CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION
1.1 INTRODUCTION

Poverty in South Africa is a social ill that affects the majority of women, children and the elderly, especially those living in the rural areas. Women are the most affected as they bear the brunt of poverty, overcrowding and hunger in the rural areas (Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), 1994:84). There are factors that contribute to the impoverishment of people world-wide and there are factors that are area or context specific. In the South African context, White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) highlights that illiteracy and poverty are the major obstacles to the majority of women advancing towards a better life. Gebremedhin (2002: 183) writes that poverty results from the “failure of development” to improve the lives of the people. An example is the “distorted development” in South Africa during the apartheid era (Midgley, 1995: 25). In the current context of democracy, attempts to address poverty and improve the standards of living within communities are initiated through community development programmes by government departments and civil society organizations.

White Paper for Social Welfare (1997: 93) proposes that community development is an intervention strategy to implement development programmes that lead to the betterment of the lives of community members. The social, economic and cultural dimensions of the community should be considered as they play a significant role in the holistic development of communities and especially women within these communities. The community development strategy within the developmental paradigm in South Africa post 1994, stresses the importance of economic growth, linked to income generating programmes and small business development in local communities (Gray, 1998). These programmes should result in local productions that are affordable to communities, create jobs and address poverty.

Issues such as unequal participation of women in development programmes, unemployment, lack of skills or being unemployable, environment and policies developed by the government contribute to the impoverishment of women, specifically Black women living in the rural areas of South Africa (Blackburn, 1988:16-19). The
gender roles and relations between men and women also contribute significantly to the impoverishment of women as they are characterized by inequality in terms of power, decision making, control, freedom of action and ownership of resources. It is acknowledged that the key roles played by women in the past and even currently, in social and economic development is that of productive activities such as domestic labour and reproductive activities where they are responsible for being bearers, carers and the socialization of the next generation (Gabriel, 1991: 69). These reproductive activities of women are not viewed as work because there is no cash payment attached when compared to work done by men. Women are viewed as “facts of life and husbands have to make decisions” (Swanepoel, 1997: 64). However, women have proved to be more concerned about the development of their families compared to men, and as a result, women are viewed as the “principal agents in the fight against poverty” (Perry and Schenck, 2001: 15-20).

Rural development is about development of resources and people in rural areas. According to Hirway (1990: 126) rural development strategies aim at maximizing production, by tapping the growth potential in rural areas in such a way that equal distribution of growth, income and assets benefits all. In line with this perspective, women in rural areas need to be provided with a suitable environment to enable them to effectively contribute to their own development. Cooperatives were introduced in some African countries as an intervention strategy to eradicate poverty and to empower rural and urban communities. The current democratic government of South Africa identified and adapted cooperatives as a strategy to allow communities in rural areas specifically, to improve their lives through income generating programmes and creating jobs for themselves.

There are different types of cooperatives and women cooperative is one category that is funded by the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Social Development to improve the levels of the previously disadvantaged and unemployed women as part of the national strategy for poverty alleviation. This study explored the impact of women cooperatives, specifically those from the previously disadvantaged areas, on community development and their contribution towards the Integrated Sustainable
Rural Development Plan (ISRDP) which is intended to combat poverty in South African communities.

1.2 PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND STATEMENT

Through international conferences for women and the establishment of women’s organizations, women have managed to convert major organizations such as the World Bank, to be gender sensitive with regards to their programmes (Perry and Schenck, 2001). In 1994 the World Bank’s leadership promulgated a policy document entitled Reinforcement of Women’s Participation in Economic Development, aimed at modifying gender relations in economic development (Perry and Schenck, 2001: 10-12).

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) contains plans, strategies and policies which were developed in an attempt to change the lives of all South Africans, while focusing on women and children as priority groups. The Reconstruction and Development Programme of the African National Congress (1994) and White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) both emphasize the need for gender sensitivity in developing policies and implementing programmes in order to equalize the imbalances of the past.

The democratic government of South Africa post 1994, established social development as a policy framework and community development as an intervention strategy to eradicate poverty, focusing on specific target groups such as children, youth and women. According to White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), social development or the developmental approach aims to improve the social welfare of the people with a specific focus on previously disadvantaged groups and the poor of the poorest. Van Dyk (2006) writes that social development encourages facilitation of new processes of working together selflessly to enhance the well being of all communities in South Africa. Weyers (1997: 50) defines social development as a process of planned change that must be undertaken jointly by government and the people of the country. It is a people-centred approach to development (Midgley, 1995: 11; White
Paper for Social Welfare, 1997: 96). This means that for effective social development to take place it needs individuals and communities to work collectively and be active participants in their development.

Gray (1998: 56) views social development as an effective strategy to break the cycle of poverty and is implemented through community development as an intervention mechanism for poverty reduction. Community development is considered a national priority and the National Department of Social Development in South Africa is developing policy on community development that is relevant to the democratic context of the country. Community development is a movement designed to promote better living for the whole community with the active participation and if possible, the initiative of the community (Jeppe, 1985: 25). Community development could be viewed as an appropriate mechanism or intervention to empower women and integrate them in their own development as participants of development in their respective communities (Akande, 1992: 63). The emphasis is on the equity and equal distribution of development benefits for all.

As part of the poverty alleviation strategy the National Department of Social Development set goals to develop women cooperatives; youth programmes and food security programmes where communities produce products and sell them at an affordable price to communities at large and create jobs for themselves (Business Plan for Poverty Relief Programme, 2001/2003). In 2002/2003 the National Department of Social Development decided to shift from funding projects to funding programmes with not less than R250 000 per programme. However, increased community participation was a requirement as part of this initiative. Women cooperative was one category identified for funding by the National Department of Social Development as an effort to increase participation of women in community development and to combat poverty.

The socio–economic challenges of the Eastern Cape Province can be qualified in terms of income, employment, poverty, growth, investment and productivity (Strategic framework for growth and development, 2004). The Eastern Cape Province is one of
the poorest provinces in South Africa as it is made up of two of the former Bantustans, Transkei and Ciskei (RDP, 1994: 9; Strategy Framework for Growth and Development, 2004-2014). The Eastern Cape Province has a population of 6,872022 of which, 54% are female and 46% are males (NSDP Spatial profile, 2006). The province has the highest number, 4.7 million people living below the minimum living level (MLL). 10% of the communities have no formal schooling. Women are the most affected as a high rate of females drop out of school due to teenage pregnancy and other challenges. The unemployment rate is high with 1.1 million unemployed people residing in the province (NSDP Spatial profile, 2006). The report further states that the province has relatively low levels of access to municipal services, contributing to unsatisfactory living conditions. This is supported by Davids, Theron and Mampunye (2005: 39) who highlight that in the Eastern Cape, only 45% of communities have a direct water supply to their houses, 33% have flush toilets, 50% have electricity for lighting and 28% are able to access electricity for cooking.

Women are most affected by poverty and lack of resources within the communities. In 1994 female headed households had an almost 70% poverty rate compared to 43% of male headed households suggesting that rural women are most affected by poverty in South Africa (Reconstruction and Development Programme, 1994: 12-13). Kotzer (1997: 54) recognizes that the majority of the poorest people in the community are women and that they face particular constraints in development.

Following national policy initiatives on women’s cooperatives, the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Social Development embarked on establishing women’s cooperatives as part of its poverty alleviation programme in the province in 2002. However, this goal of economic sufficiency and sustainability through the programme on women cooperatives has not been achieved effectively by the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Social Development. Consequently, assistance was sought from the Independent Development Trust (IDT) to support the programmes to become sustainable and independent. The intervention of IDT has not been much of a success. In 2005 a lead study was conducted by IDT to verify the performance of all funded poverty relief programmes. In 2006 it was confirmed that out of 20 women
cooperative programmes funded by the Department of Social Development in the Eastern Cape, seventeen women cooperatives still needed further assistance (Independent Development Trust/Department of Social Development Verification Study, 2007).

It was found that although funds were utilized, there was no quality production on a large scale nor were the majority of the women cooperative programmes developed to become economically sustainable. It was also found that most of the cooperative programmes led by men as chairpersons, thus not achieving the goal of developing the capabilities of women and their cooperatives. Women are not given an opportunity to lead, support the programmes and to access resources that will enable them to perform to their potential. According to the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) empowerment through education, skills development, knowledge, participation, gender equality and support could improve the status of women and their contribution to community development programmes. These would create jobs and alleviate and eradicate poverty in the communities.

Perry and Schenck (2001: 15-20) remind us that history shows that women have the ability to collect resources for their families and when it comes to providing for their children, women have proved to be better than men. The authors explain that an increase in women’s earnings has a direct impact on household spending, which directly results in improved family quality of life.

This study posits that women can drive cooperative programmes successfully and can strongly contribute to reducing poverty in their homes and communities. In line with this proposal, the study adopted a combination of theories such as people centred development, the humanistic perspective and a Black feminist perspective as a guiding framework to the study. People centred development and the humanistic perspectives were referred to because they view women as human beings with right and capability to make own decisions. The black feminist perspective focuses on empowering black rural women who need to improve their lives. A detailed discussion of the theoretical framework follows in Chapter 2. In order to understand the impact of
women cooperatives on community development and to promote the participation of women in their development, the study asks the following research question: To what extent does gender and specifically women through women cooperatives, impact on community development and poverty in the current context of social welfare transformation in South Africa?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The objectives of the study are as follows:
- To explore the role of women in community development in the current context of democracy and social welfare transformation in South Africa.
- To explore the impact of gender and women through women cooperatives on community development and poverty.
- To explore strategies for the empowerment of women through community development as an intervention strategy.

The study rests on the assumption that women impact community development and have the capacity to drive community development programmes to effectively alleviate poverty on condition that they are given the opportunity, resources and support by the relevant agents of development, including government.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research design of the study is exploratory, descriptive and evaluative in nature. An exploratory study provides a clearer understanding of the problems or phenomena in question by collecting the appropriate data (Hammonsley, 1989). The study is exploratory in nature because of the current relative novelty of the topic of women’s cooperatives in the context of community development within a democratic South Africa. According to Kumar (2005: 10), descriptive research systematically describes the situation, problem, phenomenon, service or programme, or provides information about the living conditions of a community or describes attitudes towards an issue. The design is suitable for this study which aims at determining the contributions and
the impact of women through women cooperatives on community development. The research study was conducted in relation to ISRDP programmes of the Eastern Cape Province.

The study utilized a qualitative research methodology to determine the nature of women’s impact on community development. The study also used an evaluation and gender analysis method to verify the effectiveness of women cooperatives in communities. According to Kumar (2005: 274-275), evaluation is a process of ascertaining the decision areas of concern, selecting appropriate information, collecting and analyzing information in order to report summary data useful to decision makers in selecting alternatives. The gender analysis method of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations was adapted and incorporated as a data collection and analysis tool of the study. The tool focuses on four sections which are context profile, activity profile, resource profile and the programme profile. Gender analysis is a powerful social analytical tool and its results often describe the situations of gender inequality (Vainio-Mattila, 1999:11). The method assisted the researcher to engage in the roles and the impact of programme participants in community development.

1.4.1 Location of the study and research sample

The study was located in the Eastern Cape Province and the women cooperative programmes are from the Chris Hani District Municipality in the Cala and Lady Frere villages. A purposive sampling method was used to select the research sample. Twumasi (2001) states that sampling is crucial in social research, it deals with the scope of the research coverage and whether the respondents selected are suited to answering the research question.

The researcher identified two women cooperatives programmes funded by the Provincial Department of Social Development in the Eastern Cape as they were implemented as part of the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Plan (ISRDP) in the Eastern Cape. Each co-operative comprised of a membership of twenty to
twenty five women, below sixty years of age. The sample also comprised of two Community Development Practitioners (CDPs) working with the programmes, one project officer from the Independent Development Trust (IDT) responsible for providing support to the Department of Social Development Poverty Relief Programmes (PRP), and two senior management officials from the Department of Social Development, Community Development and Research Directorate. The study utilized two sets of samples because there was a need to obtain information from the participants (community) and from the agents of development (government officials). In total the sample comprised forty four research participants or respondents.

1.4.2 Data collection

Data was collected through two data collection methods: focus groups and individual interviews. Utilization of more than one method of collecting data is supported by Clarke (1999: 67) when he states that it is rare to find a qualitative study based on one method of data collection. The gender analysis data collection framework used in the focus groups covered the four areas of context; activity; resource and programme profiles. Individual interviews were conducted with government officials responsible for facilitating the implementation of women cooperatives through interview schedules. The interview was chosen as it represents a valid source of knowledge production (Alvesson, 2002: 111).

Secondary data sources in the form of monthly and annual reports of the programmes provided written information which was used to verify accuracy. As Chambers in (Vainio-Mattila, 1999: 13) points out, bigotry should be borne in mind when collecting information to avoid bias, or prejudice that “impedes our understanding of new circumstances”. The exercise was conducted on site to enable the researcher to better understand the women cooperative programmes. The responses of the women participants were handwritten on the profile worksheet. The responses to the individual interviews were also recorded by hand by the researcher.
1.4.3 Data analysis

Gender analysis is a tool used to organize information in such a way that the researcher evaluates what further information is needed, what potential and the impact the activities will have on women and men (Vainio-Mattila, 1999: 11). The aim of data analysis is to understand the constitutive elements of the data collected through an examination of the relationships between concepts, variables and to verify trends that can be identified and isolated or to establish themes in the data (Mouton, 2001: 108). Data collection for the women participants was analyzed according to the profiles or themes contained within a gender analysis framework. The information was arranged according to themes and captured on computer. Data gathered from the individual interviews was captured and analyzed according to the themes contained in the gender analysis framework.

1.5 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted on women cooperatives within a district municipality, and confined to those that were attached to the ISRDP initiated by the PDOSD. This excluded the researcher from focusing on other women cooperative programmes within the Province of the Eastern Cape. This limitation also precluded exploring the contributions other women in the province have made through various community development programmes.

1.6 CHALLENGES IN CONDUCTING THE STUDY

The researcher experienced certain challenges and limitations specifically during the data collection process. Challenges were related to reduction in numbers of members in the cooperatives; referral to junior officials by PDOSD for data collection; lack of programme records; and movement of Community Development Practitioners out of the programme areas. Addressing these challenges was time consuming and costly to the researcher. The study focused on two women cooperatives which were linked to
the ISRDP of the Eastern Cape Province. This left out a number of other cooperatives within the province and limited the scope of the study.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethics are about an attempt to formulate codes and principles of moral behaviour (May, 2001: 59). According to Birch, Jessop and Millev (2002), participants have a right to cooperate, or not to cooperate with the researcher and have to freely consent to the use of their property as a study site. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the programme members and obtained their permission to conduct the study. According to Clarke (1999: 83), failing to reveal one’s identity as a researcher or concealing the true purpose of the study from informants constitutes unethical conduct. Ethics serve to protect participants from possible harm by the researchers (Birch, Jessop and Millev, 2002). Mouton (2001:243-244) states that confidentiality refers to both the identity of an individual that must be kept a secret, as well as the information gathered from the individual. The results obtained should be in harmony with the informant’s right to dignity and privacy (Mouton, 2001). The research participants were aware of their rights, as these were explained to them by the researcher.

1.8 VALUE OF THE STUDY

The study will assist in facilitating the establishment of women programmes by the Provincial Department of Social Development. The lessons learnt could be shared with other area offices in the province and will enable the Provincial Department of Social Development (PDOSD) in the Eastern Cape to develop funding criteria that will be inclusive of government and community views.

1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The research study consists of five chapters: Chapter 1 covers the introduction, problem identification and statement, the objectives of the research, research design
and methodology, location of the study and research sample, data collection, data analysis, delimitations of the study, challenges in conducting the study and the ethical consideration of the study. In Chapter 2 the introduction, understanding of key terms: poverty, social development, community development, women and gender, women and culture, women cooperatives and the theoretical framework guiding the study are reviewed. Chapter 3 contains the introduction of the chapter, objectives of the study, research design and methodology, location of the study and research sample, data collection process, data analysis, challenges and delimitations in conducting the study, ethical consideration, value of study and the conclusion. Chapter 4 focuses an introduction followed by the findings and analysis of the findings. Finally, Chapter 5 provides the conclusion, the recommendations and the concluding remarks of the study.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents literature supporting the dominant idea of this study, which is, that women have the capability to undertake community development successfully, if given the opportunity and necessary support and empowered with knowledge, skills and resources. The literature review further provides an explanation of key terms pertinent to the study such as: poverty, social development and community development, women and gender, women and culture, women cooperatives. This chapter includes the theoretical framework guiding the study and focuses on people-centred development; the humanistic perspective and black feminist perspective. It is evident from the literature review that poverty means more than economic deprivation of communities. Social development as a policy framework and community development as an intervention strategy used by government to address poverty within the communities are discussed.

Literature on women and gender exposes how gender, gender roles and gender relations contribute to making women the poorest beings across the world. Culture has its advantages and disadvantages but can contribute to the development and the improvement of life for women. The literature reviewed on women cooperatives highlights how they are utilized as a tool to combat poverty.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING OF KEY TERMS

2.2.1 POVERTY

In South Africa poverty is commonly understood as not having resources or the inability to meet a family’s daily needs (Reconstruction and Development Programme, 1994). It is also important to mention that despite poverty being the most significant problem facing South Africa, notably since the new political dispensation, there is still no common or formal government definition of poverty. However, there are generally
many definitions and an examination will be made of some of the definitions in order to ground the study within national and international contexts.

Blackburn (1988:9) defines poverty as insufficiency of the minimum necessities for the maintenance of physical efficiency. However, the researcher views this definition as being too narrow for the South African context, given the elements and character of the type of poverty experienced by the poor in the Eastern Cape generally and by women in particular, as observed during the researcher’s field experience as a professional development practitioner.

A much broader definition is provided by other scholars. Shepherd (1998: 92) defines poverty as a “multi dimensional phenomenon that involves material deprivation, isolation, dependence, subordination, absence from organization, lack of assets, vulnerability to natural disasters and insecurity.” Concurring with Kiros (1985: 9), Shepherd (1998) views poverty as “not confined to lack of food or assets, malnutrition or disease but also powerlessness, illiteracy, isolation and vulnerability which further leads to impoverishment of the communities.” Du Toit (2005: 18) writes that “poverty should not only be understood in terms of asset deprivation and lack of access to jobs, but also deeply entrenched dynamics of vulnerability, marginalization and powerlessness.” The researcher agrees with the dynamism with which these authors see poverty that is only a result of a single cause but a myriad of causes.

De Beer and Swanepoel (1997: 2) provide further categories to poverty definition as relative and absolute poverty. “Relative poverty which is viewed as being poor in comparison to the standard of living of a person’s surroundings and absolutely poor is where individuals are in a situation where they cannot meet the minimum standard of nutrition and shelter and personal necessities cannot be maintained” (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1997). The Eastern Cape government has therefore taken a view of dealing with poverty as an extreme case (extreme poverty) and identifying women as the vulnerable group.
The assertion from the broad definitions given above, has resonance with South Africa and the Eastern Cape in line with its divided past. Leibbrandt, Van der Bergh and Bhorat (2001: 205) make a point through their analysis of chronic poverty in South Africa that it would not be correct to only characterize chronic poverty or inequality as largely a legacy of apartheid and past race-based policies. As much as that is true, it would be naïve to totally dismiss the damages of that past. To that extent Gray (1998: 10) and Patel (1992: 34) concur by pointing to the policies of the previous government which distorted the nature of social welfare services, as they were in favour of the white population only. Midgley's (1995) research on the lives and experiences of the black people in South Africa, found that the apartheid regime and its distorted development impoverished the black people of South Africa.

The researcher aligns herself with Du Toit (2005) when he states that poverty experienced by communities in South Africa is not only about the material dispossessions, but also about the emotional aspect of an individual. To mention a few: communities are vulnerable to social ills; illiteracy in the communities limits availability of opportunities and the attitudes of communities need to change towards a developmental life in order to move out of poverty.

2.2.2 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Jeppe (1985: 25) attributes the emergence of social development to India in the 1920s and later in Egypt, Jamaica and also other African countries in the 1930s. Democratic South Africa formally adopted social development as a policy framework for all after 1994. However, it is well known that the approach has long been implemented in South Africa before 1994. This is evidenced by the existence of, for example: infrastructure, roads, health and education systems that were developed by the previous government but for the benefit of one population group only (Reconstruction and development Programme, 1994). Social development was further popularized and adopted as a policy framework by the United Nations which committed itself through a charter to raise the standard of living and employment globally (Midgley, 1995: 56).
Social Development is defined as “the strategy to reduce mass poverty, inequality and conditions of underdevelopment” (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997). It is also defined by Weyers (1997: 50) “as a process of change that must be undertaken jointly by the government and the communities.” Social development “promotes human welfare and seeks to integrate social and economic processes, enhancing the well-being of the whole population and involving growth and change by promoting developmental processes” (Midgley, 1995: 1, 8, 23).

The approach aims at reducing poverty within communities by addressing the inequalities of the past that affected black people and especially women, and to promote the social well being of communities through structured programmes implemented in communities. According to Midgley (1995: 96), social development is characterized by its uniqueness from other approaches as it enhances people’s welfare on social problems and implements social policies in the context of economic development. The approach is inspired by modern day political economy for analyzing and dealing with the current social problems and for promoting social welfare at national and international levels.

Nationally and internationally, countries adopted social development as an approach to improve the conditions of the less developed countries according to Midgley (1995) who had a huge influence in the development of the social development policy framework in South Africa post 1994. The positive working relations between government and communities are crucial for effective implementation of social development. Government involvement assists with equal distribution of resources to the needy communities as cited by White Paper for Social Welfare (1997).

Communities have their own lives and their own structures that exist in the community. It is the responsibility of the development agency to take into account the lifestyle of the community. Social development addresses values, beliefs and ideologies of communities and is a process of growth, change and evolution that promotes positive change (Midgley, 1995 and White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997). Gray (1998) writes that the approach has an interventionist belief that organized efforts are needed to
bring about improvements in the social welfare of the communities. The poor communities need resources, skills, knowledge, information and opportunities to improve themselves (Midgley, 1995).

2.2.3 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Writers such as Jeppe (1985: 25) and Gray (1998: 59) agree that community development is a primary intervention strategy for social development. Social development utilizes community development as a tool to develop communities that is move communities out of poverty to independence. Gray (1998: 56) emphasized that community development is an appropriate intervention strategy to combat poverty. It is also a process implemented in the community and involves community members in improvement of their own lives. As a strategy it seeks to better the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities through programmes designed to achieve a wide mix of specific improvement Jeppe (1985).

First the term development will be discussed followed by that of community. Development is defined in many different ways by various sources. However, the researcher chose to discuss two relevant meanings to develop a context aligned with the researcher’s arguments in the study. Development as defined by Coetzee, Graaf, Hendricks and Woods (2001: 120), is about growth and positive change in the communities. They add that development is “a comprehensive consultation, joint decision making, satisfaction of basic needs and living a better life” Coetzee et al. (2001). Winberg et al. (1997: 79) support this definition when they emphasize that development is not only about improvement of people’s quality of life but should also enable people to regain control of their own lives.

The term community is at the centre of the study and therefore needs to be defined. (Wright, 2000: 89) defines it as “a collective group of people who share an identity on the grounds of common characteristics and shared beliefs.” Lombard (1991) explicates a community as “a structure of relationships through which a localized population provides its daily requirements.” She states that a community is made up of
subsystems. Such subsystems are social welfare, education, health, economy, local government and religion. A critical element of a community is that it should be functional. To be functional the subsystems need to work together. Weyers (1997: 23), also notes the importance of relations in his definition of a community, and defines it as "a social system which originates when a population of individuals, localized in a specific area, establishes and utilizes structures and relationships to deal with impediments, and develops a sense of communal thinking, feeling and activities.” The given definitions evidently communicate a need for cohesion and a sense of belonging to those who live in community.

As a term, community development is defined as “a movement designed to promote better living for the community with active participation and if possible, on the initiative of the community” (Jeppe, 1985: 25). According to Midgley (1995: 117), “community development is about partnership between external agencies and local people where the community contributes labour and community resources while technical expertise and external resources are provided by the community development agency.” In most cases the community development agency would bring finances and knowledge on how to go about implementing the programme and the community would bring community resources, community knowledge and their efforts for the success of the programme.

The sustainable livelihoods programme pilot project (2006: 10) adopts the United Nations (1963) definition of community development as “a process by which efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of the communities and to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress.” The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996: 9) defines community development as “a strategy to address basic material, physical needs and social needs and to encourage voluntary participation in social and community programmes.” Lombard (1991: 109) states that community development “is a process by which unexpected skills and expertise of the people are unleashed and utilized.” Communities are thus permitted to identify their needs and derive solutions to their
challenges. The success and the impact of the approach are dependent on the extent of the communities' participation. The approach should be people-centered through active and voluntary participation of the community.

Active participation of communities and setting up of structures within the community are crucial to any development taking place (Gray, 1998: 58). Cohen and Uphoff (1977) in Kumar (2002: 24) define participation as “the involvement of the people in decision making processes, implementing programmes, sharing of benefits and evaluating development programmes.” Skills, resources, empowerment and knowledge are crucial in community development (Midgley, 1995: 55). A definition for community participation is provided by (Bergdall, 1993: 2) as “a process whereby one person or a group meaningfully participate in development and have the authority to take an initiative.” Bergdall (1993) further advises as follows that communities cannot participate fairly in community development without information, knowledge and skills necessary to empower them.

Midgley (1995: 55) writes that “participation without power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless” as the development of people’s own communities takes place without their members’ contribution. Bergdall (1993) suggest that community participation means people becoming involved in public decision making to avoid the decisions being made for them without their involvement. Chambers (2004) explains that community participation is a recognition that poor people whether they are literate or not have a greater capacity to present and analyze their realities and act than many would suppose. Poor communities have the capacity to make decisions for themselves and work towards improving their lives. Woodward (2000: 237) emphasizes a very critical point that “community development is not about experts imposing solutions but assisting communities in making informed decisions.”

Community development has principles that guide the effective implementation of community development processes. Cormack (1993: 56) states that principles are social norms and rules aiming to attain the ultimate objective. Coetzee et al. (2001) explain that a principle articulates what is required or not including what should be
avoided or not. The researcher reviewed these principles because they influence the strategies utilized by the Community Development worker to implement community development in various communities and in working with women cooperatives. The principles are clearly discussed by Jeppe (1985), Midgley (1995) and Swanepoel (1997: 2-12) as follows:

• The principle of human orientation

This principle addresses basic human needs (Midgley, 1995). The writer mentions the deprivation trap where people have physical and abstract needs that are not met or fulfilled. The most important abstract need of a human being is dignity as communities, especially women, have to be treated with dignity because they are human beings who can make decisions for themselves. Respect for the community is important no matter how poor the community is or how illiterate the people are. Most often, women cooperatives or any women’s programme implemented in the rural area is composed of illiterate women who do not have formal skills. They should be treated with dignity, respect and processes should be facilitated according to their level of understanding.

• The principle of participation

Through participation solid local knowledge is used for development as participation is crucial to development (Swanepoel, 1997). The involvement and active participation of communities in their own development is a very important process of development, as communities are able to share information and resources. Swanepoel (1997: 27) regard community participation as the right of the poor to prioritize their needs and make decisions on how they should be addressed. It is about the empowerment of the people to bring about change and have access to resources in an attempt to alleviate poverty. Coetzee et al. (2001: 125) state that participation takes place when people are consciously involved in decision making. Participation gives community members control of their development, resources and their lives. Women participation in development is crucial as this will ensure that their needs are addressed effectively.
According to Midgley (1995: 55), community development projects lead to further development as further needs are identified and additional projects are established through active participation of communities. Community participation encourages collective self reflection on their experience and problems (Burkely, 2000: 56). Participation as a critical element of community development, should take place at all levels of development and communities should be allowed to participate at a very early stage to enable the community to learn and to own their development.

- The principle of empowerment

Swanepoel (1996) explain empowerment as a process that includes information, knowledge and experience that brings confidence to the people in their own abilities. Empowerment is about the acquisition of power and the ability to give it effect (Midgley, 1995). Empowerment is a natural result of participation. Women do not participate in community development programmes in most cases because they are not given the opportunity to participate and they lack knowledge, resources and skills to give them power to be actively involved.

- The principle of ownership

This principle seeks to entrench ownership of development where it belongs in the community (Jeppe, 1985). Women and men in the communities have a responsibility to sustain development in their communities and women have a good reputation for looking after their children’s benefits. Dryer and Bruce (1988) cited in Ellis (2000: 143) state that women are more likely than men to spend cash resources under their jurisdiction on household needs. This principle is very important to South African communities, who according to the researcher’s experience, some of whom destroy assets or property they view as belonging to the government when their demands are not met. It is very crucial therefore, to see to it as development practitioners that communities take ownership of their development as early as possible and are encouraged to understand that government only provides financial and technical
support for what the community has initiated. When people take ownership of their development they protect and appreciate their programmes and assets.

- The principle of release

Swanepoel (1997) states that the principle of release emphasize a holistic approach to development and the sustainability of a project. The principle aims at releasing people from the deprivation trap of poverty to independent communities. The goal of development is to eradicate poverty and release the people from poverty in a sustainable manner. Women are the poorest and most vulnerable group as proved by various studies and they need to be released from being victims of poverty (ANC, 1994). The damage of distorted development in South Africa cannot be changed in fourteen to twenty years as it is not only about providing financial support to the communities but of establishing a change of mind set and attitude so that thus understand that they should be responsible for their lives and their own development.

- The principle of learning and adaptiveness

Swanepoel (1996) state that while people strive to fulfill their needs they become better at it as they learn in the process. By striving to fulfill their needs, people realize their objectives easily and are able to adapt to their situation. This leads to the development of other programmes as communities are able to further identify their needs. The community development worker should also be open to learning from the community in order to provide assistance to that community. The researcher agrees with Starkey (1996: 289) when he states that learning organizations are leading organizations as learning communities are able to access resources, identify their needs and network to address their challenges. When communities learn they will gain additional knowledge about their development and will be able to cope better with their circumstances.
The principle of simplicity

This principle encourages simplicity in projects should ensure that people realize their potential of learning and participation in their development (Swanepoel, 1997: 14). The principle of simplicity encourages the implementation of programmes that are understood by the community as people centred and people driven programmes. The past/history of the majority of women should be kept in mind as they are illiterate and lack the skills needed to effectively steer their own development.

With skilled facilitation, communities can become equipped with skills and knowledge towards self reliance. Community development has been proved by Gray (1998) and Jeppe (1985) to be a suitable strategy for the improvement of communities. Women in communities to have the capability to make a difference in the community; the World Bank realized that investing in women's projects would bring about development and believed that economic and social returns in educating the female population were high (Perry and Schenk, 2001: 13). A study of women in India’s dairy society proved that women- managed societies functioned better than men-led societies (Rao, 2000: 2).

2.3 WOMEN AND GENDER

Studies indicate that in the past the key roles played by women in social and economic development were those of productive activities in domestic labour as bearers, carers and the socialization of the next generation (Gabriel, 1991: 68). She further argued that women in rural areas face a double disadvantage as they are members of a rural population and are females. This is supported by Jones (1990: 222) who explains that women in underdeveloped countries suffer simply because they are women. The reason behind this is that women’s contributions to their community are overlooked by the designers of economic and social development. As a result, women have only limited access to innovations, training and other resources that could facilitate women’s tasks and increase their productivity (Ashby, 1981 in Gabriel, 1991: 68-70). Literature shows that there is a link between poverty, hunger,
powerlessness and vulnerability including marginalization and all these affect women predominantly. Poverty continues to be a problem for women and the solution to problems of poverty is in restoring the capacity of individuals (Midgley, 1995: 112).

There are various factors that contribute to the impoverishment of women in the communities at large. Worldwide gender, socialization and culture have a negative impact on women’s development as much as there are positive factors that develop communities to be self sufficient. Gender sensitive policies are supposedly developed and implemented in South Africa to accommodate the previously disadvantaged groups as highlighted in RDP (1994) and the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), but they have not achieved the target set; as the rural women are still poor. These policies should sensitize development practitioners about gender equality including addressing the imbalances of the past. A few policies from various government departments according to the ANC Women’s League (2006) are mentioned as follows:

- National Policy Guidelines for handling victims of sexual offences by Justice Department
- Recognition of customary marriage by Justice Department to abolish the minority status of women married under customary law
- Employment Equity Bill (1997) by Labour Department which emphasizes the increase in the representation of women in decision making positions in both the Private and Public sector
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1997) by Labour Department focus on involving domestic workers
- White Paper on Affirmative Action Policy by Mineral Affairs and Energy intended to increase the support and access for women-owned businesses
- White Paper for Local Government (1998) by Provincial affairs and Constitutional Development which stresses the important role women play at local level.

Effective implementation of these legislations could bring about improvement, growth and development in the lives of women. The empowerment of women in line with
these policies and legislations will develop women's self esteem and knowledge to enable them to develop their communities.

In all societies there are unequal values attached to the two genders and males have a higher value than females (Winberg et al., 1997: 60). In South Africa, the researcher proposes that a man by virtue of being a man is head of the family, whether he is a breadwinner or not. The most important aspects of community development in developing societies are programmes specifically directed at women and in which women play a leading role (Jeppe, 1985: 39). In some communities gender determines one’s socialization and development. Attached to gender are gender roles and gender identity. Golombok and Fivush (1994: 3) write that gender roles include the behaviour and attitudes viewed as appropriate for males and females in a particular culture or society. Gender roles determine socialization as a boy or as a girl which contributes to the gender identity of a person.

Golombok and Fivush (1994) explain that gender identity is a person’s concept of himself or herself as a male or as a female. In communities gender identity and gender roles determine what is expected from a person and understanding of the two contributes to how one views being a man or a woman. Gender is not about women, but focuses on the interests of both women and men. The feminist’s school of thought believes that for development to benefit women, power relations between women and men in the development process need to be critically examined (McMichael, 2000: 155).

Gender relations are defined as the social construction of roles and relationships between women and men in society (Baden and Goetz 1998 in Ellis, 2000: 139). Gender relations are material, social, ideological and moral. They include division of labour, sexuality, affection, ideas about rights, responsibilities and ideologies about men and women and how they should treat each other (Francis, 2000: 79). The roles of men and women are unequal in terms of power, decision-making, control over events, freedom of action and ownership of resources. Thus, gender is fundamentally about power and subordination (Ellis, 2000: 139-143). It is mostly women and children who are disadvantaged by unequal power relations in a family. According to the
Brandt Report (1980: 56-60), women in rural populations of developing countries tend to be economically, socially and culturally powerless.

Women in urban areas, especially the illiterate and the unemployed also suffer from the powerlessness experienced by rural women. The Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa’s (Contralesa) defend customary law and patriarchal domination as they oppose women’s ownership of land and gender equity at all levels (Coetzee, Graff, Hendricks and Wood, 2001: 169). This status is changing, albeit very slowly, as there are developments taking place and structures are beginning to recognize women. According to the researcher’s experience in South Africa, the Eastern Cape Province in Senqu municipality under Ukhahlamba District Municipality, there are women acting on behalf of their underage sons as chiefs of their tribes; this situation was not an option in South Africa in the past. This is an indication that men in their circles are opening doors for women to actively play roles in what is known as a man’s world. The United Nation Development Programme (1995) stresses that gender equality and women empowerment are central to achieving all other development goals.

2.4 WOMEN AND CULTURE

The Women’s Charter in South Africa recognizes that women’s subordination stemmed, not from one source but from patriarchy, customs, tradition, colonialism, racism and apartheid (Coetzee, Graff, Hendricks and Wood, 2001: 169). Women participate in development but are not equal participants because very frequently their status prevents them from having equal access to education, training, jobs, land ownership, credit and business opportunities (Kumar, 2002: 24). Consequently, the majority of women in South Africa lack access to knowledge, skills, power and resources and disadvantages women from being self reliant and leaders in South Africa.

The researcher proposes that culture and socialization contribute to the inferiority of women in communities. A feminist perspective believes that the different status
between males and females is not biologically determined but is determined by culture Schenk and Haggis (2000: 85). Women have not been given the same status as men because in the family the husband makes decisions (Swa nepoel, 1997: 64). Women share cultural characteristics that distinguish them from the dominant group of men (Schaefer and Lamm, 1983: 334). According to the researcher, whether a person is a male or female does not determine any individual to be better than any other.

Culture is defined as the totality of learned and socially transmitted behaviour and it includes ideas, values and customs of a group of people (Schaefer and Lamm, 1983: 67). Culture refers to ways of life and sources of identity (Moseley, 2003: 4). According to Kolawole (1998: 10), culture is a total product of people’s being and consciousness which emerges from their grappling with nature and living with other human beings in a collective group. The definitions above clearly explain that culture is the life a community chooses to live and is communicated over a period of time. Perry and Schenk (2001) cite that culture is the cultivation of mind and it is expressed in forms of social conduct, lifestyle, manner and speech. Culture is about you are and where one belongs, including the norms and values of the community. Taking into consideration the above definitions, it is clear that culture plays a major role in the lives of communities.

Culture is linked to the economic, political and social change of communities Schenk and Haggis (2000). It is used to enforce oppression and to perpetuate inequality within the communities (Kolawole, 1998). The write states that women in the world are the poorest category compared to men but are proved to be the best facilitators of economic growth by World Bank. He stressed that an increase in a woman’s salary has a direct impact on the community as women contribute their earnings towards improving their family life. Women encourage development of communities but according to Schenk and Haggis (2000: 87), women are disadvantaged access to developmental initiatives which addresses women needs with in the communities.

There are numerous stumbling blocks that negatively impact on women's development. An African writer Kolawole (1998: 13), states that the socio cultural
attitudes such as myths, proverbs, folktales and legends about women are known to shape women’s attitudes and hinder their self realization. The myths according to the writer are influences entrenched in people’s imaginations and thoughts. They affect the mind set and provide a reason for fixing women in a certain social space that limits their empowerment. The writer in chapter four provide examples of words and songs women sing that are disempowering and humiliating thus impacting on the is development.

To change the situation women’s consciousness is the baseline for changing their attitude to cultural practices that undermine women (Kolawole 1998: 12). Women need to organize themselves and voice their views of how they feel as women and not to be used by men as tools to oppress themselves. The liberation of women through empowerment with skills, information, education and resources will improve the lives of women in the communities. As the definitions highlight culture is developed by communities; communities themselves need to be encouraged to restructure their customs towards prioritizing the development of women within the communities.

2.5 WOMEN COOPERATIVES

African countries introduced and adapted cooperatives as an intervention strategy to eradicate poverty and empower communities (Chambers, 1983: 31). Women’s cooperative is a strategy introduced by the National Department of Social Development in South Africa in 2005 to involve women in development and to contribute towards rural development, to ensure that women play an active role in development programmes. Women cooperatives are a vehicle to empower women to participate in their own growth, to be independent and to bring about change in their communities. Cooperatives contribute directly to the eradication of poverty through the economic and social progress of their members and employees (Sustainable livelihoods programme pilot project, 2006: 6). To support this statement the Department of Social Development conducted a study (Pilot Programme) at Mount Ayliff in Dutyini village, Eastern Cape, linking social grants to cooperatives as a supplementary measure to improve the lives of the communities. The objective of the
project was to restore clients as quickly as possible to self-reliance through linking their grants to livelihoods and cooperatives. The study revealed that there were positive relations between the two programmes. Other women’s efforts according to Para and Khan (2001:1) took place in Pakistan where women organized and empowered themselves with adult education and skills. At the end the organization was able to borrow members funds to invest in business and a training centre was established to enhance the skills of women.

Cooperatives were developed in the 1960s in East Africa but were later proved to be inefficient as they were dominated by the larger farmers at the cost of the small farmers and exploited the poor people and women (Chambers, 1983). Korten (1980:481) in (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998) claims that very few benefits were delivered by cooperatives. De Beer and Swanepoel (1998) provide three reasons for the causes most responsible for the limited success of cooperatives:

- Firstly, cooperatives were imposed on the people and not people driven. This situation still exists albeit in an improved manner as government departments determine for communities what is to be funded. Communities then choose from what is provided. According to the researcher’s experience this situation sometimes forces communities to change to what is available by the department because they are desperate for financial assistance.

- Secondly, the cooperatives increase community dependency as they are controlled from outside the community. As an example, the Department of Agriculture in the Eastern Cape provides assistance by purchasing material for the programmes leading to dependency on the officials because members are not exposed to financial processes and management. In this case, skills transfer does not take place effectively and the members will never have a full understanding of their programme.

- Lastly, communities often lack knowledge and understanding of management principles, including weak control mechanisms. Knowledge is power and the
majority of women are victims of a lack of knowledge and resources throughout Africa. Cooperatives have the potential to implement community development in rural areas and among the poor communities if these three causes are addressed.

The Cooperatives Act 14 of 2005 was passed to guide the implementation of cooperatives in South Africa. A cooperative means an “autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise, organized and operated on cooperative principles” (Guide to the South African Cooperatives Act 14, 2005: 2). The purpose of a cooperative is to bring together people with a common need to be addressed jointly; or a group of people who want to create employment for the members according to guide to the South African Cooperatives Act 14, (2005: 1). The Cooperatives Act further explains that a cooperative is not a cooperative if it does not serve the needs of the members or does not employ members.

The challenge for the women cooperatives implemented by Eastern Cape Social Development Department is that it takes more than a year to benefit from the project and that results in a high drop out rate of from the programme. Provision of stipends for the first three months or access to the profits could have a positive impact on the sustainability of the programme and the lives of the members. Cooperatives are expected to have the following values: self help, self reliance, self responsibility, democracy, equality and social responsibility (Guide to the South African Cooperatives Act 14, 2005). These values work towards developing individuals who are independent and communities who are self reliant. According to the Department, there are seven cooperative principles that are considered when developing a programme which should be known and understood by the implementers including programme members.
The seven cooperative principles are as follows:

(i) **Voluntary and open membership**

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations and are open to all those who are able to use their services and are willing to accept the responsibilities of being a member. What is important is that the group has a common goal and is determined to work towards achieving that goal.

(ii) **Democratic member control**

Cooperatives are controlled by their members as they are democratic organizations. The members take an active role in developing policies and decision making. Developers and donors should not create dependency among the cooperatives but provide support financially and technically to assist the members to achieve their goal.

(iii) **Members’ economic participation**

The goal of a cooperative is to provide services to its members at affordable prices and to create employment for its members. The needs of the members are prioritized and cooperatives aim at providing the desired benefits as effectively as possible in a sustainable manner. The experience is that membership fees contribute to developing commitment and ownership of the programme.

(iv) **Autonomy and independence**

Cooperatives are self-help organizations controlled by their members and though there are agreements made with other organizations and government, they still control themselves.
(v) Education, training and information

A cooperative should provide ongoing training to its members. All members should be equipped to contribute effectively to the development of the cooperative. Continuous training and education are crucial for the programme to grow as learning organizations are leading organizations.

(vi) Cooperatives amongst cooperatives

Cooperatives should network with other cooperatives to help strengthen their movement and their knowledge. When skills development takes place the programme develops, takes a leading role, deals with demand and supply and is able to network.

(vii) Concern for community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of the communities at large. The main focus is about creating jobs for its members so that they are able to provide for their families.

Women are central to development, but their work is undervalued and the additional burden of development imposed on women is usually unrecognized (Momsen, 2004: 224). Traditionally a woman's role has been that of being a mother, and wife, but the economic role of women is emerging in South Africa. Nieuwenhuizen (2003: 34) and Gebremedhin (2002: 227) acknowledge that the social and economic development process of women is recognized, but the traditional attitudes still prevail and political representation and economic opportunities for women remain limited. Women's groups represent an opportunity for women to acquire access to and control over resources in the society where these are frequently denied to them (Taylor and
Mackenzie, 1992: 191). These authors further highlight that when women are organized as cooperatives they achieve unity and acknowledgement of their ability to run an independent economic venture and are able to make collective democratic decisions. A number of women are currently educated, skilled, exposed to opportunities as men but still need support, and continuous empowerment for them to remain in management positions, be independent and be recognized as individuals who can make their own decisions (Taylor and Mackenzie, 1992). Women cooperative boosts the ability of women to develop their level of understanding especially with utilizing the resources in their communities. The key is to ensure that members of cooperatives are trained in organizational leadership, planning and management skills in order to be independent and sustainable.

Taylor and Mackenzie (1992: 191) highlight the following factors that impact negatively on women cooperatives:
- Lack of training in project management and basic book-keeping affects the continuity of the programme. This means that the programme cannot record or keep records of the existence of the programme.
- Absence of banking facilities within a walking distance affects women’s ability to invest and strengthen their economic capacity.
- Lack of training in leadership skills which results in mismanagement of resources and vulnerability to manipulation by leaders who want to take over the project.

Coetzee et al. (2001) emphasize that in order for development to be sustainable, participation in decision making by beneficiaries, including women is the key. Communities, specifically women members, need to be given opportunities to enable them to participate and to lead in development programmes.

2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK GUIDING THE STUDY

The study is based on a developmental perspective which is promoted by the current democratic government of South Africa. In South Africa equality for all was granted from 1994 when the current government took over (Constitution of the Republic of
South Africa, 1996). The practicality of this is very slow but the government is determined to improve the lives of women, for example through women cooperatives, women in construction and women in mining as some of the strategies to make women independent and equal partners at all levels of development. According to the United Nations Development Plan (1994) report, it was found that women are the missing link in development. There are various development theories that focus on directing the implementation of development in communities. People-centred development and the humanistic perspective combined with the black feminist perspective will be discussed in this chapter as relevant to women’s development and to this study.

- People-centred development

People-centred development is a theory South Africa adopted post 1994 to counteract the effects of colonial rule and the apartheid era. The South African democracy promotes change (in theory) from a top-down development to inclusiveness, that is, consideration of all the views of the community. People centred development was founded in 1989 through the Manila Declaration Manifesto, on people’s participation and sustainable development drawn up by thirty-one non-governmental organization (NGO) leaders. The declaration aimed at encouraging communities to be responsible for their own development; be in control of their own resources; have access to relevant information and have the means to hold government officials accountable for the services they render within the community (Coetzee and Graaff, 1996: 318). People-centred development stresses the participation of the majority of the population, especially women, youth and the illiterate in the process of development (Coetzee and Graaff, 1996: 317). In 1994 a socio economic policy framework, the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) was developed to address the imbalances of the past and the distorted development of the apartheid government, specifically among Black South Africans. The people were used as tools of exploitation, and disempowerment and were made poor through social, political and economic engineering (Davids, Theron and Mampunye, 2005: 41).
People-centred development was established to provide a starting point in addressing the injustices of the past (RDP, 1994: 7). Croft and Beresford (1993: 4) write about a community-centred approach to development where services should be provided within the context of the identified community, prioritized and conceptualized within the community environment. The people-centred development is defined as a process by which members of a society increase personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life (Davids et al., 2005: 17). The approach is based on people participation, sustainability, social learning and empowerment of the people.

Participation is a complex and ongoing process through which people are enabled to exercise varying degrees of influence over development activities that affect their lives (Kotze, 1997: 52). Participation ensures equity however poor communities do not receive their share of the fruits of development. The poor should be included in their own development through active participation (Gran, 1983: 2). Participation prioritizes communication as the foundation of the process. Participation requires development workers to change their attitudes towards communities and to understand the meaning of people-centred development. This means that CDWs have to respect and listen to communities. According to De Beer and Swanepoel (1998), a community development worker should among other things be able to treat the communities with dignity as human beings, start where the community is and assist them through the process of development and respect the community views and feelings. If community development practitioners adhere to the above they will develop independent communities. When communities participate in development they are empowered with skills and knowledge. Empowerment is about providing skills, knowledge and access to resources to enable the person to be independent. It is defined as a collective activity in which a group of people sharing a mutual interest or concern act together (Swanepoel, 1997: 13). Gran (1983: 345) explains empowerment as a learning process. Participation without power is an empty frustrating process for the powerless (Arnstein 1969 in Midgley, 1995: 65). People respond and contribute to what they own.
People-centred development is characterized by the following elements, according to Kotzer (1997: 36):

- The optimal use of human resources for the future of the next generation.
- The conservation of environmental and natural resources.
- Small scale production units that benefit the individual.
- The spread of ownership of productive assets which also benefits the sustainability of the programme.
- Acceptance of responsibility for the social support of those members of society who may need it.
- Acceptance of mental and physical welfare as an indicator of success.
- Recognizing that social groupings could bring support and stability to development action.
- Establishing an adaptive and responsive administration within which both officials and participating groups may learn and adapt.
- Taking human and individual values into consideration in the decision making process.
- Integrated rather than functional and fragmented development practice.

The people-centred development approach promotes a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist society (RDP, 1994: 7). The approach leads to the involvement and development of women in various areas of development. Women become empowered, self-confident, creative, responsible and cooperative, as cited by Burkely (1993) in Schenk et al. (2000: 63). Women are able to make decisions on issues affecting them and they participate in social and economic development though not at the same rate as men. Women’s lives in South Africa are changing towards improving their status, but the concern of the researcher and the study is the state of poverty of the rural women. Burkely (1993:35) highlights that development should involve people of varying socio-economic status, varying occupations and skills levels, varying levels of education, and varying levels of ambition, awareness and enlightenment, and this is specifically relevant for women’s development in South Africa.
Social learning is about lifelong learning on the basis of knowledge, creativity and skill (Davids et al., 2005: 20). It provides people with the ability to realize and utilize resources around them. Knowledge, creativity and skills form an integral part of policy making in the post apartheid South Africa and their effective implementation by development workers could break the poverty cycle among the previously disadvantaged communities with special attention to women who were the most deprived.

- **Humanistic perspective**

The Humanistic perspective was developed after the dependency theory and modernization theory could not meet the expected results of addressing poverty (Davids et al., 2005: 17). The approach was developed as a strategy focusing on people driven and human oriented development. Development of a community should be based on the needs of the people in the community. The humanist perspective believes that human beings have the right to live in a life-world that is meaningful to them and be able to contribute actively. Development should allow communities to live their lives in their own way. There is a shift from macro theories to focusing on people and communities (Jeppe, 1990: 62).

The humanistic approach arose out of the engagement of women in the liberation of their country and their subsequent readiness to participate in shaping their new nation (Snyder and Tadesse, 1995: 10). The humanistic perspective acknowledges women as human beings and to be treated with respect and dignity as members of the community. This perspective upholds human rights and ensures that people are treated as human beings, irrespective of gender (RDP, 1994). The current government believes and requires people-driven and people-centred approaches in developing South African communities. This is compulsory for any development agency, especially government departments. The humanistic perspective means that communities will be developed from where they are and at their own pace. This approach exposes and allows participation of women in development projects and makes them active participants in their communities and in their own development.
The increasing levels of women living in poverty and women underdevelopment resulted in the feminization of poverty since the Second World War (Schaefer and Lamm, 1983: 252). Snyder and Tadesse (1995: 10) claim that the humanistic perspective heralded a positive change for women as it recognized the reproductive roles of women as well as the productive roles where women play active roles in the economy of the country. In order to improve the lives of women they should be allowed to be participants in the social and economic development of their communities as human beings and as members of the communities to be developed. Women should be beneficiaries of development through active participation and decision making in the development processes. Development workers and donors should always remember that they are dealing with human beings who have their own understanding of life, knowledge, skills and the resources they utilize for survival. Snyder and Tadesse (1995) further highlight that the full participation of women in development lessens women’s burdens and increases their productivity by providing access to education, technology and income. Empowerment of women and their development towards being independent and self reliant would assist women to improve their lives.

• The African feminist perspective

The study focused on the African feminist perspective as an appropriate approach to dealing with issues relevant to rural women. Various feminist perspectives were developed to contribute towards addressing poverty and the oppression of women. Cornwall (2005: 39) defines feminism as women’s engagement in demanding and creating an equitable society. The author further states that feminism deals with the power of women that encompasses recognizing and respecting women. The feminist perspective believes in the empowerment of women and restoration of the dignity of women as members of the community. According to Ollenburger and Moore (1998: 17), this perspective believes that women’s oppression is rooted in individual and group lack of opportunities. The researcher supports the statement that women
organize themselves into women cooperative programmes in order to improve their level of accessing resources and opportunities within their communities.

Ollenburger and Moore (1998: 23) reject the notion that equal access, economic revolution and productive control alone will eliminate women’s oppression. Patriarchy is different from economic modes of production as it is equal to the division of labour and it controls women’s labour and access to productive resources. According to the researcher’s views, African women have been oppressed in various forms and levels and that not a single form of development on its own can change the lives of South African women who bear the brunt of poverty in the country (RDP, 1994).

African feminism focuses on the engagement of African women and patriarchal or cultural structures and the relations of patriarchy to African women (Cornwall, 2005: 32). The author further explains that the African feminist perspective is not radical in nature but challenges issues through negotiation and compromise. Further, African feminism does not exclude men in addressing issues challenging women. These form bases for the difference between Western feminism and African feminism. Cornwall (2005) writes that African feminism developed from the African women’s resistance to Western hegemony and its legacy within the African culture. The differences explained by Cornwall (2005) are based on the African feminism’s view of culturally linked forms of public participation while Western feminism emphasizes individual female autonomy. Mikell (1997) further explains that African feminism is concerned about the bread and butter culture and power issues of African women. Although Cornwall (2005: 32) emphasized that African feminism is different from Western feminism in that issues of race and class are not relevant to African feminism compared to issues of clean water supply and food for their families, the researcher disagrees with this statement because the issues of class, race and gender contributed to the impoverishment of black women in the past and the impact continues in the current context. African feminism is concerned with women and their improvement of life not only for themselves but their families and communities.
The cultural feminist highlights that African women are reared to take responsibility for providing food for their families (Taylor and Mackenzie, 1992: 199). They are able to provide for their families by utilizing their initiatives and resources. For example, through their cooperatives and societies they are able to make decisions, contribute to an economic venture, generate income, create employment and provide for their families. The situation of women feeling and being seen as inferior compared to men has improved, albeit to a small extent. Mikell (1997) stated that the economic contributions of women are traceable beyond the household, because women’s production and reproduction help their communities to continuously perform needed functions. Snyder and Tadesse (1995) also state that women are striving towards shaping a new nation. The study proposes that rural women, who are uneducated, unskilled and still experience oppression and poor living conditions, should be assisted in their development in order to release their potential which would enable them to take care of themselves and their families.

In conclusion, community development is a process that aims at improving the lives of women, men, children and communities at large through participation and empowerment of its members. The impact of development on people’s lives differs as some benefit more than others. This chapter highlighted the movements developed by women to address challenging issues affecting their lives within the community. The theories expose the approaches that could be utilized to ensure that the lives of women are improved to enable them to contribute towards the development of their communities.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY
3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research design and methodology utilized to conduct the study. The chapter includes objectives of the study, the location of the study and research sample, data collection, data analysis, challenges and delimitations, ethical consideration and value of the study. The study focused on an identified lack of or limited progress on community development programmes funded by the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Social Development with specific focus on women cooperatives. Evaluation and gender analysis methods were adapted to verify the efficiency and the effectiveness of the women cooperatives in community development within the communities. The overall objective of the study was to explore the impact of women on community development through women cooperative programmes. The study also raised possible strategies on how best women can be assisted to upgrade their impact on development of their own communities. In achieving the objectives of the study, a clear picture of women's impact and their contribution to community development will be provided.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A research design is a plan of how one intends conducting the research (Mouton, 2001: 55). The design of this study is exploratory, descriptive and evaluative in nature and enabled the researcher to collect detailed information for the study. The study utilized a qualitative research methodology. The research study adapted gender analysis methods to explore the impact of women in community development. The research study was also implemented in relation to the ISRDP of the Eastern Cape Province excluding other successful women cooperatives in the Province.
The study is exploratory in nature because of the current relative novelty of the topic for the current context of community development in South Africa. According to Hammonsley (1989: 157), the exploratory study allows flexibility in procedure in which a researcher can shift from one line of inquiry to another and adopt new points of observation as the study progresses in new directions that are previously unthought of. The understanding and the point of approach of the researcher might change as the researcher gains more information from participants in the research. The researcher changed to the use of the research schedule to collect data from one Provincial Department of Social Development official as he could not make time for a planned interview due to his busy schedule. An exploratory research provides a clear understanding of the problem or phenomenon in question by collecting the appropriate data (Hammonsley, 1989). Exploratory research explored the establishment, functioning, funding criteria, involvement of relevant stakeholders and the roles of women in women cooperative programmes in community development.

According to Harvey and MacDonald (1993), a descriptive study is an informative method concerned with the collection of data and providing explanation for a social phenomenon. A descriptive study seeks to elicit a comprehensive and improved understanding of a situation as it offers a richly descriptive report of the individual’s perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, views, feelings, meanings and interpretation (Hakim, 1987: 26). The research participants were requested to describe their own understanding of a development concept in order to verify their understanding of development and programme implementation processes. The descriptiveness of the study assisted the researcher to gain a better understanding of the functioning contributions and roles of women in community development through women cooperatives.

An evaluation research method is the systematic application of social research procedures in assessing the conceptualization and design, implementation and utility of social intervention programmes (Rossi and Freeman, 1985: 19). Evaluation provides information that can be used to improve social programmes (Royse, 1991: 192). The research participants were enabled to recognize and acknowledge their
strengths including weaknesses in order to work towards closing the gaps experienced by women cooperatives. An evaluation research method was utilized to verify the efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness of women cooperative programmes in community development (Clarke, 1999: 173). The four worksheets were used to show the roles and the impact of women in improving lives within the communities.

The study utilized a qualitative research methodology to obtain women cooperative programme member’s own accounts of situations and events with their reporting of their perspectives and experiences about their community development (Hakim, 1997: 8). Kumar (2005: 12) writes that the purpose of a qualitative research is to describe the situation, phenomenon and the problem or event. Women from the women cooperatives were asked questions about the establishment of the programmes, how women cooperatives function, the roles played by women in the community and the benefits they receive from the programme. A qualitative research is designed to discover what can be learned about some phenomenon of interest, particularly social phenomena where people are participants (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 44). The methodology allowed the participants to present their achievements, challenges and possible solutions which could be used to improve the position of rural women and condition of their communities in the Eastern Cape Province.

3.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study asks the following research question:
To what extent does gender and specifically women through women cooperatives, impact on community development and poverty in the current context of social welfare transformation in South Africa?

The objectives of the study are as follows:
- To explore the role of women in community development in the current context of democracy and social welfare transformation in South Africa.
To explore the impact of gender and women through women cooperatives on community development and poverty.

To explore strategies for the empowerment of women through community development intervention.

3.4 Location of the study and research sample

The study was located in the Eastern Cape Province and the women cooperative programmes situated in the Chris Hani District Municipality in Cala and Lady Frere villages. These two women cooperatives were chosen because they were funded under the ISRDP of the Eastern Cape Province and were the only women cooperative programmes in close proximity to the researcher.

A purposive sampling method was used to select the research sample. Purposive sampling also called “judgment sampling” involves the researcher in making a decision as to what is suitable to include in the sample (Neuendorf, 2002: 88) and there should be a relation between the research topic and the sample. A researcher more often than not cannot study the entire population due to time constraints and costs; therefore the researcher is obliged to draw a sample (De Vause, 1998: 189). The Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Social Development has funded more than fifty women cooperatives. The focus of the research was on two women cooperatives programmes of the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Social Development implemented as part of the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Plan (ISRDP) in the Eastern Cape Province. These women cooperatives comprised of fourteen women as programme members and all participated in the study. All the programme members were women below the age of sixty five and there was youth involved in the programme. These programmes were both funded by the Department of Social Development with twenty members each but when the study was conducted one programme had six members and the other had eight members. One women’s cooperative produced traditional dresses and traditional accessories. The second
programme was involved in poultry farming including gardening and sewing as extensions of the programme.

The study also targeted three officials supervising the programmes at service office level, two managers from the Provincial office of PDOSD and one official from the Independent Development Trust who served as a support system to the programmes. In total the sample was made up of twenty respondents. The numbers dropped from the original number due to various reasons of which one of those reasons was the lack of financial incentive for programme members. Three groups were formed consisting of four members each and one consisting of six members to ensure that attention was paid to each member. The gender distribution of the sample was five males and fifteen females.

The actual number of research participants was twenty. The following table shows the gender and status of respondents.

**Table 1**: Sample of gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Women cooperatives Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Community Development Practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Community Development Practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Social Development officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eastern Cape Provincial IDT Official</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5 Data collection process

The researcher visited the women cooperative programmes and the Eastern Cape Social Development Department offices in Cala and Lady Frere including the officers responsible for the programme to make an appointment to visit the programmes. The reason for the study was explained to the programme members. Programme records were requested from the programme and it was explained that they would serve as secondary data to the study.

As an evaluative tool, a Gender Analysis method of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations was adapted to conduct the study. Although this tool was designed for forestry by United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization it is suitable for any sector. (Vainio-Mattila, 1999: 11) explains that gender analysis is a powerful social analytical tool and often its results describe the situations of gender inequity. The gender analysis framework is made up of four profile worksheets (Vainio-Mattila, 1999)

- Context Profile focuses on the effect of development in the area
- Activity Profile is based on the activities carried out by women
- Resources Profile focuses on the community resources used
- Programme Action Profile focuses on what can be done to actively involve women in development.

These worksheets were used to conduct focus group interviews with programme members. The questions in the profile worksheets focused on the environment of the programme; activities that take place in the community including who is responsible for those activities; the resources available together with who accesses the resource according to gender. The last profile focused on the objectives of the programme, gender considerations and recommendations on gaps identified in the programmes. Documents and records as secondary data were provided by only one programme member. These were read to avoid biasness that impedes our understanding of new circumstances (Vainio-Mattila, 1999: 13). The weakness of the tool is that the case study to be used in training should be carefully developed to illustrate the use of
various profiles or steps and benefits are gained from a thorough knowledge of the context.

The following questions were asked of focus group members according to the various profile worksheets:

Context or environmental profile: The following questions were asked: what were the origins of the programme?; what were the member’s expectations when joining the programme? were the expectations met?; what factors contributed to women becoming involved in the cooperative programme?; what are the various roles of programme members?; what is the structure of the women cooperative programme?; how was the programme funded?; which stakeholders are involved and what are their roles?; are women encouraged towards sustainability by stakeholders?; how do individuals and families benefit from the programme?. Questions were asked on the key concepts related to the study. The activity Profile focused on the following questions: what are the roles in the community that contribute to development of community?; are women aware of community risks and challenges?; do women have access to capital and roles that impact on the programme and community?; what are the programme activities and are women allowed the freedom to participate using their skills and knowledge?.

The resource profile targeted questions on what resources exist in the community. Who has the responsibility for community resources?; how do women access the resources?; how do women benefit from the resources?; what are the basic training development resources offered to enable the members to improve themselves?

The programme profile focused on the plan of action to address the objectives of the study. How do the women deal with the various roles of women in the programme?; what is the impact of women involvement in community development?; and how do women solve problems that arise?

Each target group had a separate set of questions. Questions for the facilitators of programme implementation focused on defining the key terms; facilitator’s view of
women cooperative’s contribution to community development; the impact of women's roles in the community. The funding criterion was an important question including the stakeholder involvement in the programmes and the empowerment strategies that were accountable for women to increase their level of participation in the community and in community development.

The last set of questions targeted managers from PDOSD in the Community Development and Research directorate. Questions related to concepts; their views about the formation of women cooperatives; the criteria for funding and the role played by cooperatives in addressing poverty in the Province of the Eastern Cape.

The development of interview schedule questions were guided by the sections contained in gender analysis worksheets. The questions were predominantly open ended because the participants had to provide in depth information about the programme to enable the researcher to understand the functioning of the programme. Oppenheimer (1997) explain that the aim of open ended questions is to afford the participants a choice to provide free responses. The monthly and the annual reports of the programmes were used as secondary data to verify accuracy of the information collected.

The interview schedules were different for each group but had commonalities as the study is based on cooperative programmes. The CDPs function at operational level; they facilitate the implementation of the programme; while the Provincial respondents work at the strategic level where decisions on programme implementation are made. The interview schedule was developed in English but questions were asked in Xhosa for the focus groups. Other research participants used English mixed with Xhosa when explaining a point. The responses received by the researcher were detailed and in depth except for the two newly recruited members from the focus groups. The responses from one participant from the province were more theoretical than the actual experiences with the provincial programmes.
The exercise was conducted on site after the cooperative programmes members gave consent to the researcher through the PDOSD local service offices. The three focus group interviews with programme members and individual CDP’s interviews were also conducted on site except in Lady Frere where it was found that the programme was never visited by the newly employed CDP. The researcher was referred to the officer who facilitated implementation of the programme and who was no longer working in the area. Fick (2002: 113) explains that focus group interviews are a highly effective qualitative data collection technique because participants tend to provide their own in depth understanding of the phenomenon. The Provincial interview was conducted with one manager at Eastern Cape Provincial Community Development Offices in Bisho; the second participant completed the interview schedule in writing. The interview with the IDT manager was also conducted as requested by the researcher. This assisted the researcher to gather enough information to answer the research questions. To obtain clarity and understanding, probing questions were asked and sometimes the researcher had to repeat what the research participant had said to ensure the same understanding.

The interview was chosen to represent a valid source of knowledge production (Alvesson, 2002: 111). The interview is a social situation in which two persons or more who are typically unfamiliar to each other meet for a short period of time, on average around one or two hours. An interview according to Herbert (1990: 53) provides three kinds of information that contribute to collecting quality data. Firstly, it is the observation of a limited sample of behaviour manifested during the interview. In the focus groups one can sense who is on the committee as the chairperson participated the most and others waited for the chairperson to talk first or to give authority for others to talk. Secondly, data about the client’s present situation, predicament and life history data was collected. Data collected analyzed gender sensitivity in the programmes and the impact of gender especially of women on the community development programmes. It was through interviews with programme members, departmental facilitators and managers that the researcher understood the nature of the women cooperative programmes.
The correctness, validity and reliability of the information are crucial to the study as there are recommendations to be developed at the end of the study which could be used as a solution to the challenges identified.

Validity means the truth, interpreted an accurate account representing the social phenomenon to which it refers (Bailey, 1992). Gibbs (2002: 13) further explains that validity is a concern that the theories derived from the research data are true and that they correctly reflect the reality. Therefore the study needs appropriate and accurate information before change to the programme can be made. The interaction with the programme members took place on site to ensure reliability. Silverman (1997: 203) defines reliability of the research when the researcher would expect to obtain similar findings if the same research was conducted again in the same way.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted from the context; activity; resource and programme profiles which were completed on site. The aim of data analysis is to understand the constitutive elements of data collected through an inspection of the relationships between concepts, variables and to verify trends that can be identified, isolated or to establish themes in the data (Mouton, 2001: 108). Scripts were read and trends, similarities and difference from one programme to another including individual differences were noted. The information was grouped according to similarities and was analyzed. The idea was to eliminate irrelevant data until only data critical to the research was identified and studied (Brynard and Hanekom, 1997: 48-55). Research responses were then captured in tables and the percentages of participants per response were calculated. The documented information was utilized to support the accuracy of the information collected on site. The completion of data analysis led to report writing and the conclusion of the study for recommendation of lessons learnt on how women best impact in the development of their communities and their own lives.
3.7 CHALLENGES AND DELIMITATIONS IN CONDUCTING THE STUDY

The first challenge and delimitation is related to the reduction in the numbers of membership in both women cooperative programmes. The original number of research participants from the two women cooperative programmes was forty; only fourteen members are still active in the programme and participated in the study. The reduction in numbers limited the scope of the study.

Another challenge was that the interview schedule was developed in English but questions were asked in Xhosa for the focus group members and that consumed time and disturbed the flow of the process as the researcher herself is used to using the development terms in English.

Another challenge was that the senior officials of the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Social Development, Community Development and Research Directorate referred the researcher to junior officials. This indicated that the directorate did not see the importance of the study or did not consider that the recommendations and lessons learnt from this study would contribute to improving the current status of rural women. The information provided was more theoretical as opposed to the practical experiences of the Provincial department within the programmes.

Another challenge was the lack of records to serve as secondary data for the study. This meant that the programme did not have the essential documents required to effectively run the programme. Again the accuracy of some of the information provided by the participants could not be verified by the researcher.

The last challenge was the lack of stability of professional assistance to the programmes on the part of the Provincial Department of Social Development. The movement of Community Development Practitioners (CDP) out of the area and a lack of supervision of the programme by local Department of Social Development office was a matter of serious concern. This led to the inability to verify information and it was costly and time consuming for the researcher to follow an official who could not
provide relevant details because of the time that had passed. The visit by the researcher may have raised the hopes of the programme members of a visit by officials; however the actual purpose of the visit was different from their expectation.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The general ethics of a research study were adapted to form a critical part of the study as the researcher requested consent to visit the programmes. Programme documents were also requested and the reason for their request was explained to the members so that they could make an informed decision about issuing programme records or not. Bless and Higson – Smith (1995: 102) cite that participants have the right to choose not to participate. It is the researcher’s obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the research participants (Creswell, 1994: 56). The aim of the research was fully explained to both women cooperative programmes and to the Department of Social Development local office responsible for monitoring and funding the programmes. The study used the interview schedules to collect data from the research participants and the information was recorded by hand. The names of the participants were not written on the interview schedule in order to protect the participant from unacceptable behaviour by researchers. Bless and Higson–Smith (1995) concur with this process as the authors emphasize that the names of participants can be removed at all and identified participants by numbers. The researcher was guided by research ethics to ensure confidentiality, protection as well as the rights of the participants not to be taken advantage of.

3.9 VALUE OF STUDY

The study will have a positive impact on development of policies and criteria for funding as the Department of Social Development in the Eastern Cape will have an improved understanding of how women programmes function and the challenges they experience in implementing the programmes. The study could be the beginning of focused research on a large scale on the impact of women programmes within the
Province of the Eastern Cape. Women from other community programmes will be able to replicate the lessons learnt in their own communities.

3.10 CONCLUSION

Research design and methodology, objectives of the study, location and research sample and data collection were discussed with a clear explanation as to how the information was processed in the study. Focus groups, individual interviews and interview schedules were utilized to provide data required by the study to answer the research question. Data analysis was also presented including the code of ethics to protect the research participants from the unacceptable behavior of the researchers. The next chapter focuses on the research findings and the analysis of the findings.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS
4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research findings acquired through three focus groups from the two women cooperatives, the interviews with the Eastern Cape Department of Social Development (DSD) at the Provincial office and local office; and the Independent Development Trust (IDT) official who worked with the programmes in partnership with the DOSD. The chapter covers data collected through four sections: environment profile; activity profile; resource profile and the programme profile. Responses from all research participants are discussed beginning with the focus group findings and ending with the individual interview responses.

4.1.1 CONTEXT/ ENVIRONMENT PROFILE

Women from the three focus groups were asked questions on the origins of the programme, the number of programme members, factors contributed by women involvement in the programme and how the programmes were funded.

4.1.1.1 The origins of the women cooperatives

The origins of the programmes focused on finding out how the women cooperatives were developed and funded; whether it was a community based initiative that led to the establishment and funding of the women cooperative programmes.

98% of the research participants highlighted that it was a Department of Social Development official from the local offices who organized the communities because there was funding to be utilized at that time. According to all focus groups, various small groups were asked to merge in order to meet the requirements for funding. One participant said that because they were led by one headman they could not be funded separately. All the members of the focus groups were involved in various activities such as gardening, chicken nurturing, traditional dance and sewing. The programmes started with twenty members each as that was the requirement of the Provincial
Department of Social Development, according to the three focus groups. These numbers dropped because misunderstandings arose when the programmes failed to maintain payment to the members. Various reasons such as sharing the capita were highlighted by the participants and that led to twenty six members leaving the programmes. Two members from the one focus group did not know the origins of their programme as they joined after the programme had divided and separated.

4.1.1.2 Expectations of women cooperative members from the programme

100% of the research participants, who were involved in women cooperative programmes expected to improve their lives and to create jobs for themselves and their children. The expectations could not be met instantly in two focus groups, and when they thought things were improving they were only able to pay programme members for three months, an amount ranging between R300.00 to R400.00 per person per month, that is after waiting for three to four years for payment. According to the researcher, once people realized how the programme worked, that the utilization of funds had conditions and that the salary budget was not forthcoming from the fund, they withdrew from the programme or stole money to benefit themselves. 85% of the research participants agreed that their expectations were met, as the Provincial Department of Sport, Arts and Culture was able to provide stipends to programme members from the first year of the funding, for a period of a year.

According to the Community Development Supervisor, in order to improve the funding criteria and to achieve long term economic growth and sustainable development, a funding policy allowing communities to identify priority projects should be developed. 100% participants believed that the criteria could be improved if the project were funded according to the budget requested by the members from the Provincial Department of Social Development to support their programme. “The department should ensure that the criteria for funding is needs-driven rather than fund-driven” emphasized Independent Development Trust (IDT) official. The three CDPs also agreed that the funding must go to a cohesive group, rather than the group being formed to access the funds. A response from a PDOSD participant was that the
department should focus seriously on funding projects run by individuals who show commitment.

4.1.1.3 Factors contributing to women becoming involved in the cooperative programmes

100% of focus group members agreed on upliftment of community life, fight against poverty and suffering, creating jobs and earning a living. The research participants wanted to create an environment where their children would have food and jobs in the future. Women believe in development, and teaching each other survival strategies. 35% of the members strongly believed that the programme would enable them to strengthen their culture, tradition and heritage, thereby including other aspects of development and not only claiming the economic factor as the only reason.

4.1.1.4 The various roles of programme members in the community and in the programme

100% of the participants highlighted various roles as their daily activities of the programme. 98% of the focus group members divide tasks according to the work to be done for the day. Two participants are still learning how to sew certain types of traditional dresses. According to the participants, 50% of the members play major roles in programme committees.

Women, in women cooperative programmes, according to the implementers, participate in decision making as they are executive committee members. They play leading roles in managing their own programme as highlighted by one participant. For example, in executive committees, two participants are chairpersons, secretaries and treasurers in their organization. One member is the chairperson of the development umbrella body of the area. “Women are planners and implementers of projects and they also play a major role in the marketing of products, as compared to men",
confirmed one participant from the Provincial Department of Social Development. One official emphasized that women organize, plan and implement cooperative programmes. They are also the beneficiaries of the project and support their families.

4.1.1.5 The structure of women cooperative programmes

All focus groups agreed that both women cooperatives are composed of a chairperson, secretary and deputies, treasurer and additional members, and the committee members are 100% women. 20% of the focus group also form part of an umbrella body which is composed of youth and food security programmes. Research participants agreed with each other that in both programmes the majority of women have left the programmes, all the programme members are members of their governing committee and 100% of research participants have seats in the committee meetings. The two programmes are an example, as there is no male participation in their management committees and the programme at large, compared to women cooperatives that have male members who serve as deputies in the committee positions, while as men they control and manage the women programmes. In such programmes the involvement of women in the key positions of management, is a matter of compliance with government departments.

4.1.1.6 The funding criteria of the programmes

The funding of the programmes is critical for its progress and its sustainability, as under-funding leads to non achievement of set goals which retards the progress of the programme. The researcher wanted to find out whether the funding provided managed to support the programme to start its production. The second important issue was the understanding of spending of government funds by the programme. The two women cooperative programmes received funding of R500 000 each from the Department of Social Development (DSD). R500 000 is a standard amount allocated to the women cooperatives by the Department of Social Development. One women cooperative received an additional fund of R250 000 from the Provincial Department of Sports
Recreation Arts and Culture. The three focus groups and 100% participants interviewed were clear about the spending of funds, according to the business plan and the project synopsis. 98% of research participants from the two women cooperative programmes attended the pre-implementation workshop, which was conducted by the Provincial Department of Social Development before the funds were utilized by the programme according to the five officials interviewed. Funds were allocated according to two tranches, depending on how the first tranche was spent by the programme. The focus groups agreed that they received the first and the second tranches of R250 000 each, but one group had to share equally funds approved for them with another group of physically challenged people. According to the focus group, the programme was asked to do so by the DOSD office in Lady Frere. 75% of the focus group members did not view material support received from the Provincial Department of Agriculture as funding because it was not in the form of money.

According to the Provincial office, the Community Development and Research directorate, and the Community Development Practitioners at local level, women cooperatives are established through educational awareness campaigns and information sharing sessions that took place in the communities. There are sometimes referrals from the Department of Agriculture. The Department of Social Development follows up to establish whether they exist, what their activities are and their period of existence. Under normal circumstances, a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is conducted to identify and prioritize community needs; the district staff assesses Business Plans and submits to the Provincial office for approval of funding together with the necessary documents, such as letters of support from the local municipality, and the programme synopsis. If the programme is approved for funding a pre-implementation plan is developed with the process of signing the service level agreement. Stakeholders play a very important role in identifying programmes. The local officials agree with staff of the Provincial office on the process of funding. The provincial office suggested that fifteen members should comprise a cooperative programme while the community and local offices mentioned twenty members for a programme to be funded.
To improve the funding criteria of the Provincial Social Development Department the three focus groups highlighted the following:-

- 100% participants wanted an increase in the amount of funding of women cooperatives. One participant added that the inflation rate should be taken into consideration.
- Funding to be provided on time, to avoid spending for compliance purpose only
- 75% felt more funding for transport is critical as the challenge with marketing is transporting of programme products
- 30% were against government officials being involved in selecting suppliers, as the suppliers selected by them do not provide quality, and are expensive
- The mandatory numbers required by government to fund programmes leads to people who have no interest in the project being recruited because programmes have to be funded.

100% of officials who participated in the research felt that to improve the criteria for funding, the department should fund programmes which have been in existence for three years; which are organized; have a direction and have the potential of being sustainable. 100% of the focus group members knew the process of funding, and were aware of their programme’s financial status. This shows good management and transparency in the management of the programmes. According to the Provincial official, women are more reliable in terms of funding and there is no misuse of funds reported by women cooperatives in the Province during 2008. This confirms that “women are capable vehicles for delivering community development to the communities” said one official.

### 4.1.1.7 Benefits and women contributions to community development

65% of the research participants received a stipend for three months of R300 00 per person per month and were able to take home eggs and vegetables from the programme. 35% took home R600. 00 per person per month and managed to save money. 100% of participants involved in the poultry programme were able to provide
meals for their families. One participant mentioned paying school fees for her children. 40% of the participants managed to keep some money for the end of the year expenses.

According to the officials the contribution of women is splendid. The workers expressed that women have been sidelined in society and with these kinds of projects they work hard to succeed. 80% of officials agreed that women cooperatives are the most successful projects in community development. One official felt the contribution is still small because women are still regarded as unimportant in the rural areas. The efforts are on-going to improve the self worth of rural women and until they believe in themselves, their contribution will not matter much.

The benefits, according to the Provincial and the local officers with regards to funding, is that the cooperatives are not assisted with micro credits because they do not have security to enable them to borrow funds from financial institutions. They gain knowledge and information from training provided by the department on financial and project management. According to the CDP, the members form social networks. They gain dignity as they do things for themselves. Children and the extended family benefit from the products of the programme according to the research participants.

4.1.1.8 Stakeholder involvement in funded programmes

To verify whether the programmes were supported and monitored by the relevant departments, research participants were asked questions related to stakeholder participation. 100% of the focus groups had technical support from the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Sport, Recreation, Art and Culture. The focus groups stated that the local municipality and traditional leaders also played different roles in ensuring that the programmes were sustainable.

The CDPs believed there was minimal participation of stakeholders in DSD funded programmes. Only the Department of Sport, Recreation, Art and Culture and the Department of Agriculture are actively involved in the programmes. The extension
officers from the Department of Agriculture assist with technical support services in Agricultural programmes, and the Department of Sport, Recreation, Art and Culture support sewing and handcraft. The local Municipalities link the projects with the Integrated Development Plan. Municipalities and government departments should provide advice and technical support to community development programmes but “the silo mentality militates against this” commented a research participant.

4.1.1.9 Conceptual understanding of development concepts

In order to find out whether the community shares a similar understanding of development concepts, the research participants were asked their understanding of the following concepts: women cooperative, poverty, development, community development and the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Plan (ISRDP). Below are the responses from the research participants.

- **Women cooperative**

98% of participants from the focus groups viewed a women cooperative as a project that unites women in achieving their common goal, which is to fight poverty. A women cooperative is about women upliftment, learning from each other. One research participant cited that it is about women working on their own without male assistance. One participant added that, passing knowledge to other villages is critical. Two participants agreed that it is a project for women with fewer men, which makes it possible for women to develop themselves. One participant believed it was something more than a small project.

Departmental officials defined a women cooperative as a group of women with a common interest, who start a project to realize their own needs through income generation. It is a voluntary organization formed by a group of women to address a common goal to fight poverty and create job opportunities. One provincial participant highlighted that these programmes are not necessarily cooperatives as they are not registered as cooperatives nor do they get the benefits of being cooperatives.
• Poverty

100% of the research participants defined poverty as not having anything to eat; begging for food; and dependence on handouts. 60% further talked about hunger; unavailability of food at home; not meeting children’s school needs; having no money; no seeds to sow in the garden and not having money for family’s medical care; a person who is suffering and has nothing for his/her own survival; he/she is unemployed and has nothing to help himself/herself.

Implementers from the Department of Social Development define poverty as a state of deprivation in terms of food, basic services and basic infrastructure. It is a human condition and it includes insecurity, as that is also regarded as poverty. One official further stated that it is an inadequacy of food, shelter, sanitation, health facilities and employment opportunities.

The official from the Provincial office defined poverty as two different situations. He said poverty is being poor because you do not have clothes or food to eat or community would look at your way of living, the outside appearance of the person’s environment and the person’s way of living.

• Development

100% of focus group members viewed development as a project like the cooperative programmes. Development is about the upliftment of the living standards of the people. It is a programme that government uses to uplift the standard of living for the people, and it undertakes to help fight poverty. It is about doing things with your hands, and benefiting from products to close the gap of hunger. 100% of the participants have a similar understanding that development is about fighting poverty, upliftment of living standards and the government’s intervention strategy to fight poverty.

According to the officials in implementing and monitoring the women cooperative programmes, development is a process of gradual change where people acquire
awareness about their capabilities; have a common interest and use the awareness to identify their needs and arrive at solutions. It is about making changes by introducing new methods. Development is about being innovative, creative and progressive in life. It is also about a sustainable improvement in people’s quality of life. “It is a movement from the primitive way of living to the modern one” stressed one official.

According to the Provincial Department of Social Development officers, development is a component of upliftment; growth in terms of economy; socially and the way of doing things in the community; using new methods and mechanisms to improve people’s lives. As an example, the availability of transport could improve people’s lives by providing better access to services.

- Community development

34% of group participants agreed that community development is government’s intervention in order for people to live a better life. It is about the establishment of income generating projects. One group said community development is about change in people’s characters and attitudes; it is about the development of villages through projects, roads, water, electricity and solving problems in the community. The government provides material to the communities to rear and support their children and to educate the children to help their parents improve their lives. 33% of the focus group highlighted that community development is aimed at facilitation of projects to receive money from selling one’s products. The focus groups agreed on community development as being a government intervention to bring about a better life through providing resources and educating their children.

According to the officials, community development is a process where communities participate fully in their own development. It is about social change that encompasses improvement in the quality of life of poor people and uplifts the socio-economic status of people by engaging them in programmes that contribute towards sustainability of their livelihoods. Community development is about sustainable improvement of
people’s quality of life that takes into consideration enhancement of community dignity and self-worth.

The Provincial officers view community development as a branch of development focusing on the community level, rather than on the individual level. It is about change within the community where issues of development are introduced, for example, community halls, farmers associations, in order to shape the mind set of the community. In theory people should drive community development themselves. But currently it is not so as the illiteracy levels prohibit people from continuing with development on their own. In development, people need to be educated on certain issues. They need to have knowledge on the political and economic dimensions.

One participant highlighted that insensitive treatment among the community and project members, or the issue of who brings resources to the community, complicates the process of community development as people fight over the resources provided by the government.

- **Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Plan (ISRDP)**

100% of officials interviewed agreed that ISRDP is a plan that involves various stakeholders in sustainable rural development. It is a plan that seeks to build synergies in all role players involved, to ensure maximum and optimal utilization of resources.

The integrated Sustainable Rural Development Plan engages unemployed rural women in development programmes that will generate income to improve income base levels, for example, ploughing of fields, poultry farming, crafting. Only the two senior Community Development Practitioners had exposure to the ISRDP as they were already with the department when the Department of Social Development funded programmes linked to ISRDP. The official responsible for monitoring the programme was not that clear about the ISRDP and that the programme was funded in connection with the plan.
The Province’s understanding of the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Plan is that the programme was initiated by former President Mbeki. Its focus was on nodal points, the poorest areas of the country. The programme was not successful, and very little came of it, according to the participant. Municipalities did not take a lead as expected, and success models were not established, or lessons learnt.

4.1.2 ACTIVITY PROFILE
This section focused on the activities conducted by women in the community.

4.1.2.1 Women’s roles in community development within their communities

90% of the focus groups had various roles in the community, because they had a better understanding of community issues. They serve as health committee members, and one member is also the secretary of Headman’s committee for the Mnxe area. 70% of the focus groups encourage women in the communities to start small projects at home in order to secure an income. They all emphasized that a woman should always have something to do to be able to provide for her family needs.

4.1.2.2 Risks and challenges in the community

99% of women in the women cooperatives concerned were aware of the community risks and challenges they highlighted substance abuse a leading criminal behaviour. One participant said crime in their area was manageable as men and young men did not physically assault people. Unemployment was seen as a contributing factor to alcohol abuse and criminal activity. Drought, inflation, floods and storms threaten the communities according to 100% of research participants.

4.1.2.3 Women’s access to capital in the community

Two focus groups agreed that they are able to borrow funds from financial institutions but they are prohibited from doing so by DOSD officials who fear that they might not be able to pay back. The DOSD official’s response when asked by the researcher,
was that the projects do not have a surety to put forward when borrowing funds and that means one of the programme members needs to stand surety on behalf of the programme. The problem arises when the programme cannot pay back the money. One project member would have to be accountable as an individual. One focus group was not sure as they had never thought of borrowing funds from a financial institution.

4.1.2.4 Programme activities

Two focus groups are made up of members from one women cooperative programme and their daily activity according to participants, is poultry farming which includes cleaning of the chicken shed, egg collection and feeding of the chickens. The members also have a garden to provide fresh vegetables for programme members and others are engaged in sewing to generate income. All members do the same thing on a daily basis but divide the tasks to make progress. For example, if one member starts with collecting the eggs, others will feed the chickens and another will clean the shed.

One focus group produces traditional dresses, bead work, grass mats and brooms. The group members are also traditional dancers who render the service when required. These participants divide their labour as the first person will produce the dress then the next person will decorate it with beads.

In all the focus groups, the women also serve as committee members of their programmes.

4.1.2.5 Women’s freedom to participate

100% of focus groups agreed that women in their communities have freedom to participate, use their skills, voice their views and establish their own programmes. One participant highlighted that, in their villages, women are allowed to voice their views even at the headman’s meeting where women were not allowed to talk at all in the past. This shows a positive change in the value of women in communities.
4.1.3 RESOURCE PROFILE (nature of the resources)

In this section, the questions focused on the availability of resources, how they are accessed by women, who is in control and what the benefits are from the resources.

4.1.3.1 The community resources and the access of women to community resources

The researcher wanted to find out how community resources are controlled and accessed by women in the community. According to the research participants the two communities have the following resources: electricity, communal water taps, dipping tank, shearing shed, access roads, crèches, churches, community garden, mobile clinic, grass for making mats and government buildings available for community use and schools. Community members have talents and skills such as building construction; business skills and hand work skills. The communities have valuable knowledge at their disposal. Resources play a major role when starting a programme of any kind, because the availability of resources leads to an improved functioning of the programmes. The participants agreed that the availability of resources to women cooperatives assists in sustaining the programmes. Resources according to the three focus groups, are controlled by the headman, the councilor and the committees or forums elected by the communities. All community members have equal access to the utilization of resources which is directed through the committees. Communities are aware of their resources and they understand that they have to be utilized for the benefit of the community.

4.1.3.2 Responsibility for the community resources

According to all three focus groups there are community structures selected and established by communities to control community resources. What was different was how the different focus groups named the structures: 60% called the structure a
committee and 40% called it a forum. 100% of the participants agreed that the
councilor and the headman also play a role in controlling community resources. One
participant felt the community should be responsible for ensuring that community
resources are not vandalized. This was the most important fact as it is the
researcher’s experience that when communities protect their resources they own them
and they are passed to the next generation.

4.1.3.3 Cultural norms, traditional activities and women’s participation in
community development.

According to 99% of the focus groups, culture is no longer a problem for women
participation as women even participate in areas previously reserved for men. The
focus groups stressed that they still respect their culture, as for instance in issues
related to circumcision and the digging of graves, which are not areas for women. One
participant said that there are still some men who believe in the old order and prohibit
their women from being active participants in projects. 30% agreed that there are
churches which prohibit their members from joining the community programmes but
were not sure of the reason. The women believed that the expense of groceries
needed households to work together as men and women in order to meet the daily
needs of the community.

4.1.3.4 Training provided to programme members

98% of the participants received training from the Department of Social Development.
It was based on the core production of their programmes, that is, sewing, poultry
farming, leather works, crop production and also training in business management,
customer care, record keeping, book keeping and project management, to enable the
participants to run their programmes effectively. More than 70% of participants felt the
training provided was not enough especially the poultry production participants as they
believe that there are new developments such as treating various common diseases
that attack birds. According to the focus group the programme is unable to prevent
any outbreak of disease and have to wait for the extension officers from Department of Agriculture for assistance.

4.1.4 PROGRAMME ACTION PROFILE
This section focused on the action plan to address the objectives of the study

4.1.4.1 Impact of women involvement in community development

The women cooperatives have the ability to offer a sustainable livelihood to their programme members. The participants are 100% sure that there is a difference in the lives of the people and a significant change in the community. This is because of the positive impact due to involvement of women in development taking place in the community. Women produce food for the community; have the ability to fight poverty in the community and prevent suffering among the people. Women according to the focus groups, develop projects to create jobs for the community; look after the sick; build homes; assist youth and educate children. “Men are indifferent to children’s education” commented a member of the focus group.

According to the local officials, the impact of the various roles women play in the community contributes to poverty reduction. Women are child minders and they ensure that children obtain food and attend school. They are family minders where they take care of their families, and they are community minders and they take care of community needs as members of burial societies, grocery societies, and they serve as sources of information. Women participate in programme committees to the extent that they have an effective impact not only on their own self development but also the development of their communities.

100% of government officials felt women in communities at large play a vital role in community development. Women are pillars of community development. They are the most committed and dedicated people in community development. A number of projects in the society are initiated by women and are successful. It is not right to target women in community development as they are the “doers”, said one participant
from the local office of DOSD. The goal of development activities for women is an improvement of family life followed by communities. The self is rarely mentioned because women feel they have a responsibility to provide a suitable environment for their families and their own needs come last.

4.1.4.2 Empowerment strategies for women to impact on community development

100% of Community Development Practitioners interviewed believed that education for women to understand issues of community development was a priority. Capacity building is a critical process as it addresses the development of members and increased production. The programmes own budget for training and are able to access training other than the programmes run by the Capacity Building Sub Directorate of the Department of Social Development. Active participation in decision making positions should be encouraged, as stated by two CDPs, as women work closer to the programmes. Women need to be capacitated with various skills for example financial management; marketing and business skills. They also need exposure to other developed area with similar programmes for observation. Education of men to recognize women as capable decision makers will play a critical role in changing attitudes. Building women’s organizational skills would impact positively on their self reliance. According to one CDP, development practitioners must give space for cooperatives to make decisions even if they make mistakes in order to build their sense of ownership and self reliance.

4.1.4.3 Involvement and active participation of women in the programme

To ensure the involvement and participation of women they should be allowed to play a leading role an emphasized 100% of the research participants. It is important to inform and allow women to participate in Community development programmes and encourage women to be involved in community development with a promise to be paid. The provision of women with resources, training and support was a critical issue
for the focus groups. Women should be trained to improve their levels of work, education and women councilors should be trained to assist women in the community. All research participants agreed on active participation of women in community activities now, and not to wait for things to come or to happen on their own.

According to the local officers, women are identified to partake in a project and be the decision makers as they occupy key positions in the executive committees of their programmes. Meetings are organized to provide feedback and to share ideas and experiences. The responsibilities among them are shared. Training, educating the members and encouraging them to participate in decision making instead of relying on the Development Officer, is recommended.

4.1.4.4 Goal achievement by the Department of Social Development

100% of local officials and the Provincial officials agreed that the goals the Department of Social Development aimed to achieve were not met to the Department’s expectation. One CDP said they were met to a certain extent, as poverty is relieved in many families, though at a snail’s pace. Some of the projects funded are operating well in terms of profit making. The Provincial Department participant stated that the department is achieving the food security goals but not the income generation goal, as communities are able to eat from the produce.

According to the provincial department participants, the tools used to assess the programmes for funding and the misunderstandings that took place in the programmes had a negative impact on the progress of the programme. The researcher asked for clarity on the assessment tool but realized that the participant had just joined the Department. He further highlighted that people do not have elements of entrepreneurship and that the department does not focus on people who are in need of assistance. The participant highlighted that there should be early warning signs of whether the programme is fundable or not. He added that patience in developing community programmes is critical. The officials agreed that to ensure the
achievement of goals by the programmes is the departmental official’s responsibility, especially those at service office level. This could only take place effectively when the CDPs visit the programmes, monitor the progress and evaluate the achievements of the programme. Officials at both levels agreed that to ensure effective implementation of the process, a monitoring and evaluation tool should be in place.

- The success rate of the women cooperatives

According to the Provincial participant, there is a need for a debate or an impact analysis as it is currently not verified by any tool. The participant estimated that four projects out of ten are successful. According to the provincial officials “conflicts, lack of human resources, lack of vision, dependency, preference of employment rather than being part of the programme and laziness, impact negatively on the success of the programme”. The participant from the local office highlighted that a study was conducted in partnership with IDT and both programmes under study were rated green meaning the programmes were ready to be independent from the departmental support. According to an official from the Independent Development Trust, the success rate was low and the majority of the programme members were not ready to be entrepreneurs.

- Improvement of levels and standards of the cooperative

According to the Provincial participant, what the department has are not cooperatives. The department is changing from women cooperatives to women development and that confirms what the official highlighted. The local offices are not aware of the change and the researcher thinks it is critical for the provincial level to direct the information and development to local offices, as that is where the implementation of the programmes takes place. The difference between women cooperatives and women development is that women programmes will not be implemented according to the principles and elements of a cooperative and the programmes will not be registered as a cooperative.
4.1.5 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research identified critical issues that are gaps for leading to minimum achievement of goals by the Department of Social Development:

- The shortage of staff to effectively and regularly monitor the programmes is a serious concern and contributes to fruitless expenditure.
- Inability of the Department to retain its staff members leads to inconsistency which has a negative impact on the progress of the programme. There were no signs of handing over that took place, as the new CDP did not know most of the issues challenging the programme.
- The lack of proper supervision and guidance of the programme members. As one participant mentioned, the illiteracy levels of the people prohibit them from implementing development programmes. It is therefore the responsibility of the government to mentor the people to the level of independency. One programme was never visited by the office of Social Development during 2008. The first time was when he visited the programme with the researcher.
- Shortage of transport for officials to visit programmes regularly was a serious challenge as vehicles available are shared with other programmes.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This section presents the analysis of findings of the study. The researcher will link the findings with theory in order to support the critical data collected in the study. The analysis will cover the understanding of concepts relevant to the study, roles of women and their impact on community development, the structure and membership of women cooperative programme, possible intervention strategies, stakeholder participation, empowerment strategies and goal achievement by PDOSD. The chapter will also lead to the conclusion and recommendations of the study.
4.2.1 Conceptual understanding of development concepts

According to Gerring (2001: 21 and 35) the concepts answer the basis of the study but they are not static. A conceptual framework explains the main issues to be studied, the key factors, the constructs or variables and the presumed relationships among them (Miles and Herman 1994: 18). The section on conceptual understanding in relation to the study focused on women cooperatives, poverty, development, community development, and ISRDP. The study aimed to determine the level of congruency in understanding of the processes between the programme members, the officials at local level and the officials at Provincial level. The assessment would assist the researcher in understanding the position of women when they signed the service level agreement (SLA) with the Eastern Cape Department of Social Development because people in various areas and at various levels of work have different understandings of processes, depending on experience and exposure. The nature of assistance in education of these processes to women may then be comprehended and planned accordingly.

- Women cooperative

90% of the research participants from the focus groups defined a women cooperative as a project that unites women in achieving their common interest which is to fight poverty. According to Shepherd (1998: 120-121), projects are a convenient size module that corresponds to the structure and resources needed to initiate and implement donor assisted development activities. He further highlights that projects are short term, and that is the opposite of a cooperative. Cooperatives are organizations with high numbers of membership who have a similar interest and have a goal to support their members to be sustainable. According to the Guide to the South African Cooperatives Act 14 (2005: 2), the goal of a cooperative is to provide services to its members at affordable prices and to create employment for its members. One focus group shared that because the department funds a certain number in a programme, people with different interests are forced to meet the criteria for funding. This result in the numbers of women cooperatives dropping drastically
once people realize they are not being employed but will have to work towards self employment. 100% of the focus groups understood that the programmes were women cooperatives and they should be managed as such. Women are in control and they make decisions on their own. This shows that women in rural areas have the capability to lead but they need a chance to prove themselves and the resources to support their initiatives. 50% of research participants agreed that a women cooperative is a women’s organization with a common goal to develop and pass knowledge to women in other villages. It is about women’s upliftment, women working on their own, learning from each other and supporting each other. The African perspective supports and encourages women to organize themselves and address issues of their concern. This informs the Provincial Department of Social Development (PDOSD) that women can be utilized to change lives in the communities but need strengthening of their skills and knowledge in order to have an effective impact on community development.

A research participant from the local office also used the term ‘project’ in his definition of women cooperative though 100% of senior officials defined the term without linking it to a project. This is emphasized by Nelson (1995) when he states that the training approach should focus on all levels, including senior management, in order for them to understand what happens in the field and place field workers more at the centre rather than at the periphery. Regular training of CDPs would assist in gaining knowledge, skills and exposure which could be transferred to programme members and develop the programme and the community at large. Regular training to educate communities is encouraged by the theoretical framework used by the study. Similar understanding of concepts leads to working towards achieving a similar goal. It is critical for PDOSD and the local DOSD offices to be at the same level of understanding in order to communicate similar information to the communities and to avoid confusion of issues.

One official highlighted that a cooperative is a voluntary organization formed by a group of women to address a common goal, but this is not how it happened in both cooperative programmes as there were various groups from different areas who were combined to access funding. The research participant from the Independent
Development Trust stressed that “funding should be administered judiciously to deserving programmes”. This is a solution agreed upon by all research participants that only interested community members should be involved in the programmes and not people who are looking for employment. The researcher agrees with this line of thinking because it avoids programme failure, expectations not being met or people losing interest as a result of the incorrect approach from the beginning of the programme.

According to the Provincial research participant, the so-called women cooperatives funded by the Department of Social Development are not necessarily cooperatives as they are not registered as cooperatives or do not get the benefits of being cooperatives. According to the Guide to the South African Cooperatives Act 14 (2005: 1), the purpose of a cooperative is to bring together people with a common need that is addressed jointly, or a group of people who want to create employment for them. The Cooperatives Act 14 of 2005 further explains that a cooperative is not a cooperative if it does not serve the needs of the members or does not employ its members. The researcher agrees with the participant. As far as is known, the majority of women cooperatives funded by the Department did not apply to the department as women cooperatives, but were funded under the directorate and so were called women cooperatives. Those registered as cooperatives are individual programmes which do not comply with the principles of a cooperative. The women cooperatives were established to contribute towards community development but were not fully assisted or supported to achieve their goals. The point about similar information at all levels is still a concern as the local DOSD is implements cooperatives while the PDOSD says it is only a matter of a name.

The researcher found that the Department of Social Development’s women cooperatives were not supported as cooperatives by the Department and so they could not be compared with the privileges of a cooperative. This is not inline with the people centred development and the African perspective as community programmes need support and mentoring to assist them to develop and to be sustainable. The most important fact is that there are women who participate actively in women's
programmes and play a very critical role in contributing to the development of their communities.

- Poverty

Poverty has different meanings from community to community and from culture to culture. Given that poverty is a target of the women’s cooperative programme, the researcher wanted to know how the communities perceive poverty in their areas. What is defined as poverty in urban areas might not be the case in the rural areas of South Africa (Blackburn, 1988). 100% of the research participants define poverty as not having something to eat, begging for food and being dependent on handouts. 60% further talked about hunger, not meeting children’s school needs and being unemployed, having no seeds to sow in their gardens and not having money for their family’s medical care. 100% of research participants agree that poverty is about the inability to meet your daily family needs. 60% of the research participants, including the officials, are aware that poverty is not only about hunger. The focus group defined poverty according to what they experience in the community. Kiros (1985: 9) highlighted that poverty does not only mean a lack of food or assets, malnutrition or disease but also powerlessness, illiteracy, isolation and vulnerability to impoverishment.

A participant from the province highlighted the term ‘insecurities’ when defining poverty. He stated that poverty is a human condition and it includes insecurity. These insecurities prevent women from developing and exploring new grounds that would improve their lives. Women are the most vulnerable category because they have “fewer and poorer opportunities to work, there is a greater impact of unemployment encountered by women, greater vulnerability due to lack of skills and education, including lack of access to better technology and productive assets” (Rao 2000: 1-2).

The study revealed that communities mostly define poverty in relation to a lack of food but they are also aware of other elements such as hunger, unemployment and the inability to meet the family needs. The researcher concurs with Kiros (1985) as the
author mentions powerlessness, illiteracy and isolation; there is a link between these and impoverishment of women.

- **Development**

The research participants have a similar understanding of development. Both the focus groups and the Departmental officers highlighted the terms change and upliftment of the living standards of the people as development and agreed it is the government’s responsibility to assist communities to fight poverty. The term project was used in defining development by both the focus groups and the other participants. According to the researcher, using project in defining development reduces the power of development as a project takes place over a short term while development is a continuous process. Shepherd (1998: 120) conurs that a project is for a short period and the use of the term is over stretched. The Departmental officers do not see development as a continuous process and this has negative implications for women and community development.

- **Community development**

The focus groups agreed on community development as being a government intervention to “bring” better life through providing resources and educating their children. One focus group member mentioned that hungry people need not lack anything because of development taking place in their community. The researcher asked for clarity and it was explained that development should not negatively affect any one in the community. The participants are aware of the roles and the participation of the community members in community development processes. The emphasis on community development should be the initiative of the community Swanepoel et al. (1997) and Midgley (1995). The RDP (1994) also emphasized the active involvement of the people in their development as the RDP highlighted people-centred and people-driven development. Women are more involved in community development, as poverty appears to be a woman’s problem and the solution to problems of poverty is about restoring the capacity of individuals (Midgley, 1995: 112).
The study strongly proposes the support of women to improve their lives as this will have a greater positive impact in changing the lives of the poor in the community.

The Provincial participant believes that currently people are not implementing community development on their own because of high illiteracy levels. In development, people need education, need to have knowledge and an awareness of political and economic dimensions. The researcher agrees with the statement of the participant and that illiteracy should not be an excuse for developers to implement what they think is good and is a priority for the community, without working with the community. The need for an integrated approach to community development is critical in addressing the various diversions of poverty.

The provincial office highlighted the insensitive treatment among the community and project members on the issue of who brought the resources to the community. That attitude complicates the process of community development as people fight over the resources provided to the community. This is a serious challenge in community programmes as it leads to unnecessary tensions which result in divisions within the programme causing delays in the establishment of the programme. Time is spent on developing working relations before effective implementation of the programme can take place. The researcher agrees with Nelson (1995) when he emphasizes that the training approach should not focus only on the core production of the programme. Training should assist members to deal with different characters within the programme and how to resolve conflict and differences to contribute to the progress of the programme.

- Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Plan (ISRDP)

The DOSD officials participating in the research study are aware of the plan and how it is supposed to function, but do not know much about it especially in practical terms. In the opinion of the interviewees the plan did not succeed and the municipalities who were supposed to drive did not lead the programme. These strategies need to be revived in all municipalities so as to ensure that the people living in rural areas are
supported and developed effectively. There is a need for improvement of communication and understanding about the ISRDP as a strategy addressing rural poverty.

4.2.2 Roles of women in community development

The various roles women played in the community and in the programme were explored to confirm the efforts of women in the development of their communities. Roles according to (Van der Waldt and Knipe, 1998: 20) must be obtained to establish the basis for formulating the institution’s or programme’s mission. Roles direct the people towards achieving their objectives. It was clear from the information collected that women played various roles in their communities. These roles did not only benefit their families but the community at large. 100% of the participants highlighted various roles as their daily activities of the programme. 80% added that they have other roles they play within the community as people who have a better understanding of community issues; that is exposure in government offices and the ability to advise others. They serve as health committee members and one member is also the secretary of Headman’s committee for the whole Mnxe area because of the skills she acquired from the programme training. Women work together in a coordinated manner and all exchange tasks so as to understand the complete processes of the programmes.

Women in women cooperative programmes, according to the research participants, are leaders and decision makers as they are executive committee members. Women are organizers, planners and implementers of their own programme. This shows that women have the ability to function independently. Women in the programmes are also the beneficiaries of the programme as they benefit from being members of the programme. They are also supporters of their families. The dual roles women play need to be strengthened so as to be able to contribute effectively to their own development. This is confirmed by Perry and Schenk (2001: 13) when they stated that the World Bank affirmed that reinforcement of women’s roles facilitates economic
growth and improves family health. Women play critical roles within the community and they work towards building their own communities.

4.2.3 Women impact and their contributions in community development

Women cooperatives are community based programmes which are meant to improve the lives of communities. The researcher’s experience is that people in the community do not own what is imposed on them and government funded programmes collapse when initiated simply because funds were available or because a developer thought he would address community problems by establishing a specific community development programme. Woodward (2000) emphasizes that community development is not about experts imposing solutions but assisting communities in making informed decisions.

According to all focus groups, various small projects were asked to combine in order to meet the requirements for funding as a cooperative. Funding of community programmes because of availability funds has its challenges which become worse when different groups with different visions are combined to share approved funding. The consequences are always noticed very late when the programme collapses, when there are tensions, divisions and when the programme is evaluated to verify if it has achieved the objectives set by the donor. According to Jeppe (1985), the community development workers should utilize community development as a method of intervention emphasizing the involvement of the people in the communities in proposing, planning and promoting development priorities for their own communities. This means that communities should be involved as soon as possible in order for the communities to understand the programme and to own the programme.

100% of the research participants were involved in the women cooperative programmes expecting to improve their lives and to create jobs for themselves and for their children. The expectations were met instantly for 35% of the participants as they received an additional fund from the Department of Sport Recreation Arts and Culture
which provided a budget for stipends, while the other programme managed for three months at R300.00 per person per month after waiting for three to four years. This situation is not encouraging as women leave their homes early in the morning and come back late in the afternoon but there is no incentive at the end of the month. These women have children to take to school and to feed. According to the Cooperative Act 14 of 2005, the goal of a cooperative is to provide services to its members at affordable prices and to create employment for its members. The Act further states that Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of the communities at large. The main focus is to create jobs for its members so that they are able to provide for their families. The challenge with the two programmes under study is that they are not implemented as cooperatives according to the Provincial participant and therefore do not benefit the participants as cooperatives should do.

Women remained in the cooperatives although there is no financial benefit but do receive some programme products. Women are patient especially when their children and families are to benefit at the end of the day. The lack of incentive in income generating programmes funded by DOSD is a challenge to the process of community development. An observation made by the researcher shows that at the beginning of the programme for about three to six months, there is no production as the programme prepares the site. Further, during the first few months there will be nothing to take home as sales are still at the lowest levels and the programme is unable to generate income for its members. Members’ expectations are not completely met and the experience is that those who came for employment leave once there is no incentive.

100% of focus group members agreed that they developed their programme for the upliftment of community life; to fight against poverty and suffering and to create jobs and earn a living. Ife (1999) supports the idea that cooperatives are developed by organized communities for mutual economic benefits. Women have been proved to be providers for their families and the funding of women programmes motivated them to upgrade the small projects they started as individuals.
The officials emphasized that there are other benefits women receive such as knowledge, social networks, exposure and information on training provided by the PDOSD on financial and project management. However, the most important benefit is dignity, as people are capable of being independent and fending for themselves. The children and the extended family benefit from the products of the programme.

Regarding the income generating aspect of the programme, the participants agreed that the benefits are so minimal and not encouraging, which results in members searching for employment elsewhere especially those who are single parents.

According to the researcher’s analysis, programme members are able to use the information collected in their training to benefit their communities in various fields, whether it is about budgeting social grants; education of children or acquiring services for needy children. Women become multi skilled through their women cooperative programmes.

The impact of women’s involvement in community development is the essence of the study. If the women cooperatives have the ability to offer a sustainable livelihood to its programme members they can make a significant contribution towards community development and make a positive impact on the lives of the people. The research participants stated that there is a difference made to the lives of the people and a significant change in the community. According to Gebremdhin (2002), active participation of women in development programmes allows better opportunity to make realistic changes in restrictive practices at legal and developmental levels. The programmes according to the focus groups provide good health through the fresh products, the capacity to create jobs that enabled members to pay school fees, the capacity to look after the sick because the members are exposed to the community development principles of ubuntu including respect and are able to render home community-based care services to others, develop homes, assist youth and educate their children.

According to participants “women are the motivators in poverty reduction programmes in their communities”. Women are child minders and they ensure that children have food and attend school. They are family minders where they take care of their families.
and they are community minders when they take care of community needs, for example as members of burial societies and grocery societies. One participant stated that, “women are the pillars of community development” and this claim is strongly supported by the researcher.

The researcher concurs with the participants that women are the most committed and dedicated category of people in community development. One participant highlighted that community development projects in the communities initiated and established by women are successful.

A participant thinks it is not right to target women in community development, as women are ‘doers’ and the researcher thinks women are a suitable target group to be utilized in order to ensure that the family benefits. Women have been proved to utilize most of their resources towards benefiting their family, compared to men. According to Gebremedhin (2002: 232) women are agents and beneficiaries for change. He further states that investing in women’s capabilities and empowering them to exercise their choices is the surest way to contribute to economic development and social progress.

4.2.4 The structure and membership of the women cooperative programme

The structure and membership of the programmes is crucial in order to ensure that women are exposed to skills and resources for their own growth and development. The management structures of both cooperatives are composed of a chairperson, secretary and their deputies, treasurer and additional members. The committee members are 100% women. The two programmes are an example of females driven management committees. Women manage their own programmes and strive towards being small businesses on their own.

The different numbers of membership that compose a women cooperative between the local and the Provincial offices of DOSD is a concern, as funds are allocated to benefit a certain number of people with the expectation that a certain return will be generated.100% of research participants raised their dissatisfaction with the high numbers the Provincial Department of Social Development is funding as a requirement because their communities end up recruiting members who have no interest in the programme.
4.2.5 Intervention strategy for women empowerment

Wates (2000) explained that community planning processes should be owned by the community and the need should be people driven. Proper preparation of communities for funding of programmes is critical and leads to sustainable development. The study revealed that funding of the programmes is critical for its implementation, progress and sustainability as under or lack of funding leads to non achievement of set goals which retards the progress of the programme. 100% of focus groups and interviewed participants were clear about the spending of funds according to an approved business plan. They all agreed on the pre implementation workshop which was conducted by the Provincial Department of Social Development (PDOSD) before utilization of funds by the programme. 98% of research participants from the two women cooperative programmes attended the pre implementation workshop. To ensure that funds are utilized effectively PDOSD also developed a project synopsis where items and operational costs were specified according to the department’s approval of the business plan. It is critical for the community development worker to ensure that correct financial control mechanisms are in place (Ife, 1995: 224). As the issue of illiteracy was mentioned by one participant, it becomes imperative that the CDPs support and monitor the spending and the progress of the women to ensure that the women achieve their goals. Literacy programmes are also crucial for women empowerment to develop independency and self reliance.

The four officials further stated that the women cooperatives are established through awareness campaigns and information-sharing that takes place in the community. There are referrals from other government departments to the district offices for assessment and submission of the application for funding. A Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is conducted to identify the community needs, develop a business plan with the communities and collect the necessary documents, such as letters of support. Programme synopsis is the summary of a business plan developed for easy referencing by the implementers. If the programme is approved for funding a pre implementation plan is developed with the process of signing the Service Level Agreement. The process followed seemed to be effective and needs to be
implemented in all areas so as to fund the deserving programmes which will be able to achieve the set goals. This process refers to the normal procedure followed by the PDOSD and not what actually happened in the funding process of programmes involved in the study.

The other important issue was to find out whether funding provided by the Provincial Department of Social Development managed to support the programme to start its production effectively. 98% of research participants agreed that the women cooperative programmes were funded to the amount of R500 000 each by PDOSD. According to the officials who were research participants, the above amount was a standard criterion that is allocated to women cooperatives. This has no flexibility and does not accommodate every need of the programme which might lead to under funding and increased chances of failure. One other crucial point is the time frame in which programmes are expected to utilize funds allocated to them. According to the participants, time provided to spend the first tranche was too short and communities end up spending for the sake of receiving the second tranche. Cormarck (1993: 67) stressed that the pressure for funding to be spent within a specific time poses a challenge to the communities. This means that communities are not developed at their pace and the chances of skills transfer from community development practitioners to programme members are limited. This means that PDOSD does not comply with the principles of community development. This has a negative effect on the development of the programme as funds are approved with the clear understanding that the programme will achieve specific targets. The researcher agrees with one research participant who emphasized that the Department should ensure that the criteria for funding is needs-driven rather than funds-driven. Quality funding to deserving programmes will change the current situation of the inability of programmes to achieve the objectives of funding and implementing community development programmes.

According to the research participants the two communities have basic critical resources such as schools, roads, water and electricity. The community also posses human resources such as skills, talents and information that are used to develop the community to benefit the next generation. The community is aware of these resources
and they utilize them for their benefit. The availability of these resources to women cooperatives assists in sustaining the programme. In all three focus groups there are community structures or forums selected by communities to control community resources. 100% of the participants agreed that the councilors and the headman also play a role in controlling community resources. One participant emphasized that communities should be responsible for ensuring that community resources are not vandalized.

Women in women cooperative programmes should be equipped with skills and knowledge in order to contribute effectively to the development of their programmes. A cooperative should provide ongoing training for its members according to the Cooperatives Act 2005. Continuous training and education are crucial for the programme to grow and develop as learning organizations are leading organizations (Thomson, 2004: 28-30). According to Akande (1992: 67), women still need a lot of education to develop their potential due to cultural norms of seeing men always at the forefront of initiatives. All focus groups had no problem with their cultural practices. According to women “negative interferences of culture have changed”. According to 80% of research participants, there is transformation taking place in the rural communities as women are allowed to participate in public meetings and their initiatives are supported by the headman and his committee.

The study identified that the communities, local office and the PDOSD do not have the same understanding of concepts and understanding and that is a serious gap if all three levels are to work together toward achieving a similar goal. According to the CDP, the Provincial Department of Social Development requested that the CDPs be part of the training rendered to funded community development programmes during November 2008 to ensure that there is a similar understanding of processes. This is good for the benefit of the programme and the facilitators of programme implementation.
4.2.6 Stakeholder participation in the women cooperative programmes

According to the researcher, stakeholder participation in the programme and integration of services by various stakeholders is critical for the success of the programme. To verify whether the programmes were supported by an integrated team of departments with varied expertise, questions about stakeholder participation were asked. The three focus groups had technical support from the Department of Agriculture, Department of Sport Arts and Culture, the Municipality and Traditional leaders. There were stakeholders who worked with programmes; however one government official interviewed stated that stakeholder involvement was minimal in Department of the Department of Social Development funded programmes. The researcher identified lack of commitment by other stakeholders as the officer said stakeholder participation is limited. To give an example, the municipality only provided water in the tanks when they did not have water for the chickens in the village. The role that was supposed to be played by the municipality should be more. The municipality should have installed water taps at the programme site and linked the programme to the Local Economic Development (LED) section to ensure that the programme develops and graduates to a small business. The Municipality has a responsibility to ensure that there is development of communities in their areas of jurisdiction, according to the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000. Good working relations between the community leaders have a positive impact on the development taking place in a community. PDOSD should involve the Department of Education (ABET) section to make community women literate.

4.2.7 Empowerment strategies for women to impact on community development

The three Community Development Practitioners interviewed believed that educating women to understand issues of community development is a priority. Capacity building is one critical process. It addresses human dignity and strengthens the programmes. Women need to be capacitated with various skills such as financial management,
marketing, and business skills in order to be independent. One participant mentioned that women also need exposure to other developed countries for observation.

The fifth principle of the Cooperative Act 14 of 2005 cited that a cooperative should provide ongoing training to its members. All members should be equipped to contribute effectively to the development of the cooperative (Guide to the South African Cooperatives Act 14, 2005). Continuous training and education are crucial for the programme to grow and to develop its members. The Department of Social Development does provide training to the programmes but it is a once off and focuses on the basics. As the programme develops it needs to be more empowered in order to be able to address new challenges. As much as community development principles emphasize that empowerment should be at the level of the people, their development should be monitored to verify readiness to the next level.

The knowledge and skills of women should be strengthened as communities have their own indigenous knowledge and skills that could assist in developing communities. The government needs to develop an integrated approach for the implementation of community development within the communities. The approach should be able to focus on the empowerment of communities holistically to ensure that all areas of development are addressed. Empowerment of women programmes should be able to develop communities that are self reliant and independent. Empowerment is a critical element of community development and it leads to participation of communities in their own development (Midgley, 1995).

4.2.8 Goal achievement by the Provincial Department of Social Development

The study concurs with the research participants that the goals of both the programme and the department were not achieved as expected. The Department is achieving food security goals but not income generation goals as mentioned by a research participant from the Provincial office. According to decision makers of the directorate women cooperatives managed to address poverty in the Eastern Cape to an extent. The Provincial office believes that people do not have elements of entrepreneurship but
the humanistic perspective believes that communities have their own knowledge and skills that should be strengthened in order to meet the challenges of the programme. The study proposes that this is a critical responsibility of DOSD officials at all levels to assist the communities from the bottom up to the level of self reliance, entrepreneurship and Local Economic Development.

The two programmes were evaluated by the Independent Development Trust (IDT) to verify the success rate of the programmes. Both programmes were found ready to be on their own according to the verification study conducted by IDT. According to the researcher, the programmes need to be boosted with capital to be able to produce according to the demands of the market. The physical observation of the programmes did not show any signs of readiness for exit, but a need to finalize certain activities with regular monitoring by the Community development practitioners. According to Rubin and Rubin (1992: 411), monitoring and evaluation is a process which allows those who set up programmes to evaluate the progress of the programme, focusing on production, profit and funds utilized by the programme.

To improve the levels and standards of the women cooperatives the programmes should function as real cooperatives and benefit from the privileges of being a member or a cooperative. According to a participant, there should be an independent body to manage the cooperatives and verify their successes and to account for their successes and challenges. The funding criteria should be able to determine programmes that are ready for funding at district level and provincial levels in order to sift through qualifying Business Plan from the area offices. The researcher agrees with the participants that programmes should be given funds according to their applications to enable women cooperatives to purchase all the necessities of the programme in order to have a good start and to achieve their goals.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
5.1 CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study. The findings revealed that the women cooperatives were not implemented as they were supposed to be as there was no compliance with the principles that guide the implementation of cooperatives. These would have provided some advantages to the programmes for their development. There are various reasons for not being clear on cooperatives programmes at local level. The study finds that women cooperatives are that in name only. A limited number of Community Development Practitioners were trained in cooperatives when the Act was introduced in 2006 by the Provincial Department of Social Development. The Department seemed to have noticed the gap in funding of women cooperatives. The Department is currently in the process of changing the name as the sub directorate is now called Women Development.

The findings also revealed that there is a lack of flow of information, knowledge and skills between the Province, the local office and the community. The Provincial office is supposed to support the local office with knowledge, resources and skills to be transferred to the communities. It is a support system to the districts and the area offices. The Province funds women development while the local offices implement the women cooperatives in the communities. The local level or the implementation level of the department should be empowered with every new development in order to ensure that quality and effective service delivery is received by the communities. Information is the key to every aspect of development involving communities, as a lack of knowledge at certain levels of development could lead to confusion which would delay the progress of the programme. De Beer and Swanepoel (1998) mentioned that a lack of knowledge limited the success of cooperatives in the past. When communities lack information they are unable to participate effectively in their development and remain empowered.

The findings further revealed that there is a lack of continuous training of programme members and officials at local level. Eade (1997: 7-8) states that capacity building is about a long term investment in people and their organizations and a commitment to
the various processes through which they can better shape the forces that affect their lives. Empowerment of the people with knowledge assists the programme members to realize other community needs and to be able to be ambassadors of development in their communities. According to Van der Waldt and Knipe (1998: 145), empowerment is a process which provides power to gain access to resources and to ensure the utilization of these resources in achieving development objectives. At the time of termination with the funder, the programme members should be well equipped. The theoretical framework of the study strongly emphasizes regular empowerment on communities and the department could not align itself with the basis of the study. The department needs to strengthen its capacity building section to ensure that communities are empowered.

The women cooperatives programmes have been in existence and in contact with the department for about five years and people still define development as a project. The officials too use the term ‘project’ in defining development. A project is the end product of development as cited by Van der Waldt and Knipe (1998). Comparing development to projects or defining development by using the term project, limits the progress of development in the communities. A project according to Shepherd (1998: 127) is often equated with planning and design skills rather than management and implementation of a programme. A project has a short life span while development is continuous and focuses on changing the lives of the people; development is a process that cannot be accomplished over a short period. According to the people centred development and the African feminist perspective development is an on going process that focuses on changing the community lives.

The research revealed that the lack of incentives in Department of Social Development programmes has a negative impact on the progress and sustainability of the programmes. These women are heads of their families; they have extended families to care for and they have children to educate. The Department expects them to stay in a programme that cannot meet its member’s needs for years. This is a violation of the characteristics of people centred development as the approach believes that the programme members should benefit from their programme. The
Department should revisit its criteria and make provision for a stipend, especially during the first months of putting up the infrastructure of the programme. According to the humanistic perspective women should be treated with respect and dignity as heads of their families who are able to meet the daily needs of their families. The working conditions of women cooperatives and lack of proper support did not change the women’s will to develop their organizations and improve their communities through community development initiatives. It is critical to support women, as they have been proved to be most concerned and committed to community development.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 Conceptual understanding of development terms

The research found that research participants in the programmes, the community development practitioners and the province do not share the same understanding of key concepts. In other cases the understanding of concepts is not clear to all the implementers of the programmes. Communities cannot effectively implement what they do not understand and the community development practitioners cannot effectively monitor implementation of a programme they do not clearly understand. According to people centred development, humanistic perspective and the feminist perspective which are the theoretical framework guiding the study, empowerment of the people is the priority of development. According to Midgley (1985) people are able to participate only if they have information to enable them to be active members of their programmes and not to depend on the Community Development Practitioner. The research is aware of financial constraints but recommends regular in-service training of both officials and programme members to ensure that they are at a level of understanding that is conducive to effective development.

One critical point is to render training that will be simplified to the level of the community and to use language familiar to them in order for the members to participate freely. According to the community development principle of simplicity, the programmes implemented in communities should be simple to ensure that people
realize their potential of learning and participation in their development. The knowledge and clear understanding of issues by the community leads to active participation and ownership of the programme as the people will be able to explain their existence and make sense of it (Midgley, 1995). Midgley (1995) emphasized that empowerment is about acquisition of power and the ability to give it effect. This will help the Department to have clients or communities who are able to question and advise the department on services delivered to them.

Continuous training on management of the project and the core function of the programmes should be prioritized for both the programme members and the officials, in order to have multi skilled officials who can work in any field. Quality training empowers communities with skills that can contribute toward their own community development and reduction of poverty. Accredited training on regular bases is recommended not the unstructured workshops without mentoring that are provided by the government departments and expect communities to implement sustainable programmes.

5.2.2 The establishment and progress of the women cooperative programme

The findings above suggest that women development is obstructed by the approach (es) in planning and design of projects by CDPs’ which is also not in line with community development intervention strategies. It is therefore clear from the programmes studied that their planning and design did not follow the humanistic perspective which emphasizes people driven and human oriented development.

What seems to have been important in the design and development of the projects by the Department was exhaustion of the available funds and compliance with the criterion set to access funds by projects which were not people driven. Participants also highlighted the same as follows; funds should not lead; be the governing fact rather a deserving and organized group of people, who understand what they want with a clear direction, should be assisted.
To amplify the point, the research revealed that the women cooperative programmes were not well planned and were funded because there were funds available. Establishment of assessment committees and a thorough assessment of business plans at local office level are therefore essential to guard against wastage of public funds. This will ensure that communities are empowered; self confident; responsible and co operative; creative and have the ability to make decisions.

This will only take place when community development practitioners work with communities towards understanding the processes of community development. The finding showed that the results of poor targeting and poor selection of beneficiaries for funding lead to unsustainable projects and therefore poor production.

It is recommended that the field workers need to implement and manage community development processes adequately and communities should be clear about the development processes followed. The department should therefore fill vacant positions to run successful programmes. When adequately staffed, the department needs to drive vigorous awareness and outreach programmes empowering villages and councilors about community development processes.

In view of the above research findings it is clear that there are issues that contribute to the delayed progress of the women cooperatives programmes. The origins of the programmes are not satisfying; the process followed by the CDP was not according to community development as an intervention strategy. The humanistic perspective also emphasizes people driven and human oriented development which did not take place in the programmes under study. Participants highlighted that funds should not lead but rather a deserving and organized group of people, who understand what they want with a clear direction, should be assisted to lead. This will only take place when community development practitioners work with communities towards understanding the processes of community development. The finding showed that the results of poor targeting and poor selection of beneficiaries for funding led to poor production.
The shortage of staff to conduct community awareness campaigns to empower communities in development processes and the focus on funded programmes is a challenge that put the department in a position where there is no competition for the readiness of the programme and only available programmes will be funded. Distribution of reading material to communities, presentations in outreach programmes in the villages and empowering the councilors could help to educate communities in community development processes.

The research revealed that the women cooperative programmes were not well planned and were funded because there were funds available. The characteristics of the theoretical framework that forms the foundation of the study were not completely adhered to by the developers. Proper implementation of community development within the communities based on the needs of communities, their participation and empowerment leads to self sufficient and independent communities.

5.2.3 The various roles of programme members in the community and in the programme

Women play a number of roles in the programme and within the community. The roles played by various members empower women and develop their skills. The researcher was impressed with the division of roles as all programme members are aware of what was taking place in the programme. No roles were reserved for certain members in the programme. Programmes members should be encouraged to play various roles, as that exposes members to a variety of skills and information they could use to start their own businesses or to explore further community needs. The dual roles women play in communities should be supported in order not to deny them opportunities for further development. The willingness of women to contribute to their community development calls for assistance with resources, knowledge, skills and opportunities in order for women to achieve their objectives.
5.2.4 The structure of the women cooperative programme

The two women cooperative programmes are 100% led by women and are purely women programmes. There is positive progress in the programmes and women are determined to work towards improving lives in their communities though the programme has not met their expectations. It is recommended that the criteria for funding needs to be specific and clear that women cooperatives are developed for women and should be implemented in accordance with the Cooperative Act. This would give women a chance to build their confidence and be independent as women. The two programmes are an example to other communities as they implement their programmes without men’s assistance.

5.2.5 The funding criteria of the women cooperatives

The researcher agrees with the participants that the criteria for funding needs to be reviewed, and communities taken on board when developing the criteria, so that communities can voice their experiences and possible solutions. In this way communities will own the criteria, as they will have an understanding of the decisions taken. The researcher understands that there are limited funds, but the department can verify the needs of a specific programme and drive it to a level of independence. Quality funding rather than quantity funding is also recommended, as there are numerous government funded programmes that are not sustainable because they run short of funds.

It is further recommended that the PDOSD complies with time frames set for effective implementation of a programme. Funds should be available to programmes at the beginning of the financial year especially if the fund is allocated for a specific year. This will provide time for members to learn, grow and develop at their own pace and the Department will have adequate time to evaluate the progress of the programme. Community development programmes should not suffer because the Department fails to meet the deadlines of transferring funds to the programmes. Programme members will not own the process and this could lead to tensions as the community
development worker will not have been able to discuss processes with the members. Community development principles of empowerment, participation and ownership will be violated by the community development practitioner. Community development enables communities to be independent of the professionals, to develop confidence in themselves and to use indigenous knowledge and expertise and to improve their circumstances (Bergdall, 1993). Community participation is critical in community development.

5.2.6 Stakeholder participation in the programme

The findings revealed that women cooperatives are not supported effectively by the stakeholders, who were supposed to work with the community development programmes to ensure that there is production and sustainability. Government departments, including the local municipalities, are supposed to work together in an integrated manner in order to provide the expertise lacking in the programme. The government departments have a responsibility to develop communities, preparing them to enter the market and this is where the municipality’s Local Economic Development (LED) programme comes in and exposes the programme members to the level of entrepreneurship and Small Medium Enterprises (SMME). The other challenge might be that, in the rural areas, the number of government departments is limited and communities have to travel long distances to reach to the Department of Trade and Industry or Tourism, to assist with the marketing of hand crafts and other products. Rural women programmes need assistance from officials and Community Development Practitioners to develop them towards independence and self reliance. The Rural White Paper stresses that through development government wants to see communities living in rural areas fully involved in developing their own communities, safeguarding valued features and shaping the decisions that affect them (Moseley, 2003: 135).

The strengthening of the Inter Governmental Relations (IGR) forums is recommended and should be led by an appointed official who will be requested to report on progress on a monthly basis. Currently they are supposed to be championed by the
municipalities who are not playing a leading role in the implementation of the programmes. In the IGR meetings, departments are able to highlight their challenges and to share information on various fields of development, including how to assist other departments with challenges they experience. Integration of services is critical for development of communities. If government departments could render integrated services to communities there could be improvement in the lives of the communities as a holistic approach will be utilized in addressing community needs and the available resources could be used to benefit more communities.

5.2.7 Women access to capital in the community

It is clear from the findings of the study that the women cooperative programmes do not have access to capital from financial institutions because they do not qualify. The researcher proposes that the Provincial Department of Social Development provides adequate funding to enable programmes to have all the necessary equipment to start a programme and to be able to generate income for the sustainability of the programme.

5.2.8 Women’s freedom to participate

The study revealed that women in some rural communities have the freedom to express themselves in public. This is a positive change for rural women as they have freedom of speech within their communities. The African feminist perspective aims at improving the lives of women through their participation and empowerment. This will also benefit communities in general. The study recommends that PDOSD engage traditional leaders in community development in order for the leaders to practice community development effectively in their communities. Participation is defined as an organized effort to increase control over resources and regulative institutions by groups (Shepherd, 1998: 180). Women should be allowed to be active participants in their development in order to be empowered and to ensure that there is equal distribution of resources within the community.
5.2.9 The community resources and the access of women to community resources

According to the research participants the two communities have resources and use them to benefit the programmes and the community at large. The people centred development emphasizes that communities should be responsible and in control of their resources. “Communities should be responsible for their resources” cited a research participant. The statement shows maturity and understanding of community development within the communities. The people centred development also encourages communities to be responsible of their resources. Women have equal access to the resources just like any member of the community. The researcher recommends the empowerment of women and not to only elect men to control resources, to have confidence in women as controllers of community resources. Their involvement in these committees will expose women to management skills and develop their strategies in working with communities. The education of individuals in communities to be responsible and protect their resources is further recommended.

5.2.10 Training provided to programme members

Development does not lead automatically to delivery of goods and services to an inactive community but rather requires involvement by and empowerment of the community (Van der Waldt and Knipe, 1998: 145). Training gives power to the programmes. Regular training and update in all aspects of developments is recommended.

5.2.11 Impact of women involvement in community development

The research findings revealed that the impact and the contribution of women in their communities is remarkable. Women empowerment that took place through the training and exposure of women to the cooperative programme enabled them to serve their communities in various ways. They shared their knowledge with other women in the
community and encouraged them to start their own initiatives so as to earn an income. They used their skills to help others, while referring them to relevant Departments for professional intervention. Others served as secretaries to the headman’s committee, assisting the community to conduct meetings and to keep community records through training received from the programme. They served as health care workers visiting the sick in their homes and sharing their programme produce with their extended families. From the little money they received from the programme, the members were able to provide school needs for their children. One might not view the impact as enormous because it is not in the form of hard cash but the knowledge, skills and the services they shared with the community made a difference to the lives of the people within their families and community.

The impact of women in community development was recognized from the early years when India and other African countries realized that women’s contributions to development can change the lives of the people in their communities. In South Africa the establishment of organized women structures, to ensure the progress of women’s development; the involvement of women in construction, in the mining industry and in witnessing women as Chiefs of the tribes after the death of their husbands, are examples that show women’s contributions and their impact on every aspect of community development in South Africa.

The impact of women in community development needs to be strengthened through education, provision of resources, opportunities, skills and the support of the communities and structures working within the communities. The involvement and active participation of women in development processes in all stages, is critical as the exposure will assist to expand understanding of processes. Women have a great impact in community development and it is recommended that they should be supported in order to play their various roles effectively.

Capacity building is important as it provides change, influence to make informed decisions and the ability to access and manage resources, according to Van der Waldt and Knipe (1998: 146). Women need to be empowered with information, knowledge
and education in order to be self reliant, self sufficient and to effectively address the challenges of community development. Educating men and communities at large to change their attitudes and to recognize women as capable decision makers would have a positive impact on the contributions of women in community development. The humanistic perspective view women as human beings just like men and the Black feminist perspective also supports women to become decision makers and independent.

5.2.12 The success rate of women cooperatives in communities

The study recommends that the programmes be supported with additional funding to enable the programme members to procure the material the programme needs to develop and graduate to a higher level. The study further recommends that the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Social development conduct verification and a feasibility study at regular intervals in order to collect information from all funded programmes and to identify gaps in implementing the programme across the province.

5.2.14 Goal achievement by the Department of Social Development

The research revealed that the Provincial Department of Social Development in the Eastern Cape did achieve the objectives set, but they were not achieved as expected. The study identified a number of gaps that the Department of Social Development would have to address in order to work towards effective and quality service delivery in community programme implementation. Firstly, the Department lacks a theoretical framework to guide the implementation of community development within communities. The framework would provide direction, techniques and ensure that the goals set by the Department are achieved. Secondly, there is a clear gap in the marketing plan of the programme and it is recommended that a proper and effective marketing plan be developed before a programme is approved for funding. Another gap is the lack of monitoring and evaluation of community development programmes.
South African communities have a history of disproportionate and distorted development and a background of illiteracy in African and Coloured communities. New development methods recognize that communities are systems with their own knowledge, skills and resources for survival. Government has a responsibility to see to it that community development in communities is implemented effectively and to the benefit of communities. Guidance of the programmes is critical and evaluation of work done at intervals in orders to verify whether the programme is achieving the goals or not, is critical. Monitoring should not be a responsibility of the implementing officials alone; the management must monitor and visit the site to verify the accuracy of the reports.

In summary, the researcher recommends that, firstly, the Department provides relevant material and technical support for the programmes it funds. That will ensure that projects are sustainable and empowered to maintain the dignity of women in their communities in accordance with the African perspective. Secondly, quality funding should be prioritized, rather than quantity funding and the programmes be funded according to their application requests. In relation to the people centred development funding of programmes should be human oriented and people driven. The needs of the people should be prioritized in order for the government to fund what the communities think will improve their lives. Thirdly, capacity building and empowerment of communities including community development practitioners on a regular basis is critical for the growth and development of the programmes. Training by an accredited institution conducted at the level relevant to the community will make the difference in the community. The departments currently use service providers to render training within communities. This arrangement have a positive and a negative side as programme members will not be separated from their families but on the other side programmes are provided trainers who do not understand or know the programme. The majority of members from the area I worked in people would come back from the training unable to perform the task her own. Provision of formal training to illiterate communities needs serious attention. People centred development, humanistic perspective and the African perspective stress the importance of education in development. Lastly, there should be ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the
programmes by all relevant stakeholders and the local municipalities in order to provide the necessary assistance on time. Effective implementation of the above recommendations will assist the department to ensure that women are effective in the implementation of community development programmes. The women impact in community development is more powerful and effectively felt by the communities they serve. Women could be used as tools to eradicate poverty within communities through community development strategies.

5.3 Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the literature reviewed proved that women are actively involved in community development and in the improvement of lives within the communities. The African feminist perspective supports women’s effort to work towards addressing issues that contribute to impoverishment of women. The Gender analysis framework emphasizes an increased access to decision making by women about their own lives. The responses from the research participants showed a willingness, commitment and eagerness that women have to achieve their goals in the struggle against poverty within their communities through community development programmes. The study also revealed that women cooperative programmes have a positive impact on the lives of programme members and of the community at large. Women play various roles within the community to help the community members to improve their lives through necessary skills, information, knowledge, education, exposure and encouragement gained through the programme.

To beneficiaries, the impact may however not be visible or huge, but it is evident that if the programmes implemented effectively, there would a clear improvement in people’s lives. The following points need urgent attention if the Department is to change the current situation of women cooperative programmes in the communities. Firstly; the Department needs to develop a theoretical framework to support the government strategy in implementing community development programmes. Community participation and empowerment is lacking because there is no philosophical framework in place. Secondly; the Department needs to have an integrated approach
to community development. Community development should be implemented in an integrated manner to ensure that all resources needed to support the programme are available especially the technical support from other stakeholders. Compliance with community development principles when implementing community development programmes could help the department to make a difference in the lives of communities. There is scope for future research to focus on the development of philosophical and theoretical frameworks to guide women cooperatives in the Eastern Cape Province particularly.

Another critical point as already pointed out above is monitoring and evaluation of the programmes. Monitoring and evaluation should inform management as to whether the goals are achieved or there is a need for restructuring in order to achieve the Departmental goals.

Women cooperative programmes have a great impact in community development; however they need to be empowered with skills, knowledge, resources, opportunities and support from the community to achieve the intended goal of developing their communities. Gender analysis highlights that development is about power, it encourages women to make decisions and to have control over resources within their communities in order to improve their lives. With proper capacity support, cooperatives and their communities would be self reliant, self sufficient and independent. The impact of women in community development could increase if various stakeholders could intervene and contribute towards utilizing women as tools of developing communities.
REFERENCES


Eastern Cape Provincial Department Social Development 2006. Sustainable Livelihoods Programme Pilot Project on “Linking grants to livelihoods” The Dutyini experience, Eastern Cape.

Independent Development Trust/Department of Social Development 2007 Verification Study.


Appendix: A Interview schedule for focus groups

Worksheet 1

CONTEXT/ ENVIRONMENT PROFILE
- Focus on environmental, economic, institutional, demographic, social and political norms, trends and changes that pose constraints or support development in the area of concern.

QUESTIONS:
- What are the origins of the programme?

- What were member’s expectations when initially involved in the cooperative; were the expectations met and to what extent?

- What factors contributed to women becoming involved in the cooperative programme?

- How many project members constitute the programme?

- What are the roles of members in the cooperative?

- What is your understanding of women cooperative?

- What is the structure of the cooperative?

- How were you funded by the Department of Social Development and what is your understanding of the funding?

- Who else has funded the programme and by how much?

- Which stakeholders are involved in the programme and what are their roles?
- What are the benefits and how do they contribute to the development of your community?

- Are women encouraged towards sustainability by the relevant stakeholders? Yes/No – How and what are the issues?

- How do individual members and families benefit from the programme and how long did it take to derive benefit?

- What is Poverty?

- How do you understand development?

- What is community development?

- How can the criteria for funding be involved in order to achieve long term economic development and sustainability?

Worksheet 2

**ACTIVITY PROFILE**
- Focus on the activities conducted by women in the community

**QUESTIONS:**
- As women in the community what are your roles in the community that contribute to development of community?

- Are women aware of the risks as well as the challenges in the community?

- Do women have access to capital and the roles that impact on the programme and community?
What are the programme activities? (Time frame for activities).

- Are women allowed the freedom to participate using their skills and knowledge?

Worksheet3

**RESOURCE PROFILE** (nature of the resources)
- The focus is on the availability of resources, how they are accessed by women and, who is in control and what the benefits from the resources are.

**QUESTIONS:**

- What community resources exist in the community?

- Who has the responsibility for the community resources?

- How do cultural norms and traditional activities prohibit women from participating in development of resources and in community development?

- How do women access the resources?

- How do women benefit from the resources?

- Do women have access and control over development resources, equal to men?

- What is the importance of the resources to the programme?

- What are the basic training or development resources that are offered in order to enable the members to improve themselves?
- What are your human development resource needs? Are they being met Yes / No Elaborate.

Worksheet 4

PROGRAMME ACTION PROFILE
- The focus is on the action plan to address the objectives of the study

QUESTIONS:

- How do you deal with the various roles of women in the programme?
- What are the better and efficient ways of doing things?
- What is the impact of women involvement in community development?
- How can communities ensure that women play a leading role in community development?
- How do you plan to solve your problems?
Appendix: B Interview schedule for Department of Social Development Community Development Officers.

QUESTIONS
What do you understand by the following terms?

1. Development
2. Poverty
3. Community Development
4. Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Plan
5. Women cooperative
6. Women participation

- How do you view the contribution of women cooperatives in community development?
- What are the roles of women in women cooperative programmes?
- How do you ensure the involvement and active participation of women in the programme?
- What is the impact of the various roles women play in society?

7. How are the programmes funded?
8. How can the criteria for funding be improved in order to achieve long term economic growth, development and sustainability?

9. What is the involvement of other stakeholders?

10. As the Department are you achieving your goals?

11. What is your view of women in community development at large?

12. What are the empowerment strategies for women to impact on community development?
Appendix: C Interview schedule for Provincial Department Social Development Management.

QUESTIONS

What do you understand by the following terms?

1. Development

2. Poverty

3. Community Development

4. Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Plan

5. Women cooperative

6. Women participation

Answer the following questions in your own view:

a. How are the women cooperatives established and what are the processes followed?

b. What are the criteria for funding women cooperatives in the communities?

c. Are women cooperatives addressing poverty in the Eastern Cape?

d. What is the success rate of the women cooperatives?
e. What could be done to improve the levels and standards of the cooperative?

f. What are the benefits for the rural women?