

**Socio-economic challenges and the survival
mechanisms for the female-headed households in
the Bophelong Township**

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DECLARATION

I declare that:

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND THE SURVIVAL MECHANISMS FOR THE FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN THE BOPHELONG TOWNSHIP

is my own independent work, that all the sources quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference and that I have not previously submitted this dissertation for a degree at any University.

Dorah Dubihlela

OPSOMMING

In hierdie skripsie word die sosio-ekonomiese uitdagings en die oorlewingsmeganismes van huishoudings in die Bophelong Township wat deur vroue bestuur word, bestudeer. In die studie word gefokus op drie vlakke, naamlik huishoudings wat deur vroue bestuur word, hulle sosio-ekonomiese uitdagings en oorlewingsstrategieë.

Daar word eers 'n literatuurondersoek gedoen, en daarna 'n empiriese ondersoek. Die literatuurondersoek is onderneem om 'n teoretiese raamwerk vir die empiriese ondersoek te voorsien, en die ondersoekproses is oor twee fases versprei. In die eerste fase is 'n steekproef van die hele Bophelong-area geneem. Uit hierdie steekproef is die huishoudings wat deur vroue bestuur word geïdentifiseer. In die tweede fase is 'n opname gemaak van die huishoudings wat deur vroue bestuur word, en wat geskik is vir die doeleindes van hierdie studie.

Die metode wat by die meting van armoede gebruik is, is die Huishoudelike Bestaansvlak (HSL). Die HSL meet die minimum bedrag wat deur 'n huishouding benodig word ten einde 'n bestaan te kan maak. Dit neem die geslag en ouderdomme van alle gesinslede in ag. Volgens die gevolgtrekkings van die studie is die vlakke van armoede hoog onder huishoudings in Bophelong wat deur vroue bestuur word. Ongeveer 77% van die huishoudings (wat deur vroue bestuur is en wat in Bophelong voorkom) wat in hierdie studie ondersoek is, is armoedig. Die armoede gaping indeks in hierdie huishoudings in was 0.53; dit beteken dat huishoudings wat oor die algemeen arm is, 53% van hulle inkomste benodig voordat hulle hulle armoedelyn te bereik.

Dit is bevind dat die hoë werkloosheidsyfer baie algemeen is onder huishoudings in Bophelong wat deur vroue bestuur word, en 'n koers van 65% is aangeteken. Hierdie hoë werkloosheidsyfer, tesame met die lae vlak van opvoedkundige kwalifikasies onder die genoemde huishoudings (slegs 2% het 'n nagraadse kwalifikasie) is moontlik die oorsake van armoede in hierdie huishoudings.

Huishoudings in Bophelong wat deur vroue bestuur word voer op 'n daaglikse basis 'n stryd om oorlewing. Hulle het egter verskeie strategieë begin aanwend om te kan oorleef, en sluit in die soek en gebruik van wilde vrugte in omliggende omgewings, emigrasie na ander omgewings en die voordeel van voedselprogramme wat deur skole in werking gestel is. Wat die bron van die huishoudelike inkomste betref, is daar bevind dat regeringstoelae 'n belangrike rol speel by die bestaan van die betrokke huishoudings. Die gemiddelde huishoudelike inkomste is op R1760 per maand vasgestel. Die gemiddelde afhanklikheidsvlak, wat die aantal werkloos met wat op die inkomste van slegs een inkomstevoorsiener staat maak, is 5.5.

Ter afsluiting word die aanbeveling gemaak dat 'n studie gedoen moet word waarin dieper en in meer besonderhede ondersoek ingestel word na die sosio-ekonomiese uitdagings wat huishoudings, wat deur vroue bestuur word, in die gesig staar. Daar bestaan ook 'n behoefte aan verdere ondersoek ten opsigte van hulle oorlewingsmetodes, ten einde beleidsaksies te rig wat op die aanspreek van sosio-ekonomiese sake fokus, en wat spesifiek verband hou met huishoudings wat deur vroue bestuur word.

Sleutelwoorde

Vroulike hoof van huishoudings, huishoudelike struktuur, Bophelong, armoede, werkloosheid, onderwys, sorg las, oorlewing-strategieë, geslag wanbalans, vroue, deelname, maatskaplike bystand, kindertoelae, beskerming, gemiddelde inkomste, arbeid mark, diskriminasie, vaardighede en sosio-ekonomiese uitdagings.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation studies the socio-economic challenges and the survival mechanisms of female-headed households in Bophelong Township. The study focuses on three areas namely, female-headed households, their socio-economic challenges and survival strategies.

The study followed a literature survey first, then an empirical study. The literature study was undertaken to provide a theoretical framework for the empirical work. The survey process was undertaken in two phases. In the first phase, a sample survey of the whole area of Bophelong was undertaken. This was the sample from which female-headed households were identified. In the second phase, a household survey on the female-headed households serving the purpose of this study was undertaken.

The method used in the measure of poverty is the Household Subsistence Level (HSL). The HSL measures the minimum amount needed by a household to maintain subsistence. It takes account of the sex and ages of household members. According to the study outcome, poverty levels amongst female-headed households in Bophelong are high. About 77% of sampled female-headed households in Bophelong were poor. The poverty gap index in these households was 0.53; meaning that on average poor households needs 53% of their income to reach their poverty line.

High unemployment rate has been found to be prevalent amongst female-headed households in Bophelong, where the rate of 65% was recorded. This high unemployment rate was possibly the cause of poverty in these households together with low educational qualifications among households members; only 2% were found to have a post graduate qualification.

Female-headed households in Bophelong township are engaged in a daily struggling to survive. These households have devised various means for survival. These include the search for wild fruits in the nearby areas, immigration to another region and the benefit of school feeding schemes. When it comes to the sources of household income, government grants were found to play an important role in the sustainance of

these households. The average household income was calculated at R1760 per month. The average dependency ratio, which measures the number of unemployed who depend on one income earner, was 5.5.

Finally, the investigation recommends a more detailed and deeper study relating to the socio-economic challenges faced by the female-headed households. There is also a need to explore on their survival means so as to direct policy actions aimed at addressing socio-economic issues relating to female-headed households in general.

Key Words

Female-headed households, household structure, Bophelong, poverty, unemployment, education, care burden, survival strategies, gender imbalance, women, participation, social assistance, child support grant, protection, average income, labour market, discrimination, skills and socio-economic challenges.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	:	ACQUIRED IMMUNO-DEFFICIENCY SYNDROME
BEPA	:	BRITISH AND EUROPEAN POLYGRAM ASSOCIATION
CSG	:	CHILD SUPPORT GRANT
GDP	:	GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT
HIV	:	HUMAN IMMUNNO VIRUS
HSL	:	HOUSEHOLD SUBSISTANCE LEVEL
ILO	:	INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE
PDL	:	POVERTY DATUM LINE
PPP	:	PURCHASING POWER PARITY
RDP	:	RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
SADC	:	SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION
SERG	:	SOCIOECONOMIC REVIEW AND OUTLOOK FOR GAUTENG
SPII	:	STUDIES IN POVERTY AND INEQUALITY INSTITUTE
STATS SA	:	STATISTICS SOUTH AFRICA
US	:	UNITED STATES
UN	:	UNITED NATIONS
UNAIDS	:	UNITED NATIONS ACQUIRED IMMUNO-DEFFICIENCY SYNDROME
UNDP	:	UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
UNESCO	:	UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANISATION
WPSW	:	WHITE PAPER FOR SOCIAL WELFARE

CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

1.1 INTRODUCTION

International organisations, several governments and societies have in the past years engaged on massive moves to address gender imbalances in developing nations. The current global village has also engaged in numerous meetings in a bid to recognise female participation in global issues (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2008:1). A study by UNDP (2005:4) reported that women lack equal representation in most parliaments, holding only 16% of the parliamentary seats worldwide. Musingafi (2008:54) alludes to this momentum to address female issues by indicating that conventions, symposiums, workshops, legislations and declarations have tried to uphold the dignity of a woman but the journey is still long.

Enquiries into the current socio-economic challenges facing women are not new. In the 1970s, the United Nations (UN) declared the 1970s a women's decade, following massive pressure from various women groups. The UN's General Assembly urged governments to formulate policies that incorporate women in their planning processes. This was made with the aim of ensuring that women play a key role in economic developments undertaken by their respective governments. Their full involvement in decision-making would therefore spearhead growth and development in most economies. This led to the conception of Women in Development and later Women and Development. The latter is rooted in the liberal feminist principles of gender equality (Venter & Marais, 2005:5).

Growth in these movements has also been propelled by a growth in female-headed households. This growth has been observed in both developed and developing nations. In the United States of America, the number of females raising up children on their own more than doubled from 13% to 30% in the 22 years from 1970 to 1992 (Triegaard, 2005:5). In Philippines, the number of the female-headed households increased by 42.7% in 9 years from 1988 to 1997 (Moranda, Lianeta, Pangan & Pomentil, 2005:3). A study by Venter and Marais (2005) found that 41, 9% of all households in South Africa were headed by females in 2001. This growth has prompted governments to elevate the interests of women through empowerment programmes. These programmes are meant

to address specific female related challenges. There has also been a general acknowledgement that women are becoming important global economic players as well as heads of households and as such, their contribution cannot go unnoticed (Venter & Marais, 2005:3).

The head of the household is defined as a household member with authority and income earning responsibility (Barros, Fox & Mendonca, 1997:2). In the case of a female-headed household, the female adult member is the one responsible for the care and organisation of the household (Buvinic & Gupter, 1997:6). Having full responsibility of maintaining the household alone brings challenges to a female person. The challenges females face include poverty, unemployment, disease and hunger, loss of personal dignity, crime, ignorance and illiteracy, among other things (World Bank, 2005; World Bank, 2001).

According to past researches, the following hold for the female gender:

- More women than men face the unemployment dilemma, thus more women than men are likely to be unemployed at whatever time (Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), 2009:X).
- Women are over represented among the poor. More poor people are women than men (Venter & Marais, 2005; World Bank, 2001).
- Illiteracy is prevalent among women (Gangopadhyay & Wadhway, 2003:4).
- Females are more affected by the social problems like diseases in view of the HIV and AIDS pandemic (UNDP, 2005; UNAIDS, 2005).
- Women are paid less compared to men even if they are doing the same job and possess the same qualification (Moranda *et al.*, 2005:3; Gangopadhyay & Wadhway, 2003:4).

A study by Hindson, Xaba and Associates (2003:2) indicated that women and children are more vulnerable to poverty. This was eluded due to the increasing number of women heading households. The study further reported that between 57% and 75% of children in the world lived in poverty in 2003. Delius and Schirmer (2001:16) found a high

prevalence of poverty among females in rural areas. The causes of the poverty among women in the rural areas are a result of men leaving their rural homes to find jobs in urban areas. In most cases, they never return to their rural homes. Another cause is that women and children are also discriminated against regarding the allocation of resources within households (Hindson *et al.*, 2003:2).

The challenges that come with heading a household have prompted females to devise numerous survival strategies. In South Africa, the means of survival for females differ, ranging from legal to illegal ones. Some households survive on niche services which include backyard activities, domestic labour, part-time jobs and governmental social grants. Community based networks and networking with relatives is also another adopted means of survival (Adelzadeh, Alvillar & Mather, 2003:3).

The harsh socio-economic environment faced by the majority of women has contributed to some committing crime as a means of survival (Schmidt, 2005:3). Crimes normally committed by women in general include shoplifting and prostitution. Venter and Marais (2005:5-6) write that some female-headed households have adopted a hand to mouth, and meal skipping survival strategies. This is where a family goes without all the normal meals per day. All that they get for the day is consumed immediately and none left for the next day.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although there are a number of studies focusing on women, there is a limited understanding of these socio-economic challenges and the survival mechanisms of female-headed households at a household level. This makes research focusing on women to be both desirable and challenging. With more women bearing the greatest burden of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy, an analysis of their survival mechanisms remains a gap in the research arena.

A study of this nature is also important as unemployment is reported high among women (Stats SA, 2009:X). In some cases where women are employed, they receive a lower wage compared to their male counterparts due to labour market discrimination and unfair labour practices. The low income levels expose women to harsher socio-economic

challenges than men. High unemployment prospects among women is compounded by their general low education levels, which is being spearheaded by culture, belief and teenage pregnancy (Stats SA, 2007:1; Gangopadhyay & Wadhway, 2003:6).

Poverty among women is both a political and an economic concept since it relates to the allocation and distribution of resources. It results from the past and present policy choices (Meth, 2006:5). Issues of tradition have also been stumbling blocks for women empowerment. Traditionally, the distribution of inheritance in the African society favoured men and deprived women of the resources. It further discriminated against women regarding decision making, particularly on issues that pertain to their own lives and wellbeing (Gangopadhyay & Wadhway, 2003:6). This has prompted the global world as well as the South African government to formulate policies to promote gender equality. Even though good policies, regulations and laws have been put in place to eradicate inequality and discrimination against women, there still exists a gap in their implementation. These issues have been addressed in a normative manner (Musingafi, 2008:45).

Women also face an array of social problems arising from the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The increase in the number of orphans, the increasing need for home-based care-givers as well as women's vulnerability to the HIV/AIDS infection add to the growing challenges faced by women (UNDP, 2007:1).

It is at the back of all these that insecurity, unfair labour practices, discrimination, violence and health remain topical issues in so far as women are concerned. With this background in mind, this study aimed at analyzing the socio-economic challenges and survival mechanisms of female-headed households in Bophelong Township. Bophelong is one of the residential townships within the jurisdiction of Emfuleni Municipality, in the southern tip of Gauteng. The focal point of the study is in addressing the following questions:

- What is the household structure of a female-headed household in Bophelong?
- What is the unemployment and poverty levels among these households?

- What are some of the other socio-economic problems faced by female-headed households?
- How do females heading these households maintain their day to day function?
- What are some of the solutions that can be identified with the collaboration of these households to address their socio-economic problems?
- What are the survival strategies in these female-headed households?

Several studies have been carried out in Bophelong (Driel, 2009; Sekhampu, 2003; Slabbert, 2003 & 2009a). These studies have found a high prevalence of female-headed households in the area. The data collected by Slabbert (2003:14) indicated that 55.8% of the poor population in Bophelong were females. A study by Driel (2009) found out that there are more women than men in Bophelong. These women were also found to survive mainly on government social security services.

1.3 IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

The number of female-headed households is seen increasing in most economies including South Africa. There exists a need to have an understanding of the challenges and survival mechanisms of female-headed households in a township situation. The fundamental motivation for this study is therefore to create a body of knowledge upon which further studies on socio-economic challenges and survival mechanism for female-headed households can be based.

The involvement of women in economic planning and decision making tends to be the key to economic development. According to Simutanyi (2006:2) development involves both quantitative (economic growth) and qualitative changes (people's living standards). Development can be achieved better if the people's living standards are lifted. There is also a considerable body of literature suggesting that effective targeting on development initiatives and women access to resources can achieve significant results (Delius & Schirmer, 2001:17). Hence the study on the challenges faced by women which hinders their contribution to development remains crucial.

The study also aims at highlighting poverty and unemployment levels among the female-headed households and provides possible solutions to the socio-economic challenges facing the female-headed households.

1.4 STUDY OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the study was to investigate the socio-economic challenges and the survival mechanisms of female-headed households in Bophelong.

The following secondary objectives have been formulated for the study:

- To do a literature review of the socio-economic challenges faced by women in general.
- To find out, through literature, the survival means of the female-headed households.
- To ascertain the level of unemployment and poverty among female-headed households in Bophelong.
- To identify opportunities for job creation, income generation and poverty alleviation.
- To analyse the data collected and provide findings in terms of economic demographics of female-headed households.

1.5 HYPOTHESIS

The following hypothesis is made:

Female-headed households have limited means to survive due to their socio-economic challenges. There is a need to devise means to assist these households with income activities to improve their socio-economic situation.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Literature and empirical study were employed in this research.

1.6.1 Literature review

The literature review, sometimes called 'theoretical study' is useful in formulating and defining the research problem, and as a framework for establishing the research purpose

and developing research questions or hypotheses (Kent, 2007:81). Literature provides useful secondary data obtainable from such sources as written text books, journals articles, previous researches, internet, reports, conference papers, government publications, newspapers, and any other sources deemed to be relevant. This study extensively made use of these sources of secondary data.

1.6.2 Empirical study

In the design of the empirical study, a quantitative method of measuring data was employed. With quantitative research, the methodology seeks to quantify data and to typically apply some form of data analysis. According to Malhotra (2004:137) in quantitative research a large number of representative cases are used, the data collection is structured and data analysis of the outcome recommends a final course of action. A quantitative research study involves the collection of data that involves larger, more representative sample and the numerical calculation of results. The study followed a deductive reasoning where a theoretical framework was done first through literature review.

The empirical study was done in two phases. The first phase is the survey conducted by Slabbert (2009a) in the whole of Bophelong, the second phase involved indepth interview with identified female-headed households from the overall sample. This fieldwork was undertaken in 2010 by the researcher.

In the first phase interviews, simple random sampling was used to select the 286 households in Bophelong. In the second phase, a sample of 60 female-headed households was selected from Slabbert (2009a) data, and a structured questionnaire administered to them.

1.7 CHAPTER CLASSIFICATION

The study is divided into six chapters, which are outlined below as follows:

Chapter 1: The problem and its setting. This chapter comprises of the background and scope of study as well as the research methodology adopted. It also defines the problem statement of the research. The study proposal formed the basis for the chapter.

Chapter 2: Theories on socio-economic challenges. This chapter provides literature review of the socio-economic challenges with specific reference to poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and diseases.

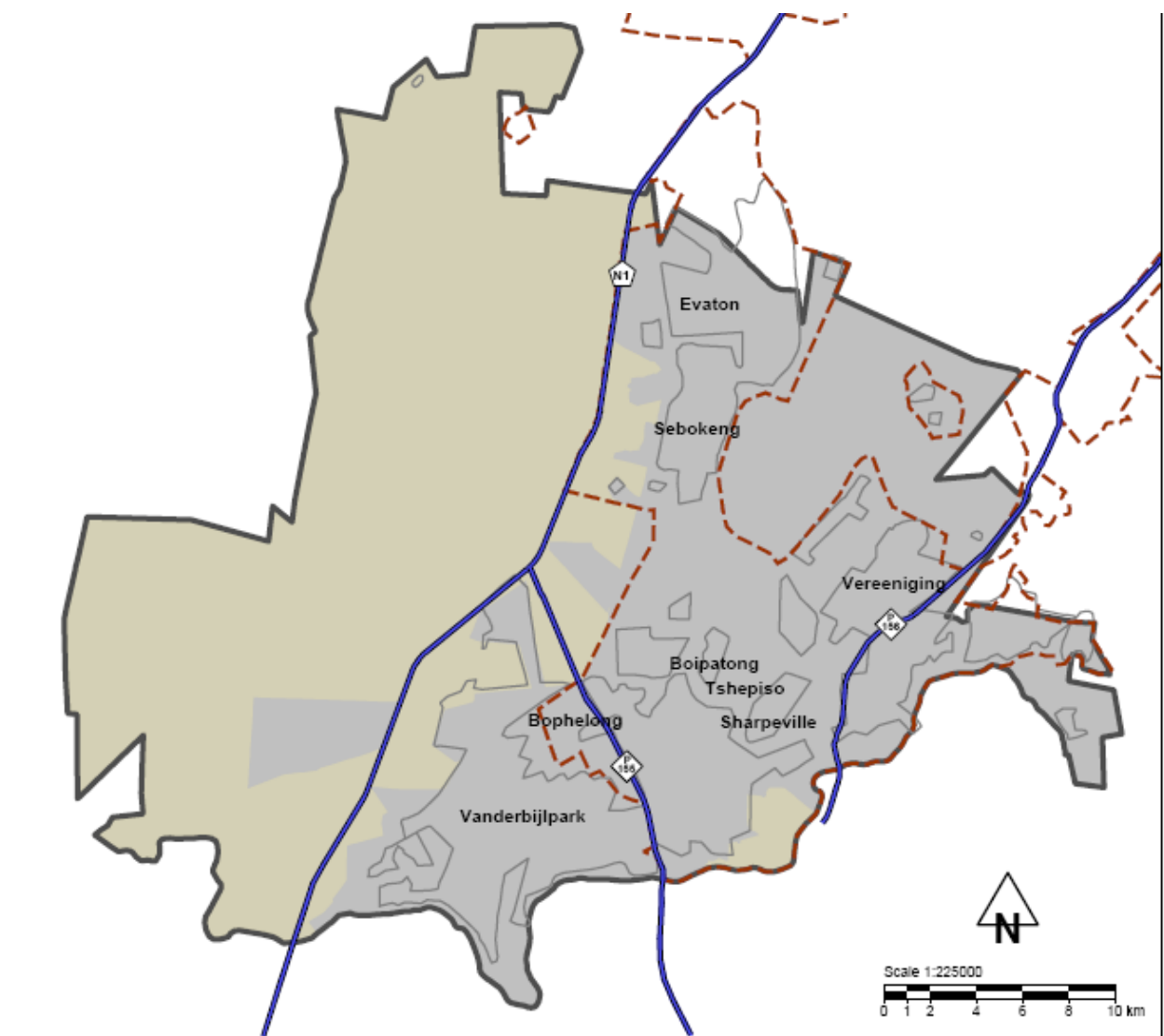
Chapter 3: Women challenges and survival means. This chapter focuses on the household structure, in particular female-headed households. The female dimensions of the socio-economic challenges are viewed and their means of survival will also be analysed in this chapter, using literature.

Chapter 4: Profile of female-headed households in Bophelong. The aim of this chapter is to give the structure of female-headed households in Bophelong in terms of their demographics and household structures.

Chapter 5: Survival strategies of female-headed households. In this chapter, a detailed analysis of the survival mechanisms in the female-headed households in Bophelong Township will be done.

Chapter 6: Summary, conclusion and recommendations. This chapter provides an overview of the study. It will give conclusion and make recommendations based on the study outcome where necessary.

1.8 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF BOPHELONG



Source: Demarcation Board, 2008:6.

CHAPTER 2: THEORIES ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a need to address the social and economic challenges faced by many citizens in the developing world. This was seen as an important determinant of economic development. The challenges of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and diseases have continued to impede economic progress in most economies (Studies for Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII), 2007:17). These challenges not only affect individuals concerned but also the development imperatives of these economies (Anon, 2007:10).

One of the important challenges facing many economies has been that of creating employment opportunities for its citizen. Unemployment is recognized as a global challenge and imposes great concerns to most governments. It constitutes permanent loss of potential output. The unemployed individuals suffer loss of self esteem and confidence (Dornbusch, 2000:145). According to Stats SA (2009:X) unemployment is arguably the greatest cause of poverty in South Africa. High unemployment rate is found among the unskilled and the illiterate. Low education levels have been found to be the other cause of unemployment in South Africa (Stats SA, 2009:X).

This chapter provides a theoretical framework of the study. The chapter explores the literature on the socio-economic challenges of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and diseases. The definitions of both poverty and unemployment, methods of measurement, and types are studied.

2.2 POVERTY

Poverty is an undesirable social, political and economic phenomenon. It entails social exclusion where individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in society (Allen & Thomas, 2000:14). In the global world, the question of decreasing poverty and reducing inequality between the rich and the poor remain as potent as ever. The World Bank, among its development goals has the halving of the proportion of the people in extreme poverty by 2015 as an important indicator (Allen & Thomas, 2000:14).

The World Bank (2005) found poverty to be more prevalent in the Sub-Saharan Africa and other emerging economies compared to developed nations. The 1980s and early 1990s saw the emergence of poverty in the United Kingdom which drove many communities into lives full of prostitution, crime, drugs, alcohol and child abuse (Allen & Thomas, 2000:17). In South Africa, poverty results from a complex history which cannot be understood without the reference to the impact of race and racism (SPII, 2007:11). This sub-section provides the understanding of poverty from a theoretical point of view. The definitions of poverty and its associated measurements are discussed.

2.2.1 Definition of poverty

There are many factors that make poverty a complex and a multidimensional social phenomenon. These factors include the place where poverty is defined, conditions surrounding the definition as well as the person who is defining it. This sometimes results in conflicting understandings of poverty among the academics, theorists, politicians and researchers (Bhorat *et al.*, 2003:6). Poverty captures a wide range of meanings, depending on who is defining it. Different people at different places interpret poverty differently. This makes the eradication of poverty a challenge (SPII, 2007:1). Definitions of poverty are also critical to political objectives, policy focus and research objectives. They are linked to explanations, implications for solutions and to situations where value judgments are involved (Allen & Thomas, 2000:7).

Since an inclusive definition of poverty is difficult to come up with, different groups of people define poverty in a way that suits their study or research focus. According to Langmore (2000:37) poverty is lack of participation in decision-making, a violation of human dignity, powerlessness and susceptibility to violence. Duclos and Gregoire (1998:3) define poverty as the lack of resources, voice and power to obtain a diet and participate in the economy. This lack can lead to economic dependence and subjection to exploitation.

Laderchi, Saith and Steward (2003:4) purports that poverty never results from the lack of one thing but from many interlocking factors and resources that cluster in poor people's experiences. The lack of the resources makes the poor suffer a lot of physical, material and social damages. Woolard and Leibbrandt (1999:6) see the inability to afford basic

consumption needs as experiencing poverty. These needs can result in hunger in the households as evidenced by fewer meals per day and nutritionally inadequate diets (Duclos & Gregoire, 1998:2). Most of the definitions of poverty include hunger, poor health, lack of adequate clothing and poor housing conditions. These are collectively called poverty indicators (Langmore, 2000:39).

Poverty is also any barrier to prosperity resulting from a lack of resources and opportunities. This results in feelings of being disenfranchised from various support systems (Tilakaratna & Satharasinghe, 2002:2). This definition carries several implications of poverty. The poor lack prosperity due to lack of resources and the feeling of disempowerment to obtain resources. Due to the difficulties in the definitions of poverty, the sub-section that follows is limited to absolute, relative and social exclusion approaches to understanding poverty.

2.2.1.1 Absolute approach

The absolute approach explains poverty as the lack of sufficient resources necessary for living. It is an income-related definition of poverty where poverty is a result of lack of sufficient income to sustain a normal living (SPII, 2007:24). The concept of absolute poverty is based on the notion of subsistence, thus not having enough to satisfy basic needs. The poor in this case are those who are living below subsistence levels (Noble, Ratcliff & Wright, 2004:6).

The World Bank (2005:2) in conceptualising poverty in the international development context has adopted an absolute poverty approach as a yardstick for measuring poverty. Chen and Ravallion (2007:6) further explain that the absolute measure uses two poverty lines, one at US\$1 per day and the other at US\$2. The higher line being more representative of what poverty means in middle income developing nations. The absolute definition of poverty was further elaborated on by the UN declaration in Copenhagen in 1995. This declaration defined poverty as a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information (UN, 1995:2). Poverty in this context not only depends on income but also on access to services and nutrition (Oosthuizen, 2007:3).

Absolute poverty can be measured using an absolute poverty line (Ikejiaku, 2009:2). The absolute poverty line estimates the cost of a bundle of goods deemed to ensure that basic needs are met. The basic needs constitute the cost of food basket to provide for basic nutrition. Achieving basic needs is central to the definition of poverty and focus is on the actual needs of the poor and to their expenditure patterns (Woolard & Leibbraidt, 1999:5). In developing countries, such basic needs mainly consist of food expenditure. Poverty line used in this case is based on the amount of money needed to buy enough food to obtain the minimum diet. People are therefore referred to as poor when they lack the command over resources to meet some absolute needs (SPII, 2007:28).

Advocates of absolute poverty see it as the best poverty measure and have brought the following points to support their views:

- Absolute poverty is objective and has a scientific notion and therefore easy to measure. Since poverty is measured by the minimum subsistence level, any households earning below subsistence can be categorised as poor (Noble, Ratcliff & Wright, 2004:7).
- Measuring poverty by an absolute threshold has the advantage of applying the same standards across different locations and time periods, thus making comparisons easier (Alcock, 1993:68).
- Absolute poverty attempts to define the poor not in terms of being well off but in terms of the poor themselves (Alcock, 1993:69).

The absolute approach to the understanding of poverty has been criticised on the following grounds (Williams, 1998:7-8):

- If a family is described as poor by not affording food, then by any absolute standards there is very little poverty in developed nations since many can largely afford food.
- For the measure to be absolute, the currency must be the same in different countries but in the real world currencies differ in strength. Different cultures, technological levels, and time periods make this measure difficult as well.

- Escaping the battle of survival does not necessarily mean escaping poverty, thus the absolute measure ignores some factors like social deprivation and any changes in income distribution (Williams, 1998:7-8).

According to SPII (2007:29) there is no blue print as to which goods should be included in the consumer basket. The absolute poverty is usually defined in terms of the subsistence level which was put at typically 1 (US\$) a day (Alcock, 1993:70). This measure was then revised by the World Bank to \$1.25 a day measured in the prices and the Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) of the year 2005 (World Bank, 2005:6). In developed nations, setting such thresholds has no meaning since no one in those nations lives on incomes anywhere near US\$1 a day. Logically, either one concludes that there is no absolute poverty in those countries or that a much higher threshold should be used. The US\$ measurement therefore is not ideal for inter country measurement since countries are not the same (Bhorat, Der Berg & Aardt, 2003:4).

2.2.1.2 Relative Poverty

SPII (2007:24) defines the concept of relative poverty as the poverty that exists dependent on some specific reference group. It depends on the general living standards of the society (Woolard & Leibbrandt, 1999:12). According to Slabbert (1997:39) this is a normative concept that resides on a comparison of the standards of living of the poor to those of the rest of the population. People are said to be poor if they are poor in comparison to those around them. The notion of poverty does not merely focus on the needs for bare survival but brings the question of inequality in the society that leads to social classes (May, 1998:2). According to this definition, income and wealth redistribution is the key solution to poverty eradication (Walsh, 2008:15).

Relative poverty can be defined by a relative poverty line. This is the line that demarcates the lowest income that can be earned by a household and is deemed sufficient for a normal standard of living. A relative poverty line will move with standards of living and the poor are then taken to be those persons that are living below the relative poverty line. This poverty line varies across time, societies and place, and each country uses lines which are appropriate to its own level of development, societal norms and values (Laderchi *et al.*, 2003:5).

Relative poverty involves value judgments and there is no proven fact on the statement passed (Noble *et al.*, 2004:6). This approach to poverty has been criticised based on the following (Beisner, 1995:6):

- Absolute poverty, compared to relative poverty raises a more serious issue especially in the third world, where the focus is on income.
- If one accepts that relative poverty is important in principle, controversy arises on the thresholds to be used and on what basis.
- Relative poverty explains more on inequality rather than poverty. It can then be regarded as an inequality theory but not poverty theory (Beisner, 1995:6).

2.2.1.3 Social exclusion

The term social exclusion relates to the alienation and disenfranchisement of certain people within the society (SPII, 2007:11). It is a term used by most governments today to explain poverty. The relative concept of poverty relates poverty to notions of exclusion from participation in mainstream economy where, in a given society, those who are considered poor are usually excluded from full participation (Clert, Mario & Wodon, 2001:13). When considering social participation, there exists the concept of relative deprivation. This is when people cannot obtain, at all or sufficiently, the condition of life which allows them to play their roles, participate in the relationships and to follow the customary behaviour.

The inclusion of social exclusion in the definition of poverty explains the larger notion of poverty where the poor are denied participation in the society in addition to their insufficient incomes. If substantial numbers of people have this insufficient income, then, not only are they excluded from ordinary living patterns, but it demeans the rest of the society and reduces overall social cohesion in society (Noble *et al.*, 2004:4).

While poverty is material in nature, it also has some psychological effects such as distress and stigma (Duclos & Gregoire, 1998:3). Maintaining social solidarity is of extreme value to poor people. The inability to reciprocate with gifts or participate in community events can have very harmful consequences to them. These consequences could range from humiliation, loss of honour and psychological distress. Social solidarity

does not differ much from social capital which, when broadly defined, refers to the benefits of membership within a social network. It enhances the traditional dimensions of poverty. The accessibility of additional resources via social connections enables the poor to meet everyday needs. When they are socially excluded, such networking becomes difficult (Clert *et al.*, 2001:13).

The debate on the concepts of defining poverty is worth pursuing because of the considerable costs of poverty to those who have to endure it and its impact on the rest of society. The same debate underlines the measure of poverty where there exists several means with each yielding different results (Duclos & Gregoire, 1998:3).

2.2.2 Measuring poverty

The World Bank (2001:11) concurs that poverty has many dimensions and as such difficult to measure. It further asserts that calculated in money terms, poverty can be referred to as inadequacy of income. In terms of the human condition, poverty is measured as the deficiency in nutrition, health, education, and other components of well-being, including leisure time. Depending on the type of measure used, the results yielded will be different.

Poverty can be measured both qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative measures of poverty look at the experiences of those actually suffering from poverty while quantitative approach makes use of the collected data and does not consider the experiences and the feelings of the poor (Clert *et al.*, 2001:1).

These measures of poverty bring contradiction among different associations and organisations. The World Bank concentrates on income measures of poverty, the UNDP has a broader view of poverty as multi-dimensional and therefore covering a broader picture. The World Bank stresses on labour intensive economic activities, the UNDP gives emphasis on developmental issues in social services like education (Allen & Thomas, 2000:16). This will therefore cause the policy implications of these two to differ.

In this sub-section five methods of measuring poverty, poverty lines, head-count index poverty gap, poverty gap index and the dependency ratio are discussed below.

2.2.2.1 Poverty lines

The most commonly used measure of poverty is based on income necessary to purchase the basket of goods and services necessary for survival (Woolard & Leibbrandt, 1999: 10). This is the income that demarcates the poverty line and it is the income required to avoid poverty. According to Oosthuizen (2006:2) there are three basic approaches to estimate the poverty lines, namely, the absolute, relative and the subjective approach. These approaches view poverty, the experience of poverty and its quantification differently.

The absolute poverty approach uses a line that values the goods and the services required to meet absolute minimum living standard in money terms. The value of the absolute poverty line is fixed but can be changed in line with adjustments to inflation, technological innovations, and time passage. When an individual's income falls below the minimum level or threshold necessary to meet basic needs then such individual is deemed poor (Oosthuizen, 2006:2).

The common international absolute poverty line has been roughly US\$1 a day, or more precisely US\$1.08 a day at 1993 prices (Laderchi *et al.*, 2003:5; Deaton, 2003:4). It was however revised by World Bank (2005) to \$1. 25 a day measured in the 2005 prices. The revision of the poverty line was made because the earlier poverty lines were based on smaller and now outdated set of poverty lines (World Bank, 2008:7). The rich nations generally employ generous standards of poverty than poor nations (Deaton, 2003:28). In practice, the official or common understanding of a poverty line is significantly higher in developing countries (Bhorat *et al.*, 2003:4; Ravallion, 1998:14).

Relative poverty line takes into account the society's characteristics. It attempts to identify those individuals whose standard of living is relatively low to the rest of the society. According to Mokoena (2001:21) poverty lines demarcate a group of households whose income or consumption is too low in comparison to that of the general population. Poverty lines are income and price elastic. This means they respond to income and the general price level in the economy.

The subjective approach to poverty measurement has the individual's opinion as to what constitutes the minimum income or expenditure required by the household. This approach also takes into account the household's nutritional requirements (Oosthuizen, 2006:2).

The poverty line in common use is the Poverty Datum Line (PDL). When using the PDL, the lowest cost of food, transport, shelter, clothing, fuel and lighting are used to determine the line. The PDL involves the application, into a monetary value, of a number of items based on the basket of goods. It can be used to measure relative poverty by measuring the mean income of the people living below a certain income (Oosthuizen, 2006:2).

The PDL is commonly used by labour unions, employers and sociologists in determining minimum wage levels. This PDL is used to measure absolute poverty, thus the ability of the person to afford basic needs with available income. Poverty lines in general can be used to analyse the distribution of resources in a country but does not describe the depth of poverty (SPII, 2007:11).

2.2.2.2 The head-count index

The head count index is derived by expressing the number of the poor as a proportion of the whole population. This is the simplest method of measuring poverty. The head-count index is a fraction of the population below the poverty line (Deaton, 1994:122). The headcount index aims at determining the number of households that fall below the poverty line. It is calculated using the following formula according to Borooah and McGregor (1991:357):

Headcount index = $H(y: z) = M/N$ where

Y, explains the distribution of income

Z, explains the poverty line

N, represents the whole population

M, represents households with income equal to or less than the poverty line.

According to Tilakaratna and Satharasinghe (2002:3) the head-count index is widely used because of its simplicity in application and administration. It is therefore useful in addressing the overall changes in poverty levels. There are some criticisms to this method as well. These are listed below:

- The index assumes that all the poor are in the same situation. It does not consider that some are poorer than others, thus their degree of poverty differs (World Bank, 2005:6).
- The index only measures the income changes that cross the poverty line. It ignores the intensity of poverty and the welfare aspect (Reyes, 2005:8).
- It violates the welfare principle of Dalton (1920) which states that transfers from the rich to the poor person should improve the measure of welfare.
- It does not change if individuals below the poverty line become richer or poorer (Reyes, 2005:8).
- It assumes that the household members enjoy the same level of well being (Reyes, 2005:8).

2.2.2.3 Poverty gap

The poverty gap is defined as the average difference between poor households' income and the poverty line. The poverty gap is used together with the head-count index in order to account for the degree or severity of poverty. The head-count index alone does not account for the degree of poverty (SPII, 2007:11). The gap measures the average shortfall of the income of the poor from the poverty line. A large value indicates a large gap between the poverty line and the mean income of the poor (World Bank, 2006:3). The formula for calculating the poverty gap is:

$$R_i(y;z) = (z_i - y_i)/z_i \quad \text{where:}$$

R_i = income shortfall of the household expressed as a proportion of the household's poverty line

y_i = the income of a specific household

z_i = the poverty line of a specific household (Borooah & McGregor, 1991:357)

The poverty gap has however been criticised based on the following conditions, according to the World Bank (2006:3):

- It does not capture the severity of poverty. It only gives the percentage of those who are poor and does not show how far they are from their poverty line.
- It is insensitive to the transfers among the poor. That is if two individuals fall below the poverty line and income is transferred from one individual to another but they both remain below the poverty line, the poverty gap will record no change in the income distribution.

2.2.2.4 Poverty gap index

Poverty gap index is the poverty line less the actual incomes for the poor (Reyes, 2005:10). It expresses the poverty gap as a percentage of the poverty line. It alleviates some of poverty measuring challenges by measuring the aggregate amount of poverty relative to the poverty line (World Bank, 2008:3).

The poverty gap represents the transfer of income to the poor that would be necessary to eliminate poverty, assuming an absolute poverty line. The poverty gap index is simply the average poverty gap across the entire population. Summing all the poverty gaps in the sample population and taking the average provides an estimate of what would be the minimum cost of eliminating poverty in society. According to the World Bank (2008:3) the weaknesses of the poverty gap index are as follows:

- The poverty gap index does not indicate the severity of poverty.
- The poverty gap index is insensitive to transfers among the poor.
- It is more difficult to interpret and is less intuitive than the other poverty measures.

2.2.2.5 Dependency ratio

Dependency ratio is the proportion of the non-income earners that depend on the income earner. In developing nations where the birth rate has reportedly been higher than in the

developed nations, there is a higher dependency ratio. This is the other cause of poverty in these nations (Cheema, 2005:17). In South Africa, the dependency ratio is higher in the black families and is worse with the extended family set ups. Poverty in the household increases with the increase in the dependency ratio as more dependants compete for the income of the working people in the household (Cheema, 2005:17).

The dependency ratio is calculated by dividing the total number of non-earners by the total of earners. This indicates the burden that the income earners carry in the households. If a large number of people depend on the small income of an individual in the household, poverty may result. The main driver of poverty can not only be attributed to the lack of resources in the economy but also to the inequalities in the distribution of the country's resources. A study of poverty can therefore be better understood by the studying of inequality as well (World Bank, 2008:1).

2.2.3 Poverty and inequality

The issue of inequality in the distribution of income and wealth is a long term global problem. According to the World Bank (2008:4) the richest, 20% of the world's population consume about 76.6% of the world's wealth. The poorest, 20% of the population consume 1.5% of the wealth and the middle, 60% consume 21.9% of the world's resources. The poor majority seem to own the world's few resources while the rich minority enjoy the bulk of the world resources (World Bank, 2008). In this sense, poverty eradication measures should direct their focus to income and wealth redistribution (Walsh, 2008:15).

Although poverty and inequality are related, one does not assume the other. Even though poverty does not assume inequality, measures of inequality are useful in the evaluation of relative poverty (Sen, 1981:15). However, poverty and inequality differ in the following aspects (Bhorat *et al.*, 2003:3-7):

- A country with low levels of poverty may have high inequality; therefore the two are not the same.

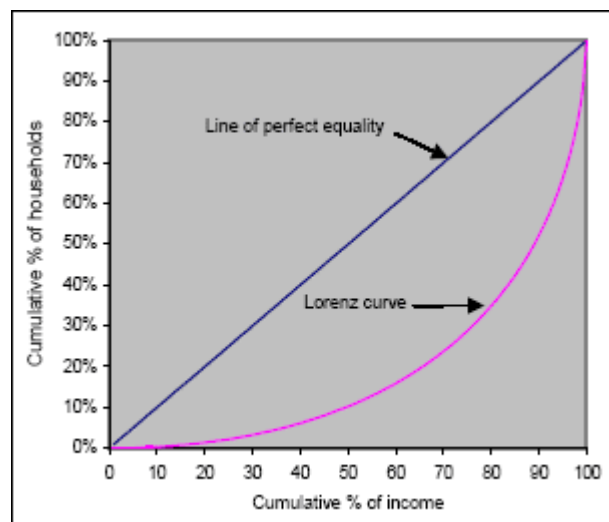
- Fair and equal society may still have high levels of poverty. This is the case especially where a country is poor but income fairly distributed. Thus many developing nations may have lower gini-coefficient than South Africa but be poorer than South Africa.
- Poverty and inequality respond differently to growth (Bhorat *et al.*, 2003:3-7).

The World Bank (1991:39) states that causes for greater income inequality which is prevalent in the developing nations compared to the developed ones lie in the following factors:

- Inequalities in ownership and access to land for historical, cultural and social reasons.
- Scarcity of professional and technical skills leading to different remunerations.
- Widespread existence of imperfect factor mobility and information, also monopoly power based on economic or political strength may account for existing disparities.
- Social structures that exclude people on the basis of caste, race, sex or religion from jobs, also land holding and other means to produce income (World Bank, 1991:39).

In an effort to reduce inequality, governments have made attempts to move towards equity through taxes and transfer payments in changing the distribution of income (World Bank, 1991:40). Inequality can be measured in many ways and the methods have some mathematical appeals. The most commonly used measures of inequality are the Lorenz curve and the Gini-coefficient. The Gini-coefficient is calculated from the Lorenz curve. The curve plots the cumulative percentages of total income received against the cumulative number of recipients, starting with the poorest household. **Figure 2.1** below shows a hypothetical Lorenz curve. The Gini-coefficient measures the area between the Lorenz curve and a hypothetical line of absolute equality, expressed as a percentage of the maximum area under the line.

FIGURE 2.1 LORENZ CURVE



Source: HSRC, 2005:4

The Lorenz curve shows the distribution of income earned over a given period in relation to its recipients. When actual incomes are distributed unequally, as depicted in the diagram below, the Lorenz curve is bowed further away from the diagonal line. Along the line of perfect equality, the 45-degree line represents perfectly equal income distribution. At this point, the distribution of income is equal. If the distribution is unequal, the curve is bowed away from the 45-degree line (HSRC, 2005:5).

In geometric terms the Gini coefficient is measured as:

$$G = \frac{\text{area between Lorenz curve and line of perfect equality}}{\text{total area below line of perfect equality}}$$

Source: HSRC, 2005:5

The Gini-coefficient is another method which measures the degree of inequality based on the areas on the Lorenz curve diagram. The Gini-coefficient measures the degree of inequality and the distribution of the national income. It varies between 0 and 1 and the closer it is to 1, the greater inequality in income distribution in the society and the closer to 0 the more equal the income distribution in the society (Bhorat *et al.*, 2003:3). A coefficient of 1 indicates perfect inequality of incomes, whereas a coefficient of 0 indicates equality of income. In a situation of perfect equality the Lorenz curve would

overlap the line of perfect equality and the Gini-coefficient would equal zero. In the theoretical situation of one household earning all the income, the Lorenz curve would coincide with the axes and the Gini coefficient would equal one (Bhorat *et al.*, 2003:3).

This method of calculating the Gini-coefficient fails to take into account the degree of inequality in distribution within countries. It only reflects the unequal distribution of income in countries and assumes that income is equally distributed within the countries themselves. The next section explores on unemployment as another socio-economic challenge.

2.3 UNEMPLOYMENT

The sub-section covers the definitions and the theories of unemployment. Unemployment is a global challenge in the world today (Lam *et al.*, 2008:1). It is a legitimate policy concern of most governments, especially those of the developing nations. It is also a multi-dimensional concept carrying two types of definitions, the broad and the strict definition (Barker, 1992:80).

2.3.1 Definitions of unemployment

Stats SA (2003:247) defines unemployment using both the narrow and the expanded definitions. The expanded definition defines the unemployed as those people within the economically active population who bear the following characteristics:

- Did not work during the seven days prior to the interview.
- Want to work and are available to start within a week of the interview.
- Have taken active steps to look for work or to start some form of self employment in the four weeks prior to the interview (Stats SA, 2003:247).

The narrow definition also defines unemployment as above but excludes the last group of people. The unemployment figures will therefore differ depending on the type of definition used (Barker, 1992:81). Barker (1992:81) defines the unemployed as people who:

- Are 15 years and older.

- Were not in paid employment or self employment, thus did not work for five or more hours for a wage or salary or for a profit or family gain during the seven days preceding the survey.
- Were available for paid employment or self employment during the reference week (the seven days preceding the interview).
- Took active steps during the four weeks preceding the interview to find paid employment or self employment.
- Have the desire to work or to take up employment or self employment.

The shortcoming of this definition is that it is silent about the discouraged workers. These are people who want to work but are not actively seeking work because it seems hopeless and costly for them to do so. The cost of looking for a job includes the costs of applying and travelling for an interview (Barnejee *et al.*, 2006:15). Ottosen and Thompson (1996:2) define unemployment as the state of an individual looking for a paying job but not having one, thus remain unemployed. This definition excludes full time students, the retired, children and those not actively looking for a job. This group is excluded because it is not actively looking for a job. Depending on the definition and the situation, the unemployment level varies with the economic condition and other circumstance (Yang & Lester, 1994:215).

The issues surrounding underemployment makes unemployment difficult to define. Underemployment exists where job-seekers fail to get the right job for their skills and end up taking jobs below their capability and skills level. This leads to waste of human resource and underestimate the unemployment level given an economic scenario (Ottosen & Thompson, 1996:7). It also entails a situation where a person's employment uses less than normal working hours than other jobs (Barker & Holtzhausen, 1996:4).

2.3.2 Types of unemployment

A distinction should be drawn between different types of unemployment. This distinction arises because of different causative factors to unemployment which requires different means of tackling it. Economists usually distinguish between three different types of unemployment namely, frictional, structural and cyclical (Kaufman & Hotchkiss,

2000:651). Another type, seasonal unemployment is seen as resonant in most of the world economies today. These types of unemployment are based on an analysis of cause, policy prescriptions and also on the characteristics of unemployment (Hasluck, 1987:100). Below is the discussion of the types of unemployment.

Frictional unemployment is unemployment that occurs because of constant flow of people between jobs and into and out of the labour force (Kaufman, 1986:652). Workers voluntarily leave their jobs for greener pastures. Frictional unemployment is not harmful to the economy per se.

The major cause of frictional unemployment is the imperfect flow of information within the labour market which can co-exists with job vacancies, because unemployed workers do not have the right skill or are not in the right places (Ruoth, 1986:20). This type of unemployment used to be most common among young women who were temporarily resigning from the labour force during their fertility periods. Now there exist favourable labour laws that allow women maternity leave and return to work after the birth of the child (Stephen & Augar, 2006:1). At any moment, there is a considerable frictional unemployment, that is, not all active job seekers would have yet found or accepted employment and not all employees would have yet filled their job vacancies (McConnell & Brue, 1995:540).

If there was perfect flow of information and labour was highly mobile, this type of unemployment would not exist. Public policy could also reduce the level of frictional unemployment by eliminating undesirable causes of turnover. One frequent suggestion is the reform of the unemployment compensation system (Kaufman, 1986:652). According to (Kimmel, 2006:3), an extension of child care programmes will also help reduce this type of unemployment.

Structural unemployment is the type of unemployment that exists because of basic mismatch between the demand and the supply of labour. There will be a mismatch between the available jobs and the available skills. This type of unemployment is very detrimental to the economy since it can last for a long time (Hasluck, 1987:105). It is occasioned by obsolete elements in the occupational or industrial resources of the country or region (Routh, 1986:20). These can be the structural changes in the economy

resulting from technological innovations and economic dynamism. In South Africa, structural unemployment includes the inability of the demand side of the labour market to absorb the unemployed (Windvogel, 2009:13).

The mismatch and obsolete skills may be related to education, geographical area or age. The job openings in the country can be in the skilled areas yet the available labour is composed of untrained youth or elders who have been laid off from unskilled jobs. This type of unemployment arises from barriers to mobility between labour markets that impede or prevent unemployed labour from taking up the available jobs. These workers can be displaced by new technology or a plant. Job vacancies and unemployment co-exist under this type of unemployment (Kaufman & Hotchkiss, 1990:653).

To reduce structural unemployment, the government should provide or subsidise the training programs for the workers who have been affected by the structural changes. Unemployed workers should also be encouraged to move out of the depressed regions. The government should therefore provide a relocation allowance and be a last resort employer by offering public work jobs to those who suffer persistent unemployment (Kaufman, 1986:653). Sustained high levels of demand may reduce structural unemployment in the long term if employers lower hiring standards in an attempt to fill vacancies (Hasluck, 1987:105).

Cyclical unemployment, which is sometimes called demand deficiency unemployment, is fundamentally a Keynesian notion (Hasluck, 1987:106). It is caused by insufficient aggregate demand in the economy to generate enough jobs. This type of unemployment is usually common during recession period where aggregate demand and labour demand are very low and is caused by a downswing in the business cycle (Mafiri, 2002:43). It is also caused by fluctuations in the levels of formal economic activities. According to the Keynesian economists this type of unemployment can be reduced by boosting the country's aggregate demand.

Policy makers can adopt fiscal and monetary policies that ensure stable and healthy rate of economic growth (Kaufman, 1986:654). Stable economic growth can be achieved through an increase in aggregate demand and if aggregate demand goes up, more labour is employed for the production of goods and services. Impact of the recession can

be reduced by tax cuts and easier monetary policy. Tax cuts will create incentive for production (Fourie, 1997:363).

Seasonal unemployment occurs due to normal and expected changes in the economic activities during the course of the year (Mafiri, 2002:15). It is most common in the sectors like agriculture which is seasonal in nature. Seasonal workers are employed during the peak periods like planting and harvesting then laid off during the off-peak periods. This type of unemployment occurs on a regular and predictable basis.

2.3.2 Measuring Unemployment

The way unemployment is measured determines the ultimate figure which is used for policy making decisions. This places importance on the measuring methods since economic policies to fight unemployment lean on the resultant figures. According to Barker (2003:203) the unemployment data in general exaggerates the unemployment problem. This is because the data sometimes includes the discouraged workers and those who are not interested in the existing vacancies and also people can lie about their willingness to work, a typical case in developing countries. The main aim of measuring unemployment is to discover how many people satisfy the essential conditions of being without work, yet interested in finding employment (Dawson, 1992:32).

Unemployment is an important indicator to the health of the economy and the governments of industrialised countries have elaborate systems of measuring it (Routh, 1986:6). Various methods are used to measure unemployment. Amongst them, the following four are more or less the standard methods used in most economies:

- **Census:** This is the physically counting of the number of people who are economically active but unemployed in a given country or area. There are, however, shortcomings associated with this method as a measure of unemployment. These include the frequency of conducting the census and the limited number of questions that can be asked pertaining to unemployment (Slabbert, 2009b:55).
- **Sampling:** In this method, a representative sample of the whole population is questioned regarding their work status (Cawker & Whiteford, 1993:4). The sample outcome is meant to represent the whole population. In earlier years in South Africa,

the Central Statistical Services conducted a monthly survey for unemployment. Results are now not published since they were found to be inaccurate (Slabbert, 2009b:55).

- **Registration:** This is where the unemployed are required to register within the Department of Manpower. To encourage registration, South Africa, only gives the unemployment benefit to those who have registered. Also in South Africa, some categories of civil servants, domestic workers, farm workers, casual and seasonal workers, those earning more than the ceiling income and those whose period of benefit has elapsed (6 months) are excluded from the fund. In some countries, registration with placement offices is a precondition for the receipt of unemployment benefit, whereas in others, registration is entirely voluntary (BEPA, 1985:6). The registration method is used by countries like as Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (ILO, 1999:13).
- **Differences:** This is examining the differences between independent estimates of the economically active population and the number of jobs in the economy (Cawker & Whiteford, 1993:4). The number of the economically active population is ascertained together with the number of jobs created in the economy. The unemployment figure is attained by subtracting the number of jobs in the economy from the economically active population. This can also mean estimating the difference between the demand and the supply of labour in the country.

Using any of the above methods, the unemployment figure published can be resultant of either broad or narrow definition being used. Data concerning unemployment in South Africa are very unsatisfactory. The reason for this is that there are no unemployment series for all population groups combined for a lengthy period, and also the exclusion of some other geographical areas (Barker, 1995:116).

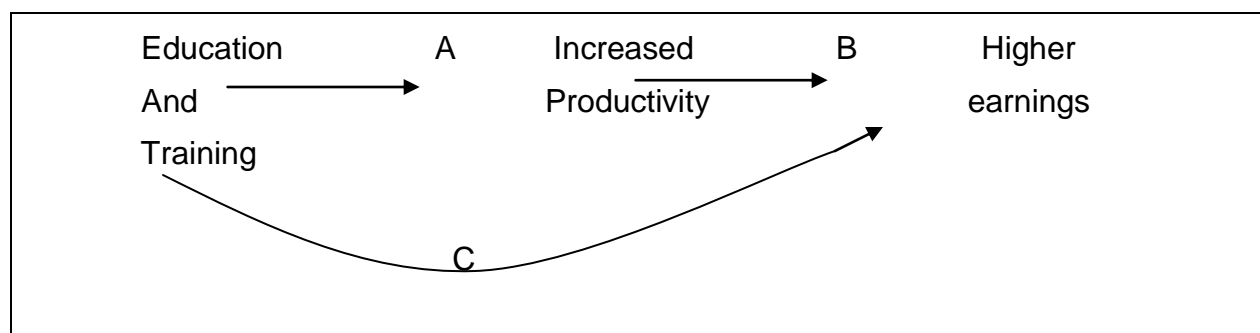
2.4 EDUCATION

Education can be defined as all the series of instruction and discipline which are intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper and form the manners and habits of people to fit them for usefulness in their future stations. It is a process of educating and learning (Webster, 2000:1).

The United Nations' Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2007:5) define education as an organized and sustained communication designed to bring about learning. UNESCO (2006) was pressing for expanded access to education. It has insisted on the issue that economies must realise the right to education for everybody since this improves individuals' right to exercise political, economic, social and cultural rights. With education, an individual is able to make an informed decision and anticipate the desired outcome. It also ensures a person's dignity and is part of basic human rights (Ezewu, 1985:42).

The benefit of education is explained by the human capital theory. Barker (1995:140) points out that most people regard education and training not only as a consumption good, but as an investment. This explains the fact that education and training, in a long run offers monetary rewards. The human capital theory points out that investment in education and training leads to an increase in productivity, which eventually leads to higher earnings. Barker further explains the human capital theory in **Figure 2.2** below.

FIGURE 2.2 THE HUMAN CAPITAL THEORY



Source: Barker, 1995:141

According to the above figure, human development in training and education initially leads to increased productivity and eventually to higher earnings. Education and training also directly lead to higher earnings and therefore higher employee benefits. Increased levels of education also lead to the reduction in health related illnesses. One university study (2003) showed that 22% of new mothers are at risk, and 9% could present a big physical danger to their babies unless they receive extra support and education. Education makes an individual conscious about some health tips and therefore takes right measures to prevent such (Dryden & Vos, 1997:93).

Education is the key to future economic development. It provides people with choices regarding the kind of life they should live and also enables them to express themselves confidently (UN, 2005:11). Investment in education is also necessary if the economy aims to achieve a stable economic growth and development as stated by the human capital theory, which postulates a positive relationship between education, earnings and productivity. There is a close relationship between development and education because the key to all development is education (Ozigi & Canham, 1992:189).

There are, however some costs associated with education. This can include loss of value and culture. As people further their education, they mix up with people with different values and cultures. Other costs include foregone earnings and loan repayments. Furthering education is done at the expense of working and therefore foregone income. Instead, education loan accrues if education was funded by borrowing. Education is also no guarantee for decency, prudence or wisdom (David, 1991:2). According to the Bill of Rights (1996), in South Africa, everyone has a right to basic education and as such the state, through its measures, must make education available and accessible. The South African Schools Act (1996) states that education is compulsory for learners of ages 7 to 15 years or learners reaching Grade 9 whichever occurs first.

2.5 DISEASES

This sub-section looks at diseases and the socio-economic challenges that come with them. The prevalence of disease in the economies erodes the human capital and leaves many with no option but to abandon their jobs and care for the sick. The burden of care and disease forces people to withdraw from the labour force and to stay at home (UNAIDS, 2009:5). This withdrawal from the labour force reduces family income and leads many into poverty. Due to sickness, the workers' output diminishes and employers are reluctant to employ the sick.

The rising health costs have led to the emphasis of the value of prevention of diseases and the promotion health as a long term strategy for cost containment. Economic research has been conducted to ascertain the social costs of diseases rather than to avoid them (Sassi & Hurst, 2008:11). The education of the population on disease prevention therefore yields a more economic outcome than the actual curing of the sick.

According to Sassi and Hurst (2008:10) diseases are the main cause of death and disability. If disabled, an individual may fail to perform some tasks and this subtracts to the economic output. However, chronic diseases display a less promising trend worldwide (Sassi & Hurst, 2008:11).

2.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Poverty is a social and an economic challenge that does not seem to go away. It is deep rooted in developing nations where it has been difficult to eradicate in the past years. The controversy in the definitions and understanding of poverty makes it a complex phenomenon. The study of poverty therefore has a long way.

Poverty can be defined in a narrow or a broad sense. In its narrow sense it means lack of income. In a broader sense poverty can be seen as a multidimensional concept encompassing housing, health, education and access to services. A more expansive understanding of poverty is that people are poor if they are unable to participate in society as full citizens. The different definitions and measures do take into account the nature of poverty. Each definition is true in its way but no single definition holds the full truth.

Poverty can be understood from an absolute and relative point of view. The absolute poverty concept approaches poverty from the lack point of view while relative poverty, on the other hand, introduces the issue of comparison with the society's living standards. Complexities also exist in the measure of poverty wherein each measure yields a different picture about the poverty levels.

There are many ways of measuring poverty. This study has explained five methods which are the poverty line, head-count index, poverty gap, poverty gap index and the dependency ratio. Poverty line is based on income necessary to purchase a basket of goods and services necessary for survival. Poverty gap measures the difference between poor households' income and their poverty lines. Poverty gap index is poverty line less actual incomes of the poor. Dependency ratio measures the number of non-income earners that depend on the income earner.

Poverty differs from inequality. Inequality shows relative living standards of the entire population. Although poverty and inequality are related one does not assume the other. There are many ways of measuring inequality, all of which have some intuitive or mathematical appeal. The Lorenz curve shows the distribution of income earned in relation to its recipients, whereas the Gini-coefficient measures the degree of inequality based on the areas on the Lorenz curve.

Unemployment has been revealed as a complex phenomenon with a negative impact on economies, unemployed individuals, families and to governments at large. It can be defined by the use of either the broad or the narrow definition and these yield different results.

There are different types of unemployment. The causes differ with the type and therefore the cure as well. Frictional unemployment results from normal labour movement, structural unemployment can persist even in the long run, cyclical unemployment is associated with the changes in the economic cycle and lastly there is seasonal unemployment which can be anticipated and therefore plans made against it beforehand.

Different countries have different means of measuring unemployment and each country employs a measure that is peculiar to its economic conditions. The most common means are census, sample, registration and the differences methods.

Education is an act of learning and is central to economic growth and development. It also has a direct link with technological innovation and advancements. Illiteracy among a country's citizens is an impediment to the developmental imperatives of that country's economy. In the output sense, the benefits of education are explained by the human capital theory which postulates a positive relationship between the time spent on education and the resultant earnings and output. Higher education levels can be a shield against both unemployment and poverty. Education, however, brings with it cost to a society in the form of loss of values and beliefs.

In the next chapter, the household structure is discussed and the socio-economic challenges discussed in this chapter are discussed in the female context. The survival strategy for the female-headed households is discussed as well.

CHAPTER 3: WOMEN CHALLENGES AND SURVIVAL MEANS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the global village, more women than men are unemployed and illiterate (ILO, 2009; World Bank, 2005). The prevalence of unemployment among women poses a bigger challenge when these women become heads of households. This high unemployment rate among women is closely linked to their high illiteracy and low skills levels (Gangopadhyay & Wadhway, 2003:3). According to Wanasundera (2007:1) 110 million children in the world do not attend school, and of these two thirds are girls. This leads to the feminisation of illiteracy and decreases the employment prospects of women.

The burden of care for the sick also adds to the social problems women carry. Caring for the HIV/AIDS patients is largely women's responsibility and that it is more pronounced in female-headed households (Medeiros & Costa, 2006:2). This fuels poverty in these households since women have to curtail their employment prospect and care for the sick, hence the feminization of the epidemic.

Theories of poverty, unemployment, education and diseases have been discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter provides a literature specifically on the gender dimensions of these challenges and is divided into three sections. The first section explores literature on households' structure, the second section deals with the gender dimensions of the socio-economic challenges and the third looks into the survival mechanisms for female-headed households.

3.2 FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

The term household is defined by the World Bank (2001b:1) as a group of related or unrelated people living in a dwelling unit or its equivalence, eating from the same pot, and sharing common housekeeping arrangements. According to this definition, the term is not only restricted to related people but to any group of people dwelling in the same house. Ngwenya (2008:2) asserts that the definition of a household involves people living together, sharing food and function accordingly to family rules defined within culturally specified socio-economic boundaries.

A household usually has the head who is a household member with authority and income earning responsibility (Barros *et al.*, 1997:2; Buvinic & Gupter, 1997:6). According to Ngwenya (2008:2) the head of the house is usually nominated but can also take the headship even without any form of nomination. The male is usually the one who heads the household. In the absence of the male figure, the female family member takes over the role of headship.

Interest in research on household headship arises because of the perceived economic and social differences between male-headed and female-headed households. Female-headed households have become a concern because of the high incidence of poverty and food insecurity in those households. They have therefore become a focus of economic and social policy discourse both in developing and developed nations (Ngwenya, 2008:2).

According to Barros *et al.* (1997:2) a female-headed household is where a female adult member assumes responsibility for the care and management of that particular household. It can be explained as a situation where in the main decision maker and the economic provider for a household is a woman, regardless of her marital status. These households are usually embedded in a network of relationships for survival where these relationships are usually heavily dominated by women. Sometimes men may be present in these households but they are often less stable.

There are several reasons for the existence of female-headed households. Lingam (1994:2) lists the following as leading factors to the female-headship phenomenon:

- Absence of a male resident due to widowhood, separation, divorce or desertion.
- Migration of the male member for a longer period of time.
- Loss of economic function by male due to unemployment, illness or disability (Lingam, 1994:2).

A study by Chant (1991:3) on female-headed households reported that the household size and structure can enable women's survival through the creation of different options for childcare. Female heads do have a choice to work while their children take care of

household tasks. They can also make use of extended families as important support structures.

According to the World Rural Women's day (2002) there is an increase in female-headed households. These households are more vulnerable to parenting difficulties because of structural and functional factors such as a lack of emotional or social support (Buvinic, 1998:8). According to Chant (2008:6), female-headed households have a greater risk of income-based poverty than their male counterparts. They bear the primary responsibility for household maintenance and childcare under very few material resources. Female-headed households often draw on extended family or what has been referred to as reciprocal networks.

Female-headed households can be understood from two perspectives; these are the 'de jure' and 'de facto' households (Martins, 2008:1). A de jure female-headed household exists when the head of the household is an unmarried woman, divorced, widowed or with no husband in the household. On the other hand, a de facto female-headed household is when the head of the household is in practice a female due to the fact that the male head is absent throughout the year or for a longer period. The wife becomes the main decision maker during the husband's absence and thus heads by default. In South African literature, most households are referred to as de facto situation, wherein a woman heads the household in the absence of a husband (Liddel *et al.*, 1991:3).

According to Chant (2007:17) the female-headed households are forced into single headed management of multiple of tasks. These tasks include the generation of the main income, housekeeping, child caring as well as the provision of a good shelter. Generally, the dependency ratio has been noted to be higher in female-headed households than in those headed by males (Ngwenya, 2008:2). While female-headed households are perceived to be having a greater risk of income poverty than their male counterparts, the female headship seems to be the most preferred option for most women since they do it as a matter of choice (Chant, 2008:6). Chant (2008:6) further noted that some women voluntarily decide to stay single due to some government policies being in their favour.

In South Africa, the concepts of households and families have been criticised for being inadequate in describing domestic groupings (Bozalek, 2004:5). This is due to the

complexities of the relationships existing within what has traditionally been termed household. A household is therefore defined by Amoateng and Richter (2003:2) as being one of the acceptable models of family life, consisting of people related by kinship, residence or close emotional attachments. Household members share a number of systematic features including intimate interdependence, boundary maintenance, preservation and adaptation of identity and the performance of household tasks.

The South African government has shown commitment to addressing issues of gender discrimination against women. In 1996 it ratified the terms of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. This was an attempt to curtail gender bias and to ensure that women are not discriminated against in any form. The policy shows government effort to eliminate discrimination, particularly in a rural context (World Bank, 2005:3). The South African constitution also provides for several channels to assist women in accessing resources and to actively participate in the economy. Women however face challenges in accessing the resources implied above (White Paper for Social Welfare (WPSW), 1997:72).

3.2.1 The gender development index: Sub-Saharan Africa

The gender development index shows the index for development indicators in selected countries. The development indicators of life expectancy, literacy and income are taken to be the major development indicators in economies by the World Bank. Below is a table showing these indicators for both men and women. Women are seen to suffer much in terms of access to education, income and other resources (Chant, 2007:13).

TABLE 3.1 GENDER DEVELOPMENT INDEX: SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA						
	Life expectancy		Adult literacy		Income(US Purchasing Power Parity)	
	F	M	F	M	F	M
Botswana	42	40	81	76	5,353	10.550
Kenya	46.4	44	78.5	90	0.962	1.067
Lesotho	39	33.3	90.3	73.7	1.357	3.578
Malawi	38.2	37.5	48.7	75.5	0.427	0.626
Mozambique	40	36.9	31.4	62.3	0.840	1.265
Namibia	43.6	43.8	82.8	83.8	4.833	9.511
South Africa	51.9	46.0	85.3	86.7	6.371	14.202
Swaziland	36.9	34.4	80.0	82.0	2.259	7.227
Zambia	32.5	32.9	73.8	86.3	0.571	1.041
Zimbabwe	33.5	34.3	86.3	93.5	1.757	3.059

Source: Adapted from Chant, 2007:13

Table 3.1 is a compilation of the life expectancy, adult literacy and income levels based on the US (PPP) using the 2005 prices for selected Sub-Saharan countries. Females seem to enjoy a greater life expectancy than men in all the countries except Zambia. Buvinic (1998:4) attempts to explain this trend in the life expectancy. Greater life expectancy among women is due to their purported advantage in biological survival over men. South Africa is having the greatest life expectancy of 51.9 years among females and 46 years among males. In the table above, the shortest life expectancy is found in the country of Zambia which is 32.5 years among females and 32.9 years among males.

Female literacy is reportedly higher except in Mozambique where only 31.4% of females were literate. The highest literacy rate was found among Zimbabwean men where 93.5% of the men were literate. On average in most countries men were more literate than

women except for Botswana and Lesotho. The highest difference in the illiteracy ratio was in Mozambique where the figures for literate men were almost double those of women.

The income based on the US (PPP) was high in men in all the countries. Even in countries like Botswana and Lesotho where more women than men were found to be literate, income is smaller for females than that of males. South Africa has the highest income levels and men get more than double the income earned by women. The difference in the literacy rate is only 1.4%. This is a clear indication of labour market discrimination and existing gender pay gap. The deprivation faced by women exposes them to more socio-economic challenges. The gender dimensions of the socio-economic challenges are discussed below.

3.3 GENDER DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY

In 2005 the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals set some key targets. The following are some of the set targets/goals (UN, 2005:4-5):

- Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.
- Achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and women empowerment.
- Improving maternal health and reducing child mortality.
- Combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases (UN, 2005:4-5).

These goals were aimed at reducing the socio-economic problems affecting humanity in general and women in particular. The majority of people living in poverty are women, both in South Africa and in the whole world (Mokoena, 2004:15; World Bank, 2001a; Swanepoel & De Beer, 2000:16; Moore, 1993:66). Women constitute the majority of the Southern African Development Cooperation (SADC) population at an average of 51% of the whole population. If women are in the majority in the SADC region, and also constitute the poor majority, it therefore means that the majority of the SADC population is living under poverty (Bookie, 1997:3). The majority of poor women live in rural areas which lack in resources and facilities. This makes poverty alleviation strategies,

particularly those focusing on Sub-Saharan Africa where the majority of the poor live and also on women more valuable (Woolard & Leibbrandt, 1999:32).

There is a magnitude of research focusing on poverty and gender such as (Raja, 2009; Medeiros & Costa, 2006; World Bank, 2005; Barros *et al.*, 1997) and all these have revealed that poverty does have a strong gender dimension. Raja (2009) found that women were poorer than men in plight of the global economic crisis. This conclusion was in line with Barros *et al.* (1997) who found poverty to be high among women compared to men in developing countries. One would say that poor women live in poor households, but according to Woolard and Leibbrandt (1999:33) the figures are underestimated because in reality women may live in non poor households and still be poor. This is due to the inequalities in household property allocation where property ownership is biased towards men in households.

The UN's conference for women held in Beijing in 1995 stated that 70% of the world's poor were women. Women therefore are lagging behind men in terms of well-being support and as such bear more than their fair share of capability-based poverty (Medeiros & Costa, 2006:5).

A considerable literature base exists that is focused on poverty among women but there is little on the feminisation of poverty. Feminisation of poverty refers to an increase in poverty among the female-headed households while poverty among women focuses on all women in general (Medeiros & Costa, 2006:5). There is also gender imbalance in the evolution of poverty giving rise to poverty overrepresentation among the female-headed households (Medeiros & Costa, 2006:5).

Women and poverty is a multi-dimensional topic and a legitimate policy concern (World Bank, 2005:1; Buvinic, 1998:3). Women are seen to be increasingly becoming economic actors and heads of households as well as mothers. Their poverty trap slows global economic growth and development. Statistics indicate that women are more likely to be at risk of hunger and lack compared to their male counterparts. Poverty implications are widespread for women, leaving many without very basic rights such as access to clean drinking water, sanitation, medical care and decent employment. Girls are also forced

into early marriages and to quit school early due to poverty. This leads to feminisation of poverty (World Bank, 2005:7).

3.3.1 Causes of female poverty

Poverty among women can be a result of both political and economic circumstances (UN, 2005:1). The following are some of the causes of high prevalence of poverty among women:

- The gap between male and female poverty is a result of the gap between theory and reality in women's rights, policies and access to property and resources. There exists a gap between theoretical practice and reality pertaining women's rights (World Bank, 2005:2).
- Cultural norms and legal restrictions that limit women's access to resources as well as their decision-making and discretionary power. This cultural deprivation and societal misnomer heightens women's vulnerability to poverty (Buvinic, 1998:7).
- The amount of time which women spend in unpaid labour. Women are often singly responsible for child-care, cleaning the house, fetching and heating water, washing and ironing, shopping, collecting firewood, cooking and washing dishes (Woolard & Leibbraindt, 1999:33; Buvinic, 1998:7).
- While assets are often considered to accrue to the household as a unit, it is often men within the household who hold exclusive decision-making power over how these assets should be used (Woolard & Leibbraindt, 1999:33).
- Female unemployment rates are higher and the wage gap between male and female earnings persists. On cases where women are employed, they face low earnings compared to their male counterparts (Buvinic, 1998:8).
- Discriminatory policies and practices among governments and policy makers. Women are discriminated against regarding decision making. They represent only 16% of the seats in parliaments worldwide (World Bank, 2005:4).
- Inheritance patterns, cultural and customary practices. Women are discriminated against regarding inheritance due to both culture and custom (Buvinic, 1998:11).

- Low paying jobs due to lack of human capital among women. Priority to education is usually given to boys while girls help with household duties. Teenage pregnancy is one cause of lack of human capital among women (Buvinic, 1998:8).

3.3.2 Female-headed households and poverty

A female-headed household is the one where the female adult member is the one heading the household. These can either be the 'de jure or de facto' households as explained in section 2.2. A study conducted by Woolard and Leibbrandt (1999) in South Africa discovered that 35% of the households were 'de jure and de factor' and were poor.

Studies have indicated an increased incidence of poverty among female-headed households in rural areas compared to their urban counterparts and these include (Medeiros & Costa, 2006; Woolard & Liebbrandt, 1999). Concentration of female-headed households in rural areas results from the immigration of male to the urban cities in search for employment and never return. This stimulates female poverty where women and children are left without any form of income. Employment prospects in the rural areas where most women live are also very low (Medeiros & Costa, 2006).

Poverty in female-headed households is fuelled by their low average income. Woolard & Leibbrandt (1999:33) found that the average income for a female-headed household was about one-third of average wage income in male-headed households. The reason brought forward for this income discrepancy was the discriminatory practices existing in the labour market, poor human capital and the high unemployment rate among women. The low income in the female-headed households can also be due to the deprivation of the male provider (Chant, 2007:17).

Female-headed households are being caught in a severe circle of deprivation where they are regarded as the most vulnerable group. They are often referred to as the poorest of the poor households due to lack of access to property, land and finance (World Bank, 2005:5). Poverty in female-headed households causes children in those households to suffer socio-economic challenges as well. Lack of food can be perilous since it retards the physical and mental development and thereby threatening their survival. This leads to

high number of undernourished children especially in the developing nations (UN, 2005:6).

3.3.3 Costs of poverty among women

Poverty among women imposes costs both to the individual experiencing poverty and to the economy at large. Poor women cannot fully participate in the economy and this lack of participation constitutes permanent loss of output. The following are some of the costs that accrue due to prevailing poverty levels among women:

- Lack of voice and power in relations with the state, landlords, bankers, money lenders, and employers. This lack of voice and power makes women remain low in status (Buvinic, 1998:3).
- Poor women express fear of increased poor health. They lack the access to good sanitation placing both themselves and their households at risk (Holzer, Schanzenbach, Duncan & Ludwig, 2007:8).
- Poor women face increased crime, both in public and in their homes. They are sometimes forced to commit crime in order to survive. The crimes committed will affect both the woman concerned and her community (Holzer *et al.*, 2007:8).
- Poverty also leaves women vulnerable to rudeness, humiliation, and social exclusion (Holzer *et al.*, 2007:8).
- Inability to fully participate in community leads to a breakdown of social relations (Buvinic, 1998:3).
- Material aspects like hunger and food insecurity to the children (Holzer *et al.*, 2007:8).
- The risk of the transference of poverty to the next generation (Chant, 2007:12).

3.4 FEMALE LABOUR MARKET

Theories of unemployment have been extensively covered in the previous chapter. The types and ways of measuring unemployment were also dealt with in Chapter 2. This section therefore covers existing literature on the female unemployment dilemma.

3.4.1 Female labour force participation

Raja (2009:3) asserts that the global female labour force participation is rising. Female labour force participation is the number of women willing to take steps in finding employment which leads to the feminisation of labour (Casale & Posel, 2002:1). Women made up 40% of labour force in the world in 2008 compared with 39.9% in 1998 (Raja, 2009:3). Despite this increase, there are disparities between developed and developing nations. In developed nations, women can voluntarily stay out of labour force but in developing nations, they stay out by obligation wherein they engage in household duties and unpaid family obligations (ILO, 2009:3).

South Africa has also experienced a rise in the female labour force participation. According to Casale and Posel (2002:3) this feminization is associated with rising levels of female unemployment which is initiated by a low increase in the demand for female labour in the formal sector. **Table 3.2** below shows the extent of female labour force participation in South Africa.

TABLE 3.2: FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH AFRICA: 1995 & 2003		
Year	Male	Female
1995	65.9	47.8
2003	71.9	62.8

Source: Stats SA, 1995 and 2003

Table 3.2 above shows that between 1995 and 2003, the female labour force participation rose by 15% from 47.8% to 62.8%. This indicates that the number of women entering the labour force was on an increase. In **Table 3.2** above, compared to the female labour force, the male participation also rose by only 6% during the same period.

The following reasons attempt to explain the rise in female labour participation:

- Increase in the child care arrangements. These are formed structures which are aimed at taking care of children and therefore liberating women so that they can work (Kimmel, 2006:12).

- Increase in the number of female-headed households forcing women to join the labour force (Casale & Posel, 2002:18).
- The need to upgrade living standards. The general world living standards have been rising. In order to catch up with the rising living standards, families are finding it necessary to have both couples working (Kaufman & Hotchkiss, 2000:145).
- Increased educational attainment among females. This has been necessitated by the affirmative action policies on gender equity. More women have been encouraged to further their education (Kaufman & Hotchkiss, 2000:145).
- Need to postpone child bearing and family planning practices. With the advancement in family planning, women are able to postpone childbearing to latter years (Kimmel, 2006:12).
- Need for financial independency. Women are becoming family breadwinners and hence the need for women to be financially independent (Kaufman & Hotchkiss, 2000:145).
- Decline in the male income due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Casale & Posel, 2002:17).

The above have initiated the rise in the female labour participation figures. With economic growth lagging behind the growth in the labour supply in developing nations, high unemployment has resulted.

3.4.2 Women and unemployment

Unemployment has a strong gender dimension with more women than men being unemployed (Stats SA, 2009:X; Woolard & Leibbrandt, 1999:1; Deboer & Seeborg, 1989:3). According to Raja (2009:9) the global economic crises which first emerged in the US in 2007 put more women out of jobs than men and the gender impact of unemployment is likely to be more detrimental to women than to men.

Table 3.3 below illustrates the global unemployment trend by gender from the year 1998 to 2008. According to the table, at whichever year, women were more hit hard by unemployment than men. Evetts (1994:30) attests that high female unemployment is due

to labour market discrimination which is not easy to combat through legal obligations. This makes women to constitute the majority of the world's unemployed.

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Men	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.8	6.0	6.0	5.8	5.7	5.5	5.9
Women	6.0	6.2	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.1	6.1	6.0	5.9	5.6	6.0
Total	11.4	12.1	11.9	11.8	11.8	12.1	12.1	11.8	11.6	11.1	11.9

Source: ILO, 2009:4

South Africa does as well experience a strong gender dimension in its unemployment figures, with more women than men being unemployed (Stats SA, 2009:X; Stats SA, 2003:2). The trend does not deviate much from the global lookout. With this rise in female labour force, the economy's ability to create jobs has lagged behind giving rise to the high female unemployment rate. **Table 3.4** below depicts the trend of gender unemployment, using the narrow definition in South Africa from the year 2000 to 2007.

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Female	26.5	29.4	31.1	28.4	26.6	27.8	27.0	23.3
Male	20.4	23.3	22.6	21.7	19.9	19.7	17.8	18.2
Overall/average	23.3	26.2	26.6	24.8	23.0	23.5	22.1	21.0

Source: Stats SA, 2009: 26

Table 3.4 above shows the high prevalence of unemployment among women. Throughout the period under review, more women than men were unemployed. In 2006 there was the greatest gender unemployment gap between men and women where the gap was 9.2%. According to Stats SA (2008:18) the big unemployment figure among women arise because women leave their current jobs due to pregnancy and the need to

attend to family responsibility. It further concurs that more women try to re-enter the labour market after their children have grown or re-enter after child bearing.

Although the unemployment figure for women is reflected as being higher than the one for men, ILO (2009:5) points out that the female unemployment rate is usually underestimated due to the following reasons:

- More women than men are classified as discouraged workers.
- Official unemployment figures mask the fact that women are in the informal sectors (ILO, 2009:5).

The general reasons for not working by the unemployed in South Africa are explained by **Table 3.5** below. The prevalence of unemployment among women can be caused by family responsibilities and taking care of the sick, which sometimes forces women to temporarily pull out of employment. In **Table 3.5** the reasons for not working are shown for the 402 000 economically active population in South Africa. Although some of these reasons can either be for male or female, others like pregnancy, child caring and family responsibility are specifically for women. Women tend to resign from the labour force during their fertility periods.

TABLE 3.5 REASONS FOR NOT WORKING	
Reason	Number (000)
Health	62
Caring for children	33
Pregnancy	31
Family responsibility	27
Going to school	6
Relocation	26
Dissatisfied with work	173
Retired	2
Other	42
Total	402

Source: Stats SA, 2008:19

Cultural factors also contribute to the high female unemployment rate. According to the World Bank (2005:3) these cultural factors lead to gender bias in employment access. Women also fail to penetrate the job market due to their health challenges (Okojie, 2003:12).

3.4.3 Measures to alleviate high women unemployment

High unemployment among women is a cause of concern for many governments and policy makers. The following proposals can help reduce the high unemployment among females:

- Affirmative action approach wherein the mainstream beneficiaries for the unemployment programme are women (Kimmel, 2006:11).
- Targeting entrepreneurial development programmes involving women as well as the development gender friendly technology (Clert *at el.*, 2001:69).
- Provision of child care arrangements for young working mothers (Kimmel, 2006:12; Clert *at el.*, 2001:69).
- Training of women in business skills and ensuring the access to credit (Buvinic, 1998:3).
- Provision of education and vocational training to women (Buvinic, 1998:4).

The above measures are meant to reduce the existing high female unemployment. It should however be noted that the unemployment scenario in each country may have its own unique features and therefore the adopted policies should be in line with the prevailing economic conditions.

3.4.4 Gender Pay Gap

Gender pay gap is a salary disparity between men and women doing the same job and possessing the same qualifications. The elimination of the gender pay gap is both a political and an economic concern for most governments, but according to Raja (2009:4) the speed in addressing this issue is slow and deteriorating in many countries. Women

earned an average of 15% less than men worldwide for every hour worked in 2007 (ILO, 2009:5).

The result of the gender pay gap is being attributed to motherhood and female family responsibility. Over the past years in some countries, the gender wage gap has been reportedly deteriorating where the range is reported to be falling below 15% (Kimmel, 2006:10). This pay gap usually exists between the urban dwellers and the rural workers and between men and women (Van Wyk, 2004:10).

3.4.5 Women sectors of employment

According to the World Bank (2005:4) there is an under representation of women in the formal sector of employment and a huge representation in the informal sector where there are few benefits like medical insurance, pension and life cover. The informal sector workers experience substantially high prevalence of poverty and are exposed to risky working conditions (Anon, 2007:9). The agricultural sector where most women are employed is characterised by high seasonal employment and this makes the majority of women to stay out of employment during seasons in which their labour is not needed.

According to Okojie (2003:3) women employment is also found in the lower echelons of the formal sector. This is in job levels like receptionists, clerks and tea makers which are lagging behind in salary and benefits. Due to this, women find themselves poorer than their male counterparts.

3.5 ILLITERACY AMONG WOMEN

Over the past years, there have been moves to address illiteracy among women. The UN Global Millennium Development Goals have, as one of its key priorities, the provision of basic education for all. The UN launched the literacy decade (2003-2012) campaign in 2003 with the aim of bringing literacy to all by the end of this decade (Dighe & Reddi, 2006:15). The targeted group in this campaign were women who were reportedly facing literacy challenges. Women constitute the majority of the world illiterate counting 64% of the world illiterate who can neither read nor write (UNESCO, 2006). A study conducted

by the UNDP (2002) found that illiteracy was declining globally but the rates were reportedly increasing among women in general.

Illiteracy among women has not received the priority attention from policy makers and planners of many African countries (Dighe & Reddi, 2006:15). Education, especially for girls has social and economic benefits to society. Educated women have more economic opportunities and have fewer and healthier children who are more likely to attend school, thus the key to breaking the cycle of poverty. Children with educated mothers are more than twice likely to be at school compared to those whose mothers are without formal education (UN, 2005:11).

In the Sub-Saharan Africa, the education crisis has been made worse by HIV/AIDS. In 1999 alone, 1 million children worldwide lost their teachers to the epidemic (UN, 2005:12). The situation is made worse for children whose parents fall ill with HIV/ AIDS thereby forcing them to pull out of school and work in order to take care of parents and other family responsibilities.

Women and girls are however still the minority in the education system of many countries and the problem in this regard is that the proportion of their enrolment decreases as the level of education progresses (Stats SA, 2009:51). Quantitative indicators have shown a gender gap in the access to schooling. The rise in the illiteracy levels among women brings several problems, both to the concerned individuals and to the economy at large. The following are some of the problems that arise due to women's illiteracy:

- Poor sanitation and child welfare. When women are educated and literate, evidence suggests improved family health and society sanitation (Mahammad, 1998:5).
- Low economic productivity due to foregone women output. Reports for economic activities only accounts for the recorded activities in the formal sector and the women's production which accounts for the larger quantity in the informal sector is excluded (Clert *et al.*, 2001:39).
- The rise in the illiteracy levels among women at the present times will make it impossible to eliminate it in future as the affected women will also later see no need

for their daughters to go to school. Statistics reveal that 110 million children worldwide do not attend school and two out of three of these are girls (Wanasundera, 2007:1).

- The socio-economic status of illiterate women remains low (Mahammad, 1998:5).
- Illiteracy increases gender inequality between men and women (Mahammad, 1998:5).
- Educated women are able to take action against domestic and sexual violence (Dighe & Reddi, 2006:21).

In situations where women are educated, the benefits of self esteem, empowerment, improved health, improved children's education and reduced poverty holds (Dighe & Reddie, 2006:18). The majority of the illiterate women are found in the rural areas which are wanting in resources, school facilities and qualified educators. These rural women are usually rooted in ethics, religion and culture (Mahammad, 1998:6). Even on cases where women attend literacy classes, they usually drop out of such classes due to male attitude and lack of family support (Dighe & Reddi, 2006:15).

3.5.1 Gender parity index

Gender parity index indicates the level of access to education that females have compared to the level that males have. If the index is more than one, it indicates that there are more females than males in the schooling system and vice versa. In 2007, the gender parity index in South Africa was 0.98 in the Further Education and Training centers. In the General Education and Training phase, the index was 1.15 (Department of Education, 2009:7). According to the UN (2005:15) the gender disparity index increases at higher levels of education.

3.6 WOMEN AND DISEASES

The burden of caring for the sick mostly rests on women yet they are vulnerable to some diseases that are specifically associated with women. These diseases are reproduction and birth-giving related. In developing nations, women risks death from maternal causes and it is estimated that these risks are 33 times that of developed nations (Anon, 2007:1). Women risk high child mortality and their own lives to give birth, a reason why the UN (2005:5) made the improvement of maternal health one of its development goals.

The other cause of ill health and diseases is intimate partner violence which causes premature death among women (Rob, 2004:1). The intimate partner violence causes diseases such as mental illness and high blood pressure. The causes of this violence can be attributed to human rights, culture, social and economic factors (Rob, 2004:2).

One of the major challenges facing women in developing nations is that of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. According to Simutanyi (2006:5) the prevalence of the epidemic in Botswana and South Africa is among the highest in the world. Inevitably, this devastates the impact of human capital formation. Nearly with so many years into the epidemic, persistent gender inequality and human rights violation still put women and girls at higher risks of vulnerability (UNAIDS, 2009:1). In Sub-Saharan Africa, women make up 59% of the total population living with HIV/AIDS (Ashford, 2006:3). The epidemic has had a disproportional impact on poor families and trapping many families in poverty in South Africa. The link between poverty and HIV/AIDS has been recognised in South Africa (Manona, 2005:30).

The determinants of HIV/AIDS can be divided into two sections, the micro and the macro determinants. The micro determinants are the individual's immediate environment which includes his or her personal life and encounters. These determinants only focus on the individual facing the epidemic. The macro determinant of HIV/AIDS on the other hand focuses on the bigger picture of the disease which includes aspects like poverty, governance and policies thereof (Adis ababa, 2004:8).

Women are at the risk of infection because of their weak nature. Married women remain in abusive relationships while widows suffer social and economic consequences in a form of poverty and lack after losing their husbands. This is due to the violation of property rights in most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2005:7). Women are forced to engage into sex work for food, protection and living (World Bank, 2005:7).

3.7 OTHER SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

According to Chant (2007:2) the absence of the male figure in the female-headed households exposes these households to lack of protection. Children growing up in the absence of a father may experience feelings of trauma, rejection and insecurity. They

may also be forced to take the high burdens of labour both inside and outside their homes to supplement the home income. More so, the lack of a father deprives young male children of a male role model at home (Chant, 2007:13). There is also high risk of crime in these households.

The female-headed households usually suffer high levels of low esteem because of lack of a father figure. There is a negative societal attitude towards lone mothers' households since they are considered inferior to two parent households. The children from these households may be pitied, isolated and stigmatised. The girls from these households usually face premature sexual advances from men since there is no father to defend them (Chant, 2007:2).

3.8 SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

The hardships that female-headed households face bring about several unanswered questions on their survival means. The scenario that has been painted on the socio-economic challenges that women, especially those heading households face brings more concerns into how these households survive. In many cases, women are the primary sources of family income. Income comes from occupations which includes paid domestic work as well as work traditionally considered men's work only, such as informal industrial jobs. Below are some of the strategies that are being employed by some women to ensure survival.

3.8.1 Social networking

Women survive on social networking especially in the context of poverty (Schmidt, 2005:23; Kritzinger, 2003). The networking is in friends, relatives and the community in general. Through this networking, they can get child care arrangements. Such networks also provide security for the women who also get protection from it. In cases where they want to seek for employment, children are either sent to grandparents or older daughters take the responsibility of care-giving (Kritzinger, 2003:3).

Social networking has been accepted as policy throughout the developed and developing nations. There is agreement that social networking is important for poverty prevention as

it reduces the burden of the poor and allows them to seek employment (Triegaard, 2005:5). These forms of social networking are key to women's survival, especially in rural setups. Networks were developed in response to the inaccessibility of formal social security systems that help reduce the economic and social hardships women face. They are prevalent in rural areas. These systems however, have a tendency to exploit women for the benefit of other members of the society, with no guarantee of women's own social protection (Kasente, 2000:39).

Social networking tends to depend heavily on women's reproductive work of caring for children, the sick and other members of the household. This is a role which is loaded with more responsibility as social and economic reform policies opt for increased productivity. For example, with increasing numbers of orphaned and vulnerable children as a result of HIV/AIDS, the burden of care has fallen more on women as community and home-based care-givers (Triegaard, 2005:7). A study by Lingam (1994:3) showed that women prefer to sustain relationships with brothers so that they can fall back when in need.

3.8.2 Agriculture

Buvinic (1998:7) cites female-headed households, especially widows as being prone to survive on subsistence agriculture and that the majority of agricultural workers are women. In some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, subsistence through land is restricted by inheritance systems and discriminatory reforms where at the death of the husband widows are denied the rights to their family land. Women also depend on the fruit sector for a livelihood (Bradshaw, 1995:4).

In South Africa, agriculture is viewed as a buffer against poverty, particularly in rural homesteads. Due to the seasonal nature of the agricultural products, women are out of employment for the greater part of the seasons. Most of the food generally in Africa is grown mostly by women but they are only considered as gardeners rather than farmers resulting in most of the aid agencies in the agricultural sector being given to men. Women also face restricted access to agricultural education and this confines them to low productivity farming. Agriculture has become one of the livelihood activities taken by the female-headed households especially in rural setups (Manona, 2005:22). The agricultural products are then used to gain livelihoods (Adalzadeh *et al.*, 1998:3).

In South Africa, the employment within the agricultural sector has been depressed. With the fall in the agricultural income, farmers have responded by reducing the payments of their workers. Workers still face competition from immigrating cheap labour (Sibanda, 2008:10).

3.8.3 Social security

Social security systems are means used by the governments targeted to protect specifically vulnerable persons. According to the WPSW (1997:49) social security is defined as: “A wide variety of public and private measures that provide cash or in-kind benefits or both, never developing, or being exercised only at unacceptable social cost and such person being unable to avoid poverty and secondly, in order to maintain children”.

Social security includes all government social grants like the child support grant, old-age pension, foster care grant and the disability grant. South Africa incorporated many of these elements into its social security system during the formative years (Midgley & Kaseke, 1996:103).

The South African Constitution (1996) makes provision for social assistance for people without any income. The definitions of those without income exclude the reality of the context of poverty and social exclusion. People who claim this type of assistance are therefore supposed to be classified as poor and as being without any means of income. If they are employed in the informal sector, they are excluded from the social security network and may be considered as being the working poor (Triegaard, 2005:5).

Female-headed households tend to be more heavily reliant on remittance and state transfer income (pensions and grants) than male-headed households because of their poverty status. The irregular and uncertain nature of remittance income increases the vulnerability of female-headed households. They therefore suffer huge poverty and lack in times of remittance delays (Woolard & Leibbrandt, 1999:33).

3.8.4 Informal employment

Due to low human capital which is prevalent among most women, the majority of them find it difficult to penetrate the formal sector of employment and hence they are concentrated in the high risk, low pay and meagre benefit jobs in the informal sector. The formal sector employment is becoming less labour intensive and needs fewer and better skilled workers (WPSW, 1997:4). Women are therefore forced into secretarial, receptionists and child minding jobs. Some immigrate from rural to urban centres to do domestic jobs. Females, when employed are usually at the lower tiers of the sector (Chant, 2007:14).

The informal employment sectors where most working women are found is usually characterised by long hours of work. The time with children and the opportunity for rest is restricted, depriving women of the time spent on family matters (Chant, 2007:40). The sense of desperation drives women to seek employment in such sectors. However, with the increase in female labour force participation and the emphasis on the affirmative action, more women are now seen taking well paying and challenging jobs in South Africa.

3.8.5 Other survival means

In many cases, where women are primary sources of family income, several countries report that they engage in all types of activities. Such activities include work, trading, operating tuck shops and migrating to other countries in search for survival means. The casual jobs usually sought by these women have limited opportunities (Myanmar, 2010:1).

Female-headed households sometimes survive on skipping meals. During times of shortage women may be left with virtually nothing to eat at all. Women admit that when food become scarce, they only eat once a day to allow their children to eat three times a day. This meal skipping arrangement allows them to save for the future and the available resources will then stay longer.

According to Myanmar (2010:1) the majority of the female-headed households are continuously being trapped in the debt trap. They live in unsatisfactory shelter which is also insecure for habitation and for the children. Some have managed to secure houses in the government programmes. Children in these households often drop out of school and face abrupt attendances due to failure to cope with education expenses.

3.9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

More women than men are unemployed both in the world and in the South African context. Reasons for this situation lie in the low education attainment levels among women. They lack human capital and hence employers are reluctant to employ them. On cases where women are employed, they receive lower wages than men even if they do the same jobs and possess the same qualifications as their male counterparts. This is called the gender pay gap. Women earned 15% less than men worldwide in 2007. Women sometimes pull out of employment during fertility, a reason why employers are reluctant to employ them. Culturally, women usually take care of the home while the men work. This has since changed as seen by the rise in the female labour force participation which is accompanied by high female unemployment rate.

There is a need to help women get good employment by increasing child care arrangements. Some women now delay child bearing to later years in order to be employed. The issue of gender employment discrimination should also be tackled in order to ensure discrimination-free working environment.

There is high prevalence of poverty among women and this stimulates poverty in the households women lead as well. This poverty is fuelled by cultural practices, violation of inheritance rights and poor employment prospects for women. Female poverty is costly both to the individual experiencing poverty and to the society at large. Poor women lack voice, power and sanitation leading to poor health among households. These households are socially excluded from participation in the society. Poverty among women leads to food insecurity among children and risks the transference of poverty to the next household.

Women also face low levels of literacy compared to their male counterparts. This is because priority to education is usually given to boys while girls help with the household duties thereby making women lag behind in terms of education. Uneducated women bring costs to the society and these include low economic productivity, increased gender inequality and poor sanitation and child welfare. The increase in the female illiteracy rate presently will make it difficult to eliminate it in future. Uneducated women are vulnerable to domestic and sexual violence.

The burden of care for the sick is largely a woman's responsibility. Women forego their employment prospects while they take care of the sick family members. With the prevalence of HIV/AIDS women are carrying the greater burden of care compared to men and as such they forfeit their economic prospects thereby increasing the possibility of poverty amongst them. This burden of care increases the risk of HIV infection among women compared to men, a reason why researches have pointed out that more women are infected than men. The female-headed households also seem to carry more of the burden of care for the sick than households with both parents.

The survival means in the female-headed households range from social network, subsistence agriculture, gardening and informal jobs. Most of the female time is spent on unpaid activities of housekeeping which do not even form part of Gross Domestic Product. This output is therefore ignored in the national statistics.

In conclusion, women carry a larger burden of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and diseases more than their male counterparts. This exposes them to greater socio-economic challenges than men.

The next chapter seeks to analyse the data and report on the findings of the empirical research. It will provide the profile for the female-headed households in the Bophelong area. There will be extensive use of figures and charts as a way of data presentation and interpretation.

CHAPTER 4: PROFILE OF FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN BOPHELONG

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Women's contribution to development has generally lacked recognition by social planners and policy makers. National output in most nations has in the past years ignored women's unpaid domestic services (UNDP, 2005:1). Hassims (2005:7) reports that women are actively involved in informal sectors of employment and are generally considered second class citizens. Kimmel (2006:10) concurs that the hindrance to the economic quality of women is at times, motherhood.

A study by Frazoa (1993:1) found that female-headed households would want to spend more on food related expenditures but are restricted by low income levels. They are therefore heavily represented among the welfare and the food assistance programmes in many countries. Haralambos and Holborn (2000:127) argue that women have different social and economic needs due to their biological nature. The lack of means makes them more susceptible to more economic hardships compared to their male counterparts.

According to World Bank (2005:3) households led by women are among the poorest in society. This is caused by their multiple responsibility of being family breadwinners, mothers and subordinate to men's authority in several sectors. In addition to that they are excluded from status occupations and positions of power. In South Africa, the post-apartheid government formed a non-racial women's national movement, the Federation of South African Women in an effort to recognise women's issues. This renewed impetus in addressing women issues has resulted in the formation of the Ministry for Women, Children and People with Disabilities (Hassims, 2005:7).

This chapter provides a profile of female-headed households in Bophelong. Comparison is made with the Gauteng and national figures. The aim is to provide insights into female-headed households and their circumstances in Bophelong.

4.2 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF BOPHELONG

The township of Bophelong falls under the Emfuleni Local Municipality. This municipality is one of the three local municipalities that constitute the Sedibeng District in the southern tip of the Gauteng Province. The Sedibeng District consists of the three local municipalities, namely, Emfuleni, Midvaal and Lesedi. Emfuleni Local Municipality is situated at the Western-most part of the district, which covers the entire southern area of the Gauteng province extending along a 120 kilometers axis from east to west. The Vaal River forms the southern boundary of the Emfuleni Local Municipality (Urban Econ, 2009:2).

Emfuleni Local Municipality is rich in history as it encapsulates the Anglo Boer War, heritage assets such as the Sharpeville Monument and the liberation struggle epitomised by the signing of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in 1996 in Sharpeville. After 1994, Emfuleni Local Municipality was restructured to include Black townships and former White towns. Emfuleni's settlement patterns are largely dictated by the history of the area. The evidence of San rock engravings near the Vaal River verifies that the San people originally inhabited Emfuleni (Urban Econ, 2009:2).

The Municipality is located with access to a well-maintained road network - N1 national route linking Johannesburg and Bloemfontein. This municipality has two main city/town centres, namely, Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark within its jurisdiction while Sasolburg city center is only 10 kilometers to the south. Emfuleni contains approximately six large peri-urban townships namely Bophelong, Evaton, Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Boipatong, and Tshepiso. In 2007, the municipality had a recorded population of 650 687 inhabitants. This was a growth of 1.2% from 2001 population figures for the area (Stats SA, 2007). Stats SA (2007) further states that the population for women was 336 414, of which 287 309 were Black.

4.3 FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS DEMOGRAPHICS IN BOPHELONG

In this section, the demographics for the female-headed households will be provided from different angles. As mentioned in the first chapter, the survey process was undertaken in two phases. The first phase interviews were administered to a sample of the whole of

Bophelong. The second phase of the interviews involved female-headed households identified from the overall sample.

4.3.1 Population composition

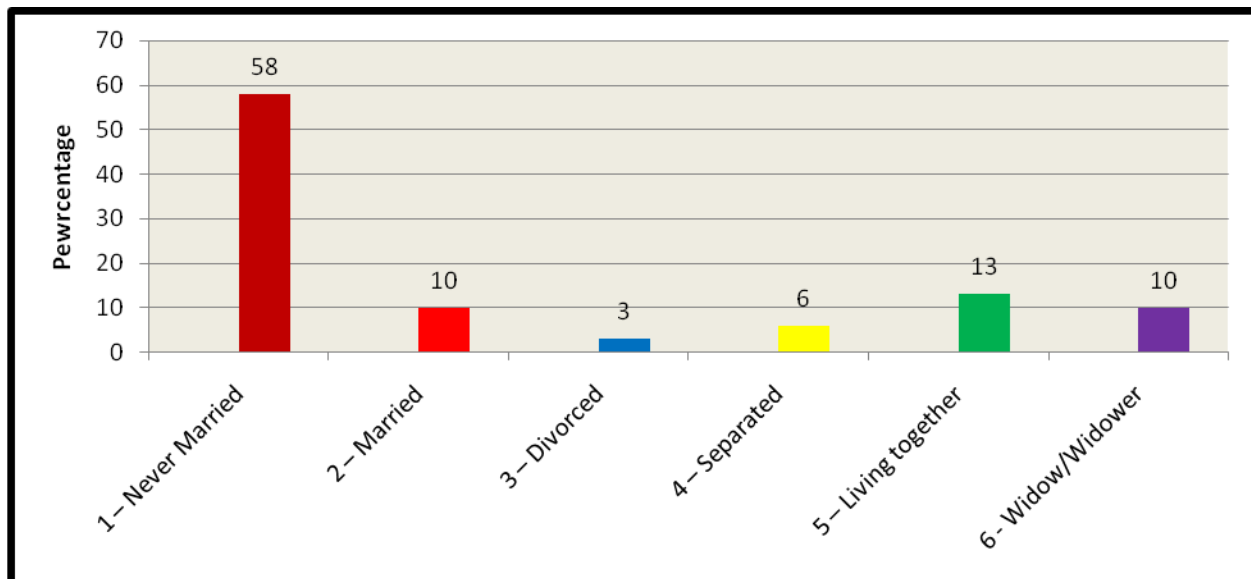
The population of Bophelong has a high female representation than men. Women constituted 56% of the total sample population. The female population in the township is increasing compared to the composition of 55.8% for women in 2003 (Slabbert, 2003:5).

A survey by Stats SA (2006:6) showed that 51% of the South African population were females. Gauteng depicts the opposite trend where the total population for men was 51.3% and 48.7% for women (Stats SA, 2006:3). Cross, Kok, Wentzel, Tlabela, Smith and Mafukidze (2005:5) attempts to explain this variation by pointing out that Gauteng is the hub of South Africa's financial and service sector with its link to the mining industry in the province. It therefore attracts male migrants from Southern Africa and other regions in South Africa.

The marital status of female-headed households in Bophelong is shown in **Figure 4.1** below. Among the households headed by females, 10% of respondents were married. The female headship a male being away for a long period and therefore the women remains heading the household in the husband's absence. In the sample for the whole population in Bophelong, 29% indicated that they were married.

A study by Driel (2009) in Bophelong noted that the number of families managed by a married couple in Bophelong was falling. The highest percentage of respondents amongst female-headed households (58%) indicated that they have never been married. this is comparison to 34% of the respondents for the whole of Bophelong, who were found to be never married. Those who were widowed and divorced in the female-headed households constitute 10% and 3% respectively.

FIGURE 4.1 MARITAL STATUS

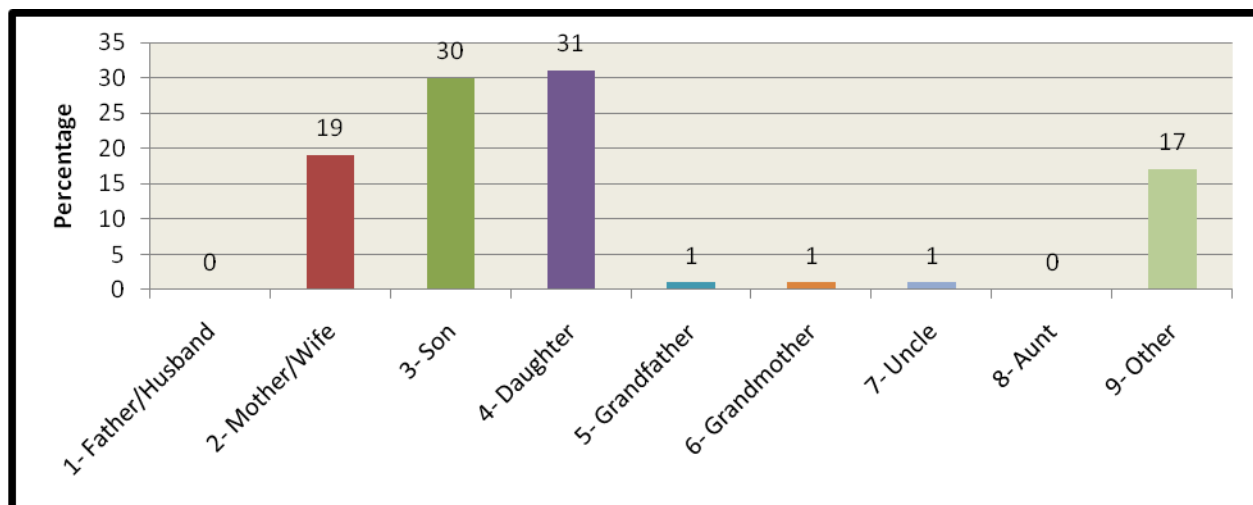


Source: Slabbert, 2009a

The composition of household members varies in the female-headed households as shown in **Figure 4.2** below.

The composition of son and daughter is 30% and 31% respectively. No father or aunt was recorded amongst female-headed households. The category of other (17%) was used to record extended family members like cousins, nieces and nephews. In the sample for the whole population in Bophelong, 29% of household members were fathers.

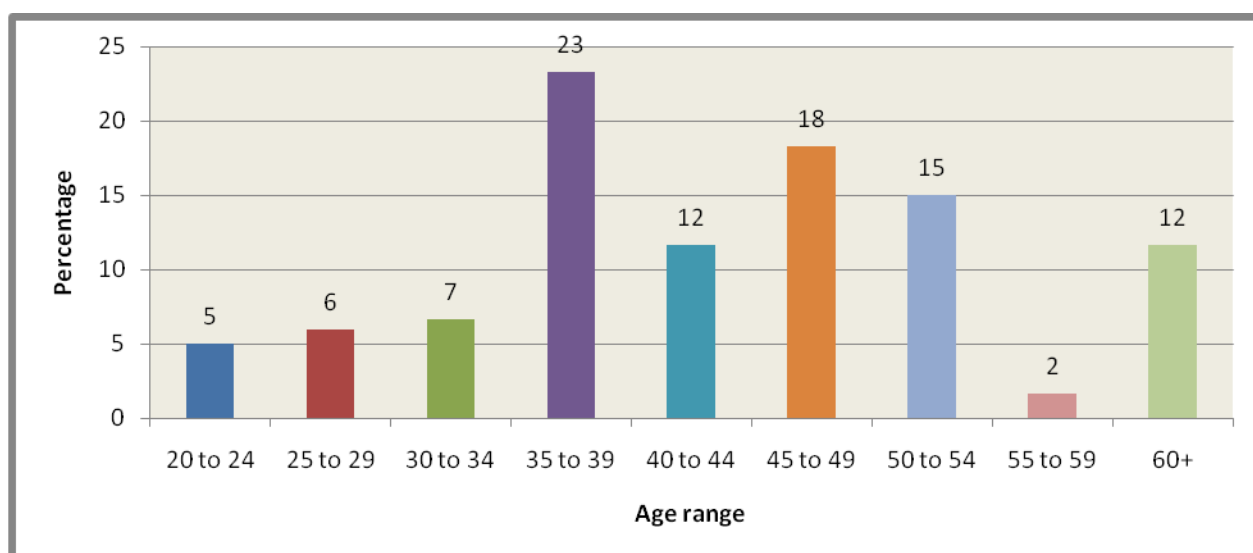
FIGURE 4.2 COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS



Source: Slabbert, 2009a

The age distribution of household heads is shown in **Figure 4.3** below. The figure shows the percentage of household heads in different age categories. The youngest head of household was aged 21. The majority of single parents (23%) were aged between 35 to 39 years. The least frequency occurred in the age category of 55 to 59 years which constituted only 2% of the sample survey. The eldest interviewed female household head was aged 79 years.

FIGURE 4.3 AGES OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS

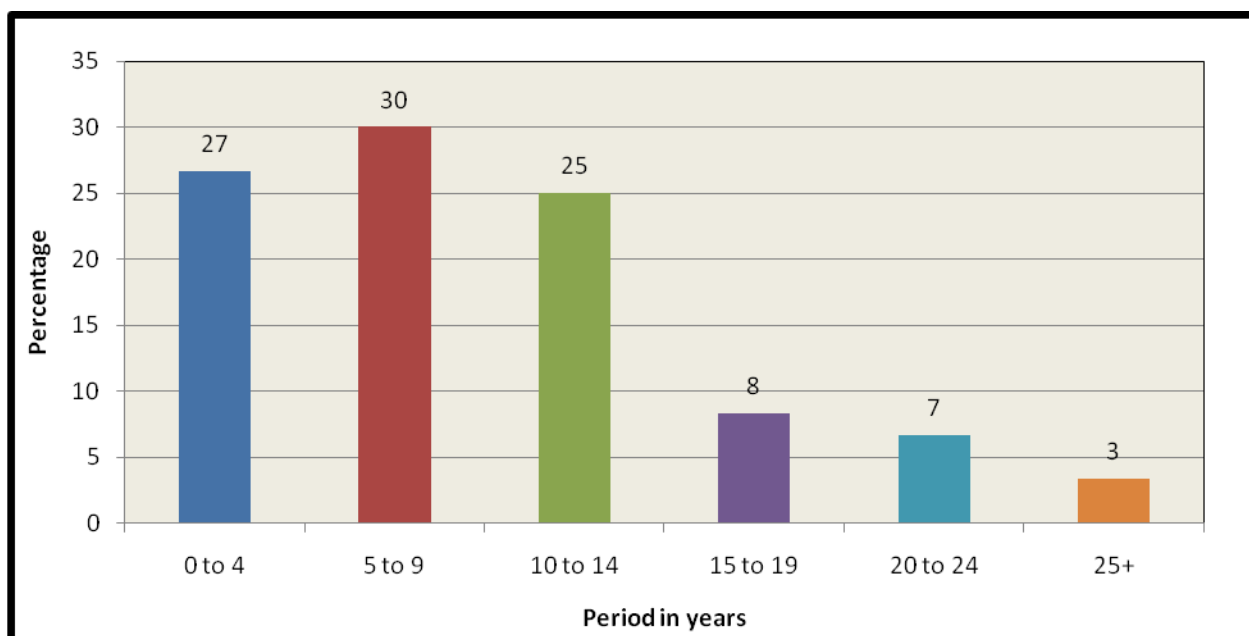


Source: Survey Data, 2010

A further analysis of the number of years these female heads have been single parents was undertaken. A total of 30% of the female household heads had been heading for 5 to 9 years. Only 3% had headed the family for more than 25 years. The majority, 57% of the households were heads only for the period less than 10 years (**Figure 4.4**).

The most recent single mother according to the survey was a 21 year old mother who had headed the household for a period of three weeks preceding the interview. She had become a head after losing her mother who previously headed the household. She cited challenges of insecurity, lack and a feeling of inferiority which compares very well to other households in the township. The increased household responsibility and the need to take care of her children, limited her employability. She proposed the need for a support structure in the township to help under privileged households like her.

FIGURE 4.4 YEARS OF FEMALE HEADSHIP



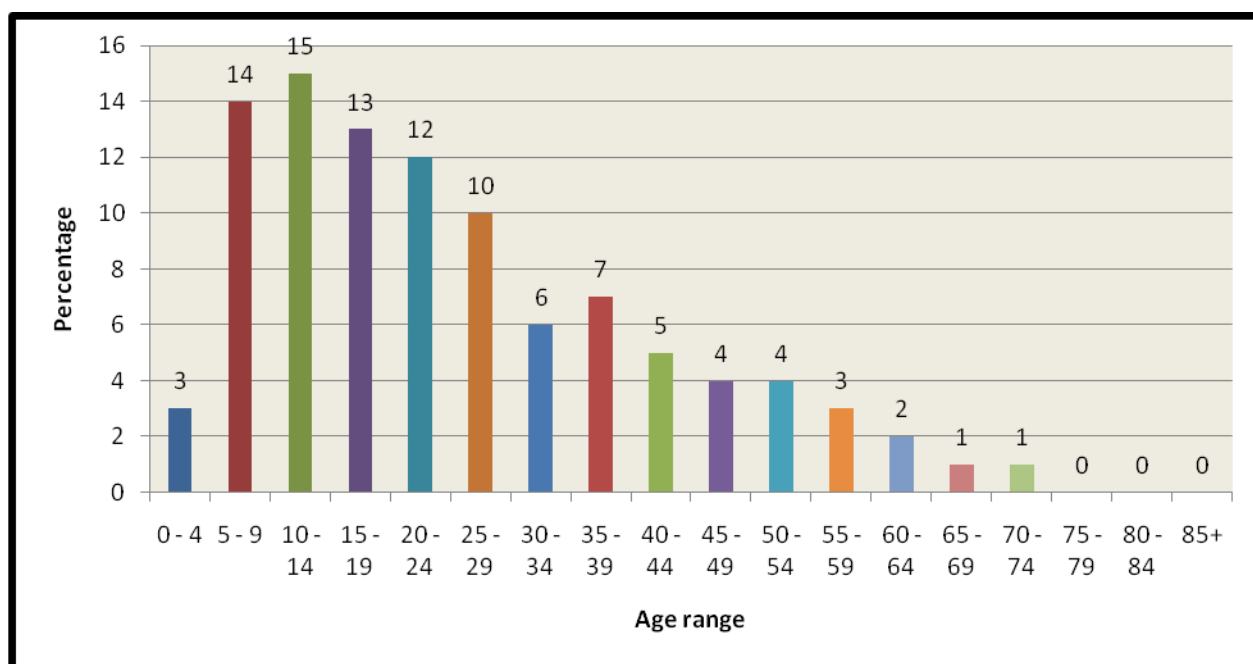
Source: Survey Data, 2010

An analysis of members of households was also undertaken. **Figure 4.5** shows the age distribution of family members amongst the female-headed households. A total of 34% of the population were either younger than 15, or older than 65 years. This is the age group within which individuals are regarded as economically non-active. In the whole of the Bophelong sample, the economically non-active population showed a lower figure of

26%. The figure for the non-active population has increased from 25% in Bophelong in 2003 (Slabbert, 2003). The dependency ratio is therefore greater in the female-headed households than in all the households in Bophelong.

In Gauteng, the dependency ratio is estimated to be 30.5% of the total population (Socio-Economic Review and Outlook for Gauteng (SERG), 2010:8). The economic active population constitutes 66% of the total population in the female-headed households in Bophelong and 69.5% for the whole of Gauteng (SERG, 2010:8). The figure for Gauteng is higher because Gauteng captures a lot of the economically active population to work in the mines.

FIGURE 4.5 POPULATION IN AGE CATERGORIES



Source: Slabbert, 2009a

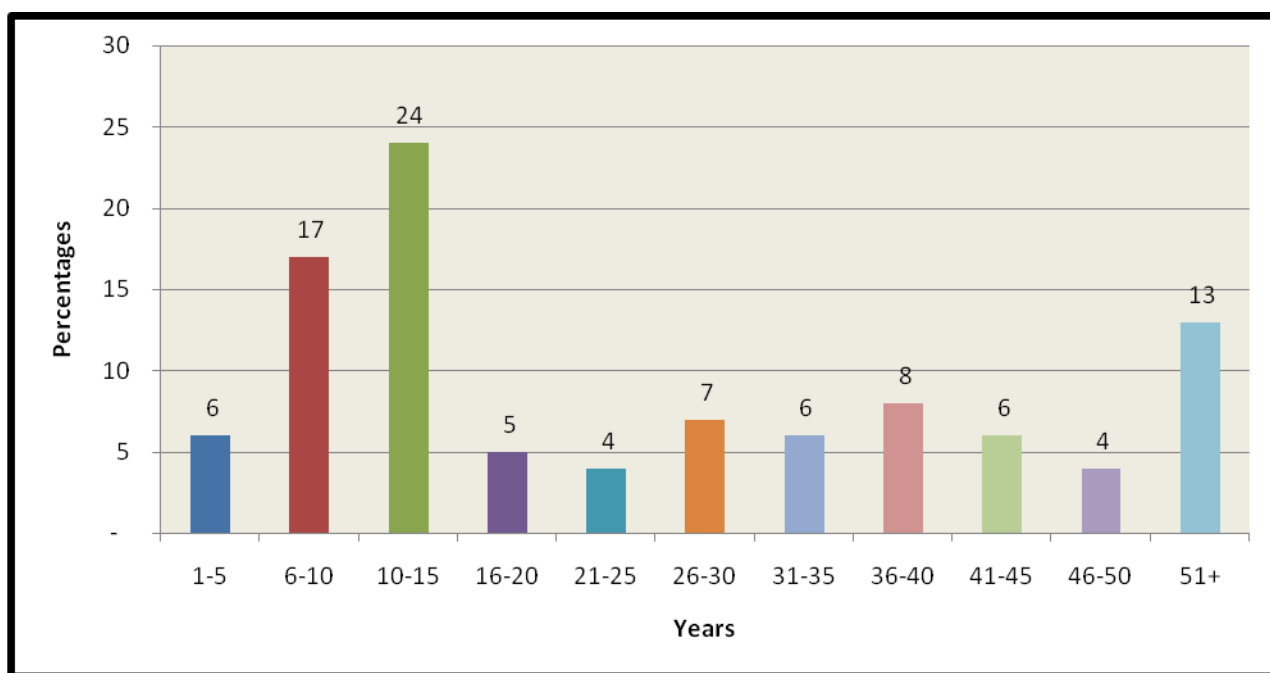
4.3.2 Migration

Figure 4.6 below shows the average years the respondents in the female-headed households have been in the Vaal Triangle area. Out of the survey population, 47% of the respondents moved into the Vaal Triangle area in the past 15 years. A total of 13% of the respondents have stayed in the Vaal Triangle for over 51 years. In the whole population sample survey noted that 7.8% of the respondents had stayed in the Vaal

Triangle area for the past 51 years. In 2003, a slightly higher percentage of 8.7 had stayed in the Vaal area for a period exceeding 51 years (Slabbert, 2003). The reason for the long stay in Vaal could be that these households are now old and there is no need to relocate. SERG (2010:10) notes that 10% of the population in Gauteng are recent immigrants, having moved into the province within the last 10 years.

Among the female-headed households, majority of the sampled population has moved into the area in the last 10-15 years. This is a period in which the area saw an increase in government provided housing, through the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) (Driel, 2007:69).

FIGURE 4.6 AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY IN THE VAAL



Source: Slabbert, 2009a

4.3.3 Average household size

A study sampled on the whole of Bophelong showed that an average household size varies from 1 to 12 for the area. Poorer households were found to be in larger households. Among the female-headed households, the average household size was 5.5 members. This is high in comparison to the household size of 4 for the Black population

group in South Africa (Stats SA, 2009:11). This could be an increased burden of responsibility to the household head.

4.3.4 Dependency ratio

Dependency ratio explains the number of non-income earners that depend on the income of an earner. Among the female-headed households in Bophelong Township, the dependency ratio was found to be 5.5. This means that a single income earner has to support an average of 5.5 people. This could be one of the causes of increased poverty levels among female-headed households (Mallick & Ravi, 2009:1). The dependency ratio for the whole of Emfuleni, to which Bophelong belongs, was calculated to be 3.41 in 2002 (Van Vurren, 2003:86). A study by Sekhampu (2004) found a dependency ratio of 3.08 for the poor in Bophelong.

4.4 EXPENDITURE PATTERNS

The expenditure pattern for the female-headed households in Bophelong township is shown below. According to **Figure 4.7** below, the bulk of the money is spent on food. This is a typical expenditure pattern for the poor where the bulk of the income is spent on food (Duclos & Gregoire, 1998:2). The food expenditure constitutes 36% of the total expenditure. This is higher than the national household's expenditure on food which is at 32,3% (Aliber, 2009:15).

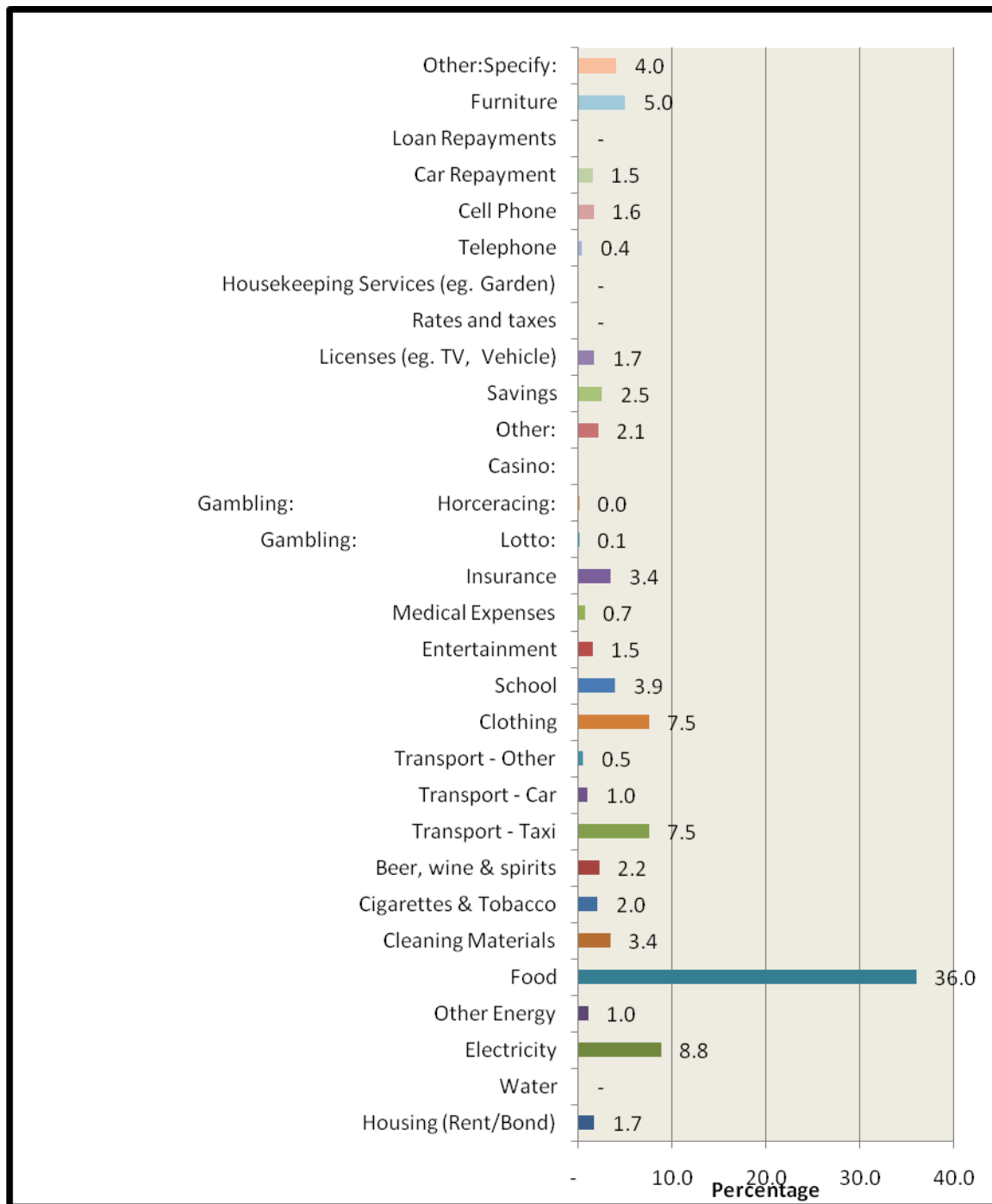
There is a small percentage spent on housing (1.7%). This can be due to the prevalence of the RDP houses in the township. According to Driel (2009:130) there has been an increase in the RDP houses in the area and as a result few people have bought their houses at market rates. Goebel, Dodson and Hill (2010:267) argue that access to better housing by most female-headed households remains a great challenge and point to the need to put in place policies to assist these women in dire situations.

Households in the township have resorted to using all forms of energy. These include electricity, coal and paraffin. A significant percentage (4.2%) of household income is spent on alcohol, despite the high poverty level in the township. Furniture acquisition constitutes 5% of the household expenditure.

No expenditure is incurred for housekeeping services. Due to destitution in these households, they prefer to do the housekeeping jobs themselves rather than paying for such activities. However, these duties are unpaid for and they are done at the expense of income generating activities in these households, therefore causing a high incidence of poverty in these households (World Bank, 2006:1). A sample on the whole population in Bophelong by Slabbert (2009a) discovered that 2% of the total expenditure is spent on housekeeping. From these results, it can be deduced that this expenditure is incurred by male-headed or two parent-headed households since no such expenditure is incurred by female-headed households.

The majority of children attend government schools where no school fees are paid. The 3.9% spent on school is spent on buying stationery and school uniforms.

FIGURE 4.7 GENERAL EXPENDITURE

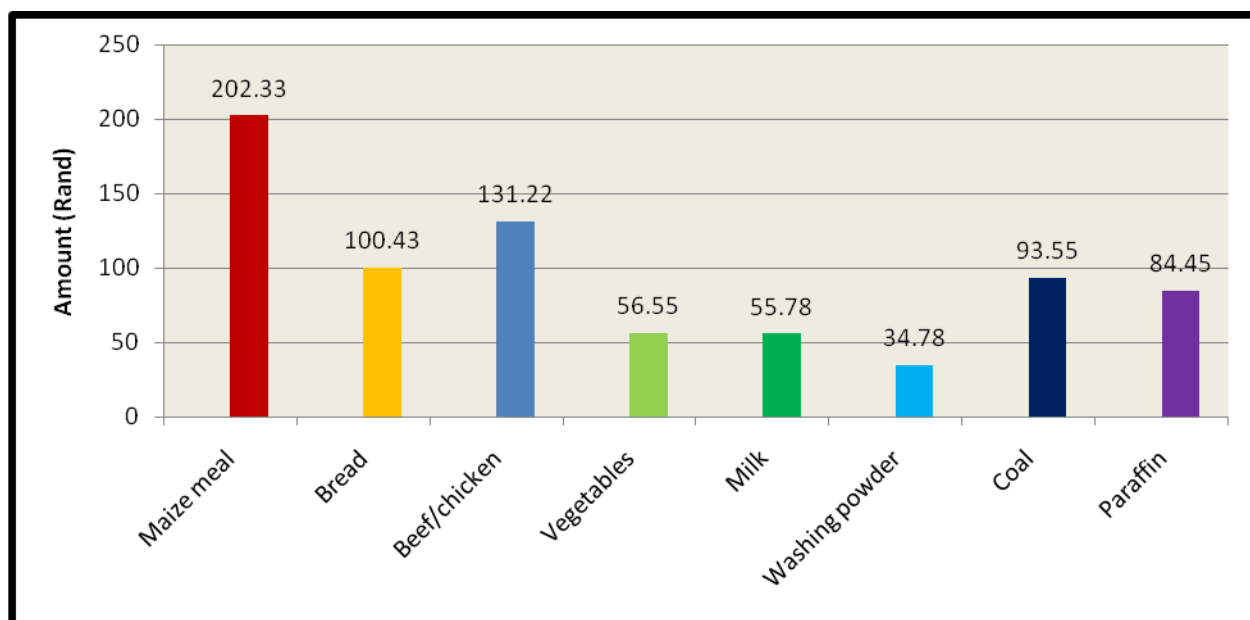


Source: Slabbert, 2009a

An analysis of expenditure on basic items is shown in **Figure 4.8** below. The largest amount is spent on maize meal (R202.33) in a month. This is more than the amount spent on meat which is at R131.22. Expenditure on bread is also among the highest

(R100.43) because bread is a basic commodity and is purchased by most households. Other basic needs that take a significant amount of expenditure are vegetables (R56.55) and milk (R55.78). With the average household income of R1780.96 and 36% is spent on food. This leaves an amount of R94.84 that is spent on other food not specified in **Figure 4.8**. These other food expenditures may be cooking oil, sugar, tea leaves and other.

FIGURE 4.8 BASIC ITEMS CONSUMPTION

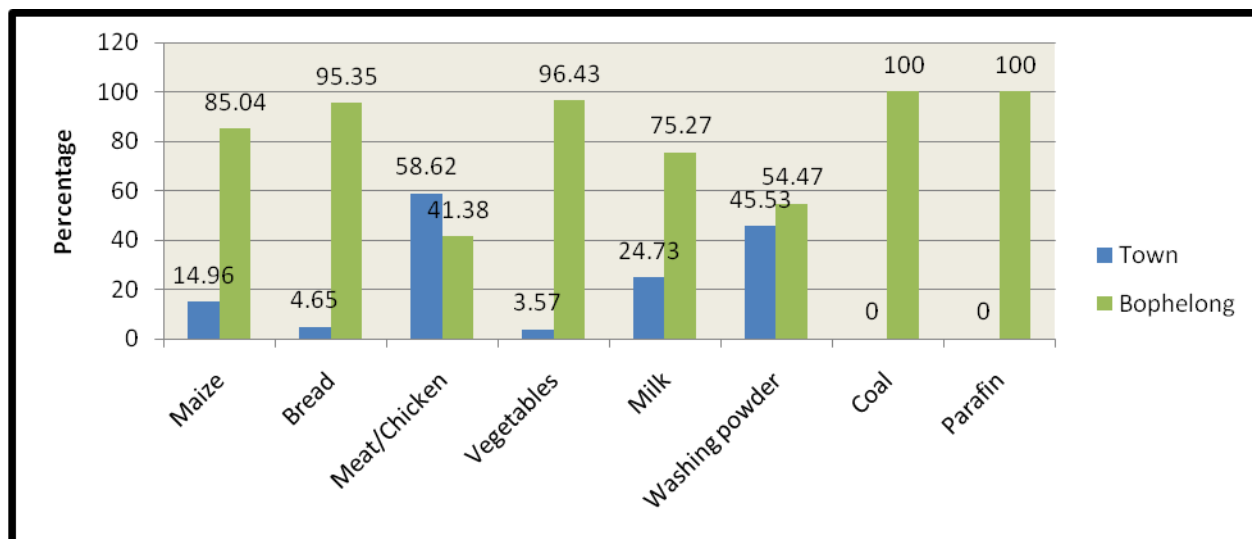


Source: Slabbert, 2009a

Figure 4.9 below indicates the place where these basic products are bought. The majority of the basic commodities are bought in the township. A total of 85.04% of maize meal is bought in the township, the rest is bought outside. Vegetables and bread are mostly bought in the township at the percentages of 96.43% and 95.35% respectively. Paraffin and coal are wholly bought in Bophelong.

With the bulk of these goods being purchased in Bophelong vast business opportunities exist in the area. The businesses should focus on sale of basic commodities.

FIGURE 4.9 PLACE WHERE COMMODITIES ARE BOUGHT



Source: Slabbert, 2009a

4.5 PROFILE OF THE POOR FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

This section analyses poverty as a social and an economic challenge in Bophelong female-headed households.

The poverty line used in this study is the Household Subsistence Level (HSL). The HSL is an estimate of the income needed by individual household to maintain a minimum level of health and decency in the short term (Potgieter, 1980:4). It is calculated at the lowest retail cost of a basket of necessities such as food, clothing, fuel, lighting, washing and cleaning materials needed by the household as a whole, together with the cost of rent and transport (Slabbert, 2009b:54). A poverty line was calculated for each household individually and then the household's own income is compared with its own individual poverty line. In accordance with this method, the poverty line for each household is calculated by allocating a monetary amount for each member of the household. This method takes age and gender into account. In **Table 4.1** below, the basic consumption for the male and female at different age categories is shown. Men and women have different consumption patterns at higher ages. The consumption patterns for children below the age of ten are the same for boys and girls. The calculation takes account of housing, transport, fuel light, washing and cleaning. The poverty line in Bophelong, using 2009 prices was calculated as listed below:

TABLE 4.1 CALCULATION OF HOUSEHOLD SUBSISTENCE LEVEL

Age (Years)	Male	Female
0 - 3	R232.25	R232.25
4 - 6	R293.40	R293.40
7 - 10	R351.74	R351.74
11 - 14	R431.10	R418.8
15 - 150	R488.52	R439.19
Household fuel, light, washing and cleaning		R300.49
Housing		R40
Transport		R50

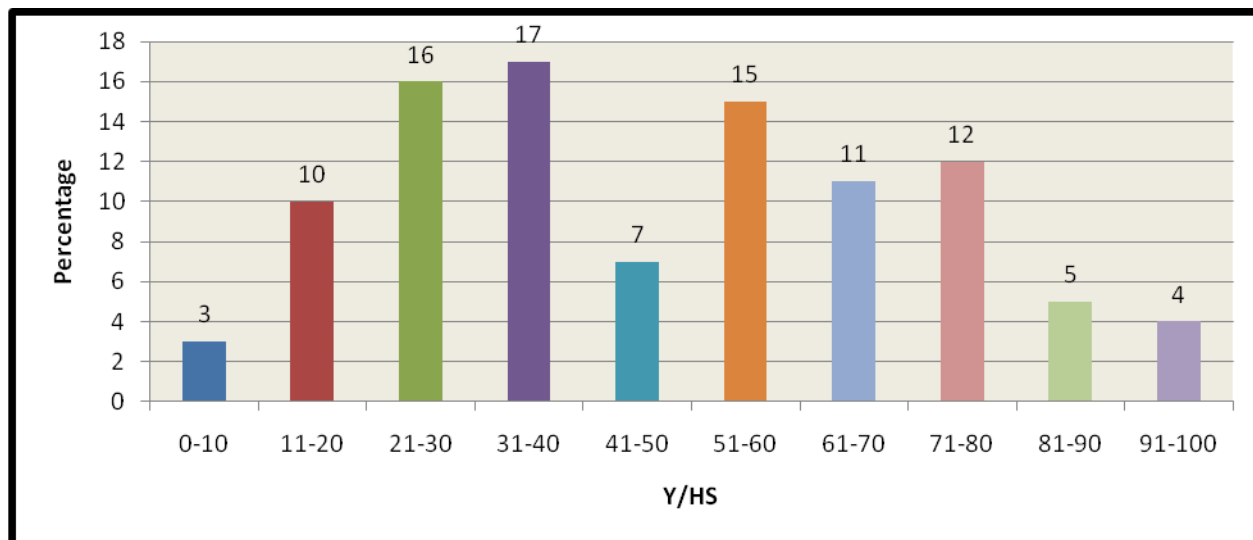
Source: Slabbert, 2009a

The HSL makes no provision for items such as medical expenses, entertainment, recreation, insurances and other expenditures (Slabbert, 2009b:54). It also does not suggest any adequate income. Using the HSL method, the head-count index for the female-headed households in Bophelong was 0.77 and the poverty gap ratio 0.53. The head-count index explains the fraction of the population that fall below their poverty line. This implies that 77% of the surveyed female-headed households in Bophelong were poor. The poverty gap ratio of 0.53 implies that generally the households need an increment of 53% of their income to move to their poverty line. A large value indicates a large gap between the poverty line and the mean income of the poor. The head-count index and the poverty gap ratio are high in the female-headed households in Bophelong compared to the general households in Bophelong. In the sample for the whole of Bophelong, the figures for head-count index and poverty gap ratio were 66.3% and 49.7% respectively. Poverty levels in Bophelong have been rising. In 2003, the head-count index was 62% and the poverty gap 48% (Slabbert, 2003).

Bophelong belongs to the Sedibeng district which had the head-count index of 60% in 2009 (SERG, 2010:77). A similar study by Driel (2009) recorded a poverty rate of 69% amongst female-headed households in Bophelong. Hassims (2005:4) asserts that in South Africa, 65% of female-headed households were poor.

Distribution of poor female-headed households below their respective poverty lines is shown in **Figure 4.10** below.

FIGURE 4.10 POOR HOUSEHOLDS SUBSISTENCE LEVEL



Source: Slabbert, 2009a

According to **Figure 4.10** above, 3% of the households have their income level in the range 0-10% of their HSL. A total of 53% of surveyed households had their income below 50% of their poverty line. The less poor households, 91-100% of their HSL were 4% of surveyed female-headed households.

In the whole population sample survey, 47.4% of the poor in Bophelong had their income level range below 50% of their HSL and 8.5% had the income range between 91%-100% of their HSL. The depth of poverty has worsened in Bophelong where in 2003, 45% of the poor lived 50% below their poverty line and 8.6% were 91-100% of their poverty lines (Slabbert, 2003). This shows that the depth of poverty is high in the female-headed households in Bophelong than in the general households in the same township.

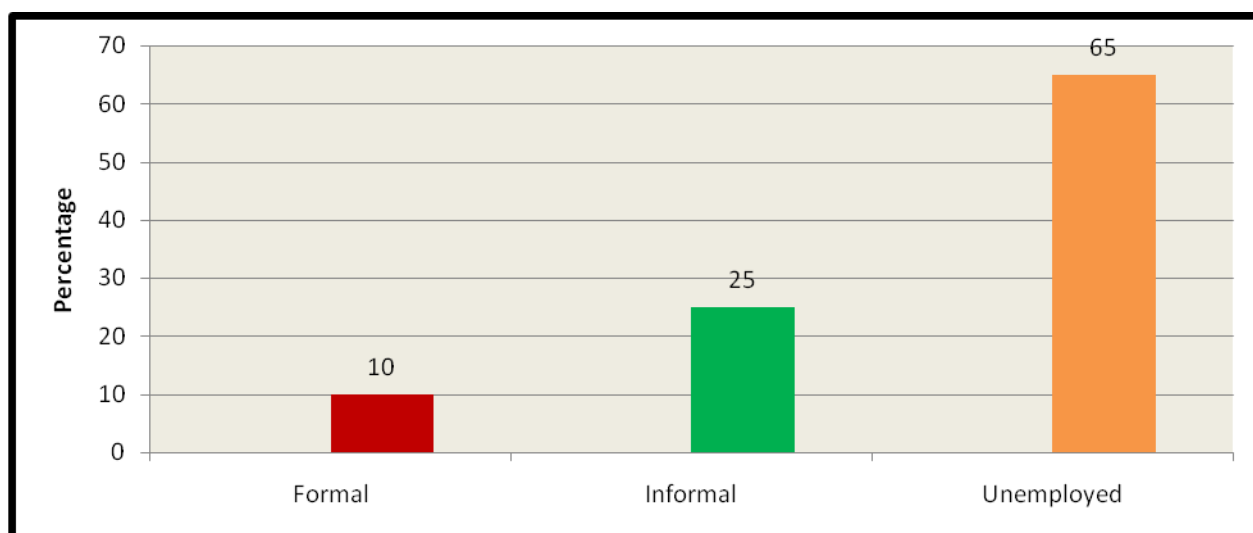
4.6 UNEMPLOYMENT PROFILE

The section below looks at the unemployment trend in female-headed households in Bophelong. The number of people unemployed includes the discouraged workers. These are the people who have stayed unemployed for a long time and have since actively stopped looking for a job. This a broad definition measure of unemployment. The

economically active population are those people within the age of 15 and 64 years who are able and willing to work (Stats SA, 2003:247).

The employment status in the female-headed households is shown in **Figure 4.11** below. In the female-headed households, the unemployment rate depicted was 65%, using the broad definition. This definition includes the discouraged workers. A small percentage (10%) was in the formal sector of employment while 25% is in the informal sector. In the sample of the whole of Bophelong 16% of the people were in formal employment, 33% in informal sector employment and 51% unemployed. The unemployment rate is high and the formal sector employment is low in the female-headed households. Those employed in the informal sector are usually faced with high insecurity, low pay and few work benefits (Defina, 2008:1). Vermillion (2005:1) noted that in the United States, 73% of employed single mothers were employed in the informal labour force where the pay is low and uncertain. The national unemployment rate for the same period using the strict definition was 23.6% (Stats SA, 2009:2).

FIGURE 4.11 EMPLOYMENT STATUS



Source: Slabbert, 2009a

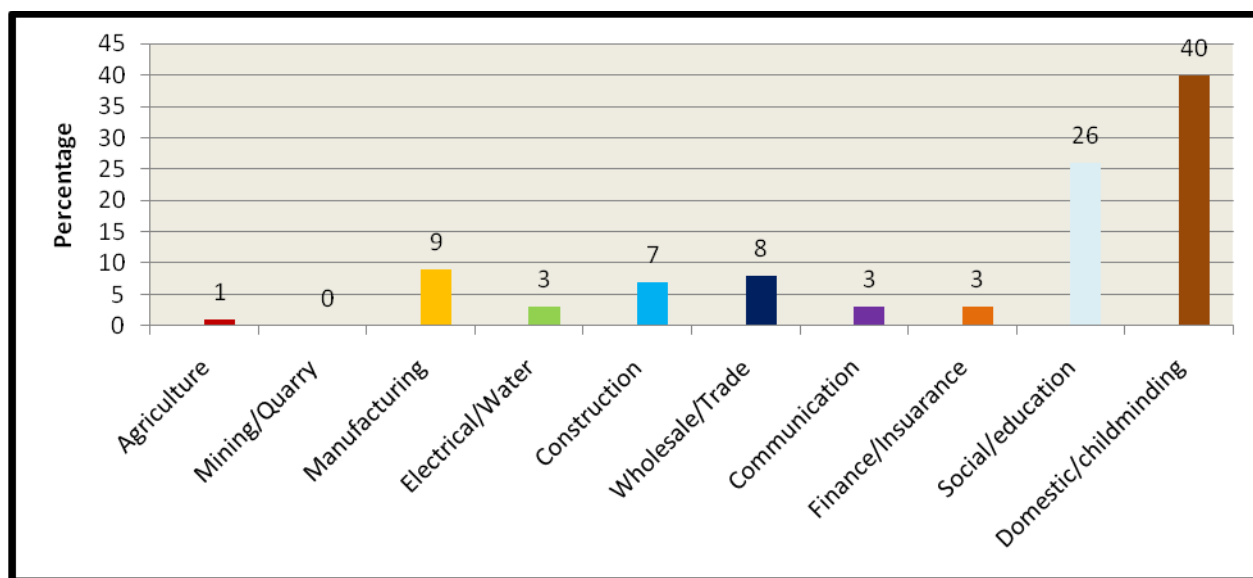
The majority of women in Bophelong are heading households without any form of consistent income. On the question of unemployment among household heads, the results show that 60% of them were unemployed. This high unemployment rate among these female heads can be due to low occupational skills levels. According to Urban

Econ (2009:33) there is gender bias in favour of men in the access to management positions in the Sedibeng District. Men were found to occupy 69% of the positions (Urban Econ, 2009:34).

The sectors of employment among the female-headed households are shown in **Figure 4.12** below. The domestic and child minding sectors had 40% of the employed. These sectors have little or no benefits like medical aid, pension cover, life cover and other benefits. They are also generally low paying jobs. Social and education takes up 26 % of the total employment. Those employed in the construction industry are 7% and do not differ much from the Gauteng employment in the same industry which was 7.6% in 2009 (SERG, 2010:38).

Buvinic (1998:7) alludes that the low skill levels among women make it more difficult for them to secure permanent employment in the formal sectors of the economy. Defina (2008:1) suggests that governments should help the informal sector employment to encourage wage redistribution and uplift the living standards of the female-headed households.

FIGURE 4.12 SECTORS OF EMPLOYMENT

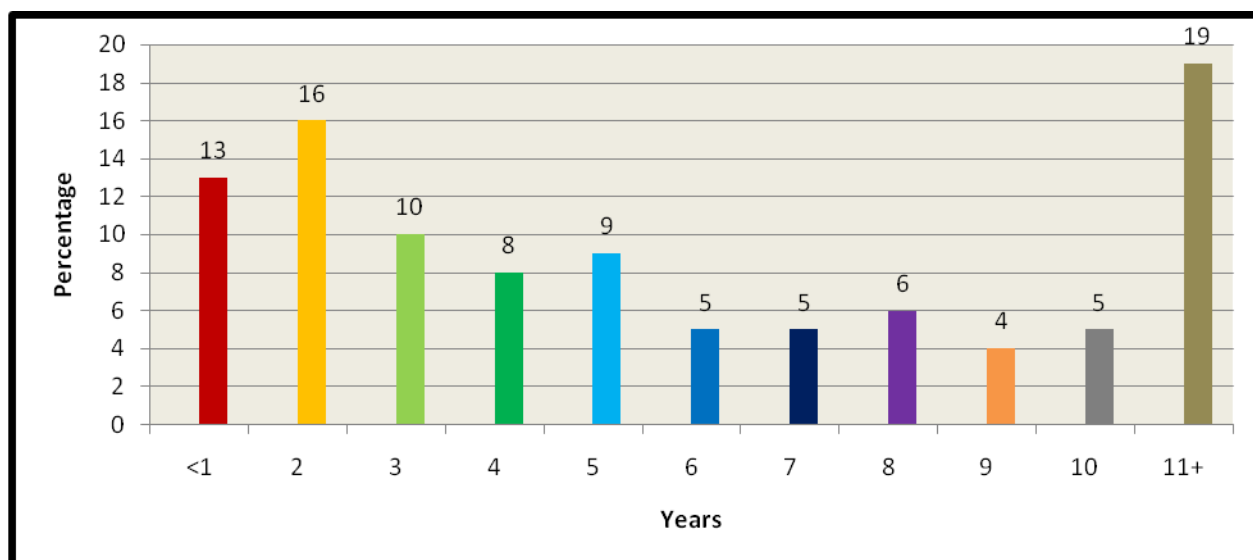


Source: Slabbert, 2009a

Figure 4.13 below shows the duration of unemployment among the unemployed in the female-headed households. Those who have been unemployed for a period more than 11 years account for 19%. The new entrants into the job market had with unemployment duration of 1-2 years constituted 29%. Those who have been unemployed for a period up to 10 years constituted 81%.

In the whole of Bophelong sample survey a slightly higher figure of 22% for those who have been unemployed for more than 11 years. The new entrants in the job market, whose unemployment duration is between 1 to 2 years was 28%. The unemployment duration generally does not differ much in the female-headed households compared to the sample of all households in Bophelong.

FIGURE 4.13 UNEMPLOYMENT DURATION



Source: Slabbert, 2009a

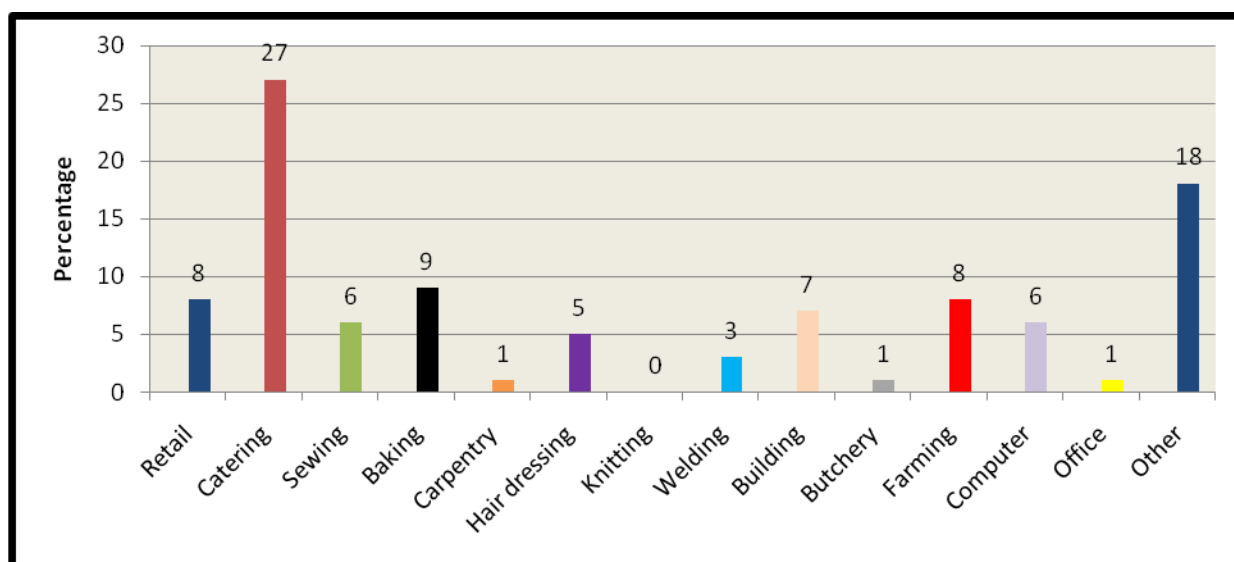
Figure 4.14 below shows the skills that the unemployed possess in the female-headed households.

The bulk of the unemployed have skills in the catering sectors (27%). Those with baking, retail and farming skills account for 9%, 8% and 8% respectively. No one had a qualification in knitting and 1% had the qualification in carpentry, butchery and office. The figure for “other” included domestic duties like child minding. In South Africa, the sectors

in which the majority of females are employed in are the retail and domestic work (Hassims, 2005:4).

The skills of the unemployed in the female-headed households do not vary much from that of the sample for the whole of Bophelong where the majority of the unemployed (25%) had a catering skill. Of these unemployed, the majority of them indicated that they were no longer actively looking for a job. A total of 40% said they now simple help with the household duties and no longer looking for a job.

FIGURE 4.14 SKILLS OF THE UNEMPLOYED

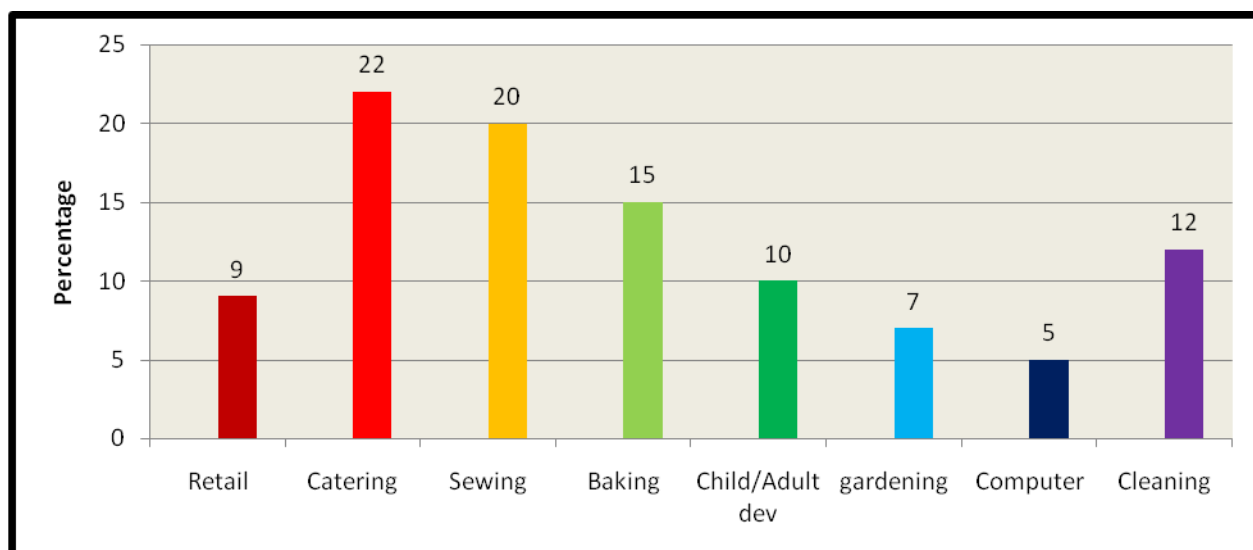


Source: Slabbert, 2009a

Figure 4.15 below shows self-sustaining activities which the unemployed prefer to be involved. Compared with the figure above, slight similarities exist. In **Figure 4.14** above, 27% of the unemployed have skills in catering and in **Figure 4.15** below, the majority, 22% prefer to be trained in the same area. In the sample for the whole Bophelong population, 27% preferred training in cooking and catering. This therefore seems to be the liked skill in Bophelong.

The other skills needed by the unemployed are sewing and baking wherein 20% and 15% needed training in these sectors respectively. The least skills required are computer skills, gardening and retail skills with 5%, 7% and 9% respectively.

FIGURE 4.15 PREFERRED TRAINING BY THE UNEMPLOYED



Source: Slabbert, 2009a

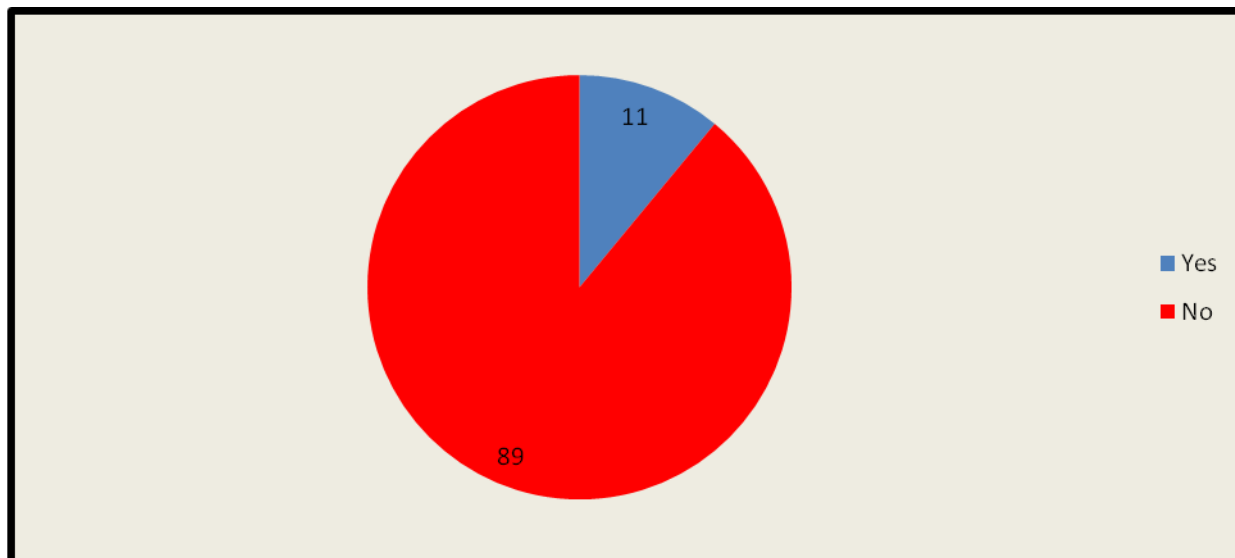
4.7 THE EDUCATION PROFILE

This section analyses the education profile in the female-headed households in Bophelong. Education is the key to development and a shield against unemployment. When people are enlightened, they become cautious of other happenings and more importantly are able to lead the lives they want (Ezewu, 1985; 3).

Figure 4.16 below shows the percentage of those who obtained matric exemption. The majority (89%) of respondents had no matric exemption and 11% had the exemption. In 2007, 15.1% of the matriculants passed with exemption in South Africa (Stats SA, 2009:28). More people (27%) had matric exemption in the sample survey for the whole of Bophelong showing that the matric attainment in the female-headed households in Bophelong is lower than the general achievement rate.

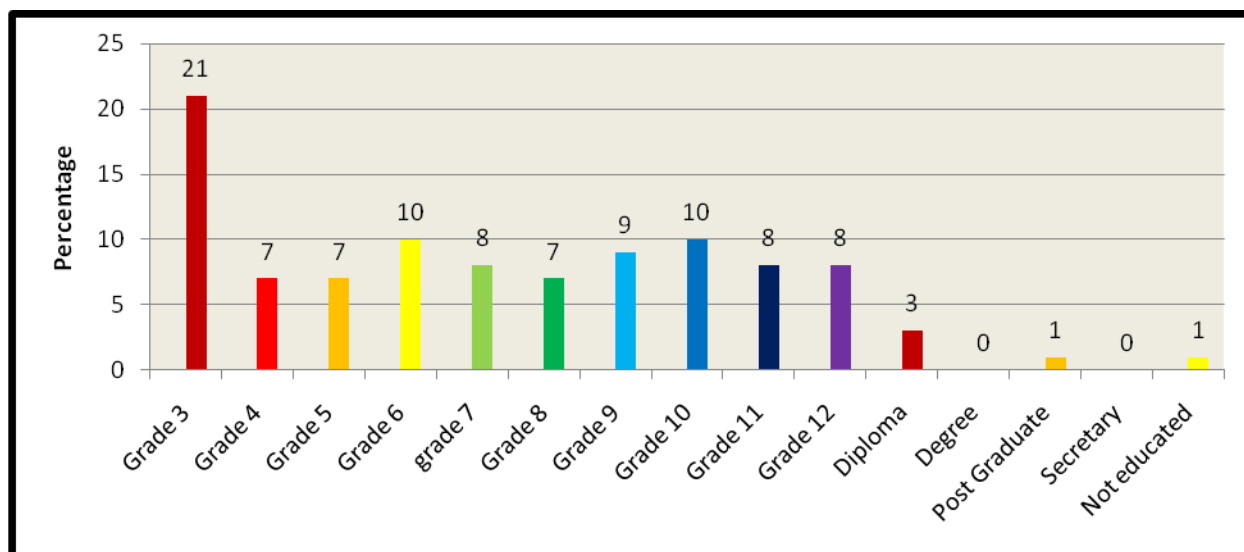
Figure 4.17 below shows the qualifications of those still in school in the female-headed households in Bophelong. A total of 95% of the population in school is attending formal schooling while 4% are in the tertiary institutions. In the tertiary institutions, 3% are doing diplomas and 1% post graduate certificates. The other 1% is not educated at all.

FIGURE 4.16 MATRIC EXEMPTION



Source: Slabbert, 2009a

FIGURE 4.17 EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS/ STILL AT SCHOOL

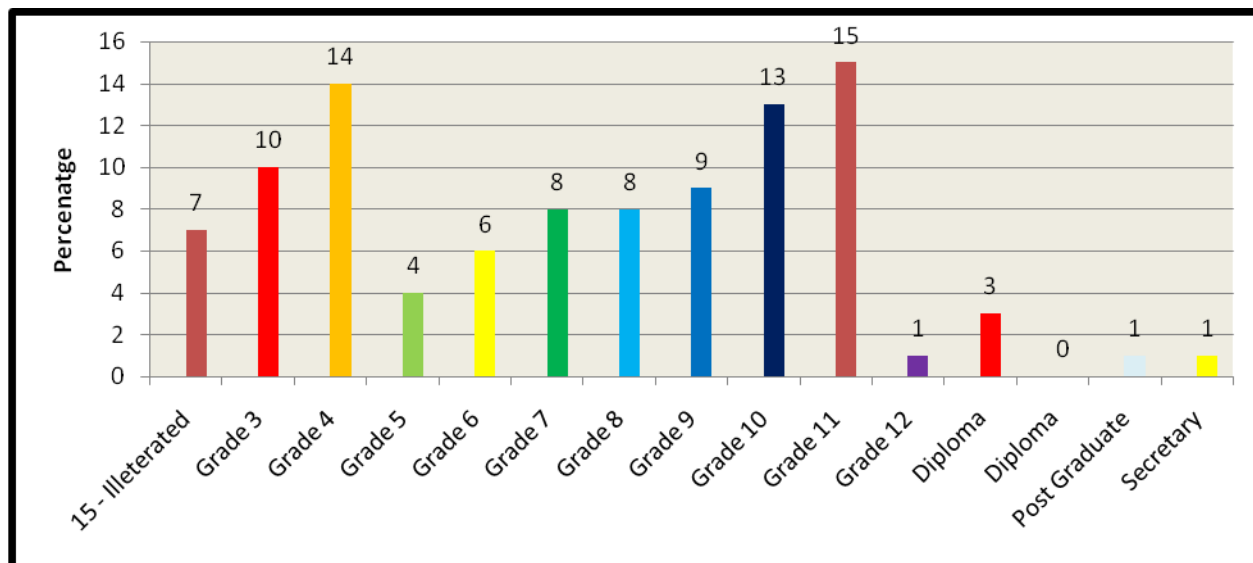


Source: Slabbert, 2009a

Figure 4.18 below shows the qualifications of those out of school. Only 5% have a post school qualification. The number of people with post matric qualification is slightly higher than that obtained in the whole of Bophelong in 2003 of 4.7% (Slabbert, 2003). There has been a slight rise in those with post matric qualification. The illiteracy level of those out of school is high in female-headed households which was 7% compared to 5% in the

sample on the whole of Bophelong. A large percentage of (87%) are literate but have no post graduate qualification.

FIGURE 4.18 QUALIFICATIONS, NOT AT SCHOOL



Source: Slabbert, 2009a

4.8 OTHER CHALLENGES

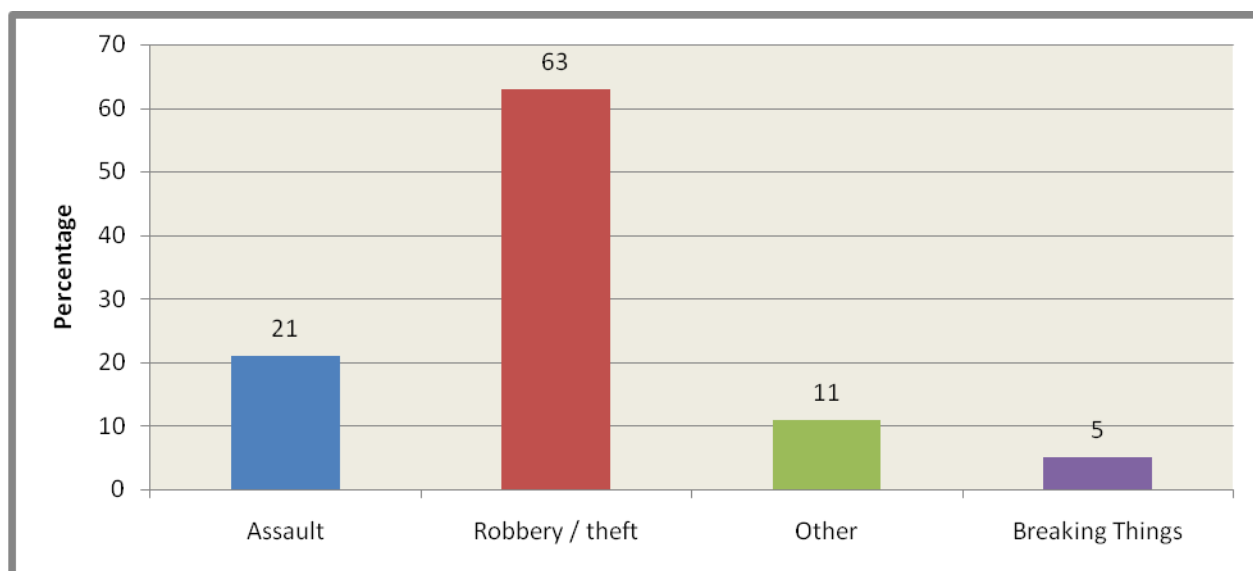
4.8.1 Crime

This section attempts to find common ground between crime and female-headed households in Bophelong. The majority of these households are poor and crime is perceived to be prevalent among the poor because of limited defensive means against crime (Chiu & Maiden, 1998:20). This is because rich neighbourhoods can employ some means to defend themselves and these include electric fences, private guards and watch dogs.

In the female-headed households in Bophelong, 75% believed that crime was a problem in the area while 25% believed it was not. These results contradict with those found in the whole of Bophelong where 86% of the households indicated that they feel safe in the township.

Figure 4.19 below shows the female-headed households that have been affected by crime in the last 12 month before the survey in 2009. Of those who have experienced crime, 63% had experienced robbery or theft, 21% experienced assault and 11% experienced other crimes and 5% experienced breaking things. According to Chant (2008:8) crime is more common among the female-headed households because of lack of protection.

FIGURE 4.19 AFFECTED BY CRIME



Source: Slabbert, 2009a

4.8.2 Burden of care

According to UN (2005:6) the burden of care is prevalent among women and more pronounced in the female-headed households. The majority of female-headed households in Bophelong believed that care for the sick is a women's responsibility.

Hassims (2005:5) asserts that the HIV/AIDS epidemic has a profound impact on women than men. It increases poverty among women where they have to curtail work and education opportunities to take care of the sick. HIV/AIDS also worsens inequality by impacting the female population the hardest (Choudhury, 2004:5). The female-headed households are not only likely to be poor but also take more orphans than the male-headed households.

The burden of caring for the sick appeared common in the female-headed households in Bophelong. In the female-headed households' survey, 85% of the female household heads believed that the burden of care for the sick is primarily a women's responsibility. A total of 22% of the interviewed heads of households had a sick relative in the family.

4.9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the whole of Bophelong, numbers of families led by married couples are 10% of the total households. A total of 58% were never married. There is therefore a high incidence of single parenting in the township.

The ages of the female household heads vary from 21 to 79 years. The youngest household head was 21 years and the oldest 79. The majority were in the age category of 35 to 39 years. A percentage of 3 had headed the households for the past 25 years. The majority (47%) had stayed in the Vaal area for the past 15 years and 13% for over 51 years.

Female-headed households in Bophelong seem to face severe socio-economic challenges compared to the whole population of Gauteng. Poverty indicators are more severe in Bophelong female-headed households where the head count index was 77% compared to 60% for Sedibeng. The HSL was used to measure poverty in the township. This took account of the ages and sex of the household members. In measuring poverty, transport, housing and cleaning were considered. The poverty gap in female-headed households was 53%. The cause of poverty in these household could be the high dependency ratio and the deprivation of the male provider. The dependency ratio was 5.5.

The majority of the household heads are unemployed in Bophelong where 60% of them are without employment. The general unemployment rate in these households is 65%. There is little employment in the formal sectors in these households where only 10% are employed in the formal economic sectors. Some, 25% are in informal sector while 65% are unemployed. Most of the unemployed (27%) are in the catering sector. There is a high figure for discouraged workers where 19% have been unemployed for a period of more than 11 years.

Low education levels prevail in the female-headed households. Only 11% of them have attained Matric exemption. The population still attending basic education is 95% while 4% are in the tertiary education and 1% illiterate.

The majority of the households in Bophelong purchase their basic commodities in the township. The proportion bought in the township for vegetables, bread and maize meal are 96.45%, 95.35% and 85.04% respectively. Paraffin and coal are wholly purchased in Bophelong. The amount in Rands spent on these commodities per month per household are R202.33, R131.22 and R100.43 for maize meal, meat and bread respectively.

There is high dependency ratio in these households. The dependency ratio was found to be 5.5 in 2009. This indicates that an average of 5.5 people depend on the income of a single person. With the low income levels in the township, this can be the major cause of poverty.

Female household headship has become an accepted norm in society today. Although women head households, in general, it is the men who are subscribed to take the household headship. The pressure for gender equality, equal access to resources and equal chances of participation are meant to bring balance between the two genders. This balance will help eliminate some of the problems faced by the households headed by females.

In view of these challenges faced by the female-headed households in Bophelong, the next chapter looks at their survival strategies based mainly on the survey conducted in September 2010. These means are also be demonstrated in figures and charts.

CHAPTER 5: SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN BOPHELONG

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Structural and political changes in South Africa have attempted to address the gender inequality in the employment, income distribution and education sectors. The need to address these inequalities arises because more women are becoming household heads and therefore need stable and consistent sources of income. Households headed by females are more vulnerable to poverty and unemployment than male-headed households (Medeiros & Costa, 2006:5; Moranda *et al.*, 2003:50). Richards (2005:5) comments that women perform 67% of the world's working hours, yet earn 10% of the world's income.

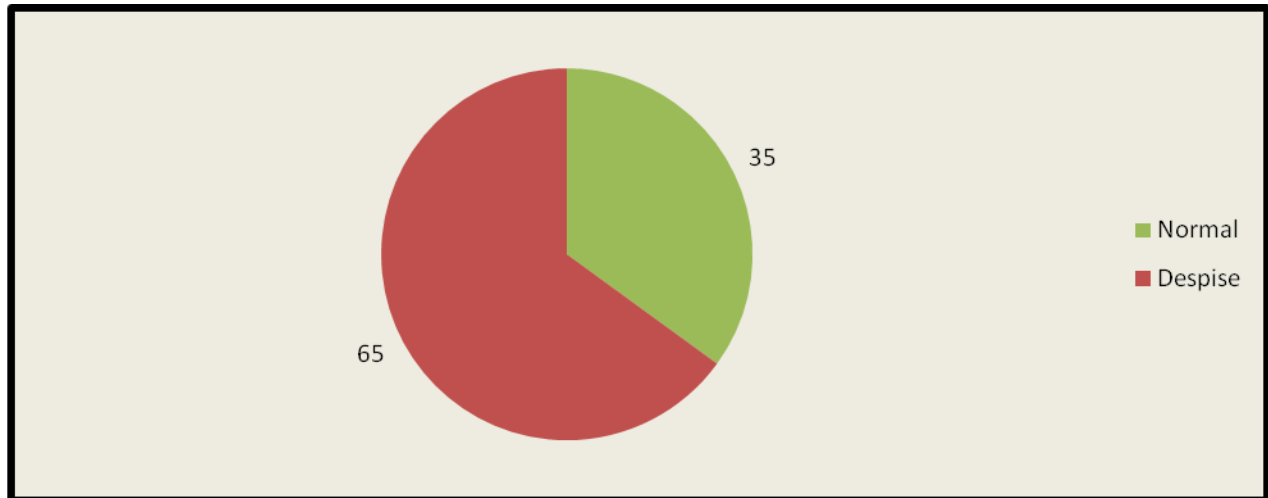
This chapter aims at highlighting survival mechanisms of female-headed households in Bophelong. Interviews were conducted in a manner that allowed these households to narrate their survival means without influencing their line of response. The main aim of the exercise was to ascertain the means these female-headed households employ to sustain themselves. The data is presented in the form of figures and charts.

5.2 PUBLIC VIEW OF FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

The majority of single parent households pointed out that society generally despises households led by single mothers. A question posed to each female head was; How do you think the society view households headed by females? There was an overall feeling that being female and heading a household has negative appeal in society. They sometimes fail to feel as full members of the society because of the way the general public views them. A total of 65% of the respondents said they fail to participate in community activities as full members. They are pitied and sometimes excluded from important community gatherings. They are then forced to rely on their neighbourhood for community updates. The other, 35% said they felt as normal households and full community members. **Figure 5.1** below show their views.

The feeling of being despised distorts the overall societal cohesion where some groups end up being created in the society. According to Clert *et al.* (2001:14) the lower group fails to perform any activities in the society and this leads to the breakdown of relations.

FIGURE 5.1 GENERAL PUBLIC VIEWS OF FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS



Source: Survey Data, 2010

Despite the feeling of being despised, the “female heads” felt they are better alone without a male partner. The majority (70%) of the respondents preferred staying alone, citing reasons of wife beating and fear of lack of children acceptance by the new partner if they are to engage in another marriage. Some, 27% wished there was a male partner in the house to help with other household responsibilities like gardening and painting the house. The minority, 3% did not want to comment on the question.

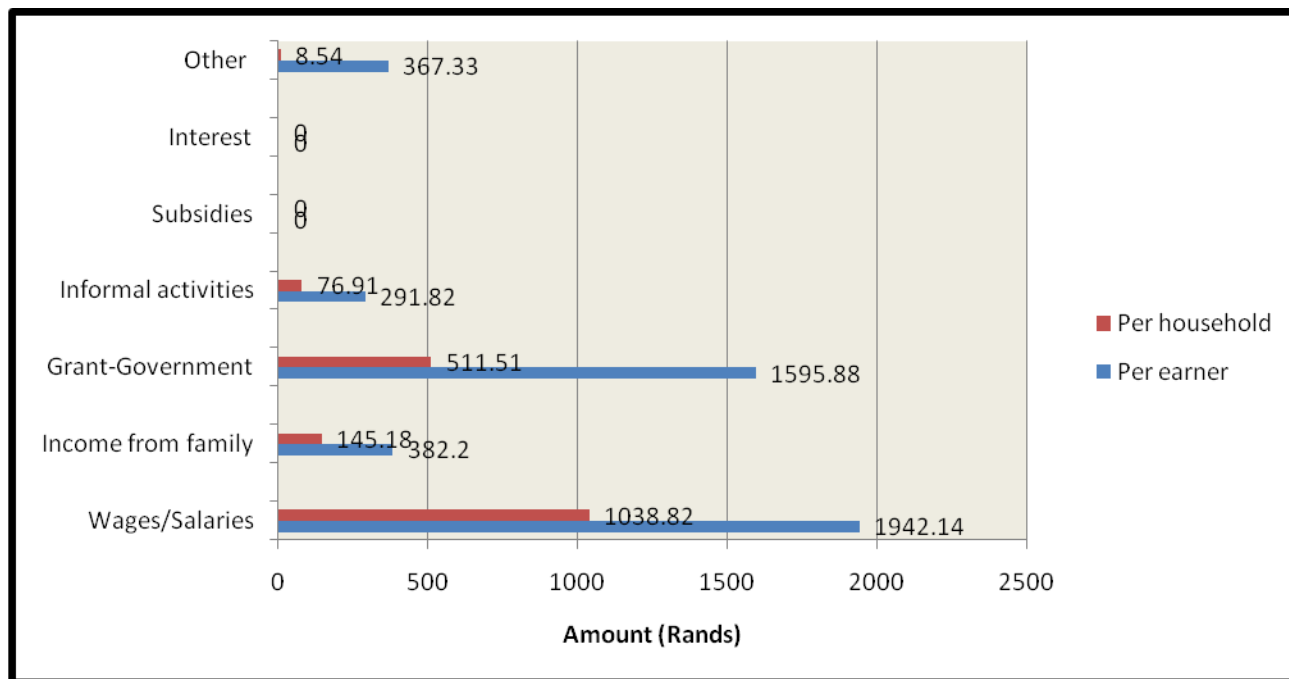
According to Stuart (1996:5) to most women, marriage is not seen as a social necessity hence females prefer to raise children on their own. They therefore prefer not to enter into permanent unions with men. Women therefore think they are better off financially and will have their full social independence if they remain single.

5.3 HOUSEHOLD INCOME SOURCES

Figure 5.2 below shows the average income earned in the female-headed households. Among the female-headed households in Bophelong, the total average household income was R1780.96. Wages and salaries make up the most contribution to household

income. The average wage per earner in the female-headed household is R1942.14 while that sampled on the whole of Bophelong was R2200.34 and average household wage was R1038.82.

FIGURE 5.2 MONTHLY INCOME SOURCES



Source: Slabbert, 2009a

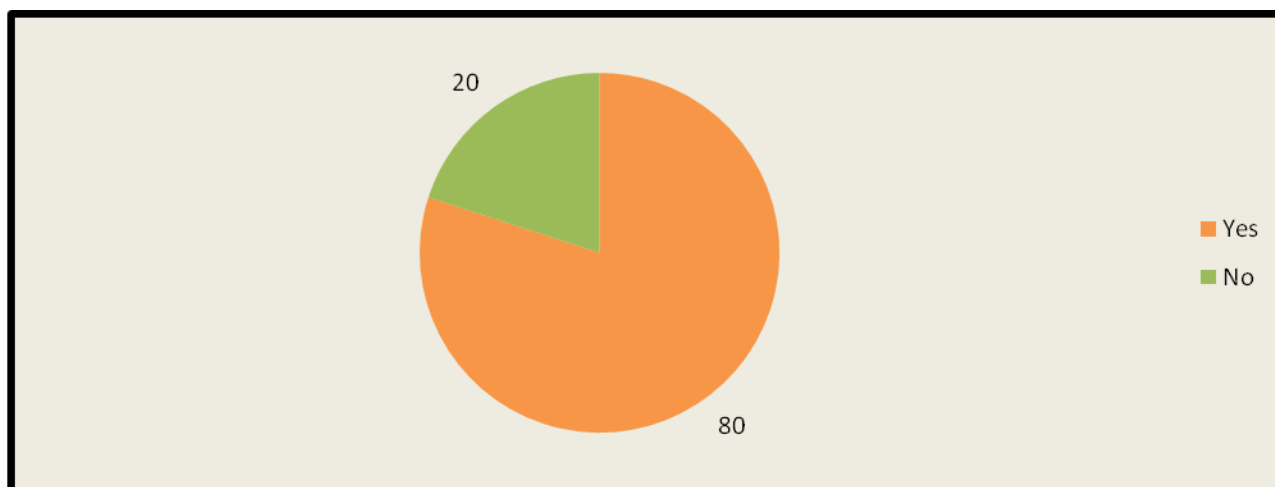
The most common grant among the female-headed households was the child support grant (CSG). Some households receive the grant for up to three children. The income from the family amounts to R145.18 per household and the income from informal activities amount to R76.91 per household.

5.4 INCOME FROM STATE WELFARE

In South Africa, the current welfare system was implemented and reformed in stages adapted from the legacy of the post-apartheid government (Sameson, Macquene & Van Niekerk, 2006:2). During the apartheid regime, the majority of the social assistance was for the White population and the underprivileged Blacks were minority recipients. The trend has since changed following the election of the post-apartheid government in 1994 where Blacks too started benefiting from the program (Sameson *et al.*, 2006:2).

Figure 5.3 below shows the female-headed households in Bophelong who received the CSG. According to the survey (2010) on female-headed households, the majority (80%) received the CSG. Of the total that received the CSG, 65% received for more than one child. The majority of those who received such the grant indicated that it was not enough and suggested that it be increased.

FIGURE 5.3 CHILD SUPPORT GRANT RECIPIENTS



Source: Survey Data, 2010

Studies by Hassim (2005:80) and Schidt (2005:89) noted that CSG recipients are largely single women with children, living solely on grant income. In many instances, it becomes the sole income of for the household's survival. This view was further supported by De Koker, De Waal and Vorster (2006) who discovered that the CSG is becoming a major survival means in the female-headed households. This also applied to the female-headed households in Bophelong where 80% of them received the child support grant.

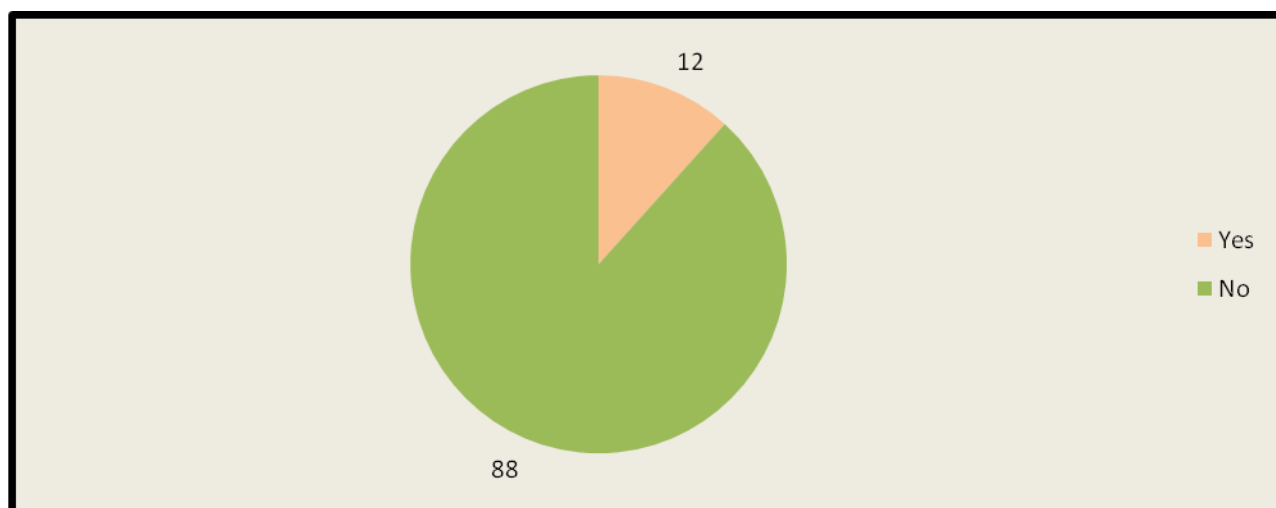
Though the CSG formed the basis of household income, the recipients were of the opinion that it increases teenage pregnancy. They cited that sometimes young girls are forced into getting more children in order to increase family income. With the increase in the number of children qualifying for the CSG, the household income will also increase. Of the total interviewed sample, 62% felt that the grant increases teenage pregnancy and only 38% thought it does not. According to Richards (2005:19) the dangers of teenage pregnancy are that it increases poverty and contributes to the poverty trap among girls.

In Bophelong's female-headed households, the grant appears to be used for the entire household needs. Though meant to cater for the needs of the child, the majority, (75%) indicated that they use the grant for the needs of the whole family. These included purchase of household electricity and grocery. The reason for this is that in some cases it was the only source of household income. The minority, (20%) of the respondents said they try to only cater for the needs of the child which included buying food for the child and paying school fees. The other, 5% refused to answer the question.

Though the CSG was being misused in the households, household heads indicated that the amount granted was not enough and therefore called for its revision. In **Figure 5.4** below, 88% of the respondents felt that the grant was not enough and 12% felt it was enough. The noted finding was that those who indicated that it was not enough were using it for the whole household use. In cases where it was only used for the child's needs, household heads indicated that it was enough.

According to Hassims (2005:19) the child support grant is also spent on clothing and lipstick. The grant is therefore not spent on the child's needs but on other household needs and the needs of the parents.

FIGURE 5.4 IS THE CHILD SUPPORT GRANT ENOUGH?

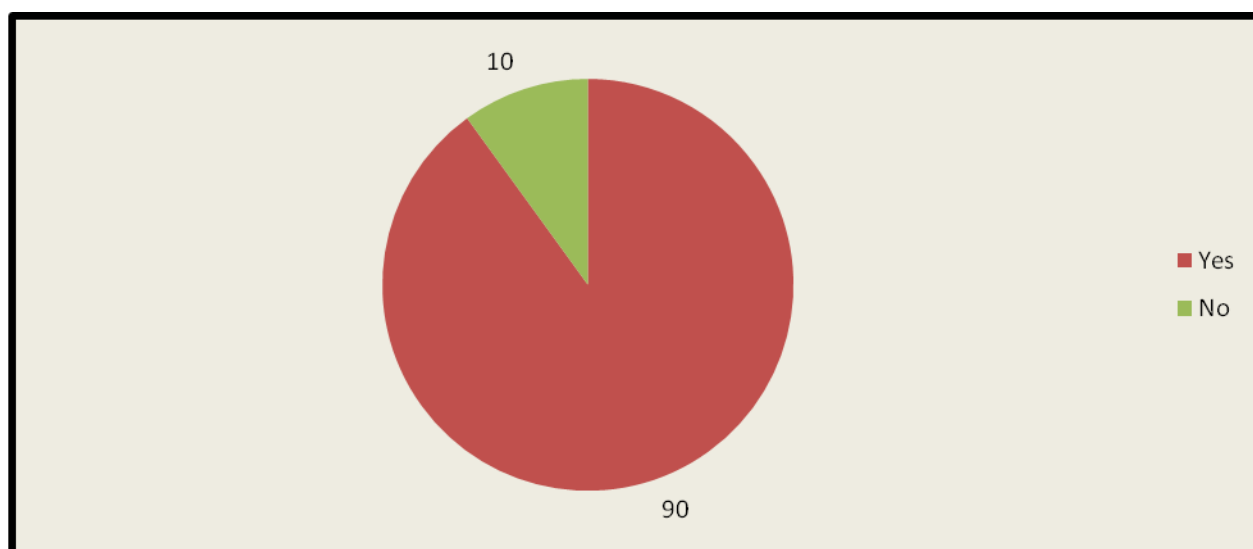


Source: Survey Data, 2010

Among the social grants that are already being administered in South Africa, the female-headed households in Bophelong felt the government should introduce another grant, the female-headed households grant. The question posed to the households was; Do you think the government should introduce the female-headed household grant? The reason for this question was that these households seemed to be surviving on other grants not specifically meant for the female-headed households. This proposed grant will be meant to cater for the poor female-headed households with no stable source of income.

The vulnerability, financial challenges and poverty these households face expose them to greater material and health risk. As indicated in **Figure 5.5** below, 90% of these households felt the government should introduce the grant to help the poor female-headed households. The reasons given for the introduction of this grant included the need to help the impoverished children. The grant would also lift the esteem of these households and help reduce poverty in these households.

FIGURE 5.5 SHOULD THE FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLD GRANT BE INTRODUCED?
(%)

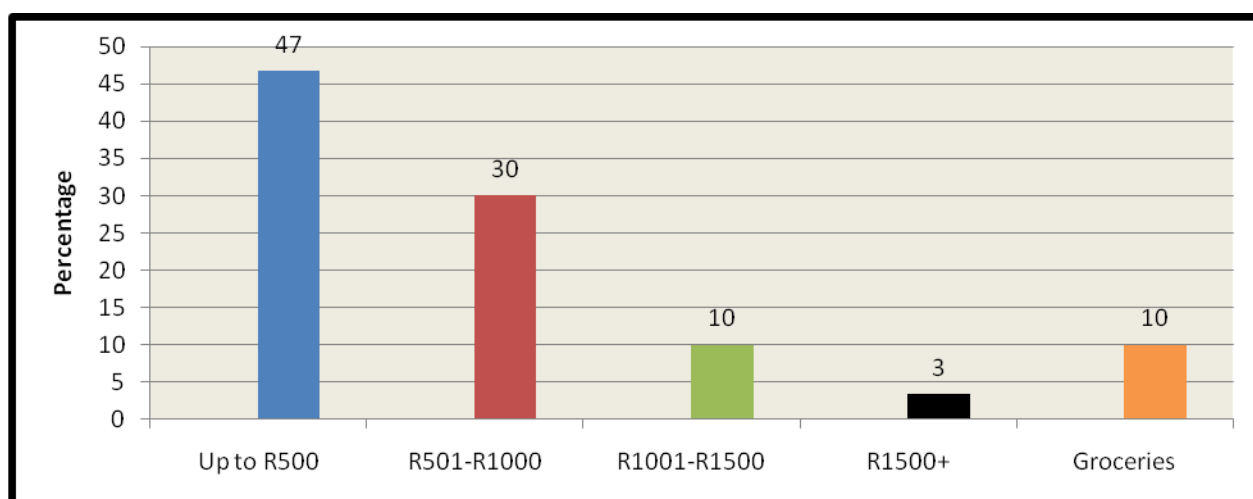


Source: Survey Data, 2010

A further question was asked on the proposed amount of this grant. **Figure 5.6** below shows the amount proposed to be the value of this female-headed household grant. The amount varied from R300 to R2500. The majority, 47% of the respondents proposed that the amount be at least R500. They pointed out that most of the female-headed

households can generate some income through informal means. The households in need of large grant are those led by old women who can no longer join the job market. The minority, 3% suggested that the grant should be above R1500. The reasons given for citing the amount above R1500 were that the grant is not meant to cater for a single individual but for the household as a whole, also considering the high dependency ratio in these households. Some of the respondents, 10% suggested that these households should be given monthly groceries since poverty and food deprivation is common among them.

FIGURE 5.6 PROPOSED AMOUNTS OF THE FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS GRANT



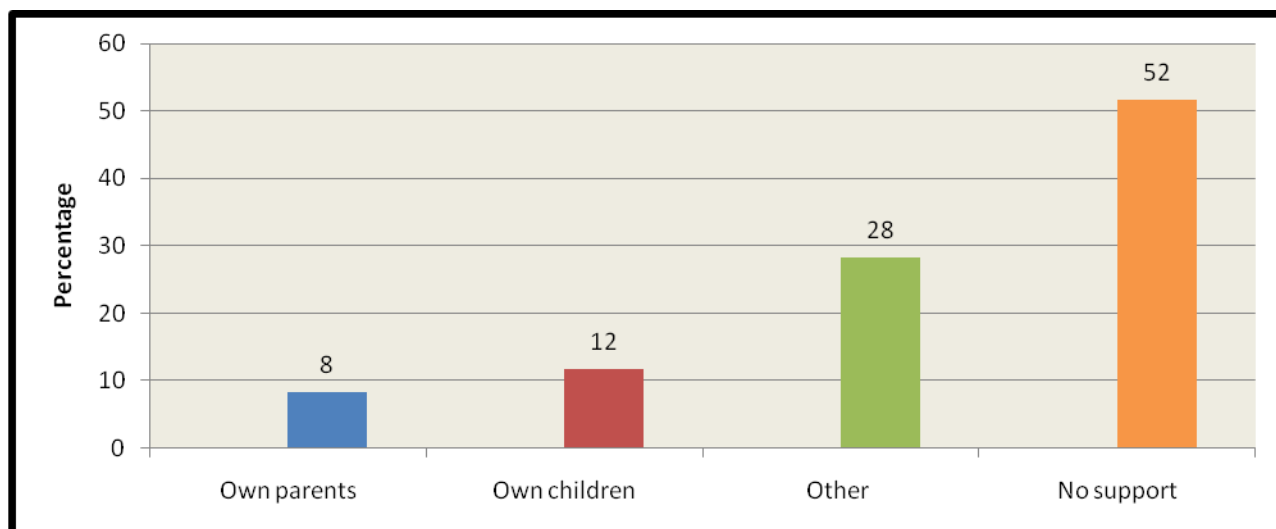
Source: Survey Data, 2010

5.5 INCOME FROM FAMILY

In **Figure 5.2** above, income from family amounts to R145.18 per household per month. This indicates the extended family support that the female-headed households receive. The breakdown of the percentage number of households who received the extended family support is shown in **Figure 5.7** below. Those who received income from extended family constituted 48% of the population and 52% did not receive extended family help. Of those who received income from extended family, 8% receive it from own parents, 12% from own children and 28% from other relatives which included cousins, aunts and uncles.

Villarreal and Shin (2008:1) maintain that female-headed households receive more extended family support than the male-headed households. They further argue that the socio-economic contribution of the individual outside the nuclear family compensates for the low income in the female-headed households. The female-headed households who received financial support from relatives were of the opinion that the male-headed households do not receive as much family support as they do. They mentioned the reasons of pride and the need for these men to maintain their male status.

FIGURE 5.7 INCOME FROM RELATIVES



Source: Survey Data, 2010

When asked on whether they feel the support they receive from the extended family is causing problems to their own family support. A total of 17% of the respondents indicated that they were aware that this was done at the expense of the givers' own family and 38% indicated that they actually deserve the support and as such feel that they are not burdening the relatives that support them. The majority, 45% indicated that they were not sure if this support was jeopardising the support of own family.

According to Defina (2008:1) the issue of older children having their own households to support their parents becomes a burden if they give more support to their parents who are female heads. This mitigates the consequence of heading their own families.

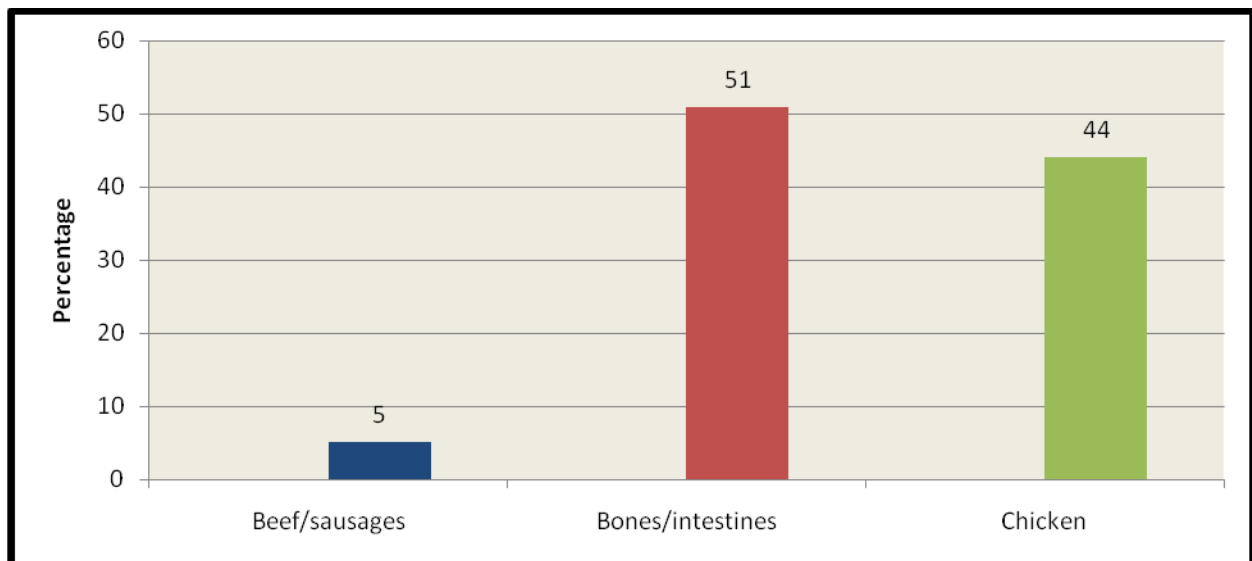
5.6 OTHER SURVIVAL MEANS

Some of the female-headed households in Bophelong have adopted the meal skipping survival strategy. A total of 32% of the households indicated that they do not usually have three meals per day. Those who skipped the meals cited the reasons of the need to save food and that it has become a habit.

In the total of those who skip meals, 75% of them skip lunch. They usually have breakfast late so that they can skip lunch. The other skipped meal is breakfast. Children usually have food at school and they then decide not to cook anything for them in the morning. No household indicated that they skip supper.

Bauer (2008:8) observed that during hard times, vulnerable poor households consume only one or two meals per day. This move is usually necessitated by the unavailability of food in the households and the need to preserve for future. This however causes the children in these households to suffer malnutrition and other food deficiency related diseases (Bae, Kim & Hong, 2008:1). The other survival strategy is the limit on the meat eaten as shown in **Figure 5.8** below.

FIGURE 5.8 TYPE OF MEAT EATEN



Source: Survey Data, 2010

Meat is expensive and as such most households involuntarily limit its consumption. The majority of the respondents (63%) eat meat at least twice a week while 37% have it at least 5 times a week. Even when meat is eaten, most of the households (51%) usually survive on low quality meat which mainly consists of bones and intestines. A small percentage of 5% often buy beef and sausages while 44% usually buy chicken.

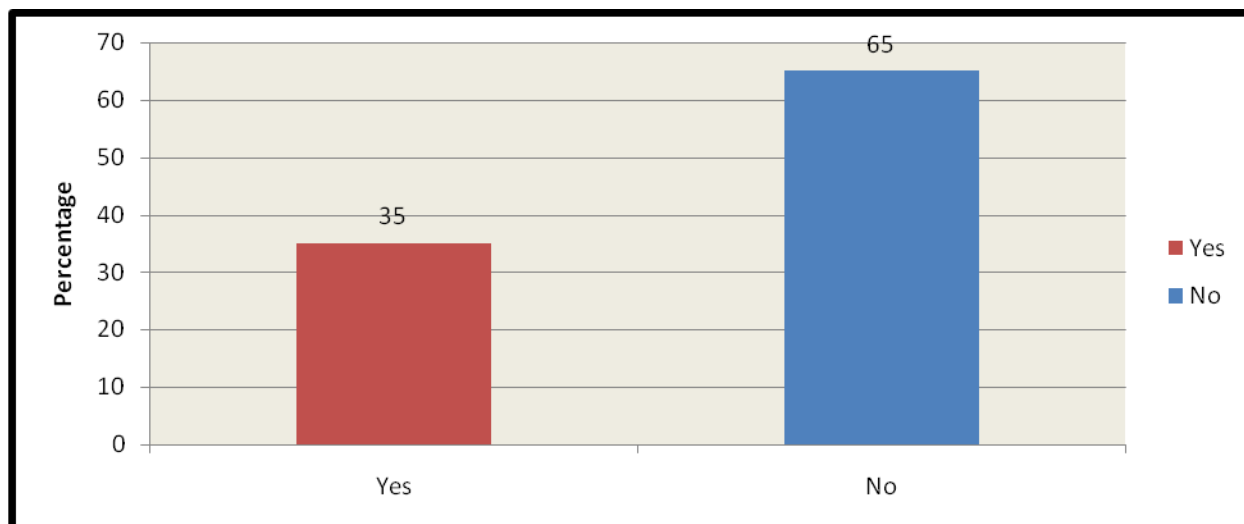
The school feeding scheme gives remedy to a number of households in Bophelong. The children in the area seem to survive on these feeding schemes. This enables households to skip breakfast and save on food. Most of the children, 78% eat at school while 22% have no feeding scheme. In addition to feeding children, this scheme encourages them to attend school and this increases the school enrolments (Dolwa, 2007:5). The attendance in large numbers of children from the female-headed households reduces illiteracy in these households thereby increasing future employment prospects of such children. In Gauteng, the number of children who benefit from subsidy in schools in a form of fees constituted 10.16% of the schools' enrolment in 2009 (SERG, 2010:50).

The household heads sometimes migrate to some other regions to gain income. In the survey, 20% of the female-headed households in Bophelong indicated that they sometimes go to other regions to work. The jobs done are usually temporary and at the end of the contract they return to their homes. Their elder children take care of the households while they are away. The jobs they normally do include child minding and domestic duties mostly carried out in Johannesburg.

Figure 5.9 below shows survival on hunting for wild fruits in the nearby areas. These fruits are obtained from the bush. They mentioned that this is the easiest meal to acquire since there is no price attached. Children join adults in the search.

A total of 35% of the sampled households sometimes survive through these wild fruits and vegetables. The (UN, 2008b:1) highlights the dangers of accidentally picking poisonous fruits when people pick the wrong plants.

FIGURE 5.9 SURVIVAL ON WILD FRUITS AND VEGETABLES



Source: Survey Data, 2010

Borrowing from neighbours is another survival means in the female-headed households. Items normally borrowed included mealie-meal, sugar and tea leaves. Some of the households mentioned that they were reluctant to borrow citing reasons of shunning away from being gossiped. In the sampled survey, 45% of the respondents indicated that they sometimes borrow from neighbours for survival. According to Dolwa (2007:6) this practice increases the social solidarity of the poor and also the sense of living together.

Some (67%) usually fail to return their borrowings. According to Sekhampu (2004:85) 30% of the poor in Bophelong borrow and never return borrowings. In the female-headed households in Bophelong, 24% indicated that they never return borrowings.

The other survival means identified in the female-headed households in Bophelong was the income from former partner. This applies only to those women who indicated that they were once married. The income was mainly in the form of child maintenance. Of those once married, 20% indicated that they still receive the income from their previous partners and 80% indicated that they do not. Previous male partners do not usually support their past female partners and hence the low percentage of those who receive such an income. Stuart (1996:1) concurs that it is unlikely that the income from the past partner can be regular for women. It usually comes with known uses like children's school fees.

Households sometimes survive on grocery or money clubs. Through such clubs they take turns to buy each other groceries. This relieves them because in a club they buy in bulk and they are able to beat inflation. In the money clubs, they take turns to give each other money. When it is one's month, all the major supplies in the house will be bought.

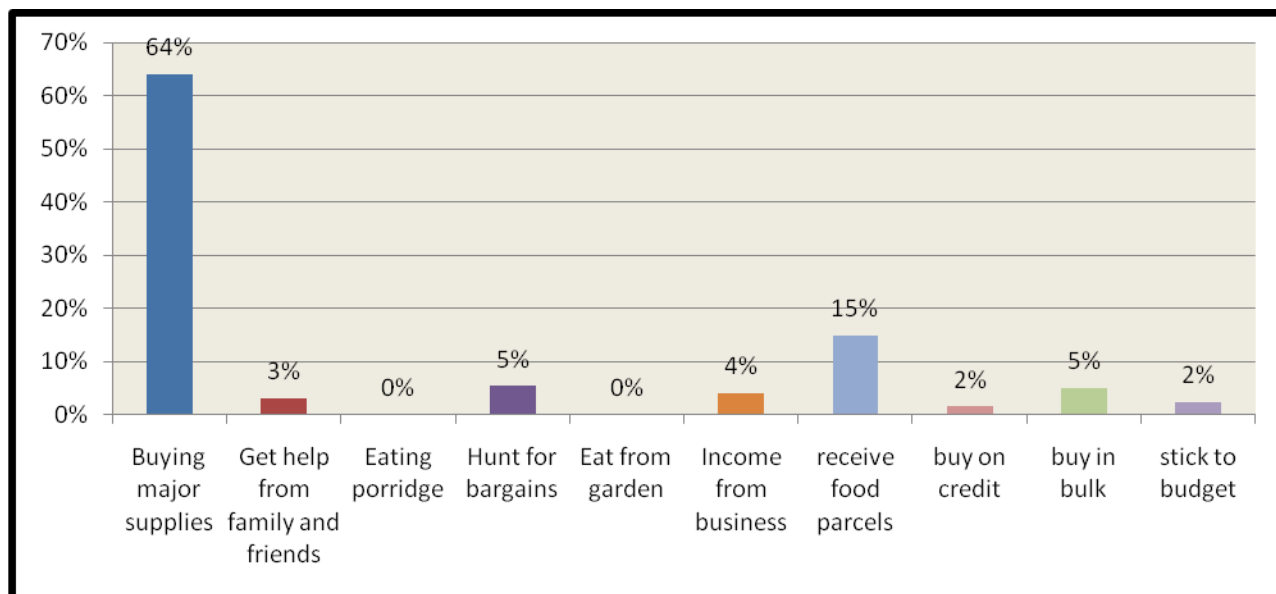
Donations are another form of survival. These donations usually come from church and sometimes neighbours. They take the form of clothing, food and in rare instances, cash. The households proposed the need for the Non Governmental Organisations to extend their donations to the township.

The majority, 75% of the female-headed households do not have any vegetable garden. They therefore buy vegetables. Of those who do not have the garden, 52% indicated that they needed some assistance to start their own gardens, as that will relieve them from buying the vegetables.

In the plight of the increasing food prices, the female-headed households in Bophelong have devised various means of coping with inflation as shown in **Figure 5.10** below.

As shown above, 86% indicated that they buy major household items to survive. This is in line with the findings by Braunstein and Heintz (2005:1) who pointed out that the poor households during inflationary times usually buy on credit and only buy the major supplies. These supplies included items like mealie-meal, sugar and soap. Those who hunt for bargains constituted 5%, and 3% indicated that they get help from relatives. None said they eat from the garden or survive on porridge.

FIGURE 5.10 SURVIVAL DURING RISING PRICES



Source: Slabbert, 2009a

5.7 ILLEGAL SURVIVAL MEANS

Few women in the township supported prostitution as a survival means. The reasons for their view rested on religion, culture and values. Older women expressed that they can even disown their children if they engage in prostitution. In the second phase survey, none indicated that they have prostituted in order to survive. They cited the dangers of dignity loss, diseases, and negative influence on the children. However, 65% agreed that it is a recognised survival means.

According to the female-headed households shoplifting can also occur, especially, at the times when the family has gone without food for some days. The items they suggested can be shoplifted are food and clothing. This shoplifting is necessitated by lack and hunger. Though they said they cannot do it themselves, 50% indicated that they would use the items if someone does it for them.

Households indicated that they were aware of people who illegally sell drugs for survival. None of the households indicated that they were involved in the activity for fear of being arrested. The adoption of illegal survival means were necessitated by the limited available survival means in these vulnerable households.

5.8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Income from wages and salaries contributes the most of the household income. The total household income was R 1780.96.36 while R 1038.82 came from wages and salaries. However, the majority of the household members were unemployed and mostly survives on government welfare. The most prevalent grant was the CSG where 80% of the households receive it. Survival on pension, borrowing and meal skipping are some of the methods employed by the female-headed households in Bophelong.

The households who indicated that they survive on pension fund constitute 22% of the sample survey and 48% survived on the income from relatives. Those who relied on the income from relatives indicated that they were aware that this was jeopardising the support of the relatives' own families but insisted that they also need to be supported because they had no other means. They gave an indication that relatives sometimes want to lend rather than give.

Some female-headed households in Bophelong skip meals in order to save on food. A total of 32% of the households have adopted the meal skipping survival strategy. The meal normally skipped is lunch where households eat breakfast late so that they can forego lunch. Some households borrow for survival and 35% sometimes search for wild fruits in the nearby areas.

The households in Bophelong propose the introduction of the female-headed households grant. The grant will specifically be targeted at the poor households led by women and therefore help reduce poverty. This grant can offer assistance either in cash or in kind. The majority (47%) proposed that this grant be at least R500 while 10% said it should be in a form of food vouchers. Some (3%) proposed a higher amount of R1500 citing reasons that the grant is not meant for one person but for the whole household.

Though they denied being involved in illegal activities like prostitution and drug selling, the female-headed households supported that as a way of surviving. Each survival means was not sufficient to cater for the entire household's basic needs, and hence a single household had to employ various means.

There is need for a continual evolving pattern and understandings of survival means in the female-headed households. Further researches should focus on the means to upgrade the survival of these poor female-headed households. These should include the linkages between agriculture, child minding and part time domestic jobs. There is a need to upgrade the women, encourage them to improve their education qualifications so as to prepare them for good employment opportunities in case they become future female household heads.

The next chapter summarises the work done in this study, brings the conclusions emanating for the study. The recommendations will also be brought forward.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this study was to investigate the socio-economic challenges and the survival strategies of the female-headed households in Bophelong. These socio-economic challenges have been found to be deep rooted among the households headed by women in Bophelong. The study also aimed at highlighting that female-headed households are more vulnerable to poverty and unemployment.

The understanding of the survival strategies of female-headed households was presented theoretically before an empirical study was conducted. This chapter summarises the work done, draw some conclusions and also make recommendations based on the study outcome.

6.2 SUMMARY

The summary will be drawn in accordance with the outline of this study.

6.2.1 Theoretical background

Poverty is not easy to define and measure. Within its understanding, there is a series of varying definitions and arguments that sometimes contradict each other. This has led to researchers, academias and any interested party to define poverty the way it fits their research focus. Different people at different places see poverty differently. Nonetheless, the definition of poverty is also critical to political and research objectives.

In this study, the relative, absolute and social exclusion means of defining poverty were explained. The relative approach defines poverty in relation to society while the absolute measure of poverty attests that the poor are those who live below their subsistence. In this definition, poverty is when one lives below a minimum accepted living standard. The poor also feel socially excluded from full participation in society. These varying definitions make poverty difficult to measure.

There are various means of measuring poverty. The measures used in this study were the HSL, headcount index, poverty gap ratio and the dependency ratio. In this study poverty is defined as the inability to attain a normal standard of living. In determining the

poverty rate, HSL was used. This is an estimate of the income needed by an individual household to maintain a minimum level of health and decency. The basket for calculating the HSL includes food, clothing, fuel, lighting washing, cleaning, rent and transport. Poverty gap ratio was used to measure the individual household's income shortfall. Head count index measures all the individual households falling below their HSL. The poverty gap is used in conjunction with the headcount index in order to account for the degree of poverty. Poverty gap usually measures the average shortfall of the incomes of the poor from their poverty line, while the poverty gap ratio measures the extent of the shortfalls of income below the poverty line. Dependency ratio is calculated by dividing the total number of non-income earners by the total number of earners.

Inequality was also studied in this research. Poverty and inequality are different although they are related. Even though poverty and inequality are related, the one does not assume the other. Measures of inequality are useful in the evaluation of relative poverty. Inequality is measured by the Lorenz curve which shows the distribution of income earned over a given period in relation to its recipients. The Gini-coefficient measures the degree of inequality based on the areas on the Lorenz curve.

Unemployment is a multi-dimensional concept with two types of definitions, the broad and the narrow definition. The broad definition reports a bigger figure than the narrow definition because it includes the discouraged workers. The problems associated with defining unemployment include the issue of underemployment where people end up taking jobs below their skills level.

There are different ways of measuring unemployment. The economic policies used to fight unemployment lie on the resultant figure obtained. Unemployment is an important indicator of the health of an economy therefore governments of countries have elaborate means of measuring it. The most common of these measures are census, sampling, registration and the differences methods. Each method yields a different figure.

The unemployed suffer low esteem, discouragement and lack of confidence. This may pull back their motivation to search for a job. The loss of income, status and esteem by the unemployed brings domestic problems to those experiencing it. The governments of

countries fight unemployment using means appropriate to their level of economic standards.

Education is the act of learning. The benefits of education are the reduction of mortality, increase in the employment prospects and the ability to make informed decisions. The benefits can be explained by the human capital theory. It states that the benefits of education are in the form of increased productivity then higher earnings. The gender parity index measures the ratio of enrolment in the education system between boys and girls. The problem of diseases is becoming a challenge in today's labour market by its erosion of human capital.

According to UNESCO (2006:3) everybody has a right to education. Over the past years, the education system has been having a gender bias where priority in education was given to boys while the girls had to help with the household duties. In the case of declining household income, families would address that by taking away the girl child from school, leading to the high illiteracy levels among the girls.

The illiterate female-heads poses many problems in society. These include the high mortality rate, endangered children's health and a low probability of the children to attend schooling. Children in these households are usually less privileged compared to those in households headed by both parents. Due to the reliance on single income, such households fail to attain good quality education.

The gender dimensions of the socio-economic challenges indicate that women are more affected by these challenges than men. Poverty and unemployment are prevalent among women. Most women are unemployed and in cases where they are employed, they are found in the low paying jobs and also in the bottom echelons on most companies. Women are seen being secretaries, tea makers and sweepers. They usually get low income with no fringe benefits. Most of women's time is spent doing unpaid household duties, hence the prevalence of poverty among them.

More women than men are illiterate. High illiteracy among women is spearheaded by teenage pregnancy, culture and beliefs. In the cultures prevailing in Sub-Saharan Africa, priority to education is given to boys while girls help with the household duties. Girls

remained behind in terms of education. Teenage pregnancy is another cause for high prevalence of poverty among women.

The burden of caring for the sick is a women's responsibility. Women curtail their economic and employment prospects to take care of the sick. With the increase in the number of HIV patients, the burden of care among women is increased. The majority of these patients are nursed at home, thereby putting a strain on ordinary women. Women are also more vulnerable to the HIV infection than men and statistics report that more women than men are infected by the epidemic. Their weak nature, unbalanced power relations and biological nature make them more vulnerable to the infection than men.

6.2.2 Empirical study

The empirical study was in two fold. The first survey was carried by Slabbert in 2009 and the second by the researcher in 2010. Questionnaires were used and face to face interviews were conducted in both surveys.

The reasons for the existence of female-headed households include desertion, widowhood and a situation where marriage never existed. Causes of poverty in these households include low and inconsistent income, poor skills levels leading to lack of employment in the high paying jobs and discrimination in the labour market.

An analysis of poverty among the female-headed households in Bophelong brought to clarity that poverty is endemic in these households and the strategies to alleviate poverty remain key. The female-headed households suffer social consequences in the township and as such feel despised by the community. They feel some degree of isolation and detachment from the township activities. Often, they remain behind in terms of community updates as a result of this social exclusion.

In the whole of Bophelong, 10% of the households were headed by married couples and 58% indicated that they were never married. This depicts a high incidence of single parenting in the township. In the female-headed households, 58.1% had stayed in the Vaal Triangle Area for the past 15 years. The ages of the female-household heads ranged from 21 to 79 years and 3% had headed the households for the past 25 years.

Though defined poor by their household subsistence level, some of the female-headed households denied the issue of being poor. They have become so much used to the situation of living in deprivation of some basic commodities. Various definitions were given by these households.

The headcount index was 77% and the poverty gap index was 53%. The dependency ratio was 5.5 and the average household size 5.5. The head count index indicates that 77% of these households were living below their subsistence. The poverty line for each household was established, taking into account the ages and sex of the household members. The poverty gap of 53% indicates that the poor need 53% of their income to reach their HSL. High poverty incidence was detected in the female led households.

Unemployment is also a challenge. It is undoubtedly the major cause of poverty in these households where people live without any stable and consistent source of income. The unemployment rate was 65% in the female-headed households and the household heads were without employment. The majority of the female-headed household members are concentrated in the informal sector employment while only 10% are in the formal sector. This informal sector is characterised by low and inconsistent salaries/wages with little or no fringe benefits. Even when in the formal sector employment, they are in the low echelons of receptionists and tea making. The main cause of this is the low skills levels attained in these households where the majority has skills in domestic work, child minding and security. The figure for the discouraged workers was also high with 24% having looked for a job in the past 10 years.

The noted reason for high unemployment in these households is the low skills levels in the township. The number of people who had passed Matric with exemption was 11% of the total of those who wrote and only 2% had a post graduate qualification and unemployed. The female-headed households in Bophelong are dominated by the low levels of education and hence the risk of the transference of illiteracy to the next generation.

On the analysis of the skills of the unemployed, the prevalent skill was catering (27%) and only 1% had the office skill. The “other” section which included domestic work and child minding was 18%.

The majority of the respondents (75%) indicated that crime was a problem in the township and 63% had been affected by robbery and theft in the past 12 month. The female-household heads in Bophelong thought the burden of care is a women's responsibility with 85% of them supporting this view point.

The other cause of poverty in the female-headed households is the big household size where the female head is the sole income earner. This deprivation of the male income places women under financial pressure thereby under privileging the other household members who are then forced to survive on the small income. Female-headed households in Bophelong had a household size of 4 for the Black population group in South Africa.

The female-headed households in Bophelong have various survival means. The bulk of the income they have comes from wages and salaries. Due to the high unemployment rate in the township, the majority of the respondents live on state welfare with 80% of them surviving on CSG. Due to the number of children qualifying for this type of grant, the majority of the households received this grant more than once.

In terms of the amount, the income from wages and salaries contributes the most in these households. The average household income from wages and salaries is R1038.82 while the total household income was R1780.96. The households that indicated that they receive income from relatives were 48% of the sample. Though they indicated their awareness that this help they receive from relatives is done at the expense of their own family, these household heads believed that they are deserving of such help since they have limited means of survival.

The following survival means were also employed by the female-headed households. A total of 35% said they sometimes borrow from their neighbours and they return these borrowings once they get the means. Some women indicated that they were once married and 20% of the previously married receive income from the previous partner in the form of child maintenance. Those who sometimes search for wild fruits and skip meals involuntarily constituted 35% and 32% respectively. A proportion of 20% sometimes immigrate to another region to gain income. Others survive on donations, handouts and meal skipping.

On the illegal means of survival, these households indicated that they have never shoplifted but agreed that if someone shoplifts and gives them the items, they will gladly accept them. They said this is being driven by lack. Households also indicated that the sale of drugs and prostitution are some of the illegal means of survival but none of them said they do engage in such activities for fear of being arrested and prosecuted.

6.3 CONCLUSION

In the beginning of the study, a null hypothesis was set which stated that the female-headed households in Bophelong have limited means to survive due to their socio-economic challenges. There is need to devise means to assist these households with income generating activities.

The study has found out that female-headed households in Bophelong are poorer than other households in the township. The head-count index for the female-headed households was 77% and 66.3% for all other households. This depicts that there are more poor female-headed households compared to the general households in Bophelong. The poverty gap ratio was 53% in the female-headed households and 49.7% in other households meaning that the depth of poverty is more in the female-headed households.

Unemployment was found to be more in the female-headed households where it was 65% and 51% in other households. This high unemployment rate is considerably the cause for the high poverty level in these households. Lack of employment deprives households from stable and consistent income and makes these households' survival means limited.

Few people in households led by females in Bophelong had matric exemption. In the whole household sample, those with matric exemption constituted 27% while only 11% had matric exemption in the female-headed households. This makes a high illiteracy level in the female-headed households making penetration in the job market difficult.

Female household heads in Bophelong believed that the burden of care for the sick is lies on women. In most households where there was a sick person being cared for, it was from an extended family. The burden of care for the sick makes these women curtail their

employment prospects and therefore increasing the poverty in these households. They are then forced to deduce other survival means beside full time employment.

Various means of survival have been employed by the female-headed households in Bophelong. Each means is not sufficient on its own and most households survive on more than one means. There is great uncertainty in the means of survival means and there is need to help these households with stable income generating activities to improve their socio-economic status.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section attempts to propose some recommendations that can help reduce the socio-economic challenges facing female-headed households.

6.4.1 Lending to the poor

Barriers to formal sector entry and the lack of financing for low-income earners seem to stall the development process of small businesses. The study shows that, on average, in the female-headed households in Bophelong, 25% earn incomes from informal activities. These activities range from small scale manufacturing to the selling of fruits or vegetables on streets corners. Lending arrangements will provide the female-headed households with access to savings within the local area and with a certain cushion against economic fluctuations. They will also encourage a cooperative and community feeling. Banking facilities for the female-headed households lacking access to them and would want to be self employed should be investigated more closely where women would access credit easily (Sekhampu, 2004:115).

6.4.2 Training, education and skills

This is training to build up human capital and marketable skills such as basic literacy and basic entrepreneurial skills. Training in non-traditional occupations for vulnerable groups are critical to the integration of the women especially those heading the households into the labour market. For the female-headed households in Bophelong, the majority of the household members were in low skills suggesting the need for training schemes, offering on-the-job training as well as structured work experiences that can help phase people with low skills into the labour market. Ten percent of the households visited during the

second interviews have children at home because they cannot afford the cost of taking them to school. Sometimes the reason was that their children were excluded because there was no money for school uniforms and food. Education is a basic human right for everyone. The government propagates a policy of access to education for all and this policy should be properly monitored and implemented among the female-headed households in Bophelong. In addition mothers' education is the basis important determinant to raise health standards and enhance the probability of child survival.

6.4.3 Public works programmes

Standish (1992) cites the following reasons why public works programmes have positive direct effects in the short term;

- The provision of employment and income to those whose poverty is endemic.
- The provision of skills and training to the participants of a public works programme.
- Public works programmes produce the infrastructure for economic development, e.g. schools, clinics, the extension and upgrading of roads, the building of low income housing, slum clearance and the development and extension of urban transport system.

Well-targeted public works programmes can play an important role in delivering services and infrastructure to the female-headed households of Bophelong. They can also provide income and skills training, thus building the assets of these households. Job creation will have a major impact on poverty. Most of the persons that have some kind of skill, would, if they would get the opportunity, prefer to get further training in the same field and would like to start self-sustaining activities in the same field as well.

6.4.4 Security

Seventy-five percent of female-headed households (75%) indicated that they need more security in their dwelling units and are exposed to crime. Measures should be taken to work towards improving security in the township by hiring security guards, watch dogs and have night patrols. The local council should consider extending its building of houses in favour of women so that they too can secure safe dwellings. There should be a

significant investment in female resource development and delivery of basic social services such housing in Bophelong. In the South African context, women can be assisted to access resources under the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and also to access houses through the RDP.

6.4.5 Urban farming

In the survey, 25% of the households had vegetable gardens while the majority buy these vegetables. Also in these households, 7% are interested in starting agricultural projects. One way to help alleviate hunger among low-income households may be through urban agriculture. According to Egziabher *et al.* (1994:3) urban agriculture has positive outcomes. These include providing employment, food supply, supplementing incomes and producing important nutrition. Further investigation on the need to work with the councilors for the identification of land should be done. In addition to selling vegetables to the Bophelong community, vegetables could also be sold to customers along the Golden Highway (Sekhampu, 2004:115). The creation of a market place along the Golden Highway where vegetables, arts and crafts, clothing and other products could be sold may provide both incentives and manufacturing possibilities to the Bophelong community. There is need to encourage women to do micro gardening by giving them agricultural training.

6.4.6 General Recommendations

About 28% of the unemployed in the township desire to start businesses in sewing. The possibilities should be investigated for the establishment of the clothing sector. The possibilities of sourcing the equipment for these women should be further investigated.

As part of their social responsibility, industries could be approached to give food parcels to the needy in order to combat poverty in the township. This will be done as a community social project aiming at helping the needy.

There are opportunities for a process of inward industrialisation in Bophelong, especially with regards to the production of mealie meal, bread, meat/chicken and vegetables. The production of these on a small scale, with labour intensive techniques should also be

investigated, as well as the skill required to operate such enterprises. About 22% of the unemployed would like to be involved in catering/cooking activities to sustain themselves.

There is need to provide an incentive for young girls in Bophelong to further their education levels and to take up challenging careers. This will shield them against future low employment prospects, in case they become household heads. The possibility of large companies around the township to take initiative to visit the local schools and inform the school children on what kind of people they would want to employ should be considered. This will change the mindset of young girls by challenging them to aspire to take challenging careers in case they become future female household heads.

There should be sufficient early childhood development programmes in the township to meet the needs of women. In the survey 10% of the unemployed were interested in starting adult and child development centres. Their resource limits should be investigated and the possibility of banks offering loans should be considered. These programmes will enable women to do productive work while their children are taken care of.

There is a need to further investigate the possibility of introducing the female-headed household grant. The means test and the amount need further and deeper research on the subject.

Policy markers in general need to pay particular focus to the underprivileged households especially those that lack both parents. Ignoring such households will impede the development aspect of economies.

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ANNEXURE 1: HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE SEPTEMBER 2010

N.B.: The information in this questionnaire will be treated in strict confidence.

BOPHELONG	Extension:	Date:	Questionnaire no:
Street:	House number:	Interviewer:	

Please note that the Head of the Household should preferably answer this questionnaire.

A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. What is the position of the respondent in the Household? Mark with x

Head of household	Spouse	Child	Extended member	family	Boarder
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2. What is the age of the household head?

3. For how long have you been a single parent?

4. What is the structure of the house? Mark with x

Shack, RDP house, Brick house

5. Do you think there should be houses earmarked for female single parents? Yes No

6. How do you think the general society view the household headed by a female compared to male-headed one? View as normal / Despise. Mark with x.

7. Is there a support structure for female headed households in the community?

8. If not how do you think female headed households should be supported?.....

B: SOCIAL/ECONOMIC REPARCATIONS

9. Do you feel as full members of society despite the lack of a male partner? Yes No

10. Do you think you are better off alone or you wish there was a men helping you with the responsibilities of the household?

11. What household duties you find challenging and wish there was a male partner to assist?

12. Have they ever been married/cohabitated before? Yes No

a) If yes, what were the challenges?

13. Would you engage in a marriage of convenience for the sake of additional income?

14. Do you think the fact that you have kids will be a challenge if you were to get into a relationship? Yes No

a) If yes what are the challenges?

15. Are you aware of people who say they engage in prostitution due to the fact that they are single mothers and cannot afford to support their children?

a) If yes, do you support that?

- b) Would you do it yourself?
- c) What would they do if your child was to engage in that?

16. What challenges do you think prostitution possess in the community?

17. Do you feel secure in this dwelling unit or you think there should be an increase in security?

Yes	No
-----	----

18. What do you think can be done to increase your security in this unit?

19. Are you taking care of any sick relative?

Yes	No
-----	----

- a) If yes, how are you related?
- b) What is he/she suffering from?

20. Do you think the burden of care for the sick especially with HIV should primarily be a women's responsibility?

Yes	No
-----	----

21. What is your opinion about HIV and its impact on the community?

22. Do you find it hard to discipline your children due to the absence of a father?

Yes	No
-----	----

23. Do you see the point of your children finishing school?

Yes	No
-----	----

- a) What would you like them to become when the finish school?.....
- b) What do they want to become.....

24. Will you have enough money to put them through schooling / college?

Yes	No
-----	----

25. Do the children have the motivation and inspiration to finish school?

Yes	No
-----	----

26. Is the household head employed?

- a) If not employed which job is she looking for?
- b) What is the minimum expected wage?

Yes	No
-----	----

27. Do you think the employers prefer to employ men in some specific jobs, thus gender discrimination?

Yes	No
-----	----

Yes	No
-----	----

C: SURVIVAL PATTERNS

28. How much is the total monthly household income?

--

29. Do you have enough income to support your family?

Yes	No
-----	----

30. Do you consider yourself poor?

Yes	No
-----	----

- a) Why do you think so?
- b) How do you define being poor

31. What keeps your family unity? faith/ church/community?

32. Do you sometimes receive financial support from the extended family? a) Own parents. b) Older children. c) Aunt. d) Uncle. e) Friends f) Other, specify

a) If so how frequent in a month?

b) Do you think their support to you is causing problems in their households?

Yes	No
-----	----

33. Do you think the households headed by men receive as much family support as those headed by females?

Yes	No
-----	----

Explain why.....

34. Do you receive income from your previous partner, if once married

Yes	No
-----	----

35. Do you earn income from past investment?

Yes	No
-----	----

36. Do neighbours lend you food e.g. a cup of sugar/coffee tea

Yes	No
-----	----

a) How much/what kind of foods

b) Do you return the borrowings

37. Should the government introduce a grant to assist female headed households?how much should the grant be

Yes	No
-----	----

38. Do you think the child support grant is enough?

Yes	No
-----	----

a) If no, by how much should it be increased?

39. Do you think the child support grant increases teenage pregnancy?

Yes	No
-----	----

40. Is the grant helpful and how?

Yes	No
-----	----

.....

41. How do you spend the child support grant? List typical items bought

a) For the needs of the child or

b) To support the whole family?

42. Do you think the pension grant is enough?

Yes	No
Yes	No

a) If no, by how much should it be increased?

43. Is there an elder in the house with whose pension money you survive on?

a) If yes, what would be the impact if he/she dies?

Yes	No
-----	----

44. Do you have a savings account?

What about a or funeral scheme?

Yes	No
-----	----

45. Do you normally have three meals every day?

Yes	No
-----	----

a) If not, which meal do you usually skip? Breakfast Lunch Supper

46. How often do you have meat in a week?.....

a) What kind of meat do you often have?.....

47. What kind of meals do you usually have? i.e. side dishes, leftover meals, pap, tea etc.

48. Do you grocery or money clubs?

Yes	No
Yes	No

49. Do you sometimes feel forced to commit crime in order to survive?

a) If yes, what crime do you think of committing?

Yes	No
-----	----

50. Do you think crime is a problem in the Township?

51. Do you sometimes get donations?..... If yes from where?.....

52. What do you give as a lunch box or how much money for your kids when they go to school?

53. Is there a school feeding scheme at their kids' school and how does that assist them?

Yes	No
-----	----

54. Do you think the government is doing enough to create jobs?

Yes	No
-----	----

55. Do you know of any employment generating programme initiated by the local municipality in your area?

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, what kind of programme?.....

56. Do you sometimes go out to search for wild vegetables?

Yes	No
-----	----

57. Do you know of people who shop lift inorder to survive?.....

What is your comment on such people?.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

ANNEXURE 2: HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE APRIL 2009

N.B.: The information in this questionnaire will be treated in strict confidence. (30 March 2009)

BOPHELONG	Extension:	Date:	Questionnaire no:
Street:	House number:	Interviewer:	

Please note that the Head of the Household should preferably answer this questionnaire.

A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. What is the position of the respondent in the Household? Cross *

Head of household	Spouse	Child	Extended family member	Boarder
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5. How many housing units are on the site?

6. How many people stay permanently on the site?

7. How long have you (respondent) stayed in the Vaal Triangle (years)?

B: ENVIRONMENTAL

8. How do you feel about the environment in which you stay? (Mark 2 options) *

1. It is clean and pleasant	2. It is littered, untidy and dirty	3. Indifferent – No opinion	4. Something should be done to clean it	5. It can be left as it is
-----------------------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------------------	---	----------------------------

9. If you feel it should be cleaned up, who should take the initiative and responsibility? (* More)

1. The municipality	2. A street committee	3. Everyone should be made responsible	4. A campaign should be organised	5. Other: explain
---------------------	-----------------------	--	-----------------------------------	-------------------

10. If you would have the money, what would you be prepared to pay monthly to have your environment cleaned up?

11. How do you experience, especially in winter, the smoke levels (air pollution) in your area? *

1. Not affected	2. Slightly affected	3. Affected	4. Badly affected	5. Unbearable (Severely Affected)
-----------------	----------------------	-------------	-------------------	-----------------------------------

12. If you are making fire for cooking & heating purposes, would you like to be introduced to

technologies that will reduce the smoke levels at your house? *

1. Not making fire: using electricity for cooking & heating	2. Making coal / wood fire: but not interested	3. Making coal / wood fire: And interested	4. Using paraffin: Not interested	5. Using paraffin: Interested
---	--	--	-----------------------------------	-------------------------------

13. What would you be prepared to pay monthly to have your environment smoke-free?

a) What % of the smoke pollution do you think comes from industry? and coal fires?

b) Number of persons in your household whose health is affected by air pollution?

c) What are most of them suffering from? (e.g. coughing, asthma, etc)

14. How do you experience, especially in winter, the dust levels in your area? *

1. Not affected	2. Slightly affected	3. Affected	4. Badly affected	5. Unbearable (Severely Affected)
-----------------	----------------------	-------------	-------------------	-----------------------------------

15. What would you be prepared to pay monthly to have your environment dust free?

16. Especially in the spring & summer some people are using amplifiers to make loud music. How are you affected by this in your area? *

1. Not affected (quiet in the area).	2. I hear it but I don't care (accepting it)	3. I hear it and it is affecting me (don't like it)	4. I hear it and I am badly affected	5. I hear it and it is unbearable (severely affected)
--------------------------------------	--	---	--------------------------------------	---

17. If you feel that something should be done in your area to reduce the noise levels, who should be responsible and what should be done? (Mark * more than one option)

1. The municipality should control & restrict people to play loud music.	2. The police should control & restrict people to play loud music.	3. A street committee should control & restrict people to play loud music.	4. People who disturb the neighbourhood with noise should be fined / punished	5. The instruments of those who disturb the neighbourhood should be confiscated
--	--	--	---	---

18. If you would have the money, what would you be prepared to pay monthly to have your environment quiet?

19. Has any person in your household been a victim of crime in the last 12 months?

20. What kind of crime? (Can mark * more than one option)

Yes	No
-----	----

1. Assault	2. Robbery	3. Rape	4. Murder	5. Abduction	6. Other (specify
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C: CONSUMPTION

21. How much of the following items does your household buy per week/per month & about how much does your household spend on these items per week/per month?

Product	Kilograms / litres per week	Kilograms / litres per month	Rand per week	Rand per month	Town ✓	Bophe long✓
1. Maize Meal						
2. Bread						
3. Meat / chicken						
4. Vegetables						
5. Milk						
6. Washing powder						
7. Coal						
8. Paraffin						

22. **How does your household spend their income monthly? Bought where?**

Item	Rand per month	Name of shop	Town	Bophelong	
Housing (Rent/Bond)					1
Water					2
Electricity					3
Other energy (coal, paraffin etc)					4
Food					5
Cleaning materials					6
Cigarettes & Tobacco					7
Beer, wine & spirits					8
Transport:		Total			9
Taxi.....					
Car.....					
Other.....					
Clothing					10
School					11
Entertainment					12
Medical Expenses					13
Insurance					14
GAMBLING: Lotto.....					15
Horseracing.....					16
Casino					17
Other					
Savings					18
Licenses (e.g. TV, Vehicle)					19

Rates and taxes					20
Housekeeping Services (e.g. Garden)					21
Telephone.....					22
Cell.....					23
Car Repayment					24
Loan repayments					25
Furniture					26
Other: Specify					27

D: EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION STATUS

23. How does your household spend their income monthly?

1. Number of people in the household								
2. Composition of members (Code list 2)								
3. Age of each member in years								
4. Sex (Male = 1; female = 2)								
5. Marital Status (code list 5)								
6. Highest qualifications (still at school) (Code list 6)								
7. Qualifications (not at school) (Code list 7)								
8. Employment Status (Code list 8)								
9. Sector of employment (Code list 9)								
10. (10 – 17 for unemployed only) Skills of unemployed (list 10)								
11. Duration of unemployment in years								
12. Willingness & type of Skills Training required (code list 10)								
13. What is the Unemployed doing presently								
14. Do you have matric exemption?								
15. If persons would like to study further: preferences (list 15)								
16. Preferences to start self-sustaining activities (list 10)								
17. Minimum wage required to take a job								

18. Income: Wages/salaries per month (Take home pay) Formal								
19. Pension/Remittance								
20. Child Grant from Government								
21. Other Grants from Government								
22. Help (family/relatives/etc) Also help in kind								
23. Informal activities								
24. Subsidies (e.g. Housing)								
25. Interest/dividends								
26. Other (Specify)								

24. How do you cope with increasing food prices (inflation)? _____

25. Does someone in your household have a vegetable garden?

Yes	No
-----	----

26. Would someone in your household be interested in receiving assistance to start a food garden in your yard?

Yes	No
-----	----

27. Would someone in your household like to be involved in a community food garden project?

Yes	No
-----	----

28. Does someone in your household own a sewing machine?

Yes	No
-----	----

29. Do you know a clothing manufacturing business in your township?

Yes	No
-----	----

If so, give the address: _____

30. Does someone in your household own a welding machine?

Yes	No
-----	----

31. Do you know any small scale welding / metal work firm in the township?

Yes	No
-----	----

If so, give the address:

32. Has any member of your household operated a SMME / still operating one?
If so, what kind of SMME? (Also distinguish between formal and informal)

Yes	No
-----	----

33. Taking into account your skills (or that of your household members), would you or someone in your household (unemployed persons) be interested in starting your own business or rather work together with others in a cooperative?

Own business	Cooperative
--------------	-------------

34. What kind of business would you like to start? (Compare Q.20.16)

35. If you would like to start your own business, what kind of support do you think you will need?

36. Do you think you will get a job if you are better trained?

Yes	No
-----	----

37. What kind of training do you need? (Compare Q.20.12)

38. Were any members of your household retrenched in the last year?

Yes	No
-----	----

39. What was the reason for the retrenchment?

40. Where were they working at the time of the retrenchment?

41. Do you think large corporations like Arcelor Mittal should be more involved in community development projects?

42. What should they do?

Yes	No
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