

**CASE STUDIES OF UNEMPLOYED WOMEN  
IN ACORNHOEK.**

by

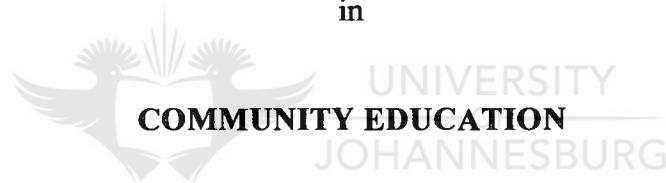
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## ABSTRACT

Education is the key to success. Those who are educated have doors opened for them to better and well paying occupations. Those unemployed and uneducated are often isolated by their communities. There are still those people who believe that unemployment is the unemployed person's fault.

This study is aimed at finding out the causes of unemployment and its effect on the lives of the black women in Acornhoek. The extent to which these causes affect their family lives is also investigated, as well as to find what these women recommend to facilitate change. Data was collected through multiple methods. These unemployed, illiterate and poverty-stricken women were interviewed. Observations through informal visits were made. A thorough review of literature was made to determine what other researchers found on the same phenomena. Multiple methods of collection were used to triangulate the data and to enhance the validity of the findings.

These unemployed women need to be encouraged to transform. They are oppressed in the private and public spheres of their lives, through patriarchal hierarchies of relations, and through societal acceptance of their illiteracy and unemployment as natural. Through empowerment they could be transformed from objects to subjects who have a say in the political, social and economic aspects of their lives.

The findings of the study show that these women need education to equip them with the skills to have a say in their domestic affairs. This information will help them to have control over production and reproduction. Literacy will help these women to give birth to fewer children, and help them to be knowledgeable about various diseases such as Anaemia, Kwashiorkor and Aids. Their awareness of these diseases will help both the State and these women. Literacy programs should be linked with income generating projects. Due to their situation of being marginalized and poverty stricken, literacy programs for these women should be linked with income generating projects. These projects will motivate the unemployed women to participate in literacy programs. Politically, economically and socially they will be equipped to take their rightful place on center-stage in the development of their communities and their country.

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## SECTION I

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study addresses the problem of the unemployed, poverty stricken and marginalised black women of Acornhoek. Unemployment is a serious concern around the world. This problem is more serious for women, because women are oppressed in the private spheres and the public spheres of their lives. Mc Givney and Sims (1986:40) state that:

The scale of female unemployment is also camouflaged by the long discredited but persistent belief that women do not need to do paid work because all women are dependent on a male breadwinner.

Acornhoek, as my research area, is situated in the eastern part of the Northern province. The Northern province was declared the poorest province in South Africa with the population estimated at 4,128 million (Burger, 1998:18). This province is predominantly rural. Unemployment is very high in this province with the per capital income by far the lowest in the country.

The Acornhoek and Bushbuckridge area (Acorn-Bush) has been declared to be that part of the Northern Province that is the poorest and fastest growing due to its population explosion. This area has extensive socio-economic problems. It has a small economy coupled with a high population growth that leads to unemployment and poverty. This problem, as indicated earlier, affects women more than men, because most of the men earn their livelihood as migrant workers in Gauteng. Acornhoek comprises mainly of the Sotho and Shangaan speaking people, who still live under traditional norms and values that governed their forefathers who found this place. The women face oppression under patriarchal power relations. Men have the final say, as most of the women are dependent on men for economic necessities. These women live their lives in silence.

It is in these oppressed women that one will amongst others observe isolation, depression, destruction of confidence, shame, boredom, alcohol abuse and reduction in the scope of decision making because of lack of security about the future.

The infrastructure of Acornhoek is lacking, particularly in terms of education facilities, water, sanitation, electricity supplies and homes. The standard of living is amongst the lowest in the country. This is the condition under which the unemployed women, dependent upon their husbands for financial support, must live. She must bear as many children as possible to secure her marriage, whilst at the same time contributing to the population explosion.

## **1.2 RESEARCH INTEREST**

My research interest is to find out the effects of unemployment on the lives of the black women in Acornhoek. I want to determine the causes that led to them being unemployed, and record the women's recommendations of how their problems could be addressed.

## **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR THE STUDY**

The following research questions may be posed as relevant to the phrased research topic, namely

- What are the underlying causes of unemployment of the black women in Acornhoek ?
- What effects do unemployment have on their family lives?
- What do these women recommend to alleviate their problem of unemployment?



#### 1.4 MOTIVATION FOR THE INQUIRY

What motivated me to conduct this study was the desperate situation of women in this area. I want to determine the effects of unemployment on the lives of the black women in Acornhoek. I also wanted to find out the underlying causes for them being unemployed.

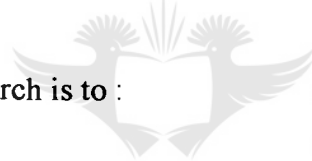
I want to get a thorough and a clear picture of the above two aspects, in order to understand the causes and the effects of unemployment on these women's lives. Recommendations will be made based on these findings.

#### 1.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This is the first study to be conducted in Acornhoek. The results of this study could not only benefit the women of Acornhoek in particular but also the unemployed women of South Africa in general. The importance of this study lies in its contribution it can make to the evolving body of research on women in society.

#### 1.6 THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the research is to :



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- Find out the underlying causes of unemployment of the black women in Acornhoek.
- Find out what effects unemployment has on these women's lives.
- Find out what these women recommend to alleviate their problem of unemployment.

#### 1.7 TARGET PARTICIPANTS FOR THE STUDY

My sample will comprise of 15 unemployed black women of Acornhoek. With this number of subjects I will be able to record different opinions, perceptions and feelings as it is considered a good representative sample of the research population for this inquiry.

Gay (1992 : 123) states that :

Sampling is a process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected. The individuals selected comprise a sample and the larger group is referred to as a population.

## 1.8 RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

My first research method of gathering data will be the in-depth interview, because it will provide me with a thorough understanding of the different opinions, feelings and perceptions of the unemployed women. Maccoby and Maccoby in Denzin (1989 : 103) defines an interview as :

A face to face verbal interchange in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expression of opinions or belief from another person or persons.

The second method of data collection will be covert observation. In my visit to these women's home's for the interview, I will observe to determine what their living conditions are. I chose to make use of covert observation and not overt observation because I want to record their real living conditions.

The third method of collecting data will be through a literature review. A literature review will be embarked on, and enough sources related to the same problem will be analysed and used to supplement the data obtained from the interviews and observations.

## 1.9 THE MAIN THEORETICAL VIEW

I have two theoretical frames that my research will be structured within, namely the theory of community and Paulo Freire's critical theory.

These unemployed women experiences a loss of community, *gemeinschaft* because their rights are violated. Their actions are predetermined by their private and public spheres, as being mothers, wives and housewives. They need to experience a feeling of belonging in that other members of their communities and the society in general have their interests at heart and are ready to help them in the process of transformation. Sergiovanni (1994 : 04) states that :

In communities we create our social lives with others who have intentions similar to ours. Communities rely more on norms, purposes, values professional socialization, collegiality and natural interdependence.

For transformation from objectivity to subjectivity these women need to be conscientized. Taylor (1993: 69), in discussing the texts of Paulo Freire, states that:

Conscientization requires that the individual changes his or her attitudes, perception or beliefs. The essential virtue here is that of non- - acceptance. There is nothing given, nothing that cannot be questioned. Conscientization is a form of paradigm shifting in which an individual experiences the redefining of their total boundary systems and recreating of their own self-image.

These unemployed and oppressed women must no longer accept their oppression under patriarchal hierarchies of control as natural. They must have a say in the political, economic and social matters that pertains to them. According to Belenky et al (1986 : 57) society teaches women to put their trust in men as defenders, suppliers of the economic necessities, interpreters of the public will, and liaison with the larger community. Women learn that men hold the power and in society's eyes have the ultimate authority. Taylor (1993:52) discusses Freire's advancement of dialogue and conscientization. To Freire conscientization is a process of developing consciousness which is the power to transform reality as it is known by marginalized women. The women must be able to act and reflect upon their world in order to transform it.

Conscientization transform objects into subjects, those oppressed into the liberated. It is through conscientization that people stop believing in what long seemed to be true and begin to realise its falseness.

Conscientization is a crucial point in the women's empowerment framework. For women to take appropriate action to close gender gaps or gender inequalities, there must be recognition that their problems stem from inherent structural and institutional discrimination. (Karl 1995:109)

Both the authoritarian banking model and the adversarial doubting models are wrong for women. Belenky et al (1986:228) quotes Freire who said:

If we abandon the banking model in favour of the problem-posing model, we will undermine the power of oppression.

It is through replacing the separate with the connected model, that we can spare women the alienation, repression, and division in their lives (Belenky et al 1986:228). Women are living according to the society's expectations of them, as dependant on the male for economic necessities. They need to be conscientised about their situation. They need to shift from silence and conformity to external definitions of truth into subjectivism, that represents a move toward self realisation and independence (Belenky et al 1986 : 54).

## **1.10 SUMMARY OF THE SECTIONS**

This study consists of four sections. The following will be covered in these sections.

### **Section 1 Background to the inquiry**

In this section the research topic was presented and a brief discussion of the following aspects was provided: background to the problem, research interest, the research questions, motivation of the study, the importance of the study, the aim of the study, the target participants, the research strategy and methods and lastly the theoretical view points.

## Section 2 Literature review

In this section the literature will be reviewed. The review of the literature will be guided by the three research questions mentioned. In reviewing the literature I will use the research questions to guide me. This will guard against me raising irrelevant arguments.

## Section 3 Data collection methods

This section will describe how data was collected, conceptualised, categorised and coded. This section will also contain samples of the raw data that was collected.

## Section 4 Findings, suggestions and recommendations

It is in this section that the findings of the inquiry will be discussed and recommendations will be forwarded.



## SECTION II

### THE LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Section I will present ideas of different theorists as evidence to support my main claim. I will argue the validity of my main claim from the work of these authors on the problem presented by me. Wiersma (1991 : 49) states that:

In the review of literature, the researcher attempts to determine what others have learned about similar research problems and to gather information relevant to the research problem at hand.

Review of literature provides the background and context for the research problem (Wiersma 1991). I will review the literature in the light of the two theoretical frameworks of my study, namely, Tonnies' theory of community and Paulo Freire's critical theory. In a community people are bound by the sense of togetherness and having the feelings of each other at heart. Communities are governed by a sense of "we" and not "I". Relationships in communities, which Tonnies calls the *gemeinschaft*, are not contractual as in a society, the *gesellschaft*, but are based on understandings about what is shared and on the emerging web of obligations to embody that which is shared (Sergiovanni 1994 : 07). These oppressed women need to feel that they belong to their communities and societies. They need to break free from oppression in the private and public spheres of their lives.

To achieve such a breakthrough these women need to be conscientized to close gender gaps. Conscientization is, according to Freire (Taylor, 1993), a process of developing conscience in order to transform ones reality. The reality for many women is that they are oppressed under the patriarchal hierarchies of control. They need to know that this is oppression and not an accepted norm of living.

Vella (1994:92) states that:

Praxis is a special kind of action, full of reflection, leading to a new, refined action.  
It is an ongoing, never - ending cycle of change toward a better situation.

Through praxis these women are able to reflect on their situation in order to transform it for the better.

## **2.2 EMPLOYMENT FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE**

Unemployment has become a serious concern around the world. You listen to it on the news and you read about it in the magazines. The escalating rate of unemployment is without doubt one of the prevalent themes in more recent sociological debate. This problem affects women more, as women are oppressed in the private and the public spheres of their lives. Women are being discriminated against because of their biological differences to men. Women are seen as people with expressive traits. That is, they are seen to be kind, cheerful, affectionate and sensitive, whereas men are seen as those people with instrumental traits. They are seen to be curious, tenacious, aggressive and competitive (Alant et al, 1995:74). The conservatives argue that women are people not fit for paid work based on the above expressive traits' explaining of women. Women were said to be good at housework and in the caring for children. This view holds that they must only work for love and not for money. Women are, according to Mc Givney and Sims, (1986:39) more likely to be unemployed than the men and likely to remain so. All these beliefs stem from the fact that women must depend on their husbands or boyfriends for economic necessities.

The main victims of the steady rise in unemployment throughout the community are women (Mc Givney & Sims 1986:39). Unemployment is striking women more than men, and it affects the women not only as those who are fit and able to work, but as wives and mothers. These women will only suffer because their husbands are out of work, or are not working. They are not expected to suffer as those who may work. Thus Allen et al (1986:30) maintains that "Unemployment is a terrible thing for everyone, it struck at man's identity as workers,

while women are affected not primarily as workers but as wives and mothers".

Women are seen as those who must be busy with the monotonous, boring, repetitive and lonely housework which is unpaid and has a low social status attached to it. Horne (1994:84) in his two studies of the Soviet and British Survey found that in three quarters of families, women did all the shopping. It was taken as common sense that housework is women's work, and the real world of work was seen as the man's world. Some men feel strongly that if their wives are working they will stop respecting them, and that it is culturally condoned that men must work and provide their families with the economic necessities. Women are almost universally responsible for taking care of the children and other members of the household and for taking care of all the household duties entrusted to their care. Their primary responsibility is that of taking care of the household and not going out for work to earn a living. Even though they are fully entrusted to the household duties, that does not always mean decision making power within the family (Karl,1995:03). These women are excluded from making some important decisions such as, when and how to have sex, and how many children to give birth to. They do not have control over their reproductive rights.

Men do not at anytime in their lives want to experience a threat to their authority. They want to make sure that they remain respectful authoritative figures at home. These men do not want to compete with their wives either for authority or for ways of running the family. Married women workers are seen as a threat in that they might displace men and undercut their wages (Allen et al, 1986:39). Some men always refrain from competing with their female counterparts in work situations, because they think of themselves to be superior. Lupri (1984:351) wrote about the traditional view of women and said: "The most important traditional duties of the black women are her household chores and looking after her children".

### **2.3 UNDERSTANDING THE ORIGINS OF GENDER INEQUALITIES.**

In this part of the essay I will discuss the three perspectives to understanding gender inequalities, namely, the nature perspective, the nurture perspective, and the nature plus nurture perspective.



### **2.3.1 The 'Nature' Perspective of Gender Inequalities**

This is the conservative view of gender. They argue that women's role and men's role at home and in the public, that is, in the private and public spheres are determined naturally by biological differences. Tiger and Fox (1984:223-225) refers to what they call biogrammers which predisposes men and women to behave in certain ways. As a result of these biogrammers men are more aggressive and more suited for hunting, while women are predisposed to reproduce and care for children. Through these biological differences men are seen to be superior and competitive whereas women are regarded as good at caring for the baby and attending to other household activities. Elliot, (1986:27) states that differences between men and women in hormonal functioning have also been used to explain women's mothering and men's occupancy of dominant positions. These explanations qualifies men to be unsuitable at child caring and taking care of household duties, while women seem to have the natural capacity for parenting that men do not have. According to Elliot (1986:27).

The female hormones associated with pregnancy, child birth and lactation stimulate in parturient females caring responses to the newborn infant, and so provide a psychologically basis for mothering (which man lacks), and the sex hormones which affect development of reproductive organs also affect the brain during prenatal development so as to produce behavioural and psychological differences between men and women, for example, the male hormone, testosterone is said to be associated with aggressiveness.

It is according to the above paragraph that I understood that for conservatives, gender inequalities are inherent and inborn. It is against this idea that the feminist perspective of nurture arose.

### **2.3.2 The 'Nurture' Perspective of Gender Inequalities.**

The feminists view of gender is that of 'nurture' and not 'nature'! They ask how the body could automatically know that it must go shopping for the family and know about various

household duties and how to carry them out without cultural instructions having taken place in that person's life at some time. It is clear that according to this view within the cultural context, sex categorisation becomes socially constructed, and everyone is or should be either male or female and is categorised and taught to think, feel and act in ways considered to be natural and appropriate for a person of that sex (Alant et al 1995:74). This view argues the fact that boys and girls learn from their childhood to behave like boys or girls in that girls associate themselves with their mothers and learn to act and behave like them and boys associate themselves with their fathers, and act and behave like them.

From this perspective, femininity and masculinity are not universally and naturally given but are constructed within specific cultural settings (Elliot; 1986:28). Feminists such as Millet, Frieden, and Oakley, in Alant et al (1995:75), took to extensively re-examing the phenomenon of socialisation in general and gender role socialisation in particular with special reference to the following aspect which they consider relevant in the formation of gender :

Gender is a learnt attribute, which is transmitted to the individual through the process of (sexist) socialisation and that male domination and the oppression of women are reinforced in the socialisation process.

In this perspective gender differences owes their existence to cultural instructions and socialisation. It is through socialisation and cultural instructions that girls learn to act and behave like women, and boys learn to act and behave like men.

### **2.3.3 The ' Nature plus Nurture' Perspective to Gender Inequalities**

This is the perspective that take both the biological and the social into account. It is in this perspective that the biological and the social interactions are called to shape gender divisions. The work of Kohlberg, and Chodorow, in Elliot (1986:31) points to two different kinds of processes which best defines and explains this perspective.

Kohlberg suggests that the child has the cognitive ability to understand that he or she is a boy or girl and actively selects and participates in sex designated activities on the basis of that understanding. Chodorow roots the development of gender identity in the fact that mothers

experience their infant daughters as extensions of themselves but their sons as male opposites and as separate from themselves. Gender identity develops on the basis of the child's early self categorisation of himself or herself as a boy or girl. Furthermore, gender identity develops on the basis of psychological relationships whereby girls associate themselves with their mothers and act and behave like them, whereas boys associate themselves with their fathers, acting and behaving like them.

#### 2.4 THE EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployed women suffers a lot, especially as women under the patriarchal hierarchies of oppression. They again suffer as those who are seen to be not fit for doing paid work but fit for the lonely housework which is unpaid and has low social status. The consequences or the effects of unemployment may range from being mild to being severe. They may range from loneliness to acute depression which may lead to suicide attempts. The effects of unemployment are multiple.

The unemployed woman experiences economic hardships in that she lacks money. Her standard of living is inevitably low. Warr, in Winefield et al (1993:12) states that : "Because unemployment usually implies lack of income, financial anxiety is frequently observed". The unemployed women suffer financial constraints, due to their lack of money.

Unemployed women are prone to ill health. Some researchers have found a correlation between unemployment and an increase in suicides (Mc Givney & Sims, 1986:02). Some unemployed women find no value in life. They are unable to take positive steps where there appears to be no light at the end of the tunnel. They experience a reduction in the scope of decision making because they feel insecure about the future.

There are fewer or no goals in the life of the unemployed person (Winefields et al 1993:16). For this reason some unemployed people resorts to suicide or suicidal attempts because of their lack of vision. Brenner, in Winefield (1993:27) studied admission to psychiatric hospitals in New York between 1910 and 1967 and found a strong relation between employment rate and the number of people admitted to mental hospitals. He found that as

unemployment increases, so did the increase of mental illness. Unemployment, as such becomes a contributory factor to mental illness, and also to physical illness. The typical examples of psychological stress brought about by unemployment include, amongst others, hypertension, headaches (migraine), ulcers and dermatitis.

Another consequence of unemployment is destruction of confidence. Unemployed women experience low self esteem because being unemployed is regarded as being inferior. They have fewer goals to reach in life. They look down upon themselves as worthless and good-for-nothing. They experience a total erosion of self confidence. They develop negative feelings such as bitterness, anxiety, frustration and a sense of worthlessness (Mc Givney & Sims, 1986:02). These feelings may drive the unemployed woman to insanity and desire to commit suicide, as they experience a sense of worthlessness. Winefield et al (1993:18) states that unemployment leads to emotional disorders such as anxiety and depression and psychosomatic disorders that require physical treatment. Banks (1988 : 19) states that:

Cross sectional comparisons of groups employed and unemployed have typically shown increased psychological distress, depression and anxiety, less happiness, lower self-esteem and a greater experience of strain amongst the unemployed.

The unemployed woman will normally isolate herself from those who are working. She sees herself as someone who is not fit to join other working women in social gatherings. The main reason is that because she lacks money she can not socialise with others for the fear of being seen as parasitic, that is, depending on friends for her survival. They become isolated, withdrawn and bitter. Warr in Winefield et al (1993:12) states that " Partly due to not having to leave the house and partly due to lack of income, the variety of life tends to be restricted".

They are restricted to their homes, and shun away from socialising with others and this may cause them depression and acute depression for that matter. They experience boredom and lose structure for their lives. One day emerges into the other and life becomes shapeless and meaningless for them. Turtle and Turtle in Banks et al (1988 : 21) found that the longer term unemployed spent more time drinking alone, less playing sports, slept more during the day and lost contact with friends.

The idea that unemployment is an individual's own fault is still widespread (Mc Givney & Sims 1986). Unemployed women will avoid socialisation with others because of this stigmatisation that defines unemployment as the individual's own fault. The shame and embarrassment that they experience can lead to them hiding their problems from others who might be of assistance to them. For as long as the unemployed woman believes that people sees her as work-shy, she will hide her predicament and not come out to ask for assistance.

The unemployed woman sometimes experiences lack of understanding and sympathy. Women are seen as those people who must care for babies and having a natural capacity for parenting, and attending to household duties. They are according to the conservatives, made for household work and not for paid work, and for this reason women don't get sympathy and understanding from the public for not working. Allen et al (1986:30) in their 1930's focus of women unemployment found that unemployment was a terrible thing for everyone, it struck at man's identity as workers, while women were affected not primarily as workers but as wives. Mc Givney and Sims (1986:02) quotes one of the women they interviewed, as saying:

People think that just because you are a women it doesn't matter if you are unemployed, but you 've still got to eat, pay the rent, go out occasionally, you are still a person with needs.

The unemployed woman experiences frustration, confusion and bitterness for knowing that, that is what the society expects of her: staying at home and remaining unemployed for life. Some of these women may resort to prostitution to make ends meet, risking contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Their experience of a reduced scope in decision making and a feeling of lack of security for the future can lead to them abusing alcohol and drugs. They may become violent and engage themselves in criminal activities, like house-breaking and shop-lifting. Unemployment frequently leads to an increase in psychological and physically threatening activities.

## 2.5 THE PRIVATE SPHERE AS PRISON

The home can either be a haven or a prison. If the home is a haven there will be stable intimate relationships necessary for healthy personality development in children (Elliot; 1986:117). These intimate relationships are necessary and determine the child's development

of the self. Feminist writers identify women as the main victims of the family's power to oppress (Elliot; 1986:126). One of the main reasons why women are oppressed at home is their state of being unemployed. Heise et al (1994:29) states that :

The economic inequality for women is the strongest factor, reinforced by male control in the family and the women's inability to divorce.

Women are oppressed at home because of their inferior economic status to men. These are the men who say that these women must not work, because they will take care of their women's economic necessities, but they in turn use this opportunity to oppress them. These women are taught to be obedient and subservient to men, or to deny and sacrifice themselves if they want to secure their marriages.

Children borne out of this abusive relationships are psychologically affected because of their observations of what is happening at home. Some children get affected by this oppressive homes. They respond by escaping the home to seek refuge by friends, who in turn give them wrong advise. Some end up as alcohol or drug abusers to get a sense of belonging to the group. The family institution provides the child with his/her first experiences in social living and these experiences have an effect on most of his/her later development. The family should provide the child with love and at the same time be a haven of relief from outside pressures (Aichorn; 1964:142). The early life experiences of a child in the family lay the groundwork for the type of person he/she will be in future.

The home should be a haven of relief from outside pressures for both the woman and the children. If the home is a prison the child gets a distorted picture of what a family is. Oppressive families leads to children getting depressed and they may suffer severe or acute depression which is linked to suicide or suicidal attempts. The unmarried and unemployed women's inability to provide for the material needs of the child can create insecurity and affect the amount of control that the women exerts over the child, because he or she will seek material support and security outside the home and this can take different dangerous directions in life.

Many teenage girls escape the poverty and oppression of the home and get married. Some give birth to children that they can not afford to clothe nor feed, which keeps the ball of poverty rolling. Children borne of teenage mothers are more likely than other children to have low IQ scores and do poorly in school and this problem increases as they grow older (Papalia & Old 1989:397).

Homemakers and unemployed women are more likely to suffer abuse at home. They are abused either by their boyfriends or husbands. The most endemic form of violence against women is wife abuse or more accurately abuse of women by intimate male partners (Heise et al; 1994:04). These women are abused because of lack of financial stability, and are prone to physical and emotional abuse because they depend on their husbands or boyfriends for material support. The Educator's Voice (1999 : 13) states that :

Police Statistics indicates that a woman is raped every 35 second in South Africa, while it is estimated than one in four women are likely to experience domestic violence in their relationships. These statistics mean than each one of us is likely to know one or more who are survivors of this kind of violence.

These oppressed women decide to remain silent, because of their dependency on those abusing them. They frequently become isolated and withdrawn as they try to hide evidence of their abuse. Violence against women is an extremely complex phenomenon, deeply rooted in gender-based power relations, sexuality, self identity and social institutions (Heise et al; 1994:29). According to Hörsten (1996 : 01) oppressed women have very little say over their own fertility, and fear to use contraception, much less insist on safe sex. These women do not have control over their sexuality. Some men use their masculinity to abuse women. As this is happening so often in our societies, it seems to be natural and normal for a woman to be physically and emotionally abused by her husband.

This is seen as a means to disciplining wives and girlfriends for wrong-doing. Bernard; (1986:26) states that :

Violence against women in the family takes place because the perpetrators feel, and their environment encourages them to feel, that this is an acceptable

exercise of male prerogative, a legitimate and appropriate way to relieve their own tensions in conditions of stress, to sanction female behaviour or just to enjoy a feeling of supremacy.

Wife abuse, sexual harassment and rape are almost trivialised in many societies where male violence and female submission are regarded as the natural order of things (H5rsten 1996 : 01). Violence against women has in the past decade become increasingly recognised, and deserves international action. Something needs to be done and if it is to be done, it must be as soon as possible. Gender violence, a universal phenomenon which takes many forms across culture, race and class need to be recognised as a violation of human rights requiring immediate action (Karl; 1995:142). These women's rights are violated as they have no say in matters pertaining to them.

The coordinators of the Street Kids Development Board (1999), a community based 24 hour program for high risk and street children, designed the following diagram to empower and support the child, his/her family and the community. This diagram has relevancy to women too.





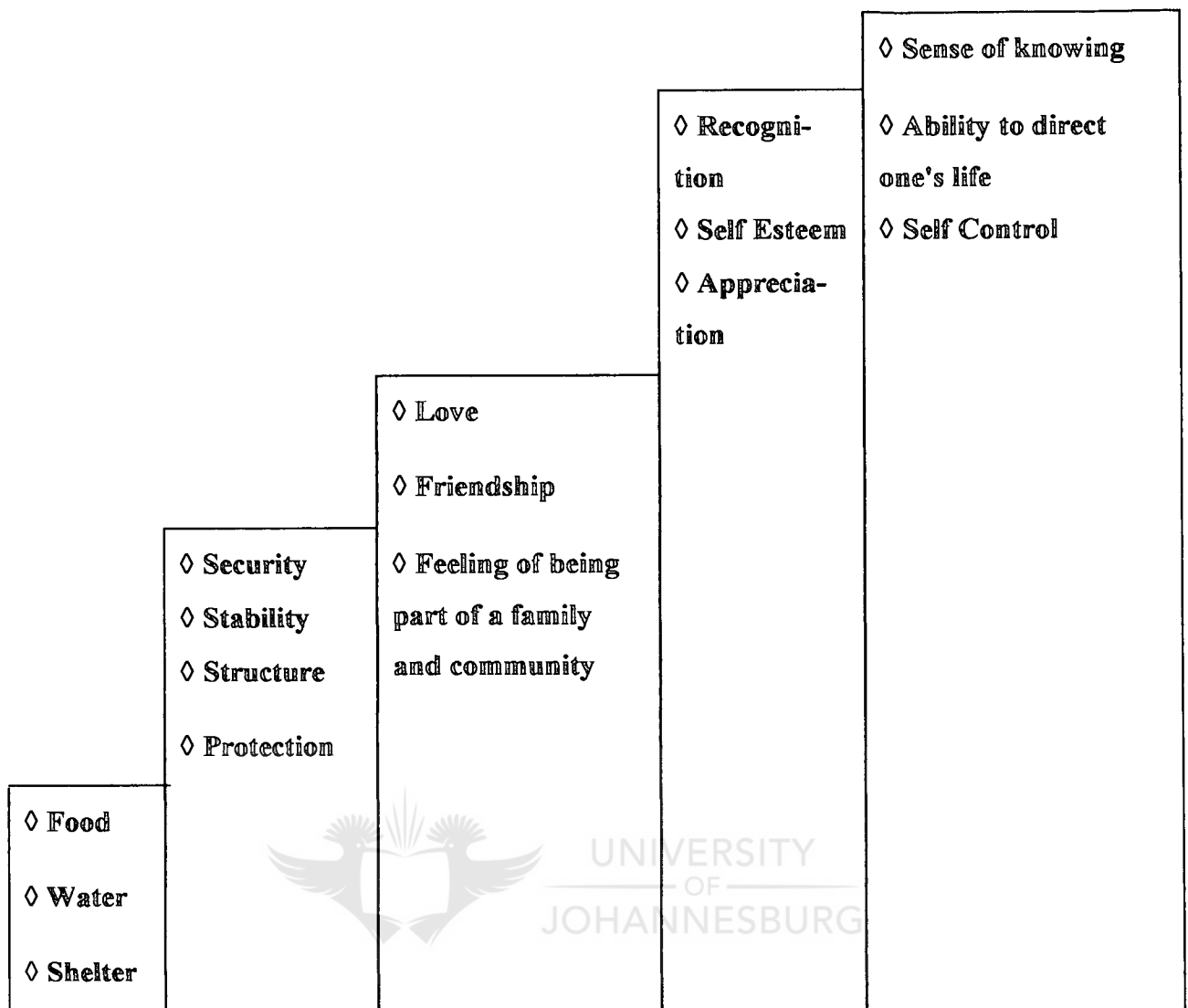


Figure 1: The provisions of the home as a haven and not a prison (SKDB:1999).

Unless and until violence against women is treated with the attention and seriousness it deserves, we will continue to mourn the loss of dignity and the lives of millions of women who are continually exposed to it (The Educator's Voice 1999: 13). The home should provide for its members the above and be a haven of relief from outside pressures.

Social Scientists studying the problem of unemployment are less interested in its elimination than fascinated by its dramatic effects (Alheit 1994:24). What could be done to alleviate the problem in this situation?

## 2.6 WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

### 2.6.1 From Objects to Subjects

Women have to be conscientized about their problems. Conscientization could be a way of transforming them from objects to subjects. We need to break the barriers that seemed true and acceptable that women should put their trust only in men as the suppliers of their economic necessities. Society taught women that men hold the power and have the ultimate authority to oppress them. These women should no longer live in the *gesellschaft*, the society that deprives them of their being. They must form part of their community, the *gemeinschaft* that values their being.

Conscientization will help these women to realise who they are and what they are capable of. They will as such, have self definition, self assertion and can become their own authorities. They will transform from passivity to action, from self as static to self as becoming, from silence to a protesting inner voice and infallible gut, from silence or conformity to external definitions of truth into subjectivism (Belenky et al 1986:54). Through conscientization the women will be able to close the gender gaps or gender inequalities they lived with for a long time because of the perception that it is cultural and natural. With conscientization people stop believing in what may have been true and now has become false (Taylor; 1982:58). The women's voices must be heard, and valued. (Belenky et al 1986:167) states that :

The fact that women are expected to curtail their voices may account for the greater prevalence of clinical depression, and learned helplessness.

Women must no longer keep quiet if they are abused by their husbands or boyfriends. They must now speak out their fears and bad experiences they experience with their husbands and boyfriends. These women needs to live in communities the *gemeinschaft* whereby they are accepted as women and not as mothers, wives, and housewives subservient to men. They need to experience what Tönnies in Sergiovanni (1994 : 06) describes as the three forms of a community. The first one is kinship which emphasizes unity of being "we", the second one is that of place, the sharing of a common habitat, and the last one is that of the mind, which means the bonding together of people that results from mutual binding to a common goal of shared set of values, and shared conception of being. They need to shift from the society,

*gesellschaft* in which relationships are formal and distant, having been prescribed by roles and role expectations. This means that for these women to get a sense of belonging they need to deny themselves and act as expected of them by the society, the *gesellschaft*. To break through this oppressed women needs conscientization. According to Freire (Taylor, 1993) conscientization has become a process of changing the conceptual horizon of the victim. The unemployed women need to be conscientized to the reality in order to transform it. The reality being that they are oppressed under the patriarchal hierarchies, and the transformation being through closing gender gaps and functioning as equals.

## 2.6.2 Understanding Feminism

Feminists are people who hold the belief that women should be given the same rights, opportunities and status as men. Feminists seek to break gender inequalities. To them men and women are equal, and that what a man can do, a women can also do. (Karl; 1995: 35) defines feminists as

Those people who recognise the exploitation of women and its relationship to other forms of oppression, and who work actively to change it.

Feminists have the interests of the women at heart. Present day feminism according to Karl (1995:34) is different from the earlier feminism because present day feminism is a struggle for achievement of women's equality, dignity and freedom of choice to control their lives and bodies within and outside the home, whereas earlier feminism focused mainly on legal reforms to end discrimination. Feminist groups and organisations have put on the agenda recently violence against women, reproductive rights, sexuality, child care, recognition of the value of household work, and discrimination in educational and job opportunities (Karl; 1995:38). These are the forms of oppression they want to address to stop women abuse and oppression. I designed the following diagram which illustrates the feminists' women empowerment framework.

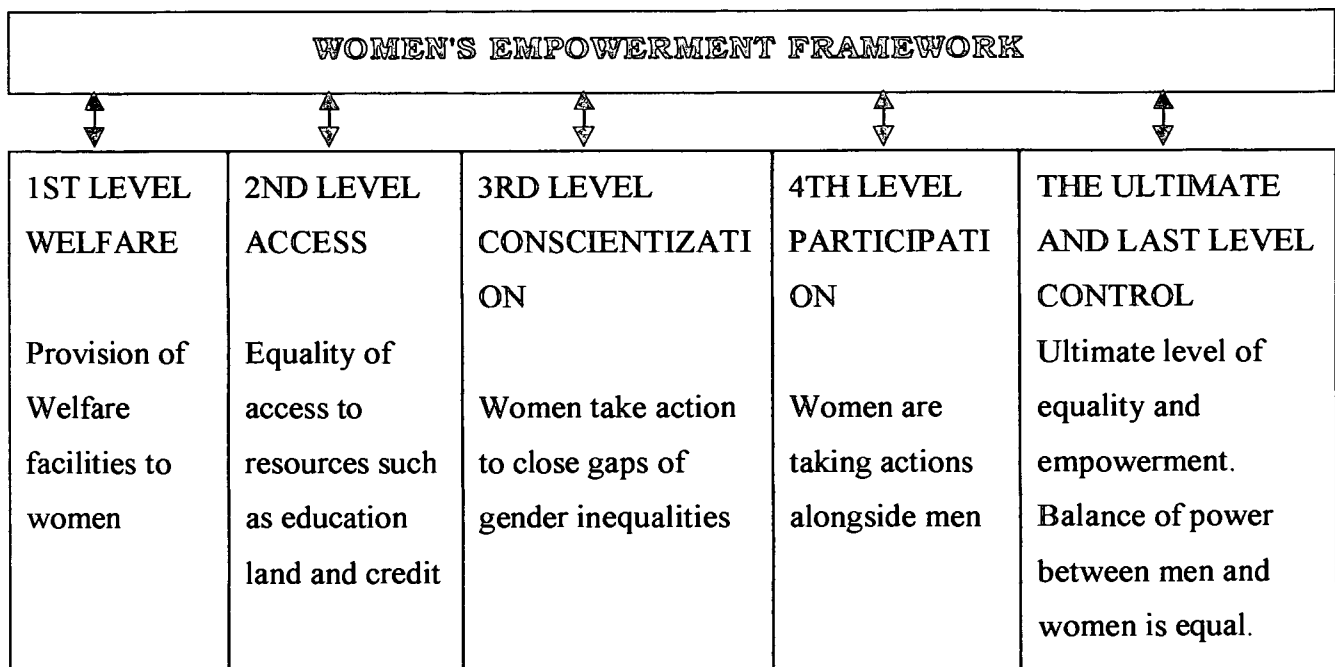


Figure 2: Women's empowerment framework

### 2.6.3 The Power of Women's Empowering Projects

The concept of the empowerment of women as a goal of development projects and programmes has been gaining wider acceptance in the 1990's (Karl 1995:108). We are having a number of Non Governmental Organisations that are assisting in empowering women through capacity building. Empowering women through capacity building and organising them as a group for the transformation of unequal relationship builds up the women's self-esteem (Karl 1995:109). This will help to boost their self-concept. Stromquist (1994 : 107) states that " Because of their poverty women are more interested in learning skills for income consciousness.

Women learn and work better with those people with whom they can associate themselves with. They find themselves in the company of women and this makes them feel secured and at ease. Belenky (1986:60) states that if women are empowered they consider turning for answers to people closer to their own experiences - female peers, mothers, sisters and grandmothers.

It is in the company of female peers, mothers, sisters and grandmothers that these women feel secured, welcome and free to talk about their problems. It is acknowledged that the people who need the most support and resources in South Africa are rural women. (CCD 1999 : 02). Rural areas are undeveloped and these women are trapped in a situation of unemployment, in undeveloped areas. Coombs, in Altbach (1982:235) states that :

It is the rural areas which have consistently reaped the fewest benefits from "modernization" and that the balanced development of a nation must be predicated upon the growth of its rural sector, and fundamentally upon the development of its agriculture.

Rural areas are also defined by the Rural Development Framework, compiled by the rural Development Task Team (RDP) and the Department of Land Affairs in South Africa (1997 : 05) as :

The sparsely population areas in which people farm or depend on natural resources, including the villages and small towns that are dispersed through these areas. Rural clusters in the former homelands, that is, large settlements without an economic base except for transfer payments, are also included.

Most of the people who are poverty stricken are found in rural areas. This happens because rural people have the smallest share of resources.

The Rural Development Framework (1997 : 06) states that :

In South Africa, as elsewhere people are much poorer in rural areas than in the cities. Almost three quarters of the poor live in rural areas. Of these, rural children less than five years, youths and elderly are particularly vulnerable, women more so than men.

Women and children must be helped to grow in confidence of their right to live unmolested. They must learn to seek help when in need (Rural Development Framework 1997 : 57). The women empowering projects introduced in rural areas can be of assistance to the unemployed

women and they can boost their morale and make them develop a positive self esteem or image. Women empowerment through projects that aim to improve woman's productivity and their access to resources, enables them to participate actively in national development. It also enables low income and disadvantaged women to gain access to training and technical support for their productive and reproductive activities, which will be of assistance to the unemployed women (Karl 1995:25).

An example of rural women's empowerment projects in South Africa is that by the Centre for Community Development of Vista University (1999). Their empowerment of rural women is done in two phases. In the first phase, they aim to build the self awareness and self esteem, restore human dignity and prepare rural women psychologically for the development challenges and opportunities they encounter in the national reconstruction process. In the second phase they set out to develop the basic business acumen in order for women to start to conduct income generating activities either in groups or as individuals, in a way which is consistent with good business practice. In this second phase these women learn amongst others the profit margin or profit triangle

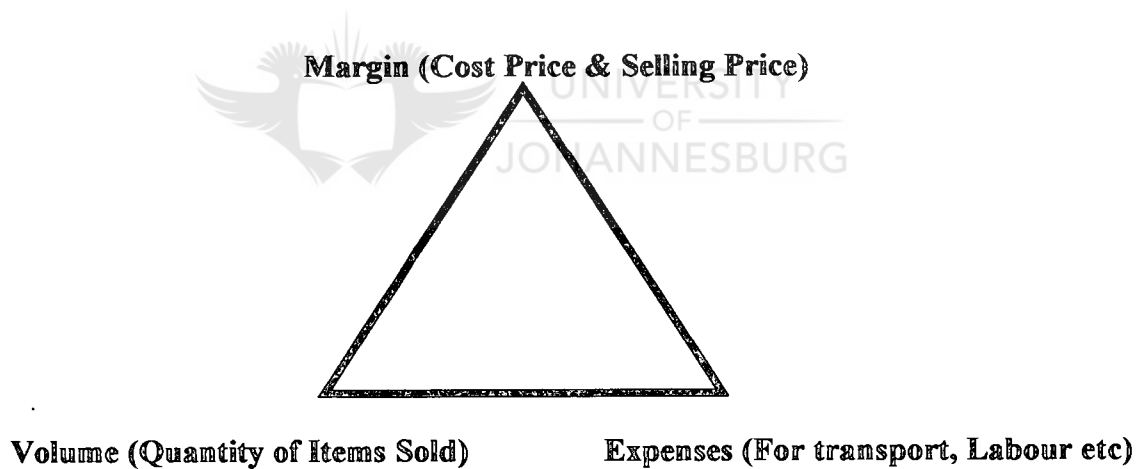


Figure 3. Profit Triangle

By mastering the profit triangle or margin, the women will be able to manage their own projects profitably, and their business will not run at a loss. Unemployed women from rural areas are not hopeless because they find themselves in underprivileged and undeveloped areas. The example of the Centre for Community Development (CCD) of Vista University is existing proof to this.

#### 2.5.4 The Power of Adult Basic Education (ABET) in empowering women

Recent research conducted proved that the illiteracy rate is higher in women than in men. This is another strong contributing factor to these women's unemployment problem. Karl (1995:138-139) in a shocking statement, says :

There are hundreds, thousands of depressing environmental statistics. The newspaper are full of them, television reports them, they are chronicled in our workshops, conferences and meetings. Yet one statistic stands out as more distressing than any other : There are 600 million illiterate women in the world, more than twice as many illiterate women as illiterate men.

Moreover according to the Unesco reports the proportion of illiterate women is increasing (Stromquist 1994 : 95). Hörsten (1996 : 31) in his description of the illiteracy rate in rural South Africa states that :

Data on rural areas in South Africa are hard to come by, but the overall illiteracy rate for women according to the 1991 Census (Central Statistical Service 1993) is 12% higher than for men which means that here, also, women are unequal beneficiaries of education.

These women have amongst other reasons experienced this problem of illiteracy because of their lack of access to education. It may also be because of their parent's negative attitude to them going to school. There is the cultural belief that if girls go to school, they will be educated, married and work for the in-laws at the expense of their parents. This is more so because these parents are products of a patriarchal society.

In Rockhill's study of the Hispanic women illiterate in English in the United States, as quoted by Stromquist (1994 : 103), she found a strong reluctance on the part of husbands to allow their wives to become literate. Male resistance to women literacy has also been found in several African settings (Stromquist 1994: 103).

Stromquist (1994 : 110) states that:

Illiteracy is an expression of power relations in contemporary society, and poor women, as a major subordinated group exhibit the highest levels of illiteracy in many developing countries.

The illiterate, unemployed and poverty stricken women are the main victims of depression. What type of a mother will the illiterate mother be, if parents discourage their girls to go to school. Uneducated women are less able to help protect their environment, they are more likely to bear a greater number of children than their environment can fully support. Due to limited resources they are less able to care for their children and keep them healthy. They marry younger and are less likely to use family planning, and also less likely to send their own children for schooling (Karl 1995:139).

The type of education that these adults need is that type of education that will help them adapt to local community needs. That type of education that they need, should help them find direction in their lives. This type of education should be more skill-orientated in nature. Tuijnman (1996:22) defines this type of education as a non-formal education which is more effective because the educational function is more concrete and skill oriented. The knowledge and the skills that the learners will acquire from the NFE will make them to be competent with the technologies of the workplace. The state of the past education system in South Africa contributed a lot to black women's unemployment. Daniels (1998 : 171) states that :

Apartheid separated women according to race and, as such afforded them very different life experiences. White women in South African were considered superior to black women and enjoyed voting rights alongside white men. They generally had more freedom in terms of economic mobility and those who worked outside their homes earned wages that were considerable higher than earned by black women, partly owing to their access to education .

Today we can make a change and empower our women through the newly established Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes which are skill oriented and merging



with the technologies of the work place. This is the type of education that empowers women with literacy skills. This type of education is, according to Daniels (1998 : 167), an empowerment education which targets oppressive elements of society for change through the collective actions of those population in learning situations.

Non formal education as a vehicle of change offers more possibilities for participants to challenge political, social and gender stratifications (Daniels 1998 : 167). Women groups require encouragement and support on many fronts to increase their capacity to take their place in the community politically and financially (Rural Development Framework 1997 : 57). Literacy can thus be assumed to be the catalyst of development (Hörsten 1996 : 18). They develop the women in totality, for self realisation. Stromquist (1994 : 107) states that :

Literacy programmes must be dialogical, involving women at various levels of program design and implementation. Teaching methodology must be participatory and democratic so that it increases self - confidence and self respect.

For these literacy programs to address the women's needs, these women must participate in the program developmental stages. Inclusion should be practiced at all levels of program development. Hörsten (1996 : 44) quotes Stromquist's two modules of literacy programs for women. The first model is addressing the immediate needs of women such as literacy skills and employment skills. The second one is addressing the women's strategic needs such as awareness of gender oppression and legal rights and assertiveness and negotiation skills.

Literacy programs must in all respect empower women socially, politically and economically and make them take their rightful place on the centre stage of development. Lind, in Hörsten (1996 : 42) writes that women who were interviewed on their reasons for wishing to become literate identified, besides the basic reading, writing and calculation skills and the desire to help their children with homework, the following needs.

- increased self reliance
- more social contact with others
- respect from the community

- Liberation from isolation
- lessening of domestic burdens
- equality with men
- participation in civic and political life
- leadership roles

Although findings are not always unambiguous and positive, the results of research indicates a correlation between women's education and lower fertility rates, decreased infant mortality, better family nutrition, increased communication between husband and wife, more talk with children, less physical punishment and force feeding, more visit to health clinics, positive attitudes toward development and the ability to detect relation between means and ends.

Literacy could empower women in every aspect of their lives. Through literacy these women could develop a positive self esteem. Women needs this information to increase their awareness of their oppression and to learn ways of protecting themselves and knowing how to seek assistance and advice when in need. However, not all literacy programmes succeed in accomplishing this goal.

## 2.6 SUMMARY



Society taught women that men are holders of authority and that they should depend on men as breadwinners and providers of their economic necessities. Women are made to accept that they are not fit for paid work, but that they are good at child caring, and caring for other members of the household and taking care of housework which is fragmented, monotonous, repetitive and boring.

Housework has low social status and is not recognised universally to be work of value. Unemployment has serious and disturbing effects ranging from lack of money to admission at mental institutions and death. Women suffer violence and oppression under the patriarchal hierarchies of relations. Not only do the women suffer under oppression but the children born of the oppressed women also suffer tremendously. The home for them is not a haven of relief from outside pressures. Their mothers are unemployed and illiterate, as such these children gets no educational motivation from them as role models. They drop out of school, engage

themselves in teenage marriages to escape the home as the prison, while boys engage themselves in criminal activities.

There is hope that conscientization and praxis, which is reflective action, will bring about change in the lives of these children and their mothers. They will break free from patriarchal oppression and participate in literacy programs that will empower them politically, socially and economically. These women are conscientized to close gender gaps, and to realise that they are not worthless.

They can now fight for their rights and be confident. In this study I aim to find out the causes of unemployment for the unemployed black women of Acornhoek, and the extent to which unemployment affect their family lives. I also aim to find out what these women recommend to alleviate their problem of unemployment.

Unemployment and illiteracy threatens a sense of community, the *gemeinschaft*, or the 'we' identity. These women feels that they are not part of the community nor the society in which they live. Their problem of being oppressed is considered acceptable and natural and is practised according to societal norms and values. They need a sense of belonging, the 'we' identity. They want to know that their communities are aware of the problems they are experiencing and are ready to assist them in the process of transformation. Transformation is possible if conscientization took place. Conscientization means being aware of your present situation, which you used to accept as true to be false. When a person is conscientized, what was seen to be true is now seen as false. This process of being aware of your present situation and changing it is transformation. Conscientization is according to Freire (Taylor : 1993) the effort to enlighten people about the obstacles preventing them from a clearer perception of reality.

Consciousness of reality is needed to transform reality and change the victims' conceptual horizon (Taylor 1993 : 65). Through conscientization women will have a say in matters that pertains to them. They will have a say at home, and in the public spheres. They will be able to have control over their reproduction, and gain access to education, land, finance and loans. The greening of the earth can only begin with the empowerment of women.

## SECTION III

### DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND ANALYSIS

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section a clear exposition of the processes of the field inquiry will be provided. A qualitative research design was used. I have embarked on multiple methods of data collection in order to triangulate data and to improve validity. I have made use of in depth interviews, covert observations and a literature review as research methods. Gall et al (1996:574) states that:

Triangulation is the process of using multiple data collection methods, data sources, analysts, or theories to check the validity of the study. Triangulation helps to eliminate biases that might result from relying exclusively on any one data- collection method, source, analyst, or theory.

Through the usage of these various methods of data collection I enhanced the research study's reliability and validity. Reliability is the extent to which other researchers would arrive at similar results if they studied the same case using the same procedures as the first researcher (Gall et al 1996:572). Miles and Huberman (1994:278) state that if the study is reliable the process of the study should be consistent, as well as reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods.

#### 3.2 THE SETTING (CONTEXT) OF THE INQUIRY

This inquiry was conducted in a rural area in Acornhoek. Acornhoek is situated in the Eastern part of the Northern Province. The Northern Province is declared the poorest province in South Africa. The per capita income is by far the lowest in the country. The Acornhoek and Bushbuckridge areas (Acorn – Bush) were declared by the political analyst of the University of the North, Masuta, to be that part of the Northern Province

experiencing population explosion and an escalating unemployment rate. This problem is more of a women's problem, as most men are not living in the area. They are earning their livelihood as migrant workers in Gauteng, leaving their families female-headed. Some of the women who stay with their husbands are experiencing unemployment and patriarchal oppression and most of these female-headed families are living below the poverty line. The Rural Development framework (1997: Executive summary) states that:

The most recent surveys undertaken in rural South Africa reveal depths of poverty as severe as in the poorer African countries to the North. They show that women and female-headed households are particularly disadvantaged.

Most of the constraints to rural development stem from the long period of apartheid with its discriminatory policies and neglect of the majority black population (The Rural Development Framework). Acornhoek, like many other rural areas, has the smallest share of developmental resources. The schools are poorly resourced with buildings, equipment and books and are without electricity and running water. The infrastructure of Acornhoek is poor due to its lack of water, adequate housing, sanitation, domestic electricity supply and educational facilities.

Most children from this rural area are living under female-headed families that are below the poverty line and they suffer psychologically and physically. Many children in rural areas have their growth stunted through malnutrition or undernutrition. According to statistics one in every four is stunted and one in every ten is underweight, while one in every four is anaemic (Rural Development Framework:58).

### **3.3 THE RESEARCH PLAN AND MANAGEMENT OF DATA**

For this study, I have made use of qualitative research. The justification for this type of research, was to find out the different feelings, perceptions and opinions of unemployed women. I am researching a problem that is affecting the people of a community that I am part of. I embarked on this research because I wanted to get a deeper understanding of

the causes of these women's unemployment, the extent to which these causes affects their family lives and the women's recommendations of how these conditions can be addressed. The women who were selected into the sample are staying in my area, thus I had no difficulty contacting them. Furthermore, I did not have to travel long distances and spend lots of money to reach their homes. I made use of convenience sampling. I made appointments with them and was able to see them at the times convenient to both of us. Gall et al (1996:227) states that by convenient sampling the researcher

Selects a sample that suits the purposes of the study and that is convenient. The sample can be convenient for a variety of reasons, the sample is located of or near where the researcher works.

I limited my sample to 15 women who were considered representative of the population of the inquiry, namely unemployed women from Acornhoek. The representation of the sample determines the generalisability of the results (Gay 1992:125). Gay (1992:136) continues to state that "A sample which is too small can affect the generalisability of the study regardless of how well it is selected". The number of the sample chosen should be able to well represent the population from which it was selected. Nachmias et al (1987:180) states that:

When data are partial and used to make generalisations on the whole, the subset is called a sample and the whole is called a population.

I used in depth one-on-one interviews because I wanted to record the different feelings, perceptions and opinions of those 15 unemployed black women of Acornhoek and their problem of unemployment. I followed the Survey Research Centre of the University of Michigan's useful pointers on how the interviewer should introduce himself or herself to the respondent to win his/her trust to pursue with the interview. They stated the following:

- Tell the respondent who you are and whom you represent.
- Tell the respondent what you are doing in a way that will stimulate his or her interest.
- Tell the respondent how he or she was chosen.
- Doorstep instructions should be brief.
- Adapt your approach to the situation.
- Try to create a relationship of confidence and understanding (rapport between you and the respondent (Nachmias *et al* 1987:242).

The interviews were conducted in a quiet place, that is, in a room where a television or radio was not turned on, as I was using the tape recorder to capture the exact quotations. Background noise can have disastrous results, as one may find out that most of the relevant data have been distorted by the noise. Patton (1987:138) states that, “Few things are more distressing in collecting qualitative data than to find that the tape is blank or that background noise is so severe that the tape is virtually worthless. However, its usage was dependent on the participants’ approval. According to Wiersma (1991:193) the tape recorder can retain the entire oral communication, but the interviewer should get the respondents’ consent before using one.

The use of a tape recorder did not stop me from taking notes when necessary to do so. The taking of notes were done in such a way that the respondent did not feel threatened or become suspicious. If a short response is given, the interviewer should not engage in extensive writing (Wiersma 1991:193). As an interview is a face to face verbal interchange in which the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expression of opinions or belief from another person (Maccoby and Maccoby, in Denzin 1989). I made sure that these women’s children, friends or partners were not present as this could have impaired on the accuracy of the responses. Generally, other people should not be present while the interview is being conducted. It is only those who are interviewed and the interviewer who should be present. I made sure that I made the interviewees feel comfortable and free to answer the questions. I clearly stated the importance of them co-operating and contributing to the study. Nachmias et al (1987:242) states that “the first

step in the interviewing process is getting the respondent to co-operate and provide the desired information”.

There are three factors that help in monitoring the respondent to co-operate, namely:

- The respondent needs to know that their interaction with the interviewer will be pleasant and satisfying.
- The respondents need to see the study as being worthwhile.
- Barriers to the interviews in the respondents mind need to be overcome (Nachmias et al 1987:242)

Since the interview is a social encounter, it was important that the interviewer established a good rapport with the respondent. The approach was businesslike, efficient and friendly but not chummy, and confidentiality of information was assured as I did not want respondents to be threatened by the questions. My friendliness and openness led to the respondents becoming friendly and open up to me and express their feelings, perceptions and opinions on their problems. This did not stop me from checking if the responses were systematic. Sometimes I asked the same questions in different ways to detect if the respondent was telling the truth. I would change the wording of questions. I also did probing to get additional information if the responses were inadequate. Probing is defined as the technique used by an interviewer to stimulate discussion and obtain more information.

Probes have two major functions. One is that they motivate the respondent to elaborate or clarify an answer or to explain the reasons behind an answer. The other is that they help focus the conversation on the specific topic of the interview (Nachmias et al 1987:243). Looking at the limited time I had at my disposal, I made use of an interview guide. An interview guide specifies the questions, the sequence in which they are to be asked, and guidelines for what the interviewer is to say at the beginning and end of each interview (Gall et al 1996:313). I did not end the interviews until I was sure that I got the satisfactory responses for the questions that I have asked. An interview is a conversation



that should not end until the interviewer has received satisfactory answers to the research questions (Denzin 1989:109). I chose the in-depth interview method to collect the data because of the multiple advantages it has.

I also made use of covert observations to collect data for my study. The major concern about the validity and reliability of observational data concerns the effects of the observer on what is observed (Patton 1987:76). If the observed is aware that you are observing her, she will make sure that the observer gets the best out of her. After I conducted the interviews with these women I decided to follow it up with informal visits to their homes. I did not tell them that I will be coming to visit them. I wanted to observe their real living conditions in order to triangulate the interview data. With overt observation the observer may get the wrong data. People may behave quite differently when they know they are being observed compared to how they behave if they are not aware of being observed (Patton 1987:77). Covert observations are, according to Patton (1987:77),

More likely to capture what is really happening than are overt observations, which allow people in the programme to become aware that they are being studied.

The third and last method of data collection I used is the literature review. I wanted to find out what other researchers found on the phenomenon.

### 3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

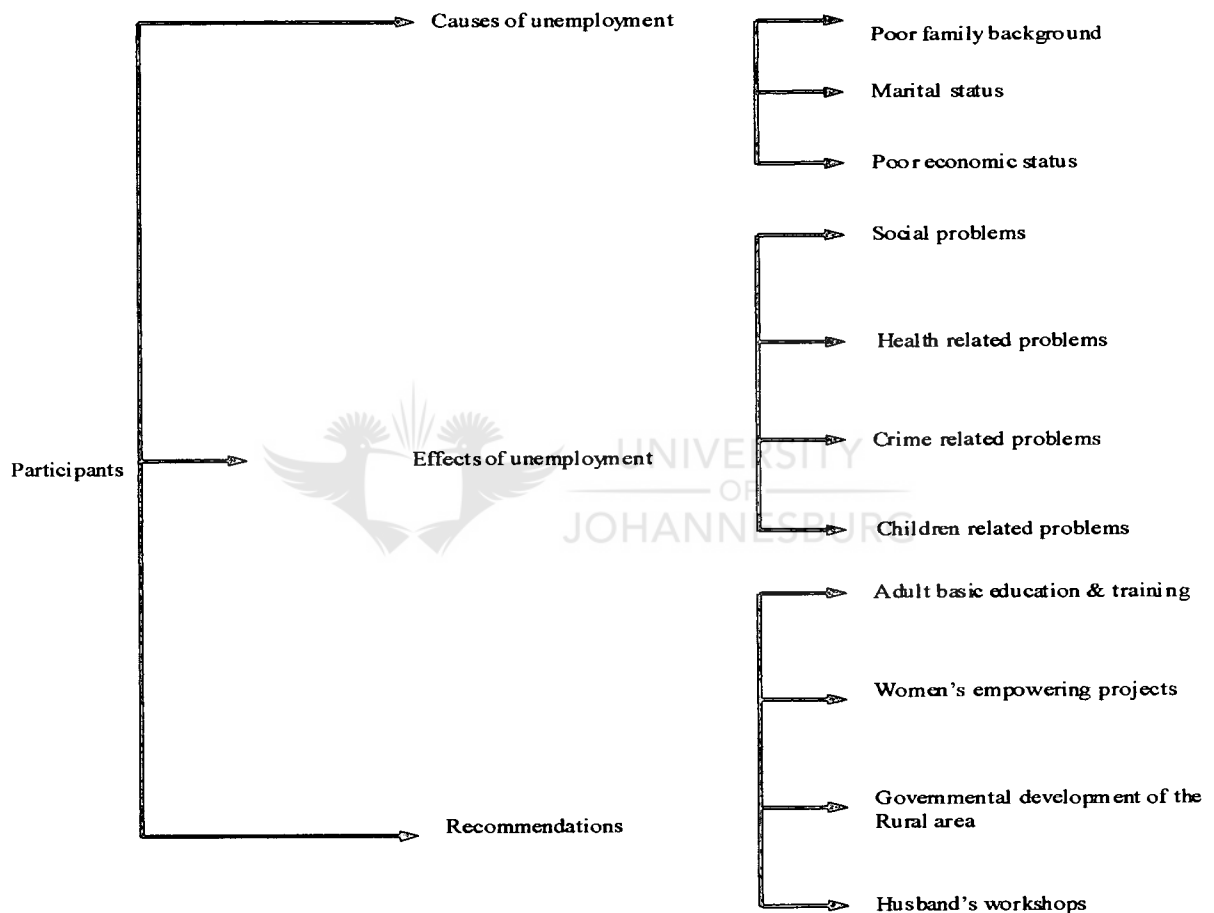
After organising the data to make sure that all the field notes were accounted for, I started coding. In the left margins I coded the information by paragraph, using multi-coloured pens to identify the main areas to my research. The main areas that I identified were determined by the research questions. The areas were:

- The causes of unemployment.
- The effects of unemployment.
- Ways to address unemployment.

### 3.4.1 INTERVIEWS

#### The conceptual framework for data analysis

The interviews were held in Tsonga and N.Sotho and were later translated to English. These interviews were conducted from the 16<sup>th</sup> May, 1999 to the 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1999, from 14h30 – 17h00.



After the broad areas were identified, I started with open coding of each section. Open coding is part of analysis that pertains specifically to the naming and categorising of phenomena through close examination of data (Strauss & Corbin 1990:62). During open coding the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences and questions asked about the phenomena are reflected in the

data (Strauss & Corbin 1990:62). At the same time I did axial coding whereby data is put together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories (Strauss & Corbin 1990:97). I have made use of matrixes to present the data collected from these interviews. A matrix is a table that has defined rows and columns (Gall et al 1996:583).

### Characteristics of the participants

Fifteen unemployed black women of Acornhoek were interviewed about their feelings, perceptions and opinions on unemployment. The following table depicts the characteristics of these women. The names used are not the real names of the participants. This was done for confidentiality of information and to respect their privacy.

Table 1: Characteristics of participants

	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Home language</i>	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Number of children</i>
A	Khensani	38	T	M	5
B	Tintswalo	52	T	M	7
C	Eva	43	S	M	6
D	Mokgadi	30	S	S	4
E	Kurhula	28	T	S	4
F	Delani	34	T	M	6
G	Nomsa	48	S	M	8
H	Tirhani	41	S	M	7
I	Donna	36	S	S	5
J	Thalitha	28	T	S	4
K	Tholaphi	29	T	S	3
L	Solane	34	T	M	5
M	Mosima	55	S	M	8
N	Lerato	59	S	M	8
O	Thoko	45	T	M	7

Codes :      T = Tsonga      S = Sesotho      M = Married      S = Single

### Unequal access to schooling.

I set out to find out what these women's academic backgrounds are. Most of the women interviewed never went to school partly owing this to the patriarchal hierarchies of control. They have been denied access to formal education because of their race, because education for blacks was not compulsory. The majority of those who went to school in the primary level forgot what they have learnt at school. Mokgadi said that if she wants to write a letter to her brother in Johannesburg she asks her first child, who is in standard seven, to write it for her. Schools were situated far from home and they had to walk for long distances. Table 2 is a depiction of their school background.

Table 2: The scholastic achievements of the participants.

SUBJECTS	SCHOLASTIC BACKGROUND
Khensani	Never went to school
Tintswalo	Never went to school
Eva	Went to school for the first year
Mokgadi	Went to school for the first two years
Kurhula	Never went to school
Dulani	Never went to school
Nomsa	Went to school up to Std 1
Tirhani	Went to school up to Std 2
Donna	Never went to school
Thalitha	Went to school up to Std 3
Tholaphi	Never went to school
Solane	Went to school up to Std 2
Mosima	Never went to school
Lerato	Never went to school
Thoko	Never went to school

Sixty percent of the women I interviewed never attended school. There are many reasons why these women discontinued schooling or never went to school. The following are excerpts from responses.

- Eva : *[Dikolo di be di le kgole re sepela leeto le le telele.]*  
Schools were far from home, we had to walk long distances
- Lerato : *[Se se bego se kgahla batswadi ba rena ke go ya bogadi e sego sekolo.]*  
What pleased our parents most was getting married, more than schooling.
- Tintswalo : *[Xikolo xo antswa eka hina a kuri ku ya engomeni, laha a hi dyondzisiwa ku vu vasati vo tiya va ntiyiso.]*  
The best school for us was the initiation school, where we were taught how to be best mothers and wives.
- Solane: *[Vatswari va mina a va tsakele ku va ndzi tekiwe ndzaha ri ntsongo, Loko ndzi fika evukatini muna wa mina a nga pfumelanga liswaku ndzi ya emahlweni ni swa xikolo]*  
My parents were happy when I got married younger. My husband did not approve of me continuing my studies.
- Tholaphi : *[A ndzi dyondzanga hikuva hi mina lonkulu e kaya kutani a ndzi fanele ndzi pfuna mhakhi hi swa laha kaya na vana lava n'wana.]*  
I did not go to school because I had to assist my mother with the household chores, as I am the first child at home, I also was expected to help her to take care of the other children.

## Causes of Unemployment

The causes of unemployment that these women mentioned are multiple and vary from one woman to the next, although some of the reasons are common amongst these women. The following matrix provides a summary of these women's views on their lack of schooling, and their unemployment.

Table 3: The main areas of the causes of Unemployment

P. Fam. Bac	Mar. Sta.	P. Eco. Sta
Parents negative attitude to daughters schooling	Husband's negative to wives schooling and working	Undeveloped area (poor infrastructure)
Poor Parental Income		Absence of women's self empowering projects

Codes: P. fam. Bac = Poor Family Background

Mar. Sta = Marital Status

P. Eco. Sta = Poor Economic Status

These unemployed women mentioned different reasons for their illiteracy and unemployment. The following are excerpts from the responses.

Tirhani: *[Re be rele ba ba ntshi ka gae. Batswadi ba rena ba be ba sa kgone go re isa sekolong.]*

we were many at home, our parents could not afford to take us to school

Thalitha: *[A ndzi le ku tirheni hikuva a kuna ti projekt ta vavasati laha hi tshamaka kona leti hi nga kumaka mintirho ka tona. Loko a vo hi endlela tona endhawini ya hina ku fana na le tindhawini tin'wana ti nga kona.]*

I am unemployed because there are no women's empowering projects I heard are operating in other areas. If they can be introduced I will be glad to take part in.

Nomsa: [*Monna waka ga a kwesise ditaba tsa gore mosadi a rutege goba a ye sekolong.*]

My husband is against the idea of a woman schooling or working

Tholaphi: [*Acornhoek a yi hluvukangi. A kuna ti feme ku fana na bo Pietersburg kumbe Joni kumbe kona Naspoti. A kuna laha va nga ta hi tholaka kona*]

Acornhoek is undeveloped, it does not have firms like Pietersburg, Johannesburg or Nelspruit. There are no places to be employed at.

The following matrix provides a broader view of these women's views on their lack of schooling and unemployment:

Table 4: Illiteracy and causes of Unemployment

Theme	Responses
P. Fam. Bac	
PPI	<p>D: [<i>Ka gae go be go sena tshelete.</i>] My parents did not have money.</p> <p>E: [<i>Vatswari va hina a va nga ri na mali ya ku hi yisa exikolweni.</i>] Our parents did not have money to take us to school.</p> <p>F: [<i>Baba wa hina u love ha ha ri vantsongo. Makhi a tirha emasinwini kutani mali ya yena a yi nga swi koti ku hi yisa exikolweni.</i>] Our father died when we were still young and my mother's meagre salary from the farm was not sufficient to take us to</p>

	school.
P. Neg. at	
	<p>A: <i>[Ekaya a va nga swi tsakeli leswaku vanhwanyana va ya exikolweni.]</i> Our parents had a negative attitude for girls going to school.</p> <p>B: <i>[Ngoma a ku ri xona xikolo xa vavasati.]</i> The initiation school was seen as the best school for daughters.</p> <p>I: <i>[Papa o be a no fela a re sekolo sa basadisadi ke koma.]</i> My father usually said that the best school for women is the initiation school.</p> <p>L: <i>[Vatswari va mina va tsakele ku ri ndzi te kiwa hiku hatlisa (ndza ha ri ntsongo), a va nga rina mhaka na dyondzo.]</i> My parents were pleased when I got married younger and did not go further with my studies.</p>
Mar. Sta.	
P. At. S	
P. At. W	
	<p>M: <i>[Mona yo go a dumele ge ke nyaka mosomo.]</i> My husband does not approve of me working.</p> <p>N: <i>[Ge ke fihla bogadi ke ile ka kgopela monna waka gore a nkise sekolong, o ile a gana, o gana le ge ke nyaka mosomo.]</i> My husband refused to take me to school, he does not want me to work.</p> <p>O: <i>[Monna waka o a ntlhokomela, le ge a re ke sa some ke fo bona go lokile.]</i> My husband takes care of me, even if he says I must not</p>



	work, I don't see any problem.
P. Eco. Sta.	
	<p>C: <i>[Ge go ka ba le dikgobokano tsa basadi tsa go ba ruta mesomo go ka ba kaone.]</i> If we can have projects of empowering women, we will be employed.</p> <p>J: <i>[Acornhoek a yi hluvukangi, a yina le swa tifeme.]</i> This place, Acornhoek is underdeveloped there are no industries.</p>

The following codes were identified from the raw data on reasons for their unemployment.

Codes:	P. Fam bac	= Poor Family Background
	P.P.I	= Poor Parental Income
	P. neg. at	= Parental negative attitude to daughters for schooling
	Mar. sta	= Marital Status
	Patr. At. S	= Patriarchal attitude to schooling
	Patr .At. W	= Patriarchal attitude to work
	P.Eco. Sta	= Poor Economic Status
	Un. are	= Undeveloped area
	Abs. W. Pro	= Absence of women's empowerment projects

The causes of unemployment and illiteracy are different from one woman to the next, although some reasons overlap. Forty four percent of the women interviewed, stated that they were illiterate because their parents were not working or worked on farms and earned meager salaries. Thirty six percent stated that because of their parents adherence to their culture, and again because of their illiteracy these parents had a negative attitude to them schooling. Another twenty percent of the interviewed women stated that their husband or partners do not approve of them working nor going to school. What they

commonly said is that their husbands want to be the sole providers of the families. They had all at some stage in their responses stated that the absence of firms and industries in Acornhoek is also a contributing factor to them being unemployed. They furthermore stated the importance of women's empowering projects as important in creating jobs for them.

### **The effects unemployment has on the women**

The effects of unemployment are multiple. These women are affected in different ways. The effects of unemployment that were stated by these women were social, whereby they felt that they were not accepted by their communities for being unemployed. They often felt lonely and out of touch with their communities. Some of the women stated that they are emotionally and physically abused by their partners. This contributed to them feeling worthless. Some of their children drop out of school and do not respect their mothers, because they blame the mothers for the family's problems. As such, these women are emotionally traumatised, they are often depressed, stressed and withdrawn. Some of these women resort to alcohol and some of them are living a promiscuous life, trying to make ends meet. When asked about how unemployment affects their lives in particular, and their family lives in general, these women gave similar responses to some issues, but differing in relation to their situations.

The following matrix is a depiction of the effects of unemployment on the lives of the black women in Acornhoek.

Table 5: The effects of unemployment

<u>Response</u>	<u>Respondent</u>
<b>Social Problems</b>	
Lack of Sympathy from the Public	C, D, G, H, M
Loneliness and Isolation	G, H, I, N, O, L
<b>Crime-related Problems</b>	
Physical abuse from Partners	E, F, I, J, K, O
Emotional abuse from Partners	A, E, F, J, K, I
<b>Children related Problems</b>	
Drop out of school	B, E, G, H, K, F
Street-child	E, F, G, H, K, B
Disrespectful	C, E, D
<b>Health Related Problems</b>	
Diseases from lack of Proper Diet	A, F, H, L, M, O, N
Depression	G, H, I, N, O, J, K, E
Promiscuity	D, I, K
Alcoholic	A, C, E, J, K, M

Remark: Codes were used instead of names to protect the respondents' privacy

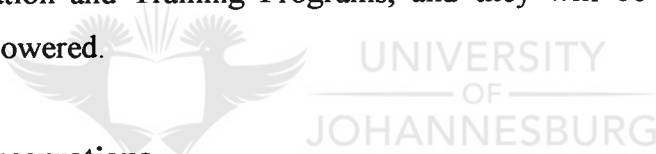
#### Ways to address Unemployment

I recorded the women's suggestions of their solutions to their unemployment. When they were asked about possible solutions to their problems, they mentioned four possibilities, which are:

- Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET).

- Governmental Development of the Area.
- Women's Self Empowering Projects.
- Husband's Workshops.

All of the women interviewed stated that they want to take part in the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Programs. They said that they need to be literate. The majority of those who went to school in the primary phase, stated that they forgot some if not all of what they had learnt. A hundred percent of the women stated that they want women's empowering projects to be introduced in the area, and again stated the importance of the government developing the area through the construction of industries or firms. This rural area must be developed and job creation must be promoted. Twenty percent of the women stated that it is important that the community workers and social workers organise workshops whereby their husbands or partners will be told about the importance of letting them go to work. Their men use cultural and traditional reasons to justify keeping them home bound. Through participation, they could be introduced, to Adult Basic Education and Training Programs, and they will be happy because they would become empowered.



#### **3.4.2 Covert Observations**

To record data that could support or refute what the women told me about their circumstances, I visited them in their private settings. The observations were made from the 14<sup>th</sup> June 1999 to the 21<sup>st</sup> June 1999, for a duration of two weeks. I made informal visits to the homes of these women. The visits took place from 10h00 in the morning to 15h00 in the afternoon. The common things I observed from their homes were a lack of water, electricity, proper sanitation, proper housing and food. There are few furniture items in the homes of the women.

The findings are that their living conditions are generally bad. Water is not always available every day. The local tap that supplies the community with water often run dry. Some of the women had to walk for long distances to reach the tap. They walk for about

one kilometer pushing wheelbarrows full of buckets of water. This is strenuous to the women. Some of the women walk for about 500m to reach the tap, where some walk for about 100m. They spend most of their time walking to and from home to fetch as much water as possible, because they do not know when the local tap will dry out.

They do not have electricity in their homes, and some buy wood from the local shops. The wood is sold for R80.00 to R100.00 a load which is the needed supply for the month. Generally their houses are self built and not strong enough to withstand bad weather. Some of these homes do not have toilets. Due to the lack of domestic water supply, they use pit toilets. These toilets are not well structured and are dangerous for children to use. Many children use their yards for ablution purposes. This exposes the family to further health risks.

The children that were around, were underweight and have skin diseases. Their appearance suggested that they suffer from malnutrition. This could be due to a lack of a proper diet, because most of these families are living below the poverty line.

### 3.5 FINAL CONFIGURATIONS



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Patriarchal hierarchies of oppression led to these women being unemployed. Firstly the parents of these women had negative attitude to their daughters schooling. They are products of patriarchal hierarchies of oppression. These are the parents who wanted their daughters to be married at an early age. It is out of these marriages that many children were born. The husbands use cultural reasons to keep their wives at home, thus continuing the oppression of these women and the poverty of the family. These unemployed and illiterate poverty stricken women suffer a lot. They experience depression, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, isolation and lack of support in their lives. These women need to be empowered to transform their reality.

## SECTION IV

### DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

#### 4.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The effects of unemployment on the lives of the black women in Acornhoek were investigated through in-depth interviews, observations and a literature review. In this section the focus will be on the research findings and recommendations of the study. I will discuss the research findings and their implications in the light of the research questions of this inquiry.

#### 4.2 DISCUSSION OF THE FINAL CATEGORIES

##### 4.2.1 The causes of unemployment

The causes of women's unemployment are multiple. It has been found in the review of the literature that in a patriarchal world, the world of work is meant for men and not for women. Women are seen to be good at taking care of children and other household duties. Women are suffering under the patriarchal hierarchies of control. In traditional societies the duties of the black women are that of taking care of the children and other members of the family. In these societies, women attain the full status of women only if they are married and have children. The number of children they bear is also important. Mothers-in-law prefer daughters-in-law who have more children than other daughters-in-law. Education for daughters is discouraged. The women who were interviewed pointed out that if a girl is educated she will enrich her in-laws at the expense of her parents. Husbands do not encourage their wives to go to school nor work. They do not at any time in their lives want to experience a threat to their authority. The men want to make sure that they remain respectful authoritative figures at home. These men do not want to share with their wives the ways of running the family. They want to have the final say, and everyone in the family should do as they like and wish.

These causes originates from the conservative view of gender whereby women's roles and men's roles at home and in the public, that is, the private and public spheres, are determined by biological differences.

In the interview data, I found that most of the women were not working because they did not have access to education. They were unequal beneficiaries of education, due to them living in a rural area. This rural area has the smallest share of resources devoted to formal education. The literature supported this. The Rural Development Framework (1997:Executive summary) states that:

Under apartheid, African's living in rural areas were denied educational opportunities to an even greater extent than those in urban areas. Most rural schools are poorly resourced without buildings, equipment, books and without electricity and running water.

Apartheid played a vital role in disadvantaging the rural areas in South Africa in as far as allocation of resources is concerned. As the interview findings show, some of these women did not go to school because of their parent's economic circumstances. Most of these parents were poor and unemployed. Those who were working were working on farms and earning meagre incomes. They could not manage to keep their children in school or buy school uniforms for them. They could not afford to pay for their transport to schools because schools were located very far from home. They had to walk for long distances ( $\pm 20$  km). Another reason that surfaced from the interviews was that these women's parents were products of a patriarchal society that oppresses women.

The rights of women were constantly violated. The most important traditional duties of the black women were the household chores and looking after her children, thus their parents were pleased when they got married. Their husbands expected them to bear as many children as possible. The belief held by these men were that the number of children a woman gives birth to determine the number of years these women will stay in their marriages. What I observed was that with only their husbands working, the family is not well provided for. This escalates poverty and malnutrition. This is supported by the Rural Development Framework

report which found that almost three quarters of people below the poverty line in South Africa live in rural areas.

#### 4.2.2 The effects of unemployment

The effects of unemployment are multiple, and unemployed women suffer a lot. They suffer as women under the patriarchal hierarchies of control, and again suffer as those people who are seen not fit for working. They are seen to be good only for the monotonous, repetitive and lonely housework, which is unpaid and has low social status. Unemployed women suffer economic hardships due to lack of money. They experience depression and destruction of confidence. They look down upon themselves as worthless. These women experience isolation from others. They become anxious, withdrawn and bitter. Life becomes meaningless for them. They lose a sense of belonging because they perceive others as blaming them for their unemployment. The unemployed are often perceived by others as work shy or lazy to work.

This stigmatisation of seeing the unemployed person as being work shy, deprives the individual of her sense of belonging. The unemployed women feel that their communities are rejecting them. They also feel like they are not part of the community. If these women are to experience a communal life they need to experience a sense of belonging. If a person experiences a sense of community, she feels attached, loved, intimate and trusting. She will no longer feel unattached, rejected, isolated, lonely and distrustful. In the interviews conducted I found that these unemployed women experience a loss of community. They feel isolated, rejected, lonely and unattached. Some of these women also experience emotional and physical abuse from their husbands or boyfriends. They decide to remain silent about their abuse because of their dependency on those abusing them. These men give them money. They think that if they report them to the local police station these men will stop giving them money. One of the women said that if she were employed she would leave her boyfriend who physically abuses her when he is drunk. The children born out of these abusive relationships are traumatised and suffer psychologically and physically.

In the observations I found their living conditions to be generally poor. These are not good environments for raising children. These homes lack proper sanitation, water and electricity,



and are of a poor quality. They are the types of houses that can not withstand bad weather. Furthermore, most of the families are living below the poverty line.

#### 4.2.3 Unemployment as disempowerment

The majority of these unemployed women that I interviewed said that their problem of unemployment is due to their problem of being illiterate. They said that they are illiterate because their parents had a negative attitude to daughters going to school. One lady said that when she got married she requested her husband to take her to school, but he refused. He told her that he is working, and will take care of her and the children. Her husband is a product of a patriarchal society of control. If these women want to be accepted by their communities in general and their families in particular, they need to deny themselves and behave and act according to their prescribed roles. Their roles are that of being mothers, wives and housewives. The husbands as the authoritative figures are the ones who have the final say at home. The wives must be subservient to their husbands if they want to be accepted. Generally wives in traditional societies are regarded as good wives if they stay at home and give birth to children. Sergiovanni (1994:10) states that: -

In the co-operation, relationships are formal and distant, having been prescribed by roles and role expectations. Circumstances are evaluated by universal criteria as embodied in policies, rules and protocols. Acceptance is conditional.

For these unemployed women to feel acceptable in their private and public sphere, they have to deny themselves and ignore their rights. They are being restricted from accessing education, land, finances and labour. These women mentioned four ways to their empowerment. They stated that they need to have access to education, as literacy is being valued. Their education should be linked with income generating skills. They also said that they would appreciate it if the government can develop this rural area. The construction of industries and factories will help in creating jobs. The other factor emphasised by the married women was that they would welcome the intervention of the social workers or other community members. The professionals could organise workshops with their husbands and convince them of the importance of the women working, and participating in the Adult Basic

Education and Training programmes (ABET). According to the literature reviewed the majority of the illiterate people in the world, in Africa and South Africa in particular, are women. These women are, amongst other reasons illiterate due to a lack of access to education and because of the patriarchal societies that discourages girls from schooling. The problem of high illiteracy rates among women is a worldwide phenomenon linked with deep-seated social causes: such as the unequal division of labour and control over women's sexuality (Hörsten 1996:52).

These unemployed black women need education to change their living conditions. This education must be linked to empowering projects. Through their participation in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes these women will have the power to control their lives. With the right kind of education these women will be empowered to participate in economical, political and social matters that are affecting their lives. According to Daniels (1998:167) Non - formal education (NFE) as a vehicle of change offers more possibilities for participants to challenge political, social and gender stratifications. Literacy is a prerequisite for meaningful interaction with the modern world and can, therefore, in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries be logically regarded as a basic human right (Hörsten 1996:53). It is through education that women will be able to change their oppression to self-control and determination. The information they will acquire from participating in the adult basic education and training program will help them to change also their family lives. Women need information to increase their awareness of oppression and exploitation (Stomquist 1994:107). Literacy for women contributes to development by influencing the birth rate, infant mortality and the spread of diseases, and which in turn affect national economic growth and the development of the whole country (Hörsten 1996:54).

These unemployed women are desperate and are living below the poverty line, as such their education for literacy needs to be linked with income generating projects. This can motivate the women to participate in the Adult basic education and training programmes. Empowerment through capacity building builds self-awareness and self esteem in women, restore human dignity and prepare rural women psychologically for the development challenges and opportunities they encounter in the national reconstruction. They again help

these women to develop basic business acumen in order for them to start conducting income-generating activities, either in groups or as individuals, in a way, which is consistent with good business practice (Centre for Community Development of Vista 1992:02).

#### 4.3 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

From the discussed findings it has emerged that women are oppressed in their private and public spheres. This oppression led to them being illiterate and unemployed. These women are unemployed partly owing to their lack of access to education as well as to their oppression under the patriachal hierarchies of control their husbands subject them to. These unemployed women experience a loss of community, as they do not experience a sense of belonging, due to their isolation. They are often withdrawn and depressed. Association with others is too restricted as they are always at home whilst their husbands are out working in the cities.

Due to cultural and ethnic dictates, their husbands do not approve of them going to look for work on the neighbouring farms. They promise their wives that they will provide everything for them and the children. Through observations, I found that these promises are not being fulfilled. These women and their children are being underfed. They do not eat a balanced diet, as the breadwinners are not providing enough for these families. The conditions under which these women are living are not conducive for child rearing. They have poor housing, and lack water and electricity supply. The effect of this poverty is felt by both children and women.

#### 4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

These unemployed and oppressed women need to be conscientised to transform. They need to transform from being objects to being subjects. They must have a say in matters pertaining to them. Freire, in Taylor (1993:67) states that, "Oppression prevents the illiterates and the poor from self realisation and self assertion". These illiterate, unemployed and poverty-stricken black women need to be conscientised to broaden their conceptual horizon. They must have a say in the social, political and economic aspects of their lives. Conscientisation is a means of liberating these women. These unemployed women need to be empowered to take their rightful stand in society. They must be empowered through participation in literacy

programmes that cater to their needs. Women can not continue to be the under-educated majority. As such gender specific literacy programs must be designed specifically for women so as to be both practically relevant to their lives, and emancipatory or empowering.

Because these women are in a desperate situation their literacy must be linked with income-generating projects. These women's empowering projects will equip them with skills on how to start and run small businesses effectively. These women need to be familiarised with the ways of starting a business and how to run it profitably. For these literacy programs to be relevant and addressing the needs of these women, they must be included in the designing of the programme. They must be included in every aspect of the literacy programs development. They must make contributions in the planning and implementation of the literacy programs. Inclusion must be practised at all levels of the development of the literacy programs. There must be a dialogue. Conscientisation by dialogue is the means of transforming these oppressed women into the liberated (Taylor 1993:58). Through dialogue the literacy programs will be planned and designed in such a way that they address the needs of these women. These women must be granted the opportunity to take part in their education.

The right literacy programmes could empower these women and make them develop a positive self-esteem. They will be liberated from being objects to being subjects. They will have a say in the political, social and economic aspects pertaining to their lives. These literacy programmes will also empower these women to have control over their sexual rights. This could lead to them choosing to have fewer children and increasing their frequency to visiting the clinics and learning more about health programmes.

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

The problem of illiterate women and unemployment was investigated. I interviewed 15 unemployed black women of Acornhoek as the sample for the research study. I followed it up with visits to their houses for observational purposes. In addition I studied relevant literature that addresses this problem. I went through all these processes in order to make sure that my research data is reliable, credible, transferable and valid. The use of these multiple data collection methods helped me to triangulate my research findings. Triangulation is a process

of using multiple data collection methods, data sources, analysts or theories to check the validity of the study (Gall et al 1996:574).

What the study set out to find was the causes and effects of unemployment on the lives of the black women in Acornhoek. It also set out to find ways to address unemployment. In the interviews conducted, I found that the causes of unemployment are multiple. Some of the women stated that they were unemployed because they did not have access to schooling, partly owing to their parents' negative attitude to them schooling and partly owing to their poor family background. Some of these women stated that their husbands did not want them to go to school nor work, whereas some of the interviewed women stated that Acornhoek is undeveloped, and there are no places to look for work. The literature reviewed also supported the interviews' findings.

The effects of unemployment on the lives of these women are multiple. Some of the women stated that they experience social problems because they feel that their communities are not having their interests at heart. They feel rejected, isolated and lonely. The literature I reviewed also revealed that the same feelings are experienced by other unemployed women around the world, as such these feelings are not only experienced by the unemployed black women in Acornhoek. These women also stated that they are suffering physical and emotional abuse from their partners. They don't report them to the local police nor the social workers because of the fear that these men will refrain from giving them money. Their children drop out of school. These problems are hard to bear, and some of these women resorts to being alcoholics and living promiscuous lives. The implication here is that programs dealing with partner abuse are vital for the women's survival.

In the observations I found that these women's living conditions are poor. The findings from the literature reviewed and interviews held, together with the observations suggests that these unemployed women needs to be empowered. Empowerment through literacy and capacity building will help them to transform their lives and become the authorities of their self. They will also be able to have full control over their lives. Empowerment must come through literacy programmes that are linked to the women's empowering projects. These unemployed women need this information in order to create awareness of their oppression and to make changes.

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## ***ADDENDUM 1***

### **Address to the Nation on National Women's Day**

9 August 1999

Today, August 9th is National Women's Day. On this day, as a nation, we re-commit ourselves to the advancement of women at all levels of our society.

In doing this we are alive to the harsh reality that faces women in our country today. For many years, the majority of women in our country, particularly in the areas and the townships, have the brunt of poverty and hardship. The lives of these women were and indeed, still are characterised by low levels of literacy and inadequate to education, health, housing water, fuel sources and employment opportunities.

Many amongst the women of this country have experienced violence, abuse, rape, sexual harassment and are the worst affected by the scourge of HIV/AIDS. They daily carry the scars of their suffering often in solitary silence and without adequate counselling and support.

At the same time, both the government as well as organs of civil society, have responded, as we should, to confront these degrading and humiliating conditions facing our women, so that together we build a better, more human and caring society. But more needs to be done.

Together we must bring the abuse and violence against women to an end. In this regard, we must speed up the establishment of one-stop centres for abused women and children. Special measures have been put in place for the criminal justice system to deal sensitively with the survivors of rape. The time has come for all of us to end the cycles of abuse and violence against women and children that have engulfed our communities. As we mark National Women's Day today, let all of us-each and everyone - ask ourselves a question: Why do we keep silent when we are witnesses of violence against women; why do we keep silent when we are subjected daily to intolerable abuse.

I would like all South Africans, individually and collectively, to pause and reflect on the incalculable damage that this violence has inflicted on our society, the way in which it reduces us to less than human and destroys the possibility to rebuild the fabric of our society

Accordingly,

Let every man respect the dignity of every women!

Let every man pay his child maintenance!

Let every man stop abusing women and children!

It is in the interest of the health of our nations, that we intensify our work on the issue of HIV/AIDS, ensuring; that our public education campaigns are effective and we must do all we can to improve support to AIDS victims and orphans.

Fellow South African,

I am pleased to announce that the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, as part of the National Legacy Project, is holding a competition open to all, for the design and erection of a monument, to commemorate and celebrate the contribution of women to the struggle for freedom and justice in South Africa.

Today as we remember those twenty thousand women who took part in the 1956 march, and also the struggle of all South Africans, let us also pay tribute to our mothers, our wives, our daughters, for their selflessness, their creativity, their love, their commitment to their country as they continue to work for their full emancipation, through their words and deeds, in their daily lives.

We cannot say we are making progress as a people and a nation, unless the women of our country have shelters over their heads, adequate food to feed themselves and their families, health care and access to clean water and electricity.

We cannot say we are moving forward faster the attainment of complete liberation from the legacy of the past unless the women of our country receive the education and training that

enables them to reach their full potential and are themselves the African Pioneers leading all of us into the African Century which should also be the century for African women.

For women to take their rightful place on centre-stage, the development of Africa, requires the collective effort of all the people of our continent, and the inculcation of new consciousness of gender equality at all levels.

The attainment of a people - centred, caring society is a task that cannot be postponed for one day more. Let us together get down to work to achieve this goal, and with it, the liberation of our women.

***President : Mbeki T.***



## ***ADDENDUM 2***

### **Statement at the Technology for Women Business Awards Dinner**

9 August 1999, Sun City

Master of Ceremonies

Minister Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

Minister Ivy Matsepe-Cassaburri

Minister Thoko Didiza

Deputy Minister Bridgette Mabandla

Premier Popo Molefe

Women in Business

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honoured to be here in the company of distinguished business women and entrepreneurs as we celebrate the contribution of women in business. We are here tonight both to reward women who used technology in successful business enterprises and also to celebrate National Women's Day.

Given the unacceptable high levels of abuse and violence against women, there may be some amongst us who will suggest that there is still no reason to celebrate this day, and that we should instead only reflect on this violence against women prevailing in our society. Indeed this violence continues to occupy our collective mind, and government is coming up with more practical measures as to what can be done to remedy the situation and make our cities, our towns, our villages safe in places in which our women can live and go about their daily lives in peace and without fear.

I believe that since 1994, we have made tremendous gains towards the full emancipation of the women of our country both by passing new laws that protect and defend the rights of women and new policies, that address the issue of gender equality in all aspects of South Africa.

Both government and civil society have worked together and continue to do so to address the conditions facing women, to create an enabling environment in which our women can prosper.

All departments which are concerned with criminal justice will work together to share information and have a more integrated approach in dealing with crime. One-stop centres for abused women and children are being established.

One of the most important challenges facing our country today, including our women, is how to bring about sustainable economic development.

The complete emancipation of our women through their full participation in the economic life of our country is dependent on us attaining higher rates of economic growth and on how we go about prompting the creation of a larger number of jobs.

The complete emancipation of our women is dependent on skills developments and embracing the new technologies of our information age that will fast track our development, so that we can compete on an equal footing with the rest of the world.

The complete emancipation of our women depends on our encouragement of entrepreneurs and our creating a supportive environment of SMME's particularly; around the question of the financing of this sector.

Thus, I am pleased that this initiative of Technology of Women in business addressed these concerns. The enhancement of the use of technology by women in business, the promotion of innovation and an entrepreneurial spirit, the encouragement of young women in

Choosing careers in science and technology and, most importantly, the promotion of co-operation through partnerships between SMME's, the private sector, parastatals and research bodies, will - I believe - go a long way in bringing about the sustained economic development we speak so much about, and especially for the women of our country.

The fact that this initiative has brought together a number of different departments - Communication, Agriculture, Minerals and Energy, Housing, Public Works - Further strengthens our abilities to work towards the economic empowerment of women.

Through this initiative aspiring business women can be informed of opportunities, their rights and obligations, of how and where to obtain start-up capital, of how to promote their business and of where to get on going training.

It is also to your credit that through this initiative you are also concerned with the formulation of regional policy strategies and the implementation of regional development measures interwoven with the stimulation of economic development at regional and local levels.

The importance of technology in our business and our daily lives cannot be under-estimated. The electronic information age with its globalisation of the economy , culture and knowledge is upon us. The question we have to ask ourselves : are the women of our country and our continent ready for the demand of the 21st Century?

For, when we speak of an African Century, we speak of African women both participating in leading and benefiting from this process.

We speak of an African Century that must be the century for African Women to realise their full potential, freed from the shacklers of the past.

When we speak of an African Century, we speak of sustained economic development, in which women play a crucial part.

When we speak of an African Century, we speak of the Cultural Renaissance of all people of this continent : a celebration of who we are as Africa, proud of our heritages, but also modernising to present needs and future demands.

When we speak of African Century, we must speak of our increased productivity as a people, whereby all the people of our country work more efficiently and effectively, attending both to the maintenance of quality and respecting delivery schedules, while also achieving job satisfaction.

I believe that the women of our country, perhaps more so than others, are aware of how to use the time they have available in fully productive ways and how to get job done, given the limited time and frames.

All of the women we are paying tribute to tonight, through these awards, are here, as evidence of their hard work, determination and creativity.

Through their successes, we are bridging the inequalities that existed within our nation as a result of the discriminatory past. We are also confronting the issue of poverty, for through such projects, the poorest of the poor can uplift themselves and prosper.

Through their determination and hard work, we can say with confidence that we are, through them, bringing about the sustainable development of our country, and of the developing world. We are addressing the inequalities that existed between nations, between North and South, between Africa and Europe.

The challenge for all for us here tonight - government, business civil society is how to develop strategies for local and regional economic promotion which provides jobs without necessarily compromising the right that the states gives its citizens and workers, as an integral part of attaining economic growth and a better life for all.

For too long the women of our country have had to walk many hours to fetch water. For too long the women of our country have had to collect firewood and spend hours on household chores - not out of choice - but because of the unavailability of electricity. It is time for these women to enter the 21st Century armed with the technology that will help to advance us all.

When we nurture a new patriotism, we are building a society that threat women with dignity and respect. We are nurturing a new national culture whereby women are acknowledged as equal contributors in our national life and in community cultural development.

When we cultivate a new patriotism, we are saying that women have the right to power.



We are saying that the wealthy must share with the poor, men must share with women, that our patriotism must be based on a national empathy, especially for the poor and the vulnerable, the marginalised members of our society. It is our task to motivate our citizens and activate our nations in working towards this goal.

I believe that this initiative, Technology for Women in business, is one way of achieving this goal.

My congratulations go out to all the winners. May your projects go from strength to strength.

I Thank You

***President : Mbeki T. (1999)***

