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**An Exploration of the Role of Women in Household Poverty Alleviation in the
Amatikulu Area, Umlalazi Municipality,**

Kwa-Zulu Natal province

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Date of submission

27 September 2021

DECLARATION

I, Thobeka Mpunzana, declare that this is my own unaided work and all references, sources and citation have been duly acknowledged the dissertation titled “**An Exploration of the Role of Women in Poverty Alleviation in the Amatikulu area, uMlalazi Municipality, Kwa-Zulu Natal province**”. This dissertation has never been submitted by myself or any person for any degree or any other university for examination. The dissertation is being submitted for Masters in the department of Anthropology and Development Studied in the Faculty of Arts at the University of University, South Africa.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to all women who are leaders and heads of their household especially to my late Great-grandmother Annah MaGumede Mpunzana and my entire family especially Lindiwe Pretty Nala, Ethel Duduzile Mpunzana, Zethembiso Macia Sithole, my daughter Aphiwe Ayabongwa Dlamini and to the entire family of Izimpuzi.

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Exodus 15:2 **“The lord is my strength and song; he has given victory”**

ABSTRACT

Poverty is a social problem that has incapacitated many African women from accessing quality standard of living. In the year 2000, the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (that is goal 3) aimed at eradicating feminized poverty, and in 2015 the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reinforced this commitment. This resonates with challenges faced in South Africa since 1994, as the country has been experiencing increase in poverty, unemployment, and gender inequality in recruitment. Gender scholars have shown that higher percentage of women than those of men are still living below poverty line of R441 per month, and in South Africa and other African countries, women are not well-represented in the labour market. The aim of the study is to explore the women's agency in poverty alleviation and focus on managing of poverty for women and their households. The present study argues that even though the United Nations introduced the MDGs and SDGs with the aim to end poverty and hunger by 2030, the role being played by women in their households and community. The study was underpinned by womanism theory, which argues that black women have been oppressed because of race and class. The study adopted qualitative research approach with non-probability sampling technique of a purposive sampling, 10 women participants were interviewed. Data collection instrument was used in-depth interviews were used are open-ended discovery methods. The main findings of the study revealed that despite the poverty socio-economically challenges that were faced by women in their household, they were engaged in women's role in imperative to overcome poverty within women leader's household. The study has added more insight into the exploration of women's agency in poverty alleviation, and in managing their household against poverty. The study recommends that women need a diversity of practical training programs that will assist in educating them about financial budgeting and how to gain business skills. The future research can explore the study in other geographic area to investigate whether other women's experiences are similar to what have been obtained in Amatikulu area. The study recommends that women need diversity of practical training programs that will assist in educating them about financial budgeting and how to gain the business skills.

Acronyms/Abbreviations

- CWP-** Community Work Programme
- EPWP -** Expand Public Works Programme
- FHH -** Female-Headed Household
- GDP -** Gross Domestic Price
- IDP -** Integrated Development Plan
- MDGs -** Millennium Development Goals
- NDP -** National Development Plan
- NGOs -** Non-Government Organization's
- SDGs -** Sustainable Development Goals
- SMMEs -** Small, Medium, and Micro-size Enterprise
- SONA -** State of the National Address
- UN -** United Nations
- UNDPs -** United National Development Plans
- USAID -** United States Agency International Development

Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| DECLARATION | i |
| DEDICATION | ii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | iii |
| Acronyms/Abbreviations | v |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| 1.1 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.2 The Background of the Study..... | 3 |
| 1.3 Problem Statement | 4 |
| 1.4 Aim of the Study | 4 |
| 1.5 Objectives of the Study | 5 |
| 1.6 Research Questions | 5 |
| 1.6.1 Primary Research Question | 5 |
| 1.7 Secondary Research Questions | 5 |
| 1.8 Significance of the Study..... | 5 |
| 1.8 Intellectual Property and Innovation..... | 6 |
| 1.9 Harvesting the Research | 6 |
| 1.10 Format of the Study | 6 |
| 1.11 Conclusion..... | 8 |
| 2.1 Introduction..... | 9 |
| 2.2 Conceptualizing Poverty | 9 |
| 2.3 Gendered Poverty at the Global Level..... | 11 |
| 2.4.1 Southern Africa Women and Poverty | 13 |
| 2.4.2 South African Women and Poverty..... | 15 |
| 2.4.3 Apartheid and Poverty..... | 16 |
| 2.5 The African Historical of Gendered Poverty..... | 16 |
| 2.6 Gendered Poverty: Poverty and Female- headed Households | 18 |
| 2.7 Poverty Alleviation Initiatives by Women..... | 20 |
| 2.8 Challenges Faced by Women in Poverty Alleviation Strategies..... | 26 |
| 2.8.2 Traditional Practices, Culture, Religion and Poverty | 28 |
| 2.8.3 Gender Pay Gap and Poverty..... | 29 |
| 2.9 Challenges Faced by Women in Alleviating Poverty..... | 31 |
| 2.10 Dynamic Amongst Women | 32 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 2.10.1 Social Exclusion..... | 33 |
| 2.11 Post-Development Theory..... | 33 |
| 2.12 Measurements of Poverty..... | 34 |
| 2.12.1 Absolute Poverty..... | 35 |
| 2.12.2 Relative Poverty..... | 35 |
| 2.13 Conclusion..... | 36 |
| CHAPTER THREE..... | 37 |
| THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK..... | 37 |
| 3.1 Introduction..... | 37 |
| 3.2 Contextualizing of Womanism Theory..... | 37 |
| 3.2 The Theory of Womanism in this Study..... | 40 |
| 3.3 African Context of Womanism..... | 42 |
| 3.4 Importance of Race in Womanism Theory..... | 43 |
| 3.5 Conclusion..... | 44 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY..... | 45 |
| 4.1 Introduction..... | 45 |
| 4.1.1 Map of the Study Area..... | 45 |
| 4.2 Research Site..... | 45 |
| 4.1 Study Area..... | 46 |
| 4.4 Research Philosophy..... | 47 |
| 4.4.1 Research Paradigm..... | 47 |
| 4.4.2 Ontology..... | 48 |
| 4.4.3 Epistemology..... | 48 |
| 4.5 Research Approach..... | 49 |
| 4.5.1 Qualitative Research..... | 49 |
| 4.6 Research Design..... | 51 |
| 4.6.1 Exploratory Design..... | 51 |
| 4.7 Research Methods..... | 52 |
| 4.7.1 Target Population..... | 52 |
| 4.8 Sample and sampling..... | 53 |
| 4.8.1 Sampling Strategy..... | 53 |
| 4.8.2 Sample..... | 53 |
| 4.9 Data Collection Instrument..... | 54 |

| | | |
|---------|---|----|
| 4.10 | Data Collection Techniques | 55 |
| 4.10.1 | Recording Interviews | 55 |
| 4.10.2 | Data Management | 55 |
| 4.11 | Data Presentation and Analysis..... | 56 |
| 4.11.1 | Qualitative Data analysis and Interpretation | 56 |
| 4.11.2 | The Raw Data..... | 57 |
| 4.11.3 | Planning for Data Recording | 57 |
| 4.11.4 | Coding the Data | 57 |
| 4.11.5 | Creation of Themes | 58 |
| 4.12 | Trustworthiness..... | 58 |
| 4.12.1 | Credibility..... | 58 |
| 4.12.2 | Dependability | 58 |
| 4.12.3 | Transferability | 59 |
| 2.13 | Ethical Consideration..... | 59 |
| 2.13.1 | Obtaining Consent | 59 |
| 4.13.2 | Ensuring Privacy and Confidentiality | 60 |
| 4.13.3 | Prevention of Harm..... | 61 |
| 4.14 | Delimitation of the Study..... | 61 |
| 4.15 | Limitations of the Study..... | 61 |
| 4.16 | Reflexivity of the Researcher | 61 |
| 4.17 | Conclusion..... | 63 |
| | CHAPTER 5..... | 64 |
| | DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION | 64 |
| 5.1 | Introduction | 64 |
| 5.2 | Generating of the Themes..... | 64 |
| • | Experiences of women in the Attempt to overcome Poverty in their Households | 65 |
| 5.3 | Description of Participants..... | 65 |
| 5.3.1 | Table (2): The profile of the participants of the study..... | 66 |
| 5.3.1 | Conceptualizing Poverty | 68 |
| 5.3.1.1 | Basic Needs..... | 68 |
| 5.3.1.2 | Lack of Money and Adequate Education | 71 |
| 5.3.2 | Identifying and Understanding Poverty..... | 75 |
| 5.4 | Survival techniques of Women in poverty alleviation projects | 77 |

| | | |
|--|--|-----|
| 5.5.1 | Unemployment and Gender Pay Gap..... | 80 |
| 5.6 | Experiences of women in the Attempt to overcome Poverty in their Households | 83 |
| 5.6.1 | Income-generation..... | 83 |
| 5.6.2 | Female-Headed Household Role in Poverty Alleviation within their Households. | 89 |
| 5.7 | Conclusion..... | 91 |
| CHAPTER SIX..... | | 93 |
| Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations | | 93 |
| 6.1 | Introduction | 93 |
| 6.2 | Summary of Findings and Discussion from the Study | 93 |
| 6.2.2 | The activities undertaken by women to eradicate household poverty within the uMlalazi Municipality | 95 |
| 6.3 | The major causes of gendered poverty among women within uMlalazi Municipality. | 96 |
| 6.4 | The challenges faced by women in their attempts at alleviating poverty in their households..... | 96 |
| 6.5 | Summary of the Study..... | 98 |
| 6.6 | Recommendations..... | 99 |
| 6.6.2 | Government and municipality involvement in empowering women agencies..... | 99 |
| 6.7 | Future and Further Research..... | 100 |
| 6.8 | Conclusion..... | 100 |

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Poverty has been part of global challenges especially in rural communities where women live below the poverty line (Lujabe, 2012). The domination of poverty has attracted the attention of both Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the private and public sectors. As a result, governments around the world have sought solutions to eradicate or reduce poverty through various interventions. Poverty is a condition in which the individual or community is powerless in terms of obtaining or securing financial resources or material to reach their minimum living standard (Saaid,2018). In rural areas, women tend to play significant roles in poverty alleviation through various economic activities like farming (subsistence and commercial farming). In South Africa, the women population is significantly higher than men population, and women spend more resources to cater for the family compared to men (Mayoux, 2015; Velez, 2018).

Moreover, lack of employment is another factor which leads women to experience high level of poverty in rural areas (Westhuizen, 2015). Meanwhile, there is a plan by the South African government to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030 according to the 2012 National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP is targeted at eradicating poverty by 2030 so that all South Africans can have access to social resources such as information, goods, and services. This is important in rural areas where absolute poverty exists (National Development Plan ,2012). The NDP (2012) mentioned that after fifteen years into democracy, South Africa remains a highly unequal society where many people live in poverty, and where only few employments are available. The National Development Plan had strategic framework and vision to end poverty and create equality by 2030 (Awuah, 2020), and it has been claimed that high percentage of unemployment in general has led to high rate of poverty among the rural dwellers (National Development Plan 2030, 2012). However, the recent findings from Statistics South Africa has revealed that 6 out of 10 children in South Africa (about 62.1 per cent) are poor in all dimensions, and these children are mostly located in KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, and Limpopo provinces, and they are from female-headed households

(StatsSa, 2020). This means that the children inherited poverty from their parents who are majorly women in those aforementioned areas.

Narrowing down to the provincial level, most households in Kwa-Zulu Natal province for instance are headed by single women who cater for their families while most of their men members are there but are unable to take responsibility for their family needs (Duma, 2019). As a result, women have to work harder in order to provide basic needs for their families. Therefore, women play a significant role in helping their families to survive as they creating income for themselves. They do this by participating in the agricultural sector (crops and livestock farming) or by acquiring education (mostly adult literacy), and surrendering other necessary needs to provide food, and these are similar to what women in Amatikulu area within the uMlalazi Municipality are experiencing (Ngwenya, 2015).

Furthermore, rural areas are known for high rate of poverty compared to urban areas or communities, because poverty has magnitudes of risk factors such as poor education, little access to livelihoods, inequality and inadequate clean water. Poverty has tendency to manifest and affect one's education, healthcare services, safety and security, economic growth and employment, skills, infrastructure, rural development, settlements, and social protection (Lujabe, 2012). Likewise, poor people have limited power and voice in government, and those in the rural environment also have less access to information, adequate education, life skills, service of labour and opportunities (Saaid, 2018).

It is on some of the above reasons that this study aims to explore the roles and initiatives of women in poverty alleviation for their households. This study focuses on exploring the important role played by women in alleviating household poverty in rural areas at Amatikulu area within the uMlalazi Municipality. The study has potential to create great new knowledge, and fill the existing gap in relation to research topic. This study explores the experiences of these women and strategies employed in their attempt of fighting against poverty

1.2 The Background of the Study

According to Statistic South Africa (StatsSA,2018, StatsSA, 2020), 60% of black South Africans live below the poverty line, and from the figure 40% are women. Likewise, the work of Colacce (2019) has indicated that female-headed household are estimated to be 70% those who live below the poverty line global. According to Chant (2014), women are part of the population living in poverty, thus the emergence of the concept of “feminisation of poverty”. In addition, women experiences to poverty are because of gender discrimination. Likewise, Chant (2015:45) explains that, “Feminisation of poverty is process whereby poverty becomes more concentrated among individuals living in female-headed households”.

As a result, women tend to undertake roles that are viewed to alleviate poverty within their households or community as the main income generators. The lack of access to basic needs are viewed from a different perspective because each society has diverse causes and effects of poverty. This implies that each community or society may not suffer from the same poverty, and in the same way in terms of their social or basic needs. This claim is applicable if poverty is measured on the household and individual level (Cheteni, Khamfula, & Mah, 2019). The interpretation of poverty according to the scholars and those individuals who experience it may also different. For an example, residents of the Amatikulu area of the uMlalazi Municipality have their different interpretation of how they view poverty and how they experience poverty.

Poverty alleviation is possible through women’s involvement in several socio-economic activities to provide daily foods for their families. According to Cieslik (2018), poverty is a social and economic phenomenon that affects mostly women in rural areas, and these women engage in different vocational and agricultural activities to improve their social-economic status of the families.

According to Mussa (2014), endogeneity reveals that poverty has been part of people’s live in the different way as endogeneity is well-known for the circle development ,

furthermore, the lack of social, basic and infrastructure needs likely to be main cause to increase the likelihood of being poor to each society based on their currently need. Endogeneity also refers to simple problem that seems similar but has quite difference solutions to it (Azoulay, 2012).

1.3 Problem Statement

Globally, the numbers of people who live below the poverty line are estimated to be 767 million, however, women are the majority (Kwobenyi & Mumbang, 2017). Moreover, in 2015, the fifth of the Sustainable Development Goals was named women's oppression and this goal advocated for ending all discrimination against women and girls (Mubecua & David, 2019). Moreover, just like other places in African countries, South Africa faces gender inequality, and it is for that reason the NDP was developed with the aims of solving the issues of gender inequality by 2030. The Integrated Development Plan Review (2021), and the Integrated Development Plan (2020) of Umlalazi Municipality estimate that there are 234 327 people who are living below the poverty line. From this figure, women constitute 53% while men are estimated to be 47%. Present literature (Lateh, Hussain & Halim, 2017; Chan, Omar & Yong, 2018; Purnamawati & Yuniarta, 2020) shows that women play a very important role in development, and such women engage in different activities to address their poverty. For instance, women work in an informal sector by engaging in trading, serving as labourers, homeworkers and family workers. Except that there were studies conducted in the field of women and poverty alleviation, it cannot be ignored that these studies were not conducted in South Africa. In a theoretical perspective, the work of Rodgers (2017) has shown that womanism encourages women to participate in different initiative to address gendered poverty. This study therefore explores the agency of women and initiative in addressing poverty at Amatikulu.

1.4 Aim of the Study

This study aims to explore the role of women and initiatives of women in poverty alleviation for their households at Amatikulu area within the uMlalazi Municipality under KwaZulu-Natal province.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The specific research objectives of the study are as follows.

- 1.5.1** To explore how women at Amatikulu area within the uMlalazi Municipality identify and define poverty in comparison to definitions that are currently available in the literature.
- 1.5.2** To explore the activities undertaken by women to eradicate household poverty at Amatikulu area within the uMlalazi Municipality.
- 1.5.3** To investigate the major causes of gendered poverty among women at Amatikulu area within the uMlalazi Municipality.
- 1.5.4** To explore the challenges faced by women in their attempts to alleviate poverty in their households.

1.6 Research Questions

1.6.1 Primary Research Question

How does women role impact poverty alleviation in the uMlalazi Municipality in Amatikulu area?

1.7 Secondary Research Questions

- 1.7.1** How do women in Amatikulu area define and identify poverty in comparison to definitions currently available in literature?
- 1.7.2** What are some of the activities undertaken by women in Amatikulu area in eradicating household poverty?
- 1.7.3** What are the possible causes of gendered poverty among rural-based women Amatikulu area within the uMlalazi Municipality?
- 1.7.4** What are the challenges faced by women in alleviating poverty at Amatikulu?

1.8 Significance of the Study

The purpose of this exploration is to understand the role and initiatives undertaken by women in alleviating poverty in their households. The study has potential to assist in getting a deep understanding of the role and initiatives that women engage in towards alleviating poverty within their household. The study may also aid identifying challenges that are faced by women-led household in generating income for the households. The

study contributes to gender studies, and may also be used for future information and knowledge. Through this study, some experiences that are faced by households headed by women in Amatikulu area and the women agencies that help female headed household in managing poverty may be revealed. Findings from this study may also motivate and assist the local Municipality to collaborate with the female headed households and other initiatives like women agencies that fight against poverty. The outcome can further help the uMlalazi Municipality's community programmes, as well as NGOs that focus on women and poverty alleviation.

1.8 Intellectual Property and Innovation

The researcher does not need intellectual property rights into the originating from this research in terms of copyright issues. The researcher will use the University policy and procedure in taking care of plagiarism." Other than the usual copyright issues, I do not expect any special intellectual property rights to emanate from this research." (University of Zululand Policy and Procedures on research ethics, 2016).

1.9 Harvesting the Research

The researcher will be publishing articles from the research study, using some of the data gathered in the study. The researcher intends to publish the findings of the study in the Journal of Human Development and Capabilities.

1.10 Format of the Study

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

This chapter outlines the introduction, the background of the study, a significant of the study, a problem statement, aims and objectives of the study, and the research question of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The chapter reviews literature of previous but relevant studies on the role and initiatives of women in poverty alleviation in global, regional and local perspective. The chapter explains the concept of poverty, history of gendered poverty, poverty and female-headed households, women initiatives and the role play in managing poverty, post-

development theory, poverty measurements, gender pay gap, and poverty and dynamic amongst women.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

The chapter provides the outline of the theoretical background of the study, which is womanism. The theory of womanism acknowledges the experience of women initiatives and contribution into their household. Furthermore, the theory is rooted in black culture. The theory considers race as an important concept itself. The chapter explores how womanism argues that blackness is a key concept in understanding South African women's experiences of poverty.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

This chapter focuses on the research approach, research design, sampling, data collection and data analysis applied in the study. The research adopted the qualitative approach and chosen the exploratory design. This chapter describes the in details the sampling used and tools for data collection and data analysis, as well as principles of confirming research trustworthiness.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis, Discussion and Interpretation

This chapter puts forward the findings of the research. It analyses and interprets the data that was collected from 10 participants. The chapter discusses the findings that were generated from the data collected as informed by the research objectives of the study.

Chapter 6: Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter puts forward summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The chapter further provides the outline of research avenues and the findings are presented using each objective of the research study.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter 1 outlined the introductory part of this study by providing the overview of the study, gave problem statement, significant of the study, research question, research objectives and it explained the purpose of the study. The outlines for chapter 2 present the literature review of the previous but relevant studies on the role of women in poverty alleviation with their initiative activities, challenges faced by women in their poverty attempt, causes of poverty and further elaborating the use of the theory on the chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Literature review serves as the foundational knowledge for the new study and provide scope for further studies (Leedy & Ormord, 2005). Seemingly, Johnson and Christensen (2004) posit that literature review in any research study provides an in-depth understanding on the phenomenon based on various scholars' perspectives. Creswell and Clarke (2007) assert that literature review is an essential component of any scientific study that intends to contribute to the body of knowledge.

This chapter therefore reviews relevant literature and research studies that relate to the role of women in poverty alleviation, factors that influence poverty and the conceptualization of poverty. Other studies (Colacce, 2019 and Westhuizen ,2015), have looked at women and men as people with comparable family role and experiences of poverty, however this study has considered to review and interpret multiple meanings of poverty. The chapter firstly conceptualises poverty, expand on gendered poverty in global level focusing mainly on its historical effects and poverty alleviation initiatives by women within the households. Thereafter, the chapter discusses challenges faced by women in poverty alleviation strategies with challenges encountered in their poverty alleviation initiatives and how poverty measurements are used to measure poverty. This chapter also offers theoretical viewpoints and perspectives regarding poverty among women. The chapter views the cause of poverty as some of hindrances to women's role in poverty reduction from global and local perspectives.

2.2 Conceptualizing Poverty

The present section deals with the concept of poverty, and the section is motivated by the objective of the study which aimed at exploring how women at Amatikulu area identify and define poverty in comparison to definitions that are currently available in the literature. Different scholars from varied academic disciplines have defined poverty in different ways. As a point of departure, the word 'poverty' originated from a Latin word and it means being *pauper* (Addae-korankye, 2014). On the basis of this, the presence and effects of poverty is not only in Africa but global. The condition means that poverty

is not only in Africa but a universal phenomenon that affects people's lives, and which has some historical references. According to Monroe (2005), numerous behaviours which are negative and stigmatized have been linked to poverty. Poverty in a simple term refers to socio-economic status of individual that portrays their inability to access necessities of life, according to the needs. The multiple concepts of poverty assist in the understanding of definition and understanding of poverty at large in the different language.

The concept of poverty in Africa in relation to the description of most rural women means those who have no stable, adequate and regular source of incomes that can take care of their households needs (Megbowon, 2018). The United Nations (1995, as cited in Ludi, 2016) avers that poverty refers to lack of adequate income or resources that can ensure sustainable livelihoods; prevents hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion. Collace (2019) posits that "poverty is characterized by lack of adequate resources in making vital decisions on the needs and provisions for civil, social and cultural life". Maphumulo (2015) in a study conducted in Swaziland describes poverty as situations where people's inability to have adequate paying jobs and income hinders them from living comfortable with all needed basic needs. Furthermore, those who suffer bad living conditions are in poverty. Ludi (2016) argues that poverty is used as a term to described people who are vulnerable to social-economic deprivation and ill health in the societies, and are also financially powerless to effect changes in their lives within their communities.

Since, the study focuses on gendered poverty it is important to explore and unpack poverty in relation to women. Maphumulo (2015) states that in Africa, women are the most trapped in poverty and are mostly rural-based in different parts of African communities. Importantly, diverse definitions of poverty may be based on diverse understanding and perspectives as regards the subject. According to Stewart and Herr (2017), in the theory of womanism, poverty is significantly found and exhibited among rural women. This implies that poverty as a gender disadvantage factor hinders women

from adequate access to decision-making and tend to control their wants (Aggarwal & Delhi,2012). The adoption of womanism as a theoretical framework to view the role of women in poverty reduction is therefore critical to this study.

The descriptions of womanism (which is expanded on the next chapter) as one of the concerns of the womanists is based on the use of socio-economic restrictions to disadvantage women and oppress them with poverty (Walker, 1983; Cannon, 1988; T'Shaka, 1995; Hudson-Weems, 2003; Deloach & Young, 2014). Seemingly, Buitrago, Newhouse, Scott, and Suarez-Becerra (2018) assert that female-headed households are highly affected by poverty in terms of socio-economic, household structure, access to resources and the life cycle, when compared to male-headed household. Ntombela, Dayal, Munthre, Kongolo, and Masilela (2010) in their longitudinal study avow that poverty can be expressed as lack of adequate and befitting housing, water, sanitation, electricity and adequate education. Poverty can also refer to lack of employment opportunity and access to social networking (Jones, Tafere & Woldehanna, 2010).

2.3 Gendered Poverty at the Global Level

In the studies conducted in European Union (EU27), van Lancker, Corluy, Horemans, Marchal, Vick-Herman, (2015) state that in Denmark and Romania, gendered poverty is high specifically in women headed households of an elderly women and lone parents compare to of men. Poverty alleviation is one of the goals of the SDGs in South Africa, and SDGs' goal number five aims at "solving the issues of inequalities against the women and girls by 2030" (UNDP, 2015). Mubecua and David (2019) agree that South Africa might fail to attain the SDGs by 2030 due to the poor output of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The SDGs was introduced in 2015 after the failure of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). MDGs was first introduced in 1990 and subsequently approved in 2000; however, the goals were not met until 2015 (UNDP, 2015). The United Nations again re-introduced SDG with the hope of eradicating poverty by 2030. According to Ramphoma (2016), women are not well represented in the society, especially in the labour market; as a result, there is gender inequality. Statistic South Africa (2018) reveals that 11 million from the country's populations still live below the poverty line of R441 per month. Among these 11 million people, half of them are estimated to be women.

Furthermore, Onwubiko (2012) states that gender inequality remains one of the factors that incapacitates women's participation in projects that can alleviate gendered poverty. Despite the challenges women face in development-related projects, their role is significant to the society. Endeley (2016) posits that women are regarded as being good only in housework (domestic roles); while men are seen as non-domestic but playing constructive roles. Tshelo (2012) argues that women can be significantly positioned for sustainable development through active role in their households and communities. Moreover, women contribute to sustainable development through agricultural practice to alleviate poverty and influence more women to take initiatives (T'Shaka, 1995; Hudson-Weems, 2003; Deloach & Young, 2014). Kandawire (2016) also reveals that feminism recognises the African culture that places significance on patriarchal system and practices which are against African Zulu women; and needs to be changed.

Kimani and Kombo (2010) maintain that women play diverse roles in poverty alleviation. According to the womanist theorists, women's engagements in agriculture (both crop and livestock farming, which could be in form of subsistence farming or commercial farming) are to improve their access to resources (Hudson-Weems, 2003; Deloach & Young, 2014). Team and Doss (2011) indicate that 43% of women in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) contribute to the agricultural sector in form of backyard vegetable gardening for survival. Similarly, Sebolai (2017) affirms that women show the important role in farming and contribute to the GDP. Walker (1983) asserts that womanism is a struggle for empowerment of women to provide equal access to resources for their households.

Moreover, women also play significant role in education. Bhat (2015) argues that education is key to women development-related projects. Education is an important tool to fight against poverty amongst society especially among women (Sumari, 2007). Likewise, Gletsu (2012) states that education can be used to empower women for achieving full potentials in social participation. Likewise, women can educate one another in different projects that can improve their living standards. In the political circle, women can engage in political activities or hold political positions where they partake in policymaking. Essentially, gender equality requires the shift in power and structure for

women to be involved in leadership and to drive the initiatives. According to Bhat (2015), community development projects have improved the livelihoods of women in developing countries through poverty alleviation. Similarly, Kavitha (2017) states that women's role in poverty alleviation drives them to engage in different economic activities; and the activities and involvement assist in reduction of unemployment rate and to improve the community initiatives. These initiatives are crucial to curb poverty traps among women (Ajuruchukwu & Sanelise, 2016). It is noticeable that women leave their own life tasks and education to meeting up with their family demanding needs (Kaka, 2013). Furthermore, Endeley (2016) believes that the design and deployment of various empowerment initiatives for women is to address the rising poverty level among women. Ademiluka (2018) also opines that government approaches to use various vocational initiatives are to empower women in vocations that can generate incomes for them. Thobejane and Nyathi (2018) confirm that engagement of rural women in various vocational skills is aimed at reducing poverty, thus helping to meet some of their needs. Altogether, women play a crucial role in their attempt to reduce poverty with their involvement in different business sphere.

2.4 Gendered Poverty in Africa

2.4.1 Southern Africa Women and Poverty

Walker (1983), Cannon (1988); T'Shaka (1995), Hudson-Weems (2003), Deloach and Young (2014), and Vyas-doorgapersad (2019) have maintained that gender equality should be an approach for African countries to reduce poverty between the genders. National Development Plan (2030) and The World Bank (2018) explicate that since 1994, (i.e. after the election of the new democratic government in South Africa), there has been continuous increase of unemployment; therefore, inequality remains a challenge to poverty reduction in many African countries. Boudet, Newhouse and Suarez-Becerra (2018) state that globally, women lack access to quality education and lack of asset ownership; and that might have spurred the United Nation to initiate socio-economic development projects that women can be involved in according to Ntombela et al. (2010), The authors also highlight that between 1975 and 1985, such projects contribute to poverty alleviation through various socio-economic activities. Fallis (2013)

concur that women contribute to the socio-economic development through poverty alleviation and by lifting themselves out of poverty.

Dubihlela (2010) also agrees that women's involvement in economic development is a means of bringing change. Most black women that are affected by poverty in South Africa are found in rural areas, where their sources of income depend on small scale farming or other small scale economic activities unlike urban women who are educated and engaged in high profile businesses or have plum jobs (Cheteni, Khamfula, Mah & Casadewall, 2019). The rural women therefore engage in several activities to reduce the impact of poverty on their family needs.

The African continent is predicted by the World Bank that in 2030 global poverty is estimated to be of 87% in a Sub-Saharan Africa, furthermore, Nigeria and Zambia women and girls are suffering from gendered economic inequality (Seery, Okanda, & Lawson, 2019). Extant literature further avers that most women in developing countries have remained in poverty because of employment inequality that widely exist in these countries (Dubihlela, 2010; Thobejane & Nyathi, 2018). Seemingly, Jones et al. (2010) in their longitudinal study conducted in Ethiopia avow that despite significant roles of women in agricultural sector, gender inequality has limited women to absolute poverty. The report from Jones et al. (2010) has shown that involvement of women in agricultural sector as a form of poverty alleviation is estimated to be at 40% to 60%. Deedam and Onoja (2015) argue that most rural women are involved in farming activities to provide not only foods for their family members, but also to raise some income for the households.

Colacce (2019) opines that 70% of female-headed households from Saharan Africa and Asia are poorer than male-headed households. In another study conducted by Westhuizen (2015) in Kenya, not less than 70% of the population live below the poverty line of US1.25 dollars. Colacce (2019) emphasises that the unemployment rate is estimated at 70% to 80% among African women. Most women in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia therefore engage in self-employment and some are looking for available plum jobs (Boudet, Newhouse & Suarez-becerra, 2018). Relatedly, women (especially

female-headed households) are mostly vulnerable to different dimensions of poverty, and this is the case in South African rural communities (Thobejane & Nyathi, 2018).

2.4.2 South African Women and Poverty

In a related study, Maphumulo (2015) posits that South Africa's high level of poverty is a common phenomenon among women in South African communities. Mayoux (2015) further avers that poverty in South Africa hinders access to quality education, adequate housing, and safe water. Poverty is still a racial issue to black South Africans, which have remained the poorest (Maphumulo, 2015) since the return to democracy. Poverty level at KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, and Northern Cape provinces has been estimated at 75%; and the most trapped are the female-headed households where these heads lack education and are unemployed, and among female-leaders who depend on entrepreneurial income (Maphumulo, 2015). Thobejane and Nyathi (2018) in their longitudinal study have also declared that out of 3 290 household leaders recorded in South Africa as female-headed households with the estimate of 27.4% of 43% of South Africa's poverty rate. Vyas-doorgapersad (2019) concurs that female-leaders are being observed to be poorer in their households and communities than men; despite the fact that the United Nations' MDG number one goal was to extremely reduce poverty by half in 2015, and which necessitated the government to initiate social grant as means of poverty eradication (Westhuizen, 2015).

According to Guyer (2018), social grants have created a major different gender pay gap in terms of assisting with poverty alleviation. However, the grant initiative is not enough to meet the needs (National Development Plan, 2030; World Bank, 2018). As South Africa's population reflects 10.2 million women who are living extremely below the poverty line of R321.00 per month; Poverty Line Stats (2019), states that income and expenditure survey of 2010-2011 estimated the cost of basic needs in the housed to be R561 per month. However, the majority of these women access government grant to sustain their families, as South African households in rural areas have been found to deeply depend in social grant (Gumede and Nzama, 2019). According to womanism, there will always be a strong connection between women and poverty as long as women remain marginalised and disadvantaged (Walker, 1983; Cannon, 1988; T'Shaka, 1995; Hudson-Weems, 2003; Deloach and Young, 2014). Women's role in

addressing poverty within their households is therefore invaluable, as most women strive to provide for the family needs with their economic activities (Cheteni et al, 2019). According to Megbowon (2018), various initiatives such as entrepreneurship tasks are embraced by these women.

2.4.3 Apartheid and Poverty

The advent of poverty and inequality in South Africa could be historically traced to apartheid era when the black population was disadvantaged from socio-economic opportunities (May, 2007). Black population in South Africa was greatly incapacitated by poverty and inequality during the apartheid (Monroe, 2005; Baloyi, 2013), and poverty according to race in South Africa was estimated at 56% blacks, 27% coloured, 9% Indians, and 2% white (Thobejane & Nyathi, 2018). This shows that poverty and inequality has been part of South African population and dated back to apartheid area. Feminization of poverty also did not start today and women population has been trapped in poverty right from when men were leaving their households to look for job and political engagements (Monroe, 2005; Baloyi, 2013).

The advent of democratic government in 1994 has not significantly changed inequality and racial discrimination that existed during the apartheid government, as women remain vulnerable to poverty and inequality that affect their standard of living, access to education, health and employment (Dyubhele, 2012). The premise for Alice Walker's struggle for womanism developed from racial discrimination and separation against black women in the United States of America (Walker, 1983), and this is similar to inequalities against black women in South Africa. According to Megbowon (2018), South African apartheid system contributes to historical trap of poverty on black people especially their women. Poverty has been a long-term and historical struggle globally, but South African case remains a source of concern even after twenty years of democracy

2.5 The African Historical of Gendered Poverty

The African Union Commission 2063 (2015) has revealed that there is a great progress in the struggle against colonialism and apartheid in establishing peace in a democratic governance advancement. South Africa has remained unequal society since 1994 as the post-apartheid system continued with inequality. Jacobs and George (2021) affirm that the drivers of colonialism history continue to present substantial problems and

hurdles to education. Seemingly, Plagerson and Mthembu (2019) contend that the constitutions enshrine a right-based approach and envisions a thriving, non-racial, non-sexist democracy that belongs to all of its citizen, with the goal of healing past wounds and establishing equity. Ntombela et al. (2010) assert that approaches to alleviate poverty in South African communities should be multidimensional to end hunger and to enhance provisions for everyone's basic needs. Furthermore, Thobejane and Nyathi (2018) in their study conducted in Limpopo province, ascertain that poverty is momentous among women and their lack of access to education and healthcare services make them significantly vulnerable to poverty. Maphumulo (2015) concurs that poverty is mainly among women, and can be described as family households with many members living in small house apartments, without healthy water supply other than river water and these people also lack adequate necessities.

The above situation concurs with the World Bank Reports (2018) that "the larger the size of the household, the higher the incidence of poverty". These people are mostly found in the rural settlements of KwaZulu-Natal province and are women headed families (Maphumulo, 2015). Ajuruchukwu and Sanelise (2016) believe that most rural family households in poverty are women-headed, and with large family members who share similar views. Baloyi (2013) affirms that households who cannot afford adequately the basic needs of life are trapped in poverty, and these people are mostly found in rural areas. He posits further that the rural women are mostly vulnerable to poverty. Additionally, Maphumulo (2015) highlights that the indicators of poverty include lack of access to basic amenities in the society. In his longitudinal study conducted in KwaZulu-Natal, the author reported that poverty traps family households who experience difficulties accessing provisions from municipalities; and other indicators for poverty traps include informal settlements, lack of electricity and water supply system. Ntombela, Dayal, Munthre, Kongolo and Masilela (2010) also concur that several indicators of poverty continue to trap women in poverty. However, some scholars assert that lack of access to basic amenities especially in black people's case indicate poverty, and it also include their inability to provide for the needs of their family members and also to live comfortable lives (Ajuruchukwu & Sanelise, 2016; Endeley, 2016; Ademiluka, 2018; Thobejane and Nyathi, 2018).

World Bank Report (2018:91) avers, "Poverty is higher in rural than in urban areas, and the gap between rural and urban poverty rates widened between 2006 and 2015". Seemingly, Walker (1983) opines that marginalisation of black women will always make them to be oppressed and to remain in poverty despite the fact that they want to provide for their households but remain handicapped by resources. World Bank Reports further that "a profile of the poor shows a typical poor household as rural and headed by a single, economically inactive female black South African" (The World Bank Reports, 2018) Conversely, Ntombela et al.(2010) mention that women and men experience poverty differently according to their needs; and Dubihlela (2010) agrees that poverty means lack of socio-economic capabilities for individuals, such as income, information, access to own assets as well as social capital. However, Bellamy (2005) opines that most female-headed households sacrifice their basic needs for family survival in terms of food, shelter and clothing and therefore, these female-headed households tend to be poorer and remain in poverty. In another related study among Kenyan women, poverty is identified as the lack of infrastructure, land tenure, security, employment and lack of education (Ajuruchukwu and Sanelise,2016). Similarly, Thobejane and Nyathi (2018) in their longitudinal study that was conducted in Zimbabwe, declare poverty as food scarcity and lack of adequate water for the households.

2.6 Gendered Poverty: Poverty and Female- headed Households

According to Raniga and Ngcobo (2014), poverty is commonly found within women, which are known as female headed-households since 1970s at the United States and other developed countries; and the number of female households has continued to grow fast and same with their children who are also poor. Mwangi's (2017) report has shown that half of African population is unable to meet their basic needs, additional for example, sub-Saharan Africa constitute half of the poor population. Likewise in Botswana, Magombeyi and Odhiambo(2017) also mention that gendered poverty is rampant among households heads, especially of women that experience high unemployment rate. Notably, feminization of poverty is more attached to women due to economic and social issues, low paid and unemployment of women (Moghadam and Ged, 2005; Veeran, 2014). Relatedly, feminisation of poverty has its root from the idea of female-headed households who are mostly trapped in extreme poverty than the men

headed households (Chant, 2015). Similarly, Jones et al. (2010) state that the female-headed households are more vulnerable to poverty compare to the male-headed households expressed view.

According to Thobejane and Nyathi (2018), the female-headed household refers to the females that are raising the children by themselves without the presence of fathers or husbands to support the households. Ruhiiga (2008) describes a female leader as a single female parent and a black woman who is vulnerable to poverty and faces continuous gender discrimination and household responsibilities. Westhuizen (2015) thereby defines vulnerability as being prone to lack of resources, assets and opportunities for social needs. According to Dubihlela (2010), household head as a family member within the household who is responsible for household needs in terms of his/her income expense. In addition, Raniga and Ngcobo (2014) maintain that women are discriminated in education, health care, food security, access to land and employment. Studies on womanism (Walker, 1983; Cannon, 1988; T'Shaka, 1995; Hudson-Weems, 2003; Deloach and Young, 2014) have further revealed that vulnerability to poverty by women and girls are extremely driven by gender inequality. They have shown the systemic gender inequality that leads into women being vulnerable to poverty in various rural communities and other several root causes of gender inequality and issues women faced and that have trapped them into poverty. Noticeably, women in their attempts against poverty are striving towards equality level opportunities between women and men in ending gender inequality. The historical background of gender inequality will assist in analysing the collected data and in shaping the study finding.

In Moghadam and Ged's (2005) view, developing African countries are mostly female-headed households that gained popularity from the 1990s. These female household leaders' dwell in poverty and remain poor. According to Deedam and Onoja (2015), women have inadequate access to production resources and services due to cultural and traditional boundaries in education, access to adequate jobs, and housing. Similar views by Ntombela et al. (2010) have shown that women's participation in anti-poverty initiative are strategies for their households and communities. Jones et al. (2010)

explain that the female-headed households could benefit in the initiatives that enable their participation in their communities. Veeran (2014) states that the feminization of women and poverty of women are unique. Furthermore, men are only concerned about unemployment related issues but women and family are consequently affected. This further implies that women struggle to make provision for the basic needs of their families than men in female-headed households in most rural African communities (T'Shaka, 1995; Hudson-Weems, 2003; Deloach & Young, 2014). Seemingly, most rural South African women are said to be more trapped in poverty than men, and the rural women whose occupations are mostly subsistence farming and other small vocational activities do not get employed like their contemporaries in the urban communities (Thobejane and Nyathi, 2018). The literature of the study reveals that, men's roles have not been identified in their households in the attempts of poverty. This revealed women involvement has caused drastic changes into their households.

Veeran (2014) concludes that the cause of female headship is the absence of the males in the families; and male absence refers to the absence of male heads within the households. However, despite that male heads are present in some households, women still suffer substance abuse and gender violence (Moghadam and Ged, 2005). Also, patriarchy system which disadvantages most women in their societies from leadership position and within the family does not shield women from indirectly being breadwinners for the families (Collace, 2019). It is a common practice in rural communities where men are seen as lords over their women, these men want to be respected in any decision they make but fail to provide for families' needs (Endeley, 2016; Thobejane and Nyathi, 2018). Jones et al. (2010) therefore opine that women need more participation in community decision making. The following heading expands views on the roles and initiatives that female headed households partake in.

2.7 Poverty Alleviation Initiatives by Women

Women's vulnerability to poverty has made them to attempt to improve their standards of living. Dubihlela (2010) highlights that most women continue to make efforts and to adopt measures that can reduce poverty within their homes. According to Mrara (2016), women that are female headed household are regarded as the heart of the family. These women engage in different initiatives such as domestic labour, entrepreneurship

activities, and agricultural farming purposely to support their households and to reduce poverty traps on their basic needs. Thobejane and Nyathi (2018) reveal that women participate in Agricultural initiatives for their households as means of poverty alleviation. Walker (1983) calls for more involvement of black women in socio-economic opportunities to ensure gender inequalities. However, several causes have been recorded for high population of women in poverty.

According to Chant (2014), women have limited powers to resist legal and moral activities that are challenging to them, as they need to fend for their families and instructed to partake due to patriarchal systems. In patriarchal systems, women are not encouraged to be educated and the lack of education among women (in) directly limit them from getting good jobs; hence, this may be responsible for their poverty. Notably, lack of education deprives them access to basic needs such as safe water, decent accommodation etc. The National Development Plan (NDP) reports that by 2030, it is aimed that access to adequate housing, safe water, dignified sanitation and electricity will be attained for the purpose of poverty eradication in rural communities. This implies that lack of basic needs is a major cause of poverty in rural households.

Ademiluka (2018) reveals that the patriarchal system in African countries is one of the dominating causes of poverty among women. According to Hatla (2010), the patriarchal system creates and enhances inequality between women and men; in the labour market, thus promotes high unemployment rates among women. Buitrago et al. (2018) are of the opinion that gender differences and inequality remain significant causes of education gap and poverty that hinder women's access to needful resources. This suggests why women have no enough presence and authority in labour market due to inequality of gender, and women are provided with lower paying jobs (Buitrago et al., 2018)

Furthermore, Ruhiiga (2008) asserts that women's dependency on inadequate pension and grants as their main household incomes for their households makes most female households to remain in poverty. Westhuizen (2015) posits that the challenge of

unemployment that is estimated at 87% and poverty rate at 59% in South Africa is worrisome; though, global figure of unemployed is estimated to be 197 million people. Conversely, Boudet, Newhouse and Suarez-becerra (2018) agree that gender inequality is the main cause of lack in education and gender pay gap.

2.7.1 Women Initiatives and Role Played in Poverty Attempts.

Various extant literature describe poverty in different perspectives and use diverse indices to highlight poverty (Aggarwal and Delhi, 2012; Baloyi, 2013; Ajuruchukwu and Sanelise, 2016; Endeley, 2016; Ademiluka, 2018; Thobejane and Nyathi, 2018; Collace, 2019; Vyas-doorgapesad, 2019). These studies have revealed that women from different communities do not experience poverty the same way, and their geographical locations determine their needs as well as their standard of living (Walker, 1983; Cannon, 1988; T'Shaka, 1995).

In this context, rural women are mostly trapped in poverty. Stewart and Herr (2017) in their theories of poverty admit that there is a need for diverse approaches to empower women, and to reduce poverty among women. According to Francis and Webster (2019:789), "poverty and inequality are closely interlinked and South Africa's historical inability to meaningfully address the high levels of inequality is due". Many women partake in community projects and activities as means of alleviating poverty. The activities include agricultural work, community kitchen, craft making, and farming projects.

The Department of Rural Development programme (2015) reveals that uMlalazi Municipality has several registered projects that are agricultural initiatives and other economic empowerment interventions that are women-driven. Women are purposely being empowered by these social-economics activities to alleviate poverty (Lukhele, 2013).

According to the Women's Budget Group (2008), poverty among the women implies sacrificing their needs for the survival of their families, and social isolation with human right issues that they experience in their society or community. Mrara (2016) mentions that female-headed households are likely to be in poverty risk as the household have

one adult who is a breadwinner. The group also recognizes poverty as lack of education, poor health, hunger and malnutrition. Conversely, The United States Agency International Development (USAID) (2015) posits that lack of ownership in land, housing, agricultural equipment, and vehicles among women evidently translate to poverty. However, Desarrollo (2004) argues that the interpretation of poverty is measured base on intangible resources or lack of resources that prevent people from living comfortably.

Ntombela et al. (2010) posit that some scholars opine that poverty relate to availability of adequate money and resources to individuals and families, and how these meet their needs for survival in the communities; while Jones et al. (2010) view poverty as shortage of infrastructural facilities such as schools, roads and clinics. All these arguments concur with the struggle of womanists to address various tools of marginalisation again black women (Walker, 1983; Cannon, 1988; T'Shaka, 1995; Hudson-Weems, 2003; Deloach and Young, 2014) In sum, Westhuizen (2015) posits poverty as social injustice and lack of access to social services and a state of being hungry; while (Collace, 2019) states that it is lack of adequate money. The study needs to consider varied perspectives of definition and identification of poverty as it will assist in understanding the multi-dimensional phenomenon of poverty. The given definitions of poverty have shown an enormous gap between the rich and a poor. The study defines poverty by providing the conceptual background as point of departure. It is also essential to understand the definition and how poverty is defined in general. Poverty studies and descriptions hence to lead into identification of desirable belongings by human being in order to maintain a living standard.

2.7.2 The Role of Women in Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurs are people who engage in production of goods and services, which are needed by the community members to create income for themselves as well as job opportunities for other; and are passionate about these activities. "Small, medium and micro-sized enterprises (SMMEs) are a vital part of the macroeconomic growth in the developing world. Because the success of SMMEs is arguably more dependent upon

the owner's capabilities than is the case with larger enterprises" (Irene, 2017:1). SMMEs are crucial to the economy of every country, apart from the fact that they contribute to the Gross Domestic product of every country, they also create jobs and provide income to various families. The SMMEs may also influence poverty level of countries as well as availability of fund to the entrepreneurs is a critical determinant of level of involvement or type of activities that can be engaged at in various SMMEs. Irene (2017) agrees that one of the factors that pushes many rural women into agriculture largely is lack of fund. However, other women also engage in other SMMEs and the fact is that most women in rural parts of Africa are into various agricultural practices.

Apparently, Bastian, Sidani and El Amine (2018) argue that the involvement of women in various entrepreneurship activities has significantly improved living standards of many families in Africa, aside from contributing to the national economies of various countries. The women engagement in various economic activities cut across different sectors according to their locations in the society. Similarly, Irene (2017) posits that involvement of women in most vocational skills is necessitated by the need to reduce poverty traps, especially the rural women in South Africa. Nziku and Struthers (2018) agree that for women who are domicile in rural areas, they are mostly engaged in agricultural activities of planting and harvesting of various crops, rearing of livestock animals, and others are into vocational skills. While Agyapong and Matlay (2018) assert that engagement of rural women in agriculture provides food security for their communities and not only their families; Ugwu (2019) asserts that agriculture is critical to food production as well as improvement of livelihoods of rural people where agriculture is significantly the primary occupation, and this ensures sustainability of the environment. Megbowon (2018) posits that women especially rural based women, play significant role in agriculture, and ensures that the environment is well protected.

As women constitute at least 80% of the total agricultural population in Africa, and play a prominent role in agriculture, especially the rural economies development in Africa (Saquina, 2013). Studies establish that African women who are rural-based produce more than 80% of various basic staple food crops such as cereals, potatoes, legumes,

cassava, vegetables and many others; and these women also raise poultry birds, pigs and other small ruminants in small scale for the consumption of their households and commercial purposes (Ajani, 2008). Ajani (2008) further explains that the women activities are also expanded to other post-harvest activities that include shelling, grinding, drying, storing, and other post-harvest processing activities. The United Nations (2006) confirms that the importance of women in various social and economic spheres are crucial to the economies of various African countries and their involvement in agriculture accounts for more than half of the world's food production.

Meinzen-Dick, Quisumbing, Doss and Theis (2019) opine that agriculture is synonymous with rural development, and the rural people depend majorly on agricultural resources to feed their households and to generate income. This further confirm a nexus between the development of rural areas and agriculture; and the rural economic activities which are capable of curbing poverty traps on the rural society (Misselhorn and Hendriks, 2017; Cousins, Dubb, Hornby and Metro, 2018; Thobejane and Nyathi, 2018). Similarly, Khapayi and Celliers (2016) report that agriculture is critical to food production and women have deployed their energy there to provide food and enhance livelihood. Their knowledge of the environment advances their agricultural activities in the communities for the survival of their family members. Ramphoma (2016) adds that while many rural women are engaged in agriculture their male counterparts are seeking for employment in various formal sectors. Ugwu (2019), in his own views avers that rural women are culturally limited to some roles.

Several studies have revealed that women play prominent roles in agriculture in different African countries; and the rural women' activities are what make rural areas in these African countries to be food baskets to the entire African continent (Ajani, 2008; Saquina, 2013; Khapayi and Celliers, 2016; Thobejane and Nyathi, 2018; Ugwu, 2019). Tibesigwa and Visser (2016) reveal that women's involvement in various agricultural activities are hereditary in rural areas, as most women are introduced into agriculture from their young age, and then trained to cultivate land and animal production at small scales to provide food stuff for the families, while the excess produce is sold for

commercial consumption. Women in various South African rural locations are therefore recognised as contributors to the national productivity and economy in South Africa (Megbowon, 2018; Thobejane and Nyathi, 2018).

In a survey study conducted by Komatsu, Malapit and Theis (2018) across Ghana, Mozambique, Cambodia and Bangladesh, it was established that a large number of women participate in various domestic works such as sewing, cleaning, weaving, laundry and many more as part of the women empowerment activities in these countries. This implies that women will always engage in various domestic activities to provide for the needs of their families. Furthermore, Fudge and Hobden (2018) argue that women in most low levels' economies are traditionally confined to domestic works to create or improve their economic power or resources. In another study, Poo and Tracy (2021) assert that fear of poverty or attempt to break away from poverty forces many women into labour force, where they engage in various domestic works. Casale and Shepherd (2021) posit that women aged 18 and over are significantly entrepreneurs in South Africa with some of them doing domestic works. Similarly, Osinuga, Hicks, Ibitoye, Schweizer, Fethke and Baker (2021) assert that many rural women engage in different domestic works and they are motivated to do these for financial gains; hence, engagement of rural women in many domestic tasks is aimed at supporting their families, and to provide basic needs for the family (Osinuga, Hicks, Ibitoye, Schweizer, Fethke, and Baker (2021)).

2.8 Challenges Faced by Women in Poverty Alleviation Strategies

Despite women's involvement in different and numerous initiatives to manage household poverty, women still encounter challenges in their attempts. Women are confronted with several challenges in their bid to alleviate poverty; and some of these challenges include male domination tendencies (patriarchal), lack of leadership skills, lack of socio-economic opportunities, and employment inequalities.

2.8.1 Patriarchy and Poverty

According to Chauya (2015), men are identified as breadwinner of their household. Due to patriarchal system, which is a social stratification system that elevates and places men above women, men are seen as decision makers whose decisions are to be respected by women; and the women are limited in human dignity, right, and worth compared to men (Facio, 2013). Stewart and Herr (2017), patriarchy is a cultural structure designed to benefit men and oppress women. In the African continent, patriarchy promotes gender inequality. Magombeyi and Odhiambo (2017) view patriarchal as a system through gender gap and inequality promote social and cultural challenges against women.

Additionally, these women are not fairly supported by various government programmes (Nqiwa, 2015). According to Louw-Harmse (2015), women need to be treated equally as citizens; hence, there is need to address and minimize their challenges. The NDP also reveals that the role of women as leaders in poverty alleviation in all sectors of society must be encouraged in South Africa, just like other African countries where women face challenges of unemployment (Bhat, 2015). They (the women) are responsible and accountable for their household financial needs while men struggle to support (Chauya, 2015).

The uMlalazi Municipality is involved in fighting against poverty and unemployment, and the municipality has created job opportunities projects such as EPWP (Expand Public Works Programme), CWP (Community Work Programme) and other programmes (IDP,2021). The IDP of uMlalazi Municipality aims at addressing or to eradicate poverty challenges in form of socio- inequalities and unemployment amongst the people of uMlalazi Municipality (Department of Rural Development Programme, 2015). Notably, women attributes in socio-economic has been underestimated (Ntombela et al., 2010); and urban women contest against their male counterparts in high paid jobs, which reduce poverty traps among urban women (Walker, 1983); Cannon, 1988; T'Shaka, 1995; Hudson-Weems, 2003; Fallis,2013; Deloach and Young, 2014). However, it is a common feature that most rural women tend to be farm-oriented, with their engagement

in various planting of subsistence crops (Megbowon, 2018). The political and culture has been a historical influence on women as most poverty issues attached into inequality and pay gap.

2.8.2 Traditional Practices, Culture, Religion and Poverty

According to the womanism (Walker, 1983; Cannon, 1988; T'Shaka, 1995; Hudson-Weems, 2003; Deloach and Young, 2014), various traditional practices in African societies have placed black women in diverse disadvantaged spaces where the women have been marginalised and pushed into absolute poverty. Dubihlela (2010) reveals that globally, women are faced with challenges of unemployment, poverty, and hunger. There is a high rate of unemployment that gradually grows in rural area. It has been indicated that 22.1 percent of the unemployed in KwaZulu-Natal from January-March 2020 were women (Poverty line Stats,2019). In addition, traditional, religious and cultural practices in most African societies like South Africa are significant limitations to black women, and these limitations make them to be marginalised and prone to poverty.

Furthermore, African cultures believe that women are only responsible for child bearing. Thobejane and Nyathi (2018) reveals that customary and statutory laws in Africa are influencing suppression of women, and in turn lead into poverty and insufficient resources for women. Veeran (2014) agrees that women have been rooted in traditions and belief that recognise men more than the women. No wonder, Walker (1983) posits that women need to be given equal recognition. Dubihlela (2010) also states that African traditions make men superior than women and this becomes a problem in decision making that involves the women.

Walker (1983) further asserts that black women need freedom to make decision that affect them, especially decisions in any initiative or empowerment; and not to be pushed by traditions or cultural practices that make them accept any decision by men. Colacce (2019) reveals that Bangladesh women according to their socio-economic norms have no access to men's belongings; such as selling of cattle's and decision-making in asset ownership. Seemingly, Kenyan women are faced with the challenges of inadequacy of resources and socio-cultural practices, as all decisions are significantly made by men (Colacce, 2019). Thobejane and Nyathi (2018) state that Zimbabwe is also a

patriarchal society, where women are restricted to home chores and to bear children. Moreover, Van Der Byl (2014) avows that women's role in South Africa has been a problem because of the cultural and religious beliefs that limit women's participation in socio-economic activities. Bellamy (2005) reveals that women mainly partake in unpaid family initiatives and responsibilities that do not allow them to be financially empowered. Van Der Byl (2014) maintains that the government policies and legislation which promotes rights for women in culture related and, in the workplace, has not yet being resolved since 1994 debates. Veeran (2014) opines that most women are held by the tradition that believe women's responsibilities are to be limited according to the patriarchal system of the societies.

2.8.3 Gender Pay Gap and Poverty

Existing studies affirm that women's poverty is higher than men in South Africa (Monroe, 2005; Baloyi, 2013; Cheteni, Khamfula, Mah, Casadewall, 2019). Fallis (2013) explains that women in the labour market are faced with lot of challenges in different sectors of economy they work. Bellamy (2005) reveals that female-headed households depend on their income to cater for their households despite their low paid jobs and this makes them to experience more poverty than men. Capital is a problem for many households in poor rural areas (Chauya, 2015); and Veeran (2014) believes that most paying jobs require masculine characters; hence, less paying jobs such as farming is dominated by women. Similarly, Gornick and Boeri (2014) concur that women still earn less than men due to pay gap discrimination in the labour market. Fallis (2013) agrees that women are denied opportunities of well-paid jobs due to inequality in employment. Furthermore, Cheteni et al (2019) explicate that poverty is dominant among rural women population in South Africa, thus making it a worrisome issue and a challenge to womanhood. Women who are engaged in low wage employment are not treated properly (Harriet, Asare, and Anin, 2014).

In Bellamy's (2005) opinion, women suffer from economic status as well as low-paid jobs that enhance gender pay gap. Fallis (2013) reveals that 38% of employed women in South Africa are paid less than men. Van Der Byl (2014) agrees that male-domination in employment has continued to take high percentage in various institutions compare to

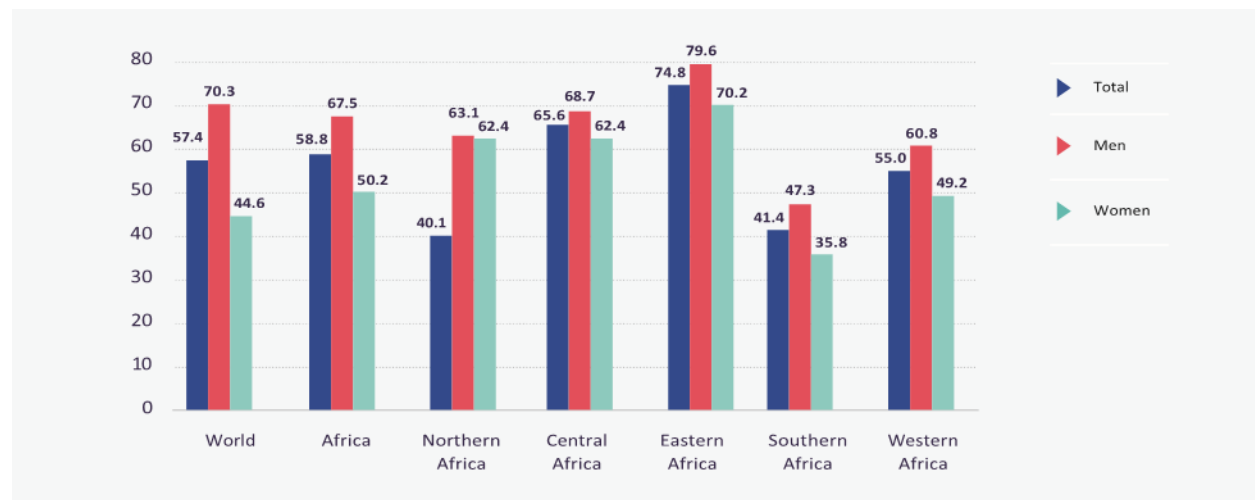
women since 1994. Furthermore, women still face higher poverty than men do. Veeran (2014) argues that female-headed households work more hours than men-headed households and still get less pay. Some authors have also confirmed that women who are engaged in domestic work are paid less (Harriet, Asare, & Anin, 2014). According to Fallis (2013), they (women) are forced to be paid less because of the gender inequality and their quests to provide for their families. Colacce (2019) agrees that vulnerability on women and girls (Walker, 1983; Cannon, 1988; T'Shaka, 1995) place them in extreme poverty as strengthened by gender inequality. Mrara (2016) mentions that women who are earning less are regarded to be the poorer of the poor

Hoynes (2012) believes that poverty is enhanced in women based on the pay gap that exists between the women and the men in the labour market. Similarly, Bellamy (2005) agrees that the pay gap issues between the women and the men create the employment status. Fallis (2013) therefore believes that women still work longer hours compared to those of men and still get paid less. Gornick and Boeri (2014) affirm that the issues of pay gap between genders promote different effects on the women's access to economic resources. However, government-initiated policies that can assist women in eradication of poverty and address their needs (Bellamy, 2005).

Hoynes (2012) agrees that the government initiative of the employment equity Act of 1998 is a programme that can reduce gendered inequality in the labour market and workplace. Fallis (2013) reports that the Employment Equity Act came into existence in August 2014 to advocate and mediate for women's employees' right towards gender pay gap discontinuation. Contrastingly, Bellamy (2005) ascertains that women still face poverty and their levels of poverty differ from those of men. Similarly, Hoynes (2012) concurs that continuous existence of inequality of gender pay gap continuously trapped women in poverty in South Africa. Gornick and Boeri (2014) further maintain that labour market pay gap remains a source of concern to women's high rate of poverty. Additionally, women lack decision making in the socio-economic environment level because of gender discrimination that sees them being weak and thus, they are unable to break away from poverty oppressions (Bellamy, 2005)

2.8.3.1 Figure 2.1: The percentage of employment ration rate between men and women.

The following graph represents the percentage of employment ratio rate between men and women according to International Labour Organization (2019).



Computed from ILOSTAT, ILO modelled estimates, November 2019.

Source: International Labour Organization (2019)

2.9 Challenges Faced by Women in Alleviating Poverty

Extant literature has established that rural women in different parts of Africa are poverty trapped, and they have been engaging in various economic activities to support their families (Bastin, et al., 2018; Irene, 2017; Nziku, 2018; Jones, et al., 2018). While scholars have also asserted that women are into diverse economic activities to generate income mainly, they also contribute to country's GDP, as well as creating job opportunities for others (Agyire-Tettey, 2018; Komatsu, et al., 2018). However, various studies have also established women's effort and their achievements in reducing their households' poverty traps (Thobejane & Nyathi, 2018; Mnini & Ramoroka, 2020). According to Thobejane and Nyathi (2018), socio-economic factors have significantly limited most rural women from engaging in various activities that can enhance their standard of living. The women have limited or no access to needed socio-economic resources that can be used to drive their households' needs. According to Nyathi

(2018), husbands of rural women who lost jobs or unable to get jobs compound the woes of the rural women, as the responsibilities of taking care of the households' rest solely on the poor rural women.

Mnini and Ramoroka (2020) posit that rural women who may want to take interest in various entrepreneurship activities are hindered from doing so, as they fail to get financial support from government bodies or other corporate bodies. Meinzen-Dick et al. (2019) argue that land issues in South Africa is a significant factor that limits rural women from commercial farming that can improve their source of income. The land ownership system in South Africa affects rural women's participation in agriculture, as land around them are not owned by them; hence, trespassing on such land may put them in trouble. This inability to access land for agriculture by rural women is described as land allocation inequality (Thobejane, 2015). While Nyathi (2018) argues that female-headed households in rural areas are mostly trapped in poverty due to lack of socio-economic empowerment; the poverty traps make these women to be vulnerable to many health, social, economic problems.

Mnini and Ramoroka (2020) further assert that rural women sacrifice a lot to ensure their households can have necessities. Other challenges facing rural women in their attempts to reduce poverty include poor or lack of education, lack of access to resources, personal mobility, and lack of information (Nyathi, 2018). Furthermore, Thobejane (2014) argues that rural women who are female heads are faced with various forms of violence from their husbands or live-in partners, who abuse, coerce or threaten them, and do not give them freedom to do things freely. These female-headed households are subject to domestic violence most times from their frustrated or ego-driven partners, who feel threatened or need to exercise their controls over these rural women (Thobejane, 2014).

2.10 Dynamic Amongst Women

However, the recent findings from Statistics South Africa has revealed that 6 out of 10 children in South Africa (about 62.1 per cent) are poor in all dimensions, and these

children are mostly located in KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, and Limpopo provinces, and they are from female-headed households (StatsSa, 2020). This means that the children inherited poverty from their parents who are majorly women in those aforementioned areas.

Deloach and Young (2014) contend that women are also faced with their own individual differences amongst themselves due to their levels of knowledge and standards of living that affect their understanding on educational issues. This may also lead to inequality among them and cause dynamic challenges in empowering one another. Cheteni, Khamfula, Mah and Casadevall (2019) opine that poverty is a common trap for rural women in black population groups in South Africa. Ramphoma (2016) argues that rural women who migrate to urban areas get some opportunities to be employed and thus, relatively reduce their poverty traps. Similarly, Veeran (2014) is of the opinion that women empowerment initiatives can address poverty issues among rural women, especially for those who embrace the initiatives. This implies that when these women are not occupied with any source of income, their poverty level will increase while it is reduced when gainfully engaged with income generated activities. The dynamism of poverty among women is influenced by their economic activities at different time.

2.10.1 Social Exclusion

Walker's (1983) womanism was borne out of the drive to promote women inclusion in some socio-economic activities for better living. Exclusion of women in several socio-economic opportunities remains the prominent reason why they are in poverty (Cannon, 1988; T'Shaka, 1995; Hudson-Weems, 2003). Their social exclusion may be influenced by community or societal beliefs and disadvantage women's community decision making and political activities (Walker, 1983); Cannon, 1988; T'Shaka, 1995; Hudson-Weems, 2003; Deloach and Young, 2014).

2.11 Post-Development Theory

The post development theorist is debating the failure of the development, which was rejected in Africa brought by Westerns. Post development theory is basically the theoretical approach for critical analyses of global effects of Europeans colonialism

(Matthews, 2015). Post development is about how the philosophy of culture, traditions of western people and African differs. Involvement of rural women in various economic activities is influenced by African culture, tradition, and family needs. The theorist believes that the development came into modernizing Africans into thinking they underdeveloped country which leads into Africa to be categories as developing countries. According to Matthews (2007), the rejection was affected by the cultural beliefs of African to Westerns as African embrace of Ubuntu.

African women are so concerned about their families, and they strive to engage in various economic activities to support these families; thus, limiting the extent of poverty traps on the households (Ugwu,2019). Andreasson (2007) posits that the beliefs and social cohesion, and the circumstance of Southern Africa runs position to communitarian identifications of human nature, including moral and social duties and accountabilities personified in the traditional concept and philosophy of Ubuntu. The rationale for this theory in this study provides the necessity for the drive of development and economic empowerment by women, in using culture and literature philosophy of the colonial's countries such as India, Africa, Asia and Canada to improve their households.

2.12 Measurements of Poverty

Several studies have established that there are different indices to measure poverty (Aggarwal & Delhi, 2012; Baloyi, 2013; Ajuruchukwu and Sanelise, 2016; Endeley, 2016; Ademiluka, 2018; Thobejane & Nyathi, 2018; Collace, 2019; Vyas-doorgapesad, 2019). Poverty can therefore be discussed in terms of types, clarification, definitions, and measurement.

Dubihlela (2010) states that poverty line measures individuals or a group of people in a population, or a household that lives below the living standard of other populations in terms of the income that is very low. In the same way, Ajuruchukwu and Sanelise (2016) reveal that it is the means of defining the poor from those who are non-poor according to their minimum living standard, in terms of basic needs such as education, housing, electricity, and adequate job that they afford. Ludi (2016) categorises this as poor people who live below the living minimum income of other people per day. Capacitation and empowerment of black women is the main drive of womanism, and

this idea continues to be prominent even among men that believe in gender equality to break the poverty grips on women (Walker, 1983; Cannon, 1988; T'Shaka, 1995; Hudson-Weems, 2003; Deloach and Young, 2014). The multidimensional phenomenon has conceptualised the poverty as including monetary and non-monetary issues that mainly affect individual's living standard. It is for that reason the study includes the measurement of poverty into issues of how the women from Amatikulu define and identify poverty in comparison with the current literature.

2.12.1 Absolute Poverty

Ajuruchukwu and Sanelise (2016) opine that the shortage of basic needs for individuals such as food, clothing housing, and other resources is absolute poverty. Similarly, Dubihlela (2010) describes absolute poverty as inadequate income to sustain the individuals. Ludi (2016) also reveals that absolute poverty is used to describe people who do not have basic resources and they grossly live below the poverty line. Seemingly, Baloyi (2013) posit that insufficient of different basic needs that hinder individuals from living comfortably are mostly based on inadequate shelter, nutritious and balance diet for good health, and clothing. Maphumulo (2015) also avers that absolute poverty is measured by the living standard, housing, clothing, and education of individuals. This implies that when individuals find it difficult to meet minimum standard in accessing all these basic needs, it is considered to be in absolute poverty level.

2.12.2 Relative Poverty

Relative poverty is defined as the inequality that exists among societies and communities with reference to the basic needs that are socially and financially unrecognized (Ajuruchukwu and Sanelise,2016). Ludi (2016) affirms that the state where individuals struggle to meet the standard living in comparison to other individuals in the same society. Dubihlela (2010) argues that relative poverty explains the comparison of poor population's living condition with other people around them such as female leaders who earns less compare to other people in the neighbourhood. The living standard will not be the same because of the pay gap in their income. Relative poverty explains how and why the municipality or government in comparison with other geographical areas or communities (Maphumulo, 2015) meets individuals' needs. The government sectors strive to create the balance in the livelihood of the individuals

through provision of basic amenities by the municipality. However, these do not adequately address economic needs of the rural households. This implies that most rural women suffer from relative poverty. Relative poverty is a kind of poverty that differentiates them from their contemporaries in the cities or urban areas. Women in the rural areas are of the opinion that the municipality should be responsible enough to provide them with all the necessities (Thobejane and Nyathi, 2018). Similarly, some scholars view poverty based on absence or inadequate money. In the context of this study, the measurement of poverty provides the understanding of how poverty has been measured and defined by various extant literature. The World Bank (2019) reports that 82% of people living in extreme poverty in Africa are living in rural areas and earn little money primarily from farming activities.

2.13 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to define and describe measurement of poverty, and it has been revealed that the concept of poverty has multiple definitions and they are multidimensional. The chapter discussed poverty and role of women in the poverty alleviation based on the previous literature as well as notable views about poverty and women initiative. In this chapter, poverty was said to have specific features in people's lives especially those of women who are poor than men due to different factors such as gender inequality at home and workplace, cultural practices, absence of men at home which has led many households to be headed by women. The next chapter details the theoretical framework that is underpinning the study.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framing of the study. The researcher details the theoretical framework that is underpinning the study. Grant (2014) mentions that theoretical framework functions as a vital role in the research by assisting and in guiding the research structure and giving clarifications on how to build the study philosophy, epistemology, and analysing. According to Izgarjan and Markov (2012), womanism was first propounded by Alice Walker and Layli Maparyan (Phillips) in the year 1979, and the theory is sometimes called black womanism. The chapter explores discussions on womanism theory as methodology used in different extant studies and in this study to proffer in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

This study's motive is to explore and understand poverty alleviation strategies of women in uMlalazi through womanism, and to acknowledge that black women have historically faced different challenges than western feminists. The rationale for this theory in this study is to explore what African women have faced by subjugation through culture, race, and sex. Importantly, the women's race plays crucial role in the development of economic and social conditions, which womanism takes into sufficient consideration.

3.2 Contextualizing of Womanism Theory

Feminists and womanists recognize women and girls' experiences, and how the oppression of men upon women in power affect women and girls (Rodgers, 2017). Womanism as a theory explains how black women's experiences within a race are important concept to be understood, and how these affect women. The womanism theory advances the cause for race, class, and gender oppression as they all affect or influence women activities in different spheres of life (Bhagyathara, 2015). Therefore, the womanism theory provides the lens in this study to understand the role of rural women in poverty alleviation. Specifically, the theory of African feminism has variations like stiwani, Nego-feminism, Motherism, femalism, snail-sense feminism and womanism (Meer, 2010). Amongst these theories, the study is guided by womanism. Adoption of the theory of womanism is to provide frame for in-depth understanding of

women activities towards poverty alleviation in Amatikulu. The theory is used to advance the concern on poverty among female household leaders, and their role in poverty alleviation as drawn from black female experiences.

According to Johnson (2016), womanism is a liberation movement that originated as a result of feminism's racial divide and the gender divide of The Civil Rights Movement. The practices and ideologies of womanism work toward dismantling the hegemonic power structures that continue to oppress the marginalized women. Cannon (1988) concurs that even though womanism relates to feminism but its focus is on black women. Seemingly, Hudson-Wems (2003) posits that womanism is a fight against sexism, and it concerns itself with empowerment of black women to alleviate their oppressions in the communities. This concurs with Alice Walker's reason of coining womanism in 1983. Walker (the key figure in developing womanism) was a committed social activist whose focus was on black women and issues affecting them. T'Shaka (1995) agrees that womanism argues for equality for the women who are being dominated or oppressed predominantly by men in their day-to-day survival. Considering that economic inequality and employment remain some of the most frustrating indices against black women's development in Amatikulu, womanism is a theory that has potential to help people understand the phenomenon, and how individual women especially have been experiencing such issues and how they seek to mitigate them.

Cannon (1988) agrees with Alice Walker that womanism can provide framework for the empowerment of the marginalised black women. The tenets of womanism promote in black women, the wholeness of their households for survival based on their love. This is a shift from feminism (Mehta, 2000). According to Mehta (2000:396), [t]he communal mother, who occupies a privileged place in West African societies, exemplifies Alice Walker's definition of a womanist who is committed to the integrity, survival and wholeness of entire peoples due to her sense of self and her love for her culture. Several African feminists like Filomena Steady and Chikwenye Ogunyemi are self-identified womanists who have demonstrated how the philosophy and practice of womanism have enabled them to propose a new model of femininity for African women

that is independent of patriarchal and western definitions of the feminine. Situating itself at the grassroots level, womanism shows the impracticality and inviability of feminist utopias, by seeking total commitment, as the woman factor is an integral part of the human factor.

Womanism is a paradigm that continues to operationally reinvent and monitor women's role in the societies to ensure equality (Walker, 1983). Hudson-Weems (2003) affirms that women continue to dedicate themselves to the struggle that can liberate them from fragmentation and oppression by men or the systems. This struggle therefore promotes Amatikulu women to see themselves as oppressed black women or females that need common platforms to communicate better on gender equality (Walker, 1983; Cannon, 1988; T'Shaka, 1995; Hudson-Weems, 2003; Deloach & Young, 2014). Amatikulu women have continued to be limited in their economic activities to alleviate poverty in their households (Bulagi, 2020). This implies that the extant literature, and their findings on various factors that influence poverty alleviation activities by rural women in Amatikulu concur with Womanism explanation.

According to womanism theory, the socio-economic status of rural women of Amatikulu has drawn many initiatives by the government agencies and non-governmental agencies to empower women for better living. Ugwu (2019) concurs with Megbowon's (2018) view that economic initiatives should be restructured to capture more women, while Bulagi (2020) as well as Ntshangane, Ngiba, Van Niekerk and Zwane (2020) call for review of implementation procedure for economic empowerment schemes to include more women and to provide adequate support to the rural women in Northern Coast of KwaZulu-Natal, which include Amatikulu rural women. This will enable women in rural area to create more or stable income for their households. Womanism is a theory that tends to encourage women in taking up economic responsibilities, as the women of Amatikulu area are involve in women roles as means to manage their household needs.

3.2 The Theory of Womanism in this Study

The term 'womanist' expresses Africa's feminist consciousness while being fundamentally, culturally and community oriented. Womanism is a preferable term to use for Black feminism. The theory of womanism acknowledges the involvement experiences of women initiatives and contribution into their societies (Rodgers, 2017). The term womanism theory consciously connotes an inclusiveness of race, social class, and sexuality; it appreciates and embodies Black women's culture and the community of women while opposing separatist gendered ideologies that may situate Black women against Black men (Aldridge, 2003). The rationale for framing this study using womanism is to understand the women's agency with their everyday experience of life in poverty alleviation with the concern of ethical theory of human believes.

Poverty traps as indicated by various studies showed that women in rural areas are most trapped in poverty, and these rural women engage in various economic activities to ensure that their households are provided with basic needs within their reach (Khapayi and Celliers, 2016; Ramphoma, 2016; Misselhorn & Hendriks, 2017; Thobejane and Nyathi, 2018; Ugwu, 2019). The main goal of this study is to explore the role of rural women in alleviating poverty through vocational activities such as agriculture, entrepreneurship, sewing, and domestic activities, which is the predominant traditional and hereditary occupation among the rural women. Poverty is a major to women in rural areas, especially in many African communities (Megbowon, 2018). Hence, the impact of poverty on women in rural South African communities is what drives many rural women into various economic activities (Tibesigwa and Visser, 2016). Urban women engage in various high profile economic activities or break into male dominated jobs which advance the tenets of womanism theory, which calls for liberation or empowerment of women for equality (Deloach and Young, 2014). This supports Hudson-Weems (1993, 1998) that women must brace up to do exploits that will give them economic power like that of men, strive to reduce poverty traps from their households and engage in male dominated economic activities. This implies that the studies agree that women in rural areas as described by various studies to be poor and live in poverty, need to improve on their economic activities to make provisions for their

households. Hence, the significance of this study is strengthened by the Hudson-Weems' (1993) discussion on womanism theory. Hudson-Weems (1993) calls on African women's needs to reclaim themselves by engaging in various economic activities as well as function in those capacities where male dominants have occupied to drive equality and most importantly to liberate women who have been kept in poverty and have been grossly affected by household poverty. This study therefore explores women agency in poverty alleviation for their households in the rural communities.

Dove (1998) opines that culture plays significant role in encouraging women to engage in activities that can generate incomes for the households, and to reduce poverty traps on the households. As Dove (1998:109) explains,

“My contribution is to further emphasize the concept of culture as a tool of analysis for understanding the nature of African women's experiences. I specifically address culture as a weapon of resistance and as a basis for defining a new world order. I emphasize the validity of the experiences of mothers, who look to their re-Africanization' as the solution to challenging alien social structures and inappropriate values and behaviours among African women and men.”

Furthermore, that cultural tradition also places responsibility on women to support men to provide for basic needs of the family, stretches women to engage in various economic activities that can generate income with which they can take care of the family needs.

Gender inequality has created human right violation of women. Walker (1983) indicates that women's poverty is higher than men's poverty, and 37 years later, (i.e. in 2021), this phenomenon remains valid for women in Amatikulu (IDP, 2020). Walker (1983) highlights race and class as historical differences that undermine or separate women from men. Deloach and Young (2014) acknowledge that womanism is concerned with social equality of genders. Walker (1983) decries that socio-economic differences are barriers to keep women in poverty. Walker (1983) emphasises the need for women to break away from negative stereotypes that have incapacitated them and placed stringent restrictions on them. According to Maparyan (2013), womanism's motive is to discourage the continuing existence of some forms of exclusionary and practices that

limit black women, and to ensure liberation of black women from the shackles of poverty, through social equality.

3.3 African Context of Womanism

Rodgers (2017) argues that womanism intends to emphasise on multidimensional understanding of black women's subjugation from an African context. Womanism propounds that women should have equal opportunities and rights as men. According to the theory, women have challenges which limit them to participate in society, and some of the challenges include but not limited to culture (Atanga, 2014). This theory is important for the study in order to navigate the lives of the study participants. This implies that Amatikulu women have continued to be limited by cultural practices that do not allow social equality. According to Maparyan (2013), feminism is more based on sex and gender in western countries and more specifically about white women, while womanism is all about how gender, class, and race influence inequality between women and men from Black perspectives.

The rationale for adopting the theory in this study is its ability to view the research objectives in African context, using the womanism theory appropriately. The theory provides the researcher with the understanding of the challenges faced by women in their attempts to alleviate poverty; and it also aids understanding of what should be the role of women in their society, their various attempts to improve their economic status within uMlalazi Municipality at Amatikulu. The experiences of Amatikulu women are different from white, coloured, and Indian women or urban black women; in addition, their history and realities thus reveal that they experience and understand poverty in a different way compared to other women mentioned (Mabilo, 2018). Various initiatives have been designed to empower rural women; however, these initiatives have not been effective due to ineffective implementation (IDP, 2020). In a study conducted by Ntshangase, Ngiba, Van Niekerk and Zwane (2016), their findings show that more support is necessary to encourage rural women in their drive for poverty alleviation. The study which was conducted in the North Coast region of rural KwaZulu-Natal revealed that many factors limit sustainability of rural women's economic activities (Ntshangase

et al, 2016). Similarly, in another related study conducted at Northern KwaZulu-Natal, Bulagi (2020) affirms that there are many limits against socio-economic drivers which women may employ to alleviate poverty.

3.4 Importance of Race in Womanism Theory

Womanism addresses the black of women's experiences and the impact of subjugation faced by the African women. While feminism does not consider colour, womanism focuses highly on the colour of black women and how their race has a bearing on their life experiences and trajectories. Maparyan (2013) reveals womanist theory is filling the missing gaps in feminist theory and thereby contributing to the importance of black women experiences. Womanism is all about contributing to wellbeing, peace, and justice for black women. Similarly, womanism is a theory that understands the experiences of the black female, capabilities and responsibilities (Maparyan, 2013).

According to James (2001), and Walker (2005), black feminism and womanism theories are the same and closely tied up. Rousseau argues that womanism is thought to be black feminism as they are both against sexism and racism against black women in their communities. Black feminism is believed to advocate for African women as it also expresses things from an African perspective and usually called African feminism. It is intended to allow women playing their roles within their communities without being held back by any African traditions. This argument can be used to establish the second objective that intends to explore the activities undertaken by women to eradicate poverty in their households within Amatikulu area. Kandawire (2016) states that womanism considers that black women have been oppressed in race and class based on gender discrimination this make them remain poor.

This is necessary to establish the third objective which aims to investigate the causes of poverty among women within the uMlalazi Municipality. Furthermore, this theory provides emphasis on how to address black women gender challenges and their characters. Similar to the fourth objective that proposes to explore the challenges faced by women in their attempts at alleviation poverty in their households.

Furthermore, womanism explains how women have been neglected even though they form more than half of the world population in past years (Mabilo, 2018). According to Facio (2013), patriarchy as a cultural arrangement promotes exclusive rights and benefits for men, thereby encouraging gender inequality and its centred on men. Also, Moghadam and Parpan (2011) reveal that patriarchal is a structure that is designed for men and it places women at disadvantage positions that do not allow them to equally benefit in economic development; and this leads to gender pay gap. Poverty therefore becomes higher among rural women as the socio-cultural factors limit women's involvement or engagement in male dominated-spaces.

Accordingly, Maparyan (2013) declares that the womanism is promoting women's liberation to voice out but still embrace and respect their African culture; and for men to give them access into be engaged initiative of empowerment. Cultural practices which limit women from functioning or engaging themselves in some male dominated spaces do not also promote poverty alleviation among women. In most African communities, women are forbidden from questioning men's authority or words over some issues, same with engaging in activities that are men's due to women's stereotyping (Megbowon, 2018; Ugwu, 2019; Bulagi, 2020). Despite the cultural practices, the women in Amatikulu explore other economic activities that the culture does not restrict them from, to alleviate poverty in their households (Bulagi, 2020). The study therefore aims at exploring how women define and identify poverty in comparison with debates that currently available in literature.

3.5 Conclusion

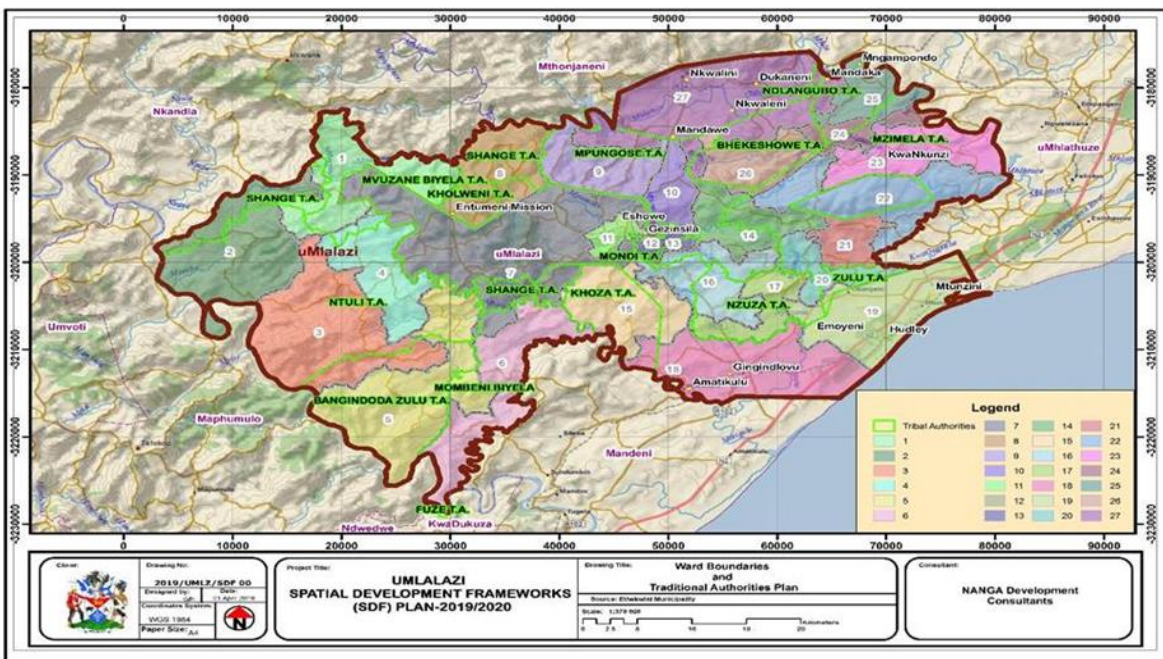
Women has been discovered to be oppressed in African continent through race, sex, and culture. In this chapter, the researcher further explained womanism theory. The theory in this study is advocating and mediating for women in African perspective as the theory itself specify the colour. The following chapter is the methodology, which focuses on the approach, design and the sample that the study used.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented an intricate discussion of the theoretical framework and its role in the study. In this chapter, the focus is on research methodology. The current chapter shapes and presents the different steps of research methodology used in this qualitative research. Explanation and description of the method and procedures adopted in the collection of data are described in this chapter. It also outlines a detailed account of the research paradigm, research design, target population and sampling procedures. The research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations are also explained.

4.1.1 Map of the Study Area



MAP 8: Boundaries and Traditional Authority Areas. The uMlalazi local municipality (IDP, 2020)

4.2 Research Site

This study took place at King Cetshwayo District Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal province. This district consists of six local Municipalities but this study was carried out in Amatikulu area within uMlalazi Local Municipality. Umlalazi Local municipality is located

at the North Coast of the KwaZulu-Natal province, and is made up of three major towns named Eshowe, Gingindlovu, and Mtunzini. Each of these towns has several villages under their tribal areas. There are 27 electoral wards and 14 traditional areas under the traditional leaders '*Amakhos*' in the uMlalazi local Municipality (uMlalazi local municipality IDP, 2020).

According to Integrated Development Planning Review of uMlalazi Municipality of 2020-2021 (IDP, 2020), 234 327 people from uMlalazi Municipality tribal areas live below the poverty line. IDP (2020) also affirms that 53% of that population are women and they are vulnerable to abject poverty as against 47% of men. This implies that women are more vulnerable to poverty at uMlalazi Municipality. This motivated the investigator to engage in this research to explore women's attempts and agency alleviating poverty in their households and to proffer strategies on how to enhance poverty reduction among women, which the women themselves perceive could work best for their context. Prins (2013) the Amatikulu is a small village situated in a 130 km of the northeast Durban near Gingindlovu under the uMlalazi Municipality. Amatikulu was named after the larger river Matigulu which is known as Amatikulu presently. An area of Amatikulu that is within uMlalazi Municipality comprise 4 602 populations with 1 837 households, and 57% of these households are headed by female (IDP,2020).

4.1 Study Area

The study was conducted at Amatikulu area ward 18 in the tribute authority of chief Khoza which is also known as KwaKhoza reserve under uMlalazi Municipality in Kwa-Zulu Natal province of ` South Africa. The target community was Amatikulu area which had 57 percentages of women-led households that live below poverty line. According to the uMlalazi Integrated Development Plan (2020), the phenomenon of women-led households has increased due to unknown reason within the area.

According to the uMlalazi Municipality Integrated Development Plan (IDP,2021), uMlalazi Municipality consists of 27 wards with 14 tribal traditional authorities. The study was conducted in ward 18 in Amatikulu area which is dominantly a rural area under uMlalazi municipality. The municipality has 27 wards which includes urban and rural

household, the Amatikulu ward 18 forms the part of the uMlalazi Municipality rural area. The Amatikulu area is rural ward as regarded by the uMlalazi Municipality. The uMlalazi Municipality has population of 234 327 which also increases every year, and ward 18 where the study was conducted has a population of 4 602 with 1 837 households that are situated in Amatikulu area(Stats SA, 2018; Mid-year population of Statistic South Africa, 2020; IDP,2020). Furthermore, the IDP of the uMlalazi Municipality of 2021 has revealed that among the 19 986 households, the municipality has 5 598 and 14 388 urban and rural households respectively. From that 14 388 rural households, the women-led households have been put at 57%. It is for that reason the study intends to investigate the gendered poverty and women agency in the managing of poverty with their households.

4.4 Research Philosophy

4.4.1 Research Paradigm

The research paradigm is the lens assist the researcher with the participant on how they view the world experiences (Kivunja, Ahmed, and Kuyini, 2017). Rehman and Alharthi (2016) reveal that paradigm is a model that assist with the clear understanding of the belief with agreement of the worldview, ideologies and mindsets of the individual participant. This paradigm is therefore helpful in facilitating understanding the role played by women in their households at Amatikulu Area within uMlalazi Municipality from the internal perspective. The study used constructivism views of human nature and reality.

The research used the philosophical paradigm of constructivism in the investigating the study using participant of Amatikulu area women in terms of their reality, belief and experience of poverty to create knowledge with the participants. Pulla and Carter (2018) explain that the paradigm also helps the researcher to discover the truth of the human nature of the women, such as whether they have perceived themselves poor and knew their significant role in poverty alleviation attempt. The paradigm has also helped to shed light on data interpretation.

4.4.2 Ontology

Ontology is concerned with the assumptions of how people or individuals believe the world operates and with what had be certainly viewed (Kivunja, Ahmed, and Kuyini, 2017). Ontology helps to understand people's beliefs and what is already known in the worldview (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, the researcher is expected to answer question about the nature of reality with the concerns of the ontological supposition. It is more concern with the traits of nature. The study used subjectivism, and that helps to define life experiences and give them meaning (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The researcher understood that participant worlds can be investigated in both natural and physical settings in use of a social act in order to be able to interpret participant backgrounds (Pulla and Carter, 2018).

The ontology is based on the arguments that the reality is constructed subjectively in people's thoughts and experience. The study is interested in individual's experiences, the study become internal in it is nature, therefore, this study adopted the qualitative approach. The qualitative approach used for the study assisted in understanding the reality of poverty within the female household leaders of Amatikulu area and on how participants viewed poverty. The study used the interview method as an instrument to gather data. Kivunja et al, (2017) argue that individuals are expected to shape their events meaning around them to create views and experiences of the world. Therefore, these views can create concrete and contextual information from the field that drawn from participant human interpretation and their social constructions of reality.

4.4.3 Epistemology

Epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge that assists in gathering valid knowledge on what human beings accept as a truth or reality, and it is regarded as what should be acceptable as valid information (Rehman, 2016). It helps the researcher to be able to communicate with participants in data collection process of interviewing and gathering trustworthy information with what participants regards as acceptable information. The research paradigm adopted for this study is interpretivism. Goldkuhl (2012) explains that interpretivism helps to view the world from the experience of participants and through the perception of the researcher. Pulla and Carter, (2018) Interpretivism allows the

researcher to relate the life of the participants through the interpretation of their lives' experience in their households.

4.5 Research Methodology

The nature of the problem in this study involves understanding people's experiences from the participants' perspectives; therefore, the study enquired the research method that allow the researcher to converse with the participants through answering of research questions. This has helped get deep understanding of their thoughts. Engels (2014) stipulates that research methodology is an active search of knowledge that involves define and defining problems, collecting, suggesting solutions, evaluating of data, organising, making deduction before reaching conclusions that can determine the validity and the fitting of the study objectives.

4.5 Research Approach

Creswell (2007) stipulates that "there are three research approaches that are advanced, qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods". Due to the nature of the study which is interested in the experience of the participants and seeks to get rich descriptions a qualitative research approach was adopted. The qualitative research approach properly seeks answers to questions by examining various settings and the individual who inhabits the setting.

4.5.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research involves recording, analysing, and attempting to uncover the deeper meaning and significance of human behaviour and experience, including contradictory beliefs, behaviours, and emotions from the inside perspective. In qualitative research, the researcher is interested in gaining a rich and complex understanding of people's experience and not in obtaining information that can be generalized to other larger groups (Creswell, 2007).

Collin et al. (2012) explain that,

[in] qualitative research, the information is often collected in a way that encourages research subjects to feel that they can speak freely.

Qualitative researchers do not base their research on pre-determined hypotheses. Nevertheless, they clearly identify a problem or topic that they want to explore and may be guided by a theoretical lens - a kind of overarching theory which provides a framework for their investigation.

Furthermore, as this study is a systematic investigation of social processes in natural environments these often include, but are not confined to how individuals recognise elements of their lives; how individuals and/or groups behave [how businesses operate; and how interactions shape relationships. The researcher is the primary data collector in qualitative research. The researcher investigates how and why things happen, what happens, and what those things imply to the people who are being studied (Bergman, de Feijter, Frambach, Godefrooij, Slootweg, Stalmeijer and van der Zwet, 2012). Quantitative research is originated in a fundamentally different set of beliefs-or paradigms qualitative research and would thus not help to address this study's research questions (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

The qualitative approach in terms of data collection and analysis is methodical but allows for greater flexibility than in quantitative research. Data is collected in textual form based on observation and interaction with the participants for example, through participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus groups. It is not converted into numerical form and is not statistically analysed (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative research assisted in gathering more information on women in their attempt to understand the meaning of poverty alleviation initiatives and by investigating the problem, and in answering the question.

The researcher adopted qualitative approach to answer the research question that delivers more knowledge and understanding of women's agency in poverty alleviation in managing of poverty alleviation within women-led households. The approach suits this study as the researcher the interviews were conducted with the Female-headed household of Amatikulu area to omit women's interior perspective regarding poverty and women initiatives. The use of the qualitative approach has helped to reveal more

information about the problem being studied. The qualitative approach is more suitable and appropriate for the study as it allowed the researcher to interact with participants, face to face and to study participant's experiences and perspectives. Another advantage the researcher derived from this approach is acquisition of deep and in detailed information that can answer the research questions. As qualitative approach helps in reflecting in ones lived experience, it intersects womanism as both concepts recount experiences that have become part of one's life and which need revisiting for possibility after reflecting on them in either formal or informal settings.

4.6 Research Design

Research design is a masterplan that structures the research method and procedures of the research study (Boru, 2018). The research design used in this study was exploratory design. The exploratory design was used to find out how people get along in the setting of questions, what meanings do they give to their actions and what issues concerns them (Swedberg, 2018). The research design can be explained as a method that helps a researcher to plan the interview procedure on how he/she will go into answering of the research question with the clear objective (Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams, & Blackman, 2016). The main aim of the research design of this study was to acquire data systematically, analyse the data systematically, and come to scientific conclusions in response to the objectives of the study and of research questions.

4.6.1 Exploratory Design

The exploratory design was used in the study, with what meanings they give to their actions, and what issues concern them. The exploratory design assisted the researcher in investigating the research question and self-reflexive participants in the interviews. Exploratory research is critical for determining the "why" and other aspects that have yet to be determined (Swedberg, 2018) Its purpose is to collect descriptive data and provide a better knowledge of a subject. The use of exploratory design as a collection of data collection methods provides richness (Rocha, 2004).

It is not, however, intended to be used to verify or draw definitive conclusions. One of the advantages of exploratory research is its adaptability. Some research approaches, particularly when it comes to concept or testing, can feel inflexible. Nevertheless, one of the advantages of exploratory research is that it is designed to be flexible and creative in order to acquire the most depth and in-depth information possible (Bergman et al., 2012). For instance, you can use a range of questions and projective approaches to collect participant input in a way that helps you better understand what people are thinking and why.

Another reason is that the research design used in this study assist creating alternatives ways that help in establishing of new sense of the worldview and on what was already known and described as reality. Exploratory was established on the new and present information that is shared as it consents the overview of creating new knowledge (Reiter, 2017). Finally, it concentrates on the goals; particularly, the possibility to be used for choosing who to approach, what questions to ask, and which answer alternatives to include in the next phase of study.

4.7 Research Methods

This section deals with the research methods used in the study. The research methods are covering target population, sampling method, sample size, data collection, and followed by the data analysis. These research methods assist in choosing an appropriate way of conducting the research so that relevant knowledge can be established.

4.7.1 Target Population

The study investigates the strategies used by women for household poverty alleviation at Amatikulu area. To this end, there is a need to identify and describe the population for the study. Kothari (2004) states that, “the term population as a collection of cases that fit certain defined limit that is made by the investigator”. The population of the study were all black women residing in the Amatikulu area within uMlalazi Municipality. These women were leaders of female-headed households. Moreover, these selected

participants were not limited to women who were involved in poverty alleviation programmes and initiatives activities such as entrepreneurship.

4.8 Sample and sampling

4.8.1 Sampling Strategy

The study undertook a purposive sampling strategy in selecting the research sample. Neuman (2005:98) confirms that, “purposive sampling as an acceptable kind of sampling method.” Furthermore, purposive sampling is a judgemental and selective sampling strategy that relies on the researcher’s judgement (Brown, 2006). The main goal of choosing purposive sampling was to focus on the characteristics of Amatikulu women that were of the researcher’s interest as justified by the nature of the research problem and research methodology justified by the nature of the problem.

A purposive sampling method was used in this investigation. The researcher used this purposeful sampling method in selecting participants within the uMlalazi Municipality in Amatikulu area. Each member of the population has an equal probability of being chosen in this sampling approach, because it only takes a single purposeful selection and little previous knowledge about the population, and this method is the simplest of all the probability sampling methods.

4.8.2 Sample

According to Gentles, Charles, Ploeg and Mckibbin (2015), a sample can be viewed as subjects of measurements drawn from a population which we are seeking to understand. The small sample of 10 participants from the population is appropriate for the researcher to be able to acquire information that build up the understanding with deep arguments of poverty alleviation of women’s agency of the participant’s view. The researcher purposively selected 10 black women of Amatikulu who were heads of their households. These were women leaders of their households that have the in-depth information and knowledge of the how to manage their household poverty as means of fighting with poverty alleviation. These women leaders could provide the detailed data on women’s’ agency to manage poverty within their household. The researcher interviewed 10 participants with the motive to enquire valuable information that respond to the research questions and objective of the study. The participants hold the

individualities that required to the presentation of population (Neuman, 2011). Each of the participants gave her consent and thereby willingly participated in the study. The researcher chose 19-80 years of age group of women. Sumari (2007) explains that the age that is more active in maintaining family household, and for that reason, the researcher considered the age from 19-80 years. Most of the households were also observed to be headed by the great-grandmothers and grandmothers. Purposive have various sampling techniques, furthermore, they provide researchers with the justification to make generalisations from the sample that is being studied (Brown and Kandirikirira (2007). All women leaders who were involved in the managing their household against poverty and playing a crucial role as women-led individual were purposefully chosen by the researcher to participate in the study.

4.9 Data Collection Instrument

In-depth Interviews was used as data collection instrument. The in-depth interview is an open-ended discovery method that is used to unfold the conclusions and views of the participants using the interview tool as an instrument (Guion, Diehl, and Mcdonald, 2011). According to Maree et al (2010:120), "an interview is a two- way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions to collect data and learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participants." The time, which was taken for each participant to be interviewed is 30-45 minutes and where the fieldwork was undertaken over two (2) weeks.

The purpose of using open-ended question is to encourage participants to express their attitudes, emotions, ideas, sentiments, suggestions or opinions in their own words (Collin et al, 2012). The researcher used open-ended questions so that the participant can express their feelings, thoughts, perception about the research questions and the experience of the participant. Data was gathered in isiZulu, the language of the participants, and translated into English, as detailed in 4.9.2. The researcher interviewed 10 women who met the criteria explained in section 4.7 above. The researcher used the interview guide as the instrument of data that was collected from

the participants. Throughout the interview covid-19 lockdown restrictions were adhere such as wearing a face mask, sanitizing and physical distance.

4.10 Data Collection Techniques

According to Rahi (2017), data collection is a process of collecting data with the objectives or plan of answering research questions that were set by a researcher. In this study, the women were selected from their respective households using purposive sampling. The researcher travelled to Amatikulu area for fieldwork in order to have face-to-face interviews with each participant in their respective household.

4.10.1 Recording Interviews

The participants were approached individually and asked for their permission to conduct the interview and have their responses on tape. They were informed about the nature of the study and were given consent form to sign. This was done to ensure they are not coerced into participating in the research since it was a voluntary exercise. The names of the participants were concealed and represented as “participants”. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) state that data collection in qualitative study includes the use of various data collection techniques which are not limited to interviews, written documents, audio-visual material and electronic. Having obtained the permission from the participants, the data was collected by tape-recording their responses and it was stored in an audio recording device.

4.10.2 Data Management

The data was transcribed and saved on a computer of the researcher. Data management is a process that involves activities that assist in organizing and keeping the data collected from participate(Borghgi, Abrams, Lowenberg, Simms, & Chodacki, 2018). This was to keep the records of the research study done by the researcher for conducting fieldwork. (Kawulich, 2005; Burgess, 1984) Participants were interviewed using their home language (IsiZulu); the researcher translated the interviews into English with the help of a specialist who ensured that the original meaning from the data was not lost in the process of translation. The translation setting is to create each language meaning in other to reflect participant’s perspectives without changing the

source of language(Larkin, De Casterle' and Schotsmans, 2015). The translation was done as the students at the University of Zululand are expected to use English in their academic work as part of the University Policy in research of data collection (University of Zululand Policy and Procedures on research ethics, 2016).

4.11 Data Presentation and Analysis

According to De Vos (2005:56), data analysis is “the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass collection of data”. In this study, data was presented in form of transcripts of responses obtained from the interviews conducted with the participants. The data was analysed using thematic analysis. Ibrahim, (2012) explains that thematic analysis is used for a qualitative approach in assisting the analysing of the interview. Jugder, (2016) also states that thematic analysis is a process that mostly used in qualitative to interpret and discover the themes and patterns of qualitative data. The researcher chose thematic to be able to organise data and interpret to make sense in the process of analysing interview (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Data that was collected from the participants in form of recorded interviews, and the data was then translated from the participant language (IsiZulu) then transcribed and manually put into themes in arrangement with the comprehensive thoughts from the participants with the common language was coded, analysed and interpreted. The researcher coded the raw data obtained from the participants and the data was translated into English before being coded. The data were then analysed, summarised, and interpreted according into themes from the in-depth interviews.

4.11.1 Qualitative Data analysis and Interpretation

According to Ngulube (2015), qualitative data analysis is referred to sense-making and creating meaning of data gathered. Similarly, interpretation is defined as a process that illustrates the interpretation presentation of on-going and unpredictable data (Dean, 2018). The study used qualitative approach to analysed and interpretation of interview data using thematic analysis. These were thematic context steps as following:

4.11.2 The Raw Data

The raw material refers to the data that have been collected for the study. During the data analysis, Jugder (2016), the researcher made meaning of the data. In qualitative research as in this study a working design, to keep a clear mind and not become overwhelmed by the sheer amount of data, the researcher approached the data analysis in a highly organised manner. The researcher reduced the audio recording into transcription and carefully studied the field notes. Moving from mass words and heaps of paper to a final report requires a method of organising and keeping track of the text (Maree et al. 2010). The data was organised, classified, and categorised thematically for the purpose of producing meaningful data. This process was conducted for each participant's responses to each question asked during the interviews.

4.11.3 Planning for Data Recording

In this study, data was recorded using an audio recorder, and after transcription, it was typed and saved on the computer of the researcher. The coding enables the researcher to organise a large amount of text and to discover patterns that would be difficult to detect by just listening to an audio recording and reading a transcript (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2010). The participants were interviewed using their home language (Isizulu), to allow the participants reflect numerous aspects of their experiences as pertained to poverty in their households. The researcher translated the information into English as students of University of Zululand are expected to use English in their academic work.

4.11.4 Coding the Data

Qualitative coding is the process of conceptualising the data. The researcher aims at organising the data so that the scope and coverage of the data set can be achieved (Ngulube, 2015). For this study, the researcher familiarized herself with the data by listening repeatedly to the collected data from the participants, and thereafter assigned codes to individual's responses for easy identifications.

4.11.5 Creation of Themes

The study creates themes which represents categories of data, and the categories were labelled accordingly. The labels included the title, subtitle, and the themes. As the categories of meaning emerged, the researcher searched for those that have internal convergence and external divergence. The themes generated by the researcher were drawn from the coded and transcribed data. The themes were generated by listening to the common phenomena reiterated by the participants with a use of research questions of the study to get clear clarification and knowledge of the research.

4.12 Trustworthiness

According to Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams, and Blackman (2016), the confirmation of accurate research in the qualitative research method, the trustworthiness must be taken to consideration and established using four aspects of trustworthiness that are in-depth.

4.12.1 Credibility

The first criterion that must be established is credibility. Credibility emphasises the reality and the truth of the study (Bless, Higson-Smith and Smith, 2013). It is used to measure the interpretation of the finding that are drawn and presented from the participants, if correctly interpreted. Spending enough time on the field assisted the researcher to evaluate new knowledge and changes, and to understand the live experiences of women in Amatikulu area and thereby gained quality time with the participants (Anney, 2014).

4.12.2 Dependability

According to Anney (2014), dependability known as for the assessment of the interpreted and recommendations of the findings to support the data captured on the field by the researcher. The researcher used suitable data collection instruments and ensured thorough cross-checking of data to keep the information valid. The use of these tools has been explained in details in sections 4.10.

4.12.3 Transferability

Transferability refers to the amount of the results that can be transferred into other context with the use of other participants (Moon et al ,2016). The data that was collected from the participants was indicated by direct quotations after they have been translated, transcribed, and coded based on the on the content of participants' responses. In addition, transferability implies that the results of a study are transferable or generalised into another situation that the researcher identified (Bless et al.,2013). The researcher in obtaining and ensuring of valid information of data collection, the briefing and introduction of the study to the participants it was rendered in order to offer instruction for the participant to have clarification and the researcher gain the trust of participants.

2.13 Ethical Consideration

Goddard and Melville (2004:89) said, "Apart from instrumentation and procedural concerns, collecting data from people raises ethical concerns". These include taking care to avoid harming people, having due regard for their privacy, respecting them as individuals, maintaining anonymity, and not subjecting them to unnecessary research. To avoid harming people, guarding against both physical and psychological harms are necessary. The researcher obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the University Research Committee that grant the researcher with a rightful to conduct fieldwork research. The ethical clearance is attached in appendix 1. The voice recording was used with the permission of the participants. The researcher was thoughtful towards the participant's language, beliefs, customs and culture towards understanding individual participant holistically.

2.13.1 Obtaining Consent

De Vos (2005) points out that "emphasis must be placed on accurate and complete information so that the participant will fully comprehend the investigation and consequently be able to make a voluntary thoroughly reasonable decision about their possible participation". To be ethically justifiable, consent must meet three requirements. These requirements are related to personal abilities, voluntariness, and the actual information the researcher has to gather (Collin et al. 2012). To obtain

consent (to participate in the study) from the participants, the researcher explained the aims and the purpose of the study to all participants. The issuing of consent forms was discussed and gave to all participants to sign purposely to obtain their consent. The participants were told about the questions, about their voluntariness and rights to withdraw from the study at any time they wish if they are no longer comfortable with the questions of the study. The researcher explanation was provided to the participants that participation is not compulsory. The research participants were also informed about their participation in the study. The consent form is at appendix 4.

4.13.2 Ensuring Privacy and Confidentiality

Confidentiality and privacy are central issues in the research study, but assurance of confidentiality varies between the investigator and the research participants. The fieldworker and the research participants have agreed not to report private information or data that have been identified as private or confidential by the participants; therefore, the participant's right to confidentiality was respected. Essentially, the procedures taken include protecting all participant's privacy (Strydom, Founche, and Delport, 2005).

In addition, the researcher used pseudonyms to mention participants in the research for privacy. For example, Nomasonto was used instead of using the actual name to identify the participants. The researcher employed pseudonyms to avoid easy recognition of all the participants. The research did not identify any participant's residential or work area information as well. The researcher asked for the participant's permission to conduct interviews with them through telephone communication, due to covid-19 their homes were more comfortable as per participant's response's. In this study, privacy and confidentiality was considered in terms of the sensitivity of the information from the participants, and the conducive place where the interviews were conducted. The interviews were conducted in their households, and their right and dignity were respected. The COVID-19 restrictions and regulations were adhered to by the researcher during the interview's engagements with the participants, as masks were put on, and social distance protocols were observed.

4.13.3 Prevention of Harm

The researcher should ensure that participants are not exposed to any undue physical or psychological harm (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). In this study, the physical safety of the participants was maintained as the researcher interviewed the participants in their homes or workplace. Psychological safety was ensured as the researcher did not ask disturbing and personal question that might be sensitive to the participants.

4.14 Delimitation of the Study

The study was based and limited to the uMlalazi Local Municipality at Amatikulu area. The study did not include other demarcation of municipalities and areas. The role and initiatives that were explored were those applicable to Amatikulu's women-headed households at the uMlalazi Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal province. The study mainly focused on the role of women who were leading their households and their initiatives such as ploughing of sugar cane, gardening, taxi business, tuck-shop and engaging in domestic work and never looked into common role within the household such as doing chores.

4.15 Limitations of the Study

Researcher was not able to interview two women that were purposeful chosen due to their busy schedule, but the researcher managed to interview those who were available. This affected data gathering for the study as the researcher had to get other women who were willing to take part in the study. Some women were in their households but during the interviews, they were busy with their work as most of them were running tuck-shop within their houses. This led to researcher's inability to get enough time. Such constraints did not affect participants' responses to the interview questions.

4.16 Reflexivity of the Researcher

The purpose of reflectivity in this qualitative study is to keep track of the researcher thoughts and decisions if they are well-structured into contribution of the scientific rigour of the study. Reflexivity is the introspection process where the researcher examines his/her beliefs, judgements and value (Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas & Caricativo,

2017). Reflexivity plays the vital role in the qualitative research. Kalu (2019) believes that it is a process of self-analysis in the creating interpretation of the researcher social background. The reflexivity of the study assists and it serves as rigour trustworthiness checking in asking for the realities (Morrison, 2015). It requires the researcher to be transparent.

This researcher's purpose was to explore the role and initiatives of women in poverty alleviation for their households at Amatikulu area within uMlalazi Municipality. The proposal stage of this study (which was a mastering stage of this study) has made me to gain a lot of experience and knowledge as concerned the topic. Over the time, I have mastered some relevant parts of this study and scientific research in general. These aspects include analysis of theories, reading, writing and ability to discover the population percentage of women who are living below poverty line in African continent besides those of Amatikulu area. This has created and gave the researcher the background knowledge and the underlying beliefs, furthermore, this on the study revealed other problems that might be taken granted which research question can include.

During the data collection stage, I went to the fieldwork and met some women who allowed me to introduced my study to them and also granted me the permission to interview them. I interacted with a specific number of my participants before I interviewed and got their opinions, beliefs, and view on their roles in poverty alleviation.

This research made me work with diverse female-headed households as I chose my participants using purposive sampling strategy. I have never been to any meeting with these women, so I have to adapt and be flexible with them in order to gain knowledge while engaging with them. As a researcher, my purpose was to build legitimate relationships for achieving the research objectives. As I have stated, my research is my priority. In my study the aim was to discover more about Amatikulu area women-led households within the uMlalazi Municipality and about women in general by looking in the causes, challenges, and strategies of poverty alleviation along with how patriarchal system has affected these women during apartheid era and in democracy.

The outcomes of the research will assist in knowing the women's agency of Amatikulu area who play a significant role in poverty alleviation and improve their social engagement in their life in general. It will also further help upcoming researcher like me to be motivated in conducting research as well and to use the information from this research. The reflexivity essay will be attached in appendix 6.

4.17 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher expounded the research design for the study. The chapter indicated how the researcher has employed qualitative research design, and in-depth interview as a research instrument towards investigating the role of women in poverty alleviation at Amatikulu area. The following chapter focuses on the findings and the discussion of the findings

CHAPTER 5

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the research methodology of the study, which consists of research philosophy of the study, qualitative research approach that the study adopted and exploratory research design. The purpose of the current chapter is to present the data analysis and interpretation of collected data from the women at Amatikulu through various thematic discussion that centers on Amatikulu female headed household and their fighting against poverty within their household. The participants in this study were women who were involved in different activities to generate their livelihood and ensuring poverty alleviation in their households. Moreover, some of the women were the head of their household. The data were collected with the motive to understand the women's experiences, feelings, and thoughts (Rahi,2017) and possibly help to answer the research question of the study which aim to explore the agency of women in poverty alleviation. The study used the qualitative approach with in-depth interviews as data gathering instrument.

5.2 Generating of the Themes

The themes of the study were generated based on the common concepts or ideas the participants expressed in relation to research questions of the study. This has helped to obtain relevant information and views about the research focus.

5.2.1 Themes Generated

Table 1: Generated themes and their links with the research questions

| Research Questions | Themes |
|----------------------------------|--|
| How do women define and identify | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conceptualization of poverty at Amatikulu area |

| | |
|---|---|
| poverty in Amatikulu? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Needs of poverty • Lack of money and adequate education • Misfortune and lack of employment |
| What are some of the activities undertaken by women in poverty eradication? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survival techniques of Women in poverty alleviation projects |
| What are possible causes of gendered poverty among rural-based women of with the uMlalazi Municipality? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reasons of feminization of poverty in the female-headed household |
| What are the challenges faced by women un alleviating poverty at the uMlalazi Municipality? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences of women in the Attempt to overcome Poverty in their Households • Female-headed household role in poverty alleviation within their households. |

This study thematically analyzes the data collected from the participants as captured in chapter 4. The research objectives, questions, literature review, and theoretical framework remained consistent with the themes of the study, and that also aided generation of the findings. The participants' responses were sorted into themes of the study with the motive of answering the research questions of the study. In life with confidentiality ethics, the use of pseudonyms was employed instead of each participant's name. Chapter 4 of this study as captured information on private and confidentiality.

5.3 Description of Participants

The participants of this study were women drawn from Amatikulu area, and they were recruited based on the belief that they played a significant role into fighting against poverty in their households. These participants were female-headed household at Amatikulu area. Table 2 displays presents some personal data about these participants.

5.3.1 Table (2): The profile of the participants of the study

| No. | Pseudonym | Gender | Age | Occupation Status | Source of Income |
|------------|--------------------|---------------|------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1. | Hleziphi | Female | 56 | Self-employed | Poultry farming, sugarcane farming, traditional beer selling, tuck-shop (Selling, bread, cold-drink, sugar maize-meal) and commercial farming. |
| 2. | Zekhethelo | Female | 31 | Self-employed | Owing a tuck-shop at home, and sugarcane farming |
| 3. | Nandipha | Female | 40 | Employed | Domestic worker (laundry lady) |
| 4. | Ntombizonke | Female | 55 | Self-employed | Owning a tuck-shop (Snacks, bread, sugar, Sweet and cigar) |
| 5. | Bongekile | Female | 58 | Self-employed | Owning a tuck-shop (Bread, cold drinks, alcohol, meat and snacks with sweets, and sugarcane farming |
| 6. | Fundile | Female | 35 | Self-employed | Owning a tuck-shop (Meat, alcohol, Cold-drinks, Snacks, Sweets, Tomato, breads and other basic needs, and sugarcane farming |
| 7. | Zandile | Female | 48 | Self-employed | Owning a tuck-shop (Cigar, snacks and sweets) |
| 8. | Fikelephi | Female | 59 | Self-employed | Sugarcane farming |
| 9. | Dorothy | Female | 71 | Self-employed | Sugarcane farming, and owning a tuck-shop (Sugar, Snacks, sweet and cold-drinks). She is also receiving old age grant from the government. |
| 10. | Thandiwe | Female | 60 | Self-employed | Taxi business owner and sugarcane farming |

In the sample above, it shows that most participants were self-employed with different skills, which have helped them to participate in different activities to generate income in their households. These women engaged in different farming project (livestock and crop farming). In crop farming, they participated in sugarcane ploughing; while in livestock farming, they engaged in poultry farming. Some women in Amatikulu also engaged in entrepreneurship, while others were working as domestic workers.

According to Dyubhele (2012) and Velez (2018), the majority of women in rural areas are not educated, that is lack access to western and formal education. The majority of the participant were uneducated and drop-out due poverty, however, they were capable of generating their livelihood for their family to survive. The sustainable activities that women initiated were hardworking and these participants had benefited from them as they had recorded success. The benefits of the initiatives of these participants diverted to care for their households' responsibilities. The responsibilities include provision of daily needs and food for the families. The participants' initiative was also found to be gradually growing. The participants also benefited from their initiatives by building proper houses and affording a stable living standard because of the engagement in creativities roles.

5.3 Conceptualization of Poverty by Women in Amatikulu Area.

Various studies (such as Vyas- doorgapesad, 2019); Collace, 2019; Ademiluka, 2018) have revealed that different women do not experience poverty the same as in other communities; however, women's standards of living are determined by their geographical locations. This points out that there may be different understanding attached to poverty. In addition, rural settlements of the KwaZulu-Natal province with female-headed households are enormous and thereby leads into higher incidence of poverty as those households cannot afford basic needs (World Bank Report, 2018; Baloyi, 2013; & Maphumulo, 2015). Cleslik (2018) agrees that poverty commonly affects rural-based women; and Lujabe (2012) also affirms that poverty has been an encounter among rural-base communities and households. The following section focuses on how the participants define poverty from their own perspectives.

5.3.1 Conceptualizing Poverty

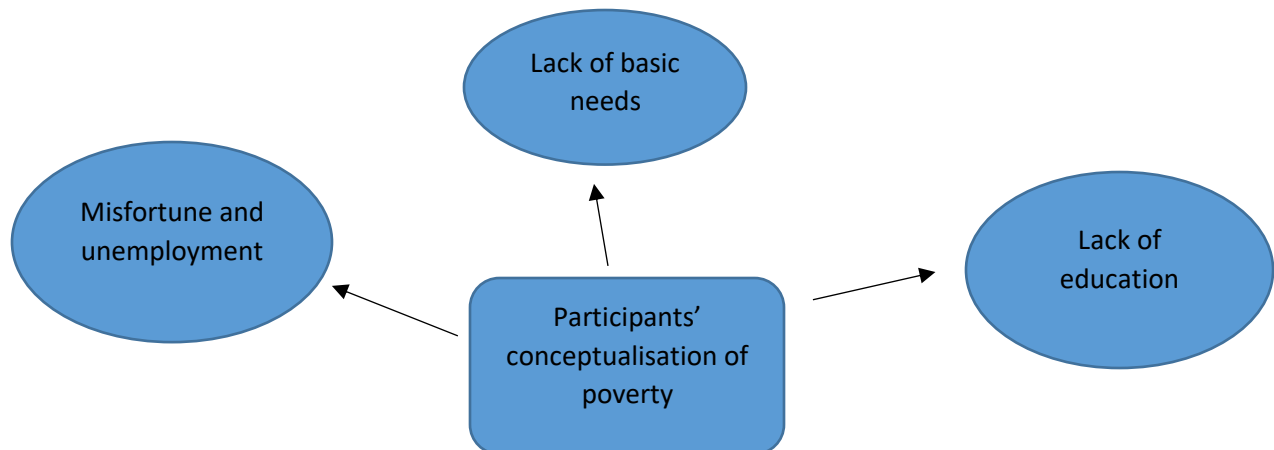


Figure 5.1: Participants' conceptualisation of poverty

As shown above, the participants view poverty in different ways, just like the theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, some women link poverty with the lack of basic needs. Moreover, some define the concept of poverty as having misfortunate and not having access to education.

5.3.1.1 Basic Needs

The finding of the study showed that the participants in Amatikulu defined poverty as not having access to basic needs like shelter. Some women believed that not having shelter is a good indication of *ukweswela* (to lack). It was found that the participants have different perspectives of poverty. The womanism theory is detailed in chapter three as framework of the study that reveals theory is for black women as it is dealing with life experiences of women in African perspective and advocating for them. Womanism is social activist that main focuses on the issues that are affecting black women (Johnson, 2016). National Development Plan reported in literature that by 2030, the aim is to deliver adequate basic needs for rural communities. This implies that lack of basic needs in areas such Amatikulu which is situated in rural community may cause high rate of poverty within households.

“I can define poverty according to different types shelters we have in this our households. I can say poverty, is to be poor of having nothing” (Dorothy, 02 March 2021, Homestead)

Based on this, all the participants agreed with this definition of poverty. Female-headed household businesses in Amatikulu have fulfilled the self-actualization of meeting their individual need into fighting against poverty within their household. The finding above concurs with Ugwu (2019) report that African women are so concerned about their family needs. Poverty, being identified as a gender-disadvantaged factor in the womanism theory avers that poverty is knowingly found among women in rural areas (Stewart & Herr, 2017). The definition is mostly associated with socio-economic issues that their household and community are faced with. Similarly, Mussa (2014) asserts that poverty has been indigeneity problem, and it has surfaced in people’s lives in different way, and in relation to people’s basic needs. The households have different definitions of poverty as it not always similar to other family’s needs.

Furthermore, the result of the study showed that some women believed that not having someone as a breadwinner in the household could be considered being poor:

“If the household have no one who is a bread winner who is practical working that is how I can define a poor household. I think I can say poverty is a lack of having a proper shelter as I do not have one in my home and not having a good job” (Nandipha,31 February 2021, Homestead)

The above participant defined poverty as a scarcity of monetary issues, adequate housing, and lack of job as some women are not employed. Maphumulo (2015) concurs that poverty includes the lack of access to the basic needs. Similarly, the womanism theory reveal that black women experience are different to other race with their impact of subjugation that are faced (Maparyan, 2013). The experiences that are faced day-to-day by women are not the same struggle as each household has its own definition of poverty. Ludi (2016) defines poverty as homelessness and inadequate housing. The participant’s narrative above reveal various definitions of poverty in their own perspectives.

Scholars such as, Westhuizen (2015), and Collace (2019) indicated poverty concept as a lack of social services, lack of housing, lack of adequate money and the state of being hungry. This was stated by many participants, and Ntombizonke stated that:

“I do not have a house myself, my child, I am also struggling so I cannot point and differentiate between a poor and not poor household. As I do not have a beautiful shelter that I dream of that is poverty to me” (Ntombizonke, 01 March 2021, Homestead)

The participant believed that the involvement in poverty alleviation initiative made no difference to their poverty status as they still lack basic needs such as having proper shelter for their households. The finding revealed the narratives of Nandipha and Ntombizonke did not make massive differences in differentiating between the poor and not poor, as some, if not most participants also identified themselves poor with only slight differences as they were trying to manage poverty within their households. Not having a proper shelter was identified and defined as poverty in this study area. Female-headed household in rural areas have been identified to be more vulnerable to poverty than men (Thobejane and Nyathi, 2018). The poverty definitions of the participants were based on the description of the individual household living standards and the presentation of the household's structure setting. It implies that having older people who cannot be involved in any poverty alleviation attempt are also viewed as being poor and vulnerable to poverty. Individuals that were identified as, 'others' were referred to as their neighbors who were mentioned by the participants that were community members, and who perceived them.

The finding has shown that some women could not survive without the assistance of government mechanism. The participants were involved in entrepreneurship and agricultural initiatives as the escape into poverty, and this correlates with report by Dyubhele (2012). The research interviews revealed that even though the participants involved themselves in fighting against poverty, however, they recognized the hardships of other households, and were able to give a positive contribution towards the understanding of how poverty could be perceived. The womanism theory that underpinned the study has revealed that poverty among women in rural area need to be

exposed and discussed (Aggarwal & Delhi, 2012). The theory makes known that women in rural area are most affected by poverty as the study reveals about Amatikulu women. These women are not only in rural areas, but also in poverty, so they also involved in initiatives to assisting managing their community and household poverty.

Moreover, social grant has created a major different in gender pay gap of inequality in terms of assisting with poverty reduction (Guyer, 2018). While national poverty line of South Africa is reported to be R441 per month (Mubecua & David, 2019), the breadline percentage R441 per month as means of poverty alleviation appears insufficient to reduce poverty. Income and expenditure survey of 2010-2011 are referring the poverty line household cost of basic needs to be R561 per month (Poverty Line Stats, 2019). The poverty as being experienced in many households can therefore be regarded as extreme. It means, the government support mechanic cannot be viewed as a poverty alleviation strategy. The study findings revealed that household that received the social grant were perceived as poor. South Africa households that are located in rural areas deeply depend in social grant (Gumede & Nzama, 2019). This is caused by the lack of skills that may develop those people in certain rural communities. Moreover, poor household is referred to the combination of individual household income that is calculated as household subsistence level (Dyubhele, 2012).

5.3.1.2 Lack of Money and Adequate Education

Some scholars Ntombela, Dayal, Munthree, Kongolo and Masilel (2010) relate poverty to lack of adequate money with the necessary resources to the individual and families that unable individuals or communities to meet their survival needs. The findings further showed that participants defined poverty as lack of finances and education in their household. The participants revealed that poverty is a lack of monetary issues, which leads to school drop- out. Similarly, in Kenya and Limpopo province, the literature has revealed that women define poverty as the lack of education which makes them to be vulnerable (Thobejane and Nyathi, 2018; Ajuruchukwu and Sanelise 2016). Lack of adequate education, has been taken as the cause of poverty amongst the living households of individuals who are also experiencing such issues. United Nations (1995) avers to the participant narratives that poverty is the lack of adequate income and lack of access to adequate education. The participant was quoted saying:

“I can say or define poverty as a shortage of money in our families or households because there is nothing we can do without having money, at times as children we wish to further our studies but due to the fact that our parents they think about what we are going to eat, clothing to wear on the little money they receiving as most of the time parents are not working” (Nandipha, 31 February 2021, Homestead)”

It is deducible from the above revelation that some households with their female leaders suffer from monetary issues and lack of education. Furthermore, Thobejane and Nyathi (2018) in their study conducted in Limpopo province, have ascertained that poverty is momentous among women and their lack of access to education and healthcare services make them significantly vulnerable to poverty. This leads to the high percentage of drop-out and in turn, the huge number of uneducated women. Amatikulu women headships believed that lack of adequate education among them alone could be regarded as main problem of poverty. The school drop-out in South Africa females are estimated to be 66%, while males constitute 30% (Saint & Weinstein, 2019). The percentage that women constitute in drop-out is proving what the participants of Amatikulu female-headed households perceived the result of poverty even amongst themselves. Furthermore, the study has indicated that money is essential for providing the daily needs the households required for survival. Another participant's view of poverty is captured below.

“I can define and differentiate the household that is poor by having children who do not go to school and others are drop- out due to finances circumstances at home. I can define poverty as a shortage of money in our families or households” (Zekhethelo, 29 February 2021, Tuck-shop).

The participants shared the same sentiment of monetary issues that each household identified and understood as poverty. Notably, education is an important tool to fight against poverty amongst society especially women (Sumari, 2007). The vital role played by education in the life of women is observed, but the participants (like other women in Amatikulu area) have discovered suffering could emanate from being a drop-out. Womanism theory reveals that poverty is a gender advantage factor hinders women from adequate access of social and economic needs (Stewart & Herr, 2017). The

womanism theory considers that these participants, which are black women have been neglected and oppressed in gender, race, and class that make them to be poor. Gender differences and inequality are seen as hindrances and the cause of educational gap with poverty (Buitrago, Newhouse, Scott and Suarez-Becerra, 2018). The above scenarios may be responsible for the participant's poverty that has deprived them education.

5.3.1.3 Misfortune and Unemployment

Finding of the study revealed lack of employment as a cause of poverty. Collace (2019) and Ludi (2016) have agreed with the above finding that poverty means inadequate resources that can sustain the livelihood of individual, and it may come in terms of ill-health, lack of adequate education, inadequate housing and other social and basic needs. In this study, some participants have defined poverty as lack of basic needs, lack of finances and education. The finding has also showed that some participants defined poverty as having misfortune. One of the participants responded as follows.

“Poverty is having misfortune or bad luck” (Ntombizonke, 01 March 2021, Homestead)

Based on this, the results of the study showed that not having luck or opportunities to secure employment is another way to define poverty. This is because when one has misfortune, it is therefore not likely to get employment or other resources to feed the family. Other participants went further to reveal that:

“Poverty is when you have misfortune and this misfortune sometimes it comes from the previous generation” (Ntombizonke, 01 March 2021, Homestead).

Similarly, with the other woman who also believe poverty is not only based on socio-economic needs; however, having misfortunes in life has been attributed to poverty. Another participant mentioned that:

“Hawu! There are many households in the area that are poor my sister, even when you look at them you see it even hard to put the food on the table liyakanzima ibhodwe eziko (It is hard to put a pot in the stove), There are many poor households that I can see and say are poor in my neighborhood which you can say were cursed to be poor” (Bongekile, 26 February 2021, Homestead)

This description given above by Bongekile showed that the majority of the participants experienced and defined poverty differently unlike the white, Indian, and colored women as well as unlike the urban black women. Mabilo (2018) as regards womanism theory opines that women history and realities are different from other women. The above narrative revealed that the realities of the participants are not similar to mentioned women of other color. Additionally, inequality between men and women has promoted high unemployment rate and lower paying jobs (Hatla, 2010). Similarly, Westuizen (2015), Boudet, Newhouse and Suarez-becerra (2018) concur that South African unemployment rate has been put at 87% in terms of inequality. The participants were also affected about the inequality with the lack of unemployment with the Amatikulu area.

For instance, Fundile further expanded on the lack of employment, which women defined as poverty. Participant Fundile's response regarding defining poverty is presented below.

"I would not know how to differentiate the poor and not poor household because our needs are not the same as households. I can be saying having no job or adequate job to sustain your family that is poverty to me. I can define poverty as a lack of employment or job" (Fundile, 25 February 2021, Tuck-shop).

The women interpretation and definition of poverty are more similar as the above findings has confirmed. Therefore, women of Amatikulu seemed sharing the same sentiment about poverty as on how they define it. Female-headed households which were participants of this study have defined poverty, and the following subtheme expands on the identifying and understanding of poverty with comparison of ongoing literature. From the above findings, there were different definitions of poverty amongst the women of Amatikulu; and these women had these various definitions as they perceived poverty in their household and community.

The participants' definitions of poverty and measurement are likely to be more of absolute poverty on how female-headed household participants have measured their poverty. In the literature, the scholars such as Maphumulo (2015), Baloyi (2013),

Dubihlela (2010), and Ludi (2016) concur that inadequate basic needs such as shelter, clothing, living standard, education of individuals, food and inadequate income. People who do not have basic resources and experiencing difficulty to meet minimum standard that can grant permission to have access to all necessary basic needs are considered to be living below the poverty line which is a low level of absolute poverty in measurements. Womanism believes that black women have been oppressed in terms of race based and gender discrimination which it considered as the reason women remain this poor (Kandawire, 2016). The theory seeks equality for black women who are oppressed in order to survive like the participants of this study (at female-headed households) who experienced gendered and feminization of poverty with their households.

5.3.2 Identifying and Understanding Poverty

The participants were asked how they identify poverty. The findings revealed that poverty was mentioned as a misery. Some participants were unable to explain how they could identify poverty in their community but they knew that they were experiencing high rate of poverty in their community. One of the participants explicated that:

“The rate of poverty is very high in this place. Its depends on how you use your thinking capacity because you cannot rely on government on the other hand, you can rely on your husband to give you money, even when he is away from home.” (Hleziphi, 21 February 2021, Homestead)

Findings of the study revealed the high rate of women who were not employed but self-employed as these women of Amatikulu area. This finding correlates with the finding from Kumar, Hossain, and Gope (2013) where the authors stated that population of women in the developing country are living below their poverty line, Likewise, the result is also similar to the work of Mubecua and David (2019) who argued that 4.3 million African women live below the poverty line. This suggests that there is still high rate of poverty amongst people especially people in rural area such as Amatikulu.

Statistics South Africa StatsSA (2018) and the mid-year population statistic of South Africa StatsSA (2020) have confirmed that 60% of black South Africans live below the poverty line; and that 60% were many women-heads of households. The male-headed

and women-headed households that have been identified as poor were 48% and 28% respectively (IDP,2021). It is deducible that women-headed households compare to men-headed households. Similarly, poor female-headed households and male-headed households in rural area have been found to be 62% and 54% respectively (Jato, 2004). The above statistics reveals the extreme point of poverty among people who are living in rural areas, which is the same case with the participants of this study.

According to the Integrated Development Plan Review IDP (2021), the uMlalazi Municipality has 47% of women that live below the poverty line. This suggests that women of Amatikulu who perceived their area as poor are main part of that figure. In the 2015, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and National Development Plan (NDP) set a goal to end poverty in 2030 (Mubecua and David, 2019). One of the participants in the study also revealed that she was married, however, did not depend on her husband for the source of income. The other participant approved that Amatikulu area was full of poverty and malnutrition and further revealed that some (if not all) uneducated people were experiencing poverty and malnutrition.

The study has shown that some participants identified poverty by lack of education. Education is the key to women development-related project (Bhat,2015), therefore, women needs to be educated as education is the key to assist them in developing their business skills. The participants of this study mentioned education as the other factor that has hindered them to be better. Boudet, Newhouse and Suarez-Becerra (2018) affirm that women are indeed lacking access to quality education and it is a global issue. The participants in the study shared the same sentiment about education.

In addition, Zekhethelo (another participant) further agreed that the uneducated, like her who was a school dropout, would require the use mind-set in order to find way to survive. She mentioned that:

“The place has a lot of poverty and hunger but it is depending on the person mind-set of how they think because the majority of people in this area are not educated this goes amongst individuals if you are not educated you must know what to do in order to survive.” (Zekhethelo, 21 March 2021, Homestead)

Another participant agreed that they viewed their area as undeveloped and a poverty zone. Her comment is captured below.

“Ay, it always on its daily bases normality, I see lots of poverty in our area because I do not see a development that has been brought to us” (Nandipha, 29 February 2021, Homestead)

The other participants disagreed that the place is undeveloped but revealed that it was developing even though they were still poor. The participant’s response is stated below.

“...our area does have poverty but with a little upgrade now as we do have electricity and water which were also the things, we did not have but we are still poor since it is not full developed in other things” (Ntombizonke, 01 March 2021, Homestead)

In researcher’s view, poverty is a major issue in the community of Amatikulu as how women viewed and identified their area. The study revealed that participants did perceive and identify their area as being poor. The women were not measuring and describing poverty in terms of spending \$1.25 per day. The responses of women appear to view poverty as a social and economic issue that as women who are leaders of households are faced with.

5.4 Survival techniques of Women in poverty alleviation projects

It has been shown that the participants who engaged in fighting against poverty were between the age of 31- 71 years, as shown in Table 2. As participants were requested to identify and define poverty and replied according to how each woman of Amatikulu area (KwaKhoza Reserve) viewed poverty. Womanism emphasizes the need to empower women agencies in means to reduce and manage poverty (Stewart and Herr, 2017). The participants of female-headed households were discovered to be playing a significant role in formulating self-employment opportunities for themselves as means of fighting against poverty and managing within their households in form of living. Women were found partaking in self-employment and community activities such as agricultural work, farming projects and entrepreneurs as the means of alleviating poverty in their households. Lukhele (2013) avers that these women are empowered by these

socio-economic activities to manage poverty. The participants who are female-headed households were further interviewed about whether they perceive themselves poor' or whether they are working or have activities that assist in generating income into their household in to fighting with poverty. The discussions are as follows

“most households depend on government grants and are elder people with their children who also depend on their children grants, so I can say that household is poor compare with the one who is having those are working. Poverty is failing to bring food and get standards needs such having clothes to wear with proper food to cook for your family” (Zandile, 22 February 2021, Homestead)

“I identify my home as a better home now than before because I am able to get what I want whenever I have thoughts of doing something I do it. The activities that are assisting me in generating money are such as selling of chickens, I have a well successful tuck-shop full of fridges with meats and other basic needs, traditionally beer and I have sugar cane outside in my yard that I take to hullet sugar cane every year and a small gardening with vegetable such as spinach and tomatoes”. (Hleziphi, 21 February 2021, Homestead)

Researcher recognized that female-headed household of women in rural areas were involving in different activities purposely to generate income for their household. An initiative that women partook were found to be creating a huge role in their families lives. As shown in chapter three reveals womanism, provides the lens to understand the agency of women in poverty alleviation (Rousseau, 2019). The adaptation of womanism as a theoretical framework to view the agency of women in poverty was critical to the study. The majority of women in rural area are depending on agricultural activities to be able to feed their households (Meinzen-Dick, Quisumbing, Doss and Theis, 2019); and the participants' involvement in agricultural activities suggests their efforts to enhance and maintain the survival of their family members from poverty. One of the participants revealed how she have outdone herself in the struggle against the poverty. Dorothy also strongly agreed with Hleziphi by saying that:

“I distinguish myself better because I have somethings as means to survive for me and my family. I am taking the creativity of being involved in ploughing of sugar cane in my backyard outside my home and I am also sell small basic things that people might

need as cold drinks, sugar, salts and other things to assist me to put food on the table because sugar cane takes long but now I am also receiving an old age grant from government which also play its role” (Dorothy 02 March 2021, Tuck-shop)

It can be discerned that some women still encounter some challenges that lead them to poverty in their households in terms of not achieving everything they want to have. However, some participants were found to be involved in other activity such as domestic work. Nandipha stated that: *“To sustain myself and fight poverty I am working as domestic worker in one of our community member and they do not pay me much”* (Nandipha, 31 February 2021, Homestead)

The participants shared the same sentiments about how they perceived themselves. Another participant responded that:

“I more like them who are poor but if I look at someone else, I see myself better because I try to have food on the table. I am selling cigarette which generate lots of money and chips and cakes for children. (Zandile, 22 February 2021, Homestead)

Women empowerment is the main weapon to use in argumentative in conflict of poverty in women household (Walker,1983). In addition, womanism is concerned with women’s role in their families, society, and individual based on difference in race, culture or class (Izgarjan & Markov, 2012). Interviews with Amatikulu area women-headships revealed that as much they perceived themselves poor; however, the initiatives have impacted their living standard. In the literature review, previous studies (Kimani & Kombo, 2010;Sebolai, 2017; Team & Doss, 2011) have indicated that women roles in different agricultural sectors are observed as contribution in GDP (Gross Domestic Price) and poverty alleviation.

Similarly, in this study, some Amatikulu area female-headed households if not most of the women were involved in agricultural and entrepreneurship activities as means of fighting against poverty and to maintain their household. The activities that were mostly observed to be dominant into the women of Amatikulu area were sugarcane ploughing and tuck-shop. These female-headed households also have other initiatives such as chicken-stock, traditionally-made beer, and small vegetable garden (spinach, cabbage

and tomatoes), transportation business such as owning vans and taxis. Womanism theory has revealed that it is a social change that is dealing with black women daily means of problem solving (Izgarjan & Markov 2012). This is the main reason the study used this theory for the study as it is dealing with women daily means of managing their life through fighting against poverty within their households.

5.5 The Reasons of Feminization of Poverty in the Female-headed Households

5.5.1 Unemployment and Gender Pay Gap

Fighting against poverty still remained and discovered as a continuing issue, as the majority of women were self-employed, except one employed woman amongst these women. There was a high rate of unemployment noticeable in this rural area, as 22.1 % of women were unemployed in KwaZulu-Natal just from January-March 2020 (Poverty line Stats,2019). This confirms participant's data earlier presented about high unemployment rate among women who were mostly self-employed. Saaid (2018) affirms that unemployment is a main factor in rural areas that causing poverty amongst women.

This study has exposed how women are struggling with employment as women remain concentrated in lower paying jobs and jobs with low benefits. The Integrated Development Plan Review (2020) of the uMlalazi Local Municipality mentions a strategy to contribute to the local economic growth and with the reduction of unemployment. Additionally, President Ramaphosa in his State of Nation Address (SONA) of March 2020 mentions "improving the condition of life for all South Africans especially the poor". Female-headed household as a phenomenon is a major cause that lead many women back to poverty, and one of the participants complained as follows:

"I observe myself and my home as being poor because I am the only elder who is working and I do not earn much but a cent" (Nandipha,31 March 2021, Homestead)

Mrara (2016) states that women-headed households are taken to be in poverty risk as these households have one adult who is a breadwinner. South Africa is still suffering from the unemployment problem that has been perceived as poverty by the female-

headed households of Amatikulu area in KwaZulu-Natal. Women who are engaged in low wage employment are not treated properly (Harriet, Asare & Anin, 2014). Only few women are engaged in wage employment as found in this study of Amatikulu area. When asked about what is poverty according to her own understanding based on her livelihood experience in the area, the participant stated that:

“I would not know how to differentiate the poor and not poor household because our needs are not the same as households. I can be saying having no job to sustain your family that is poverty” (Fundile, 25 February 2021, Tuck-shop)

The woman revealed that the needs of individual households are not the same but what remained important to her was having a stable job. The uMlalazi Municipality is involved in fighting against poverty and unemployment has created job opportunities projects such as EPWP (Expand Public Works Programme), CWP (Community Work Programme), and other programmes (IDP,2021); these programmes and projects have not promoted needed change in women’s lives. This is the same experience women of Amatikulu area especially the female-headed households have had as many women are depending on self-employment. Based on the statistics, the uMlalazi Municipality has the high percentage of unemployed people within the local area as many female-headed households are still unemployed into those projects and programmes. Women who are employed in unpaid employments or earning low do not assist in fighting against poverty (Saint & Weinstein, 2019). Importantly, low earning is one the reasons that leads women to be involved in self-employed activities in order to be relieved from poverty.

According to the World Bank (2019), 82% of Africans are based in rural areas and they have been identified to be in extreme poverty and earning less. The statement shares the same view of women of Amatikulu area as most of them identified themselves earning less and thereby remained poor. The participants who were interviewed stated that their families saw them as breadwinners and the pillar of their households with everything that their households were in need of even male members were unemployed due to lack of jobs. A participant explained the role played by a male member in her household: *“Ay, we do not have someone in my home whom I can say he plays a male*

role because my brother, he is also depending in me as someone who provides for him since he is not working” (Zekhethelo, 29 February 2021, Tuck-shop)

Similarly, another participant who viewed her husband not useful to the family as he was unemployed but also helped her sometimes. The women responded thus: *“My husband is here but he is useless because he has not been working for years now and I have been the one who have to work hard to put food on the table but he does support me where he can even though it is not financial” (Bongekile, 26 February 2021, Homestead)*

Men are identified as breadwinner of their household (Chauya, 2015). Men have been always treated and observed as people who are head of their families, and always get first priority. The findings have revealed the opposite and can confirm that men are not the breadwinners as women were found as lead providers for their households without men help. Mrara (2016) confirms that women are female-headed household are regarded as the heart of the family. They are responsible and accountable for their household financial needs while men struggle to support (Chauya, 2015).

These heads of households are not depending to men for any support as they are responsible for their families and cater even for the unemployed men who are not trying. The men who are identified to be living in poverty tend to be socially isolated compare to women who are in the same situation as men (Bennett and Daly, 2014). This implies that women are mostly affected by poverty than men but, men also experience poverty. The study revealed that the women headship is playing a significant role into their families as they providing for all the members including men. Study narrative findings disagree with the various literature of the study authors Veeran (2014) and Ademiluka, (2018) stated the reason of the female-leaders on the household is cause by the absence of the male in the families . The study revealed that most of the households within their family members have men and husband, while women cultivate and lead their families. Poverty is more linked to unemployment as it is shown on the presented table of women-headed-household. It has been shown that the unemployment rate amongst the women of Amatikulu area interviewed stood at 99% of the female- leaders are not employed but self-employed. Notably, women are affected by lack of

employment and adequate jobs (Maigurira, 2016). Lack of employment is the major cause of poverty and it is challenging for women to find the adequate paying job.

The lack of adequate education amongst the women and other members of the community was discovered to be an issue as well. Another woman who was the head of her household stated that:

“...the majority of people in this area are not educated this goes amongst individuals if you are not educated what you must do in order to survive. (Nandipha,31 February 2021, Homestead)

The other woman further expanded more reason for school drop-out and she said:

“...at times as children we wished we were able to further our studies but due to the circumstance of our parents they consider about what we going to eat, clothing to wear in the petite money they receiving as most of the time our parents are not working. It is something like that because parents cannot take money for food and take you to school what are we going to eat at home?” (Zekhethelo, 29 February 2021, Homestead).

Women leave their own life tasks and education to meeting up with their family demanding needs (Kaka, 2013). This confirms the lack of education amongst female-headed households and the majority of people who are poor. The participant dropped-out of school to manage their family demand because of poverty, while she was also trying to make a living personally. Some previous studies have agreed that education is a key for women empowerment and for skill enhancement (Bhat, 2015; Ohia, 2016). The study similarly found that at Amatikulu, some women lacked adequate education, which was perceived as other problem identified as the cause of poverty amongst people and women in the area.

5.6 Experiences of women in the Attempt to overcome Poverty in their Households

5.6.1 Income-generation

The participants were asked about their income-generated needs, and the researcher further interviewed women if the income-generated covers their family's need, and how much are they end up spending to meet those needs. One of the responses is as follows

“The money it does not meet all the household needs but it does cater for my family needs as we are able to put food on the table and take my children at school” (Nandipha, 31 February 2021, Homestead)

Capital is a problem among households in poor rural areas (Chauya, 2015). It is common to see women who are unable to meet their basic needs because of not having enough personal savings for their families. Women who are engaged in domestic work are payed less, and thereby make financial problem and challenges to remain in their life (Harriet, Asare, and Anin, 2014). Furthermore, the poverty circumstances are exceeding daily bases of day to day. In addition, this can lead to continuation of poverty because the attempt of fighting is paying the woman less which leads into other needs not met. The participant wished she had enough money to get more stock of other things but the funds were not enough:

“I wish, I had more money to buy other things for me to sell beside these small things but the money issues are holding me back because the profit I use it to buy us food and for a child to attend school” (Zandile, 22 February 2021, Homestead)

Women’s vulnerability to poverty has made them to attempt to improve their living standards; however, the participants’ needs are beyond what they can personally improve. Bellamy (2005), and Cheteni (2019) concur women are suffering from low paid jobs and women in rural area in South Africa dominant due to inequality in employment and gender pay gap. The participant revealed that her household’s needs were beyond the salary the participant was receiving. She also disclosed that women were earning less. Gornick and Boeri revealed that the gender pay gap amongst women promotes different effects on the women’s access to economic resources. Another woman shared the same sentiment as a self-employed person. She stated that what she was getting was insufficient to meet every needs of the household but only cater for the basic needs. The participant stated that:

“... the fact that I am able to put food on the table and my child goes to school like any other children, I think it cater for what matters and I have one room shelter not like other people who are have no food and shelter” (Zandile, 22 February 2021, Homestead)

Women play the important role in their involvement into different sphere of business and activities. Bellamy (2005), and Women's Budget Group (2008) have mentioned that most female that are heading their households sacrifice their basic needs for the survival of their families. Additionally, female-headed households do not have fixed budget of the amount they spend for their family needs, however, it causes experiencing poverty amongst their household. Similarly, another participant said:

"I do not have secure budget on how much I should spend because I normal use what is available on that time however it not always that I have sufficient money for things that I need. (Zandile, 22 February 2021, Homestead)

The participants have the comparable views about the money they generate for their living which can be symbolize one of the challenges women faced in their attempt of fighting against poverty within their household. This shows that women share the same sentiments of not securing what they lack within their household even though they have involved in other activities. Most of the money that these women generated is being spent on their family needs in order to take care of members of the household.

Post-development theory mentions that African women are so concerned about their families and they strive to be involved in different activities that generate money (Ugwu, 2019). Similarly, Bellamy (2005) affirms that female-headed household despite their low paid jobs use their income to cater for their family needs. This shows that money generated as an income is for the provision of daily needs of their household. However, it has been discovered that every income generated is being used without having a fixed amount in form of savings. Thobejane and Nyathi (2018) assert that women in rural area engage in different businesses to meet their families' basic needs and manage poverty. One participant has talked about her unchanging circumstances as one of her challenges. She mentioned that:

"My life is not changing and there is no way forward but the same because I cannot even build a proper shelter for my children" (Nandipha, 31 February 2021, Homestead).

Female-headed household are facing challenges of not meeting their desire needs such as building themselves adequate houses in their attempt of managing their household

against poverty; and this was observed as a challenge for Amatikulu women. Women in rural areas have no property assets (Kumar et al., 2013). This agrees with what Nandipha observed as the challenge in her household.

She further stated about the difficulties of having shelter. She said:

“I am using every cent that I am receiving as my salary because it is small and only R900 per month, I cannot build a shelter with a small paying job” (Nandipha, 31 February 2021, Homestead).

Fallis (2013) agrees to the narrative above by stating that women work long hours compared to men and still get paid less. The participants found it tough to improve and maintain their financial needs and living standard. Mrara (2016) opines that women who are earning less are regarded to be the poorer of the poor. In the same way, the womanism theory believes black women experiences tough situation unlike other race and black men (Rousseau, 2019). The researcher noticed that many participants were suffering from low payment jobs even though that one worked regularly and other one was self-employed, but the salary was insufficient. This may be part of what caused the women-led households to lack adequate housing, as these women shared the same feeling about their household settings.

The study revealed that the participants had challenges on their initiatives where people who were so-called to be masculine depended on women. Most women headed households were widowers as their husband were late, and they were involved in difference activities as a way to managing poverty in means of fighting against alleviate of poverty in their households. The researcher during the interviews asked the participants to understand, as a woman who are leaders of their households, and whether any man at home plays a key role in providing wellbeing for the household as well and what he does. The participant responded openly by stating:

“I am married but he does not play a role he is lazy, he cannot assist you whenever someone comes to buy at the store but he will call you instead when you are busy with something else because he has a short-temper in working with other people and want to hit then” (Hleziphi, 21 February 2021, Homestead)

Velez(2018) asserts that women are known and expected to be involved in domestic activities and household caretaking while men go to work. The unfailing role of men in their household to help women was discovered as a challenge that female-headed household are faced with, especially those who are married. Women have been observed to be not masculine but weaker in the involvement of economic activities (Veeran,2014), hence the finding revealed that women were playing the important role than men, and women were the ones who were found working hard in securing their family needs. Black women exist within intersectional history of racial and gender oppression (Rousseau, 2019), and for that reason womanism asserts that black women oppression is unique as those challenges faced by the women-led household of Amatikulu area. Men are likely known to be working in poverty since they providing for their women partners who are earning less and others unemployed (Bennett and Daly, 2014). This means men are perceiving to be poor while working because they take care of their partners and family needs. The study of Amatikulu area may oppose the above assertion as women initiatives were found to be helping in providing household needs while men were not working and unable to provide.

The finding above has indicated that women experience challenges while men are around in their household. This has further revealed that men do not play any role in their household but they depend on women to provide for them and other family members. The absence of male role in household is less observed in many households as they are present, but these men do not involve in provision for household's needs. The current revelation by the Amatikulu women-led household disagrees with Collace's (2019) report that the reason of the female head is because of the absent of a father within the household, furthermore, patriarchy system issue (Veeran,2014). The study of Amatikulu area women does not have oppression from patriarchy practice as women were able to make decisions in their households. Their voices were valid as some were widow and have remained the head within their homes. Being a widow has made it easy for some women to be female- head of the household; however, the same headship remains in many households even when the male who is a husband is alive. One of the participants responded that:

“My husband passed away but even when he was alive I have been a woman who leads her family because before him I had two children who opened my eyes and made me to have a store in order to not depend to a man, so ever since my husband passed on I have been woman of my own” (Fikelephi, 23 February 2021, Homestead)

While some scholars have recorded that women do not have strength in handling household's resources (Chauya, 2015); the opposite was found in this study as many women have displayed strength while managing their households needs and ensuring provision for their families. The responsibilities of children being left into a parent are increasing vulnerability to poverty among households headed by women (Onwubiko, 2012). This aligns with the findings from Amatikulu women that being widowers has lead them to be lone parents and to become the leaders of their households.

These women experience challenges of the capital generated that is discovered to be causing a failure for not meeting other family needs. Another participant revealed that the pandemic was making their business to fail, and their finance was not stable due to corona virus disease. The response of this participant is captured below:

“It is hard to lead at this job as I am doing of running a tuck-shop is very challenging because it is not always where people come to buy your things, especially in this pandemic of Covid-19” (Fundile, 25 February 2021, Tuck-shop).

COVID-19 has incapacitated the world in every sector, and its negative impacts have affected African women including those in Amatikulu area. A woman revealed that the pandemic caused their business to be unsmooth and they were experiencing diverse challenges because of it. This means that women's economic activities have been challenged, and their standard of living has been affected negatively since the inception of lockdown. This suggests that most, if not all women are not employed and are doing less paying job to survive in their household to provide for their families. The lockdown stages arising because of COVID-19 and took many months that affected most of businesses and the financial capability of the participants who were mostly self-employed and heads of their households. The study indicated that the participants of Amatikulu have outdone themselves in fighting poverty despite the challenges they have met in their attempts of managing poverty. The challenges that were faced by

participants were analyzed; and the empowerment role played by women with their skills in an alleviation of poverty were revealed by the Amatikulu area women who participated in the study.

5.6.2 Female-Headed Household Role in Poverty Alleviation within their Households.

Poverty alleviation initiatives by the participants as means of fighting against poverty within their households seem to be contributing a lot into participants' needs at Amatikulu area, despite the challenges. The female leaders of the study have managed to overcome the strategies of fighting against poverty in their households. Womanism theory, used to advance the concern on poverty among female household leaders' role in poverty alleviation drawn from black female experiences in their households. Regardless of challenges women have encountered and experienced in their attempt of poverty alleviation strategies; the women including the participants have some accomplishments for fighting poverty. Ugwu (2019) concurs that African women are so concerned about their families. Despite the challenges that these women have faced, however, their agencies are vital in their households and society. Kimani and Kombo (2010) reiterate that women play diverse roles in poverty alleviation. The participants have surpassed self in their households as being leaders. Dubihlela (2010) reveals that household head is a family member within the household who is responsible for household needs in terms of his/her income expense. The researcher asked the participant if do they have something, they proud of in their attempt of fighting against the poverty in their household that they wish to add.

One of the participants revealed her success in engaging into the initiatives that assisted her to manage poverty within her household.

"I am so proud of being a strong woman because after my husband passed away, I was able to raised my boys and take them to school, I even manage to start taxi business which is the one that is generating the money for me" (Thandiwe, 23 February 2021, Homestead)

Notably, the literature has revealed that man's roles have not been identified in their households and in attempts of poverty alleviation. Women's involvement has caused

drastic changes into their households. Veeran (2014) supports that the cause of female headship is the absence of males in the families. The above narrative also agrees with the claim that as the family man passed away, the female individuals may become the leader of the family. The findings revealed that these participants had made achievements as means of being strategic. The findings disagreed with what women were believed to be as the study has shown the different roles played by female-headed households of Amatikulu area. Bellamy (2005) opines that most female-headed households sacrifice their basic needs for family survival. The interview with the participants shows that these women are not fighting against poverty but raising their children themselves as a single parent and proud of what they have achieved. Another participant, Bongekile revealed that she was also raising orphans who were still in her care.

“I am staying with three orphans’ (She named them) they do not have parents passed away but now they under my care. I treat them as my own along with my children. They eat what I am eating because they also not working. So, my child there is lot of poverty in the area which will not end now as I see thing. As woman who tried I am so glad I was able to take them all to school”

The above signifies that households headed by females at Amatikulu have different family setting as the participant revealed having orphans in her households which were under her care. Maphumulo (2015) concurs that poverty is mainly among women, and can be described as family households with many members living in small house apartments. This means that most, if not all the households have large size of family members within the participants’ households. The participants’ success was recognized about things that women achieved while still experiencing poverty. A female-headed household participant (Ntombizonke) also agreed that she was managing now to take the children of her late daughter to school. Ntombizonke shared the same sentiment with Bongekile, and stated that:

“I am able to buy block for building a proper shelter and to take my late daughter children at school without anyone assistance or having problem as I am a single parent” (Ntombizonke, 01 March 2021, Homestead)

Ntombizonke shared that, she has been able to buy blocks with her initiative money as she was a single parent woman who led a home. Raniga and Ngcobo (2014) aver that poverty is commonly found among women, which are known as female headed-households. The participants have achieved things, which are not easily maintained through their role, and which has brought transformations that are happening within their household. Another woman expressed her feeling about her initiative and role that she had played within her household.

“I am proud about my sugar cane with it I have manage to create blocks that will assist me build a proper shelter for my mother and sibling that I am to take them to school. Lastly, my family take me as a someone in important as they report everything to me” (Zekhethelo, 29 February 2021, Tuck-shop)

Zekhethelo’s narrative above has shown that despite challenges that are faced, the poverty management strategies opted for by some participants contributed to their households needs. The study participants were not only fighting for the poverty alleviation; however, their attempts paved ways for achieving a minimum living standard and they were proud of engaging in doing something that uplifted their standard. T’Shaka (1995) has also affirmed that women struggle to make provisions for the basic needs of their families.

Dorothy, shared her sentiment about owing a sugarcane farm, and she said:

“Is that I have a proper shelter and I did not fold my arms but went for sugar cane ploughing with my bare hands” (Dorothy, 02 March 2021, Tuck-shop)

According to Kaka (2013), women’s roles in poverty alleviation contribute to the economic and development growth. The participants’ roles elevate their living standard and produce development around their community in Amatikulu. These accomplishments from their engagements in various initiatives against poverty alleviation have brought changes to their households.

5.7 Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to explore the roles of women in poverty alleviation that were posed in research paper and were to be investigated with the assistance of

research questions. The findings that were presented in this chapter were derived from the in-depth interviews that were held with the female leader's households of Amatikulu area. The findings showed participants' understanding and definitions of poverty. The chapter also indicated the involvement of these participants in initiating activities that were aimed at contribution to poverty alleviation in their respective household, and to promote better life. The chapter analyzed the significant role the initiatives of the participants have played in providing the basic needs for their households.

CHAPTER SIX

Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendation based on the interpretations of findings done in chapter 5, and suggestions for the future studies are also made. The study explored the agency of women in poverty alleviation based on the literature and primary of the research. The chapter summarizes the research findings presented on chapter 5 based on different research objectives and questions. The findings of the study are presented using generated themes that were derived and stipulated under objectives of the research study. The specific objectives of the study are as follow:

1. To explore how women at Amatikulu area within the uMlalazi Municipality identify and define poverty in comparison to definitions that are currently available in the literature
2. To explore the activities undertaken by women to eradicate household poverty at Amatikulu area within the uMlalazi Municipality
3. To investigate the major causes of gendered poverty among women at Amatikulu area within the uMlalazi Municipality
4. To explore the challenges faced by women in their attempts at alleviating poverty in their households

6.2 Summary of Findings and Discussion from the Study

The study objectives and the research questions are reflected in the findings, and summary of these findings are carried out based on the research study objectives.

6.2.1 Objective 1: How women within uMlalazi Municipality identify and define poverty in comparison to definitions that are currently available in the literature

The objective is associated with the definition and identification of poverty by the women, and these are discussed in the sub-themes below. Relating to the available identifications and definitions of poverty, all the participants defined and identified poverty according to their own perspective and understanding.

6.2.1.1 Conceptualizing poverty and identifying of poverty

The findings indicated that the participants have defined poverty as a lack of adequate education, shelter, and in terms of no finance, cursed with misfortune, lack of nothing to wear, and unemployment. However, some scholars have shown different meaning as shown in the literature. The definition of poverty has different experiences and people perceive it in a different way. The participants of the study revealed much understanding of 'poverty' as a concept. The conceptualization of poverty by Megbowon (2018) contends that describing poverty in African rural area mostly involves women who still lack adequate stable income to take care of households' needs. The participants in the study revealed that poverty is not only defined by basic and social needs but also in terms of misfortunes in their own view and understanding. It mentioned that the academic never mentioned this type of poverty, therefore this study has shown the need for context-specific definition and identification of what poverty means.

The women identified themselves as poor even though they were involving in some initiatives as means of poverty alleviation. Most of the women did not have proper shelters and unemployment with those who were employed complained of low paying job which failed to cover their family needs. Unemployment and low paid jobs amongst gender, have been observed as the root of the inequality towards the female-headed household according to scholars, and while the finding revealed poverty is the main factor that has led these women into poverty. The women of Amatikulu identified poverty as lack of clothing to wear and food to put on their table. They further explicated that their neighbors who were not the part of the interview on the study have no proper shelter and food to put on their table. Other women believed that their area had developed a bit but they still discovered themselves as poor. The study finding has revealed that the women identified and defined their area (Amatikulu area) and themselves poor. In mostly African rural-based communities, women are known to more be trapped in poverty (Maphumulo, 2015). The responses also revealed that the women viewed poverty as social and economic problem that women especially the household leaders keep facing. These definitions and identifications of poverty as provided by

these women has indicated the knowledge gap that exists within the female-headed households in Amatikulu area.

6.2.2 The activities undertaken by women to eradicate household poverty within the uMlalazi Municipality

The findings of the study were used to give a full sight of exploring the roles played by women in their attempts and involvement in initiatives for poverty alleviation. Poverty has been observed as a global issue, and women are being categorized to be the face of poverty. The researcher determined to explore and uncover the gendered factors that implicate women-headed household and poverty.

The initiative activities for women to sustain their household and contribute towards poverty management in Amatikulu female-headed households were discovered, and they were gardening (vegetable such as spinach, cabbage and tomatoes), sugarcane farming, chicken-stock, selling at tuck-shops, owing taxi business, and engaging in domestic work. These initiatives have remained effective towards fighting against poverty in Amatikulu area and within the participants' households. The roles and initiatives of women also contributed towards poverty alleviation through their skills. These involvements in the community are assisting their household members to improve their life and living standard. The capital that are generated by the activities are mainly used in providing the needs of the household, and in assisting in poverty alleviation, this has also helped in developing female-headed household in Amatikulu area. These projects have created employment for these women and thereby alleviate the rate of poverty that manifest in terms of inadequate housing, lack of clothing, and daily needs. The finding revealed that most, if not all women were involved in agricultural and entrepreneurship activities which were discovered to be common amongst the women of Amatikulu. Meinzen-Dick, Quisumbing, Doss and Theis (2019) concur that the majority of people in rural area make agricultural as a tool for survival and for rural development as they generate income to feed their households. Such agricultural initiative has enabled them provide food and other family basic needs within their household. In addition, these initiatives made women to be self-confident, self-reliant and less vulnerable to poverty.

6.3 The major causes of gendered poverty among women within uMlalazi Municipality.

The women of Amatikulu experienced poverty caused by unemployment, lacking of adequate education, and low paying job. Most, if not all women were discovered to be self-employed and only one was employed during the interviews that were held with women that participated in the study. The above signifies that, lack of employment is a cause of poverty for instance based on the identity of gender, class, and race which womanism has revealed as main reasons for women oppression. The participants complained of low paying jobs. This indicates that women only get jobs that are low paying and it is for that reason the women of Amatikulu might have resulted into self-employment and not employed. The majority of these women are heading their households as individual without a backup support from anyone, including their male partners.

The study also discovered that some people including those in women-headed households lacked adequate education which thereby led to poverty amongst them. The study findings revealed that the number of schools drop-outs at Amatikulu area was also caused by the inability of parents to afford their children's school fees and other school responsibilities. The lack of unemployment and poor access to affordable education may also imply reason for more drop-outs. Apart from being the victims of unemployment, lacking adequate education and getting low payment have stopped these women to fight against poverty vigorously and thus reduced means of alleviating poverty in their households. The study further revealed that not only women were seen and discovered to be poor; but similarly, men at Amatikulu area were also unemployed and thereby depending on women initiatives for support.

6.4 The challenges faced by women in their attempts at alleviating poverty in their households

Research findings indicated that all the participants interviewed had no other income beside the initiatives as they were self-employed. The women experienced the challenges such as inability to secure funds to do business and in turn fight poverty attempts. The incomes generated were observed to be spread to cater for numerous family needs that must be met as family head. Majority of participants frequently

mentioned income generated as consequences in their agencies. The study has demonstrated that women were mostly running the same initiative like sugarcane farming which brought money once a year. It is deducible that these women have a lot of needs such as taking children to school, buying food, arranging transportation for children to school, providing clothing, securing shelter for their household, buying electricity, and to buy their stock alongside with other social and basic needs for their households. From the literature, the challenges are not limited to cultural issues as the participants revealed.

The challenge of income-generation faced by the women has affected their budget. The finding revealed that women experienced challenges of having unemployed men in their households, and many who have even passed away and made women to be single parent. In the literature, the majority of male left their households to seek for job and other left because of apartheid, but that is not the same story with the men referred to in this study. This implies that women are unable to save income for building proper shelter.

The study revealed that as some barrier for women in their poverty attempts was to provide for men whom are known as heads and meant to provide. They are central system limitations toward the socio-economic empowerment of which the study discovered to be a barrier to women which are namely redistribute unpaid household work and care, a lack of access to financial, adverse social norms, property assets and unemployment. The study has revealed the impact of the post-COVID-19 as another challenge some women encountered in executing their initiative activities against poverty. During the time, most female-headed households were vulnerable to more poverty as the pandemic required 6 months' lockdown as announced by the South African president (Bhorat, Kohler, Oostuizen, Stanwix, Steenkamp, &Thornton, 2020). The researcher during the fieldwork discovered that some women had more financial challenges as income generated during the pandemic was close to nothing. The rationale behind womanism theory is to explore the oppression challenges faced by women in culture, race and gender, and this is a core aspect of themes expressed in this study.

6.5 Summary of the Study

Poverty is revealed as a challenge that most of the households in Amatikulu households suffer from. It can be concluded however that the nature of poverty that is affecting these women is clearly a socio-economic issue, which limits them to manage poverty properly within their households.

The barriers of poverty towards women are related to the lack of adequate education, shelter, lack of finances, perceived misfortune, lack of clothing, and unemployment. These were main challenges faced by women in their poverty management within their households as leaders. In Amatikulu area, poverty seems to be measured by absolute poverty which involves lack of necessary resources that individual needs to enjoy basic living standard. In addition, government spheres have not reviewed existing policies regarding to response to current situation of poverty that these women face with their household members. One of conclusions of this study is that female-headed households are rural-based, and they lack of adequate knowledge and skills regarding entrepreneurship and business. This creates serves as a challenge towards achieving success in their agencies aimed at managing poverty. The majority of these women were school drop-out and uneducated, and that alone has made it hard to add and implement other skills that may help their agencies.

The problem of poverty has affected the agencies of these household leaders. This has affected the growth of their agencies and has increased the rate of poverty amongst them. Female leaders were faced with shortage of finances in their agencies as they were unable to save the income generated due to their family needs that always surpassed the income generated. In sum, the female-headed households of Amatikulu that participated that participated in this study have considered themselves and their community poor despite their agencies' contribution into fighting against poverty. Poverty is still the main issue among the rural-based female leaders in Amatikulu, and this was worsening by the challenges that these female leaders faced during their attempts of fighting poverty within their households.

6.6 Recommendations

The recommendations of the study are inspired by the strengths and weakness of the study in reference to information collected during the interviews.

6.6.1 Women Empowerment

These women and the area have been identified to be lacking socio-economic development as they are still in need of tools and strategies to overcome poverty. It is recommended that these women need to be empowered and supported by the government by providing entrepreneurship skills and agricultural education. The women seem to be more involved in those fields.

There is lack of women empowerment, educational skills, and accountability. These are experiences that womanism focuses, and in which women are facing in their attempt to alleviate poverty through their initiatives. The study recommends women should be encouraged to be involved in male-dominated fields and works such as constructions, electricity, and engineering. The researcher also recommends women to be trained for professional qualifications which can reduce the inequality pay gap and gendered poverty existing between women and men. This may assist the SDG and AUC 2063 to meet their goals.

6.6.2 Government and municipality involvement in empowering women agencies.

The study recommends that women need diversity of practical training programs that will assist in educating them about financial budgeting and how to gain the business skills. It will assist women to gain more experiences in handling of their income-generated from their initiatives. The training needs to also focuses on women personal development and life skills for creating growth that can help fight poverty adequately. This can assist in meeting the SDG goal of ending poverty in 2030.

It is recommended that these women undertake fundraising for their initiatives in order to bring social change. Government should implement the social assistance and relief programs for small business to recover from the impact of Covid-19 (Bhorat,

Kohler,Oostuizen,Stanwix,Steenkamp,&Thornton,2020). The encouragement package needs to support the vulnerable initiatives of women. It is suggested that local government should reconsider post-COVID-19 impact on women who are involving in small business as help them in managing poverty for their households.

6.7 Future and Further Research

The study was limited to the uMlalazi Local Municipality at Amatikulu area; and only 10 women who were heading their household were interviewed. The future research can explore the study in other geographic area to investigate whether other women's experiences are similar to what have been obtained in Amatikulu area. The study adopted the qualitative approach with the in-depth interview. The future researcher can use the quantitative approach in getting more responses and views. The future research may be extended to men and tribal authority to understand how they perceive poverty and roles of women in poverty alleviation. This could also add and provide additionally knowledge and information that may improve and sustain fighting against poverty.

6.8 Conclusion

The findings have revealed the essentiality of women empowerment and strategic initiatives against poverty in their households. This study has shown that e women initiatives have several means of contributing towards socio-economic development and poverty reduction especially within their households and communities. It has been indicated in this study that through the women initiatives and roles played in solving basic needs of their households, social changes have been enacted by women within Amatikulu area, and this might have added to the previous understanding and definitions that scholars have recorded about poverty, household leadership, and poverty alleviation within rural areas in Africa, and South Africa. The women-headed households' initiatives have created the great impact in the economy of Amatikulu area, and in the uMlalazi Municipality of KwaZulu-Natal.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance Letter

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

(Reg No: UZREC 171110-030)



RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Website: <http://www.unizulu.ac.za>

Private Bag X1001

KwaDlangezwa 3886

Tel: 035 902 6731

Fax: 035 902 6222

Email: LundallN@unizulu.ac.za

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

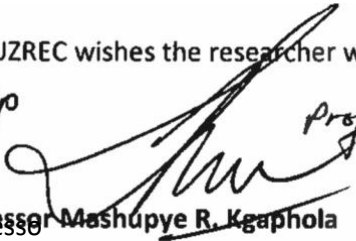
| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|----------|-------------------------------------|----------|--|--------------|
| Certificate Number | UZREC 171110-030 PGM 2021/18 | | | | | | |
| Project Title | The Role of women in poverty alleviation in the uMlalazi Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal province | | | | | | |
| Principal Researcher/ investigator | T Mpunzana | | | | | | |
| Supervisor and Co-supervisor | Mr N.R Mofokeng | | | | | | |
| Department | Anthropology and Development Studies | | | | | | |
| Faculty | Arts | | | | | | |
| Type of Risk | Medium Risk — Data collection from people | | | | | | |
| Nature of Project | Honours/4 th Year | | Master's | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Doctoral | | Departmental |

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project. The Researcher may therefore commence with data collection as from the date of this Certificate, using the certificate number indicated above.

- Special conditions:
- (1) This certificate is valid for 1 year from the date of issue.
 - (2) Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format [due date-18 January 2022]
 - (3) Principal researcher must submit a report at the end of project in respect of ethical compliance.

(4) The UZREC must be informed immediately of any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the meeting.

THE UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting research.

PP
Prof N. M. litusa


Professor Mashupye R. Kgaphola
University Research Ethics Committee
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation

18 January 2021

CHAIRPERSON
UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
RESEARCH
ETHICS COMMITTEE (UZREC)
REG NO: UZREC 171110-30
18-01-2021
RESEARCH & INNOVATION OFFICE

Appendix 2: Request permission to conduct a study

PERMISSION LETTER FOR CODUCTING RESEARCH

P.O Box 119
Amatikulu
3801
12 August 2019

Municipality Manager
UMlalazi Municipality
P.O BOX 37
Hutchinson Street
Eshowe
3801

Dear Sir or Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN AMATIKULU AREA (WARD 18).

My name is Thobeka Mpunzana, and I am a Masters student in Development Studies at University of Zululand. I wish to conduct a research titled: The role of women in poverty alleviation within uMlalazi Municipality. This research will require conducting interviews for the participants. The research project will be conducted under the supervision of Mr N.R. Mofokeng in the University of Zululand.

I am hereby seeking your consent to recruit and interview the female-household leaders of Amatikulu area purposely for this research project. I have provided approval letter, which I received from University of Zululand Research Committee (UZREC), and the consent form that will be used for participants.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 073 282 4168 and Email thobekampunzana@gmail.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Ms Mpunzana Thobeka.

Appendix 3: Grant permission letter



| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------|
| Enquiries: Imibuzo: Cllr SS Nsele | My Reference: Inkomba Yami: | Email: | Date: Usuku: 15 February 2021 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------|


ATT: MISS THOBEKA MPUNZANA
P.O BOX 119
AMATIKULU
3801

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY GRANTED TO MISS THOBEKA MPUNZANA (AN EXPLORATION OF THE AGENCY IN OF WOMEN IN HOUSEHOLD POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN AMATIKULU, UMLALAZI MUNICIPALITY, KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE.

It has been brought to my attention through a request letter as the ward councillor of ward 18 that Miss Thobeka Mpunzana a University of Zululand Masters student will be conducting her research study at Amatikulu area that is under the jurisdiction of uMlalazi Local Municipality. The study title is "An Exploration of the Agency of Women in Household Poverty Alleviation in Amatikulu, uMlalazi Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal Province". Miss Thobeka Mpunzana has further informed us of the design of her study which includes the purpose and its contribution to the Municipality and the population of her study target to interview women of Amatikulu. As such, the permission to conduct a study is granted and fully supported as the ward councillor.

Therefore, any assistance during data collection will be provided to Miss Thobeka Mpunzana should there be any enquiries encountered in the field. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Councillor SS Nsele on the numbers provided below;

Yours sincerely,
Cllr SS Nsele


076 760 8895/083 746 6436.

COUNCILLOR S.S NTSELE

UMLALAZI MUNICIPALITY
P.O. BOX 37
ESHOWE 3815
CELL : 076 760 8895

Appendix 4: Consent form

Participant Consent Form

Title of project: The role of women in poverty alleviation in uMlalazi Municipality

Name of researcher: Mpunzana Thobeka

I agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve.

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous YES NO

I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes
in his research report YES NO

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded YES NO

I agree that the researcher may take photos of me
(but not my face) YES NO

I agree that the information I provide may be used
anonymously by other researchers following this study YES NO

Signature.....

Name of participant.....

Date.....

Imininingwane yokuba uMhlanganyeli wocwaningo

Igama locwaningo: Indima yabantu besifazane ekulwisaneni nobubha ku maspala wase Mlalazi

Igama lomcwaningi: Mpunzana Thobeka

Mina..... Ngyavuma kuba yingxenye yocwaningo. Umcwaningi usekuchaze konke ngocwaningo ngaqonda ngokuzihlanganisa kwami ukuthi kuyini kulona.

Mina ngiyavuma ukuba uMhlanganyelinge engezodalulwa

Yebo

cha

Mina ngiyavuma umcwaningi asebezisa ukukhuluma kwami ocwaningweni lwakhe ngaphandle kokungidalula

Yebo

cha

Mina ngiyavuma kuthi nkulumo yethu iqoshwe ngesiqophi

Yebo

cha

Mina ngiyavuma kuthi umcwaningi angithwebule (kodwa ayibusweni bami)

Yebo

cha

Mina ngiyavuma kuthi abanye abacwaningi bengasebenzisa okuqoshwe lapha phansi basebenzise ukukhuluma kwami njengo ngaziwayo.

Yebo

Cha

Isiginesha.....

Igama loMhlanganyeli.....

Usuku.....

Appendix 5: Interview question guide.



University of Zululand

Department of Development Studies and Anthropology

The role of Women in Poverty Alleviation in uMlalazi Municipality

Researcher : Mpunzana Thobeka
Supervisor : Mr N.R Mofokeng
University : University of Zululand

Note to participants:

- Although I would like you to help me, you do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so. What you say in this interview will remain private and confidential.

How to respond?

- Please answer the questions as truthfully as you can.
- If you do not feel comfortable answering a question, you can indicate that you do not want to answer. For those questions that you answer, your responses will be kept confidential.

1. Tell me about yourself

- Your background of who you are and where you come from.

2. Do you think that there is poverty in Amatikulu?

3. How would you differentiate between a household that is poor and one that is not poor?
 - If you were to explain what poverty is, what would you say it is?
4. Do you perceive yourself being poor? Why/why not?
5. Are you in any income-generating activities or employed?
6. What kind of activities you engaged in to fight against poverty?
 - How do you feel about the type of income-generating activities you are involved in?
7. How much do you spend on your family needs?
8. Does your income cater for those your family's needs?
9. Help me understand, as a woman who is a leader of her household, is there a man in the home who plays a key role in the wellbeing of the home as well?
 - 9.1. What does he do? / What makes you say he does not play a key role?
10. As a woman who leads her home, what are you most proud of?
11. Is there anything I did not ask about your life as a woman who leads a home that you would like to share with me?

Thank you for your time.

Indima edlalwa abantu besifazane ekulwiseni ububha/indlala kuMasipala waseMlalazi.

Umncwaningi: Mpunzana Thobeka

Umluleki: Mnu. N.R Mofokeng

Isikhungo/ Inyuvesi: Inyuvesi yakwaZulu

Kwababambiqhaza:

- Yize ngithanda ukuthi ubambe iqhaza kulolu cwaningo kodwa awuphoqiwe. Noma yini oyishoyo kulolu cwaningo kuzoba imfihlo.

Indlela yokuphendula:

- Kubalulekile ukuphendula ngeqiniso.
 - Uma ungakhululekile ngokuphendula eminye yemibuzo, kuveze lokho ukuthi ngeke ukwazi ukuwuphendula umbuzo. Kulabo abazophendula, izimpendulo zami zizogcinwa ziyimfihlo ngeke bavezwe.
1. Zichaze ukuthi ungubani
 - Ungubani futhi uhlala kuphi?
 2. Ngabe Ucabanga ukuthi kunobubha eMatikulu?
 3. Ungawehlukanisa kanjani umuzi ohlwempu kumuzi ongekho hlwempu?
 - Uma ungachaza, buyini ububha, ungathini ngabo?
 4. Ngabe uyazibona uswele/uhlwempu? Kungani?
 5. Ngabe kukhona okwenzayo okukungenisela inzuzo noma khona la osebenza khona?
 6. Ngabe kukhona yini okwenzayo ukulwisana nobubha?
 - Ngabe uzizwa kanjani ngohlobo lomsebenzi olwenzayo olukungenisela inzuzo?
 7. Ngabe usebenzisa malini ezidingweni zomndeni wakho/
 8. Ngabe umholo wakho uyazifeza zonke izidingo zomndeni wakho?

9. Ngifuna ukuqonda lokhu, Njengo wesifazane oyinhloko yekhaya ngabe ikhona yini indoda engabamba iqhaza elibalulekile kwinhlonhle yasekhaya?
 - 9.1. Ngabe wenzani? / yini engakwenza uthi akalibambi iqhaza?
10. Njengo wesifazane uyinhloko ekhaya, ikuphi oziqhenya ngakho?
11. Ngabe kukhona yini engakubuzanga khona ongathanda ukukusho njenge nhloko yekhaya?

Ngiyabonga ngesikhathi sakho.

Appendix 6: Reflexivity Essay

REFLEXIVE ESSAY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCHER

Reflections on my research voyage

The purpose of reflectivity in this qualitative study is to keep track of the researcher thoughts and decisions if they are well-structured into contribution of the scientific rigour of the study. Reflexivity is the introspection process where the researcher examines his/her beliefs, judgements and value (Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas & Caricativo, 2017). Reflexivity plays the vital role in the qualitative research. Kalu (2019) believes that it is a process of self-analysis in the creating interpretation of the researcher social background. The reflexivity of the study assists and it serves as rigour trustworthiness checking in asking for the realities (Morrison, 2015). It requires the researcher to be transparent.

This researcher's purpose was to explore the role and initiatives of women in poverty alleviation for their households at Amatikulu area within uMlalazi Municipality. The proposal stage of this study (which was a mastering stage of this study) has made me to gain a lot of experience and knowledge as concerned the topic. Over the time, I have mastered some relevant parts of this study and scientific research in general. These aspects include analysis of theories, reading, writing and ability to discover the population percentage of women who are living below poverty line in African continent besides those of Amatikulu area. This has created and gave the researcher the background knowledge and the underlying beliefs, furthermore, this on the study revealed other problems that might be taken granted which research question can include.

During the data collection stage, I went to the fieldwork and met some women who allowed me to introduced my study to them and also granted me the permission to interview them. I interacted with a specific number of my participants before I interviewed and got their opinions, beliefs, and view on their roles in poverty alleviation.

This research made me work with diverse female-headed households as I chose my participants using purposive sampling strategy. I have never been to any meeting with

these women, so I have to adapt and be flexible with them in order to gain knowledge while engaging with them. As a researcher, my purpose was to build legitimate relationships for achieving the research objectives. As I have stated, my research is my priority. In my study the aim was to discover more about Amatikulu area women-led households within the uMlalazi Municipality and about women in general by looking in the causes, challenges, and strategies of poverty alleviation along with how patriarchal system has affected these women during apartheid era and in democracy.

The outcomes of the research will assist in knowing the women's agency of Amatikulu area who play a significant role in poverty alleviation and improve their social engagement in their life in general. It will also further help upcoming researcher like me to be motivated in conducting research as well and to use the information from this research.

My Story

My Name is Thobeka Mpunzana. This is the reflection voyage of the study I conducted This study was motivated by my life experience and part of it is to ensure trustworthiness in the study. I obtained a Bachelor in social work from the University of Zululand in the year 2016. During my undergraduate years in the University, I had practical internships and opportunities to connect with people of different socio-economic backgrounds to gain knowledge and experiences. I started as a school social worker at eThakasani Primary School Eskhaleni, where services were rendered such as counselling and other functions. I also involved in community development work at Kwa-Dlangezwa traditional court with focus on women who were leaders of their households and who were trying to alleviate poverty. Finally, I also served at Catherine booth hospital as student social worker where I performed organizational functions as required in relations to my academic modules and in fulfilment of the required practices. The monitoring and evaluation was done in the process. My topic of choice greatly influenced my personal history.

Being a social worker was one of my biggest interests, and as a child, I was passionate about achieving my dream. I took a gap after matric because I did not get space in the university but that never changed my dream. Despite my financial incapacitation and my socio-economic background, I was not ready to give up on my dream.

The driving force behind my career choice was my environment or community where we stay with my family. Having been raised by a single grandmother who was also the head of my household, we in the extended family of more than twenty people were trained to be God-fearing. My grandmother was a community caregiver and also a farmer who still owns a garden in her house backyard. In order for us to get food we ate what was at the garden because she was the only one earning and providing for every household need. I remember many nights of sleeping without having food because she was earning less and at times she was not paid on time. Despite the household challenges, nothing ever held us back to not get education that we deserve. I went to local schools where school fees were not paid and were walkable distance from home, until I got admission into high school where one of us got the permanent job. My aunt went some miles taking me to a better school to get better education that made everything easy for me to pursue my wishes in the academic.

This has really motivated me into being a social worker and easily provided that foundation for my research study on women who are playing significant roles in their households to alleviate poverty. My upbringing provided first-hand experience on poverty and how it is to be raised by someone who tries so hard to feed you at the same time. I settled for social work because I wanted to help people and to support my grandmother in assisting those in need of help through community work.

After my first degree, I volunteered in various organisations at Atteridgeville in Pretoria not only because of money, but to help those who were in need. I also worked as a volunteer for some months at Kingdom Life Orphanage home where I was a social worker, my duties included assisting children with homework, counselling where it required, and also doing some administrative tasks for new members within the organisation. I was a functioning member of different groups in the organisation. Thereafter, I was with Rata Social Services where I was dealing with court cases of

foster care procedure, community work, support groups and foster care. I gained lots of experience during this one year volunteering in different organisations to compliment my academic knowledge from both my first degree and honours level of my studies.

In two years of my studies, I serve as a Medical personal administrator at Stanger, where they hoped I can still do more with others years while searching and they even proposed I can have my own practice as social worker because the potential was seen. One of the days I visited home during my breaks, I was invited into community hall by some women where the unemployed youths were engaged in community project and other related entrepreneurship programmes. These women inspired me a lot and I was motivated to conduct research on women on how to alleviate poverty in the communities, and to reduce high rate of unemployment using different initiatives or roles. It is my keen interest as a researcher based on my experience and my background that prompted my study on alleviating poverty. This study investigated the concept of poverty, impact of it on women, roles of women in poverty alleviation.

In the study, the period of data collection process involved having face-to-face interviews with the women who led their households. It made me realized how successful were women in their respective agencies. During these interviews, as a researcher, I got a chance to listen to women sharing their personal experiences about their households, which were more reflecting my social background life experiences. This made me realize the important of rigour trustworthiness that these women had when they were pouring their heart out to me. I counted myself privileged that I managed to spot myself this amazing journey of interviewing these women and becoming the scholar. I truly enjoyed every minute as I have learnt a lot from literature review from other scholars. I have gained varied skills, and I have broadened my knowledge and grown academically, and in terms of getting more insights about gendered studies, agencies of women, womanism theory, strategic plans and poverty.