

**PERCEPTIONS ON THE CAUSES OF POVERTY:
FIELD STUDY AT MAVAMBE VILLAGE**

BY

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i.

DECLARATION

I Mafemani Phanel Baloyi, declare that the mini-dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master of Development has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

BALOYI M.P (MR)

Date

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To my colleagues who gave me space and sometimes do the work on my behalf while I was busy with thesis.

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DEDICATIONS

This dissertation is dedicated to:

- My grandmother Nwa Makhoja Nkavele,
- My parents Chivirika (late) and Khubhani Baloyi,
- My wife Tinyiko and our children, Paseka and Vumbhoni,
- My sisters, Magreth and Grace and my late brother Shadrack.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions on the causes of poverty amongst the people at Mavambe village. The need for this study was relevant and necessary because most studies conducted on poverty were done on a general scale without taking into account the views of the rural people, such as traditional, community leaders and also local women. Consideration towards the rural areas is very minimal when it comes to fighting poverty.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (1996), everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing, and the right to access health care services, including productive health care, sufficient food and water, social security. South Africa has had almost eighteen years of democracy; however most of those constitutional rights have not been adequately attained. Yet the Constitution suggests that those rights are guaranteed and that the state must take reasonable steps, to achieve the progressive realization of those rights.

The study was qualitative in design. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents in line with qualitative studies. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with respondents

The lack of houses, clean drinking water, adequate sanitation, and poor roads, in rural areas are major signs of poverty in rural areas. Because of lack of jobs and resources, majority people are in abject poverty.

The study evaluated the scope and extent of poverty in the Mavambe village. The study further evaluated the perceptions of local, traditional and community leaders with regard to causes of poverty in the area. The study also solicited local people's perceptions and descriptions of poverty. The study highlights the multidimensionality of poverty.

The study made the following key findings, there is lack of agricultural land and capital, the study recommends that every household should have little piece of land to grow crops and other productive uses and that those who want to do commercial farming should be assisted with capital. Another key finding is on income and social grant, the study recommends that the elderly and mothers who are not of school going age should be given social grant not school kids.

The study also revealed that poor education system is a major cause of poverty and recommends that government must provide quality education, health, housing and sanitation. The study also revealed that there is lack of entrepreneurial development and thus recommends that entrepreneurial culture be natured as a viable option to deal with

issues of unemployment. The study also revealed that there is no infrastructure development in the rural areas and recommends that this should be given priority to change the economic set up of these areas. The study revealed that there is lack of values, respect and moral decay and recommends that families should cultivate and teach values to their children. The study concluded by providing recommendations on how poverty could be solved. These recommendations could also be of assistance for future policy development with regard to combating poverty.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the background to the problem, the significance of the problem, aims and objectives of the study, the problem statement, research questions, assumptions and format of the study.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

“Poverty is hunger; Poverty is lack of shelter; Poverty is being sick and not able to see a doctor. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is not having a job, is a fear of the future; living one day at the time. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom. Poverty has many phases, changes from place to place and across time and has been described in many ways (Todaro & Smith; 2006)”.

Poverty has been viewed as the denial of choices and opportunities, for people to enjoy a normal standard of living. Poverty reduction has been one of the key challenges confronting South Africa since the beginning of democracy in 1994. Data from poverty and inequality research undertaken by Statistics South Africa indicates that 57% of South Africans are living below poverty line, of which 95% are black (Stats SA 2007).

According to Statistics SA (2007), women in South Africa constitute 52% of the population and the majority of those are from rural areas. In the face of economic hardship and poverty, rural women, traditional and community leader’s views are not taken into consideration when issues of poverty are discussed.

Poverty is defined in many ways and this indicates that perceptions on the causes of poverty differ from place to place and from society to society. The complex nature of poverty has to be appreciated from the point of view of each society. The Mavambe community’s interpretation of poverty and its causes may not be shared by another community. The way the community view the causes of poverty and how they intend fighting poverty will only be applicable in that community and cannot necessarily be used by and work in another community. People’s perceptions of the phenomena of poverty help us to understand the extent of hardships and the prevalence of poverty in that society. The needs, aspirations and priorities of the poor can provide key policy issues and can help set national development priorities and strategies. However, the views of the people are usually overlooked by policy makers. In fact, it is only the people of a particular community that

should decide on how best they can be helped to deal with poverty in their community. The fact that the poverty levels are increasing across the country indicates that strategies employed to fight and reduce poverty in the communities have not been working. When it comes to poverty a 'one size fits all' approach does not work for every community. A careful and a close look at the perceptions of the members of the community on the causes of poverty will help come up with a solution that will be long lasting in the particular community.

Poverty affects the people's contribution and participation in development activities. The unavailability of economic opportunities leaves the community with no hope but to remain in a vicious cycle of poverty. It is even difficult to initiate a commercial activity because of the possibility of not getting customers as the majority of the people are not employed.

Socially, poverty results in a situation where the family starts to fight and instability sets in. Without income there is no food and this result in the lack of other life necessities - the result is often that girls start to go out to make money through prostitution and boys engage in criminal activities. All this, brings diseases and death to the families. Families are stripped of respect and dignity - children do as they wish because the parents have lost control of the family. So it is vitally important that communities be involved in the search for possible solutions to reduce poverty; the solution does not lie with donors and other external people alone who may come with strategies that are not informed by the needs of the community they claim to assist.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.

The Mavambe community is one of the poverty stricken areas in the Vhembe district of the Limpopo province. Poverty in the community is visible in the houses people live in; most of the houses are dilapidated. Some of the families depend on hand-outs from their neighbors for survival, and children are malnourished because of lack of food (Integrated Development Plan of Thulamela Municipality, 2010/11). Crime is increasing at an alarming rate because the majority of the people are not working, so they resort to stealing and robbery.

Poverty is a serious social problem which the Mavambe community is confronted with. Poverty has a serious negative effect on the well-being of the people of every community. It takes away the dignity and the self-respect that people have. The government's poverty

alleviation strategy of providing social grants and introduction of the Extended Public Works Programmer seem not to be working as more people are living in abject poverty.

It is against this background that this study is important for execution. The study seeks to generate an understanding from the local women, traditional and community leaders on how they describe poverty and what are the causes of poverty. It also seeks to understand why the government's poverty alleviation strategy is not working in this community. The study also reveals how different perceptions of the causes of poverty contribute to an inability to solve the problem of poverty. Policy makers, donors and other stakeholders do not seem to have a common understanding of the causes of poverty. This impairs the formulation of focused interventions to address the problem of poverty.

The study attempts to bring forth the views of women, traditional and community leaders on poverty discourse. The study also reveals the extent to which poverty negatively affects the dignity and well-being of the people in that community. The correct identification of the causes of poverty would also assist the policy makers and the local Municipality to deal directly with the root cause of poverty. The study also served as the basis of empowering the community of Mavambe on how best to deal with the predicament of poverty by them.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

Many of the studies conducted on poverty have been done on a general scale, without taking into consideration views and perceptions of those who are most affected by poverty. The issue of what rural people consider as reasons for living in poverty is often neglected in the literature on poverty, particularly the views of local women, traditional and community leaders.

According to Stats SA (2007), women in rural communities are generally poor and they constitute 52% of the total population and therefore their views might be of importance in the poverty discourse.

Traditional and community leaders are also not taken into consideration on poverty dialogues, despite the fact that they are the ones who drive local poverty alleviation strategies. Furthermore, they are almost in touch with those who are vulnerable. Despite the

fact that many studies have been conducted on poverty and many poverty strategies were implemented, poverty is on the rise in many communities including in the Mavambe community

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to understand the perceptions of women, traditional and community leaders on the causes of poverty in the communities of Mavambe in the Vhembe district of the Limpopo Province. This was undertaken because most studies that were conducted on poverty were done on a general scale. Much of the dialogue in the literature in the previous two decades has concentrated on the measurement of poverty and neglects what people consider as the causes for living in poverty

More specifically, the views of women, traditional and community leaders have often not been considered by these studies and while those are of vital importance in the alleviation of poverty. Thus the aim of the study was to close the gap that exists in these studies and principally, because of women and traditional leaders are important on academic grounds as well as in terms policy making process in addressing grassroots problems.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To realize the above aim, the following objectives are pursued:

- An understanding of the scope of poverty in the community,
- An understanding how women, traditional and community leaders describe poverty,
- An understanding perceptions on the causes of poverty by women, traditional and community leaders.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For this research to meet the above objectives, the following questions arise:

- What is the scope of poverty in the community?
- How do local women, traditional and community leaders describe poverty?
- What are the causes of poverty in the community as described by local women, traditional and community leaders?

1.9 OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

Chapter One

Outlines the background and the rationale of the study. This forms the basis for the understanding of the research and also comprises the following: statement of the problem, aim of the study, objectives of the study and research questions.

Chapter Two

Comprises of the theoretical perspective of the perception of the causes of poverty, and a review of the empirical evidence of the perception on the causes of poverty.

Chapter Three

Comprises of the research design, study area, population, sample selection method and size of sample, data collection methods, data analysis methods and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four

Presents the findings and an interpretation of the study.

Chapter Five

Makes conclusions and recommendations, based on the findings of this research study.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the state of poverty in the global world, Africa, South Africa and Limpopo province. The different views on how scholars define poverty and their perceptions on the causes of poverty are also examined.

2.2 CONTEXT OF GLOBAL WORLD POVERTY

The United Nations (2011) Millennium Development Goals Report indicates the following statistics on the proportions' of people living on less than \$1.25 a day. Sub-Saharan Africa 58%, Southern Asia 49%, Southern Asia (excluding India) 45%, Caribbean 29%, Caucasus & Central Asia 6%, Eastern Asia 60%, Latin America 11%, Western Asia 6%, Northern regions 45 %. According to the report, the number of people on less than \$1.25 a day in developing countries has been reduced from 1 billion in 1990 to 1.4 billion in 2005. The corresponding poverty rate had dropped from 46 % to 27 % by the same time (UN, 2011).

The report further indicates that one in five workers and their families worldwide were living in extreme poverty on less than \$1.25 per person per day in 2009. This represents a sharp decline in poverty from a decade earlier, but also a flattening of the slope of the working poverty incidence curve beginning in 2007. The estimated rate for 2009 is 1.6 percentage points higher than the rate projected before. While this is a crude estimate, it amounts to about 40 million more working poor at the extreme \$1.25 level in 2009 than would have been expected on the basis of pre-crisis trends (UN,2011).

Despite a significant reduction in extreme poverty, considerable number of people who went hungry in 2005-2007 remained stable at 16 per cent in the developing world. The report further indicates that many regions of the developing world will not be able to meet the hunger reduction targets. Trends observed in South- Eastern Asia, Eastern Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean suggest that they are unlikely to meet the hunger- reduction target by 2015 (UN, 2011).

2.3 THE CONTEXT OF POVERTY IN AFRICA

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2003) there are three significant perspectives on poverty. In terms of income perspective a person is designated as poor if, and only when their income level is below the defined poverty line. The line is usually demarcated in terms of having sufficient income for a specific amount of food. The basic needs perspective regards poverty as deprivation of material requirements for minimally acceptable fulfillment of human needs, including food. This idea of deprivation is much deeper than the lack of private income. It also has the connotation of lack of basic health, education, employment and services that have to be provided by states or communities to prevent people from being poor.

The capability perspective pertains to the absence of some basic capabilities to function. These capabilities differ from such physical ones as being nourished, being adequately clothed and sheltered and avoiding preventable morbidity, to more complex social achievements such as participating in the life of the community. Since relative deprivations in incomes and commodities can lead to an absolute deprivation in minimum capabilities, the capability approach is regarded as merging the ideas of absolute and relative poverty (Sen, 1983).

The various poverty perspectives allow for the measurement and profiling of poverty that, in turn, allow analysts to recognize groups of poor people, to evaluate the size of the groups and the difficulty of their poverty and, therefore, to track the model in terms of how changes in the socio-economy influence poverty. These further influence the policy-makers to see how their choices, by inducing such changes, are likely to affect poverty, and if they wish –to change their choices accordingly. However, despite the index developed by the UNDP, usually, three indicators of income poverty are used to recognize the poor and establish the greatness of their poverty, but the income poverty is the most used one.

These are the percentages of poor, the aggregate poverty gap and the distribution of income among the poor. On average, 45-50% of Sub-Saharan Africans, for example, live below their national poverty lines- a much high proportion than any other region of the world. However, the proportions of poverty is declining in South Asia, but increasing in Sub-Saharan Africa. When further comparisons are made of the depth of poverty across regions,

the poverty gap is greater in Sub-Saharan Africa with an index of 15% for 1981-1995 and 16% by 1997 (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD),(1998). The poverty gap is the ratio of the poverty line. When multiplied by the headcount index this gives the poverty gap index.

According to the World Bank, (2010) approximately 47% of sub- Saharan Africans live on less than US\$1 per day and more than 50% of them are from East Africa and Nigeria. On average, poor Africans were estimated to earn US\$0.85 (85 cents) per day during the latter part of the 1990s (Bread for the world institute, 1997) The consumption poverty line of US\$1 per day per person was developed by the World Bank as an international poverty line to compare the incidence of poverty across borders, while the poverty index was developed by the UNDP as a measure of deprivation in the three necessary rudiments of human life that are also indicated in the human development index, namely-

- Longevity (percentage of people not expected to survive the age of 40 years),
- Knowledge (percentage of adults who are illiterate) and
- A decent standard of living in terms of overall economic provisioning a composite of the proportion of people without access to safer water, percentage of people without access to health and percentage of moderately and severely underweight children below the age of five years (UNDP,1998)

According, to the UNDP (1998) high income poverty is usually associated with high human poverty, and low income poverty with low human poverty. However, the two forms of poverty can move in different directions. High income poverty can coexist with lower human poverty for example as it is found to be the case in Kenya, and low income poverty can coexist with high human poverty as was found in Côte d'Ivoire and Tanzania (UNDP,1998). This is so because progress in reducing poverty in income and progress in reducing poverty in human choices do not always move together. Some countries have managed better in the reduction of income poverty than they have in the reduction of human poverty (Côte d'Ivoire, for example) on the other hand, other countries have done better in reducing human poverty than they have in reducing income poverty (Kenya, for example) (UNDP, 1998).

The gap in terms of income is quite huge in many African countries. In Lesotho, for example, the per capita income of the richest 20% of the population is 22 times that of the poorest 20%, for South Africa the figure is 19 times, and for Kenya it is 18 times. (UNDP, 1998)

The Gini Coefficient is the instrument most often used to measure income inequality. It ranges from zero (complete equality) to 100 (complete inequality). High income inequality levels persist in many African countries. With a Gini coefficient of 51%, Africa has the worst income distribution in the world (UNECA, 2001).

2.4 STATE OF POVERTY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Between 1996 and 2006 the percentage of people living in poverty in South Africa has not changed significantly, according to recent estimates. The gap between the rich and the poor has widened and those households living in poverty have gone deeper into poverty instead. These estimates have been generated by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC, 2004) in collaboration with the South African economist, Andrew Ford.

Approximately 57% OF South Africans were living below the poverty income line in 2001, unchanged from 2010. Eastern Cape and Limpopo had the highest proportions of the population who were living below the poverty income line with 77% and 72% respectively. The Western Cape had the lowest proportion in poverty (32%), followed by Gauteng (42%), (Stats SA 2007).

The HSRC (2004) estimated poverty rates for each Municipality. The Western Cape Province has the most of its municipalities that are found in the lowest poverty rates. These include Stellenbosch and Saldanha Bay with 23% and (25%) respectively. The major city with the lowest poverty rate is Cape Town (30%). Pretoria and Johannesburg have somewhat higher rates of 35% and 38%, respectively, while Durban has rate of 44%.

In the Eastern Cape, Ntabankulu is the poorest municipality, where 85% of the residents live below the poverty line. The report indicates that the poorest two municipalities are located in Limpopo and one in the Free State, while seven of the ten poorest municipalities are located in the Eastern Cape.

The poverty rate does not show any sign of how far below the poverty line poor households are, despite the fact that it measures the proportions of a region's population living below the poverty line. Because of this the HSRC had measured the required annual income transfer to all poor households to bring them out of poverty using an instrument or measure called the poverty gap. The HSRC study has shown that the poverty gap has grown from R56-billion in 1996 to R81-billion in 2001 indicating that poor households have sunk deeper into poverty over this period

Table1. Poverty indicators by province

Province	No. of poor persons (million)	% of population in poverty	Poverty gap in billion	Share of poverty gap
Eastern Cape	4.6	72%	14.8	18.2%
Free State	1.8	68%	5.9	7.2%
Gauteng	3.7	42%	12.1	14.9%
Kwazulu-Natal	5.7	61%	18.3	8.7%
Limpopo	4.1	77%	11.5	14.1%
Mpumalanga	1.8	57%	7.1	8.7%
North West	1.9	52%	6.1	7.5%
Northern Cape	0.5	61%	1.5	1.8%
Western Cape	1.4	32%	4.1	5.0%
South Africa	25.7	57%	81.3	100.0%

Adopted from: Statistics South Africa (2007)

Kwazulu Natal has the biggest poverty gap of 18 billion because of its large poor population, followed by Gauteng and Eastern Cape. Between 1996 and 2001, the Gauteng poverty gap has escalated at an alarming rate compared to the other provinces. This might be because of its rapid growth in population; one that exceeds its economic growth. When it comes to municipalities, Durban has the largest poverty gap, followed by Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni.

During 1996 the total poverty gap was equivalent to 6.7% of the gross domestic product (GDP); by 2001 it had increased to 8.3%.

The growth in inequality between the rich and the poor indicates that the poorer households have not benefited in the outcomes of economic growth. The Gini coefficient, which can vary from 0 in the case of highly even distribution of income, to 1 in the case of a highly unequal distribution, has been used by the HSRC to measure inequality. South Africa's Gini coefficient rose from 0.69 to 0.77 in 2001 (Stats SA, 2007). While historically, South Africa has had one of the most unequal distributions of income in the world, this rise is likely to place it at the top of the world rankings.

Historically, inequality was mostly defined along racial lines in South Africa. Because the gap between the rich and the poor has substantially increased, the poverty gap has been defined within each population group. The Gini coefficient for the African population has risen from 0.62 in 1991 to 0.72 in 2001. This level of inequality is comparable with the most unequal societies in the world. The white population has a Gini coefficient of 0.60; that is extremely high for a group whose education and occupational profile matches that of societies in the highly industrialized countries. (Van der Berg, et al, 2009)

Table 2. Gini coefficient by population group

	1991	1996	2001
African	0.62	0.66	0.72
White	0.46	0.46	0.60
Coloured	0.52	0.52	0.64
Asian	.0.49	.49	0.60
Total	0.68	0.69	0.77

Adopted from: Van der Berg, et al (2009)

2.5 STATE OF POVERTY IN LIMPOPO

Limpopo is situated in the Northern part of the country, having international borders with Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The province is connected with provinces such as Gauteng, Mpumalanga and North West. The province spans 123 910 square km, constituting 10.2 % of the country's land area. The Limpopo province houses about 13 % of the South African population. During the 1996 census, the large majority of the population (89%) lived on non-urban areas (Stats SA 1998). Limpopo is typical of a developing area, with rural people practicing subsistence farming (Community Survey, 2007)

According to the community survey, (2007) 33.4% of the population who were older than 20 years had no formal education. 49% of the population aged between 15 and 64, were unemployed and those who were employed in elementary occupations amounts to 33% of the population (Stats SA, 2003). In 2002 over 61% of the population lived below the national poverty line, (UNDP, 2010).The households that live in informal dwellings amount to 70% and those in informal and traditional structures are 7% and 20% respectively.

According to Stats SA (2003), one quarter of the households did not have access to ambulance facilities and just 14 % had waste removal services once a week. On average 3-4 persons shared one household, pipe water; either on site or in the dwellings or from communal tap was available in 78% of the households. Electrification was used as the main source of the energy for cooking, wood in 60% and paraffin in 11%. Almost 70% of the households had radio, 40% a television, 39% a refrigerator, 8% a telephone and 25% a cell phone.

2.6 CONCEPTS CLOSELY RELATED TO POVERTY.

Concepts are usually used in a transposable ways in poverty discourse. However they can refer to quite different things. Organizations and institutions that are passionate about eradicating poverty use these concepts and terms differently. And this points out that as long as those who are serious about fighting poverty do not have common definitions and understanding of poverty, an answer to poverty will always be different.

In the following section, I discuss definitions of some key concepts

2.6.1 Inequality

The concept, inequality is concerned with wealth allocation across the population groups, while poverty concentrates only on those people whose level of comfort or standard of living is below a certain level such as a poverty datum line (Mbuli, 2008). It involves the idea of comparability to understand its meaning as appropriately as possible. It is only after assessing the unequal possession of socio- economic assets, which we are able to tell that Z is poor and Y has enough, that we can regard Y as being above the poverty datum line.

Lloyd and Morrissey (1994), define the poverty datum (PDL) line as the lowest value of the welfare measure which permits an individual to obtain a minimum substance standard of living. PDL can be described as a measure of both absolute and relative poverty, by measuring the median income of the people living below the income quartile, which is the dividing line of who is poor and who is not. (Lloyd and Morrissey, 1994)

The unavailability of resources necessary for human survival is one of the most significant aspects in the poverty dialogue. Many poverty studies and definitions have resorted to identifying what the goods are; a person will need to prevent them from death. But agency and dignity is an essential thread: people may still be considered poor even if they are unable to fulfill their minimal social obligation in society or if they give up their self-respect. (Lloyd and Morrissey, 1994)

2.6.2 Socio-economic exclusion

Thorat (2007) describes socio-economic exclusion as the process through which individuals or groups are totally or partially excluded from participating in the society within which they live. This definition further embraces the denial of access to resources, employment, education and public services. It certainly impoverishes the life of the excluded individuals, and inversely hampers the economic growth of the country as a whole. The main way in which social segregation is distinguishable from other poverty related concepts is that it focuses on social processes and social networks, and emphasizes the ways in which adverse power relations, segregation and identity can help to marginalize and impoverish people (Hickey & du Toit 2007).

Kgadima (2009) asserts that development strategies should be directed to the poor and in turn, such poor should be able to identify themselves so that they may be able to effectively participate during poverty alleviation programmes. The government should also continue to exert constitutional practice of equality in all government related opportunities, to eradicate poverty especially among women.

2.6.3 Vulnerability

Vulnerability is a concept which is usually used in different ways (Alwang et al., 2001). Vulnerability as a concept is used to refer to a situation where a person's being cannot be defended against external threats. Vulnerability and insecurity are usually used identically where in people cannot be able to cope with problems related to their well-being or against external threats, (Dercon, 2005).

People are vulnerable when they are at the edge or bottom level of poverty, when a shock that they would otherwise recover from the relative easy causes a catastrophic and hard to reverse reduction in their well-being or access to resources (Devereux, 2002). An important contribution has been made by the study of ecological vulnerability which emphasizes that vulnerability is a property of systems, which defend it when an external problem comes.

Vulnerability is often explained as a function of two properties: its resilience, (the ease and the speed with which it recovers) and its sensitivity, how heavily it is impacted by a shock or event). People are highly sensitive when the systems they depend on change, it means they are very vulnerable, as they cannot cope (Du Toit & Ziervogel 2004).

May,(1998) holds that conditions among individuals, communities, and households are not stable but keep on changing. Even though some individuals or communities are always poor, others move in and out of poverty. This may be the results of life-cycle changes in the lives of people. Specific events such as the deterioration in economic conditions or illness of the main income earner drive individuals to poverty or deeper into poverty in the future, which may be referred to as a down-side risk.

2.6.4 Indigent

Indigent is an archaic, Middle English word, which is used to refer to people who are in need or destitute, and in the South African situation, the term is often used to refer to poor people or households which get assistance from a municipal administered poverty relief programme, such as people who are exempted from paying Municipal rates for water and electricity and other charges of the municipality. In Eighteenth century France, this term was used to describe people living in chronic poverty, as opposed to people experiencing seasonal or transitory poverty (Hulme & Mckay, 2005).

2.6.5 Social wage

Social wage refers to payment or transfers which the government pays to people as part of government spending directed towards poverty reduction, goods and services that confer a personal benefit to individuals and those can be in the form of food parcels or other means that confer benefit to those who receive. The term is often used to refer to state spending on housing, social security and education. Categories of people like old age, the physically challenged are classified as the people who are under social nets, (Hickey & du Toit 2007)

2.6.6 Deprivation

Deprivation refers to the effects on person's life. Multiple deprivations are often used interchangeably with multidimensional poverty and the term deprivation is popular with some commentators as it is not contaminated with notions of minimal subsistence which is sometimes associated with the word poverty.

Deprivation takes into consideration a restriction that goes with being poor, what an individual can be able to achieve and what he cannot be able to achieve affects his future actions. The definition of the concepts provides similarity to an understanding of poor indicating what people have or do not have, Alcock, (2006).

Deprivation is often evaluated using indicators that do not solely measure lack of income but also measure the various types of deprivation. It is a much more focused way of measuring what it means to be poor. Indicators of deprivation often include lack of access to sanitation,

electricity and water and these are regarded as key services in South Africa. Usually different scholars have written about lived poverty, Matters, (2003)

2.7 TYPES OF POVERTY

In most poverty literature definitions and concepts are phrases that are usually used in a transposable way and ultimately lead to confusion. This document distinguishes between concepts, definitions. Definitions may be used to differentiate “the poor from within the framework of the concepts. This separation is important, particularly when formulating policies to combat poverty.

“The policies developed to deal with poverty shows dominant conceptualizations. In practice, concepts are mediated by definitions and measures and it is important to differentiate between causes of poverty as they are frequently conflated. Thus for instance, concept and definitions are often used interchangeably. Differentiation of terms assists in clearing confusion and demarcate between narrow and broader definitions.”(Lister, 2004)

2.7.1 Income poverty

According to Davids et.al. (2005), income poverty exists when a household takes in less than one US dollar per day. The implication is that people who are regarded as poverty stricken cannot have adequate income for food, or medicine, and they will have poor clothes and houses. Davids elucidates that the poverty line embraces the level at which households have enough income for specified food, housing and transportation. Such an income line is adjustable to regional variation in the sense that what is considered basic needs in one community, might not be considered the same by the other communities. Currently the US dollar fluctuates at around R8.40, meaning that poverty stricken households are spending less than R8.40. on average per day

Income poverty considers only the amount of money that directly flows to individuals but not money obtained by individuals from informal sources. The best strategy to reduce income poverty is to encourage and support the development of effective business (small medium and large) which make good use of our natural resources and talents to create wealth and jobs, which subsequently describes non-income poverty (ibid).

2.7.2 Non- income poverty

Mbuli (2008) explains that, non-income poverty happens when people are poor not because they do not have money but because of other factors. The implication is that when planning for strategies to fight poverty, poverty alleviation practitioners must be aware that other people may be regarded as poor, to a certain level that they do not have access to affordable social and physical services such as schooling, health care, medicines, safe water, good sanitation and good transport. Such people may not feel safe in their homes either because they cannot trust the authorities or because they belong to some vulnerable group.

The implication perhaps is that the best reduction strategy for this type of poverty can be to ensure that people have access to affordable and good quality social services and infrastructures, so that they feel secure in their homes and that they trust the authorities and, if they are vulnerable, there are safety net programmes to protect them (Mbuli, 2008)

2.7.3 Absolute poverty and relative poverty

Mbuli (2008) describes absolute poverty as including various needs besides pure physical survival, which includes a state in which a person does not have enough to live on, based on social acceptable living conditions, which embraces other essential goods besides nutritional requirements such as food, clothing and shelter in hostile climates. Members of the society who do not have enough food to remain healthy are regarded to be in state of an absolute poverty. This idea is modified by the fact that people without access to education or health services should be considered poor even if they have adequate food.

An absolute poverty-stricken household lacks minimum subsistence service required for a living on a basis, whereas relative poverty merely describes the extent to which a household is poverty stricken, like a condition in which people's income falls considerably below the average for that particular society. Absolute poverty requires immediate attention from the municipalities and other authorities delegated to fight such poverty types. Such authorities must follow well-structured policies which are in line with the constitutional provisions on services delivery aspects,(Alcock, 2006)

2.7.4 Chronic poverty

Hume & Shepherd (2003) argue that chronic poverty is a state of poverty that exists over time. A definition of the chronic poor developed by the Manchester-based Chronic Poverty Research (CPRC, 2004) is people who experience poverty for extended periods, or throughout their entire lives. According to this definition, chronic poverty is likely to be transferred across generations, and so will probably the children of adults currently living in the state of chronic poverty.

Chronic poverty is sometimes juxtaposed with the concept of transitory poverty which refers to a state in which people are able to move out of poverty after a short spell. The concepts of chronic and transitory poverty are important because they focus attention on the dynamics associated with escaping poverty or staying poor.

According to Uccelli (1997) chronic poverty is characterized by a deep-rooted, impoverished condition, which is the consequence of multiple deprivations over time, such as poor health, substandard nutrition and inadequate access to productive assets and is often associated with persistent, intergenerational poverty which implies that poverty that has been passing on from generation to another. Transient poverty on the other hand is a short-termed poverty and is characterized by temporarily shortage of basic services in the household.

2.8 CONTESTATIONS ON THE CAUSES OF POVERTY.

The 1995 world Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen defines poverty as follows:

“Poverty has many manifestations including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of education and other basic services; increase morbidity and mortality from illnesses; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterized by lack of participation in decision-making and in civil society and cultural life.”

Many people have become disillusioned when their new freedom from oppression does not deliver the promised relief from their conditions. Even politicians are surprised that despite their well-intended macro-economic, political and social interventions for poverty alleviation, poverty in rural communities like Mavambe still persists. In South Africa the recommendations of the expert consultants on the RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) and GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution Macroeconomic strategy) had not have much impact. (Meth, 2004).

Most people within South Africa are in agreement about the need to address and reduce poverty. This can be seen in a number of national initiatives that have been attempted to identify ways to reduce unemployment and poverty, such as the 1998 Presidential jobs summit, and the 2003 Growth and Development summit, and the subsequent provincial Growth and Development initiatives. In addition, high levels of public engagement around poverty have been championed by amongst others, former President Nelson Mandela and Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu and their respective philanthropic trusts.

South Africa has also seen a very large increase in the rate of corporate social investment in recent years, and there is also high level of individual giving to charities, especially to religious organizations addressing various states of vulnerability. It is always a challenge to have different perspectives on the causes of poverty as it contributes to the prolong identification of the root cause of poverty in a particular society. Below the different perceptions on the causes of poverty is explained.

2.8.1 Slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism

Africa must own the blame of its slavery and underdevelopment because of its sons who unfortunately epitomize the leaders of this continent, (Mouliom, 2003).

Some people justify such poverty by apportioning the blame to slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. For more than three centuries, strong and brave African people moved from Africa to work as slaves in Europe and develop occidental countries. The unfortunate part of the historical event was to deny Africa its labor that could have been used according to the resources available in the land, thereby giving a chance for Africa to develop economically, socially and politically.

Luckily it came to an end, but what is lamentable and undesirable is that the coming of an end to slavery gave chance to another problem which was colonialism and because of that African civilization was found to be wanting in modern development principles. At first Europe used religion to colonize Africa after that they colonized them economically and politically.

As a result of the invasion by occidental countries in Africa, encouraging things such as industrial development, medical skills and education happened. The harmful effects of this administration of Africa by Europe was to deceive and misinform Africans to give them inferior education, so that African people can be consumers and servants of the system where only colonialists the leaders, masters and providers. The hard-fought battles (wars) of liberating Africa gave birth to independence which was the right opportunity for African leaders to exploit the resources to reduce definitely the alarming poverty but instead it got worse economically. And this blame can be apportioned to the behavior of the African leaders. (Bhorant, 2006).

The human race originally comes from Africa and immigrated to all over the world and positively contributed to have made tremendous strides in development in different human fields. It is ironically that while other people are developing across the world Africa still remains behind undeveloped. Consciously a question need to be asked as to how do it come that when the rest of the world develops Africa lags behind,(Biman, 1998).

2.8.2 Civil-wars

Birman, (1998), points out that Africa has been the dumping place in terms of landmines, bullets, guns, and other destructive technologies by developed countries. These have been sold to them by the developed world, and Africans have used them to kill each another, not

realizing that buying them deprives them of the much needed economic and industrial development. Much of Africa's tax payer's money goes to the purchase of guns and ammunitions. Kreid (1998) claims that if he had the where-withal to ban any importation of guns and ammunitions into Africa he would do so.

Most countries that are in constant civil war have almost no government structure, countries such as Somalia have seen people displaced from their households, land, factories destroyed and harvesting of natural resources disrupted. Service provision such as postal, health, education collapsed. The international sponsored power struggle, only orchestrated to cause more poverty, unrest and anger to the general population. Kane, (1987) says conflicts abound in this part of the world almost to the extent that it has ceased to be news worthy. A great deal of money is spent supplying armies while little is reserved for the improvement of general life of the people. To maintain their political holdings, they made sure that they have a well-fed and equipped army, while the common citizens live in poverty. (Kane, 1987).

2.8.3 Tribal and ethnic conflicts

According to Habibov (2006), tribal and ethnic conflicts, nepotism and political marginalization of opponents in dictatorial regimes are also the major cause of poverty in Africa. This has caused many great African minds to escape from their countries to Western developed states, in search of political asylum and this has caused a brain drain from these countries. The brain drain of Africa is an indirect system of looting the continent of her best brains and continues to be one of the major reasons that have kept this vast land poor.

Engineers, architects, medical doctors , scientists and technologists who would otherwise make scientific, technological and industrial advancements in Africa run away and become residents or citizens in developed countries. These African professionals could have been the very ones that would be creating new industrial, commercial and general business enterprise to offer jobs to millions of the people but alas, there is an exodus of Africans into western and eastern countries in search of greener pastures and political asylums to escape death and imprisonment (Szczepanski, 2010).

For example, most Zimbabweans who have fallen out of political favor from President Robert Mugabe have gone to the other African states and Europe to work and contribute to the development of these countries instead of developing their own country. Political rivalry between political leaders, contribute to the brain drain that causes major setbacks in terms of poverty eradication.

Another cause of poverty as articulated by Szczepanski,(2010) are the double standards by some of the worlds developed countries, who are responsible for the overthrow of democracy in African countries. This breeds dictators who then plunder their countries riches, wealth and opportunities for growth and development as they are grossly guilty for Africa brain drain to a large measure.

Examples of this are Joseph Mobutu Sese-Seko kuku Ngbendu wa Zabanga of Zaire (Congo), Jean Bodel Bokassa of the Central African Republic and now, General El Bashir of Sudan who is supported (because of oil) by some western countries in spite of the fact that there is an ongoing genocide in the Darfur region. How can development be made when hundreds of Africans are displaced, running away from war or insurgent rebels as in Uganda north district of AcholiGulu and in the Darfur where they have run away into neighboring Chad and in live camps. This is true because the west has corrupted many African leaders to cause war in most African countries to protect their selfish interests (Szczepanski, 2010).

2.8.4 Foreign policies

According to Bhuka Bijumiro-Jjumiro,(2010), the other major of cause of poverty in Africa is the prescribed economic policies by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund that are considered by many people both in Africa and abroad, as adverse to African growth and development. These are the programs designed to hoodwink African leaders as essential for the continent's development but as history can demonstrate, many of these programs have made little difference. At best they have left the continent in very heavy debts to the world.

Policy positions prescribed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have in many cases played a role in increasing poverty in many parts of Africa because whatever policy they proposed was not suitable and fit to solve poverty problems faced by many

African people. And it is important to mention that many policy positions are not implementable to all African countries, and this causes underdevelopment to local economies in Africa. For instance, wage earnings of the majority of the people tend to be lowered because of the reduced spending policies,(Karagara ,2010).

Poverty in Africa has been compounded by loan policies prescribed by the World Bank and IMF (International Monetary Fund). Economic decisions are prescribed by those international bodies (Karagara, 2010). For instance, the requirement to reduce total government spending has affected major social sectors such as education, health and infrastructure, which are drivers of economic development in many countries.

The USA as a super power country controls these powerful institutions as they have the majority of voting rights. Decisions of poor countries are taken by those rich countries; these poor countries do not have self-determination. It should not be surprising to note that some economic decisions for poor countries are crafted in foreign lands. Local economies are undermined because these policies are not applicable to most African countries, (World Development Report, 2006)

2.8.5 Poor governance and corruption

Karagara, 2010 also cites poor governance (coupled with dictatorial regimes) as a major cause of poverty in Africa. He says that the unavailability of strong institutions and inequitable distribution of scarce resources exacerbates poverty. Leaders of substance and non-corrupt leaders are at the center of reducing and eliminating poverty. However, in Africa, programmes designed to fight poverty are not fully implemented because of corruption where money is directed to benefit corrupt individuals, who pocket the large portion of the funds. Because of the fact that leaders are corrupt and of issues of poor governance it is difficult to apprehend those who are found to be corrupt. This creates an imbalance in society and leads to more poverty because it ends up with a few influential and powerful individuals oppressing the poor (who are in the majority).

Corruption in Chad has left scares, the nation and the people of that country are in severe misery. A foreign relation between Chad and the world organizations is at its lowest at the moment, Baseman, (2010). Baseman (2010) further asserts that corruption promotes and

compound poverty and prohibits beneficial advancement. He says 225 million generated from oil revenues since 2004 has been wasted due to internal corruption. He articulated in his article that feuding and corruption drained Chad of its best chance of economic development. President Deby agreed with The World Bank that in exchange for loans to keep the revenues in a trust account earmarked primarily for development, where 72% was allotted to poverty –reduction and a further 10 % for a future generation’s fund.

Due to nepotism, and corruption of the Chad government, the majority of the country (9 million people) lives in abject poverty. People live on less than \$1 a day; the vast desert nation is ranked among the poorest nation. Much of the cash is either used on non-existent projects or misusing public contracts run by the president’s inner clan. (Baseman, 2010).

In terms of economic theory, normally corruption results in discouraging people to invest thereby reducing economic growth (for both domestic and foreign entrepreneurs). Corruption acts as a tax when entrepreneurs are asked for bribes before an enterprise can even start and also where a corrupt official demands shares from the investment earnings. Corruption could be expected to reduce growth by lowering the quality of the public infrastructure and services, decreasing tax revenue, causing talented people to engage in rent-seeking rather than productive activities,(World Bank Report, 2000).

The way in which the government structure is institutionalized create a channel through which corruption reduces economic performance. Mostly the huge amount of money is spent on these items which it is easy to obtain bribes and treat such as secret, for example, items produced in the market where the extent of completion is slow and items whose value is difficult to be monitored. Corrupt politicians might therefore be tending to spend money on the fighter aircraft and large scale of investment projects than on teachers’ salaries and learners books even though the later may promote economic growth to a greater degree than a former,(Rose-Ackerman, 1978).

This is also true in South Africa where politicians and government officials temper with procurement processes. Tenders are awarded to friends, relatives and to those who have political allegiance to the ruling party. And as a result the state ends up paying more than necessary and it also slows the service delivery that was meant to eradicate poverty. For example road construction conducted in the Limpopo Province had to be re-done again

because those who were given the tender firstly did not do the correct job and this becomes expensive on the side of the government (Auditor's General Report, 2008).

Despite the alarming socio-economic problems in South Africa, the Public Service Monitor (PSAM) believes that the main problem of poverty reduction in South Africa is the poor corporate governance which includes poor performance of government officials in their administration of public resources as well as a lack of political will to act against underperforming officials and corrupt politicians (Public Service Commission, 2007).

The poor management of public resources translates directly into poor public service delivery implementation and thus obviously undermines poverty alleviation policies. The absence of adequate accountability mechanisms has led to frustration of the many poverty stricken families and communities and this resulted in many confrontations and violent ways, such as the service delivery protests which have swept through South Africa over the past few years.

The South African national human rights commission, office of the public protector and other bodies established in terms of Chapter nine of the South African constitution are supposed to be correctly placed to deal with and ensure good governance and accountability. Activism in the civil society must have capacity and determination to ensure that government accounts for every cent which is bestowed unto them. The role of the civil society in entrenching accountability is very important.

Institutions formed by government to assist and promote good governance are non-functional and are largely controlled by these who are in government, who are also corrupt. Institutions such as SCOPA, SARHC (South Africa Human Rights commission), and the Office of the Public Protector, were formed to promote good governance, but these institutions are manipulated by the political heavy weights. Good governance in South African government departments is a serious problem, (Auditor-General, 2008)

Most government departments got disclaimers for 2009 and 2010 in their audit report by the Auditor General. The reasons range, from unauthorized expenditures, unaccounted expenditures and payment for work which was never done and other irregularities that were committed. Government has policies in the form of PFMA (Public Finance Management Act)

which are meant to regulate financial expenditures in all government institutions, but those in charge of running departments transgress these procedures for their own benefit.

2.8.6 Poor land utilization

Poverty is also caused by underutilization of land; most people simply use land to grow crops not for commercial purpose but simply for subsistence survival. Nothing goes to the market for sale. People in most African countries own large chunks of land that are underutilized and sometimes not used at all. This is because they are not educated on what to do with the land (Karagara, 2010).

2.8.7 Lack of infrastructure development

Africa has a poor infrastructure set up. There are places where there are no economic drivers such as roads, railways, or water systems, yet these are the most important aspects for economic development. As a result, only a few areas with better facilities (such as urban areas) have developed over the other (rural) areas, which are occupied by the largest percentage of the population (Karagara, 2010). Most rural areas do not have basic services that can propel economic activities, such as electricity and those mentioned above. Business activities are very difficult to initiate under circumstances where there is no infrastructure development.

Proper roads, electricity, water and sanitation are the pre-requisite for rural development. Most people in rural areas migrate to urban areas in search of quality of life. Young people who graduate from universities prefer to stay and work in areas where there are facilities. Lack of infrastructure in rural areas is a major cause of the poverty in those rural areas.

2.8.9 Disease (HIV/AIDS) and poor health facilities

The spread and occurrence of different diseases in the rural areas is among the leading cause of poverty. The little money the households have is spent on the treatment of the sick. Diseases such as TB, Malaria and HIV/AIDS are the most problematic ones. Most family household lose bread winners and those who are left behind are left vulnerable because of lack of resources to support themselves and the situation is worsened by poor health facilities, (Bernice, 2010)

Bernice,(2010) claims, that- there is a story of just one mother who lost 11 of her 12 children in two years and the last one is dying. All the children died of AIDS. In her grief she said God gave and God has taken away because he knows best.

According to Bernice,(2010) AIDS takes the lives of some 15 million people a year in parts of Africa. People are dying due to lack of knowledge. The disease has created over a million orphans.

I fully agree with the fact that AIDS has taken many lives and is still continuing to kill people particularly in rural areas. This is prevalent in a situation where by many families are headed by children who only depend on the social grant for survival. AIDS is one of the greatest contributors to the increasing levels of poverty in our community. Most children who are left by themselves with no guardian normally drop out of school and this exacerbates the situation, (UNDP, 2002).

Starvation is one of the saddest ways to die. Being without food and left to starve to death is the worst form of violence a human being can go through (Bernice, 2010). In Africa a child dies every three seconds -30, 000 per day die. More than 800 million go hungry at night (UNDP, 1998)

Leaders in Africa have always run things the same way-they do not educate the people, and do not allow outside information in and simply keep the people ignorant. This does not mean that the people are inherently ignorant; it means that they never learned that things can be done differently. When people do not know any better, why would they demand change? They do not know what change means. The people do know how to kill and maim each other. Have the people ever figured out how they can make their agricultural situation better. In African countries they do things the way their great, great, great, great, great, fathers did. The people are ignorant, because they have been kept that way (Stelman, 2010).

2.8.10 Poor education system

Many African people have never attended schooling; therefore they do not have the capacity and skills to secure employment nor to start their own business. Those who had a chance to attend school and receive education rarely attended school anywhere near the number of years that learners in other countries attend, (Dskocil, 2010). In reflecting on poverty and

class, one has to realize that there is a link between poverty and education. Many who land the more rewarding positions in society, whether they are political, economic or social are those who are skilled and qualified. According to the UNDP Report (1998: 23):

There is a very strong relation between the standard of living and level of education: the poverty rate among people with no education is 69%, compared with 54% among those with primary education, 24% among those with secondary education, and 3% among those with tertiary education.

This is the reason why the South African government adopted a policy of free education to ensure that these children who are poor are not marginalized at school level. But more still needs to be done for those who wish to further their education at a tertiary level. Tertiary education is very expensive to the majority of young people in South Africa who have completed high school especially those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The degree of the backlogs in apartheid education demands an investment far greater than the existing levels of budgetary allocation (UNDP, 2003). It seems some discrepancies created by that legacy would need an injection of resources greater than what has been spent since 1994. However, there are dissenting opinions that purport to say that education is not necessary for exiting poverty. They argue that having education is laudable but it is not a guarantee to escape from miseries of being poor. According to a Special Report on the widening poverty gap, (UNDP, 2003:32)

“Many black South Africans are now better educated, but this has not necessarily translated into better jobs. While studies have shown that the better educated an individual, the better off they are, in South Africa it is not only those who are without skills and education who struggle to find employment.”

Some of the poor and unemployed people are very skilled and well educated, yet, they struggle to make a living because they are unemployed. Race and gender, are critical factors influencing employment, overriding and individual, s skills profile. It seems that there are still those pockets of subtle discrimination that have survived in our democracy. A special Report on Widening Poverty Gap, (UNDP, 2003:41) states,

“A recent survey by the Human Science Research Council of South Africa found that while university graduates have a distinctive advantage in the country’s competitive labour market. Some historically hurdles remain. Africans, women and those who studied at historically black universities still have the greatest difficulty finding employment. It conducted a survey of 2,672 university graduates who obtain their first degree between 1990 and 1998. The study revealed differences in racial lines. About 70% of white graduates

found employment immediately, compared with 43% Africans, 4- 2% Coloureds, and 47% Asians. A higher proportion of graduates from historically black universities (65.4 %) experienced periods of unemployment compared to graduates from historically white universities (34.65 %)."

This report gives facts about the disparities on the incidents of unemployment amongst the graduates from various racial groups in terms of their qualifications obtained from various academic institutions in South Africa. White graduates easily accessed the job market more than their African, Coloured and Indian counterparts. It seems that there was a perception that the quality of education offered at historically white tertiary institutions was better than the one offered at historically black tertiary institutions.

The majority of the people at Mavambe village are without skills and hence such poverty. There are many reasons why most people do not have formal education and those range from the historical part of the country. But those who are young, it might be because of the influence of their families and the set-up of the particular family influences educational outcomes. Education is the pre- condition of development, any society that wants to fight poverty should prioritize education.

This then brings us to the next link between poverty and unemployment. The more highly skilled a person is, the more he or she is expected to be employable. The outcome of good education is that it is supposed to open opportunities for empowerment for all people. According to the UNDP, (1998), poverty and unemployment are closely related: 55% of people from disadvantaged households are unemployed, compared with 14% of those from the non-poor households. Poor households are characterized by a lack of wage income, either as a result of unemployment or low paying jobs, and typically rely on multiple sources of income to reduce the risk.

Many of the poor are jobless, with very few prospects of permanent employment. The world of the poor is characterized by the realities of unemployment. Being poor means not having food and shelter, just being idle every day goes by, without being involved in any productive activity that generates income. Job creation is a major concern to the poor. Unemployment is a significant contributor to poverty (UNDP, 1998). Sometimes there are healthy individuals in the community suffering hardship because they are unemployed. Joblessness continues to impoverish many of our people, regardless of their colour, creed and gender. The UNDP, (1998) enumerates six basic categories of the unemployed poor, namely:

- a. Poorly educated rural unemployed (28%)
- b. Poorly educated urban unemployed (13%)
- c. Young unemployed with no labour market experience (13%)
- d. Long-term unemployed with no labour market experience (6%)
- e. Those with labour market experience and some education (15%) and
- f. Highly educated unemployed poor (1%)

In terms of the above mentioned data, the unemployment levels tend to be the highest amongst the poorly educated rural citizens and the youth with no work experience. It is clear that unemployment affects all members of the population in different degrees. Unemployment rates tend to be the highest amongst Africans, in rural areas, among the women and youth, and those with no previous experience (UNDP, 1988). It is important that we should focus on eliminating all factors that are compounding joblessness amongst the Africans.

The vast majority of poor people in our community, who are unemployed, lack essential vocational skills and entrepreneurial skills for them to be economical active. There is a danger that if this social ill is not appropriately addressed, we will have an underclass in South Africa, the majority of whom will be black people. Jennings(1992) describes the black underclass as follows:

It is generally understood to refer to a growing number of persons who are uneducated, unskilled, unemployed and often unemployable, or employed in low paying jobs, living in unrelieved poverty, and immersed in a culture conditioned by such abject circumstances, with only limited chances or hope for upward mobility(Jennings, 1992;54).

Therefore, being in such an unfortunate situation means one has to live in inferior conditions. This poses a challenge to us to embrace the vision of eradicating poverty. People do not want to see inequality and injustice returning to our society and spoiling our democracy.

2.8.11 Lack of talent development

Lopez (2010) asserts that with variants of the causes of poverty in Africa, they are common for every nation in the world when it comes to poverty. There are compelling things that operate against prosperity from within the individual and from external. The most important

thing from outside operating against individual is the government system. Government does not take care of people talents. Liberty and pursuit of happiness is oppressing its people. A government that prohibits, for example, private property is robbing its people from getting motivated to invent and invest. If the government controls people's actions then people's imagination, talents and abilities remain dormant by not having a channel of expression, (Lopez, 2010).

It is unthinkable for any government to determine what kinds of talents people have, in order to dictate the kind of work or occupation a person must take to increase the well-being of the nation. A person cannot be motivated if he knows that his achievement would be distributed among all. People should be encouraged to maximize their potential for the benefit of themselves and the country.

People are in deep poverty even though they have potential talents, which if maximized, can be of the advantage to these individuals. Government does not create opportunities for these people who have talents to participate in sports and other fields particularly in rural areas. Young people's talents are wasted because of lack opportunities which are seem to be available in urban areas only. Sometimes peoples economic set up can be changed by intrinsic abilities and talents,(Lopez, 2010).

Many people have a problem of fear of failure and because of that they figure out their talent and abilities and start nurturing them. Despite fear some will ensure that they try to unearth the God given talents and abilities. Sometimes people's talents are obvious and sometimes not. A person has to start discovering what abilities he is having. Some people start to become confident as soon as they become aware of their abilities and start to grow them and remove prospective barriers.

Aka-Eri, (2010) indicates that countries that are the richest in the world also have the poorest people and it is not a problem that can be solved easily. He also indicates that being born in Africa he has learned the fact that there are serious issues that scourge our valuable lives as Africans. And while these serious issues may differ a great deal and many impressive minds vary on really causes of poverty in Africa. Most people would agree with him that all things begin from one big cause and that is the absence of African civilization.

African countries are in economic decline and are on a gravely downward tendency losing ground in many different respects. According to Aka-Eri,(2010) this happens because as a continent we undermined our ancestral civilization while adopting foreign culture in doing things.

By embracing entrepreneurial capitalism as a trademark, they were determined to gain control and decided how the world should be to African people. Africa has lost the trust and believe that they can do things on their own. They have surrendered their own dignity and respect in exchange of handouts in the form of loans and assistance from foreign land. And that is not good at all. (Akari-Eri, 2010).

Instead of teaching and empowering Africans to be self-reliant and be hard working to achieve the best out of the continent, they caused and made us believe in the myth of praying and fasting to improve our conditions and our lives. Frankly foreigners came to Africa as missionaries and the fact of the matter is that these missionaries; Christians, Muslims and whatever, they were also mercenaries of a special kind.

African leaders must begin and initiate the process of creating stable government which can create and support infrastructure development to give chance to recover economical. Leaders must change the way things were done in the past to achieve new results. Innovation and skills development should take a centre place for the continent to recover its own standing.

Africa as a continent is the most significant component of the world. The world is not complete and cannot do without Africa as Africa cannot do without the world. The world needs Africa because the continent is blessed and fully of endowments beneath the earth such as gold, platinum and many other resources. For Africa to recover economical raw material must be unearth and be processed in Africa, in that way Africa would have begin the road retelling it own story.

Africa should industrialize against all odds of the world globalization, Instead of selling unprocessed raw material. One of the causes of poverty in Africa is the absence of

innovative skills and the denial of our unique African civilization. It is important at all cost to add best value to the finished products to serve Africa and the rest of the world, (Akari-Eri, 2010)

2.9 SUMMARY

It is important to indicate that most of the research studies were conducted on a national scale. Poverty alleviation strategies were employed at all levels. But poverty is still continuing to be the greatest problem in the society. Most of the studies conducted do not take into account the views of local women and traditional leaders into consideration. Women are a category most affected by poverty and their input as to how to deal with poverty might be of help in trying to solve the problem of poverty. Traditional leaders have a history of leading their own people, knowing what is right and wrong for them; their view point on the strategies to be employed to tackle poverty might be of significant importance.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a brief overview of the study area and the research procedures employed in the gathering of information about the perceptions on the causes of poverty. The chapter also gives a brief on the socio-economic characteristics of the study area, discusses the research design, population and sampling procedure as well as the data collection processes, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Babbie and Mouton (2009), research design is defined as a plan or structured frame work of how one intends conducting the research process in order to solve the research problem. It can also be define as a programme to guide the researcher in collecting data, analyzing and interpreting observed facts (Bless et al., 2006). Further, the research design can also be defined as the plan that describes the conditions and procedures for collecting information.

Qualitative research was used because it often contains rich descriptions, colorful details which give the reader a feel for social setting instead of formal neutral tone with statistics (Neuman, 1994). Neuman (1994) further asserts that qualitative research emphasizes the importance of social context for understanding the social world, and the present study involves a community in a social setting.

In this study the research design was qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual.

- Qualitative

According to Brick (1992) the qualitative research approach refers to a broad range of research designs and methods used to study phenomena of social action and of which we do not have an understanding. Its emphasis is on providing a comprehensive or holistic understanding of the social setting in which the research is conducted.

De Vos (2001) is of the opinion that without the holistic view, there is little value to qualitative research. The most possible relevant information is obtained to enable the researcher to draw a clear picture which is aimed at analyzing the in-depth picture of network of relationships within and among the various aspects relevant to the problem.

Qualitative research focuses on understanding the phenomena as a whole. The aim of the study was to explore the depth, richness and complexity inherent in the experiences and perceptions of the causes of poverty among the local women, traditional and community leaders. I wanted to understand how the local women view and perceive poverty and how they think what can be done to solve problem of poverty. People were interviewed and observed in their context or settings to discover their perception on the causes of poverty.

- Exploratory

The objective of qualitative design is to explore areas where limited or no information exists (De Vos, 2001). I viewed the participants as the group of people whose views were not considered or taken into account when poverty studies were conducted. The dimensions and perceptions on what are the causes of poverty were explored. The experiences of local women, traditional and community leaders were explored with regard to how poverty could be solved.

- Descriptive

Descriptive research describes the behavior, events, beliefs, characteristics, attitudes, structures and processes that occur in a phenomenon. It gives complete and accurate information about the phenomenon that is being studied (Brink, 1992). The information was gained through focus-group discussions and observations. The documented information on the phenomenon was analyzed and classified to provide new insights into it. To obtain a holistic understanding of the data collected, an in-depth description of the identified attributes was made.

Again an in-depth description of experiences and perceptions of local women, traditional and community leaders with regard to how they perceive poverty and how it could be solved was made. Accurate description during conceptualization formed an integral part of the

study since rational statements were deductively analyzed and stated. The model and guidelines for operational zing were also described.

- Contextual

Mouton and Marais (1996) describe contextual research as ideographic research, in that it is uniquely descriptive within the context of an individual setting. This study was contextual because I tried as far as possible to study people in their natural setting in order to understand the dynamics of human meaning as fully as possible. It is believed that human behavior is influenced in many ways by the environment or setting in which it occurs (De Vos, 2001). Local women, traditional and community leaders were interviewed in their local area. This study was conducted at Mavambe village. Local women, traditional and community leaders outside the selected study area were not included in this study.

3.3 STUDY AREA

The study was conducted at Mavambe village. Mavambe is a small village in the Thulamela municipality of Limpopo Province the northern part of South Africa. It is located in the north, about 9km from Malamulele Township. It lies in the vales of the Rivubye River, surrounded by green fields, on the southern side of Thohoyandou. (Thulamela Municipality integrated Development Plan, 2010)

It is surrounded by one perennial river Rivubye and one periodic river called the Ngholombbi. Two small rivers dissect the community. The village is under traditional leadership. There are two primary schools and one high school. The community lives traditional lives, where they depend on agriculture for a living.

3.4 POPULATION

According to Arkava, (1983) there is a distinction between the terms universe and population. Universe refers to all potential subjects who possess the attributes in which the researcher is interested. Population on the other hand is a term that sets boundaries on the study units. It refers to individual in the universe who possesses specific characteristics.

Powers et al (1985) define a population as a set of entities in which all the measurement of interest to the practitioner or researcher is presented. The entities may be people, such as all clients comprising a particular worker's case load, or things, such as all the research books housed in a specific library. In either case, the study of the population may be said to be exhaustive in that it includes an investigation of every entity under consideration.

White, (2002) describes the population as a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics that researchers are interested in studying. A population is thus the full group of potential respondents to whom the researcher wants to generalize the findings of the study

For the purpose of this study the population had been all local women, traditional and community leaders of Mavambe village. Mavambe village has 200 families and 21 traditional and community leaders.

3.5 SAMPLING

Sarantakos,(2000) state that the major reason for sampling is feasibility. A complete coverage of the total population is seldom possible, and all the members of a population of interest, for example, drug abusers, parents of preschool children, or child abusers, cannot possibly be reached (Yates, 2004). And in this case it was not possible to reach all women who were considered the population of the study.

I used purposive sampling because according to de Vos (2005), in purposive sampling, a particular case is chosen because it illustrates some feature or process that is of interest for a particular study. It is further indicated that in purposive sampling the researcher searches for information-rich key informants, groups, places or events to study.

Traditional and community leaders were purposively sampled, and were identified through the help of a traditional leader who knows his people. Purposive sampling was also used to draw a sample of local women done to sample local women.

. Table 3 **Populations and Sampling**

Groups	Population	Sample	Sampling methods
Traditional leaders	10	5	Purposive
Community leaders	11	5	Purposive
Local women	200	20	Purposive
Other groups	450	30	Purposive
Total	671	60	

3.6 Data Collection Methods

The researcher collected the information from the respondents through focus group discussions as well as in-depth individual interviews. An interview involves direct face to face communication with the respondents who are asked to answer questions concerning the research problem (Bless et al., 2006). Interviews differ completely from being structured to unstructured. The interviews were unstructured.

As the purpose of this study was to look at the perceptions on the causes of poverty at Mavambe, focus group interviews or discussions were used by the local women, traditional and community leaders.

Lecompte and Preissle (1993) indicate that in non-scheduled standardized interview, all participants are asked the same questions but the order in which they are asked may be altered. For this study, the respondents were interviewed in different places, for example traditional and community leaders were interviewed at the tribal offices. Local women were interviewed at the local school.

The questions were directly posed to the participants and the answers recorded immediately to create field-notes.

3.6.1 Observations

According to Brink (2012), observation is a technique for collecting descriptive data on behavior, events and situations. All observations must be checked and controlled.

Observations may be structured and unstructured. Structured observations entail specifying in advance precisely the behavior or events that are to be observed and how they will be recorded, and preparing forms for record keeping such as check lists, categorizations system and rating system.

Unstructured observation involves the collection of descriptive information that is analyzed qualitatively rather than quantitatively. In unstructured observations the researcher attempts to describe events or behaviors as they occur, with no preconceived ideas of what he or she will see

I observed the prevalence of poverty while walking through the village. I also observed the daily livelihoods of the people of the village, and where they stay. The standard of their houses were also observed, how they dress and what eat. Participant observation can be described as a qualitative research procedure that studies the natural and everyday set-up in a particular community or situation, (de Vos et al 2001). I undertook did observations to have a direct experience of the situation in the community.

3.6.2 In- depth individual interviews

This was a one-to-one interview between the researcher and the participants. The interview was free –flowing with its structure limited to the focus of the research. The interview was directed by three broad questions for every participant. The following questions were asked during the interviews:

- How is the scope of poverty in the community?
- How do you describe or define poverty?
- What are the causes of poverty in the community?

The participants were encouraged to add information or to clarify certain aspects. Probing was used to increase detailed exploration (Brink, 1996). The aim of using unstructured interviews was to actively enter the worlds of people and to render those worlds

understandable from the standpoint of a theory that is grounded in the behaviors', languages, definitions, attitudes and feelings of those affected by poverty. My contribution as a researcher was limited. My role was to introduce the theme, motivate participants to participant through probing and keep them focused on the research topic (De Vos, 2001).

I helped the participants to describe their lived experiences without leading the discussion. Interviews ended when participants believed that they had exhausted answering all questions. I always remembered to be centered on the data topic and avoided interrogating the participants. I treated the respondents with respect and sincere interest in the shared experiences. Data collection continued until I believed that saturation has been achieved. Field notes were taken to capture information with the permission of the participants. Data was collected in Xitsonga because that is the language the participants preferred. Data was then translated verbatim within 24 hours of collection (De Vos, 2001).

Unstructured interviews were used because reality can be reconstructed from the world of the interviewee, the interviewer can obtain an insider view of the phenomenon and socially and personally sensitive topics such as their experiences with regards to poverty can be more openly discussed (De Vos, 2001).

- **In-depth interview process**

The process of unstructured interview would unfold as follows

- Preparing for the interview

I carefully familiarized myself with the interview questions. I also prepared myself emotionally because issues of poverty might cause participants to be emotional sometimes.

- Becoming acquainted

I conducted myself in a good way and this resulted in a situation where I was accepted by the interviewee. Communication principles were adhered to and I was so polite to avoid a situation where the interviewee of giving wrong information or ending the interview. I gave my credentials to reassure the interviewees. The participants were made aware of the proposed research and how results would be used. The use of audiotapes, taking field notes, the interview venue, time and date were also discussed. I established a cordial

atmosphere during the interview to ensure that the interviewees could speak freely. I made sure that there is cordial relationship between myself and the interviewee.

- Establishing a relationship of trust

Mutual trust ensured the co-operation of the interviewee and also improved the quality of the collected data. The interviewers responded in a way that showed that the interviewees were worthy of their openness and did not condemn or oppose the interviewees (De Vos, 2001).

- Ending the unstructured interview

I suggested ending the interview when it was realized that the participant did not have anything more to say. The interviewee was made aware of the expected duration of the research. The value of the information gathered was also communicated to the interviewee.

3.6.3 Focus group

Krueger (1994) defines a focus group as a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment free from interruptions. It is conducted with between seven and ten people led by the interviewer. He also maintains that the key principle in the formation of a focus group is homogeneity, which is determined by the purpose of the study (Krueger, 1994). The focus-group discussion was conducted with local women, traditional and community leaders. Data gathering was conducted within the guidelines provided by Krueger (1994): Preparation, techniques, skills and attitude of the focus-group facilitator.

Process followed in conducting focus-group discussions

The following guidelines are described in relation to preparations, techniques, skills and attitude of the facilitator for conducting focus-group interventions.

- **Preparation**

Two focus groups were conducted, one for traditional and community leaders and one for local women. Focus-group interviews for traditional and community leaders were conducted on Wednesday afternoon and the second one for local women was conducted on Saturday afternoon as this was convenient for all women participants. It was therefore necessary for

me to obtain permission from chief of the area. The first focus group with traditional leaders was attended by all sampled participants but in the second one with local women only eight out of ten attended.

The environment was made comfortable and conducive without any disturbance. The environment was non-evaluative and non-threatening with comfortable chairs placed in a circle to allow face to face interaction. Written permission was requested from the participants before the beginning of the focus-group interviews. An audiotape with a cassette in position was used with the participants' permission.

The research assistant was in charge of the audiotape and had an extra cassette in case a replacement was required. The research assistant and I formed part of the circle. Each of the participants was given a number to pin on themselves to avoid using names for the purpose of confidentiality. A flipchart board with pens was used to note the discussion. The group selected a scribe who was also a participant. The participants and the interviewer established ground rules to facilitate the smooth running of the discussion. The following ground rules were set:

- Cell phones to be switched off,
- Members to respect each other's view point,
- Members to allow one person to talk at a time, and
- No refreshments during discussions.

The time limit depended entirely on the saturation of information gathered from the participants. Refreshments were provided during breaks.

- **Techniques, skills and attitudes of the focus-group facilitator.**

The role of the researcher, the environment where the focus-group interviews were conducted and the role of the interviewer are described in the following paragraphs.

- **The role of the researcher**

I arrived early enough to give the participants a warm welcome when they arrived. I again welcomed the group and allowed the introduction of everyone present. I introduced the research assistant and explained her role, which was to control the audiotape. I further

explained the purpose of the study and written consent forms were handed out to be signed before commencing the focus-group interview in line with what is asserted by Krueger, (1994).

During the focus-group interviews I took field notes. The research assistant operated the audio- tape, which was placed in the middle of the circle to capture every participant's voice. I asked three broad questions one at a time and always tried to steer the discussion back to the area of focus. I also observed the group dynamics among the participants, such as non-verbal and verbal communication. To indicate that they were in agreement to what was being said by one participant others would simply nod their heads. Some would also raise their hands and indicate that they agree with what is being said.

- **The environment**

The focus-group interviews were conducted in an environment which was conducive for the purpose. For example, during the interviews conducted at the school, the class was well-organized on time in terms of being clean and ensuring that the place was quiet. A flipchart board with charts and pen was provided by me. Participants were allowed to stand or adopt any position when they wished to emphasize something.

- **The role of the researcher**

Having laid down the rules, I asked the same broad questions to each focus group, as follows:

- How would you describe your experience of poverty?
- What are the general causes of poverty in your area?
- What do you think should be done to solve the problem of poverty?

I used the skills of establishing rapport, active listening, responding, nodding, restating, probing, understanding and bracketing to facilitate expression of the most important themes and feelings.

The participant's thoughts and feelings were probed and clarified in order to understand the nature of the response or statement made. I paraphrased by assimilating and restating in similar words in an attempt to test the participants' understanding of their responses. Unconnected issues that were raised were pursued. I noted inadequate phrases, using words like would, could, if and maybe and encouraged direct responses. I encouraged

participants to justify and validate their perception; summarizing and highlighting the main ideas, thoughts and feelings expressed by participants. It was also ensured that participants contributed equally to the discussions. When data saturation was reached, the research assistant labeled the cassettes accurately in preparation for transcription. The cassettes were destroyed after the research report was written as asserted by Krueger, (1994) asserts.

- **Field notes**

Field notes give an account of what happened and little or no interpretation is provided. I used them as pieces of evidence in support of recorded experiences and as a record of context or situation. Notes that were used were observational notes, methodological notes and theoretical notes (De Vos, 2001).

- **Observational notes**

These are the, who, what, when, where and how of human activity (De Vos, 2001). Observations were noted regarding facial expressions in relation to certain experiences and this evidence was used to emphasize why dialogue was not present or how it was initiated.

- **Methodological notes**

These notes are mainly reminders, instructions and critical comments for the researcher (De Vos, 2001). I also made notes where certain procedures were not followed or adjusted.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from the interviews held with the respondents were analyzed qualitatively. Though the interviews were conducted in a discussion form with the respondents, analyses were done by classifying the respondent in their groups that is traditional leaders, community leaders and local women.

3.8 RESEARCH ETHICS

The study has taken into consideration the ethical aspect of research. Before research could start, a consent form had been obtained from the tribal authority as it is not allowed in terms of their customs to enter into the village and start interviewing people without the permission from the traditional leaders. Informed consent becomes a necessary condition rather than a

luxury or an impediment (Brink, 1992). Sieber (1982) defines privacy as “that which normally is not intended for others to observe or analyze”. I have taken into account the privacy of the respondents, because there are families and individuals who would not like to share some of their private things and some wanted to remain anonymous after giving the information. People participated voluntarily without being promised something or forced against their will.

According to Corey et al. (1993), deception involves withholding information, or offering incorrect information in order to ensure participation of subjects when they would otherwise possible has refused it. I was very sensitive not to harm the respondent emotionally, particularly when they had to relate their poverty experiences and what they normally go through in their daily lives.

3.9 Summary

The Chapter has presented the background of the study area, including the methodology. The area is the most poverty stricken in the Thulamela Municipality in the Vhembe District. Poverty is prevalent among the people in the area and majority of them depend on social grants. It has been also been indicated that exploratory approach will be adopted for the study perception of local women, traditional and community leaders, who are not only poor and vulnerable but are widely.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSES AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION.

The purpose of this chapter is to present, analyze and interpret the data collected on the field of the research and the experiences of the respondents in terms of the perceptions on the causes of poverty, thereby, forwarding the answers to the following research question which were outlined in the first chapter

- What is the scope of poverty in the community?
- How do women, traditional and community leaders describe poverty?
- What are the causes of poverty?

The interview guide administered to all participants was divided into two parts namely section A and B. Section A provided information concerning their demographic profile and section B were interview data conducted with the participants of the research, in this case the participants are the traditional leaders, community leaders and local women.

4.2 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study will be based on the major problem that this dissertation is focusing on, that of most studies conducted on poverty have been done on general scale, without taking into considerations the views and perceptions of those who are affected by poverty. The issue of what people consider as reasons for living in poverty is often neglected in the literature on poverty, particularly local women, traditional and community leaders.

The researcher has therefore investigated, presented, analyzed and interpreted the findings from the interviews held with the traditional leaders, community leaders and women headed families. Traditionally leaders are composed of men only, while community leaders have mixture of men and women, but the committee is dominated by men. The inclusion of local women was done to ensure that the view points from both genders were captured in an open and transparent atmosphere.

4.1.1 Compositions of the Mavambe Tribal council (Traditional leaders)

The chief

Nduna Makumeke, Nduna Mphongola, Nduna Xithlelani, Nduna Mahonis, Nduna Maganda, Nduna Mapapila, Nduna Msengi, Nduna Mabasa, Nduna Phupula, Nduna Bila, Nduna Maganda, Nduna Xolwani, Nduna Makutsuli.

The traditional council is composed of the thirteen members (13). Chief Mavambe is the one who presides over the council. Every Induna represents his people on the council. The majority of the members of the traditional leaders have no formal qualifications; only three out thirteen have passed matric.

4.1.2 The community leaders come from various structures that represent the interests of community members such as SANCO (South African Civic Organisation), Development forums, CPF (Community Policing Forum), Ward Committees, Youth Formations.

4.1.3 The local women represent the most vulnerable and affected by poverty. It was important to take into account their experiences and views with regard to what they perceive as poverty.

4.2 Through interviews and observation, the study revealed that traditionally leaders, community leaders and local women, define poverty, as to be not able to provide your family with basics such as food, clothes, shelter, and education for your children. Some define poverty as being in a position where is not be able to help themselves.

Community leaders particularly youth formations defined poverty from a societal point of view, where they indicated that a society is in poverty when the majority of its youth is uneducated, where 70% of school-going girls falls pregnant before passing grade twelve, where 60% of the youth is unemployed.

4.3. SCOPE OF POVERTY

While walking through the village and conducting interviews, I could see the extent of poverty in the community. The majority of community members stay in mud houses. Some houses do not have windows and some do not even have doors.

Most families use one room for sleeping and cooking; and a bathroom. During the night, all family members sleep in the same room where there is no space for privacy. One respondent indicated that it is worse during the rainy season where it is difficult to sleep with a leaking roof.

One respondent said *“food and clothes is the priority. If we can get food, other things will come”*. Another commented *“we are trying to get piece jobs but nothing has been coming forth right now”*.(Female, aged 45 years)

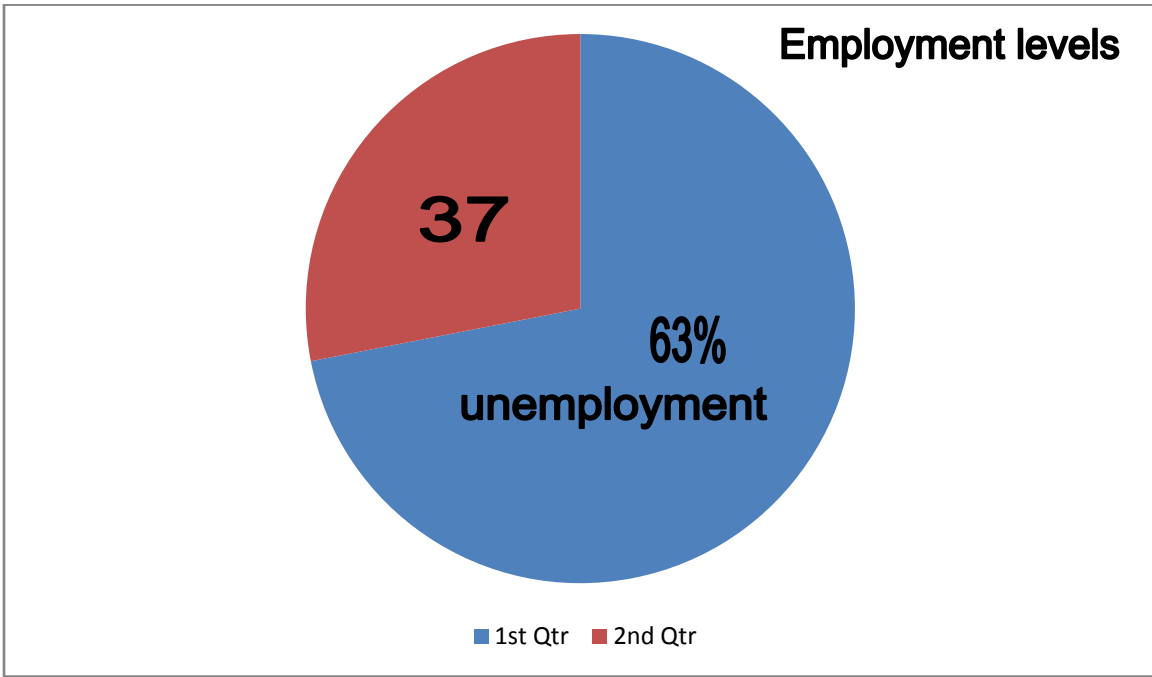
From my observations, I could see that the quality of food that they have is not suitable for human consumption. Their clothes were not clean and the surrounding was very dirty.

4.3.1 DATA FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Using the biographical information, data from community members of Mavambe is presented and analyzed as follows: employment status and level of education.

- Unemployment status of community members

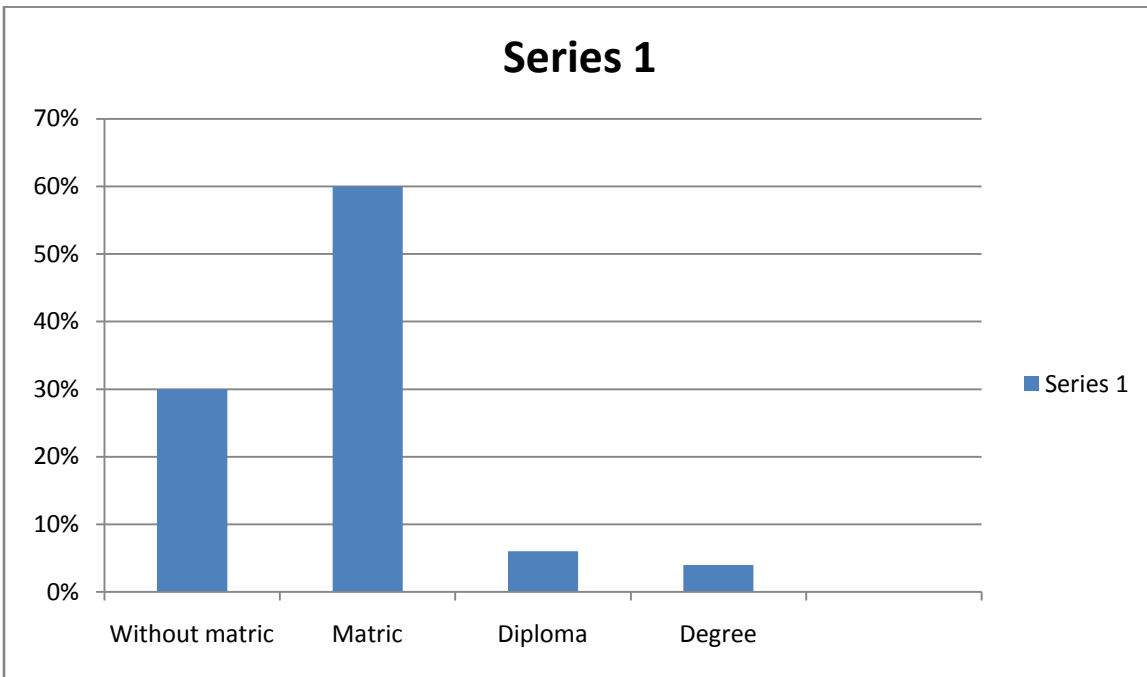
The aim of wanting to know the unemployment statistics of the respondents from the community was to find out the number of the respondents who were currently unemployed. Out of sixty respondents that were interviewed only 37% are employed and 63% are unemployed. The research findings are as follows.



- Academic qualifications of community members

The reason for probing educational level of the respondents was to check how far they have gone with their education, because the qualification level determines the employment opportunities of community members. Lack of educational qualifications and a high rate of unemployment is related.

The graph below indicates that 30% of the people do not have matric, while people with matric amount to 60% of the community members. Only 5% of the people have a diploma certificate and 3% of the people have degree qualifications. The information above is graphical indicated below.



4.3.2 INDICATORS, AND CHARACTERISTICS OF POVERTY.

Pictures of the houses below were taken while I was observing the surroundings in the village. The quality of the houses indicates the scope of the poverty in the village. Most of people indicated, they have been on the waiting list for RDP houses for a long time.

As indicated above there is no running water, electricity, proper roads and no public telephone or means of communications. There are a few communal taps where community members get water. Because there is no electricity they have to go to bushes to collect fire wood. The village is a typical rural area where there is no development.

Picture 1 reflects the type of houses that people are living in. The houses are made of boxes and old corrugated iron. The rooves have been strengthened by stones on top to avoid being blown away by the wind. The collection of wood indicates that there is no electricity; they have to go to the bush to collect fire- wood.



Picture 1: Makeshift shack and wood gathered for fire (source: primary research)

The picture 2 below also indicates the kind of houses that people live in. There are two houses, and the one with a door is the main house which the family use for keeping their belongings and which is also the bed room. The other one is the kitchen, which is used for cooking and lounging. It is clear from the picture that this is a poverty stricken family. The picture tells it all, that there is little income in the family and according to them; the two houses are the only property they have.



Picture 2: Typical house (source: primary research)

While picture 3 indicates that because of lack of employment, people just sit and the home brewed beer the whole day. It is the only way in which they can keep themselves busy. It also indicates that there is correlation between unemployment and poverty. If those people were employed, they would improve their surrounding and built themselves better houses.

The picture also indicates the nature of the houses they have. And that it is during the day they are just sitting and drinking the home brewed beer the whole day. It is the only way in which they can keep themselves busy. They have no work to do, no opportunities of employment.



Picture 3, People drinking home-brewed beer. (source: primary research)

The picture 4 below indicates the spaza shop from which the community buys. The only stock they have is what is seen in the picture. Again it explains the quality of the food they eat. It also indicates the income level of the community, because if the majority of the community members were working, their shop would be better than the one they are having now.

The shop is small and few people buy from the shop. Even the owner of the shop cannot have plans to expand because the income he generates is too limited to allow for expansion.



Picture 4: Typical shop, (source: primary research)

4.4 CAUSES OF POVERTY

4.4.1 Traditional leaders

After interviewing the respondents, it was revealed that traditional leaders believe that the major cause of poverty is the unavailability of agricultural land. Rural people do not have land to do household farming and as result they cannot cultivate crops and other vegetable which can ease the burden of buying food and other necessities of life.

They also claimed that, those who have land have fallen victim to natural disasters like drought, lightning and strong rains leading to mass destruction of crops, livestock and property. One of the respondents said:

“The fields that used to give us food have been left with no production, because of natural disasters. It also discourages us to cultivate because each year, we don’t produce anything because of the drought.”

Those who have farming schemes next to the Nandoni dam, complained about lack of markets and lack of information about where they can market their products. Unavailability of markets led to the unproductive state of those schemes, because the participants said they saw no point of continuing farming especially if they cannot find the market to sell their produce.

They also indicated that capital is the scarcest production factor among the poor because those who by chance have land cannot be able to cultivate due lack of money. They said in the past white farmers used to be given financial assistance by the then government. But now, there is no support from the government in terms of training the emerging black farmers particularly in small scale farming. One Induna said:

“Since we achieved democracy there is no change in the economic set up, no transformation in the agricultural sector. Those who have been given back their land are not supported like the white farmers used to be. And because of that there is low production and sometimes no production at all.”(Nduna Makumeke, aged 68)

They also believe that children have many rights which make it difficult for parents to exercise control and discipline over their children. Because of that, lack of values, respect and moral decay contribute significantly to the prevalence of poverty in the community.

Traditional leaders also believe that the aid that the government gives through social grants is misdirected because the aid does not do what it is supposed to do that is to help the poor.

4.4.2- Community leaders:

Community leaders believe that the cause of poverty is the lack of these things that are essential for human well-being and development such as-health care, drinking water, adequate nutrition, housing and sanitation.

Community leaders indicated that health centers do not have medication; one of them said:

“Sick people go the clinic and hospitals but returns without medication .People are affected with variety of ailments such as TB, HIV and Aids and many more. When people are not well it is hard for them to continue working, the majority of them resigns from their works.”(Community leader from the NGO sector aged 38)

They argued that before talking of families that are in poverty, the society or the community is also in poverty because there is lack of clean drinking water, a poor education system, and a collapsing health system.

Community leaders believe that lack of education and lack of skills which was already identified in the literature review, particularly among the young generation'- results in poor mind-sets, lack of entrepreneurial spirit and motivation to start small businesses. A community leader who represented young people said,

"If government can start a training institute, for young entrepreneurs where training can be offered to start their own business, It can go a long way in changing the life of young people, both male and female who are under 35 year's age."(a female leader, aged 33)

They also said because of lack of education and skills, most people are unemployed hence they just sit at home and drink and some engage in criminal activities. They also mentioned that those who are working have low incomes with many dependents and this result in them being poor.

Community leaders are of the view that lack of rural infrastructure for rural development is another cause for poverty for example feeder roads, electricity, toilet facilities for rural dwellers as well as the lack of running water.

Issues of political interference in the administration of government departments and local government were also brought out during the interviews. Community leaders indicated that poor service delivery comes as a result of political interference: In that vein one old man had this to say:

"There is no service delivery in our community because we don't have a politician who comes from our village. Politicians only consider their villages where they come from at the expense of our village, everything goes to them."(Sanco member)

Self- imposed poverty came out during the interviews, where community leaders said that some people are very poor because they are lazy to do things for themselves. For instance, they said young people do not want to go to school and others just do not want to work, such behavior invites poverty. They also said that other people do not take time to search for work. One woman aged 47 said:

"It is also written in the Bible that, those who love sleep will grow poor, if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. It is a disgrace to be lazy. Lazy people always find excuses not to work."

Leaders in the community also indicated that sometimes poverty is caused by ethnicity, where by resources and employment opportunities' are given or directed to certain groups of people. One leader said:

“A case in point is that the, Limpopo has three ethnic groups, Shangaans, Vendas and Sotho speaking people. The proportions of employment and development of areas are not equal. Under Thulamela Municipality, development only takes place around Thohoyandou because that is where the municipality is situated. All managerial positions are occupied by one ethnic group.”

The issue of lack of information also came out during interviews, where it was indicated that rural people lack information on a number of issues. For example they claimed that the reason why rural people have many children is because people in poverty in rural areas do not know much about contraception. For that reason they cannot be blamed because no one took the trouble to educate them and they never had a chance to get the information. High dependence of children on few breadwinners creates overburdened households and poverty.

Community leaders also indicated that young people lack information about careers and issues of bursaries; hence there are many young people who do not further their studies after completing grade 12.

4.4.3 Local women

Women attribute the plight of their poverty to a lack of community gardens that have been historical and always been a source of food to many rural dwellers. They also attest to the fact that in the past, women used to come together and work at the communal farm, provided by the chief for food production.

They also indicated that there is lack of entrepreneurial opportunities for rural women, as only urban women are given the opportunity of starting their own business. They also are of the view that local leaders, including traditional leaders are not supporting them in their initiatives to organize women into stockvel groups, which are intended to raise money for business initiatives. They indicated that it is not easy for them to get financing from commercial banks, whenever they have business initiatives as they demand a lot of things which they do not have.

They said they had a lot of business ideas such as clay mouldings, art work, and knitting of clothes and other apparels. They also complained that government only assists projects which are initiated by government officials and down play all the initiatives of the rural people.

They also believe that corruption is another cause of poverty as also indicated by Baseman, (2010), they claimed that councilors give the community work under the EPWP (Extended Public Works Programme) to their relatives and friends. They believe that poverty stricken families were supposed to be considered for these works.

Interviews conducted outside the focus groups revealed that the other cause of poverty is the prevalent of HIV/AIDS, as indicated by, Bernice (2010). It was also said that when a household is affected by the diseases the little resources are spent on treating the sick. In a worst case scenario where the bread winner dies, those who are left behind have no resources to support themselves, thus leading to a poor lifestyle.

Most families are headed by children because both parents are dead due to the illness. HIV/AIDS claims the lives of the young and most productive persons, leaving behind young children whose care in terms of education, health and general well-being falls in the hands of aging grandparents thus pressing the already constrained resource bases of the elderly

The women also indicated that HIV/AIDS also weakened the social support networks of the community including the elderly leaving them emotionally affected, helpless and more prone to diseases and hence chronic poverty. Children who do not have grandparents get emotional and physical support from a neighbor, which in turn becomes a burden on them. One mother said

“We had to pay for their school fees, uniform and also their hospital fees when they are sick. Really it becomes a big burden because whatever resource we have, we must share with them. Our nature does not allow seeing somebody, s kinds suffering, they are also our children”. (female aged 38 years)

From their comments, the interviewer could see that they are really over-burdened.

Gender perspectives on poverty came up during the interviews, where women claim that because women do not inherit property from their families because of the anticipation that they will get married and have children elsewhere. They also claimed that sometimes they are not included in the will of the family for the same reason that they are going to be married and this makes them worse off, as compared to their male counterparts who benefit from that start to life.

Other respondents also said that in rural areas, most men marry outside community of property and when divorce occurs, women do not benefit out of the endowments of the family and this results in a situation where women are vulnerable. One woman said:

“Men can’t be told anything by women they do as they wish; women are always on the receiving end. We women are just instructed on what to do, we don’t have a say on family issues.(A women aged 37)

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented, analyzed and interpreted the findings from the investigations in Mavambe on perceptions and causes of poverty. It is clear that those who are affected by poverty may have significant contributions on how poverty can be eradicated. Local initiatives and stake-holders involvement in issues of poverty can go a long way in terms of eradicating poverty. Community views on issues of poverty may also help in the development of national policies on poverty. The next chapter will include the conclusion and make recommendations for eradicating poverty in the rural area of Mavambe village.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this is to conclude on the findings of the study and make recommendations towards the realization of fighting poverty in the community of Mavambe. The existing literature on the perceptions of causes of poverty has been discussed in this study.

In order to alleviate the rural poverty, government alone cannot claim to understand what it is to be poor. Because the poor have a lived experience of poverty it is important to take in to account their views on how to alleviate poverty. A sick man knows where it hurts most. So it stands to reason that the viable alternative to the government telling the rural people what to do, is to the rural people telling the government and the authority their problems and how they think their problems could be solved.

The fact is that the poor usually have quite good perceptions of their own needs and goals and of what would be required to satisfy and make progress towards them. It is important for citizens to actively participate in formulating and implementing projects of which they are supposed to be beneficiaries.

5.2 KEY ISSUES EMERGING FROM THE STUDY

This study concludes that poverty reduction and alleviation should be seen and be approached in a way that is understandable by local people. Local initiatives to fight poverty should be encouraged and be supported by all spheres of government.

The following are key issues raised by traditional leaders, community leaders and locally women.

- (a) Agricultural land and capital, the respondent indicated that allocation of land to the residents would help solve the plight of poverty the community and that it should be easy for local people to access capital.

- (b) Lack of values, respect and moral decay, traditional leaders hinted out that families should try to cultivate and teach values, respect to the children because with those there will be no society
- (c) Aid from government (social grants), respondents indicated that other means must be sought because the current method of the child grant creates problems, where young people intentional get pregnant to get the grants and leave school, they indicated that it would be better to give grant to people who are older than twenty one years.
- (d) Education, health care, drinking water, adequate housing and sanitation. Most of the respondents made mentioned of these as pillars and drivers of the well-being of the society, they recommended that the government prioritized these issues for the benefit of the society.
- (e) Entrepreneurial culture, respondents indicated that that young people should be capacitated and be skilled on entrepreneurship so that they can create their own businesses
- (f) Rural infrastructure, traditional leaders recommended that infrastructure development such as roads, libraries should be done to fast track development.
- (g) Community gardens, local women recommended communal gardens be started because that is the only source of food that can drive away hunger in the community.
- (h) Manual labour jobs, community leaders indicated that because of the fact that people are not skilled; the provision of manual labour jobs can assist local people.
- (i) Corruption, with regard to corruption they indicated that the government should be firm on corruption, people who engage in corrupt activities should face the mighty of the law because if left unchecked rural people would continue to suffer because the money that was supposed to assist the end up in the pocket of few people.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS.

The study recommends that the poor should be given access to land. Every house-hold should have a little piece of land. The researcher believes that community members will use the land to grow crops and other productive uses that will be a source of food. Traditional leaders in collaborations with the government should ensure that land is available to the people.

Land without capital is useless; therefore the researcher recommends that those who want to do commercial farming should also be assisted with capital. Land Bank must have a programmer to provide financial assistance or working capital to all the community based small scale farmers in the forms of low interest loans.

Often, the amount of funding needed is minimal enough to buy some raw materials and possibly some tools to work with. Providing such small loans is unattractive for regular commercial banks. Because of lack of collateral and therefore, the impossibility to repossess assets, the poor are considered a major credit risk. Therefore it will be necessary to supply the poor with resources via non-profit agencies such as the Land Bank.

The study also recommends that every tribal authority should have a programmer on moral regeneration, to sensitize everyone particularly young people with regard to upholding the values, respect and morality in the community. This may assist to discourage young people to engage themselves in issues of sex before marriage, alcoholism and drugs. And all these things are very destructive in young people's lives and ultimately lead to poverty.

The study recommends that the current form of subsistence income or social grants should be relooked. A minimum of social security for the poor would be important not only from a human and social point of view, but also from an economic one. Notably it will raise consumer demand for basic goods and services that these poor people desperately need. Social security should be focused on two categories of people to that end the elderly and mothers with children, who are not school going age. The justification for providing the elderly with pensions enough to satisfy their most basic needs is, in the first instance, moral: it is immoral not to take care of the elderly people who are too old and infirm to work.

At the moment young school going mothers receive social grants and this creates a lot of problems- because instead of concentrating on their education, they continue making babies so that they can get more money from social grants.

From an economic point of view, providing pensions to the elderly poor could be an effective way to stimulate demand and even provide capital for investment in small-scale productive activities. Where it is customary for the elderly to live with their offspring, pensions could also help satisfy their basic needs of other household members.

Like pensions, child support would support a very vulnerable group in society while stimulating local demand for basic goods and services. It would improve the chances for children to grow up into healthy adults, able to cope in and contribute to the society. Also, it would help to alleviate the enormous burden of mothers who have to raise children in conditions of extreme deprivation.

The study also recommends that government must provide for quality education, health care, housing and sanitation. The availability of these things creates a viable environment for people to begin to do things for themselves and that human capabilities can be enhanced in the environment where people are healthier and have necessary education. Proper housing and sanitation is a necessity not a luxury, when these are available.

The study considers the aspect of developing entrepreneurial culture as a viable option to deal with the issue of unemployment among the youth. Rural youth have no opportunities where they may hone their entrepreneurial skills. Business initiatives by young people should be nurtured and be supported. Business managerial courses and financial support could go a long way in assisting young entrepreneurs. Ninety percent of graduates opt for employment instead of starting their own business. So it is vitally important for the government to ensure that entrepreneurship is developed.

The ingredient for rural development is the rural infrastructure development. Economic activities depend on the availability of road networks, electricity, running water, low rates charged by municipality and the availability of land. This study recommends that infrastructure be given a priority by all spheres of government. Nodal points must be identified to avoid the over concentration of infrastructure in one area or the further

development of the already developed areas such as Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town , Durban and other areas.

The study further more recommends that the old notion of community gardens be revitalized for the purpose of food production. The scarcity of food is the major problem and the solutions to fighting hunger is to ensure that the communities work their gardens not only for themselves but also for the orphans, the elderly and all the disadvantaged.

The study also recommends that local that the government provides jobs that demands manual labour since the majority of the people do not have skills to do other jobs. Training on knitting, backing, clay mounding, and art work such as painting could have positive effects in the lives of rural people. Without skills there is little that people can do.

The study also recommends that the recruitment of EPWP workers (Extended Publics Work Programme) be centralized at the local municipality and be transparent. This may assist in avoiding a situation where councilors appoint only their friends and relatives.

5.4 Conclusion

According to the three research questions, the study revealed that ordinary people in the rural communities have something to say about the plight of poverty they are facing. The study revealed that the majority of the people in the rural area of Mavambe are still grappling with poverty and this is evident in the kind of houses and the surrounding places people are living in.

The study also revealed that ordinary citizens described poverty from they own experiences not imaginations and they have been able to identify the causes of poverty at the area, this put them on a good standing to make recommendations on what should be done to solve the problem.

The fact that the respondents were able to respond in describing the term poverty in their own view and able to articulate on the causes of poverty, confirms the relevance in the findings of the study.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: Letter of Permission to Conduct Research.

P.O. Box 2237

Malamulele

0982

25 June 2100

The Chief

Mavambe Tribal Council

Private Bag X 9957

Malamulele

0982

Dear Sir

Application to Conduct Research: Ward 12 and 13 (Thulamela Municipality)

1. The above matter bears the following reference
2. I Mafemani Phaniel Baloyi, am a student at the University of Limpopo Turfloop Campus, studying for a Degree in Development. My Research topic is "Perceptions on the causes of poverty."
3. I hereby humbly request permission to conduct research in you villages between October 2011 to November 2011.
4. Thanking you in anticipation

Yours Faithfully

Baloyi M.P.

Cell. 079 2954 993

E-mail: phanuelpk2010@webmail.co.za

ANNEXURE B: Consent Form

Topic: Perceptions on causes of poverty: Mavambe Village

Sir/ Madam

Request for participation in a research project: Be informed that the outcome of the research will not in any way incriminate you. You are requested to participate in your own will and you are at liberty to withdraw from the exercise at any time. The purpose of the research is only for the fulfillment of the Master’s Degree in Development at Turfloop Graduate School of leadership.

Kinds Regards

ANNEXURE C: Questionnaires Interview Schedule for Mavambe Community.

I am Baloyi M.P, a student at the University of Limpopo Turfloop Campus studying Master's Degree in Development.

Research Topic: **Perceptions on the Causes of poverty**

Please would you assist me with the information regarding the topic under study. Your responses' will be treated confidentially.

Your name and surname will not appear on this instrument and your response will not be used for any other purpose except for this research.

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

- 1. Gender Male----- Female -----
- 2. Age -----
- 3. Education Level -----
- 4. House hold size -----
- 5. Household Head Male ----- Female -----
- 6. Marital Status -----
- 7. Which ward do you come from -----
- 8. Number of dependents -----
- 9. Employed YES ----- NO -----

SECTION B: Background Information (FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE)

10. What is poverty?

11. What are the indicators, signs or characteristics of poverty?

12. What is the extent of poverty in the community?

13. What in your view should be done to deal with the poverty in the area

14. Who should be involved?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSES.

ANNEXURE D: INTERVIEW GUIDE: Local women

1. What is poverty?
2. What are the indicators and characteristics of poverty?
3. What is the scope of poverty in the community?
4. What should be done to deal with poverty in the area?
5. Who should be involved?

ANNEXURE E: INTERVIEW GUIDE: Traditional Leaders

1. What is poverty?
2. What are the indicators and characteristics of poverty?
3. What is the scope of poverty in the community?
4. What should be done to deal with poverty in the area?
5. Who should be involved?

ANNEXURE F: INTERVIEW GUIDE: Community Leaders

1. What is poverty?
2. What are the indicators and characteristics of poverty?
3. What is the scope of poverty in the community?
4. What should be done to deal with poverty in the area?
5. Who should be involved?