An Investigation of the Impact of an Empowerment Programme in a Cape Town Township

BY

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Abstract

The concept of empowerment has become a mantra in the development discourse as a result of the redefinition of development to entail building the capacity of the people to effect change in their lives. This study is an attempt to provide insight into the impact of empowerment activity of Zonkee Community Development Centre on the participants. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research method the study illuminated on the aim and objectives of the study. The World Bank empowerment framework guided the collection of data and the data was analysed in relation to the study aim and objectives. The study findings indicate that Zonkee Community Development Centre through its activity endowed and increased different resource base of the participants and subsequently their individual growth and development. More importantly, the resources they were endowed with aided their ability to make choices and decisions that reflect their value and interest. Furthermore, the findings of the study shows that access to resources which include material and development of sense of self is indispensable for empowerment to take place. In other words power over resources without power within will fall short of bringing about requisite empowerment experience. Nevertheless, the findings point to the complexity of empowerment and unpredictability of empowerment outcomes with regards to choice making. The findings of the study in its entirety indicate that empowerment efforts by civil society group have the potential to diminish sense of powerlessness and enhance capacity of the poor to control their lives.

Declaration

I declare that the thesis (*An investigation of the impact of an empowerment programme in a Cape Town township)* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and by complete reference.

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Date

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1   CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction and background to the study

The protracted struggle against apartheid regime in South Africa ended in 1994, with the official handover of power to black majority led party African National Congress (ANC). However, the negative consequences of the long history of institutionalized racial discrimination that hitherto bifurcated the country along racial and colour lines has been a great challenge to the government. The institutionalized apartheid policies engendered and sustained an inequitable society, made resources skewed in favour of the minority white, while the black majority was exposed to state sanctioned poor conditions. The black majority were denied basic infrastructures, as they were dispossessed of their lands, had access to low quality education and health care. In short, they were denied their basic human right. On the other hand the white minority benefited from these discriminatory public policies (Seekings, 2007, Hoogeveen, and Ozler, 2005, Klasen, 2000). As at 1994 the Gini coefficient of South Africa stood at 0.58%, placing the country as one of the most unequal countries globally with 68% of black South Africans below the poverty line of three hundred and twenty two rands. At the same time poverty rate among the white minority was minimal (Hoogeveen and Ozler, 2005).

Following the fall of apartheid, the ANC led government deemed it imperative to revisit and correct the race and class based inequality inherited from the colonial and apartheid era. To this end, the ANC government made empowering the previously marginalized black majority central in government policy. The efforts were seen in the inclusion of socio-economic right in the 1996 constitution (Seekings, 2007, Hoogeveen and Ozler, 2005, Klasen, 2000). It is important to note that the majority of the previously marginalized in South Africa are women that dwell in peri-urban and rural areas (Office on the Status of Women, 2000). According to Department of Social Development, (Undated), a significant percentage of household (40%) in South Africa are headed by women.

Department of Statistics, (2006) notes that women constitute 52% of South African population and the racial composition of this percentage varies as follows, 79.4% are black women, 8.9% are coloured, 2.5% are Indian/ Asian and the remaining 9.3% are whites. Scholars have deliberated on the condition of women in the South African society. For instance, Kehler, (2001) notes that 47% of women live in semi urban and rural areas, and out

of this percentage 57% are Black women which is far more in majority when compared to 17% Coloured and 8% white women that live in rural areas and semi urban areas. Similarly, unemployment rate among women that live in rural area is 53%. Again unemployment amongst black rural women is higher when compared to women of other races. As unemployment rate among black women is 56% while amongst the Coloured and white race it stood at 21% and 5% respectively. Mashiri, Chakwizira and Nhemachena, (2009) in their study affirm that there is high level of poverty amongst women in rural, semi urban areas and female headed households.

It is important to mention that the reality of South African women is not different from that of other women in different societies. As, in most societies the health, security and body integrity of women are beyond their control, with their role generally perceived to be domestic (Ajayi and Otuya, 2005). Women in most societies do not own properties of their own and often they are not allowed to inherit land and other resources that will enhance their ability to make real choices that will give them control over their lives (Narayan, 2002). Thus, women in most societies are confronted with political, economic and socio-cultural frameworks (Gittell, Bustamante and Steffy, 1999) that impose limitations to their active participation in community affairs thereby sustaining their sense of powerlessness, and further gives impetus to men's domination of leadership positions and decision making (Hassan, and Silong, 2008). Ekong, (2008) argue that the obstacles placed on women participation constitutes an impediment to whatever contribution they would have made towards the realization of society's developmental goals. And this has slowed the developmental pace in many countries, especially in developing countries.

In recent times, commendable efforts have been made to empower women through enhancing their access to resources and opportunity so that they can operate on equal footing with men. For instance Ekong, (2008) notes the establishment of government institution to facilitate mobilisation and involvement of women in all levels of government in Nigeria. Nabacwa, (2001) equally noted the establishment of such institutions and frameworks in Uganda to uplift women. Similarly, the ANC black led government has worked in collaboration with the civil society and business groups towards addressing the needs of the previously marginalised groups. Precisely, civil society groups such as Community Based Organisations (CBO's), Faith Based Organisations (FBO's) and Non- Governmental Organisations (NGO's) has become an important channel through which business organisations and

government bring about improvement in the lives of the marginalized South Africans living in poverty. The government in an attempt to move away from social security like grants on the basis of dependency it creates has relied on the civil society group to evolve income generating activities and community development projects that is seen as being more sustainable. Business, organisation has relied on them equally to create skills and support Small scale initiatives that will lead to the people becoming self sufficient (Aliber, 2001). Zonkee Community Development Centre is one of the community based organisation that has worked with the government to overcome the legacy of apartheid. They have work in collaboration with both the department of Social development and business organisation in their enterprise to empower women (Zonkee, 2009).

Zonke Community Development Centre was set up in 2005 formerly as Women Aid organisation as a way to improve the life of women in Gugulethu. Gugulethu is a black township that evolved as result of Apartheid discriminating policy and as such bears resemblance to other black townships in South Africa, mostly inhabited by black unemployed, low income earners working in light industries, average income earners like teachers and taxi drivers. The area is fraught with high rate of poverty, violence and HIV/AIDS. The majority of women living in Gugulethu are very much affected by the prevalence of poverty giving that they are unemployed, with no or little education and skill to be self reliant. In effect they depend on people for survival and as a result are exposed to gender based violence and HIV/AIDS. The level of ignorance of the women manifests in their lack of knowledge of existing law that protects them from violence and their marital right, inadequate knowledge of contraceptive use and child spacing (Zonkee, 2009).

Initially, the Women Aid Organisation entirely focused on raising the awareness of the women over their right and educating them on the child spacing and use of contraceptive. This activity was informed by the rate of violence on Gugulethu women which is neither followed up nor addressed accordingly and high fertility rate resulting from lack of knowledge of child spacing and use of contraceptive. As time went by it became necessary for the organisation to engage in giving these women skills to enable them become self reliant and assisting them in getting access to institutions that deals with violence. However, given that this organisation was established on the effort of an individual the constraints presented by limited resources in terms of both human and financial resources did not give room to take many women. As a result initial vocational training in morphine making and

selling was carried out with only eleven women. While this was going on the organisation established network with older NGO's in Cape Town, Department of Social Development and Business Organisations to muster human and financial resources to engage in achieving the vision of empowering powerless women in Gugulethu. As more resources entered the NGO expanded its activity to include at its core women empowerment activities which connote gender sensitive activities, skill transfer and linking the participants up to employment opportunities. With the successful establishment of cordial relations with the municipal government, older operating NGO's in the area and business organisations, the name changed from Women Aid Organisation to Zonke Community Development Centre in 2008.

Looking at these areas of focus, it is plausible to conclude that the activities of the Zonkee Community Development Centre constitute a veritable way to bring about the empowerment of the powerless women in their area of operation. This conclusion stem from the assumption that through their activities the women can be able to acquire skills which will enable them to take up employment opportunities and earn income that will make them self reliant. Also, through the awareness raising activity, the women can be able to gain access to necessary information such as legal framework and health related information that can increase their chances of controlling their lives. This assumption is not farfetched as scholars have reiterated that there is a relationship between lack of resources of different types and inability to make choice. For instance, Kabber, (2000) argue that there exist commonsensical relationship between lack of skill, unemployment, poverty and inability to make choice. Similarly, Narayan (2002) articulate that lack of awareness of existing laws protecting the poor renders them incapable of taking action when there is infringement on their rights. Or even if they are aware of the existence they often lack the requisite resources to protect violation of their dignity and rights. Also, little or no awareness to health related information can also hinder the capacity to make choices that can improve one's wellbeing.

1.2 Problem statement, research aim and objectives

1.2.1 Problem statement

A host of scholars has validated the link between Women's lack of skills and low level of awareness with their inability to take up livelihood opportunities which has rendered them marginalised and vulnerable with immense negative impacts on their welfare and that of their children (Kabber, 1999; Narayan 2002; Bartiliwa 2007). Even though the role of women in

development has been widely recognised as essential, their lack of skills reduces their effectiveness to contribute meaningfully to societal development and their own self improvement. Poor rural women are very much exposed to the dangers of poverty and associated unequal gender relations which exacerbate their living condition as majority of women lack the capability necessary to make meaningful choice. The Word Bank has suggested that empowerment of women should be a key aspect of social development programs (Narayan, 2002).The majority of women in Zonkee area of operation are powerless and have low access to different resources which emanates from lack of skills to engage in economic activity and low awareness to information that will enable them to make meaningful choices. It has thus become important to empower these deprived women for them to be able to take care of their lives adequately. There are many efforts in this regard especially from the civil society sector, part of which is Zonkee with the primary aim of enhancing the capacities of deprived women in their area of operation by raising their awareness through education and giving them training.. This will enable these women to engage actively in economic ventures that will increase their capacity to make choice. Given that the Zonkee has been in existence for over seven years (including the years as Women aid organisation) the question arises, how successful has Zonkee Community development Centre been in empowering the women?

1.2.2 Research aim and objectives

Hence, the main aim of this study is to understand the impact of the Zonkee Community Development Centre empowerment activities on the participants. Specifically, the study seeks to understand the extent Zonkee through its activities has been successful in empowering the women to be self reliant and capable of controlling their lives.

1.2.3 Specific objectives of the study

1: To understand the nature of powerlessness that qualifies the women to participate in the programme.

2: To understand if Zonkee activities improved access to different resources the participants require.

3: To understand if participating in the activities of Zonkee influenced the development and growth of the participants.

4: To ascertain if participating in Zonkee increased the ability of the women to make effective decisions, choice that results to higher control over their lives.

1.3 Chapter outline

1. Chapter two carries out review of literature on the concept of empowerment at both theoretical and empirical level to situate the study within the existing knowledge on empowerment.

2. Chapter three discusses the research methodology by bringing to the fore the processes that was carried out to address the research problematic and aim of the study.

3. Chapter four presents descriptive analysis of the findings both statistically and qualitatively.

4. Chapter five discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research problem, answering the research objectives and further links the study to existing literatures.

5. Chapter Six gives a conclusion of the whole study by summarising what was learnt so far in the study and suggests where attention should be directed in further studies.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter set out to give the general background to the study and accordingly brought to the fore the context that necessitated the study. Also the research problematic, aims and objectives of the study was stated in this chapter. It went on to give a clear picture of how the study is presented herein. It is evident that the research problem, aims and objectives of the study revolves around the idea of empowerment and as such the next chapter engages the concept of empowerment critically and reflectively.

2   CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

This chapter carries out a review of literatures on the concept of empowerment at both theoretical and empirical level. It discusses the evolution of the concept of empowerment and practice, its adoption by radical social movements and its subsequent transformation into a mantra in the development discourse. It locates the notion of empowerment within the wider development discourse and discusses the different ways empowerment has been conceptualised and practiced. The multifaceted nature of empowerment and the complexities inherent in tracking changes in the empowerment level as a result of intervention to empower the powerless are discussed. Finally, the World Bank empowerment framework is discussed and adapted to suit the objective of the study.

2.2   The concept of empowerment

The notion of empowerment is currently being used in different ways by different organisations (Oxaal and Baden, 2007). It has been placed atop on the list of goals pursued by different development actors with different aims and ideological orientation (Bartiliwa, 2007; Rai, Parpart and Staudt, 2007). For instance, multilateral and bilateral organizations such as United Nations (UN), World Bank (WB), Oxfam, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO's), National Governments and business organisations all subscribe to the idea of empowerment and aspire assiduously towards its realization (Rai, et al, 2007). It is used virtually in every aspect that draws attention to inequality and need to evolve equality in human society. Its use ranges from human right, basic need, economic security, capacity building, skill formation and involvement in decision making process. The idea has assumed an important antidote to oppression, exploitation, injustice and other analogous problems that face societies (Beteille, 1999). This growing popularity and interest in empowerment is also exemplified in its ubiquity in the literature from 1980s when compared to its insignificant presence in 1960s (Stranberg, 2001). Oxaal and Baden (2007) point to the indiscriminate use of empowerment as epitomized by its presence in literature of different academic fields, movements and organisations such as education, psychology, social work, American radical politics in the 1960s, community development organisations in the North and South and in the feminist and development organisation.

However, its long existence and extensive use has fallen short of calling forth a consensual definition for the term (Stranberg, 2001, Lee and Koh, 2001). Empowerment has received

different definition from scholars from different disciplines and even within the same discipline. Beteille, (1999: 589) note that "it means different things to different persons and in some cases even to the same person". Hence, empowerment is a highly debated term given that it can assume diverse meanings within the same and different political and socio-economic contexts. Thus, any definition of empowerment is conterminous with the context it is being used. Foster-Fishman, Salem, Chibnall, Legler, and Yapchai, (1998:508) opine that different definitions of empowerment suggests that it assumes divergent forms and meanings and is contextually determined.

The following definitions of empowerment highlight the disparate meanings it denotes and the contexts that informs the meanings. Samah and Aref, (2009:46) construe empowerment as "a process whereby individuals or groups are able to exercise their ability and capacity to understand and interpret problems and define needs, which are then translated into an action process by organizing themselves in a manner that enable them to decide, influence, demand, negotiate and engage in carrying out activities". Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDA) (2004) in Luttrell, Quiroz, Scrutton and Bird, (2009:2) define empowerment as an emancipation process in which the disadvantaged are empowered to exercise their rights, obtain access to resources and participate actively in the process of shaping society and decision making.

Fawcett, et al, (1994) in Foster-Fishman, et al, (1998:508) understand empowerment as "the process of gaining influence over events and outcomes of importance to an individual or group". Similarly, Rapport (1987) cited in Perkins and Zimmerman (1995:570) depicts empowerment as a process by which people gain control over their lives. Empowerment may also mean the transformation of structures and systems that act as barriers to change (Gajanayake and Gajanayake 1993: 4). Other writers like Hartmut Schneider from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as cited by Frits Wils (2001:7) refer to empowerment as "….. gaining of strength in the various ways necessary to be able to move out of poverty, rather than literally taking power from somebody else at the purely political level". This definition depicts empowerment as not related to political demands but a function of other actors like knowledge, education and organization.

Empowerment is also defined as a process, and outcome of a process, of transforming power relations between individuals and social groups. This process of shifting power relations

takes place in three significant dimensions; by challenging ideologies that justify social inequality (such as gender or class), transforming unjust prevailing patterns of access to and control over economic, natural, and intellectual resources and challenging the institutions and structures that reinforce and sustain unequal power relations such as family, state, market and education (Bartiliwa, 2007).

Kabeer (1999) in conceptualizing empowerment notes that power entails the ability to make choices and to be disempowered entails to be denied choices. Hence empowerment becomes `the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them. According to her "empowerment is inescapably bound with the condition of disempowerment and refers to the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability. In other words, empowerment relates to a process of change" (Kabber, 1999:437).

Narayan (2002:11) extending upon and capturing some of the elements of the above definitions, defines empowerment as "… the expansion of assets and capabilities of the poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives". This definition captures the structural limitations often considered reasons for the perpetuation of powerlessness and immediate barriers that hamper small scale initiatives. Alsop and Heinsohn, (2005:5) defined empowerment as "enhancing an individual's or group's capacity to make choices and transform these choices into desired actions and outcomes".

These different definitions illuminate the different perspectives that empowerment have been understood. It ranges between seeing it as an individual and/or group process of taking control of and responsibility for one's life and situation and defining it as a political process of granting human right and social justice to disadvantaged group of people (Stranberg, 2002; Luttrell et al (2009). However, all the definitions suggest that to be empowered means having the ability to control one's life; that is being autonomous as in making decisions and choices concerning one's life and achieving it. Thus empowerment usually refers to the activities that enhance the capacity of the poor and powerless that previously does not control their life to be able to do so.

A host of authors attribute the discrepancies in definition and understanding of empowerment to the multiple historical and political contexts which the idea traversed Bartiliwa, (2007);

Cornwall and Brock, (2005); Beteille, (1999) Luttrell, Quiroz, Scrutton and Bird, (2009); Rai, Parpart and Staudt, (2007) which is shaped by the differences that underlie the understanding of the nature and operation of power which underpins empowerment Oxaal, and Baden, (2007); Beteille, (1999) Sharp, Briggs, Yacoub and Hamed, (2003) Samah and Aref, (2009). If the differences in understanding empowerment derive from the diverse understanding of power then discussing the idea of power is instructive.

2.3   Power in Empowerment

The idea of power which underpins empowerment has been understood in different ways which in turn has contributed to the diverse understanding of its offshoot empowerment. Weber define power as "... ... the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in social action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action" (Weber, 1978:926 cited in Beteille, 1999:592). Weber's conception of power suggests a relationship that involves coercion, intimidation and manipulation. It entails having power over resources and people, to be able to coerce, influence and manipulate others (Oxaal and Baden 2007). The coercive nature of this form of power means that one has power to an extent that he or she can make others do whatever he or she wishes. This understanding of power projects it as an outcome of conflicts between people in an open system that will lead to the emergence of a victor and vanquished (Siwal, 2009).

Power over does not necessarily need to be all about coercion or open conflict. It can manifest in the ability of some to restrain others or issues from getting to decision making space. It suggests that modalities are established to ensure that issues that reinforce the powerlessness of the marginalized are not attended to (Bachrach and Baratz 1970:105 in Siwal, 2009). Rai, et al, (2007:4) understood this form of power differently and argues that it has the potential for rational discussion and evolutionary change which has become an integral part of liberal view on transformation through mutual deliberation and democratic principles. In this sense, this form of power can equally be cooperative in that the oppressed have the possibility to organise themselves and convince the powerful that there is need for change. The third form of power over is controlling of the agenda and thinking of others through manipulation of their consciousness to an extent that they internalize existing unequal social order as natural and immutable (Rai, et al, 2007:5).

These three forms of power over entail an individual or group lording it over another group, be it in an open conflict, by subduing the voice of the other or even making the powerless not

to realise that conflict exists in the first place. These forms of power fall within the category of zero sum approach to power which by definition denote that group or individual possession of power is responsible for other individuals or group lack of power (Beteille 1999; Rai, et al, 2007:5). Understanding power in this form entails that empowerment of individuals or group will inevitably result to disempowerment of others. However, people that hold benign understanding of power in this form understand empowerment to entail granting of power to the powerless in such a way that results to reduction in the power the powerful wields (Luttrell, et al, 2009), while those that hold extreme view of power in this form advocate revolution or struggles by the people below to capture power (Beteille, 1999; Luttrell, et al, 2009). Going by this understanding, one can say that empowerment and disempowerment go hand in hand.

There are also other forms of power in which gaining of power do not result to loss of power by another. This is known as the "positive" sum approach to power. In this approach power does not entail coercion, domination or oppression of others. Rather power should be understood as a resource to further the general wellbeing of the society. There are broadly three forms of positive sum approach to power namely "power to" "power within" and "power to" (Mosedale, 2005:250; Oxaal and Baden, 2007:1; Rai et al, 2007:7; Luttrell, et al, 2009:2;). According to Mosedale, (2005:250) "Power within" refers to resources such as self esteem and self confidence". Power within can be best described as a counterpoint to the zero sum approach form in which the agenda and thinking of the some within the societies are controlled. For instance, if ones internalize the feeling that he or she is devoid of any sound view the most plausible starting point to the person's empowerment is to instil self esteem and confidence in the person. There is no doubt that Freire's consceitisation approach shares this understanding of power. In that the powerless can regain their consciousness to analyse independently (Eade, 1997).

"Power with" refers to collective action in challenging the structures that sustain marginalization, this is in recognition that a lot can be achieved by people working together than individuals alone. While "power to" refer to people having access to decision making process (Oxaal and Baden, 2007; Luttrell, et al, 2009). "Power to" coalesce with Rai, et al, (2007) understanding of the second form of power over discussed above and therefore it generally constitutes a critical counterpoint to the zero sum understanding of power in which modalities are set to prevent issues and some people from coming to the decision making

arena. It presupposes people being able to bring their concerns and issues to the decision making sphere and participate in making the decision that affects them. The different understanding of forms of power has shaped the understanding and practice of empowerment. The next section discusses empowerment in historical perspectives and attempts to highlight how different understanding of power has shaped the understanding of empowerment.

2.4 Empowerment in Historical Context

The idea of empowerment has spanned diverse political and historical periods. Bartiliwa, (2007: 558) traced the idea to as far as back as "early protestant reformation in Europe" and it pulled through centuries in "Europe and America through Quakerism, Jefferesonian democracy, early capitalism and black power movement". The idea of empowerment represents series of agitations by the masses for social justice for all in different societies. However, the idea of empowerment garnered a more complex political vitality in 1960's - 70's, when it was enriched, proselytized and practiced by series of movements such as the Liberation theology, popular education, feminism and series of other movements agitating for a just, participatory and democratic means of social change and development.

In the 1960's Paulo Freire's notion of conscientization under the rubric of popular education and Liberation theology became a formidable idea and framework to challenge structures and institutions that subordinate the poor Eade, (1997:10), Rai, et al, (2007). Though, Freire did not use the term empowerment, his emphasis on education as a means for conscientizing and inspiring individuals and groups to challenge social inequality provided an important backdrop for social activist concerned with empowering the poor and marginalized (Rai et al, 2007). Paulo Freire, worked among poor communities in the North East of Brazil in the 1960s and 70s and developed a teaching methodology that combined learning to read and write with looking critically at one's social situation. The kind of education he suggested is a liberating and revolutionary one that will enable the learners to reflect on their problems, engage in a dialogue and take initiatives to transform the society which denied them social and educational opportunity. Consceintisation is considered a process of learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and take action against the oppressive elements of reality (Eade, 1997). Hence, the majority of the excluded were encouraged to confront and challenge societal frameworks that oppress them. Paulo Freire's didactic model in the 1960's spread throughout Latin American region and heavily influenced the emergence of political organizations and grassroots movements (Eade, 1997:10).

Though, these frameworks did not incorporate gender and subordination of women as a critical aspect of development, it appealed and motivated feminists from South that were disillusioned with the chiefly apolitical and economistic Women In Development, Women And Development model prevalent in development interventions. Also the evolution of social construction theory coupled with the rediscovery of the Gramsci's subalterns shaped and inspired activists and evolving social movements at that time. The coming together of these influential discourses resulted to the spread of women empowerment as a veritable political and transformatory idea to propel struggles that challenged patriarchy as well as mediating structures of class, race, identity and ethnicity that subjugate women in societies. The infusion of previously lacking gender dimension into Freiré's work, by recognising women as part of Gramsci's subalterns classes, feminist advocates, integrated gender subordination and the social construction of gender as a critical part of analysis in the practice of social change and development (Bartliwa, 2007).

Towards 1990's empowerment became an integral component of neo-liberal policies and agenda to achieve economic growth. Mainstream development actors adopted empowerment of the people to manage their affairs in the context of structural adjustment programme, liberalization and privatization (Mohanty, 1995, Oxaal and Baden, 1997). Empowerment in this guise became an economic development objective and was transformed from a collective to an individualistic process. The focus became largely on entrepreneurship and individual self reliance, rather than on collectivising to challenge structures that subordinate the marginalized. Also it became concordant with the neoliberal idea of democracy that emphasize individual right and participation in the decision making via electoral process (Oxaal and Baden, 2007). Management practitioners incorporated it into the human resource development and motivational practices of the corporate world. Hence, empowerment became a veritable term to increase profit and expedite competition in the market arena (Bartiliwa, 2007:558; Rai, et al, 2007) and economics and politics merged as what empowerment symbolizes, Mohanty, 1995).

2.5 Contrary views on empowerment

However, despite the optimism of evolving an equitable society which empowerment invokes, many scholars have questioned the presupposition that the concept is crucial in evolving salient social transformation, especially with its adoption by the mainstream development. Bartiliwa, (2007), Cornwall and Brock, (2007), Mohanty, (1995), spent commendable energy and time in bringing to fore how the idea of empowerment has been depoliticised, subverted and abused as it was hijacked and mainstreamed in a manner that emasculated it of its tranformatory power and promise. Bartiliwa, (2007:560) situating her analysis in the Indian context argues that the original emphasis on building the ability of the oppressed to collectivise in order to "challenge ideologies that justify social inequality such as (gender and caste) by changing prevailing patterns of access to and control over economic, natural, and intellectual resources , and by transforming the institutions and structures that reinforce and sustain existing power structures (such as family, state, market, education and media)", has been hijacked and constricted with the adoption of empowerment by mainstream development actors. Mohanty, (1995) and Bartiliwa (2007) stresses that the constriction and subversion of the original tenets of empowerment within the prevalent neo-liberal orthodoxy can be seen in reservation of political quotas and organising women into self help group that merely save and lend money to its members. The organising of poor women into self help groups is rooted in the assumption that their empowerment is totally contingent on their economic empowerment.

So many scholars have argued in favour of collective empowerment most especially for women though at varying degrees (Kabber, 2010, 2005, 1999; Stromquist, 1995). At the heart of the argument for collective empowerment is the belief that women in every society are susceptible to oppressive frameworks that engender and sustain their subordination. In other words they reject the idea that powerlessness emanates from income deficiency in the light of the fact that even wealthy women experience some forms of powerlessness and as such increase in income for women as a result of working outside have the probability of increasing their household workload in the absence of women working together.

Series of study on empowerment interventions like microcredit loans and self help groups validate the argument for collective action to overcome societal structures that oppress women. A study of microcredit programme with the objective of empowerment shows that loan collected by most women are actually controlled by their spouse or male relative and the

women affected still scout for money to repay the loan even in the face of men mismanaging the fund (Goetz and Gupta, 1996). They usually resort to borrowing from money lenders at higher interest loan and are exposed to violence when they do not repay the loan (Rahman, 1999 in Moodie, 2008). However, research has reaffirmed the sociological and economic positions that material assets in form of income weakens the interlocking constraints of social, economic and political dependence of the poor and offer them greater freedom and autonomy to act in their life and society (Moore, 2001). For instance Hashemi, et al 1996 in Swain, (2007: 69) in their study of the impact of access to microcredit on women irrespective of who controls the loan suggests a strong correlation with women's access to credit and increases the exercise of purchasing power, increase in material assets in their name and high level of awareness. Also it is also associated with high rate of mobility, political participation and involvement in major decision making.

Kabber, (2005:4709), in contributing to the debate in her analysis of the efficacy of income on poverty reduction and empowerment argue that making available financial resources just like any other resources signifies range of possibilities and do not presuppose any fixed outcome as a result of its presence. The array of possibilities that exists as a result of provision of financial services that may culminate to any outcome is contingent on a lot of factors ranging from "the philosophy that governs their delivery, the extent to which they are tailored to the needs and interests of those they are intended to reach, the nature of the relationships which govern their delivery ....the calibre and commitment of the people who are responsible for delivery". In essence Kabber contend that provision of financial resources must be paralleled with making the process of its provision and the context in which it is delivered to give rise to positive outcome.

More importantly, in the analysis she took a position that provides a broader space to ruminate on the complex nature of empowerment. She distinguishes between strategic needs and practical ones in respect to women. Strategic needs refers to the importance of reversing patriarchal structures that subjugate women such as coercive gender division of labour, of unequal control to resources, male violence to ensure women's control over their body and equal political opportunity. She argued that these structures are so entrenched that transforming them will take some time and thus focusing exclusively on them might give rise to downplaying the daily impediments that constrict their ability to exercise their agency.

This might also deter some women to take part in such efforts to achieve the long term strategic needs since they are confronted with the immediate problem of surviving. However, she notes that these practical and strategic needs do not in any manner oppose each other. In this sense, meeting the daily needs of the deprived women have the propensity to alter the environment in which they thrive and therefore constitute an important route to empowering them to subvert the entrenched structures that hinder them to live fully (Kabber, 2005:4710).

Moodie, (2008:455-456), took a different tack by looking at the relationship that exists between women within micro credit groups in India and understood microcredit groups as both economic and social project. He deplored the overwhelming focus on the economic benefit of participating in self help group and interest in the relationship between borrowers and their male relatives and contends that by doing so it "collapses the whole range of histories and social relationships that is worked out in microcredit groups". The study highlights that involvement in self help micro credit group constitutes an avenue for women to engage in various negotiations and protests and as such a platform for them to articulate their concerns collectively.

A thorough scrutiny of the diverse lines of argument above makes it obvious that empowerment activities directed to individual or collectives are not incompatible and each has its own capacity to contribute in evolvement of equitable society or improved wellbeing as the case may be. Apart from the preceding there is need not to play down or neglect individual experiences of the poor and marginalised. For instance, Beteille (1999) argue that powerlessness and deprivation manifests in different forms at different level such as community, household and individual. A society might be doing fairly good but some households might be worse off. Also, certain individual in well off household may be powerless and without economic security. Similarly, Sen, (1992) in his contribution broadly argue that the inherent diversity in human beings which is obvious in the different level of endowments and liabilities, differences in natural and social environment which shapes the need and opportunity of different individuals and above all the differences in personal characteristics such as age, gender, physical and mental ability demands attention in any intervention to evolve social transformation.

Kabber, (2005), insights on the multifaceted nature of women experience buttresses Beiteille's and Sen's contention above. In that despite the fact that women are all susceptible

to societal norms, beliefs, customs and values that differentiate them from men that manifests in domestic violence, restricted access to resources men's dominated decision making space. Understanding women powerlessness within this broader context of societal encumbrances will definitely attract immense support for collective empowerment argument. But then it must be realized that women experience these oppressive structures at varying degrees and differently in different societies and even within the same society. There is no convincing reason for one to believe that powerlessness experienced by a woman from a well to do family equates that which a woman that comes from a house where there is barely food to eat and resources to seek adequate health care. This complexity can also be seen in the fact that some women might tolerate violence on them not because they are not aware that it is unjust but because they do not have sustainable source of livelihood. Also some women that have adequate income may not be able to participate in decision making and even accommodate violence on them. This suggests that empowerment strategies that seek to expand individual productivity and choice making horizons do not necessarily amount to diminution of the importance of collective empowerment nor is it anathematic to the process of social transformation.

Also the discussion highlights that certain individuals will need material resources to boost their ability to control their life while others will need psychological resources to do so. There is no doubt that a woman that have access to income and cannot make effective decision will as benefit more from empowerment intervention that seek to build her psychologically by the way of raising her self esteem and confidence. While women that are dependent on their spouse for survival will need to be economically self reliant (Oxaal and Baden, 2007). Hence, intervention that seeks to build her esteem and confidence by the way of educating her on sexual rights might not be the best starting point. However, this is for argument sake in that there is the possibility that self esteem and confidence can enhance one's ability to access material resources. Conversely, access to material resources can build self confidence and esteem.

Stromquist, (1995:14-15), understanding the multifaceted nature of women disempowerment corroborates the notion that women empowerment should connote cognitive, psychological, economic and political dimensions. Cognitive aspect of empowerment entails women understanding the cause of their subordination. It demands "understanding of self and the need to make choices that may go against cultural or social expectations". Esteem it involves

knowledge about legal rights and sexuality. The psychological aspect includes women believing that they can act at personal and social levels to improve their condition. It connotes escape from "learned helplessness" and development of self esteem and confidence. The economic aspect she notes that in as much as work outside the home increases women work burden, access to such work have the potential to enhance economic independence which is vital to independence in generally. The political aspect she argues connotes the ability to imagine one's situation and mobilize for social change.

In a similar thinking Rai et al, (2007) argue strongly that empowerment must be understood as including both individual consciousness (power within) as well as ability to work collectively with others (power with) that culminates to ability to engender social change (power to). In this sense, women individual empowerment has the propensity to propel women to work collectively on their own and there working collectively can equally strengthen their individual ability to deal with problems that confronts them individually. Strategies that will enhance the individual and collective ability of women to gain consciousness requisite to control productive resources necessary for autonomous decision include participation in education, health care and training. Sen, and Grown, (1988) in Rai, et al, (2007:11), recommends 'political mobilisation, legal changes, consciousness raising and popular education'.

In articulating these complexities, Moselade, (2005: 247) argue for understanding of the multifaceted nature of women disempowerment and suggests merging strategies as they will ensure that that women experience enhanced power relations in all levels and domains including household, community and market levels. Hence, neither collective nor individual empowerment should be singularly portrayed as the panacea to the multiple ways in which powerlessness manifests and diminish wellbeing of the poor and powerless.

Mohanty, (1995) deliberating on the concept of empowerment, stress that its alignment with economic growth within the globalization pursuit of neo-liberal advocates made it play a second fiddle role to growth. As empowerment became an idea to ensure that policies and investments are productive and profitable. Mohanty, (1995:1434) citing a World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen document, which reiterated that "..... Empowerment requires full participation of people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and well-being of our society" called for caution.

Mohanty argued that participation of people in already existing institution constitutes a subterranean agenda to subvert the politics which empowerment stands for.

Analysing the empowerment model that mobilize and organize people into informal groups, trade unions and cooperatives, Mohanty, contends that empowerment as such is disabling as it constitutes a strategy used to restrain and direct the politics of the poor and oppressed by the dominant forces in the society. Empowerment, civil society and democratisation which became a veritable vehicle on which liberalisation is pursued appear on the surface to be in line with the struggle of the people but in practice has been constricted to the whims of western capitalism. For instance, civil society that used to be categorically established on the consent of individuals based on property structure mutated into organised groups that pursue their demands in a pluralist democratic process, and the degree of market development assumed the defining feature of civil society development. The major aim being to ensure law and order in the society to allow economic growth, as such people that work towards replacing subordinating institutions are barred from participation since they will destabilize the process. Democracy in this incarnation becomes the reserve for the groups and individuals that concur to established rules to bargain in the democratisation process.

Mohanty, (1995) argue further that the giving of power to the people by the formal institutions as a result of mainstreaming of empowerment diminishes the possibility of the people below capturing power in the process of struggle. The implication of this is that focus on the salient issues that undermines dignified existence of the powerless which motivates their struggles becomes neglected. Hence the marginalization of the poor and powerless continues. Cornwall and Brook, (2007), articulates similar opinion and argue that the prominent place empowerment occupies in the policies and activities of governments, NGO's and development actors do not represent substantial disposition to build personal and collective power to evolve a just society.

However, despite the sympathy the argument of people below capturing power in the process of struggle evokes some scholars have debunked the argument with superior ones. Beteille, (1999) argue trenchantly that the idea of empowerment is imbued with theory of social change that connotes transforming a hierarchical society to a democratic one. This transformation has become very crucial in societies as it is viewed as a way to remedy inequality and evolve an equitable society. While this shift has taken largely a general

direction the pace and stages diverges from place to place. In essence, radical redistribution of power has not played the same part in all the shifts. Another alternative route to this transformation is change of value. For instance in Britain equality became a social value and a major component in the status of an individual. Thus, shifts from a hierarchical society to an equal one do not only come about by radical redistribution of power or adversarial posture to the existing structure. It can be also be achieved through expansion of citizenship by making equality a social value. Moreover, the French revolution that became a successful exemplary of radical redistribution of power fell short of achieving equality for all in France.

It is evident from the discussions above that deliberations on empowerment reflect differences in emphasis and agenda. Be this as it may, one can argue then that the crucial issue to appreciate is that empowerment is totally about engendering socio-political process that involves shifts in political, social and economic power between and across individuals. This concur to Oakley, (2009) contention that at the heart of these empowerment definitions is transforming existing patterns of power and recognizing the ability of the marginalized and oppressed to play active role in society. Taking the argument further Luttrell, et al (2009: 6) asserts that "understanding empowerment is intimately linked to addressing the causes of disempowerment and tackling disadvantages caused by the way in which power relations shape choices, opportunity and wellbeing". These arguments suggest that the concept of empowerment carries with it notion of positive change. Empowerment, whether, collectively or individually has desirable connotation and inherent capacity to improve the lives of the poor and marginalized. And be it through radical redistribution of power or change in values the crucial thing is changing the society through rearrangement of power.

These positive promises which the idea of empowerment carries have made it a mantra within the development discourse. The next section locates empowerment within the entire development discourse.

2.6   Empowerment in the Development Discourse

It is quite a herculean task to pin point a distinct theoretical root from which empowerment emanated from (Beteille, 1999). This has further made it difficult to create a clear cut understanding of empowerment or demarcation between empowerment and other similar concepts in the development field such as participation, capacity building, sustainability, decentralization and poverty reduction (Eade, 1997; Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007). However, the emergence of empowerment as a popular development topic is implacably knit with the

overall shift to alternative development or people centred development. The shift to people centred development received it impetus from the inability of the orthodox development theories (modernization and dependency theories) to improve the living standard of the World's majority (Friedman, 1992; Eade, 1997, Ferrinho, 1980).

Todaro, (1992: 99); Todaro and Smith, (2006:15-16) assert that development has been traditionally understood wholly in economic terms. This narrow understanding of development held sway for a very long period and as a result economic growth as espoused by modernization theorist has dominated development thinking for decades. At the core of this economic growth model is the understanding that development denotes "the capacity of a national economy to generate and sustain an annual increase in its gross national income (GNI) at the rates of 5% to 7%''. As a result, development was measured using growth rate of income per capita to ascertain the extent economies were able to broaden their output at a rate faster than the her population growth rate. Then the economic wellbeing of the population is measured by subtracting the inflation rate from the real GNI. To achieve economic growth the structure of production and employment have to be reordered in such a way that manufacturing and service sectors become advantaged more than the agricultural sector. This understanding gave rise to focus on rapid urban industrialisation at neglect of agricultural and rural areas.

This believe in growth is rooted in the assumption that rapid economic growth will trickle down to the people at the grass root in form of jobs and other economic opportunities that will increase their income (Todaro and Smith, 2006:16). Broadly speaking the economic growth model is analytically a top down approach to development with total emphasis on economic accumulation and democracy. The role of the government is to ensure favourable environment for growth to occur and democracy through which individuals exercises preferences which is important for market to work optimally (Weiner and Huntington, 1987). Rai, et al, (2007) articulate the understanding of development in this way as the prevailing understanding of power and empowerment then. As underdevelopment was understood as technical problem that can only be solved through the process of transferring western knowledge and values to the developing world.

Modernization theory came under severe criticism as its expected benefits became unrealistic (Eade, 1997), economic growth evidenced in rising GDP fell short of trickling down to the

poor, more people were in poverty instead of out of poverty and the democratic side turned to be an illusion as political repression heightened (Friedman, 1992, Todaro and Smith, 2006). It became palpable that the overwhelming focus on economic growth as the panacea to poverty reduction and route to achieving wellbeing is misplaced. In short, the awareness that poverty, inequality and unemployment grew simultaneously and proportionally with economic growth suggested that increase or decrease of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a measure of development is misleading and delusional (Friedman, 1992).

These generated immense critics of the dominant paradigm but however the critics did not really attempt to refute the assertion that development is contingent on growth. Rather the neo classical economists argued that state attempt to provide a good environment for growth distorted the prospects. The state intervention on the market process distorted capital, prevented private investment and created inefficient bureaucracy. In essence the motive to promote market stability has resulted to market failure. Hence, state should not interfere with the market operation. The neo Marxist on their part argued that state was held captive by the elites both internationally and nationally with the aim of sustaining a capitalist system that generates surplus for them. Furthermore, political instability rife in countries is better explained by the intention of the local elites to perpetuate exploitative system that undermines the majority of the masses. The argument of transferring knowledge and the counter thinking reflect the view that some people hold power over resources and thus a good manifestation of understanding of power over (Rai, et al, 2007).

However, Rai, et, al, (2007) in their submission contend that those that hold a benign understanding of power over (power to) deplore the way in which this idea of transferring knowledge obscures and stifle the voices, experiences and indigenous knowledge and contextual differences in developing nations. Consequently, they proposed an approach that will be based on merging western knowledge with the accumulated knowledge of the people in the developing nations whom development is intended for.

The range of criticisms and counter ones emanating from the bleak situation occasioned by the failure of dominant development theories gave impetus to increased activities by social movements inspired by the Freire's idea and that of liberation theology and subsequently prompted a search for different conceptual explanations/ or analysis for (under)development. This gave rise to the alternative development approach which represents a theoretical

departure from mainstream theories and a more broad based approach that capture the essence of development. The proponents of this alternative argue that if development is desirable, meaningful and worth striving towards, then it must be about improving the lives of the people, that there is no reason for the majority of the people to be barred from participating in the development process or even become victim of other people's progress (Friedman, 1992:9). Sen, (1999) concur to the abnormality of some people being trapped in poverty while some live in affluence and further contends that poverty of the people in itself is functionally problematic to the society and development institutions. At the core of the alternative model of development is what the Swedish Dag Hammarskjold Foundation (1975) cited in Friedman, (1992:3) describe as "humanization of man by the satisfaction of his needs for expression, creativity ...and for deciding his own destiny".

According to Sen, (1999:14-16) development should be about improving the lives of the people and the freedom they enjoy to choose the life they have reason to value. The lack of freedom to choose arises from many factors such as poverty which prevents the poor from having the freedom to lead long life. This is given that poverty results to limited access to adequate healthcare, clean water and other things that can enhance their freedom to live long life and they as a result die prematurely. It can also manifest in systematic denial of political liberty and basic civil rights. Thus "expanding the freedoms we have reason to value not only makes our lives richer and more unfettered, but also allows us to be fuller social person, exercising our own volitions and interacting with - and influencing – the world in which we live". Understanding development as increased freedom to make choice entails that political liberty; civil liberty and economic security are jointly important and enhance ability to chose. In this sense income and commodities it can purchase are mere contributory factors to human freedom and wellbeing and as such focusing on growth alone as the only way to promote wellbeing is misleading. Then it follows that it is deemed repression even when one have adequate income without political liberty and civil right to contribute in shaping society in which one lives. At the centre of Sen's contention is that the advancing the basic freedom people have is simultaneously a means and end of development. Put differently the wellbeing of the people is the aim of development and this goal should be achieved by the people.

As a result of this development was redefined within the major United Nations specialized agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF and UNRISD and other development agencies as a

"process by which vulnerabilities are reduced and capacities are increased" (Eade, 1997:13; Friedman, 1992). Hence, development has to be evaluated not exclusively on the basis of economic growth but also within the political spectrum of freedom, equality and human wellbeing (Mohanty, 1995).

Initially, alternative development as advocated by those that hold the view that the state is venal aver that broad based political and economic development cannot be achieved by state led initiatives but rather people at the grassroots should mobilise politically and generate income and employment. And there activities have to be autonomous and independent of all dominant institution at the top. In this sense alternative development constitutes development from below and any intervention from the state will jeopardize and corrupt its prospects. Hence NGO's focused on the local terrain deemed the privileged terrain of the disempowered. The emphasis was on households being an elementary part of the civil society that engage in the struggle to improve their livelihood. Hence, they need social, political, economic and psychological power to realize this aim. However, this restriction to local level and solely to NGO endeavour is problematic in the sense that NGO's do not formulate policies it is the state that does. And as such their activities might not be able to engender substantial change in power relations and even when it does its impact might not go beyond the locality in which it started. Then it suffice to assert that enhancing the disparate forms of power people need to improve their livelihood, requires a strong state that is accountable to its citizens, that recognises the needs and established right of the citizen (Friedman, 1992).

In this sense alternative development ceased to be exclusive reserve of NGO's and took the form of growing collaborations between governments, NGO's and business firms (Nederveen Pieterse, 2001:84). Understood in this form, alternative development approach is about changing the existing national strategies towards politics of inclusive democracy, appropriate economic growth, gender equality, and good governance (Friedman, 1992:34; Rai et al, 2007:9). It is also investing in the ability of the poor and marginalized to control their life and make choice. This will need removal of formal and informal institutions that prevent the poor and marginalized from taking actions to improve their wellbeing (Narayan, 2002). Making the formal institutions more responsive to the condition of the people entails accountability, grassroots participation in governance and most importantly listening to and learning from the poor (World Bank 1999 in Rai, et al, 2007:9).

By so doing mainstream development appropriated the ideas and practices of alternative development as participation and empowerment has become an important language of the mainstream development actors. It is quite cumbersome for any project to go sail through without paying substantial consideration to the concerns of the people it is intended for and seek their cooperation in planning and implementation of the project (Rai, et al, 2007).

The result of this agreement has led to embarking on series of social, political and economic process to bring about equality in the society (Friedman, 1992). National governments enshrined in the constitution the equality of every citizen irrespective of their social and economic status Mohanty, (1995) as a way to remedy the unequal power relations in the society and policies that will build the capacity and opportunity of the poor and marginalised became one of the basic aspiration of national governments (Friedman, 1992). The World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen cited in Mohanty, (1995:1434) notes "in both economic and social terms, the most productive policies and investments are those which empower people to maximize their capacities, resources and opportunities". It suffices that creation of rights and opportunity is inadequate if these opportunities and rights cannot be used by the poor and marginalised. Hence, building the capacity of the people to enable them use the existing opportunities and assert their right becomes important.

It is important to point out that alternative development model have not gone without criticism. Nederveen-Pieterse, (2001: 78-79) articulates a critique of this model and argue that "..... reflects certain normative orientations, follows disparate theoretical strands, is influx, not fully developed, and its status remains unclear". He asserts that the popularity of alternative development is rooted in the fact that it emergence coincided with a crisis in development thinking. And therefore do not proffer a clear ideology nor draw the difference between alternative development and mainstream development. As shown herein the ideas of the alternative development has been adopted and practiced by mainstream development actors.

However, a close look at the redefinition of development gives a clear indication why empowerment became very popular within the development discourse. While the orthodox development theories did not recognise the people as active indispensable agents in the development process, the alternative approach recognised the people as the main propellers of the development process and beneficiaries of development outcome. Hence, there is need

to empower the people to be enable them to engender development and reap the benefits. According to Human Development Report (1995:12) "development must be by people, not only for them. People must participate fully in the decisions and processes that shape their lives". Apart from the intrinsic importance of people participating in decisions that affect their lives, their participation have instrumental value as it will result to enhanced developmental outcomes like good governance and accountability. Korten, (1997:36) assert that in this development paradigm that the initiative of the people is the main developmental resource while increasing their mental and material welfare is the main objective. Nederveen-Pieterse, (2000:369) argue that agency which is the ability of the people to effect change has been recognised and efforts are mainly directed to increasing it through removal of institutional obstacles and increasing their capacity.

Increasing the ability and opportunity of the poor and marginalised to control their lives calls for enhancement of their social, political and psychological power. These forms of powers mentioned here coalesce with the forms of powers discussed above. Social power can be understood as power to – building of capacity by the way of skills formation and knowledge provision that will enhance access to bases of production which in turn will enhance financial recourses. It can also entail making individual decisions that affect their wellbeing. Political power can also be understood as power with- people being able to mobilise build alliances and coalitions to take part in the political processes. Psychological power can be understood as power within- awareness raising and building of self-esteem. This is best described as sense of potency and where present it is demonstrated in self-confident behaviour. These different forms of power are deeply interconnected and build each other, as psychological empowerment can occur as a result of social and political empowerment. While an increase in psychological power increases the ability of individuals to gain social and political power (Friedman, 1992).

The Freiraian approach remains prominent in today's development thinking and specifically to empowerment thinking and practice. In the development arena it is believed that the knowledge of the poor and marginalized is crucial in any development initiative and they can contribute to the evolution of an equitable and prosperous society. As a result interventions to enhance the capacity of the people to effect change in their lives and the society often engage in raising the consciousness of the poor and marginalized to strengthen the position of their positions. This is done through health education, awareness raising by the way of educating

the poor and marginalized on existing laws that protect them. In conjunction with this interventions also seek to improve access to income by linking the poor to credit facilities and improving their skills to take up opportunities in the market arena which will increase their economic wellbeing. Hence the whole idea is to enhance the freedom of the poor and marginalised to choose and control their lives (Eade, 1997).

However, the multifaceted nature of empowerment as reflected in the diverse definitions it attracts has subsequently attracted many measurements and methodological issues to identify changes brought about as a result of empowerment interventions. Nevertheless, authors like Malhotra (2002) in Swain, (2007:65), Alsop and Heinsohn, (2005), argue that the huge interest and investment that trails the identification of empowerment as a primary developmental goal has not in any way seen development of rigorous methods to track changes in level of empowerment. Alsop and Heinsohn, (2005:5) contend that "project teams and governments still lack the tools necessary for determining whether and how projects and policies aimed at empowering stakeholders reach their intended goals''. The next section discusses the complexities of measuring or identifying changes in level of empowerment.

2.7   Issues in tracking and identifying empowerment level

As noted definitions of empowerment diverge but also share similarities which are palpable on their convergence on the critical importance of agency and the need to transform the institutional structure to enable the people to exercise fruitful agency (Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007). Though, the degree of emphasis varies. More importantly some scholars has interrogated the idea that empowerment is measurable not to talk of measuring it against particular preset outcome. For instance Kabber, (1999:436) deliberating on the pitfalls inherent in attempting to measure empowerment point to the logical disconnection between processual understanding of empowerment with the current proclivity to measuring empowerment outcomes in studies. The disconnections stem from replacement of the "intrinsic argument for feminist goal with instrumentalist ones", which in turn necessitate quantification and measurement of empowerment. This disposition to measure empowerment has further diminished the probability of capturing the complex forms in which empowerment occurs.

However, Ibrahim and Alkire, (2007), deliberations suggest that in measuring empowerment, what is focused on depends on what emphasis is on. Drawing from Sen and Kabber exposition they opine that empowerment can be understood as expansion of agency: the

freedom to lead the type of life one value and reason to value and the ability to make choice and accomplish it. Despite this seeming simple understanding of empowerment practical attempts to decipher the level of empowerment is riddled with diverse views on how it should be done. Some scholars focus on measuring directly the choices people make while some deem changes in resource and institutional structures more critical. A focus on the later entails measuring the level of change in resources endowments both material social, psychological and changes in formal and informal rules that enhance the capacity to make choice or leading the type of life one values. While a focus on the former denotes looking at the meaningful choices one makes.

Be this as it may, it makes more sense to transcend this disparate understanding of what to lay emphasis on though important it will only lead one to focus on identifying changes in resource endowments or on deciphering changes in the level of agency. Rather, one should be more conscious of the complexity of the concept in trying to track changes in empowerment level. This resonates in the fact that even Sen, (1985) and Kabber, (1999) cited by Ibrahim and Alkire, (2007) in their attempt to further their case of measuring agency directly did not attempt to underplay the importance of the resources and the institutions that will enable people to exercise their agency.

According to (Sen, 1985 in Kabber 1999:438) the freedom to lead the type of live one value is reflected in the persons capability set and this capability is dependent on variety of factors that include personal characteristics and social arrangement. While "functioning" refers to all possible ways of being and doing which are valued by the people in a given context and "functioning achievements" refers to the particular ways of beings and doings realized by an individual in a given context. Nevertheless Sen, (1992) deliberated on the implication of focusing on functioning achievement on the belief that equal holdings of resources will translate to equal functioning achievement. Expanding on the idea of capability Sen argues that individual's ability to convert resources into functioning achievement will depend on a lot of factors ranging from intricate social interaction as well as divergence in physical attributes.

Kabber, (1999:437-438), points out that the ability to make choice is determined by three interrelated dimensions, resources, agency and achievements. Resources (defined broadly to include material, human and social resources). Agency connotes not just observable actions

but also meanings, motivations and purpose that underlie observable action. She argue further that in operationalising agency as decision making attention should be paid to other forms of not so measurable aspects in which decision making can take place such as negotiations, deception and manipulation. Achievements entail wellbeing outcomes. And it is resources and agency that together constitutes the ability to make choice which is deemed capabilities by Sen.

The understanding of achievement as wellbeing outcomes also posses another complex problem in trying to understand the difference between agency achievement and wellbeing achievement which in turn complicates and obfuscates what exactly should be paid attention to in evaluation of empowerment experience. As not all achievements leads to wellbeing and moreover individuals have goals they value that may or may not link to their wellbeing. Hence, Sen, (1992: 56) distinguished agency achievement from wellbeing achievements. He argue that agency achievement entails realization of goals and values one has reason to strive for, not minding if they will increase their wellbeing. Despite, the foregoing argument, it must be noted in as much as these two can be separated they are not entirely independent of each other, as most times the most important strivings of individuals are mostly towards their wellbeing.

The difficulties in trying to ascertain changes in empowerment level whether one decides to focus on wellbeing or agency achievement as highlighted by Ibrahim and Alkire, (2007:15) is if exercise of agency and subsequent achievements should be ascertained by looking at what people value or the power they have even if they don't value it. This scenario was illustrated by describing a situation where a woman takes major decision in the house because the husband is ill but otherwise would have loved to make decisions jointly. The forgoing brings out the importance of appreciating the differences between agency achievement and wellbeing achievement. Thus, bringing to light the pitfalls in the assumption that freedom to choose from multiple choices and making decisions are always necessary precondition to wellbeing improvement. Sen, (1992:59) motivate that decision making comes with cost and too "more freedom of choice can bemuse and befuddle, and make one's life more wretched". Also an increase in one's ability to strive after the goals he or she value can give rise to reduced wellbeing. Understood in this form, not only the issue of whether to focus on what one values and or the power one have but also the diminishing of wellbeing that may arise from taking on so much task.

However, Sen, (1999) suggests that in ascertaining the freedom people have to lead valued life there is need to focus on certain universal valued functioning's that encapsulates basics for survival and wellbeing such as proper nourishment, good health and shelter. In this suggestion Sen took cognisance of the fact that there exists preference and priorities and argue that in the event of systematic differences in basic functioning achievements that it should be understood as inequality in the underlying capabilities rather than preferences or priority. In other words if the failure to achieve universal valued beings and doings is related to individual preferences and priorities then it becomes inappropriate to talk of power or "unfreedom". Then it follows that disempowerment exists only when there is inequality in the capacity to choose.

Similarly, Kabber, (1999) subscribe partially to this argument but caution that restricting functioning achievement to those universal basic functioning presupposes that inability to make choose derives solely from poverty and as such tantamount to neglecting other functioning's that people may value in there context. In essence Kabber argue that rich women might achieve these basic functions but might be unable to make desired choice in some areas of their life. Arguing on the complex nature of functioning achievement Kabber stress that care must be taken to focus on achievements that really entails change in empowerment. She contend that indicators such as improvement of child's wellbeing do not constitute a valid indicator in that child care in almost all the societies falls within the traditional role women are known to preside over. And as such its improvement entails strengthening already existing traditional gender roles and not necessarily changes in power relations.

The complexity involved in ascertaining functioning achievement also applies to deciphering changes in exercise of agency. This is because there are certain decisions that are known to be prerogative of women. In addition to this Kabber (1999) deliberation on the manipulative and deceptive form of agency point out that renegotiation of power relations within the family also involves changes in the informal decision making process with some women opting for a private form of empowerment and thus retaining the public image of men intact within the current norms of the society.

What Kabber's exposition brings to our consciousness is the need to take into consideration the contextual differences in trying to track changes in empowerment level. For instance even

if child care fall within the established women traditional role, one will be short sighted to assume that all women have the same ability needed to enhance their child's wellbeing. Taking this into consideration one can aver that an increase in child's wellbeing without doubt constitutes a vital achievement to women that previously was not able to improve their child's wellbeing. This equally applies to tracking changes in agency exercise, in that in as much as women are known to take decision on expenditures on food and house upkeep, it will be rather awkward for one to assume that all women make this decision in there different households (Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007).

In articulating these challenges in tracking the level of empowerment irrespective of where emphasis is on. It is important to take into consideration contextual imperatives and individual experience. Ibrahim and Alkire (2007), suggests selecting indicators that can be compared across contexts such as basic functioning's as advanced by Sen and those that reflect contextual and individual preferences. For instance, indicators for achievement should include shelter and good health as these are achievements anyone in any context values and contextual indicators should be combined with them. Similarly indictors for real exercise of agency should include decision in child bearing, child education, whom to marry, working outside and purchase or sale of major household assets. As they reflect adequate change in exercise of agency when compared to decisions such as expenditure on food and household upkeep.

Despite these complexities recent work by a research group in the World Bank to track empowerment provides a comprehensive analytical framework to identify empowerment process and outcomes. The next section discusses the World Bank Empowerment Framework.

2.8   The World Bank Empowerment Framework

Empowerment in the World Bank Framework entails the process of enhancing group and individual capacity to make effective choice; that is translating choices made into desired actions and outcomes (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:6; Alsop, Bertelsen and Holland, 2006). The framework identifies domains and level of empowerment. The domains in which empowerment take place are state, market and society. An individual is understood to have different roles in each domain; a civic actor in the state, economic actor in the market and a social actor in the society (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:12). The three domains are further divided into eight sub domains. (a) the domain of the *state* is divided into sub-domains of

justice, *politics* and *service delivery;* (b) the domain of *market* is divided into sub-domains of *credit*, *labor* and *goods* (both for consumption and production); (c) the domain of *society* is divided into sub-domains of *family* and *community* which, depending on the context, can include clans, tribe, extended family etc. (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:11-12).

People experience the domains at different levels namely local, intermediary and macro. A level is described to be an administrative boundary. Hence, the degrees of empowerment people experience vary according to the interplay of domains and levels. Local is understood to be a village or the immediate vicinity to which a person or group belongs; intermediary connotes a familiar vicinity but which is not encroached upon on everyday basis, for instance, region; *macro* is further away from the individual and is likely to be national (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:13). Hence, in trying to assess empowerment occurring at different levels, the framework further differentiates between individual and group empowerments.

Alsop and Heinsohn (2005:35-38) state that the differences are made based on the target of interventions whose empowerment outcome is assessed; resultantly, different indicators are designed. The independent factors that are hypothesized to explain the degree of empowerment are agency and opportunity structure. Agency is defined as the capacity to make meaningful choice. This capacity to make purposeful choice is generally understood to be determined by individual assets (such as land, housing, livestock, savings) and capabilities of all types: human (such as good health and education), social (such as social belonging, a sense of identity, leadership relations) and psychological (self-esteem, self-confidence, the ability to imagine and aspire to a better future), and by people's collective assets and capabilities, such as voice, organization, representation and identity. The opportunity structure refers to the "broader institutional, social, and political context of formal and informal rules and norms within which actors pursue their interests". In other words, the opportunity structure is what enables (or not) agents to become effective. A favourable opportunity structure that allows people to make use of their resources effectively is important. And favourable opportunity structure entails equitable rules and expanded entitlements (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005; Saman, , and Santos, 2009:3). Ascertaining the level of resource endowments and the operation of the opportunity structure constitutes intermediary indicators of empowerment. However, its analysis can suggest the extent which an actor or group is empowered. But the degree of empowerment can also be directly

deciphered by assessing the existence of choice, and if the choice resulted to desired outcome.

There is the possibility to apply the World Bank empowerment framework both at the intervention and national level. For the purpose of this study, however, there is a need to limit the application to the local level where NGOs make interventions and have higher possibilities of influence. Given the operation scope of Zonkee Community Development Centre, it would be beneficial to focus on the domain of society particularly households and community. But some aspects of the programme operations are unavoidably linked to the domains of market and state and have some level of impact. Hence, attempts will also be made to capture such issues to allow for comprehensive analysis.

2.9   Operationalizing empowerment

Though empowerment has been at the centre of recent re-conceptualization of development, yet making this concept operational in program/project context remains elusive (Laverack, 2001:134; Singh and Titi, 1995:6). In this study the World Bank empowerment framework is adapted to suit the aim of the study. In this study endowment of resources and the capacity to make choice are variables that are independent of each other. This understanding deviates from the World Bank empowerment framework stipulation that resource endowment equates agency. While the idea of seeing resource endowment as a strong determinant of exercise of agency is plausible, it does not follow that increase in resource will definitely give rise to increased agency and even if it does it is not certain that it will contribute equally to different individuals' agency. In this sense endowment of resources in this study is independent of the agency which is understood as the capacity to make decisions or choices. Given the operational scope of the Zonkee, focus will be on the domains which their activities have higher possibilities to influence such as the society domain, most especially family and the micro level but also efforts will be made to capture all the domains and levels which the activities of the programme are unavoidably linked to.

However, having some aspects of resources, and decision making which the programme is likely to have impact upon in mind, the following indicators are formulated for each variable to understand how it has changed as result of participation in the programme. The indicators are chosen based on two main criteria; (1) indicators which have direct bearing on those aspects likely to be impacted by the activities of the programme (2) necessary data that can realistically be gathered from the field.

Attempt will be made to understand the changes in the individual resources and capabilities of the participants as a result of programme activity. This will be followed by trying to understand how the resources translated into increased capacity to make choice and decision over matters of concern to them. Taking into consideration the scope of programme under investigation material, informational, financial and human assets and capabilities will be considered. The indicators for informational asset are (a) awareness of existing laws protecting women against violence, (b) awareness of reproductive health issue, (c) awareness of credit facility and procedures to access it. For the material assets, indicators are ownership of assets such as house and durable goods. Human assets indicators are increased skills and education. Financial resources are increase in income and employment as a result of programme activity. Consequently, the study formulates questions that will help understand the presence or quality of these resources before and after participating in the programme.

The indicators for the exercise of agency will capacity to make choice are the ability of the participants to make personal and household decisions that concerns them. (a) Such as participants choice on the way her income and the household income is being spent, (b) participant choice and control over reproduction such as family size, child spacing and contraceptive use, (c) the ability of the participant to resist gender based violence in the family and outside by the way of speaking up to the husband, leaving the husband, seeking help from outside like the authorities, (d) the ability of the participant to make decide on the type of work to do at home. Questions that seek to elicit information on the ability to make personal decisions and choices and the outcome of the decisions and choices are formulated. This questions will seek to ascertain the extent which the participants have the autonomy and control over their decisions and choices.

Independent variable opportunity structure will be assessed by looking at the existence and operation of formal and informal structures that enhance the use of resources allow them to use make use of these resources. The indicators will be existence of formal and informal rules that enhance or impede the exercise of agency as will be identified by the participants. This might include laws that protect women from domestic violence and provides equal treatment of men and women (b) extent to which women is treated equally under the law in practice. Also the presence and operation of societal norms and values that shape behaviours will be identified and analysed to understand how it operates before and after participating in the programme, (a) perception of men/women that domestic violence is acceptable. The

existence and operation of formal and informal rules can also be deciphered by analysing the pattern of choices and decisions the women do make before and after their participation in the programme.

With this general background, the variables are operationalized by linking the programme activities with the indicators. Resource indicators have been chosen with the following justification; (a) the programme have possibilities of improving informational assets either by directly providing them to the public or via improving an individual's material/financial resources which increase people's ability to gain access to information sources: (b) it can also increase people's material assets by increasing people's capacities to own them or have sustainable use right; (c) they can also improve financial assets by delivering financial resources themselves or increase people's access to the market by creating capacities; (d) The are assumed to improve human assets through diverse health and education activities. Opportunity structure indicators are mainly confined to norms, cultural practices, customary laws and government regulatory laws to which the programme activity has better chances of influence. The capacity to make choice can be deciphered from the women's possibilities of having choice and being able to make desirable decisions and achieving them. This can also be assumed to be the manifestation of empowerment. Having these justifications for the indicators in mind, it is assumed that Zonkee in the first place, fell short of empowering the participants given their inability to increase the resources, and choice making capacity of the participants. The following research questions are deduced to test the aforementioned hypothesis.

(a) What is the participant's nature of powerlessness and how do they perceive change in their situation as it relates to the programme activities? (b) To what extent have the programme activity been able to improve the different resources of the participants? (c) To what extent did the programme influence the development and growth of individual participants? (d) To what extent did participation in the programme enhance the ability of the women to make desirable choice and decisions?

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has critically and reflectively engaged literatures on empowerment. It brought to the light the diverse definition and understanding of empowerment and the contexts that shaped the disparity in understanding it. And demonstrated that the idea of empowerment in any form it is understood is about bringing about equality by enhancing the ability of the

powerless to take control of their lives. Furthermore, it highlighted the challenges which confront efforts to understand empowerment in a programme project context. Finally, what empowerment entails in this study is discussed. Having, done this the next chapter proceeds with discussion of the steps taken to provide insights into the research aim and objectives.

3   CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

This chapter outlines and discusses the methodology applied to provide insight into the research problematic and objectives. It begins with a description of the research design. This is followed by discussion of the process of access seeking and gaining, sample size and procedure, research tools and procedures used for data collection. The method applied to analyse the data is discusses. This was followed by discussion of the ethical consideration.

3.2   Research Design

This study used the two dominant approaches to social science research, namely quantitative and qualitative methods in providing insight into the study problematic and objectives. The blending of the two methods is necessitated by the multifaceted nature of the phenomena under investigation which enhanced collection of robust information to address the research aim.

The quantitative research methods which allows for statistical manipulation of numbers derive from the positivist epistemology that supposes the existence of single objective reality that can be observed, known and measured. While qualitative research methods are concerned with understanding not measuring of phenomena. It is fundamentally interpretive and the people under investigation are conceived as self directing, thinking beings that are continually engaged in constructing and changing interpretations of their world.

Hence, qualitative approach derives from the interpretivist epistemology that supposes existence of multiple realities resulting from different meanings social actors attach to their situation and actions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:270). The researcher believes that qualitative approach is very critical in addressing the thesis research problematic as it allows the researcher to draw close to the people under investigation to be able to understand and interpret their world. This is also given the flexibility which getting closer to the research subjects offers like reframing and adjusting questions to suit and grasp emerging situations in the field. Hence, using qualitative approach allowed the researcher to focus on the subjective experience of the participants and the contexts that shaped their individual and collective interactions. Hence, the study did not just focus on counting and quantifying patterns of human behaviours.

3.3   Access, seeking and gaining

It is germane to mention that Zonkee Community Development Centre was not the NGO which the researcher intended to investigate its impact on the participants. The programme originally intended to study its impact on the participants was the Women In Need programme (WIN) which is a programme under the umbrella of Catholic Welfare Development. However, this could not be achieved as the WIN programme coordinator was reluctant and finally said that the nature of their programme is not in line with the study objectives and moreover the women will be difficult to locate. She finally directed me to Bon Espereance programme in Wynberg, on getting to the place the programme refused to grant access. The researcher got in contact with the programme coordinator of IDOHSA an umbrella programme of many empowerment programmes and he directed the researcher to Zonkee in Gugulethu. The access to Zonkee though a little easier was not without difficulties as the programme director was welcoming we had a discussion on the nature of the study. However, she was hesitant in giving the contact details of the participants who are no longer active participants in the programme. This did not deter the researcher as she explained that it will be invading their privacy and rather suggested working with the women that are currently in the programme. The researcher was hesitant and insisted that the ones that have passed out of the programme are better subjects to study.

However, be this at as it may the programme administrator was corporative and demonstrated her willingness to assist by informing the researcher of their upcoming annual anniversary which most of the current and out gone participants are expected to attend. And further, suggested that it will be a better ground for the researcher to establish personal relationship with the participants. On the annual anniversary day the researcher attended and meets with majority of the women that participated and exchanged contact details with them.

3.4   Population, Sample size and procedure

The study initially targeted forty six respondents which comprises of forty five women that participated in the programme from on start as the programme record shows and the programme coordinator. The targeting of the whole population that participated in a period was to make the process fair and as objective as possible. This will minimize the problem of trying to equate the impact of a programme on a newly involved participant as well as mitigate the possibility of programme staff that might have the interest of presenting the success side of the programme by preselecting successful participants. As mentioned earlier the challenge presented with the refusal of the programme coordinator to give out the contact

details of these participants was overcome in the convergence of those that participated in the past and those that are participating presently. On that day the researcher established contact with fifteen older participants whom attended the annual celebration and they turned out to be instrumental to locating ten other participants that were in the programme with them by giving their contact detail and promised to contact them to inform them of the study so they will expect the researchers call.

An interview was scheduled with the women and out of the twenty five women, twenty one one on one interview was held while two interviews were carried out over the phone. The remaining two participants either did not honour interview schedule or did not answer their call which suggests lack of interest to participate in the study. After the interviews with the women an interview was scheduled with the programme coordinator which was held. On going through the response of the programme coordinator the researcher decided to include participants that do not fall into the first batch of the programme participants. This decision resonates in the fact that after the interview with the programme coordinator it was discerned that most of them have actually finished receiving training from the programme. While some were actually present employees of the NGO running the weaving and cloth making activity of the programme.

The people interviewed in the second round are based on convenience as the researcher was left with no option other than to interview the five women who are working the NGO after receiving training. As they identified and gave information about some women that participated in the programme with them who stays around Gugulethu the researcher contacted fifteen of them and seven more people were interviewed out of this second group as some showed lack of interest to participate. This brought the number of women interviewed in the second round to twelve. Overall the study was conducted with thirty six respondents, one programme coordinator and thirty five participants.

3.5 Focus areas of data collection

With the intention of providing sufficient and reliable answer to the research question collection of data in the field focused on the following important element:

a. To understand the quality of their resource endowment before and after participating in the programme

b. To understand how the changes in the resources derives from programme activity.

c. To understand how the changes in the resource enhanced capacity to make choice.

d. To understand the nature, circumstances that sustained their powerlessness.

e. To understand individual growth and development that occurs as a result of programme activity.

3.6   Instruments used in data collection

The study used different instruments to elicit information used in providing insight to the research problematic and objectives. These instruments are semi-structured interview, focus group discussion and unstructured observation.

3.6.1   Semi structured interview

A total of thirty six interviews were conducted to elicit information that will address the research questions. Out of the thirty six interviews two was carried out over the phone and the rest thirty four was one on one interview. The two interviews conducted over the phone were as a result of lack of chance on the part of the respondents to entertain interviews physically as they said they do not have the time. Through these interviews immense information was elicited from the respondents on how their participation in the programme has brought change in their lives. Precisely, using the interview the quality of their access and awareness to different informational resources was discerned. Also the nature of access to and changes to material, financial and human resources before and after participating in the programme was discerned. Furthermore, information on how they lived their lives before participating in the programme and changes that took place during and after participation in the programme was gathered. Hence, using this instrument the researcher was able to get information from the participants on the extent and how the programme activity changed their live by the way of enhancing their livelihood and ability to make decide on what they want.

Most of the interviews with the women were conducted in the company of an experienced research assistant who is fluent in English language and Xhosa language. The need for her assistance was based on the fact that the most of the respondents are not fluent in English which might fetter easy communication and understanding between them and the principal researcher who happen to be non Xhosa speaking. In minimizing the challenges presented by the situation it sufficed to recruit a research assistant who happens to be also a post graduate student in the University of the Western Cape.

Out of the forty four interviews one was with the programme administrator from whom information on the type of activities which the programme carried out to enhance the lives of

the participants, the type of powerlessness the participants experiences that made them eligible to participate in the programme. Also she pointed some specific cases where the programme activity brought significant changes in the lives of some participants. Given the ability to speak English fluently on the part of the programme administrator the interview was conducted in English which enabled deep communication and comprehension and allowing the researcher and the respondent to share information direct.

The information was recorded through combination of note taking and voice recording, where follow up was made through phone calls where in-depth clarification was needed.

3.6.2   Focus group discussions

Two focus group discussions were held in Gugulethu where majority of the respondents resides. The two focus group discussions were made up of ten and twelve respondents respectively. As Morgan (1997) suggests in Babbie & Mouton (2001) the use of this instrument offers the avenue to study a more robust interaction of the respondents on some salient themes that called for more interrogation rather than basing conclusion solely on the analysis of responses from individual respondents. Focus group discussions in this study were used to elicit more information which aided the understanding and clarification on some analogous and differing responses of individual respondents. Hence this tool was of critical importance in eliciting the respondent's inter-subjective understanding as mirrored in their opinions, mindset, thinking, experiences and expressions. During the discussion sessions the researcher was instrumental to provision of unambiguous description of the purpose of the discussion and ensuring adequate participation of all the participants. In the course of the discussions the participants often unintentionally drift into Xhosa language creating communication problem and inadequate understanding. In some sensitive issues the researcher intervenes by asking a question in English which brings the discussion back to English. But this as they continuously drifts the researcher left them to discuss as interrupting with question always to bring them to English might have effect on the quality of what they will say. This decision was taken given the presence of the research assistant whom followed up on some issues that needs to be probed further. The recorded discussions were given to two other people that speak Xhosa and English to translate and their translations are not different except for the choice of expression.

3.6.3   Unstructured Observation

The researcher employed unstructured observation in the field to collect necessary information that helped to illuminate the discussion from respondent. Particularly, the emotions expressed by the respondents when they address questions that bothered on their past life and the present life was recorded. The researcher asked for some photographs of the family and children for those respondents the interview was held in their house. However majority of them do not have old pictures. However the few respondents had older pictures and recent ones that illuminated some changes that have taken place in their life.

3.7   Presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data

In the data processing quantitative and qualitative approach was applied to make comprehensive sense of the extensive data gathered from the field. The data was classified and sifted to identify connections, processes and patterns.

The data was coded and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 that aided in generation of graphs used in the statistical descriptive analysis. Apart from the foregoing that entailed sort of quantitative analysis, the bulk of the data generated from the focus group discussions and open questions in the interviews were summarized and interpreted along broader categories of relationships and was again analysed along with the numerical data. As Mouton (2001:490) state "qualitative analysis concerns all forms of analysis of data that was gathered using qualitative techniques regardless of the paradigm that governed the research". It follows that the findings of the study are presented with numerical figures, graphs and percentages and in-depth findings which cannot be expressed in figures are giving qualitatively. As a result the qualitative information were interpreted and presented alongside the graphs depicting the statistical description. This process offered the avenue to present and discuss individual experiences and contextual differences of the participants. Effort was made to link the findings of the study with the wider existing theories and literatures in the discussion.

3.8   Ethical considerations

The researcher knows and understands the growing importance of ethics involved in undertaken social science research and adhered to it to his utmost best. To this end, the researcher sought and got permission from the relevant people and organisation which the research is based on without any form coercion and financial inducement. The participants were assured that their names will not be used and their responses will be treated with utmost

confidentiality. Above all they reserve the right and freewill to choose not to participate in the study in its entirety and not to answer any question they don't want to answer. And as such they can withdraw from the study any time it pleases them to do so. The respondents filled and signed the consent form to participate in the study for documentation purposes.

3.9   Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide the reader with a clear picture of the research design and the methodology used to collect data for this study. The methodology entailed an explanation of data collection tools and how they were applied as well as the reasons for the researcher's choice of these instruments. The sample size and technique, data analysis, interpretation and presentation, have also been discussed. The next chapter presents the findings and analysis simultaneously.

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4 CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the key empirical findings and analysis concurrently as it borders on providing insight to the research problematic and objectives. The chapter proceeds with presentation of the biographical characteristics of the respondents. After which the key findings are presented and analysed. The information from the project coordinator is presented along with that of the women participants. This is to bring to the fore the connection between the programme activity with the situation of the women. It is the appreciation of this connection that strengthened the analysis of the context and process which in turn shed light on the changes and impact of the programme activities on the participants which as a matter of fact is the main aim of the study.

4.2 Biographical characteristics of respondents

A sum total of thirty six responses were collected from the field. These responses came from thirty five women that participated in the programme and one programme coordinator. The participants are predominantly blacks (100%) with no White, Coloured or Indian /Asian. All speak Xhosa as their home language.

4.2.1 Age range of the respondents

Out of the thirty five respondents, 8.5% falls within the age range of 20-29, 54.29% falls within 30-39, 22.86% falls within the age of forty to forty nine, 11.4% falls within 50- 59 while the remaining 2.8% falls within sixty and above. The distribution is represented in the pie chart below.

Fig.4.2.1
Age group

44
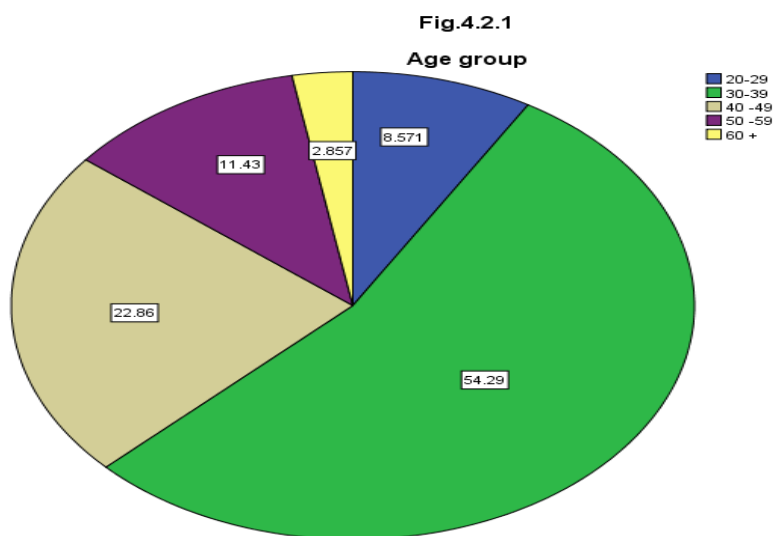
4.2.2 Marital status

Out of the thirty five respondents, 11.4% are single, 37.1% are married, 28.57% are divorced, 17.1% cohabits with their boyfriends and the remaining 5.7% are widowed. This chart below depicts this information.

Fig.4.2.2

Marital stautus
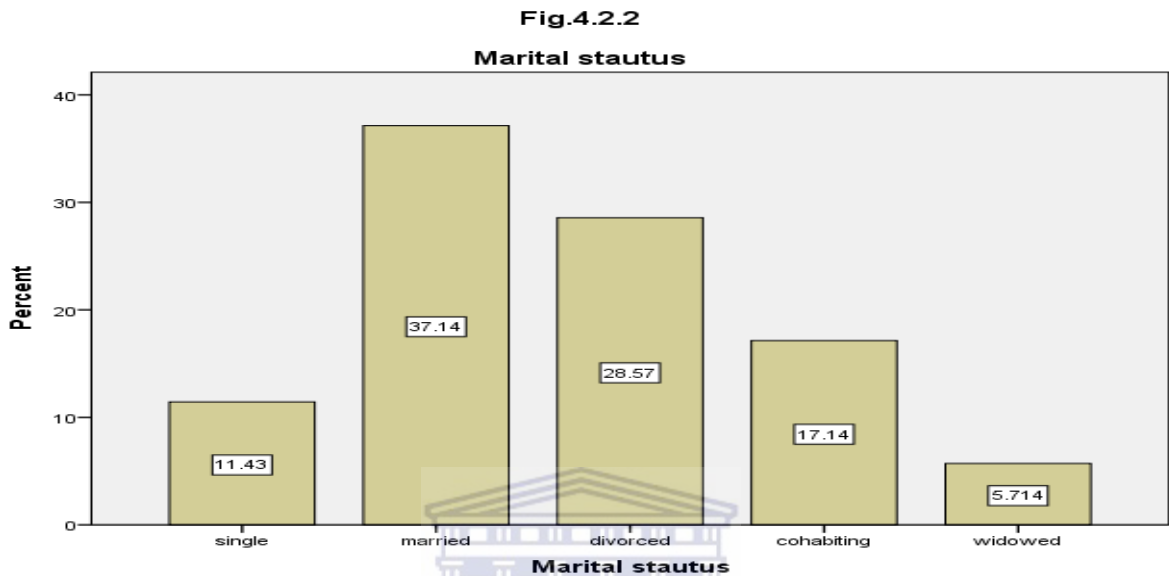
4.2.3 Educational profile

Out of the thirty five respondents, 45.7% have matric, 20% have diploma, and 8.5% have first degree while the remaining 25.7% have no form of formal education. The distribution is represented in the table below.

Fig.4.2.3

Educational profile
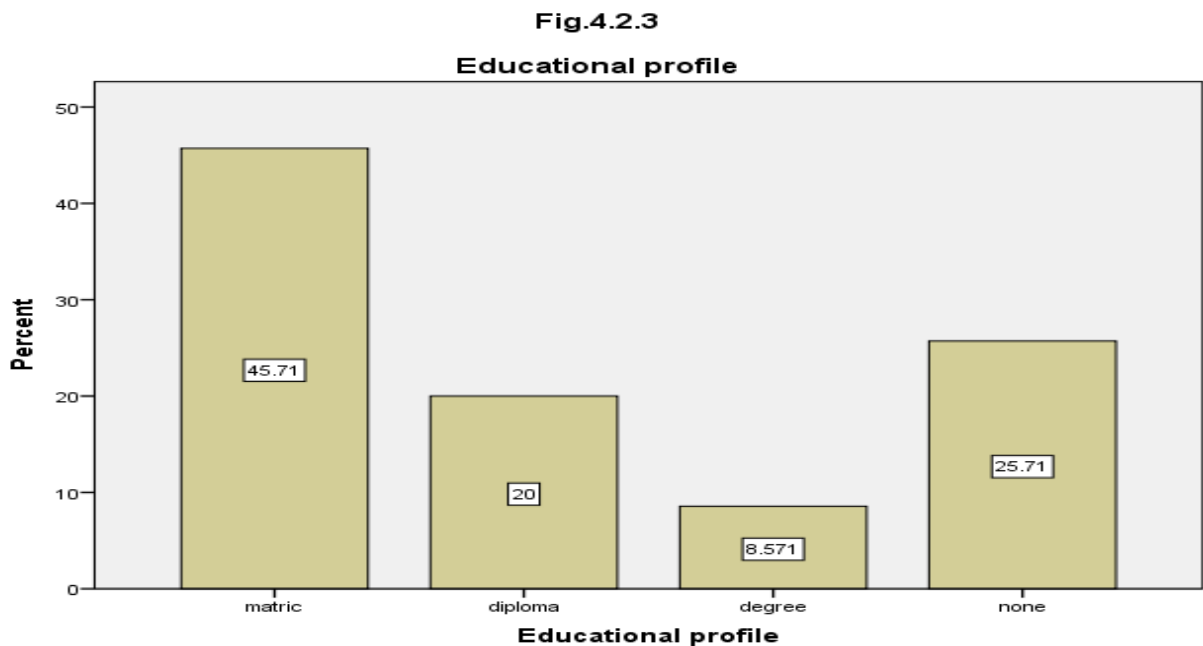
4.2.4   Employment status

Out of the thirty five respondents, 88.57% are fully employed while 11.43% are engaged in private trading. The chart below depicts this information.

Fig.4.2.4

Employment status
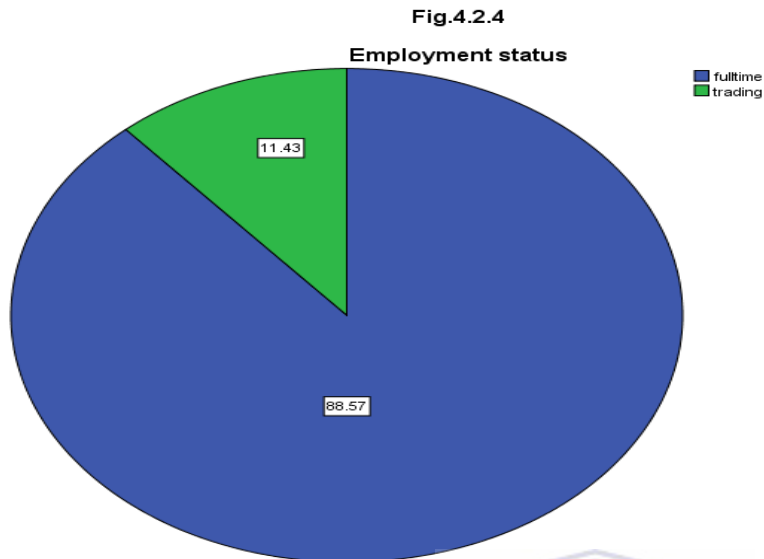
4.3   Q1a. List the type of information you deem empowering?

Out of the thirty five respondents interviewed, 85.7% responses were broadly the same on the type of information they deem empowering. The responses ranged from information on law protecting women from violence or denial of rights to health information and job related information. The remaining 14% gave no response to this aspect. However, there are differences in the degree to which they hold these different aspects critical to their empowerment. An overwhelming majority of the respondents identified lack of job/skill to have contributed to their powerlessness. And as such named job related information as more critical to their empowerment, some deemed access to information to law that protects them as very critical while some took access to contraceptive use and child spacing more empowering.

The pattern of their responses broadly is in line with the different type of powerlessness the programme coordinator perceived in the lives of the women in the process of working with them. She mentioned lack of job, low level of awareness to legal frameworks protecting them which is evident in the violence and injustices done to the respondents. Also high fertility rate that buttress minimal knowledge of contraceptive use. The differences in the contexts that shaped the understanding of a set of or a particular information empowering are articulated in the discussion chapter that comes after this.

4.4   Q6.b. Do you know any law protecting women from violence?

All the thirty five respondents (100%) reported having access to information on law protecting them from violence and denial of rights. However, the period differs as 71.43% of the total respondents reported having access to this informational aspect prior to participation in the programme while the remaining 28.57% reported gaining awareness during their participation in the programme. This distribution of their responses is shown below.

Fig.4.4.1

When did you gain access and awareness to information on law protecting you from violence.
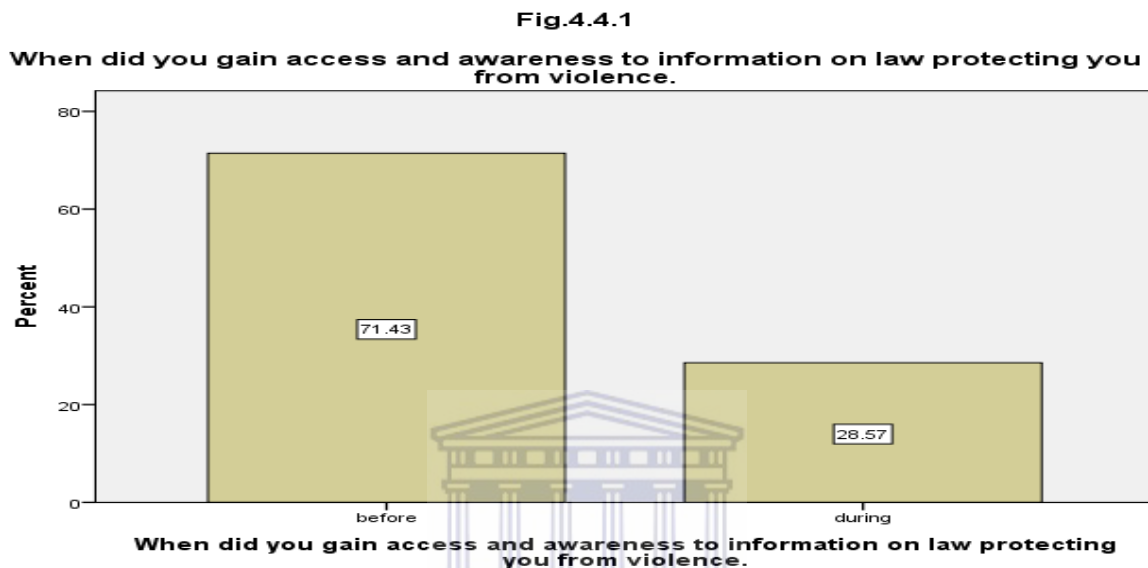
Within the 71.43% respondents that reported prior awareness to this informational aspect exists differences in the quality of the awareness. Overall thirty four respondents out of the total reported increase in the level of awareness on this informational aspect as a result of participating in the programme, though at varying degrees. The difference in the extent which they relate their increased awareness to the programme activity is captured in the multi choice answer that sought to understand the extent which the programme activity contributed to the reported change. Out of the total respondents 77.14% chose 4 (much), 11.43% chose 5 (very much), 8.571% chose 3 (little) the remaining 2.857% chose 1 (not at all) respectively. The chart below depicts this variance.

Fig.4.4.2

To what extent do you relate your awareness to inofrmation and violence to the programme activity?

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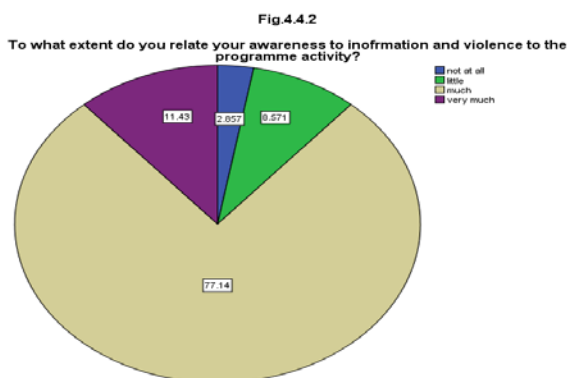
Further qualitative probing in interview and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to understand the nature of their awareness to this informational aspect before their participation and after yielded brought forward more responses that illuminated on this. To some of them calling police for their spouse based on violence is quite odd in their culture and the people frown at it. People that have done it are seen as being wayward. To some they do not know that the law is functional as they have never seen anyone that used it and as such they do not know how to go about reporting cases of violence on them or they thought it made no sense reporting as nothing will come out reporting. Two respondents narrated how their husband drove them out with the kids and got married to other women without compensation or official divorce. While some explained that they were helpless on how to go about divorcing their husband in the event of continued violence and flagrant infidelity on their husband part. But during participation in the programme their understanding of the how the law operates was expanded and they became aware on how to actually follow up violence on them.

Some responded that they came to understand that the law gives men and women equal opportunity no matter the culture one comes from. While those that was driven away without compensation sought redress and got justice. Some were able to institute divorce case against their husband successfully. A younger respondent narrated how her parent's property were confiscated by relatives and chased her away when she falls pregnant at the age of eleven. And she couldn't do anything because she doesn't know where to go or whom to report to. It was after her participation in the programme that she went back to Eastern Cape and recovered her parent's house.

All the respondents reported that their access to and increased awareness to this informational aspect was empowering though at varying degrees. The different choices they made in the multi choice answer question reflect the differing degree they felt empowered as a result of access to and or increase in this informational aspect. 43% of the respondents chose 4 (much) 37% chose 5 (very much) while, 20% chose 3 (little). This distribution of their responses is depicted in the chat below.

Fig.4.4.3

Extent empowered as a result of access to this infomation
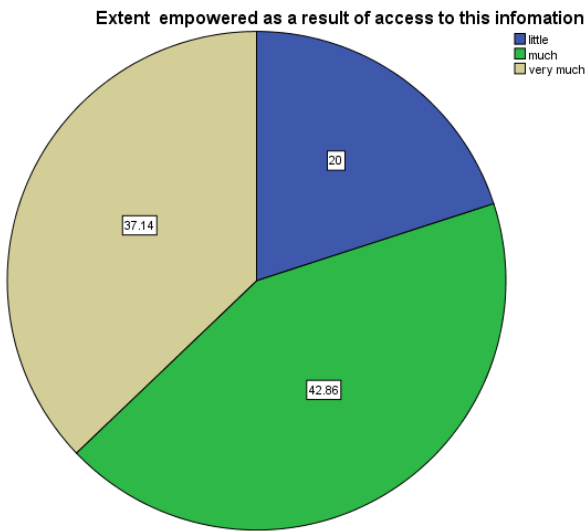
All the thirty four respondents that confirmed increase in their access and awareness to this informational aspect reported that the programme provided them access to these information directly while fifteen added that it was also indirect as they bought television where they watched some cases of women abused being handled and announcement that gave phone numbers to call on the event of violence of them.

4.5 Q.7.a Do have any knowledge of contraceptive use and child spacing?

All the thirty five respondents (100%) reported having awareness of contraceptive use and child spacing. 51.43% had access and awareness before their participation in the programme while the remaining 48.57% gained access to and awareness of this information in the process of participation. However, 97% of the respondents which comprises majority of the respondents that reported awareness prior to participation in the programme acknowledged increased awareness in this informational aspect as a result of participating in the programme. One respondent did not associate her awareness with the programme activity. The table below depicts their responses to when they had access to awareness to this informational aspect.

Fig.4.5.1

When did you gain access and knowledge of contraceptive and child spacing?
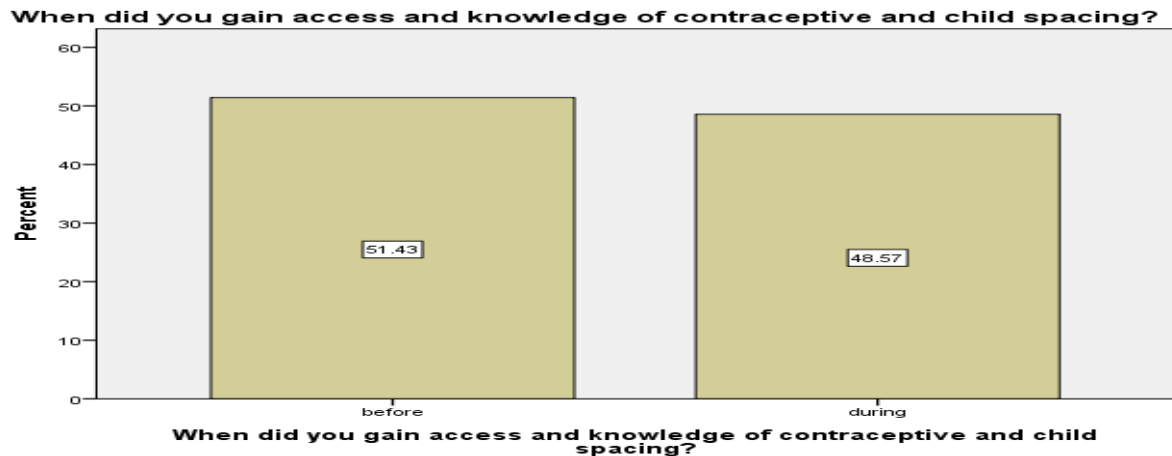
During the FGD discussions and further probing in the individual interviews to ascertain how come the increased awareness on the part of the respondents that have prior knowledge of contraceptive and child spacing it was found out that seventeen of them have shallow knowledge while one who is a professional nurse asserted adequate knowledge. Some of them explained that they only knew about condom and its use to prevent HIV. Some reported even not knowing how to use it. Some do not know what condom is and its use. In the course of their participation in the programme they learnt about pregnancy pills and injections and how to plan child spacing. Also some learnt about condom and its importance and they were thought how to use it. This is against the prior understanding among some that knew about condom that it is normally used by prostitutes and would not want to appear to their boyfriends like prostitute.

The responses to the multi choice answer provide the extent to which the participants relate their awareness in this informational aspect to the programme activity. 80% of the respondents chose 4 (much), 11.4% chose 3 (little), and 5.7% chose 5 (very much) while the remaining 2.9% chose 1 (not at all). The table below depicts this variance in their response in regards to the programme contribution to their awareness or increase in its level.

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Fig.4.5.2

Extent the programme contributed to their increased access and awareness to information on contraceptive and child spacing.

Extent the programme contributed to their increased access and awareness to information on contraceptive and child spacing.
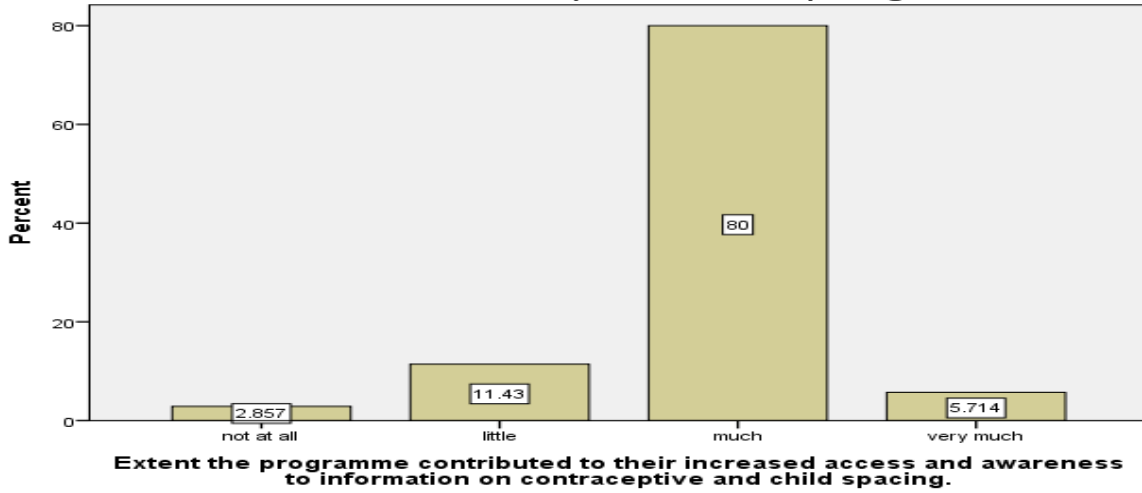
4.6   Access to Credit

All the respondents (100%) reported awareness of information on credit before participating in the programme. All thirty five respondents chose 1 (not at all) in the multi choice answer question that sought to understand the extent to which they deem their knowledge of credit and how to access it related to the programme activities. However, during the focus group discussions it was ascertained that most of them became able to access loan after they got employed as a result of programme activity. Few respondents point out that when they had no job they find it difficult to borrow money from people because they know they wouldn't be able to pay back. However, the situation has changed as they easily borrow money relatives and friends because they know they will be able to pay at the end of the month. Thus, in as much Zonkee did not have any pre-packaged activity to improve the awareness of the participants to in this aspect, their activity undoubtedly enhanced the ability of the participants to borrow money.

4.7   Material resources

In respect to material resources the participants listed house, house gadgets and income very expedient to enable people live with dignity and respect. However, all respondents reported having access to house and house equipments. However they are differences in their response to the question that sought to understand if the programme contributed to their access to material things. 54.29% of the respondents reported that the programme did not contribute to their access to house while 45.71% reported that the programme contributed. The chart below depicts the responses.

Fig.4.7

Did the programme contribute to your access to these material things?

Among the respondents that compose the 54.29% that reported no connection with their access to house with the programme are the thirteen married respondents, four respondents that cohabit, two widows and one divorcee. The thirteen married women reported to be living with their husband before and after their participation in the programme, the five that cohabits reported to be living with their boyfriends before and after while the divorcee reported ownership of her house and other thing before and after participation in the programme.

The remaining 45.71% of the respondents reported change of their nature of access to house as a result of programme activity. They were previously staying in family, relatives or husbands house. These respondents strongly relate their changed access to house with programme activity though in different ways. Three respondent points out that they became very much aware of their rights which prompted them to take up cases up with their ex husband that chased them away without divorce and in the process they got compensation that enabled them to rent or buy houses. Also the case of the young woman that dropped out of school at grade nine as a result of parent's death and have been living with relatives that took the houses and chased her out of the house when she fell pregnant at the age of thirteen. In the course of her participation in the programme she learnt her right and revisited perceived injustice done to her and got back her parents house. The remaining twelve respondents were able to buy or rent houses as a result of income occasioned from jobs or trade which they were able to engage in as a result of programme activity.

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4.8   Financial resources

In respect to financial resources all the respondents reported increase in their finance and relate this increase to programme activity though in diverse ways. 88.6% of the total respondents reported that they started earning as a result of the programme activity that linked them up with the labour market by securing them the opportunity to go receive training and job subsequently. 8.6% of the respondents linked their earning ability to them being able to legally recover what was denied to them by their parent's family and ex husband respectively from which they started their private business. The remaining 2.9% reported a more indirect but yet interesting way in which participating in the programme increased her financial resources. This respondent point out that increase in her financial position was a result of divorce with her husband which resulted in her being able to control her finances adequately.

However, they reported different level of their financial significance to their wellbeing. 77.14% chose 4 (much), 17.14% chose 5 (very much) while 5.7% chose 3 (little). The chart below shows the differences in their choice in multi choice answer to the question on the degree in which their finance is significant to their wellbeing.

Fig.4.8
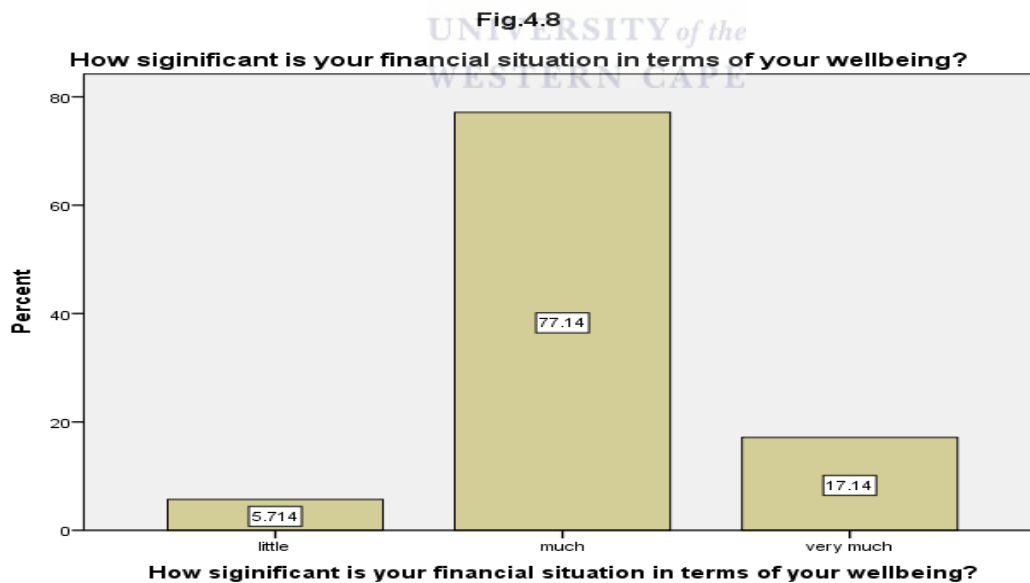
4.9   Human assets

All the respondents reported having skills that enhance their livelihood. However, they reported differences in the period they acquired these skills and the extent they relate it to programme activity. 85.71% reported acquiring their skills during their participation in the

programme; 11.43% reported acquiring their skill after while the remaining 2.857 reported having her skills before participating in the programme. The chart below explains this pattern.

Fig.4.9.1

When did you acquire the skills you have?
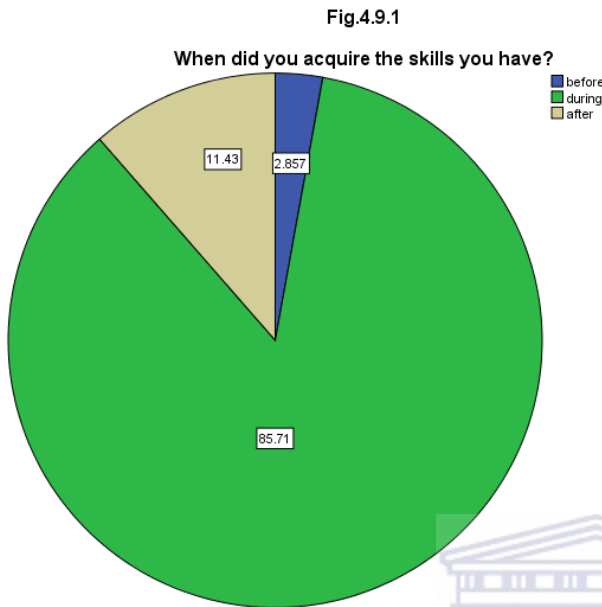
In the responses to the question that probed further to understand the choice of before, during and after, 74.29% of the respondents got their skills in the course of participating in the programme, 5.7% furthered their education and got their first degree after participating in the programme, 8.57% did diploma after participating in the programme, 8.57% reported using the compensation they got from winning court case to establish their own business while the remaining 2.8 was a nurse before participating in the programme. The chart below describes the pattern of their explanation.

Fig.4.9.2

Explain your choice above?
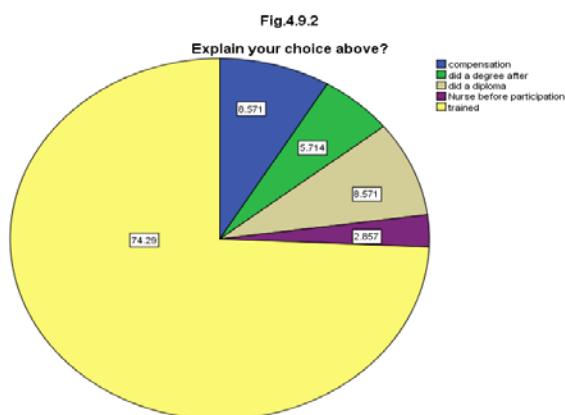
They subsequently made diffrent choices in the question seeking to the extent the programme

contributed to their skill aquisition. 2.86% of the respondents chose 1 (not at all), 8.571% chose 3(little), 8857% chose 4 (much). See the chart below.

Fig. 4.9.3

To what extent do you relate programme activity to your level of skill?
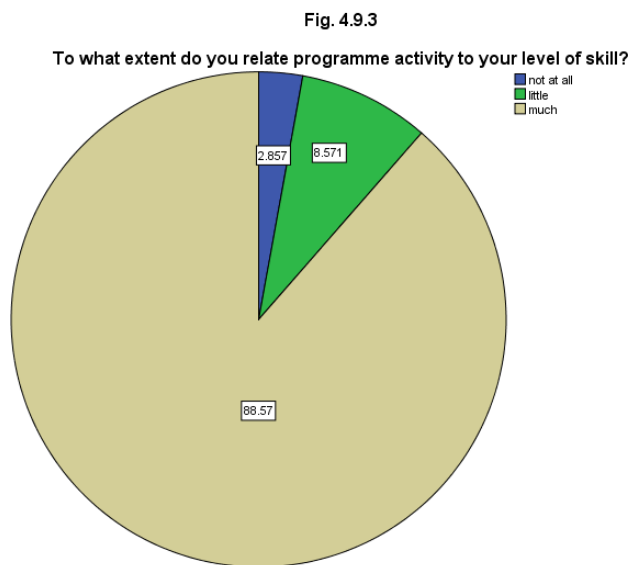
4.10 Q 11a. Were there things you wanted to change in your life?

All the thirty five respondents reported having some things they wished to change in their lives to enable them live with dignity before their participation in the programme. Their reports include changing their sense of powerlessness arising from their inability to take care of themselves financially and as a result depend wholly on someone for survival, getting rid of violent and abusive spouse, bitterness as a result of perceived injustice to them and abusive marriage. However, all reported being able to change them as a result of participating in the programme. This information throws more light on the earlier presented response on information they deem empowering. These responses will be articulated together in the discussion chapter the follows this discussion.

4.11 Q11e Are there things you still wish to change presently in your life?

68.57% of the respondents indicated that they have nothing they want to change in their life while 31.43% reported that they are still things they want to change in their lives. What they wished to change ranged from furthering their education, getting a better job and making sure there children attend higher education. And they have the capacity to effect the changes they want. The chart below depicts this information.

Fig.4.11

Are there things you wish to change presently in your life?
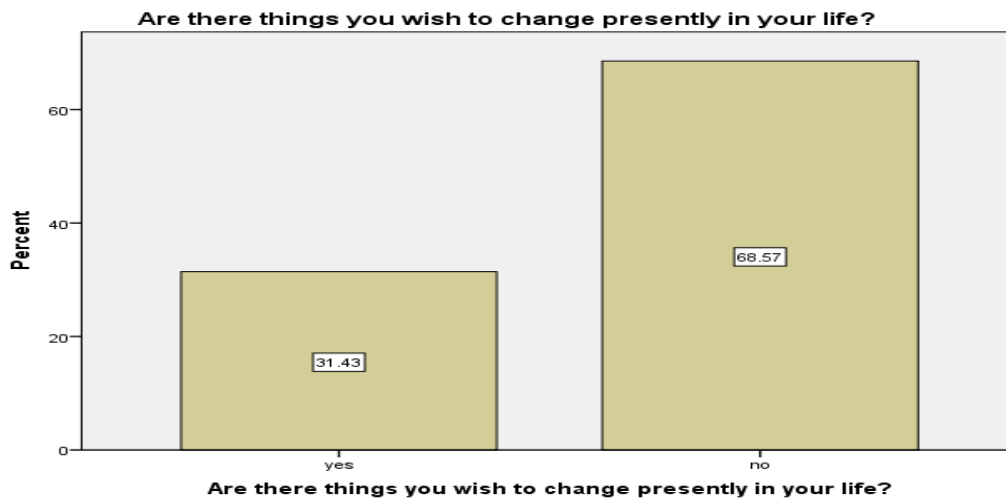
4.12 Control and autonomy over decision and choice

The thirty five respondents reported having control over decisions that affect their lives though there are variations to the extent they reported. Out of the thirty five respondents 77.14% chose 4 (much), 14.29% chose 5 (very much), while the remaining 8.571% chose 3 (little). The chart below depicts the following information.

Fig.4.12

To what extent do you control decisons that concern you?
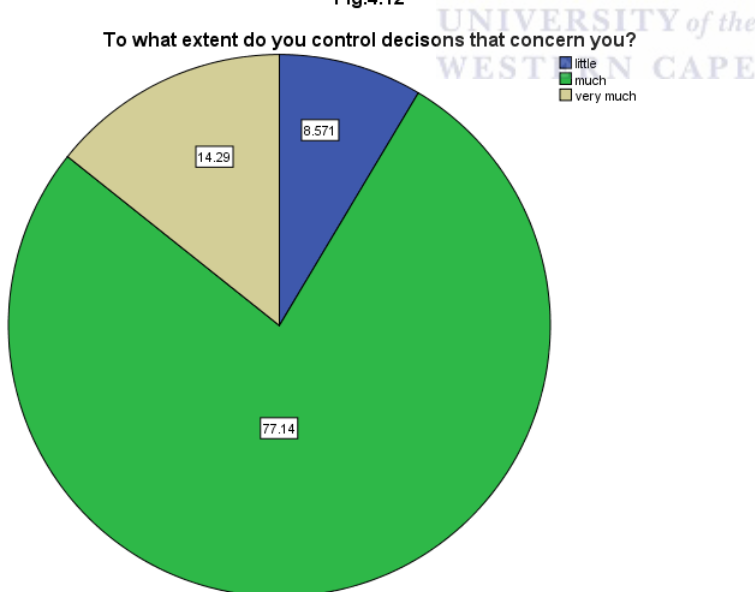
4.13 Decision on when to have sex

The thirty five respondents chose different options, 8.57% chose 1 (you and someone), 51.43% choose 4 (you and spouse) while 40% chose 5 (you). This information is shown in the chart below.

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Fig.4.13.1

Who makes decision of when to have sex in your life?
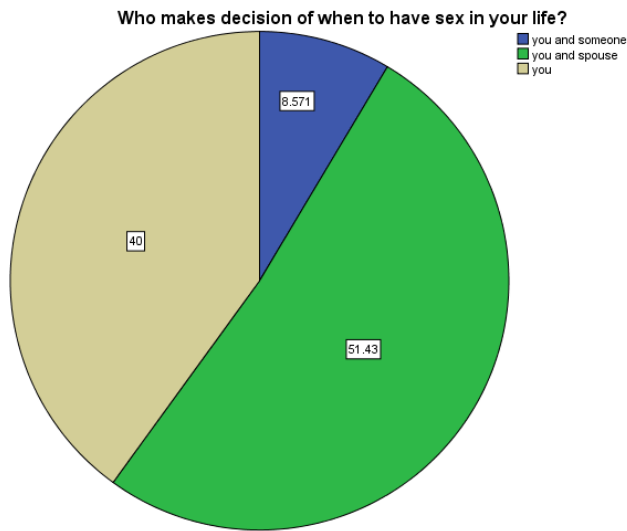
However the motivation for their choice varies as depicted in the response to the question if their decision is motivated by fear of punishment or in expectation of reward. 54.3% of the respondents chose 1 (not at all), 40% chose 3 (somewhat true) while 5.7% chose not very true. The information is shown in the pie chart below.

Fig.4.13.2

Is your decison on when to have sex motivated by fear or expectation of reward?
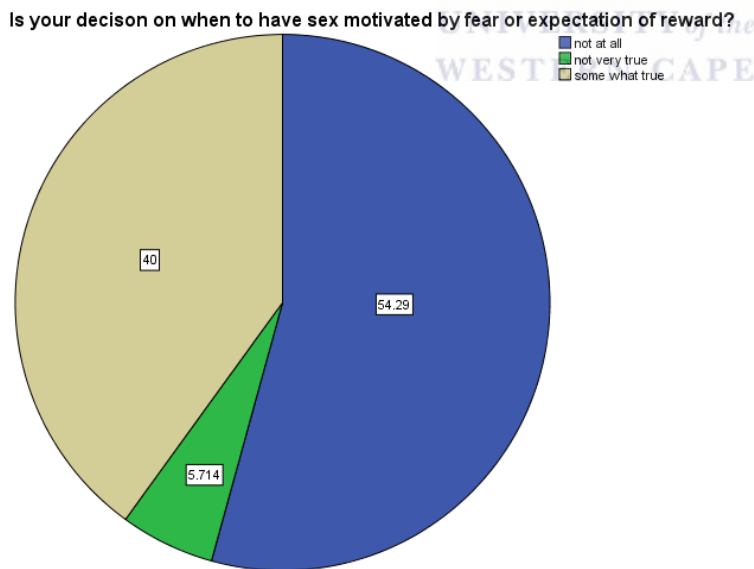
And to the question if there action stems from their attempt to avoid shame for people to speak well of them they all chose 1 (not at all). On the question that asked if their decision on when to have sex reflects their interest 48.57% of the respondents chose 5 (very true), 40% chose 4 (true) while the remaining 11.43 chose 3 (somewhat true).

Fig.4.13.3

Does your decision on when to have sex reflect your interest and value?
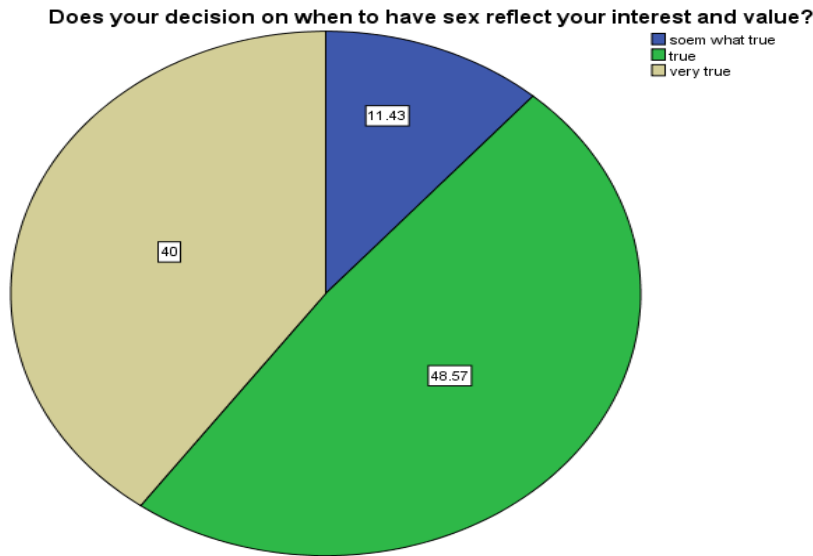
The explanation given by the respondents that make this decision jointly with their spouse is that they want to make sure that their spouses d o not have any reason to look for sex outside. Nevertheless, it does not preclude them not refusing when they are not feeling disposed to have sex. However, they try as much as they can to make it up for their spouses or boyfriends so they will not be blamed when they go for other women outside. In one of the focus groups one of the participants said that having sex is contingent on the availability of someone to have sex with since one cannot have sex alone. Further probing to understand how those that make personal decision on when to have sex were futile as they declined further comment.

4.14 Decision on child spacing

On the aspect of making decision on child spacing only thirty one responded while four did not respond to this question. 35.48% of the respondents chose 3 (you and spouse), 6.452% chose 4 (spouse), while the remaining 58.06 chose 5 (you). This information is depicted below in the chat.

Fig.4.14.1

Child spacing?
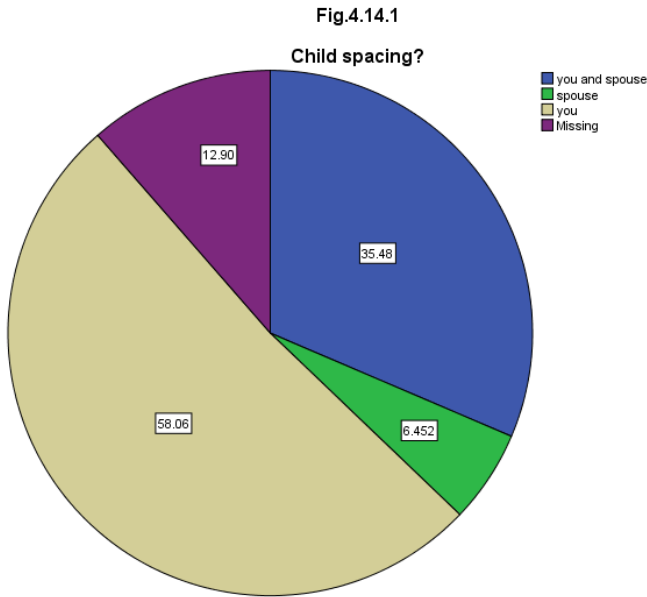
Some of the respondents that chose 4 (spouse) reported that they do not want to argue with their spouse on the number of children. The focus group discussions and individual responses indicate that most of respondents including the ones that chose 4 (spouse) and 5 (you) make use of contraceptive without the knowledge of their spouse. Their choices in the question that if their decision is motivated by fear of punishment or expectation of reward took broadly the same pattern as 92.8% chose 1 (not at all), 7.14% chose 3 (somewhat true) while the remaining 25% did not respond. However, the deliberation in the focus group discussion showed that most of the married women do not want to engage in open debate over number of children with their spouses. Nevertheless, they indicate that their decision in this aspect is a reflection of their values and interest. The response to these questions is shown in Fig. 4.14.2 and Fig. 4.14.3 below.

Fig. 4.14.2

Is your decision in Child spacing motivated by fear or reward?

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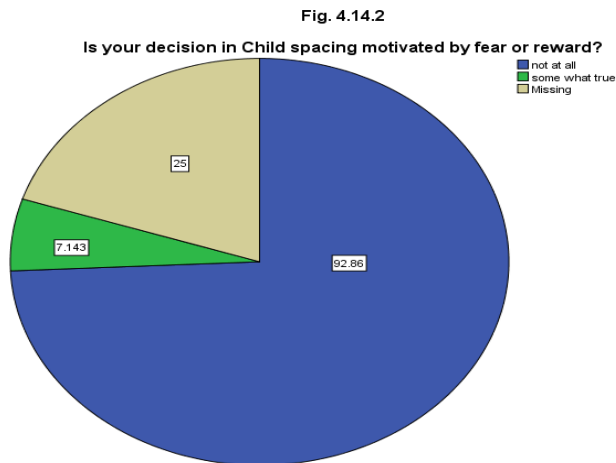
Their response to the question that sought to understand if their decision on child spacing reflects their interest are as follows, 67.74% of the respondents chose 5(very true), 32% chose 4 (true) while 12.90% made no choice. The information is shown in the chart below.

Fig. 4. 14.3

Do your decision on Child spacing reflect your value and interest?
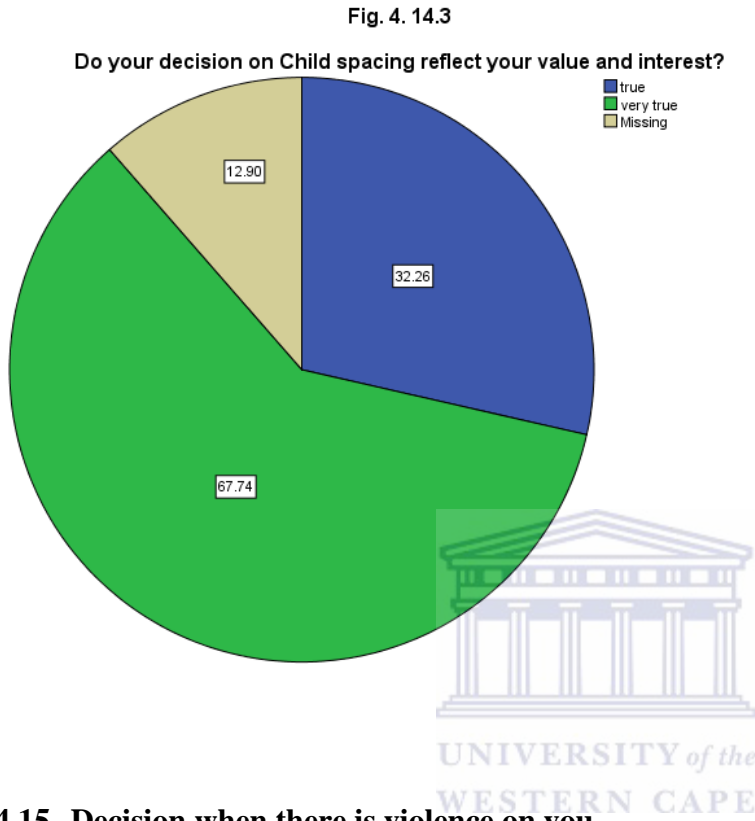
4.15 Decision when there is violence on you
The thirty five respondents reported making sole decision in this area of their lives and subsequently reported that it is not motivated by fear of punishment or expectation of reward. Neither is it for people to speak well of them rather it reflects their own interest and values.

4.16 Decision on what to spend their income on
The thirty five respondents reported making sole decision in this area of their lives and subsequently reported that it is not motivated by fear of punishment or expectation of reward. Neither is it for people to speak well of them rather it reflects their own interest and values.

4.17 Use of contraceptive
The thirty five respondents reported making sole decision in this area of their lives and subsequently reported that it is not motivated by fear of punishment or expectation of reward. Neither is it for people to speak well of them rather it reflects their own interest and values.

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4.18 Freedom to go anywhere.

On the question on who decides where they go all the respondents chose 5 indicating that they make sole decision on where to go such as visiting cinema and visiting friends. They all indicate that it is not motivated by fear of punishment or expectation for reward and not for people to speak well of them but rather it is at their own discernment. However, during the focus group discussions it became obvious that most of the married one and the ones that cohabit do not totally make and control the decisions on where they go. As most of the time they have to adjust their itinerary to fit into that of the spouse. Also some go to wherever they want to go to with the excuse of going to work. However, in the course of the discussion most acknowledged that the adjusting of their programme to suit the spouse or boyfriends own came as a result of their starting to earn money. That prior when they were totally dependent on their relatives, husbands or boyfriends they do have no choice of saying they want to go to movie not to talk of adjusting to suit that of the spouse or anyone as the case may be.

4.19 The type of work they do

80% of the respondents chose 5 (you) which means they make sole decision of the type of work they do while the remaining 20% chose 3 (you and spouse).

Fig. 4.19

Who makes decision on the type of work you do?
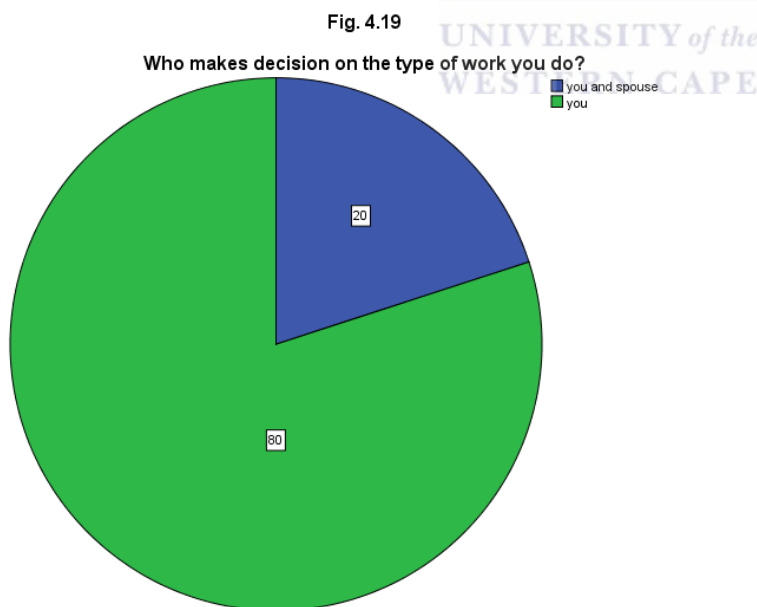
And their decision on the type of work they do reflects their own personal values and interest and as such do not stem from fear of punishment or expectation of reward. But the most important featured idea in the focus group discussion is that prior to their getting employed that cooking and keeping the house clean was their designated duty in the house. But now

their spouse cooks and cleans the house also. Four participants in one focus group discussion asserted that house work will not keep them from going to their job that puts money in their pocket.

4.20 Q13a Have you experienced violence on you before?

87.5% of the respondents reported to have experienced violence on them, 12.5% reported not to have experienced violence on them while the remaining 9.37% did not respond to the question. The information is shown in the chat below.

Fig. 4.20
Have you exprienced violence on you before?
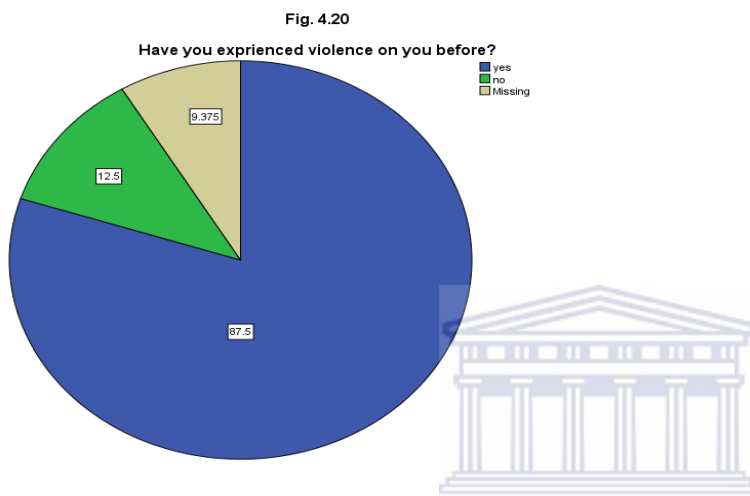
Out of the 87.5 respondents that reported to have experienced violence on them 89.29% took action, while 10.71% did not take action and the remaining 25% of all the respondent did not respond to the question. This information is shown in the chart below.

Fig. 4.20.1
If yes, did you do anything?
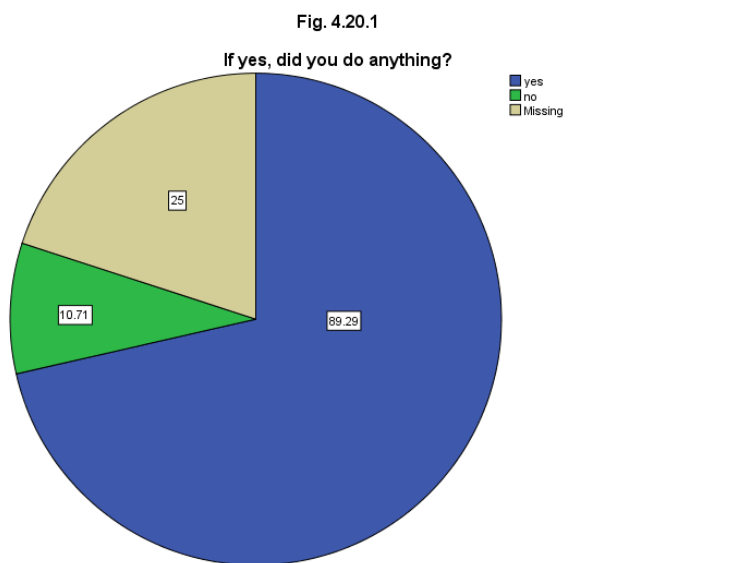
The three respondents that did not take action explained that they were responsible for the violence on them. While the action of the twenty five ranged from calling the police and going to court. The outcome of their action ranges from withdrawing of charges, charged and sentenced to divorcing. The bar chart below shows the pattern of the outcome of their actions.

Fig.4.20.2

What was the outcome of your action?
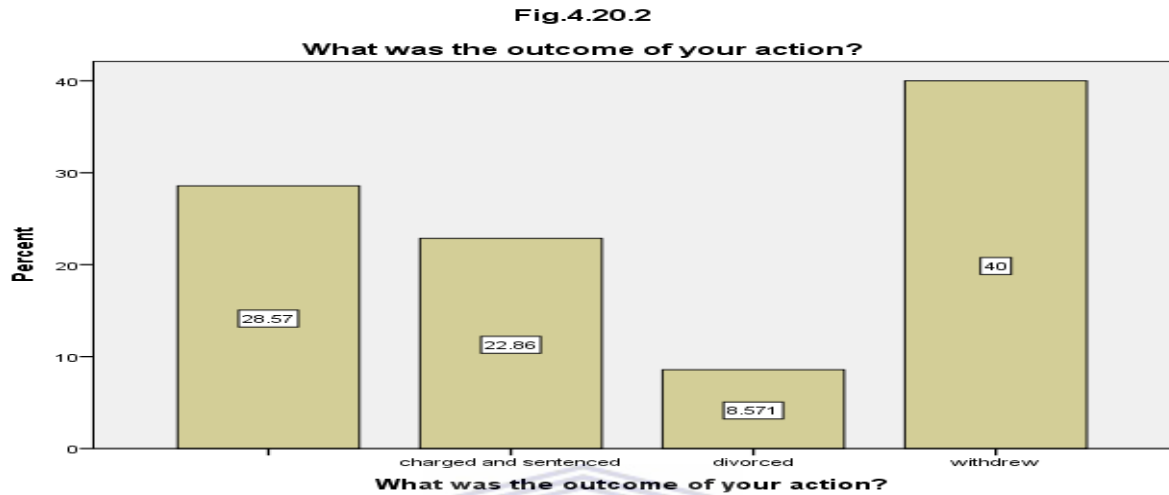
4.21 Conclusion

This chapter addressed the study's primary objective through presentation of the empirical data, its analysis and interpretation. To this effect, the data collected through interviews were first streamlined into themes and categories to ensure consistency in presentation. The analysis, interpretation of the qualitative data gathered from participants was done systematically to demonstrate the changes that have taken place in the lives of the respondents as a result of programme activities. The discussion chapter further sheds light on the findings and discusses them in relation to the study's problem and objectives and further links the study to existing knowledge.

5 CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter draws from the preceding chapter to discuss and illuminate the core thesis advanced from the on start of this study. As a result the findings of the study are thoroughly discussed to provide a comprehensive insight to the research problematic and objectives. It further links the findings to existing empirical literature and theoretical reflections on empowerment. In essence, it highlights the connection and disconnection between the study findings with and from the existing knowledge and how it fits into or not with the literatures of development. It begins with giving a summary of findings as it relates to each research question and objectives. This is followed by broader discussion of the findings as proposed above. To this end it is crucial to reiterate the study aim and objectives. The interest in the study emanates from the tangible efforts being made to empower the powerless in the society. This effort has assumed a synergistic pattern between government, business organisations and Non Governmental Organisations with the former two entities working through the later to achieve this broad aim of empowering the marginalized. This pattern of working with civil society groups is rooted in the belief that theses organisation are closer to the people and as such are better situated to deal with the problem facing the poor and marginalized. It was against this background that the research focused on impact of an empowerment programme to understand how such efforts actually brought about empowerment of the powerless or marginalized. Hence the main aim of the study was to investigate the extent the empowerment activities of Zonkee succeeded in making the participants self reliant and capable of controlling their lives. the following objectives were set to accomplish this aim.

Research objectives

1: To understand the nature of powerlessness that qualifies the women to participate in the programme.

2: To understand if Zonkee activities improved access to different resources the participants require.

3: To understand if participating in the activities of Zonkee influenced the development and growth of the participants.

4: To ascertain if participating in Zonkee increased the ability of the women to make effective decisions and choices that results to greater control over their lives.

5.2   The nature of their powerlessness

Casting a glance over the literatures reviewed to situate this study within the veneer of knowledge production it was obvious that for empowerment intervention to have expected impact there must be fit between the need of the targeted beneficiaries and activity engaged in to meet the need. To be precise, broadly within the alternative approach to development it is strongly stressed that the beneficiary of an intervention must take part in planning, implementation and evaluation of intervention seeking to bring about change in their lives (Eade, 1997). Be this as it may, this particular study paid less attention to the extent which beneficiaries were involved in the development, planning and implementation of the programme activity. Rather, the study concentrated on the changes that have taken place in their lives as result of the programme activity. And understanding the changes is contingent on deciphering the relationship with the empowerment needs or perception of the beneficiaries with that of the organisational activities. This is rooted in the fact that a mismatch in the needs of a targeted group and activity put in place to meet these needs will result to minimal or no impact. As a result of the foregoing discussion, it is important to appreciate the fit between the participants perception of their powerlessness and the activities embarked upon by the organisation. This will enhance proper understanding of the impact of an activity on the targeted beneficiaries.

It is important to state before proceeding that what is discussed as respondents nature of powerlessness was teased out from their responses to questions that sought to understand what they deem empowering, why they deem it empowering and what they wanted to change in their individual lives. There was difficulty in discerning the nature of their powerlessness which emanate from the complex meaning of empowerment. As, a result effort was made to break down complex meanings of empowerment to the barest possible level to enable them understand it. As a result of this during the focus group discussion attempt was made to break the concept down to the utmost level of comprehension for them. Also a conscious endeavour was made to understand why any particular resource they identify was critical for them to overcome their sense of powerlessness. Therefore, the subsequent discussion on their nature of powerlessness is chiefly based on the combination of the outcome in personal interviews, observation and focus group discussion. The response from individual and emerging themes from focus discussion on what they wanted to change before was of critical importance in discerning their prior state before participating in the programme. This subtle way paid off as it enhanced adequate understanding of the condition that shaped their powerlessness.

Also what is discussed herein as the nature of their sense of powerlessness should not any way be misunderstood as emanating from a single homogenous group. This is because the respondents placed different degree of emphasis on different resources as what is needed to be empowered. This is despite the fact that all the respondents shared certain degree of powerlessness which justifies bringing them together under one intervention to empower them. The findings illustrate that in the face of this uniformity of powerlessness there can be tangible differences in the contexts, circumstances and experience that shapes powerlessness. This scenario reinforces Sen's argument in his thesis "Inequality Reexamined". Sen, (1992) in this important thesis points out that human diversity that stems from differences in endowments "of inherited wealth and liability", differences in natural and social circumstances that shape what we can do and what we cannot do as well as differences in "age, sex, physical and mental ability" have formidable implication for what individuals will need to be fully humans.

The different sense of powerlessness experienced by the participants was shaped by their different histories that derive from intersection of their biographical characteristic such age, marital and context specific social arrangement. And as such the nature of the participant's powerlessness was shaped by different experiences and therefore what is empowering diverges. This was attested to by the heated debate in the focus group discussions as the respondents motivated their reason for identifying one or more resources as more critical to empowerment. In the focus group discussion, a participant describing why job related information is very critical to empowerment was that before she "stays in the house, wakes up, bath, clean the house, cook, eat and sleep and wake up, is it life". She further said that she depends wholly on the husband for everything and yet very instrumental to critical decisions in the house and have never been abused by the husband. Hence, it follows that her sense of powerlessness emanates from lack of job to be an active person and not to basically meet immediate basic need for survival or to be free from violence. Her circumstance deviates from all other respondents as shall be seen in a specific manner as shall be seen.

However, majority of the respondents that deemed access to information on job and law protecting them from violence empowering did not share the idea that job alone was empowering. As another participant in the focus group discussion motivates her reason that even when "one is aware of how to get justice when abused, it does not mean you will call police for the person that feeds you if they take him away how will you survive". After she

spoke there was a sort of air of concurrence among most participants. This shows another dimension of powerlessness among some of them as it seems to stem from their dependence on someone for survival. Three participants in the focus group discussion drawing from their personal experiences emanating from their maltreatment by their ex-husbands and relatives respectively motivated that access to information on law protecting them was critical to their empowerment as it facilitated their happiness. Furthermore they would not have passed through what they passed through if they have adequate awareness of the legal framework. Be this as it may, one can without restraint contend that in as much as they needed job to be free from violence, and it does not preclude need for being active agents with or without the need to meet immediate needs. But in this case their violent context played a vital role in shaping their sense of powerlessness.

The above contention is attested to by Respondent (21) that was living with relatives and experienced unkind treatments as she cannot do what she wants to because she have to live according to the wishes and caprices of the relatives. According to her "she cooked, scrubbed the house and washings despite the fact that her younger relatives are in the house". Though, there was no physical abuse on her but the situation reinforced powerlessness of another dimension in her. And as such job that will enable her to live on her own and be able to meet immediate basic need sufficed as empowering. Also in line with the implication of circumstances and experience most respondents that mentioned access to information on contraceptive were mainly married, and those that have experienced unwanted pregnancy and or improper child spacing. For instance, Respondent (1) on one on one interview and during the focus group discussion in conjunction with access to information on legal framework protecting her added that the she felt so powerless when she felt pregnant at eleven and as such access to information on contraceptive use indeed empowered her. In her own case there was convergence of age, ignorance and maltreatment in shaping her sense of powerlessness.

This situation identified in this study represents an empirical support for Sen's contention on the importance of understanding human diversity in trying to bring about social change. The findings of this study correlates with Foster-Fishman, et al, (1998) study on the multiple forms empowerment takes place in a context. In their study they found out that empowerment took different forms across people and different sites under their study. They identified recurrent themes among the employee such as access to information and resources, opportunities for autonomy and control which presupposes existence of similar form of

powerlessness that demands collective intervention without paying attention to specific individual differences. Nevertheless, they also identified distinctive individual empowerment experience among the employees that emanates from factors such as different positions and task they are working on. For instance, the empowerment experience of employees fluctuates as their sense of feeling empowered depends on the task they are doing. In other words they felt empowered in carrying out some task and disempowered in another task. It is also contingent on whether the employee is dealing with a superior or subordinate in the organisation.

Despite this correlation the findings of my study deviates from Foster-Fisherman, et al's study, in that the findings did not indicate any mismatch between the diverse forms of powerlessness and the activities engaged by the Zonkee to overcome them. This stems from the broad activities of Zonkee with the potential to offset the diverse forms of powerlessness. And as the programme coordinator said in interview that the organisational activities evolved stage by stage and adjustments and expansion have to be done to adequately take care of the situation at hand. An example of such adjustment was made when it was obvious that increasing access to information on law that protects them was not adequate without them being self reliant. However, this do not in itself entail that less attention to the specificities of the broader context and inimitable powerlessness of individuals will not have adverse effect on the outcome of an intervention as suggested by Sen.

The importance of understanding context and the negative consequence that parallel neglecting it was shown by a study conducted by Strawn (1994) to understand the impact of a programme that intended to empower women in Delhi. Strawn in this study conclude that the inability of the programme to realise its aim was implacably moored in the mal-definition of what empowerment denotes in the context of the targeted women's cultural context. The architects of the programme erroneously designed the intended programme around their own bias with neoliberal individualistic view, offering the participants individual training while the women valued their informal collective social interaction more important than individual action. In short the finding of the study goes a long way in mediating the somehow unnecessary tension and debate on the efficacy of collective over individual empowerment.

The nature of their powerlessness as discerned from the discussion so far have strong implication on other focus area of the study and as such is very critical to discussing them. As

a result the thematic and chronological organisation of this discussion is rather not strict as I draw from the diversity in the uniformity of their sense of powerlessness in all area of the discussion. In this sense the separation of the discussion into themes is merely to bring some sense of order. Having noted this, next section discusses the findings in relation to expansion in the resource base, individual growth and development of the respondents that are the second and third research objective.

5.3 Increased resources base and individual development and growth.

The findings indicate an appreciable increase and/or endowment of different resources on the respondents that enhanced their individual growth and development. The discussion that follows is on the endowment of resources and individual growth and development as a result of Zonkee activity.

5.3.1 Informational resources

Informational resources in this study relates to the certain information that are critical for the respondents wellbeing. That is to say that, armed with these information they stand a better chance of controlling their life. The findings on the informational resources are based on their quality of access and awareness to legal framework protecting them and contraceptive use before and after participation in the programme. The findings show that there is appreciable increase in the access and awareness to information on law protecting the women and contraceptive use. The level of access and awareness to these informational aspects before participation in the programme was generally low and spatial. This little or no awareness was totally contingent on ignorance as suggested by the findings, the only Respondent (26) that have adequate access and awareness to this informational aspects was already a nurse before participating in the Zonkee activities. This respondent substantial awareness can only be explained on the basis of her education. And as such majority of the respondents with spatial or no knowledge that gained adequate knowledge in the process of participation is an indication of positive impact of Zonke activities on the respondents.

The subsequent sense of empowerment that accompanied their increased access to this informational resources is in line with Narayan, (2002) deliberation that when the less powerful are adequately informed they are placed in a vantage position to exercise their rights which otherwise would not have been feasible without requisite information given in a comprehensible way. A submission of the findings on informational aspects to critical

scrutiny immediately brings to fore the multifaceted nature of the concept of empowerment once more. And further compels one to be careful in favouring whole heartedly that either collective or individual empowerment singularly holds the promise to evolve envisaged social transformation or even trying to draw a clear cut line between the two.

This caution is necessary in that, the supposed belief that the powerless will take action on merely on the basis of being informed as contended by Narayan, appear elusive in the face of the inability of Respondent 26 a professional nurse that had adequate access and awareness to and on information on law that protects her but yet cannot take action to put to end violence on her. " I knew exactly what to do but my parents always advised me to exercise patience that marriage demands it, and moreover it is not a good thing for a woman to get married and divorce, it doesn't speak well of a woman and the family background. But my friend who started this organisation that knew my situation told me to join the women which I did reluctantly and during my participation I realised myself that am the one taking the beatings and pains and couldn't bear it any longer. Also most of the women with me in the programme were able to speak up to their husbands and they earn lower than what I earn, it is my income that runs the house and my ex husband wasted my money with authority. I decided to put an end to the whole nonsense and I am much happier today, I have adequate savings today with no more bruises all over my body" (Respondent 26).

The forgoing explanation validates the basis of the feminist's argument from scholars such as Bartiliwa, (2007), that intervention seeking to empower women individually holds little or no promise of achieving its goal. Given, that entrenched oppressive framework will stifle individual ability to express control their lives. While this imaginary immutable structure might suffice as contributory factor to the inability of Respondent 26 to take requisite action that will enhance her wellbeing, it does not follow that individual empowerment do not hold prospects on its own. This view is anchored on Kabber, (2005) deliberation that meeting practical needs of the individual is critical to achieving strategic ones. Kabber's idea is very crucial in understanding the situation of the respondents chased away without compensation by their ex-husband and the one dispossessed by relatives. It is tantamount to deliberate blunder to assume that these women are not aware of the baseness of the societal disposition to women. But given the predicament they were into, access to information on law that protects women was most critical to them. This situation raises another critical issue that needs to be thrashed out. The seeming validation of feminist argument of oppressive structure

in the case of Respondent 26 and the case of other respondents that their inability to take action derives from lack of resources needs clarification as it has the tendency to lead us into the debate on the efficacy of collective and individual empowerment.

In clarifying the situation above, it is my contention that if the feminist argument is totally based in the belief that oppressive framework enforce conformance, then it suffice to say that the findings of this study do not substantiate such argument. Rather, the findings suggest that inability to take action is better explained by lack of resources. This contention is based on the understanding of power as a resource. In this sense, the differences in the respondents situation can be better understood within the fluidity and multifaceted operation of power. Then, it follows that the inability of the entire respondents to take action stems from lack of power. While Respondent 26 lacked psychological power or power within that will enable her to make decision, other respondents do not have power over resources that will enable them to make decisions. As Respondent (1) explain "for years I lived in with bitterness, never happy, I know serious evil has been done to me but do not know anything to do, nobody to turn to for help, all I got was food and clothes my main problem was not attended to. As I came into Zonkee, I learnt how to go about getting justice and I have reversed evil done to me, am no longer bitter, I feel like a full human now". Similar responses were rife as some respondents understood their inability to take action as basically being predicated on lack of access and awareness to the law protecting them.

Similar, pattern of access and awareness prior to and during participation in Zonkee exist in respect to contraceptive use and child spacing. There was endowment and increase of awareness on the part of the respondents as those without any prior awareness learnt and those with little awareness increased. Although there was traces of internalized situation as suggested by some respondents state of mind that using condom will present them as prostitutes to their spouse, lack of adequate knowledge of the health implications played a greater role. In as much one will be inclined to assume that mere awareness of the health implication will give rise to changed attitude to use of contraceptive which is likely but the gendered power relations needs attention also.

Thus, the awareness raising activity of Zonkee was more than enhancing their power over resources (mere telling the respondents about their rights) and increasing their ability to exercise it (power to) it included increasing power within (dealing with internalised state of

mind) that will make them know they are entitled to make exercise their right. Hence, the awareness raising activity of Zonkee shares same features of Freire's Concientization approach which the feminist activists espouse. In as much as there seems to be an overwhelming focus on raising awareness on priory identified areas where there was agreed low level of awareness as discussed above there was also evidence that suggests intensive in-depth engagement with the women as means of initiating reflection to appreciate oppressive frameworks that reinforce women subordination.

However, even if one chose to look at it from the internalisation of oppressive framework perspective, the combination of the feminist agenda with individual needs facilitated meeting the individual practical needs and as such created space to achieve strategic ones. It provided, avenue for the respondents to posses "power within" showing in increased self esteem and self confidence and at the same time increased their "power over" these informational resources.

5.3.2 Material, Financial and human resources

The findings from the field show that there was an appreciable increase in the material, human and financial resources of the respondents. However, it further brings to fore the circumstantial implication, its role in shaping sense of powerlessness and diversity of empowerment experience. This is seen in the fact that most married respondents and the ones cohabiting maintained that their access to house was not as a result of programme activity. On the contrary, the respondents that lived with relatives that were able to get access to house relate it to the programme activity. The sense of powerlessness felt as a result of not having their own houses was expressed in their narrative of insults coming from relatives and not feeling relaxed in the house. They reported high sense of relief when they became able to own or rent their own houses (Focus Group Discussion 1). "I feel so happy having my own house, nobody expects me to sweep the house ten times every day, I open my fridge when I want to, cook when I want to, open my door and close them when I want" (Respondent 4).

This situation corroborate with Sen, (1992; 1999) argument that different individual will need different resources and at different quantity to be function properly. However, the value of this argument will be utilized in subsequent discussion of findings on capacity to make desirable and effective decision. The noteworthy thing here is that despite the disparity in the report of the respondents regarding the contribution of Zonkee activity to their material

possession there is an overwhelming agreement on its critical contribution to improvement on their financial resources. Thus, signalling that empowerment can be as a result of removal of a particular source of powerlessness and reinforce the idea that one can be disempowered in an area and at the same time empowered in another area. If related to Kabber, (1999) contention that those that exercise immense power cannot be deemed to be empowered because they were never disempowered. It then suffice to say that those people that had access to house and material things prior to their participation were not disempowered in that particular aspect and at the same time disempowered financially. On the other hand empowerment can be also understood as increased control over particular resources. This forgoing relative understanding of empowerment is seen in respect to Respondent (26) who became able to control her income and save more. Ironically, the Respondent (26) in question did not feel that her increased financial situation has contributed much to her wellbeing but rather value the control she has over her life in its entirety. Conversely, most respondents see financial endowment very critical to their wellbeing (Focus Group Discussion). "There is nothing like earning your own money, my husband has to buy everything from what we eat to what I wear, and then I can't object to anything, if I want to go to anywhere I have to take excuse and ask for transport money and explain my reasons, a times it takes three to four days for my request to be approved and within those periods I have to be my best self or else no approval. But now that I earn I can chose where I want to go, all I have to do is to inform him and tell him to leave the house with his key in case I am not back when you return" (Respondent 16).

The activities of Zonkee were more pronounced in the aspect of increase in human resources. This is seen in the training and facilitating of job position for the respondents. The use of more pronounced is rooted in the fact derived from the findings as most of the respondents were giving skills and simultaneously facilitated their employment and some of them have actually advanced themselves through furthering their education. Practically, speaking the acquired skills and the subsequent job was empowering to all of them. As it was a stepping stone for some to achieve self development as they furthered their education. And, three of the respondents that engaged in private businesses were able to do so because of access to informational resource provided by Zonkee that enabled them to access material and financial resources to start their own business. This finding conforms to the World Bank framework assumption that access to a resource aspect can enhance access to another resource aspect.

However, it raises another critical shortcoming of the framework in practical terms as opposed to its conceptual usefulness. This shortcoming stems from inability of the framework to adequately explain the interaction of the different resources in accounting for respondent's empowerment. Be this as it may, by placing the understanding of the respondents' nature of powerlessness and circumstances that shaped it atop in the objectives of this study, the study was able to appreciate the importance of each resource and the complex interaction that gave rise to empowerment testimony of respondents. This findings is not necessarily novel in that studies has often, at the anecdotal level, assumed and or asserted this interaction without proper attention to the processes and dynamics. Heinsohn, (2004) in a study that sought to understand the impact of Literacy programme on disadvantaged youths and women in Mexico found that access to education improved their access to information which in turn improved their self confidence.

The findings on endowment of a particular resource enhancing access to another resource such as furthering of education also conform to the WB framework description of resource endowments as an intermediate indicator of empowerment. However, if one subscribe to the idea of intermediate indicator wholeheartedly based on the self advancement of the respondents that furthered their education, it will diminish the empowerment experience and self development of those ones that did not further theirs. This is reflected in the response of some respondents that do not have anything to change in their lives presupposing that the acquired skills/employment and present trading as the case may be brought them sufficient empowerment experience or wellbeing. This situation validates Sen, (1999) contention that freedom is the ability to lead the type of live one value. In this sense, since all the respondents were endowed with the requisite resources to make effective choice and going by Sen's argument the choice of whether to further their education or not become totally contingent on their own free will.

On the other hand the respondents that reported still having things they wish to change and having the capacity to change them correlates with Bartiliwa, (2007) argument that empowerment connotes being able to lay claim to future resources or as explained by Rai, et al, (2007) the capacity to envisage. What the preceding discussion supposes is that empowerment is an ongoing process and as such it entails acquisition of resources and at the same time surmounting contextual factors that can inhibit choice making or functioning's. Going by the dynamic inherent in these findings the plausible conclusion to draw from it is

that the respondents were all endowed with requisite resources that can enhance their self development. Nevertheless, the understanding of empowerment as an ongoing process suggests that some circumstantial situations might account for delayed individual growth and self development. This understanding stems from the fact that some of the respondents that are still giving birth asserted that they cannot be able to combine their job and child bearing with furthering their education. Hence, they are bidding time to engage in it. As a result of this complexity the last objective of the study pays careful attention to Sen's insight on choice making and what was hitherto referred to as opportunity structure. Tangible efforts are made to disentangle choices that reflect preference from that reflect deep seated constraint on the ability of the respondents to make choice.

Having, discussed the pattern of resource endowed on the respondents and the subsequent individual growth and development the next plausible step to take to accomplish the task the study has set out to, is to demonstrate how the resources endowed by the programme aided the respondents ability to make effective decisions in their lives and household. Though, the ability to make choice has been illuminated so far, the next section deals with it properly. This again points to the loose importance of the thematic and sequential importance of the discursive chapter.

5.4 Capacity to make decision, choices that lead to greater control over respondents lives

Capacity to make decision and achieve it, is considered the height of empowerment and the ability to make decision and achieve it is predicated on resource endowment, opportunity structure (Alsop, & Heinsohn, 2005), demographic characteristics (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007). The findings from the study indicate that these factors collectively or singularly determine the pattern of their decision making. More importantly, is the ability to make and control decisions in certain domains than others. For instance, there is overwhelming capacity to make decision and achieve it in the area of what they spend their income. While they all make decisions in the area of sexual relationships, child spacing, where to go, contraceptive use, the type of work they do and decision when there is violence on them, the pattern of their decision making are nuanced and brings out the complexities inherent in the idea of empowerment.

The decision making pattern on when to have sex was quite difficult to interpret as a result of their general reluctance to deliberate on this decision making aspect, that in turn obviated

efforts to understand if there was changes in the nature of their decisions prior to participation. In essence, in line with Kabber, (1999), contention that an individual can be disempowered in one area and at the same time be empowered in an area, it seems the respondents were not disempowered prior in this aspect. However, for argument sake, the respondents that make this decision with their spouses were mostly married and cohabit, while those that make the decision solely are single and divorced. This pattern might suggest relationship of dependency and also the idea of not wanting to be blamed in the event of their spouse cheating reflects lack of autonomy and control over this decision aspect.

Nevertheless, the ability to be able to refuse sexual advances from their spouse indicates that their making this decision with their spouse do not amount to lack of capacity to but rather a reflection of their interest. This is in accordance with Sen, (1985) cited in Ibrahim & Alkire (2009:4) definition of agency as anything a person is able to do and achieve in whatever goals or values he or she deem important. In this sense a purposeful decision to ensure they secure their spouse from other women ought not to be misunderstood as form of limited or lack of agency. Furthermore, the sense of approval that followed the comment in the focus group discussion that "having sex is contingent on availability of some to have sex with" (Focus Group Discussion), rather compounded the former hindrance arising from not being able to ascertain the pattern of their decision making.

This pattern of decision making also was found with some nuances in the area of decision making on child spacing and contraceptive use, freedom of going to places and the type of work they do. The women that refrained from responding to who makes child spacing decision are those who have passed child bearing age. Thus, reflecting the relevance of demographic factors in influencing choice making. In as much as they have the requisite awareness that can enhance choice making in this aspect but yet their age do not allow the use of this resource. Their inability to use it does not in any entail that the awareness is irrelevant to all of them. As Respondent 4 reports "I feel very happy as I can tell my children how to protect unwanted pregnancy as a result of what I learnt". This shows that agency can be expressed in many ways and it's totally contingent on the nature of social relationship in which one engages in. On the other hand there was no marked difference between those that make child spacing decision with their husband, alone and the ones that reported that their husband makes it. As those that submitted that their spouse decides on the number of children and those that make it with their spouses are still able to control the number of children they

have as they make use of contraceptive without their spouse's knowledge. The situation brings to fore the importance of Kabber, (1999), insights on the deceptive, negotiation, manipulation side of decision making in which women keep intact the image of men as decision makers. While they do not want to engage in open confrontation with their spouse they still make use of the awareness gained in achieving their choice. This deceptive model of choice entails that the awareness acquired through access to information on contraceptive enhanced there capacity to make choice.

The deceptive model of decision making also manifested in the decisions and choice of where they go. As some of them do not necessarily decide on where to go as they have to go to some spaces on the pretention of going to work. This deceptive model deviates from the negotiation model in which some of the respondents adjust their time and schedule with that of their spouse to enhance the welfare of the family. The respondents that fall within the deceptive decision making model in the aspect of freedom to go to spaces can be classified as excising of their agency. This is if exercise of agency is narrowly understood in the context of achieving choice and decision. Then it follows that there is no difference between their agency level and that of the respondents that objectively achieve their decision and choice in this aspect through negotiation and open flaunting of instructions. Nevertheless, they assert that their decision reflects their interest as it was to ensure the welfare of the family and as such it suffice to say that they acted on their interest and values which they deem important as Sen argues. But, this situation raises another cogent question which is, to what extent can the process they took in achieving their choice be deemed manifestation of empowerment in relation to the ones that openly defiles their spouse instruction to achieve it and those ones that were able to negotiate.

Be this as it may, the important thing to note here is that without the different resource endowments occasioned by their participation in the programme most of the respondents would not have been able to achieve their decision in this aspect be it through deception, negotiation or conflictual process. The achievement of their decisions on going to spaces they want would not have been feasible without the endowed capabilities.

Similarly, they all make decisions that reflect their interest when there is violence on them. The calling of police, charging case to court and the subsequent sentencing or withdrawal are all reliable indicators of presence of ability to make decision. The charging, sentencing and

divorce indicates that the formal institutional arrangement that enhance achievement of choice is. The reporting and withdrawal of cases might suggest circumscribed ability to achieve desirable choice but it does not necessarily entail so. As they used the withdrawal of cases to increase their negotiating power in the house which often led to eliciting more respect from their spouse. This is reflected in Respondent (14) statement "When I got my new job my husband felt I will not respect him anymore and started being unnecessarily violent and the best I could do was to report to the police and drop the cases after he was arrested and since then he has never touched me again but I still respect him".

However, the peculiarities of this respondent's situation diverge from that of other respondents that withdrew cases in as much as they to promote their interest. For instance, in the FGD it was ascertained that one reason for some the participant's withdrawal of cases might be based on inadequate income and therefore are still in the self building process. This is seen as one participant points out that she is paying for her school fees and the children's own and as such cannot facilitate the sentencing of the man that helps her in doing these things. Furthermore, she noted that since the incidence the boyfriend has treated her with more respect (Focus Group Discussion). In this sense the exercise of decision making capacity though emanating from different premises achieved same purposes. And also indicates that one might not take action on a calculated basis.

Despite the fact that the two respondents started gaining respect from their spouse, it must be realised that the respondent that withdrew as result of income signifies constraint in the ability to make desired choice. Similar, constraints was deduced in the focus group discussion where comments suggests that the intention of furthering education was diminished by lack of adequate resources as their children are already in school and as such the income being earned cannot be able to carry the financial implication involved in them furthering school with their children.

5.5   Conclusion

This chapter drew from the key findings emanating from the study to shed further light on the impact of an empowerment programme on the participant. Inferences and implications of the findings are drawn to confirm the study's hypothetical statement. Attempt has also been made in this section to draw the link between the finding and existing empirical literatures and theoretical reflections on the notion of empowerment.

The next chapter presents the conclusion, and suggest areas for further research as well as the limitations of this study.

6   CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1   Introduction

This chapter summarizes the main findings of the studies and draws conclusions. It begins by outlining the extent to which the study's objectives have been achieved and the methodology used thereof. This is followed by a summary of the main findings and conclusion as well as limitations of the study.

The central objective of the study was to investigate the impact of an empowerment programme on the participants. To this end, Chapter four and five address this objective and the secondary objectives through empirical research. The primary data was collected through in-depth/ one-on-one interviews; focus group discussion and unstructured observation. This raw data was then analysed, interpreted and presented as information that directly address the study's primary objective.

To situate the study within the existing knowledge on empowerment and development broadly, Chapter two engaged the concept of empowerment bringing its complex nature. Through the interrogation of extant literature on the concept, chapter discussed the major perspectives on the concept of empowerment as well as highlighted the methodological implication of these diverse views in understanding changes in empowerment levels.

6.2   Summary of findings and conclusions

From the beginning, the core thesis advanced in this study is that apartheid legacy has continued to render the majority of black minority powerless and a greater percentage of the powerless are women. And the proliferation of empowerment activities in which the civil society group has taken the centre stage in ensuring the empowerment of the previous marginalised majority may be of critical importance in achieving this goal. Moreover, the activity scope of Zonkee Community Development Centre suggests that it is conceivable that people that participated in their programme will be empowered. Hence, the study set out to confirm or disconfirm the above assumption by attempting to understand and provide insight into the impact of Zonkee activities in the lives of the participants.

The finding on the nature of powerlessness indicates that the different respondents sense of powerlessness though broadly the same are nevertheless shaped by difference that emanate from individual characteristics and circumstances such as age, experience, marital status. However, the broad scope of the programme activities was able to accommodate and deal

with different sense of powerlessness. As such the success of the programme activity is more rooted in the fit between the programme activity and needs of the participants.

In the area of improving resources vis a vis access and awareness to information resources, material and financial aspects, there was appreciable increase as a result of programme activity. An overwhelming majority of the respondents do not hold any form of contention as regards the part the programme played in the increase in these resources and they also felt empowered as a result of the improvements. This conclusion however needs to be separated as the some of the married women that live with their husband do not relate their access to certain material resources to the programme activity but at the same time relate financial increase to the programme activity in different ways. However, their subjective valuation of empowerment though different points to positive perception on the intervention outcome. In essence one can without any iota of hesitance assert that the programme was successful in endowing the participants with requisite resources to enhance their agency and wellbeing. In this sense the quantity that might be needed by particular participant depending on the circumstantial contingencies becomes another issue on its own. Similarly, the finding indicates individual growth and development as a result of the programme activity. This is evident in the furthering of education of some respondents and general improvement in the lives of all the respondents.

In terms of capacity to make decisions and choice that reflect control over life the resource, the respondents displayed immense ability to make choice to further their wellbeing as a result of programme activity. What seemed to be lack of control or constraint can be understood as empowerment process as it will lead to greater wellbeing when achieved. Also, the findings indicate existence of formal rules such as effective operation of the law that enhanced the capacity to make choice. The existence of favourable formal rule substantiates government effort to ensure equal ground for all to be fully human. And at the same time indicate adequate effort on the part of the programme to enhance the capacity of the respondents to make use of the existing formal rule to their advantage.

On the general note the findings of the study highlights the complexities inherent in trying to understand empowerment changes at programme level. The intricacy of interplay of diverse factors and the problem of pinpointing what effective choice denotes is not an easy task and as such requires further critical engagement to be able to overcome.

6.3 Study Limitation

The most important limitation of the study is that its findings is based on the study of impact of only one empowerment activity and as such cannot be generalized to reflect the impact and composition of other programmes operating in Cape Town. In addition to this limitation the study focused on the society domain and specifically on the family sub domain. And, as such fell short of capturing empowerment experience of the participant adequately in other domains and sub domains.

As known the strength of the qualitative approach lies in the privileged it gives the researcher to have adequate interaction with the subject of study which allows him to understand and interpret information as the respondent understands and means to explain it. And as such the researcher becomes the vital research tool. Despite the above strength, researchers have often cautioned over the use of non-probability sampling techniques and qualitative data collection instruments, against the possibility of producing subjective findings (Mouton, 2001:490). Despite these limitations the findings of this study is very important as it will contribute to improvement in knowledge of the relational or contextual nature of empowerment. Also, further studies that seek to study the impact of three or more empowerment programmes to enable comparative insight will be of immense benefit.
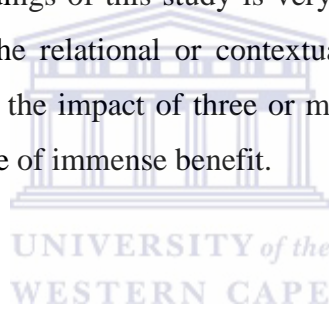
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8 APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Research Title: ― An Investigation of the Impact of an Empowerment Programme in a Cape Town Township

Student Researcher: Osuafor Chikelue Ephraim

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Supervisor: Prof. O, Oloyede

Semi-structured questionnaire for programme participants

Introduction

This study primarily seeks to investigate the impact of an empowerment programme on the participants. Though the study intends to meet academic requirements its findings may be useful to development actors with the interest in empowerment. The questions are tailored towards understanding the extent which you consider yourself empowered as a result of participating in the programme. The study wants to understand and examine to what extent you are empowered through the activities of the programme. Please note that the interview and completion of the questionnaire will not take much of your time. It is guaranteed that the information you provided in thereof will be treated with anonymity and complete confidentiality. Your genuine responses will make the study valid and beneficial. In case you do not feel comfortable and wants to withdraw entirely from responding or do want to answer any question, feel free to do so. Respondents may direct questions of clarity to the principal investigator; Mr. Osuafor Chikelue E, via telephone or email.

Thank you for your response and time.

Instructions

Please respond to the following questions as truthfully as possible. Where there are options, select the appropriate response by ticking the box of your choice. Respondents willing to list additional responses may do so either on a separate paper or send via email.

Section 1: Biographical characteristics of respondents

1. Age: [1]20-29 [2] 30-39 [3] 40-49 [4] 50-59 [5] 60+

2. Marital Status: [1]Single [2] Married [3] Divorce/separated [4] Cohabiting [5] Widowed

3. Home Language: [1]English [2] Afrikaans [3] Xkosa [4] Zulu [5] Other

Other please specify…………………..

4**. Educational Profile:** [1] Matric [2] Diploma/certificate [3] Degree [4] Post graduate

5. Employment Status: [1]Fulltime [2] Part-time [3] Unemployment

Section B:

Resource indicators: The programme activities have a focus on provision of resources and capabilities to enhance your ability to make effective choice. Please kindly provide information on the following to enable one understand the extent which the programme have been able to do so.
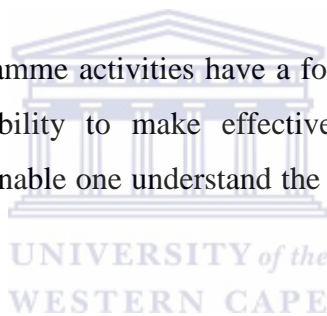
6. Informational resources

a. List the type of information you deem necessary for empowerment? --------------------------

----

6bDo you know of any existing law that protects you from violence?

Yes	No

6c. Were you aware of these laws protecting you before, during or after you joined the programme?

Before 1	During2	After3

6d. From a scale of 1 to 5 to what extent do you think that the programme enhanced your awareness and how to follow up violence on you?

1 not at all	2 very little	3 little	4 much	5 very much

6e. compared to the situation before your participation do you think your access to information on laws protecting you from violence has increased?

Yes	No

6f. If yes explain how?-- -- ---

6g. to what extent do you think access to information on law protecting you have empowered you?

1 not at all	2 very little	3 little	4 much	5 very much

7. Contraceptive and child spacing.

7a. Do you have any knowledge of child spacing and contraceptive use?

Yes	No

7b. If yes were you aware of this before or after joining the programme?

before	during	after

7c. From a scale of 1to 5 to what extent do you think the programme enhanced your access to information on child spacing and contraceptive use?

1not at all	2 very little	3 little	4 much	5 very much

7d. in general compared to the situation before your participation do you think your access to contraceptive and child spacing has increased?

Yes	No

7e. If yes explain how?-- -- ---

7f. to what extent do you think access to information on contraceptive have empowered you?

1 not at all	2 very little	3 little	4 much	5 very much

8. Material resources:

8a. Name the kinds of materials/goods you consider essential as empowering? ------------------
----

8b. why do you consider them important for empowerment? --------------------------------------
----

8c. Do you currently own or have access to any of these material things important for empowerment?

Yes	No

8d. If yes, Name them?---

8e. explain the nature of your access to these things before your participation in the programme? ---

8f. explain the nature of your access to them now? --

8g. To what extent can you relate your ownership or access to these material things to your participation in the programme?

1 not at all	2 very little	3 little	3 highly	5 very highly

8h. Did the programme contribute to your access to these material resources?

Yes	No

8i. if yes how did the programme contribute to this? ---

8j. How would you assess the impact of these materials on you? ----------------------------------
----
----

9. Financial assets

9a. How significant is your current financial situation in terms of your wellbeing?

1 not at all	2 very little	3 little	4 high	5 very high

9b. Do you think your financial situation has improved compared to when you have not participated in the programme?

Yes	No

9c. did the programme contribute to the increase in your financial resources?

YES	NO

9d. If yes, explain how the programme improved your financial situation? ----------------------
----

10. Human assets

10a. Do you think you have skills necessary for your survival?

Yes	No

10b. If yes when did you acquire the skills?

1 Before	2 during	3 after

10c. any choice you make up explain how? ....--

10d. to what extent do you think your participation in the programme is responsible for your level of skills?

1 not at all	2 very little	3 little	4 much	5 very much

11a. Were there things you wished to change in your life?

Yes	No

11b. If yes what are they?---

11c. Were you able to change them?

Yes	No

11d. If, no explain why?---

11e. Are there things you wish to change presently in your life?

Yes	No

11f. Name them?---

11g. Do you think you have the capacity to change them?

Yes	No

11h. If yes to what extent do you feel that your ability to change them resulted from the programme activity?

1 not at all	2 very little	3 little	4 highly	5 very highly

12 Capacity to make Choice

12a. To what extent do you think you can control decisions that affect your daily life?

1 not at all	2 very little	3 little	4 much	5 very much

12b. When decisions are made in these areas of your household and your life who makes them?

A) When to have sex?	
B) Child spacing?	
C) what to spend your income on	
D) Contraceptive use?	
E) The type of work you do?	
F) Freedom to move around?	
H) If there is violence on you	

1you jointly with someone	2 someone	3you & spouse	4 spouse	5 you

c. please explain how and why? --
----

f. please answer the following questions?

(i) How true would it be to say that your action in these aspects is motivated by your desire to avoid punishment or gain reward?

(ii) How true can it be to say that your action in these aspects is motivated by your desire to avoid shame and for people to speak well of you?

(iii) How true can it be to say that your action in these aspects are motivated by and reflects your value and interest?

Aspects	F i	F ii	F iii
A) When to have sex?			
B) Child spacing?			
C) what to spend your income on			
D) Contraceptive use?			

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E) The type of work you do?				
F) Freedom to move around?				
G) If there is violence on you?				
1 not at all	2 not very true	3 somewhat true	4 true	5 very true

13. a. Have you had any incidence of violence on you?

yes	No

13b. If yes did you do anything to address the violence on you?
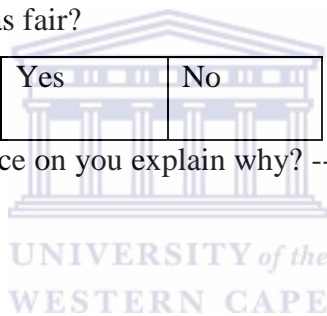
Yes	No

13c. If yes what was the outcome? -----------------------------------

13d. do you think the outcome was fair?

Yes	No

12e. If you did not address violence on you explain why? --
----

2. Checklist questions for the interview with the programme director

1. What are the major forms of powerlessness you perceive/understand in the community?
   2. What specific programmes have you designed to address the problem?
3. How much were you successful in implementing planned empowerment activities?
4. How do you evaluate the impact of your activities? Is there improvement as a result of your intervention? If so, would you mention specific cases?

Checklist for moderating Focus Group discussions

1. Is there a consensus regarding the major forms and reasons of powerlessness among the respondents?

2. To what extent do the participants feel they have control over their affairs as a result of the NGO activity?

3. What is the overall evaluation of respondents regarding the success/failure of the programme activities in terms of empowering them?

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Letter of Consent:

I……………………., have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, and received satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I agree to take part in this research.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I am free not to participate and have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to explain myself.

I am aware that this interview might result in research which may be published, but my name may **be/not** be used. (Circle appropriate).

I understand that if I don't want my name to be used that this will be ensured by the researcher.

I may also refuse to answer any questions that I don't want to answer.

Date: _____

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____

 Interviewer Name: _____

Interviewer Signature: _____

If you have any questions concerning this research, feel free to call Osuafor Chikelue Ephraim on 0732112877 or by email on elueofor@gmail.com. Alternatively, you may contact my supervisor, Professor Olajide Oloyede through the Institute of Development Studies on telephone number (+2721 959 3858/6) or pkippie@uwc.ac.za

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