

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE SOCIAL WORKERS' ROLE  
IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY OF POVERTY  
ALLEVIATING PROJECTS**

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By

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## ABSTRACT

In this research study the researcher attempted to gain an insight on what constitutes sustainability of poverty alleviating projects. Further, the researcher attempted to explore and gain understanding of the role of social worker in promoting sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.

Since the literature on sustainability is limited, it is hoped that this study will provide valuable information for further research on the topic.

In the limited literature study undertaken however, it was evident that despite the generic service that they provide, social workers have a role to play in community development. It was found that social workers can no longer afford to restrict their service provision to the traditional methods of social work. The egalitarian nature of their profession demands that they occupy the centre stage in poverty alleviation as they are strategically placed between the poor and the decision-makers in government.

Eighteen respondents composed of six social workers, six committee members and six community members from six poverty alleviating projects were interviewed. One project from each of the six districts of Tsomo, Nqamakwe, Butterworth, Centane, Idutywa and Willowvale were used in the research study.

The findings suggested that social workers, committee members and community members have differing opinions on what promotes or impedes sustainability of poverty alleviating projects. All respondents however agreed that participation as well as empowerment through training were basic requirements towards sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.

Again the findings agreed with the literature that social workers have an important role to play in promoting sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

The researcher's interest in the subject is based on his involvement in community development as a social worker. In particular, the researcher developed a passion for community development through his many interactions with poverty alleviating projects funded by the department of Welfare in the Eastern Cape. Time and again the researcher was involved in supervising project members on a daily basis. The department would, immediately at the beginning of each financial year, disburse substantial amounts of money to the districts to establish poverty alleviating projects. It is at this stage that social workers were expected to go and reach out to the communities inviting interested community members to start – up projects of whatever nature towards poverty alleviation.

The fact that social workers are understaffed, coupled with lack of specialised training in community development, lack of equipment and the generic nature of the profession itself, resulted in the projects yielding less than was intended, namely eradication of poverty. More often than not there would be much interest characterised by a lot of activity at the initial stages. As the time goes by interest and activity would subside resulting in the project lasting not more than five years. It came out that there was a need to explain this phenomenon. What was the process

of community development like in our communities? Was sustainability included as a package in community development? Was there an understanding of sustainability as a concept both by the social worker and the client? What was the role of the social worker in making sure that projects remain sustainable?

Community development is the least researched subject in social work and there is relatively little literature on the topic. Infact sustainability is regarded as one of the latest concepts to have emerged in the literature and thinking on community development policy ( Hope Sr. 1996 : 193 – 200). This was therefore a humble attempt by the researcher to open debate on the subject for the concept to be developed and make it possible to apply it as we endeavour to eradicate poverty. This can only be achieved through further research.

Social workers are fortunately and unfortunately at the cutting edge of grinding poverty. Fortunate in that they interact with the poor on a daily basis. They can see poverty in all its manifestations. They listen to what people have to say about poverty. They experience the scourge and are able to relate to the poor. Unfortunate in that there is sometimes very little they can do about it since they do not have the resources to eradicate poverty.

A clearer understanding of what sustainability of poverty alleviating projects is, is important for social workers. A common understanding and definition of the concept is imperative for understanding sustainability of community development. The genetic nature of social work suggests

that the concept cannot be left untouched because it is almost invariably that at some stage sustainability of poverty alleviating project will come back to haunt social workers and all those involved in poverty alleviation.

The political, social and economic changes that came as a result of the new dispensation in our country pose new challenges. There is a challenge for all stakeholders to come and contribute towards making the newly found democracy worth the toil of those who suffered towards its attainment. Social workers therefore need to brace themselves for the challenge and come with lasting solutions towards poverty alleviation, prevention and eradication.

## **1.2 GOALS OF RESEARCH**

The goal of this research was for those involved in poverty alleviation, that is, the decision – makers in government, the social workers and the community to inculcate sustainability as a concept in community development.

## **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH**

**The objectives of the research are:-**

1.3.1 To gain an insight on what social workers, and project members regard as sustainability.

1.3.2 To gain an understanding of how social workers and project members rate sustainability of poverty alleviating projects they are involved in.

1.3.3 To explore participants views on factors that promote or impede sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.

1.3.4 To explore the role of social workers in promoting sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.

#### **1.4 ANTICIPATED VALUE OF RESEARCH**

With this research study it was hoped that those involved in community development would put in place mechanisms that contribute towards sustainability of poverty alleviating projects. It has already been mentioned that sustainability in community development thinking is still at the initial stages. This therefore suggests scope for further research on the subject as this work is done as a half theses.

With poverty posing a danger to humanity there is a need to further develop the concept of sustainability. Social workers cannot afford to limit the methods of the profession to casework, groupwork and community work only. Their role in poverty alleviation is crucial and they therefore need to define their objectives and prepare themselves for the challenge that lies ahead.

With this study it was hoped that sustainability as a concept of community development would be defined in terms understood by all. The government as a source of external funding in poverty alleviation, it is hoped, will put in place mechanisms that contribute towards sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.

## **1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Since the aim of the study was to explore the deeper meaning of human experience, the research design used was exploratory – descriptive. The main objective of an exploratory research design is to broaden understanding, construct general ideas and highlight avenues for further study of the research topic (MacKendrick 1987 : 256).

The researcher used a qualitative method which, according to Halfpenny (cited in Newman 1997 : 228) is concerned with the relativity of the actors' accounts of their worlds. Qualitative research can be used to explore substantive areas about which little is known as well as obtaining intricate details about phenomena like feelings, thought processes and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about (Strauss and Corbin 1998 : 11).

The sample consisted of 18 interviewees made up of six social workers, six committee members and six community members involved in each of the six poverty alleviating projects in the sub – districts of Butterworth, namely Tsomo , Nqamakwe, Butterworth , Centane, Idutywa and Willowvale. The researcher used a non – probability sampling procedure and selected a purposive sampling method. The researcher also used his knowledge of the community to handpick people who best represented the range of persons in the best position to know what was being researched ( Rubin and Babbie 1993: 255).

The researcher prepared and administered the questionnaire. The interview-schedule used was structured and standardised and every respondent was asked the same question. The fact that the

interview – schedule was administered by the researcher, had an added advantage that it could be completed quickly and at low cost.

Data was analysed by hand. This was made possible by the fact that the number of respondents were not many ( 18) and therefore manageable. Information gathered was analysed question by question, reduced to themes and then grouped together. Comparisons were done between various subjects and the grouped responses were analysed using frequencies. Responses were then presented in a tabular form.

## **1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

1.6.1 Out of the twenty – two poverty alleviating projects funded by the Eastern Cape government in Butterworth district, only six projects whose respondents were interviewed. The Eastern Cape government is funding more than a hundred projects in the province. Findings from the six projects could not be generalised to the whole population of projects funded by the government. Further research on the subject with a more representative sampling frame could provide valuable information on sustainability.

1.6.2 Project members that apply for financial assistance from the government do so through social workers. Social workers assist project members in filling business plans, supervise, guide and offer whatever kind of help needed to develop the projects. They are also in a position to assist the government in deciding which projects qualify or do not qualify for financial

assistance. This and the fact that social workers, by virtue of being government officials represent the government on which project members depend, gives social workers a status superior to that of the project members. The fact that the researcher was a social worker could have led to the respondents giving answers the researcher would like to hear. In other words the responses by the subjects could have been influenced by the researcher. The researcher however explained to the respondents that their responses had no influence whatsoever on their projects since the research study was conducted purely for study purposes.

1.6.3 Data obtained from respondents reflected their subjective opinions and could not be generalised to other projects. Respondents were however advised to give objective answers as much as it was humanly possible.

1.6.4 Qualitative data is, by its nature, likely to contain implicit assumptions, biases, ethnocentrism, and ill – defined concepts from dominant cultural values ( Neuman (1997:421). The fact that the respondents were from the same region and same ethnic group, may have contributed to the respondents giving consistent responses based on the same experiences. Biases and implicit assumptions may therefore have been consistent and gone unnoticed.

1.6.5 With any interview the danger of interviewer bias may creep in and affect the interview process. To check on the interviewer bias the researcher collected and interpreted all the data himself.

## **1.7 PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED WITH THE STUDY**

1.7.1 Because the interviews were conducted from projects representing six different districts, travelling from one district to another was a long and costly process. The distance from one district to the other was between forty (40) and fifty (50) kilometres. Infact the radius from the first project in the district to the last was between hundred and fifty (150) and two hundred (200) kilometres.

1.7.2 Communication also contributed significantly to the problems experienced. Because of lack of communication facilities that researcher had to consult each district twice, first to make an appointment with the respondents and secondly, to do the actual interview.

1.7.3 Because the researcher is employed, there was no way he could sneak away during working hours. This therefore meant that the researcher had to conduct the interviews after hours. This was tedious and cumbersome in the sense that the researcher had to interfere with the respondents whilst at home relaxing and sometimes watching news from the radio or television.

1.7.4 As the interview -schedule was written in English but conducted in Xhosa, it was difficult to translate some English terms to Xhosa without loosing the whole meaning. The concept of sustainability, is for instance, difficult to translate in the vernacular. It can only be described by making examples that may not necessarily convey the same meaning.

## **1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE RESEARCH**

**CHAPTER ONE:** Introduces the research topic and provides an overview of the study. The following areas are part of this chapter, background of the study, anticipated value of findings, research design and methodology, scope and limits of the study and problems experienced with the study.

**CHAPTER TWO :** This chapter is a literature review based on available literature on poverty, community development, sustainability and the role of social water.

**CHAPTER THREE:** In this chapter the researcher deals with the research design and methodology. This includes the research design and research methodology, the sampling procedure, the interview as a data collecting tool, the interview- schedule and the interview process. Also, data analysis and limitations of the research study are examined in this chapter as well as the value of research and the conclusion.

**CHAPTER FOUR:** This chapter presents and discusses the findings.

**CHAPTER FIVE:** The last chapter of this research study makes some recommendations based on the findings in chapter four, as well as the conclusions.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

As focus on a developmental approach signals a shift from the welfare service provision, role-players in poverty alleviation are increasingly under pressure to come up with strategies that contribute to a significant improvement of quality of life by alleviating poverty. The government's social development plan embodied in the Reconstruction and Development Program (1994) as well as the setting up of special Anti-Poverty Program Plan (1999-2003) by the department of Welfare are seen as an indication of the South African Government's commitment to a developmental approach that ensures the improvement of quality of life. Also, the developmental welfare service model proclaimed in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) removes social workers from the centre of welfare service provision to community development strategies. These policies provide a context within which social workers as role-players, must consider their role and contribution they might make to the alleviation of poverty in our society, thereby improving the quality of life through a sustainable community development process.

#### **2.2 MANIFESTATIONS OF POVERTY**

Poverty is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon whose definition differs from author to author, country to country as well as region to region within a particular area. Different countries define poverty according to the amount of as well as the extent to which it affects them.

In seeking to define the phenomenon Wilson and Ramphela (1989 : 14) warn us not to confine our thinking to those characteristics that appear important to people living within the sheltered walls of urban university. The writers refer us to the research workers of the Carnegie Inquiry that were not provided with a nice clear definition of poverty that they could measure and compare with other places and other times. Instead they were told to go out into the highways and byways of the country to meet people who endured poverty and those who lived and worked with them and to listen to what they, from their own experience understood poverty to mean. They then tried to describe and measure that.

Definitions of poverty are based on assumptions of what constitutes basic needs. Webster ( 1984 : 19) defines poverty in terms of the degree to which people do not enjoy the basic standard of diet, living conditions, leisure activities and amenities, which are socially perceived as customary. Dixon (1990 : 50) defines poverty in terms of per capita amount of income which is linked to various aspects some of which include landholding and irregular income. Poverty according to this definition works in depth from absolute to relative poverty. Fundamental to the life of the poor is the struggle to survive and the uncertainty as well as precariousness of their livelihood.

Poverty in South Africa, according to Wilson and Ramphela (1989 :4) is profoundly a political issue. There are four reasons why poverty in this country is significant. The first is because, the authors note, of the damage it inflicts upon individuals who must endure it, the second is its sheer inefficiency in economic terms. They argue that hungry children cannot study properly, malnourished adults cannot be fully productive as workers , and an economy where a large proportion of the population is very poor has a structure of demand that does not

encourage the production and marketing of the goods that are most needed. The third reason relates to the consequences for any society where poverty is also manifestation of great inequality. Finally the writers cite the fact that poverty in many societies is itself symptomatic of a deeper malaise. They argue that it is often the consequence of a process which simultaneously produces wealth for some whilst impoverishing others.

In his paper "POVERTY ERADICATION : UNDERSTANDING AND OVERCOMING INEQUALITY OF POVERTY" Gil (1998:24) differentiates between two kinds of poverty namely, absolute poverty characterized by real scarcity of natural resources and low levels of knowledge, technology, skills and products, and socially constructed and enforced relative poverty that is shaped by social, economic, potential and cultural inequalities among groups, classes, and peoples from local to global levels. Absolute poverty according to Webster (1984 : 6) is the most vulnerable position where " the next meal may literally be a matter of life and death" as the increasing effects of malnutrition and starvation ravages and weakens all especially the children and the elderly.

Poverty is not only economic but also has a strong psychological dimension. Spier (1994:3) views poverty as linked to self-esteem. He argues that if people don't have expectations, they feel they can't take decision, they feel they can't do things, they just have to drift along. Self-esteem in essence lies in people having the ability to take decisions and therefore taking charge of their own destiny. Poverty is best described as the inability of individuals, households or communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy an acceptable standard of living (National Department of Welfare 1999:3).

### **2.3 CAUSES AND PERPETUATION OF POVERTY THROUGH INEQUALITIES.**

Gil ( 1998:24) argues that inequalities and poverty beyond absolute level are not inherent in human nature but result from relations of inequality and domination perpetuated by choices, practices and policies on the part of the dominant groups. Inequalities and poverty, the writer notes, evolved through the use of force and coercion, and are perpetrated through socialisation and ideological validation, backed up by the threat and actual use of coercive methods. The realities of inequalities and poverty tend to result in wide – spread underdevelopment of the dominated and exploited individuals and groups, but also tend to distort the development of their dominant counterparts. The author observes that the validation of inequalities and poverty usually reflect not only the interests of the dominant classes and people in maintaining status quo but also a vague sense of guilt and discomfort on their part. The destructive consequences of inequality on the quality of life of the affluent classes, The author asserts, are often overlooked. Islands of affluence in a sea of poverty result in insecurity, stress and alienation. There are also tensions related to owning and operating business investments. Disrupted family life due to demands at work, fear of violence in public spaces, taxes raised to pay for poverty related programmes, illness, crimes as well as military establishments necessary to maintain internal and external domination and ensure economic privilege, all these are the consequences of inequality.

Wilson and Ramphela ( 1989: 14) note that poverty shows itself in different ways, different historical situations and has diverse causes. They also observe that it is not always easy to make a clear distinction between the facts or symptoms of poverty. Not only are there several different dimensions of material and non material poverty but there is also a complex

interaction between cause and effect which makes it difficult to describe a state of poverty without considering those factors themselves as aspects of poverty that cause further misery. Because of the above, they argue, it is difficult to think of illiteracy in modern society as a manifestation, a consequence or even a cause of poverty.

Absolute poverty is difficult to measure. This implies that there is a definable level below which the human organism cannot survive, below which starvation and exposure to the elements will eventually kill. Beckerman (in Wilson and Ramphela 1989 : 14) argues that it does not really make sense to define poverty at some minimum living level when people continue to survive below it. The concept though has a moral validity only in setting minimum standards in ensuring that people are at least as well treated as those with whom they habitually compare themselves.

#### **2.4. THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE OF POVERTY**

Poverty is a global phenomenon that differs from context to context. The United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) has monitored human development and published the following sobering facts;

- One third of the people in the world live on less than 2 US dollar per day.
- In industrial countries more than 100 million people live below the poverty line, more than 5 million people are homeless and 37 million are without jobs.
- The worst decline in living standards occurred in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In these countries, 120 million people are living below the poverty line of 4 US dollar per day.

- More than 1 billion people in developing countries live without adequate housing and an estimated 100 million are homeless.
- More than 840 million adults are illiterate.
- 538 million women in developing countries are illiterate-almost two thirds of the total population.
- The assets of the three richest billionaires in the world are higher than the combined GDP of the 48 least developed countries with a total population of 600 million.
- The least developed countries have a share of 10 percent of world population, but only a share of 0,3 per cent of world trade half of what they had 20 years ago.
- North America, Europe, Japan and 8 Chinese coastal provinces and Beijing receive 90 per cent of all foreign direct investment. The rest of the world with 70 per cent of its population receives less than 10 per cent.
- A fifth of people in developing countries will probably live less than 40 years.
- 160 million children are undernourished 110 million do not get any basic education.
- About 1.2 billion people have no access to clean potable water.
- Maternal mortality in developing countries is half a million annually – 10 to 100 times the rate of industrial countries
- 7 million people die each year of curable infection diseases and of diseases transmitted by parasites such as malaria, diarrhoea and tuberculosis.
- 95 percent of all new HIV infection occur in developing countries 1600 people are newly infected with HIV each day.
- About 2 million children died during the last decade as a consequence of military conflicts.
- There are 110 million functioning land mines in 68 countries.

## 2.5 POVERTY IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa poverty can be attributed to a number of factors including the impact of apartheid which stripped the majority of the peoples of their resources, their right to land and thus resulting in destabilisation and violence, erosion of the people's asset base, over crowding, ill – health, race and gender discrimination. Spier (1994: 16) blames waste full agricultural policies , apartheid and discriminatory legislation favouring white population, a prolonged domestic global recession, fluctuating gold and commodity prices, political violence and high levels of criminal activity and a large unwieldy and stifling bureaucracy have all contributed to the extreme and unacceptable poverty and unemployment levels South Africa is experiencing today. The uncertainties of transformation high crime rate, political and taxi violence, corruption and nepotism add to the high rate of poverty that we see today. The regional conflict within SADC countries, famine in Mozambique, running battles in Angola, the political conflict in Zimbabwe, as well as pressure on our own weaker rand by foreign currencies results in unprecedented high poverty levels in this country.

It is estimated that almost 65% of all South Africans live under the poverty line. The Poverty and Inequality Report (PIR) suggests that about 18 million people in South Africa live in the poorest 40 per cent of households and are thus classified as ultra poor. (Office of the Executive Deputy President 1998:4).

The Welfare update Newsletter (2000:2) reports that 45 per cent of the population live in rural areas but the rural areas contain 72 per cent of the people that are poor. Most people who are poore black people, particularly Africans where 61 per cent of African and 38

per cent of coloureds are poor, compared with 50 per cent of Indians and 1 per cent of whites. Furthermore, South Africa compares unfavourably with several other middle income countries in terms of measures of human development such as life expectancy, infant mortality and adult illiteracy. The poorest 40 per cent of the households receive more than 40 per cent of the total income.

Lastly, the PIR indicates that there is a great divergence of living standards as well as uneven distribution of poverty between provinces. It paints a gloomy picture of the Eastern Cape, for example as having the highest provincial poverty rate at 71 per cent compared with the Free State (63 per cent), Northern Province (59 per cent), and Gauteng (17 per cent). The Eastern Cape, Free State and Northern Province make up 36 per cent of the South African population but account for more than 51 per cent of the total poverty gap. The Eastern Cape has more than 75 per cent of children living in poor households, compared with 20 per cent in Gauteng.

## **2.6 A SOCIAL POLICY AS A VEHICLE TOWARDS MAINTAINING WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE**

According to Freeman and Sherwood (1970:2) a social policy, because of its multifaceted nature, is not easy to define. The authors however use four different elements to define the concept, namely the philosophical concept, social policy as a product, a process and a framework of action.

1. As a philosophical concept social policy is the principle whereby members of large organisations and political entities collectively seek enduring solutions to the problems that

affect them.

2. As a product social policy consists of the conclusions reached by persons concerned with the betterment of community conditions and social life and with the amelioration of deviance and social disorganisation.

3. As a process social policy is the fundamental process by which organisations maintain an element of stability and at the same time seek to improve conditions for their members.

4. As a framework of action social policy is both product and process. It assumes the availability of a well delineated policy which is to be implemented within the context of potential changes in the values, structures, and conditions of the affected groups. (Freeman and Sherwood 1970 : 2-3).

## **2.7 THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN PROMOTING WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE**

According to Barry (1999:92) contemporary debate in Western societies has almost invariably been about the welfare state and, the crisis in welfare philosophy is said to be a consequence of the difficulties typical welfare policies and institutions have experienced in the last two decades. The author argues that the primary aim of welfare policy-makers remains the common provision of education, health as well as achievement of equality and relief from deprivation. This sentiment is shared by Jones (1999:281) who believes that the primary achievement of social welfare is the alleviation of poverty and its manifestations. To him this is not solely a matter of redistributing more fairly what wealth there is but that poor

countries be incorporated within a policy of economic growth. This requires a conscious effort by government to draft policy that allows for the government intervention.

Divergent viewpoints abound on the role of state in promoting welfare of its people. Hardly and Hatch (1981:3) believe that social welfare services are bound up with wider developments in the economy and society. To them the present crisis in the economy and the role of the state can be overcome and the growth of the social service can be resumed as before if a pluralist, decentralised and participative pattern of service find expression on the integrative and egalitarian values. The authors argue for voluntary initiatives set up to encourage voluntary action at neighbourhood level as well as schemes established to support self-help amongst disadvantaged groups in society. The main risk for a more decentralised and plural pattern is the possibility of variation between areas in the quality and quantity of services. Schemes that are decentralised and accountability localised might be abused or subverted. They can also be manipulated by the ruling party for political expediency in the name of participation.

There are those viewpoints that believe in the provision of social security through means testing. By means testing is meant giving support to those below the income support level. Those arguing in favour of this policy claim a need to differentiate between giving money to better off people and those who cannot afford.

## **2.8 A CRITIQUE OF WELFARE POLICIES ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION**

An analysis of different roles of state in alleviating poverty is often a subject of criticism by

different authors. In his criticism of the inefficiency of the means testing Baugh (1973:48-49) argues that means tested benefits are not claimed by many poor people entitled to them. This is because of ignorance on the part of beneficiaries of the benefits systems as well as pride that comes as a result of the stigma attached to the system. Means – testing however is not always seen as a yard stick to access this benefit in many countries. In South Africa for instance, means-testing is so unreliable as a yardstick that even government servants abuse this system by drawing money from it. (DAILY DISPATCH 2 OCTOBER 2001).

Means testing is also criticised for its propensity to create what is known as the poverty trap. Families that qualify for welfare benefits because their income is just low enough lose this benefits when income rises. A bread-winner who is unemployed has little or no incentive to find a job if there is this readily available benefit. Means—testing is also socially divisive when the main aim of the social policy should be conducive to making a nation more united.

Schram (1995:3) observes that by the 1990's the social science of poverty was caught up in the growing obsession with welfare dependency. His argument is that welfare policy research did not stand outside the political debate, instead it was swallowed by it. The author believes that constraints of welfare policy research suggest that the autonomous and objective social science, needs to be questioned. He argues that research focussing specifically on welfare policy is often inattentive to the questions of perspective, position and discourse. To him, making perspective explicit involves confronting the possibility that much of welfare policy research is written from a top-down position and in a managerial discourse that assumes a particular point of view; an imagined policy maker charged with the responsibility of containing the problems of welfare so that they do not become serious

impediments to the smooth functioning of the overall system.

Even if welfare recipients get all the income to which they are entitled, they remain amongst the poor despite the fact that securing all they are entitled to, continues to be the major undertaking. The problem is not just with what is given out but also with what should be given out and is not. Many people who qualify for the benefits get cut off welfare each month for reasons not related to financial eligibility.

Among many reasons usually cited for cutting off are non-compliance. From a welfare department's points of view, non-compliance occurs when a client is cut off welfare for failing to meet some obligation. One frequent cause often cited is failure of a client to return a letter of certification. Thousands of people are cut off every time re-certification letters go out because they never receive the letters, the letters are not in the languages they can read and understand, they fail to return them, or a variety of other reasons. It is however difficult to imagine that any recipient would willfully disregard such a letter given that the result of such disregard most often is termination of welfare benefits. In the Eastern Cape termination of disability grant to the thousands of recipients referred to as "class action", between 1996 and 2000 is an example of non-compliance to the point of view of the department of welfare.

Piven (in Schram 1995: 4) argues that marginalisation of the poor is not just the result of words about policy. It is also the result of policies themselves. Welfare policies and practices have meanings and the meanings help to define and organise the social world. Thus the intricately different programmes divide people into intricately differentiated categories like the abled-bodied, impoverished, adults without children, poor single parent families, the aged or dis

abled poor . According to the writer this helps to construct different identities and different interests . Each of these program – constructed categories of people is dealt with differently, each program confers different rights on prospective beneficiaries , subjects them to different procedures for determining and maintaining eligibility, and each programme provides beneficiaries with different levels of economic support .

In arguing for a limited decentralised accountability Hadly and Hatch (1981 : 159 ) point to a kind of framework that would provide equitable redistribution of resources . To the writers such a framework would have to ensure adequate standards of provision and where the provision of services was devolved to organisations not directly accountable to it , government would have a duty to police whatever alternative form of accountability decided upon . To these writers there is no reason why greater decentralisation as a policy should not be accompanied by more stringent inspections . Such inspection would have to cover both the quality of service provided, and the arrangements for local accountability .

Built in the framework of limited decentralised accountability Hadly and Hatch (1981 : 161–169) cite the Scottish example of a strategy that creates certain rights that give power to the local consumers . These include the right to initiate services like establishing neighbourhood councils , the right to develop alternative housing schemes as well as the right to devise local health facilities .

Parallel to the development of rights to take initiative outside statutory organisations is the recognition of the right to have a voice in the management of the statutory services themselves .

The other right for change is creating opportunities for people to act for themselves creating space in which local initiatives can grow . This right must be complimented by mechanisms on the part of central government to cut back on statutory services imposed on local structures .

Summarised in a nutshell the main features of this framework can be captured on the following points :

(1) Plural provision . A greater proportion of all forms of social service would be provided by voluntary organisations . Thus instead of expanding the statutory services , there would grow up alongside them a variety of community based initiative .

(2) Decentralisation and community orientation of statutory services . The predominant mode of statutory provision would be community oriented implying flatter structures , a different interpretation of professionalism and reinforcement as opposed to replacement of informal sources of care .

(3) Contractual rather than hierachical accountability . In return for funding and contracting out of more services to voluntary organisations, government both local and central would exercise a stronger monitoring and inspection role . Thus there would be more emphasis on maintaining accountability through contractual agreements as opposed to the exercise of authority within hierachies .

(4) Participation in representation . Instead of greater monitoring and inspection there would be the participation of consumers and providers in statutory decision-making

(Hadly & Hatch 1981 : 166)

This framework however can be said to have achieved its purpose only when a large number of people are willing to make it happen through participation . Willingness to participate though is more often than not limited . People are more inclined towards influencing specific decisions than getting involved . Participation is determined in terms of costs and benefits potential to the participants . This gives chance to those entrusted with statutory power to resist changing the status quo .

## **2.9 INSTITUTIONS AS A VEHICLE TO FIGHT POVERTY**

Whilst projects in developing countries are still being used as tools , developed countries are gradually adopting a shift away from conventional project promotion towards institutional development . In their paper on “New Ways towards Poverty Alleviation , Institutional Development to supersede the conventional project approach “Sudrun Kochendorfer – Lucius and Klemens van de Sand, note that the development co-operation of the last 30 years was all about promoting projects, projects of limited duration with a sectorial or regional focus. It was claimed that the projects generate broad-based impacts and were replicable. Yet only in relatively few cases was this claim borne out.

The writers note that institutions recently have come to be consistently seen as a missing link between the poor and development. The writers cite Bruno S. Frey who defines institutions as “rules governing human behaviour within a given society, and reflected in the structure and disposition of organisations. Bruno provides three elements that define

constructions as;

- Rules or procedures followed in a given society in order to make decisions;
- Legal norms, traditions and other behavioural rules;
- Organisations like the state, associations in the private sector or civil society and families.

Kochendorfer-Lucius and Van de Sand argue that pro-poor development strategies must tackle those structures that constrain development and cause poverty. To them development assistance must be turned upside down. It must get away from the project approach and aim at local empowerment and the development of institutions in which the poor are represented. New ways of approaching development are necessary if the process of globalisation is taken into consideration. The writers argue that the new approaches should not accept globalisation as a given fact but ways and means must be developed to influence the process. This, to them calls for the establishment and interplay of democratic institutions that go beyond national borders. Institutions are therefore of prime significance for continued economic and social development.

### **2.9.1 INSTITUTIONS AND GROWTH**

The writers note that economic and social opportunities that allow a small proportion of humanity a high standard of living are no longer available to all. Since 1820, observe the writers, the global Gross National Product has grown by a factor of fifty, whilst by comparison the global population has expanded by a factor of only six. Yet the distribution of this immense growth in wealth was highly inequitable, both within societies and between them. At the beginning of the 19th century, the ratio of per capita income between the richest and

the poorest countries was around three to one. At the beginning of the 20th century it was ten to one. And now at the beginning of the 21st century it has risen to sixty to one. Today, so say the writers, one billion people in the industrialised countries amass close to 60 % of global income, one-and-a-half billion people in the middle-income countries earn 20 per cent, and the three-and-a-half billion people in the poor and poorest countries earn the remaining 20 per cent.

According to the writers this disparity can be explained only by analysing the institutional resources of a particular country. Institutions are a determinant factor in making the process of economic development possible. To these writers institutions can enable political stability, effective and responsible administration, good governance and secure property rights, the presence of a competitive financial sector and finally can ensure provision of basic health care and education.

### **2.9.2 INSTITUTIONS AND MARKETS**

The writers assets that macro-economic stability alone cannot be said to be a sufficient determinant of growth. Institutional underpinnings of the market economy are essential for well functioning markets. The concept itself includes a system of clearly defined and enforceable property rights, a regulatory mechanism for competition, designed to keep in check the worst excesses of corruption , violation of competition rules and moral-hazards . This also includes a minimum of social cohesion , of politically legitimated institutions that are able to channel social conflicts , of the rule of law and of public accountability. Unless the institutional under-pinnings are in place , even the most well designed policies will fail and

economic incentives will not produce the expected impact . The quality of an institution , say the writers , is dependent not only on how it is designed , but also on the extent to which it is , or can be utilise by people . Institutions should not be seen in isolation from the people who utilise or are supposed to utilise them from those people's education , skills and competence or from the information available to them . Culture , social norms and values largely shape these factors .

### **2.9.3 INSTITUTIONS AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION**

The writers note that the role of institutions is creating conditions conducive to growth and economic development. To them the importance of constitutional development for poverty reduction is less well understood. For too long, development policy has laboured and tailored made under the false assumption that scarce resources are the main cause of poverty and under-development . The consensus , however, today exists in international discourse on development that the major problem is access to resources . This applies to natural resources (water , land) means of production , financial resources , marketing infrastructure , technical expertise , education and training . The major problem in the context of poverty alleviation is not necessarily the absence of institutions. The real issue is that those institutions which most strongly affect the lives of the poor are not accessible to them and they generally do not serve the welfare of the poor groups in the society . The government and administration , the military , political parties and labour unions , parastatals and private sector organisations , banks and commercial enterprises , create structures enabling them to, pursue the interests of the privileged (mostly urban) minorities . Unless the poor , that is, the majority are organised , they remain excluded from the political and economic system , politically

powerless and economically unattractive .

#### **2.9.4 INSTRUMENTS TO PROMOTE INSTITUTIONS**

The interests of the poor are the starting points for designing a strategy for institutional development . According to Kochendorfer-Luuis and Van de Sand , the strategy would include the following elements ;

- Existing institutions must be reviewed to establish whether and to what extent they involve the poor themselves . With respect to governments , this includes the issue of whether a poverty alleviation policy is in place , and how that is reflected in budgetary expenditure.

- Institutional assistance at the local level must first provide training and capacity building to enable the poor to organise themselves within various institutions and secure their influence through their participation in local governments .

- At national government level , institutional reforms e.g decentralization must be promoted in order to create scope for the poor to influence decision-making processes .

Thus where it becomes clear how vital good governance is for poverty alleviation.

Efforts must be made to develop the bargaining power of the poor by strengthening their position as market participants , and by institutionalising the accountability of public organisation.

In conclusion , the writers assert that poverty means powerlessness . If this is so , then it follows that assistance must focus on developing institutions that the poor

can use to assert b their interest and organise access to resources. To achieve this, development assistance will need to be turned upside down . The bottom line must be local institutions that empower the poor to take part in defining the rules that determine their lives . Yet local empowerment and the development of institutions of the poor alone will not be sufficient. Only when the poor and their interests are represented in institutions at the national level will there be apolicy for the poor (DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION NO 4/2000 July/ August).

## **2.10 ECONOMIC GROWTH AND POVERTY**

There is hardly any one these days who still believes that economic development trickles down automatically to the poor. Practical experiences and realities have refuted this assumption dating from the early days of development policy in the 1960s. There are however still many people who think first of economic growth in relation to poverty reduction. The relationship between economic growth and poverty alleviation is of great importance because if there is direct causal dependency then reducing poverty could fundamentally be limited to measures to promote growth. Low growth or stagnation would invariably lead to less or no decisive poverty reduction.

Jentsch (2000:04) in his article (CAN ECONOMIC GROWTH REDUCE POVERTY?) submits that poverty reduction depends primarily upon specific policies to achieve it. The writer argues that a number of studies have shown development of growth and a decline in poverty running parallel. There are also other examples which show that despite high economic growth, poverty is not reduced markedly. The author then argues that infact growth

reduce poverty provided additional measures oriented on the poor are taken up. In putting his argument in perspective Jentsch cites more recent empirical and theoretical knowledge.

### **2.10.1 NO DIRECT CAUSALITY BETWEEN GROWTH AND POVERTY**

#### **REDUCTION**

Jentsch argues that among many indications of poverty, the income of the poor has the closest relationship to economic growth. He argues that an increase in gross domestic product and thus national income could, if other factors come into play, be linked with an increase in the per capita income of the poor.

Such a relationship between economic growth and the income of the poor however cannot be described as causal. This is because, the writer argues, it is asserted time and again though implicitly that growth is a necessary but not sufficient precondition for poverty reduction. Growth and poverty reduction arise at the same time and so they exist alongside each other. Both express the same thing. The writer argues that growth is based on factors such as fiscal policy, budget structure, employment policy, combating inflation and institutional development. Economic growth therefore can emerge. But also economic growth can emerge if poverty is reduced. In other words all the factors mentioned here above including poverty reduction can lead to economic growth. Combating poverty therefore can be seen as being the cause of growth insofar as activating the capabilities of the poor and using their productive capacity trigger economic drive.

## **2.10.2 INDIRECT CAUSALITY BETWEEN GROWTH AND POVERTY**

### **REDUCTION**

Jentsch argues that even if economic growth fundamentally has no direct causal impact on poverty, growth can still reduce it indirectly. This is the case when due to positive economic development a government has greater revenue and uses the surplus for combating poverty, for example by providing public goods as education and health services. But even in these cases, argues the writer, growth is not a compelling precondition.

The writer argues that even without growth greater government revenue can be achieved, for example by more efficient tax collection. Again, leeway for social welfare spending can be gained by redistributing the budget, such as by cutting military appropriations. Creation of jobs due to increased economic activity can also be another indirect link between economic growth and income and reduces poverty.

## **2.10.3 RELATIONSHIP OF GROWTH TO POVERTY**

The writer asserts that today's conventional wisdom suggests that income poverty expresses only a part of what poverty means. It has become clear these days that violation of human dignity and rights, lack of participation in decisions and exclusion from society, unequal treatment of men and women and vulnerability are also regarded as poverty. Considerable improvements in favour of the poor can be achieved even without economic growth. The writer argues that those who see a strong and causal connection between economic growth and poverty reduction need to explain the prospects for high growth rates and thus for a decline in poverty.

#### **2.10.4 CONCLUSION**

Poverty is a complex problem and reducing it depends upon many interconnected factors. The writer argues that poverty cannot be attributed to one main cause nor its reduction based on one main strategy. Economic growth is just one strategic element among many others related to poverty reduction. Growth's role in poverty reduction needs to be put into perspective. Growth can be the first thing that comes to mind, nor can it be the golden path to reducing poverty. Jentsch observes that this simplistic theory of economic growth as the main condition obstructs a bigger picture. Even if there is no economic growth, there are promising ways to take on the challenge of mass poverty in the developing countries. The writer argues that governments must have the political will to design economic, financial and social policies so that they are oriented on poverty in a co-herent way. The result can also be economic growth.

#### **2.11 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

According to Kotze and Swanepoel ( 1983 : 1 ) and De Beer and Swanepoel (1998: 1) there is no generally accepted definition of community development. To these writers development has meant many things to many people. To some, the authors argue that community development has been regarded as an umbrella term for all kinds of development projects at the social level. To others, the concept of community development has meant the representation of local community on a project planing body and sensitivity to beliefs and prejudices of the local people.

In attempting to define the concept Kotze and Swanepoel (1983:6) describe community development as a process and a method. As a process, the authors view it as an attempt by a community

collectively and with own initiative to realize self identified needs according to pre-established procedure through societal institutions in order to reach certain set goals. As a method it could be described as an attempt by external agents to help a community to take the initiative in defining its own needs and in deciding upon a course of action to develop towards the fulfillment of those needs according to its own values. From the viewpoint of a process, community development is not static. It represents an incremental development and moves by stages from one condition or state to the next. From the viewpoint of a method, community development is seen as a means to an end, as a way of working towards a goal. Kotze and Swanepoel (1983:6) argue that the ultimate purpose of community development can be achieved only by the realisation that a community has the right and responsibility to change itself. To these writers, a community will change only when a need is not fulfilled or satisfied. The process of community development will not be set in motion if the community does not feel a need. A felt need therefore could be regarded as the first step in the process of community development.

It is at this stage that social workers as external agents or change agents, are called upon to consider the role they might play to satisfy a need.

## 2.12 PHASES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Lombard (1991:241) points out that the phases of community development process or project management are interpreted differently by different authors. The writer notes six phases of community development as situation analysis or making the first contact, identification and definition of needs and problems, representation by the community, planning, implementation and evaluation. De Beer and Swanepoel (1998:51) cite four elements of project management namely, planning, implementation, evaluation and control. Different writers however argue for different reasons on what they regard as the first phase in community development process. Most writers, Du Preez (1981:222), Jeppe (1985:28) and Adejunmobi (1990:226) agree that identification of a need or the realisation that there is a need should precede the process of community development. To these writers the community's needs are seen as the aspect that will elicit a commitment from the people to continue with the process of community development.

There are those writers however who lay emphasis on what precedes the identification of needs. To King (1965) and Swanepoel (1997) as well as Lombard (1991) making the first contact should precede needs identification. These writers argue that this is a period during which the community learns to identify its needs. These writers are supported by Erasmus and Erasmus (1988) who argue that to approach a community for the first time and identify needs at the same time cannot be viewed as sensible. To them, the human being is more important than his needs and putting too much emphasis on his needs too soon can lead to him being burdened with his need. This may lead to him lost for ever and never have an opportunity to have him again. Morris (1970:186) supports this assertion when he talks of establishing communication and exchange before anything else. Whichever comes first however, the two phases are necessary for different

reasons. A social worker who has stayed and worked with the same community for some time would not need to make the first contact in order to proceed to other phases of community development. A development worker however who meets the community for the first time would do well to make the first contact to acquaint himself with the community. Lombard (1991: 241) sums it up when she states that practice situation determines the choice of phases to be included in any community work process. The following is a brief description of phases in community development process.

### **2.12.1 Situation analysis**

According to some writers (Lombard 1991: 244, Weyers 2001: 65) situation analysis can be regarded as an assessment of the situation in the community. It is aimed at enlightening the worker about the phenomena, groups, problems as well as organisations the worker will have to work with. The basic purpose in this process is to gain an understanding of the nature of the process situation in which the worker finds himself. This is a fact-finding process composed of data collection based on observation and making contact with the community. The ultimate aim here is to compile a profile of the community that would be used as a basis for intervention.

### **2.12.2 Needs identification**

The basic purpose of this step is to identify and gain an understanding of nature of problems unsolved, needs unmet as well as the potential under utilised ( Weyers 2001:65). This process includes identifying as well as analysing impediments resulting in needs not met and

problems not solved. During this phase which involves establishing contact includes mainly inviting everybody concerned to come together, think about the needs and problems and to discuss further action.

### **2.12.3 Planning**

Planning or formulation of plan of action would to a large extent be determined by the practice model the practitioner chooses as his point of departure (Weyers 2001:78). In community development this step is preceded by representation from the community (Lombard 1991:258). This is the stage where participation plays a crucial role in that the community takes an active part in (1) planning and policy making (2) allocation and distribution of resources as well as (3) managing services.

### **2.12.4. Implementation**

The main purpose at this stage is to translate objectives into tasks. According to Potgieter (1998:164) the objectives formulated activate social work roles and strategies. Practice models in this phase are operationalised, material and human resources are mobilised, change is brought about, goals and objectives are attained and impediments are eliminated (Weyers 2001:91). This is the phase where ideas are converted into action and dreams changed into reality. It is at this stage that both social worker and client role should be clearly defined and carried out. Care must be taken to make sure that roles do not overlap.

### **2.12.5 Evaluation**

Many writers (Lombard 1991:268, Potgieter 1998:172, Weyer 2001:103) argue that evaluation should not be seen and used as the last phase of interaction in community development process. Rather it should be seen as an ongoing responsibility that continues through out. More often that not evaluation is used as a measure to determine a follow-up process and the ultimate purpose is to make right what was wrong and to improve on what was right. It is at his stage that the whole cycle of community development process of intervention starts all over again until many of the objectives are met to improve the quality of life of participants.

### **2.13 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Much as it is not a new phenomenon, de Beer and Swanepoel (1980:10) note that community development was not popular in South Africa before 1994. The authors note that community development has always been viewed with scepticism and mistrust due to its potential for political awakening and resultant demands on the government. Although various projects were introduced, these were undertaken in the homelands and on a rather small-scale. De Beer and Swanepoel (1998:11) also note that the South African government introduced community development in the homelands only after an official study, perceived and implemented internationally, was made. The then Department of Co-operation and Development was primarily responsible for studying the concept of community development and establishing guidelines for its implementation as a government policy. From 1993 the Department of National Health and Population Development played an increasingly important role in giving advice in community development as well as on its organisation on a country wide basis. After 1994 elections, this function was transferred to the National

Department of Welfare and Population Development.

## **2.14 CHALLENGES FACING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY**

It has been mentioned earlier on that community development has always been viewed with scepticism and mistrust due to its potential for political awakening and consequent demands on the government. The reality of this potential in the post-apartheid South Africa is presented in a different fashion, that is, fighting for survival on the part of CBOs and NGOs. Whilst community based organisations (CBO's) and non-governmental organisations

(NGO's) were united before 1994 in protest against the common foe namely apartheid, the dismantling of apartheid and the coming into effect of a democratically elected government brought in to bear on these structures, changing of roles as well as issues of representativeness and capacity.

According to Bollens (2000:167-180) the community based sector is faced with three important issues in the future, namely; its independence vis-à-vis government, its funding and technical support, and, its local representativeness. This writer argues that one opinion is of the view that it is now elected local officials who are the proper conduits for community needs, thus a more limited CBO sector is preferable. The other viewpoint upholds the vitality and flourishing of CBO's as critical to the nurturing of a culture of post-apartheid democracy. Without a strong civil society, suggest this viewpoint, there is no intermediary between the state and community and a strong democratic culture will not be sustained.

On the question of funding and technical support, Taylor (1998:292-300) argues that many international donors which actively sought opportunities to support CBOs and NGOs in the past have either changed, or are changing their strategic focus and aligning with and becoming involved in bilateral funding agreements with the new government. This puts intense pressure on the CBOs and NGOs to change their strategy in order to be seen as relevant to the present scenario. This brings us to the last important challenge facing community based organisations and non-governmental organisations, the issue of representativeness. This concern, according to Bolens (200:173), was overshadowed by the need to put forth a united front in the apartheid struggle. Now with the CBOs and NGOs' fight for a legitimate role in the reconstruction of South Africa, the question of representativeness becomes more

real than before. The inadequate representativeness of some civics and inter and intra-community divisions, present a problem to those seeking to help poor communities.

Taylor (1998:295) sums this up by suggesting three phases characterised by dependence, independence and interdependence. To him dependence should be seen as a period when CBO's acquire learning and skills during the period of repression. Whilst organisations that were supportive of the apartheid state were dependent on it for survival, CBO's that were against apartheid depended on international donor for assistance. The independent phase signals a period of fundamental change in relationship with the state. This is the phase when CBO's personalise skills and competencies acquired during the repression period. This period is characterised by NGOs like IDT that specialise in finances and act as conduits for funds that assist the development of projects for poverty alleviation. The interdependence phase signals the full realisation that own potential can only be achieved through effective

collaboration with others. In this phase CBOs would do well to realise that their capacity can only be enhanced when working with the state that has the resources to help the poor.

## **2.15 SUSTAINING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH POVERTY ALLEVIATING PROJECTS**

According to Hope Sr (1996:139) sustainability is the latest concept to have emerged in the literature and thinking on community development policy. Unlike those that have preceded it, sustainability in community development shall not pass soon because of its greater concern for the future. By its nature sustainable community development encompasses actions which ensure the meeting of needs of the existing inhabitants of a given community without jeopardizing the ability of future generation to meet their own needs. Whilst community development implies the utilisation of resources from governmental and non governmental sources for effective and purposive change, sustainability advocates for incremental and improved change. Central to the concept of sustainability is progress, growth, generation of wealth achieved through capacity building, empowerment and ownership. The writer asserts that sustainable community development, as a goal has taken an added importance in that past policy frameworks were unable to create long term benefits that lasted beyond direct donor involvement. Likewise, government funded poverty alleviating projects can be said to be sustainable only in so far as they last beyond government dependency.

According to Gray (1998:71) the purpose of community development workers is to work themselves out of the program. This can be achieved through imparting their knowledge and skills so that the community participants become self sufficient and capable of dependent action. Gray (1998:71) emphasises the importance of sustainability as the main concern when concluding one's involvement in a project. To her sustainability hinges on community

ownership of the project rather than on the absence or presence of the community development worker. The writer asserts that self-sustaining projects are those that are owned by the community, income-generating, managed by trained personnel, organised and recognised by other community organisations. Gray's (1998:74) assertion of self-sustaining projects as those income-generating, also brings in an economic dimension as a major determinant factor of sustainability. The writer concludes by warning social workers as community development workers to move away from small-scale, isolated development initiatives focusing only on non-material issues towards income-generating programmes which empower people both socially and economically. The widely publicised and generally accepted definition of sustainability is that of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) which defines it as development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. From this definition, emphasis on sustainability implies concern for the future.

## **2.16 PARTICIPATION AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT**

The paradigm shift in the concept demands that participation should not be handled in an instrumental way, such as attempting to prevent a project's likely failure by means of a downgraded people's participation. According to Frank Bliss (in his paper "Towards a Paradigm Change in Participation") participation by target groups is often used primarily to improve projects planned and implemented by the donors. According to this writer, participation would require a comprehensive paradigm change, a change from technical projects whose subject matter has been fixed in advance to an integrated package of measures oriented on the wishes and resources of the people.

To Bliss , comprehensive participation should take place early in the project in the sense of co-ordination, self-responsibility and self-determination. Participation should not be limited to solely to the members of the target groups , instead , other people involved should also be included . Bliss asserts that participation should no longer be a matter of co-determination of the people in the development projects . They should have a say in the entire development process to which the project is intended to make a contribution . In the final analysis , this idea means acceptance of the basic proposition that the poor can achieve better and sustainable access to economic resources only by means of stronger representation in civil society and its decision structures.

The writer asserts that as a social principle to be aimed at, participation would infact address the issue of power, but it would not call into question the implementation of measures planned on partnership basis. He objects to the idea that participation could transfer responsibility for development measures entirely to the target groups , thus relieving the donors and national governments of all obligations . He asserts that this danger should not arise in the case of true participation because it involves mutual give-and-take and joint assumption of responsibility.

The author concedes that there are many situations in which improving living conditions can be achieved only through economic growth. But what shape the goal itself takes and the appropriate development approach to it, must remain the decision of the people. Promoting this process and making external input to the people taking path they have chosen for themselves, is precisely the task of a development based on participation. The author argues that

options for approaches to promote participation within and by development have not been exhausted by far, in both intellectual and practical terms. He goes on to make examples of how this could be achieved. In conclusion, the writer states that participation cannot be a half-measure it must not stop at the doors of implementing institutions and executing organisations. He asserts that participation of the people does not end up only in a transfer of the former power of donors and implementing organisations but also in a far-reaching displacement of the latter from their responsibility for implementing projects.

### **2.17 PARTICIPATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF POVERTY ALLEVIATING PROJECT**

Participation forms an integral part of community development. The philosophy of participation lays its claim on deep rooted principles of democracy as well the value for the individual. In community development this concept according to De Graaf (1986:80) is a crucial ingredient that explains the difference between many failed programs and a few successful ones. Writers like Keogh (1998:185) and Roodt (1996:313) concur that the term has been so misunderstood that it has invariably meant different things to different people.

They claim for instance that the term can be a manipulative tool to engage people in a pre-determined process as an expedient way to achieve certain results. Governments can use it as a way of rallying support under a vague sense of democracy and an empowering process. Participation is far more important than just involving people in a particular program or project. Its importance hinges on the lasting improvement of peoples' capabilities to improve

their lives. By participation argues Roodt (1996:312) is meant people involving themselves, to a greater or lesser degree, in organisations indirectly or directly concerned with the decision-making about, and implementation of development. The writer goes on to refer to participation at a local level, access by the greater community to local government, political parties, community and development organisations. In his paper presented at a seminar on Social Work and Social Development (1984) De Graaf enumerates reasons why participation seems so crucial to community development.

One of the most important characteristics of participation in any development project is that it is the key to sustainability. When people participate, they will acquire, practice and improve on a number of social and organisational skills that have a spill-over effect into other areas beneficial to the participants. This leads to a better chance that there will be lasting change for which people need less interference from government or non-governmental organisations. This is self-sustaining development. De Graaf (1986:14) argues that any development program that creates changes during its duration results in a temporary relief from hardship but often at the high cost of increased dependency. For him, the ultimate test for success in any project is what happens next. Participation therefore, if encouraged and is effective in all stages of the project, makes the project a local and people driven exercise, becomes rooted in what people want, choose and learn to do.

## **2.18 THE GENERIC ROLE OF SOCIAL WORK IN SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY**

The vastness and vagueness of social work has resulted in many other professions asking

questions as to what social workers really do (Goldberg and Warburton 1979 : 6). In the vast number of problems bombarding large, general social services department, it is becoming more , rather than less difficult to arrive at differentiated assessment of problem situations , to plan specific intervention strategies and to determine the level of expertise required . This is worsened by the fact that social work was not realistically defined precisely because society will always entertain conflicting , expectations of social work (Pinker 1990 : 10) .

Inevitably , such conflict gives rise to uncertainty . Goldberg and Warburton (1979 : 9) note that the generic nature of social work implies that the intake worker has to be a super jack-of-all-trades , expected to be knowledgeable about the terrified young mother who has hit her nine – month old baby ; the boy who has run away from a tight , over protective home ; the middle aged man who has just sexually abused his teenage daughter , the adolescent boy who has raped his grandmother ; the husband who has killed his wife ; the marital complexities in a family where one partner is mentally ill ; the unpaid bills and eviction order of a problem family ; the guilt and doubt of parents who are at the end of coping with a family a severely mentally handicapped child at home ; the wife who refuses to have her husband home again after a severe stroke ; the lonely old frail lady whose only son has married and who has nothing left to live for in her large empty house .

Whilst in the past a large proportion of social workers could hope to be involved in direct service delivery , counselling contact with their clients , they now have to take on new roles as community development workers as managers allocating resources , as enablers to social work aides , volunteers , neighbourhood groups and as community workers thinking in terms of groups rather than individual clients . The new roles , make it imperative that

social workers , particularly in middle and top management should have the tools with which to carry out these new tasks . Goldberg and Warburton (1979:8) argue that social work education has not been able to keep pace with these widening and varying demands made on social workers so as to equip them for these functions . The basic education of social workers is mainly on humanities and the important part of their professional training is directed at achieving some insight into their own and other people's emotional and cultured biases . Jones (1990:189) views social work as a way of finding a solution to a person's difficulties through personal discussion with him . Some critics see this kind of casework as unrealistic social control in that the human problems it seeks to tackle are social in nature arising out of social conditions and relationships , and having consequences which extend beyond the individuals immediate concern .

Modern social workers are only too well aware of the importance of the community and are developing techniques of community care and community development . They are also not blind to the injustices in society that have brought to bare on the individuals and they accept the responsibility of ensuring that clients gain access to available welfare resources . Many social workers however go beyond this , seeing political action to change social conditions as an important part of their professional function .

The greatest challenge facing social workers is that their social reform activities will be limited by their relationships to their employers . Social workers are public officials and as such are expected to implement policies of their political masters and not engage in political activities against those policies . Fortunately , as they climb up the ladder becoming managers

they are able to reform the system through the recognition of their expertise within that system and perhaps even to influence the formation and formulation of policies from the outset . Olive Stenvenson (in Pinker 1990:7 ) is concerned that social work runs the risk of loosing credibility because of reluctance to decide what is not social work .

The overwhelming caseload of social workers calls for some kind of intervention and a need for inclination towards specialisation . The contingencies of practice require a clearer and specific division of labour between casework, groupwork , community work and now community development work . Also , recent exploratory research suggests that in spite of all the vastness and vagueness of the social work task , less misunderstanding and a greater sense of achievement for both client and worker issues are possible if aims are specific between the social worker and the client . The aims should be relatively modest and capable of achievement (Goldberg and Warburton 1979 : 7).

## **2.19 SOCIAL WORK AND ECONOMY**

In Britain Pinker (1990 : 34) states that the practice of social work is closely linked with the protective welfare institutions which are collectively known as the welfare state . According to this writer , welfare provision is made through government and private institutions. The provision is made in response to the need rather than the consumer's choice or economic needs . Social work practice therefore is primarily concerned with the distribution of resources , whether it be to individuals , families or communities , and it has little to do with the world of work and the production of wealth . This places social work practice in the periphery to the mainstream of economic life .

The author notes that the practice of social work in Britain is influenced by the intellectual gap that exists between social policy and economic policy . Invariably the wide gap results in the difference of opinion between social work and economic thought . The idea of protective welfare institutions and the welfare state is influenced by the intensity of Richard Titmuss's conviction that the values of the welfare state are morally superior to those of the economic market . Titmuss was convinced that social policy had two purposes namely to provide the best possible social services according to need rather than economic means as well as to serve as moral exemplars of the good society and the good life . He based his argument on the fact that no money values can be attached to the presence or absence of spirit of altruism in a society .

In criticising this views Pinker (1990 : 37) is of the opinion that Titimus neglected certain features of the relationships between social and economic policy . Titmuss's claim of antipathy was part of a tendency to lump all economists under a single stereotype without distinguishing between classical political economy , laissez faire and economism . According to this writer social work is a constituent part of the statutory social services . Social work clients make up a small minority group drawn from the weakest bidders in the economic market . Most of social work clients are removed from direct participation in economic activity . Whilst many social workers lobby constantly for welfare rights on behalf of their clients , the writer notes that the rights at issue are no more than rights to a minimum level of security which would seldom result in a transition from dependency to independency in economic terms .

Pinker (1990:35) cites three chief causes of dependency namely mass unemployment,

personal failings such as laziness and misfortunes such as ill-health or bereavement . These casual processes are often interactive and difficult to disentangle . To suggest that on occasion individuals can be architects of their own misery would be labelled as judgemental , pathologising or stereotyping .

However much social workers extend their own interventive methods , the social composition of their clientele changes very little . Because most social work clients are outside the mainstream of economic life , the cardinal tenets of social work like respect for the individual , self determination are defined in political and collectivist rather than economic and individual terms . Rights rather than responsibilities , entitlements rather than obligation , need rather than merit are the operative principles . According to the author, given the plight of their clientele , it is understandable that social workers are suspicious of economic theory and residual models of welfare . This plight reinforces retreat into the social worker's moralistic lager in the belief that there is such a thing as a welfare ethic which not only is socially autonomous but also superior to what is commonly known as the work ethic .

In conclusion Pinker (1990:38) points out that it is unlikely that the unregulated play of market forces will solve the problem of poverty as it is the radical change in the social structure that will do so . One of the hallmarks of a civilised society is the high quality of its provision for its citizens who are incapable of supporting themselves . Such provision however is only forthcoming when social policies and economic policies are felt to be complementary than incompatible . Whilst ends and means of the economic market will never be entirely compatible with those of the social market , policy-makers must keep trying to achieve a compromise between their respective claims to benefit social work clientele .

## **2.20. PROJECT AS A VEHICLE FOR CHANGE ACTION**

Quite oftenly, social workers make use of a project to effect change and to satisfy a need.

According to Patti (1983:49-51) a project is a group of people with a specific purpose having a common objective to do a specific activity with a developmental goal, unfolding vision for self-sustainability and empowerment. It has a beginning and an end. This definition concurs with that of Bembridge (1987:50) who describes projects in terms of two related characteristics namely, they are either referred to as sets of technical and organisational measures or they are associated with some particular objective. Honadle and Rosengard (1983:300) describe projects as discrete activities aimed at specific objectives.

Morgan (1983:329-330) cites certain characteristics of a project as follows ;

- Disciplined, conceptual disaggregation of complex or ill-defined problems into discrete tasks.
- Specific time limits for projects
- Pre-programmed activities
- Applied economic and systems analysis used in the appraisal of a project
- Standardised reporting procedures.

All these definitions concur to one element that a project is an effective means of translating development plans into specific courses of action. It is used as a vehicle for mobilising people towards development efforts. It can be used as an institution to guide beneficiaries towards certain prescribed activities to achieve predetermined goals and objectives.

## 2.21 THE ROLE OF A SOCIAL WORKER AS A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKER IN POVERTY ALLEVIATING PROGRAMMES / PROJECTS

The literature does not clearly specify the role of a development worker in community development. This could be attributed to the fact that the concept of community development itself is a relatively new phenomenon in South Africa. But what makes it even more complex is it being regarded by Gray (1998:57) as a melting pot of expertise and skills.

According to this writer community development is multi-disciplinary and requires blurring of professional boundaries. This assertion seems to suggest that different professionals taking particular interest on community development and on issues of poverty can collaborate to alleviate poverty and thus become community development workers. This does not make definition of a community development worker and his role any easier to describe.

Different authors assign different roles to what they perceive as community development. Du Preez (1981: 220-221) assigns the initiating role to the community development worker, adding that the community should render only assistance in organisational matters. This view is shared by Wileden (1970:221-223) who sees the community worker as a professional leader. This is in contrast to Burkey's (1993:39) assertion that development workers need to settle down to working patiently overtime facilitating and supporting initiatives arising from the ambitions and priorities of individuals, groups and the community at large. Wileden however touches on some roles that correspond with and compliments Burkey's viewpoint when he sees the community development workers as a guide, enabler, expert and therapist.



Kotze and Swanepoel (1983:43-50) give a list of roles that to them describe the responsibilities of a community development worker. They see the community development worker as a catalyst, channel, adviser and worker-colleague. These writers however note that a community development worker cannot be everything to the community. They point to a need for this worker to understand his limits in terms of expertise as well as to when to call in a specialist. In social work Gray (1998:56) postulates that the development welfare model proclaimed in the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997) brings in a new dimension in terms of the role social worker might play in community development. Whilst social work practice in South Africa has always been based on problem-solving, counselling of individuals and therapy, Gray (1998:57), asserts that social workers can no longer afford the luxury of this choice. The writer challenges social workers to become actively involved in community development.

As they are located within the institution of social welfare and forming part of the social forces that influence change, Gray (1998:57) argues that social workers are ideally placed to play an important role as change agents in community development. Social workers are called upon to move away from small-scale and isolated local development initiatives towards community development programs that empower people both socially and economically. More importantly, social workers as development workers are faced with a challenge to develop and guide programs that have built in mechanisms for sustainability. More often than not social workers perform generic work in that they are expected to meet every need of the community and individuals through social work methods namely casework, group work, community work and research. It is however incumbent upon them to remain relevant and effective in the discharge of those services. As Elliot (1993) argues, the situation in Africa demands for indigenous practice that is relevant and effective within the local context.

Elliot argues that focus should be on development rather than on remediation on social change rather than on the individual and on poverty alleviation rather than on social control.

This assertion underscores a need for social workers to take a conscious and proactive stance towards poverty eradication. Some writers, Anderson, Wilson, Mwansa and Osei-Hwedie (1994) propose an empowerment model that can be used to empower social workers towards poverty alleviation. This model emphasises the need for people to develop participatory competencies as a means of empowerment. Social work in this model is conceptualised as taking place in five overlapping dimensions namely, personal, social, educational, economic and political.

The situation in South Africa is changing. The advent of a new South Africa has brought in many new challenges to a wide range of professions, social work not excluded. Prevalence of poverty has given a new impetus on social workers to review their position and recognize a need for meaningful public participation towards social integration and social justice. They are called upon to channel their useful contributions to the country's development efforts.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

According to Bailey (1994:12) all research projects share a common goal of furthering our understanding of society. Thus the aim of this research is for the researcher to gain some understanding of the participants' view on sustainability of government funded poverty alleviating projects. The researcher also seeks to gain an understanding of the role of social workers in promoting sustainability of these projects. At this stage, finding solutions to the problem is not in the interest of this research. Rather the researcher's interest lies in gaining understanding on what constitutes sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

An exploratory– descriptive design is most appropriate for our study. This design is applied when a researcher is examining a new interest (Rubin and Babbie 1993:107), when the subject of study is relatively new and unstudied. The study is exploratory in that it is conducted to explore as well as beginning familiarity with a topic. Such explorations are often called descriptive (Bailey 1994:40) in that they attempt to describe a phenomenon in detail. The aim of the study therefore is to gain understanding of the participants' view on sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.

The researcher will further explore the extent to which participants rate sustainability of government funded poverty alleviating projects as well as the role of social workers in promoting sustainability of these projects. Why or how the phenomenon happened is a matter for further research.

### **3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research will use a qualitative method to subjectively tap the deeper meanings of human experience (Rubin and Babbie 1997:382). Halfpenny (cited in Neuman 1997:228) notes that qualitative research is concerned with the relativity of the actor's accounts of their worlds. The research study is therefore concerned with the participant's understanding of sustainability of poverty alleviating projects from their points of view.

Qualitative research according to Strauss and Corbin (1998:11) can be used to explore substantive areas about which little is known as well as obtaining intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about.

For the purpose of research, the following are of significant importance to the research :-

- Participants' understanding of sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.
- The extent to which participants rate sustainability of their projects.
- Participants' views on factors that promote and undermine sustainability of poverty alleviating projects, and the role social workers in promoting sustainability of poverty

alleviating projects.

Qualitative methods that attempt to understand the meaning or nature of experiences of persons with problems involve getting out into the field and finding what people are doing and thinking (Strauss et al 1998:11). The nature of these studies according to Rubin and Babbie (1997:186) is to describe things in such depth and detail that there is less need to worry about whether one particular measure is really measuring what it is intended to measure. To a researcher the meaning of social action or statement depends on the context in which it appears.

### **3.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

The researcher will use a non-probability sampling procedure and in this case a selected purposive sampling method. According to Rubin and Babbie (1993:255), the researcher in purposive sampling can use knowledge of the community to handpick people who best represent the range of persons in the best position to know what is being researched. Non-probability sampling, states Bailey (1994:94), is not representative of the large population. This greatly limits the researcher's ability to generalise findings beyond the specific sample being studied.

This sampling method is popular because it is inexpensive and easy to utilise. Again because the researcher wants a specific clientele, the purposive sampling method is suitable to use. It is important to note that although valuable time of the researcher is saved in this method, non-probability sampling is less reliable than probability sampling.

Employed as a social worker in Transkei, Butterworth district for the last fifteen years, the researcher has been involved in programmes contributing towards poverty alleviation. Between 1997 and 2000, the department of Welfare, Eastern Cape has funded twenty -two income-generating projects in six sub-districts namely Tsomo, Nqamakwe, Centane, Willowvale, Idutywa including Butterworth as a means of alleviating poverty.

This being the total population of government funded projects in Butterworth district the researcher will choose six poverty alleviating projects, one from each sub-district as a sampling frame (Neuman 1997:203). The six project will be described in respect of history, funding purposes, social factors promoting and impeding sustainability as well a the role of the social worker in promoting sustainability of projects. Each social worker in each district, an executive member of each project and a community member will be interviewed as units of analysis. A social worker assigned a task of interacting with participants in the projects is ideally placed to explain factors associated with sustainability or non-sustainability of the projects. Because of his or her involvement in the activities of the project, it is expected that an executive member will have a special knowledge that can bring light on the factors promoting or impeding sustainability of projects. A social worker will assist the researcher to find a community member with intimate knowledge of the project and has community ability, for interview.

### **3.5 INTERVIEW AS A DATA COLLECTING TOOL**

#### **3.5.1 THE RESPONDENTS**

Two social workers will be interviewed for the purpose of pretesting the interview-schedule. This is done in order to make sure that questions are clear as well as to make changes where necessary (Bailey 1994:144). Again, as the interview-schedule is compiled in English, the researcher will translate and administer the questionnaires in Xhosa as all the respondents are Xhosa speaking. To ascertain whether the questions asked and answered are clear, the researcher will request a co-worker to further translate the Xhosa version of the questionnaire into English. Neuman (1997:260 - 262) describes how people create social meaning and cultural understanding. The author argues that social meaning does not reside in words alone but also in social context and interaction among people as well as in cultural frames in which people live.

This experience will necessitate the researcher not only to ask for clarification on questions based on social situations but also to supplement close-ended questionnaires with open-ended questions and probes in order to gain insight into how people construct meaning in various social settings.

### **3.5.2 INTERVIEW- SCHEDULE**

The researcher will prepare and administer the questionnaires. The interview schedule used will be a structured and standardised questionnaire which will ask every respondent the same question. According to Bailey (1994:187), standardised questionnaires allow comparison of answers from all respondents and facilitates the computation of summary statistics such as percentages of respondents who answer yes or no. Because the interview schedule is administered by the researcher, this study has an advantage that it could be completed quickly and at low costs.

According to Rubin and Babbie (1992:376) standardised open-ended interviews consist of questions that are written out in advance exactly the way they are to be asked. This strategy according to the writers is used when resource limitations leave the researcher with insufficient time to pursue less structured strategies when dealing with large numbers of respondents. The authors however warn that probing should be limited to where they are indicated on the interview-schedule.

One advantage of interviews conducted face-to-face by the researcher is the highest response rate and the opportunity to conduct a longer questionnaire. Neuman (1997:253) cites the opportunity to observe the surroundings and non-verbal communication as an added advantage. Rubin and Babbie (1993:371) concur and argue that field research allows for more active inquiry.

The interview-schedule will be divided into four sections namely, personal details, the history of the project, funding and purpose of the project, factors promoting or impeding sustainability as well as the role of the social worker. These factors are based on compliance with recognised phases of community development.

### **3.5.3 THE INTERVIEW PROCESS**

As mentioned earlier on, the interview was conducted by the researcher. Neuman ( in Moser and Kalton 1972:273) observed that face-to-face interviews spent only about thirty-five percent of their time interviewing whilst about forty percent was spent in locating the correct respondent, fifteen percent in traveling whilst ten percent was spent on studying survey material and dealing with administrative and recording details.

This experience held true when the researcher had to move from Tsomo where he is presently working covering more that 150 kilometers to meet respondents on far remote rural areas. The situation was made worse by the fact that in rural areas there was no way to communicate in order to make appointments . In some instances the researcher had to make two visits for one interview because of lack of communication facilities.

In short, interviews were conducted in the respondents' homes or on the project site. The researcher would first introduce himself as well as the purpose of the research. The main part of the interview consisted of asking questions and recording answers. For the purpose of mutual

understanding the researcher would go at a comfortable pace giving feedback to every question answered to maintain interest. In recording answers Neuman (1997:257) advises that the researchers writing must be legible and recording what is said must be verbatim with out correcting grammar or slang.

Probing was done only to clarify an ambiguous answer and to complete incomplete answer. Again, the researcher repeated the question when he felt that he did not capture the response properly to avoid misrepresentation. After each interview the researcher would thank the respondent for the time spent with researcher and leave.

### **3.6 ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Data collected was analysed by hand. This was made possible by the fact that the number of respondent was not many (18) and the analysis was therefore manageable. Analysing data using a qualitative method is a way of unpacking large volume of text interpreting and explaining them in a social context in order to create meaning in real life situations ( Neuman 1997 : 419)

Data analysis forms the basis of the whole research study in that it is from the analysis that inferences to real social life can be drawn. This involves sorting out similarities and common themes. These are categorised and grouped together. Meaning is derived from reading and re- reading themes and then interpreting them into real life situations.

According to Neuman ( 1997 : 420) explanation in qualitative data tends to be rich in details, sensitive to context and capable of social life.

Information collected was reduced into groups and interpreted using themes. The themes were then compared according to frequency of responses. Concepts around definitions were formulated on the basis of their similarities and relationships. Comparisons were done between various subjects and responses as well as across categories. The responses were grouped together and analysed using frequencies. Responses were then interpreted in a tabular form using numbers. The material was then interpreted in terms of the literature and theories in social science.

### **3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

3.7.1 The findings of this research study cannot be generalised to the whole population of poverty alleviating project in the Eastern Cape because of the small size of the sampling frame, eighteen (18) respondents. Out of the twenty – two (22) poverty alleviating projects funded by government in Butterworth district and more than a hundred projects in the Eastern Cape, only six projects whose respondents were interviewed. A more representative sample could provide credible findings that can lay foundation to a better understanding of the topic in question.

3.7.2 Project members applying for funding from the government do so through social workers employed in the respective districts. These social workers, amongst other functions they perform, assist projects members in filling business plans, supervise and guide project member

and offer whatever kind of assistance needed for developing and managing projects. Social workers are also in a position to assist the department in deciding which project qualifies or does not qualify for financial assistance as they are ideally placed in the district. This and the fact that social workers, by virtue of being government officials represent government at local level on which project member depend, gives them a particular status superior to that of the project members. The fact that a researcher in this study was a social worker could have had an influence in the manner respondents answered the questions. The researcher however explained from the onset that he was not representing the department and the answers they were giving had no influence whatsoever over their projects.

3.7.3 Data obtained from respondents reflected their subjective opinions, Whilst this could be regarded as a positive aspect in qualitative research, it could be dangerous to generalize the findings to other projects both in Butterworth district and the greater Eastern Cape for the same reason that the sampling frame was too small.

3.7.4 Qualitative data is by its nature likely to contain implicit assumptions, biases, ethnocentrism and ill – defined concepts from dominant cultural values ( Neuman 1997 : 421) . This alone discredits findings and conclusions drawn from them cannot be regarded as valid. However, the fact that respondents were from the same region, sharing the same cultural values may have contributed to respondents giving consistent answers and therefore lending some credibility in their responses.

3.7.5 The fact that the interviewer was a social worker involved in poverty alleviating projects could

have led to the interviewer bias based on his experience with the projects. To guard against this limitation the researcher collected and analysed data himself so that bias may be consistent and therefore go unnoticed ( Bell 1993 : 95).

### **3.8 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH**

The research may be of value to the government by assisting authorities to put in place mechanisms that promote sustainability of poverty alleviating projects. The research could also assist social workers to determine training needs for project members. It could also assist social workers to make assumptions that could be tailor-made to meet the needs of the project members.

Finally, further research work on the subject could help other workers develop a theory on factors that promote sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

The research design used in this study was exploratory-descriptive. The research method used was a non-probability sampling procedure and selected a purposive sampling method. Six projects were used as a sampling frame and eighteen (18) respondents were used as units of analysis. Data was analysed and findings displayed. Limitation of the study were explained and the whole process can be used for further research.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

After conducting interviews with social workers, committee members as well as community members from each of the six projects, data collected had to be reduced interpreted and converted into a format that is readable and understandable. According to Marshall and Rossman (1989:114) this is a process whereby a voluminous amount of information is reduced into certain patterns or themes and then interpreted by using some schema, the aim of which according to Tesch (1990:97) is the emergence of a large, consolidated picture.

Rubin and Rubin (1995:226) describe data analysis as the final stage of listening to hear the meaning of what is said. The aim of the research therefore was to explore;

- \* The respondent's understanding of sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.
- \* The factors that promote or impede sustainability of poverty alleviating projects, and,
- The role of the social workers in promoting sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.

Analysis of data was done by hand. Information collected was analysed question by question and comparisons were done between the various subjects responses. The responses

were grouped together and presented in tabular forms. For easy reading and understanding responses were analysed using frequencies and interpreted as such.

In this chapter the finding will be divided into four sections namely,

- \* Section A: Respondents roles in the projects
  
- \* Section B: Description of the project
  
- \* Section C : Sustainability and the factors that promote or impede it
  
- \* Section D. Community development principles and the role of social worker

Tables will be used to describe some of the findings in the sections mentioned here above. Again numbers will be utilised to describe the projects in different district. Project 1 will represent Tsomo, 2 represents Nqamakwe, 3 Butterworth, 4 Centane, 5 Idutywa and 6 Willowvale.

#### **4.2 SECTION A RESPONDENT'S ROLES IN THE PROJECTS**

Six social workers, six committee members and six community members were interviewed in the six poverty alleviating projects in the six districts. It was hoped that each of the interviewees could have enough knowledge of the projects to share with the researcher.

Four social workers regarded their roles in the projects as that of monitoring, supervising and advising. One social worker regarded her role as that of training project members and the

other thought of her role as assisting in all project activities.

All committee members interviewed were apparently the ones that initiated the projects. This places them in leadership roles in the projects. Four of these interviewees were responsible for convening and chairing meetings. One project committee member regarded her role as including depositing and withdrawing project funds from the bank. The other committee member stated her function as not only that of the executive committee member but also participating in the actual project activities.

As expected no particular role was given to community members. Four members regarded their roles as that of advising and giving assistance. A community member in project 1 who is a teacher by profession regarded his role as giving advice and providing transport whenever that help is needed. Community member in project 3 was once involved in projects and was sharing her experience of project management whenever called upon to do so. Community member of project 5 owns a non-profit making organisation that assists in the development of projects. She therefore regarded her role as giving expert advice in this project.

#### **4.3.1 Section B : Description of the projects**

As is the requirement for all the projects funded by the department of welfare all the six projects had constitutions. Two of the six projects were multi-purpose. In other words the projects included different activities. Project 2 which is multi-purpose is affiliated to an umbrella body. The umbrella body has its own constitution and has different projects under

it each with own constitution but concurrent with that of the umbrella body.

One project is a sewing project, another a baking project. There is also a poultry project as well as a gardening project. Due to the shrinking market the four projects are forseeing possibility of extending their activities thereby becoming multi-purpose.

#### **4.3.2 Nature of the projects**

Whilst all the projects are poverty eradicating, four of the project are regarded as income-generating. Project 1 is income-generating and empowering its members in that it sells the produce and has a day-care centre for disabled children providing life skills. As mentioned earlier on project 2 is affiliated to an umbrella body whose nature is multipurpose.

#### **4.3.3. Commencement date of projects**

The years in which the alleviating projects commenced is shown in table 4.1:

**Table 4.1 : Commencement date**

YEAR	FREQUENCY
1 1994	1
2 2000	1
3 1998	1
4 1995	1
5 1998	1
6 1998	1

N = 6

Two projects namely projects 1 and 4 commenced in 1994 and 1995 respectively.

Projects 3, 5 and 6 commenced in 1998 whilst project 2 commenced in 2000 .

#### **4.3.4 INITIATION OF PROJECTS**

Five projects, 1,3,4,5, and 6 were mainly initiated by project members. Project 2 was introduced to the community by the social worker. This is shown in Table 4.2

**Table 4.2: Initiators of projects**

<b>INITIATOR</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>
a) SOCIAL WORKER	1
b) COMMITTEE MEMBER	5
c) OTHER	

N =- 6

#### **4.3.5. FUNDING OF PROJECTS**

As shown in table 4.3 funding of projects is mainly by government. Projects 1,2,3,4, and 6 were funded mainly by the department of Welfare. Only project 5 was initially donated a baking stove by a private company. The department of Welfare however later granted funds for this project as shown in table 4.3.

**Table 4.3 : Funding**

<b>FUNDER</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>
GOVERNMENT	5
COMMUNITY MEMBERS	
OTHER	1

N=6

#### **4.3.6 WHETHER OR NOT THE PROJECT ARE STILL FUNCTIONING**

All the project are still functioning

#### **4.3.7. SUCCESS OF THE PROJECTS**

None of the six social workers felt that the projects are very successful. Three social workers however in projects 1,3 and 4 felt that the project can be said to be successful. The social worker in project 1 attributed success to the fact that the projects is multi-purpose. The project was initially started as a poultry project and later extended activities into sewing. This gives customers a variety of products to purchase. This project is also offering a day care center service to the disabled children. The social worker in project 3 attributed success to the fact that they sell uniform to the local schools, which is an identifiable and available market. The project is therefore serving its purpose of income generation. To the social worker in project 4 the success was attributed to the fact that project members were able to sell chickens, generate income and dividends shared amongst the project members.

Two social workers in projects 5 and 6 felt that success can be regarded as neutral. Project 5 social worker attributed this to the fact that they sell their bread to the local schools on credit. Payment comes very late sometimes after four to five months. This results in project members not realising profit immediately as payment comes when they already are in debt. The social worker in project 6 attributed the neutral success to the very little produce (vegetable) that is yielded in this project. To him lack of water in the gardening project is the cause of the little yield. The social worker in project 2 felt the project is still at the initial stages to be able to measure its success.

This is in line with Haye's (1959:73-74) assertion that it is only after five to ten years that evidence of permanence and spread of changes induced by the project can be obtained.

Five committee members however felt that the projects were successful. Committee member in project 1 believes that the project is successful in that it is able to generate profit. The committee member in project 2 attributes their success not in monetary terms but to the fact that they as project members are determined to succeed and not giving up. Committee member in project 3 attributed their success to their available market, the local schools to which they sell their uniform. To her every finished product is sure of the market in that schools order in advance. Again committee member for project 4 claim their project is successful because they sell chickens to the already available market, the pensioners. Committee member in project 5 also have the available market being the local school where they sell bread in bulk.

Only one committee member in project 6 who felt that success can be regarded as neutral due to lack of water for their gardening project. None of the committee members felt their projects were very successful, or unsuccessful.

Community members interviewed shared similar views on the success of the poverty alleviating projects. As shown in table 4.4 none of them felt that the projects were very successful. Three of them however 1,2,3, felt that the project were successful. The fact that project 1 developed from a small to a big project was the reason for this member to believe that it is successful. Dedication by project member in project 2 was seen by the community member as the reasons for its success. Community member in project 3 saw the reason for

success as the members' ability to sell their produce. Two community members for projects 4 and 6 believed that success of the project is neutral. To community member in project 4 there is sometimes no capital to purchase chickens since produce is not regular. Community member in project 6 felt that project members are not well organised and the project can only be regarded as neutral.

Community member in project 5 thought that the project is unsuccessful in that it is not making any profit. She attributed this to the delays in payment by the department of Education that is responsible for nutrition in the local schools. This concern was also raised by the social worker who felt that this projects success can be said to be neutral. As table 4.4 shows none of the community members thought that the projects were very successful or unsuccessful.

**Table 4.4 Rate of success**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	REASONS	PROJECT
7.1 VERY SUCCESSFUL			
7.2 SUCCESSFUL	3	- DEVELOPED FROM A SMALL TO A BIG PROJECT - MEMBERS ARE DEDICATED TO THE PROJECT - MEMBERS ABLE TO SELL THEIR PRODUCE	1 2 3
7.3 NEUTRAL	2	- NO CAPITAL AND PRODUCE NOT REGULAR - MEMBERS NOT WELL ORGANISED	4 6
7.4 UNSUCCESSFUL	1	- IT IS NOT PROFIT MAKING	5
7.5 VERY UNSUCCESSFUL			
7.6 OTHER			

N=6

#### 4.3.8. Helpfulness of projects

None of the social workers felt that the projects were very helpful. This is shown in table 4.5

**Table 4.5 : Helpfulness**

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	REASONS	PROJECT
9.1 VERY HELPFUL			
9.2 HELPFUL	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- COMMUNITY MEMBERS BY PRODUCE LOCALLY</li> <li>- IF SUCCESSFUL SKILLS WILL BE DEVELOPED POVERTY WILL BE ALLEVIATED</li> <li>- PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES</li> <li>- CUSTOMERS BUY LOCALLY NOT TRAVELLING TO TOWN</li> <li>- MEMBERS ORGANISED AND EMPOWERED</li> </ul>	1 2 3 5 5
9.3 NEUTRAL			
9.4 UNHELPFUL	1	MEMBERS DO NOT BENEFIT	6
9.5 VERY UNHELPFUL			
9.6 OTHER			

N= 6

Five social workers felt that the projects were however helpful. Social worker 1 felt that the community do not have to travel long distances to town to buy produce since this is available locally and this makes the project helpful to the community. Social worker 2 believes developing skills for project members make the project helpful. Social worker 3 believes that sewing school uniforms in bulk provides employment opportunities for project members hence the helpfulness of the project. Social worker 4 attributed the helpfulness of the project to the fact that customers do not have to go to town to buy what is available locally. Social worker 5 believed that project members are empowered and this contributes to the helpfulness of the project.

Social worker 6 though believes that the project is unhelpful in that it does not benefit members.

One committee member, project 1 felt that their project is very helpful in that members buy locally. She also thought that disabled kids get life skills from their day-care centre and therefore this project can be said to be very helpful. Four project members regard their projects to be helpful. Committee members 2,3,4 and 5 felt that buying locally saves to the customers. Committee member 6 regards her project as neutral because of the very little produce due to lack of water in the gardening project. None of the committee members felt their projects were unhelpful or very unhelpful.

Two community members believed that the projects are very helpful. Community member 3 is of the opinion that buying uniforms and garments locally and at a very short time makes the project very helpful to the community. Community member 5 also believes that bread supply to the local schools as well as the community is the reason the project is very helpful. Three community members believed the projects are helpful to the community. Community member 1 thinks that the produce from the project is sold and therefore benefiting the community. This to him makes the project helpful. Community member 2 thinks the project is helpful in that it alleviates poverty to the consumer. Community member 4 thought that the projects is helpful in that customers buy locally. The respondent went on to show the researcher 24 chickens that she bought from the project.

Whilst none of the respondents regarded the projects as neutral or very unhelpful community member 6 thought that the project was unhelpful. He blamed nepotism and fraud on the part of the committee member. He thought that if there was anything helpful it was the committee member

who initiated the project who was benefiting since she was using ignorant and unsuspecting members for her selfish ends. This finding is in line with Hadley and Hatch (1981:158) that local and decentralised accountability stand the risk of being abused or subverted. The writer suggests that where the provision of services was devolved to organisation not directly accountable to it, government would still have a duty to police whatever alternative form of accountability decided upon.

#### **4.3.9. Time-span of the projects**

Four social workers believe that the projects will go on for a lengthy period. Social worker 1 attributed this to the fact that the project was recognised and funded continuously by the government. This finding is incompatible with Gray's (1998:71) assertion that imparting knowledge and skills results in project participants self-sufficient and capable of independent action. To social workers 2 and 3 market identification and availability ensures that the projects will go on for a lengthy period. Social worker 4 believes that the fact that the project is able to generate income makes it possible for it to go on for a lengthy period.

However none of social workers interviewed thought that the projects would go on for a short period. Neither thought that the projects would soon end, was ending nor had ended. Two social workers though, 5 and 6 had their own ideas. Social worker 5 blamed delays in payment and the fact that the baking project was becoming saturated and this could affect the time-span of the project. Social worker 6 thought that unavailability of water in a garden project could affect the time-span of the project.

All six committee members thought that their project would go on for a lengthy period. Committee

member 1 believed their project members were determined, organised and committed and this was the reasons the project would go on for a lengthy period. Also committee member 2 believed that their members were determined. Committee member 3 believed their recruitment strategy for young members ensures a lasting effect for the project. Committee member 4 believed that their project was independent and therefore would go on for a lengthy period.

Committee members 5 and 6 believed that they were not competing with any other projects involved in the same activity. This was in contrast with social worker 5 who thought the baking project was becoming saturated. Unavailability of water did not deter committee member 6 that the project would go on for a lengthy period.

Out of the six community members interviewed, four community members thought that the projects would go on for a lengthy period. All but one of the reasons cited are incompatible with Gray's (1998:56) assertion that self-sustaining projects are those owned by the community, income-generating, managed by trained personnel, organised and recognised by other community organisations. Community member 1 thought that it was because they were organised that their project would go on for a lengthy period. Community member 2 thought the fact that their gardening project was moved next to the river ensured that the project would go on for a lengthy period.

Community member 3 thought that the project would go on for a lengthy period because there was unity and cooperation amongst project members. Community member 4 believed that the project would go on for a lengthy period provided members continued to perform as they were doing.

Committee member 6 thought that the project was ending. He cited conflict among the members

as the reason for this. To him old members who joined previously were no longer participating.

Again he believed that the only member was using new people who have just joined merely for the purpose of accessing government funds for selfish reasons.

Community member 5 was concerned that the only available market for the baking project was the schools. She blamed the irregular payment by the department of education. She believed that this market was not reliable in that no one knows when the policy of the government would change. Whilst the focus of the government is on nutrition, once the focus changed to other priorities the market would be difficult to find.

#### **4.4 Section C. Sustainability as a concept**

According to Hope Sr (1996:193) sustainability is the latest concept to have emerged in the literature and thinking on community development policy. Defining and translating this concept into Xhosa language was found to be difficult by the researcher. It only made sense to the interviewees when it was described as a requirement to enable the project to remain for a long time.

When social workers were interviewed, training was mentioned four times as a requirement for sustainability. Other requirements that social workers believed were important were organised membership, recognition by other community organisations, market identification as well as commitment, each mentioned two times. Ownership of the project, income-generation, self-sufficiency and co-operation were each mentioned once as an element of sustainability in poverty alleviating projects.

Committee members shared the same views on sustainability. Training and co-operation were regarded as the key elements of sustainability, each mentioned four times. The second on the list were trust, honesty among members as well as income-generation of the project. These were mentioned two each as important elements of sustainability. One member also believed that ownership of the project by members was an important factor in sustainability, mentioned once. Other requirements mentioned once were as follows;

- organised membership
- dedication and commitment
- assuming responsibility
- experience
- expert advice
- strong but caring leaders
- banking and
- avoiding conflict

Community members believed that income-generation is the most important factor in determining sustainability of poverty alleviating project. This was mentioned four times. Also ownership of the project is the second most important element-mentioned three times, followed by training, two times. Others regarded as elements of sustainability mentioned once each were as follows;

- organised members
- discipline on the part of members
- honesty
- co-operation
- avoiding conflict

- drawn up constitution that governs membership
- banking
- market identification
- monitoring and
- feasibility study

Participation was also mentioned once as an important element of sustainability. This finding is shared by de Graaf (1980:80) who believed that participation in community development is a crucial ingredient that explains the difference between many failed programmes and a few successful ones. To this author, when people participate, they acquire practice and improve a number of social and organisational skills that have a spill-over effect into other areas beneficial to the participants.

Increased capital funding from government was mentioned once as a requirement for sustainability. Kamara and Kargbo (1999:108-121) found this paradoxical. In their study they found it incompatible that the means to encourage sustainability (external funding) indirectly gives people the impression that development is not possible except with external funding. They also found it paradoxical that in attempting to consolidate people's attempt to break from apathy by encouraging them to do something about their situation through external funding, they were inadvertently being made to be more dependent on such funding.

#### **4.5 Sustainability of the poverty alleviating projects**

With regard to the rate of sustainability of the projects the respondents were involved in, three

social workers believed that it was likely: According to social worker 1 the fact that project members were capable of independent action made it likely that the project was sustained. Social worker 2 attributes this to the market that is available and social worker 4 attributed it to the income-generation of the project.

One social worker, 3 thought that the rate of sustainability in her project was highly likely. This she attributed to the different ranges of their products. The fact that they were selling to the schools, uniforms to different churches with different uniforms, traditional wear and beadwork made their market diversified and developed. No social worker felt the rate of sustainability was unlikely or highly unlikely. Two social workers, 5 and 6 believed that the rate of sustainability in their projects was neutral. Social worker 5 believed not enough capital was injected on the project and social worker 6 attributed the neutrality rate to the fact that project members had not undergone any training on project management.

Five committee members believed their projects' rate of sustainability was likely. They thought their projects were run on business principles and the projects infact generate income. They also believed that they had available market in the local community. In particular committee member 6 felt the project members were organised, committed and willing to take responsibility. Community members 4 felt that buying on credit and late payment affected the projects rate sustainability. No community members felt that the rate of sustainability was neutral, unlikely or highly unlikely.

Three community members, 2,3, and 5 felt that their projects' rate sustainability was likely. Community member 2 attributed this to the projects generation of income, and 3 felt that members were experienced in running the projects and community member 5 felt market had been extended to the

larger community citing the schools and the community that consumes bread. Planning was the reasons cited by member 1 for rating sustainability highly.

Community member 6 felt that the rate of sustainability was highly unlikely. He believed that there was no participation by members as well as the community since this was a one person-project. Burkey's (1993:210) assertion of a people first development is based on his experience that people may give priority to increasing their participation in their environment, to making improvement in their health, welfare and social security and to reducing wasteful social expenditures. The concern by community member 6 is in direct contrast to the committee member's view in the same project who said that members were organised, committed responsible. Community member 4 was however non-committal stating that she was not directly involved in the project.

#### **4.6 Social workers on factors promoting sustainability.**

Training, recording and control of finances were grouped together as factors promoting sustainability of poverty alleviating projects. These were mentioned six times by social workers. Courage, determination and commitment were also described as factors promoting sustainability and were mentioned four times. Market identification was mentioned three times as an important element of sustainability. Co-operation, unity, transparency trust and responsibility were each mentioned two times as important for sustainability.

Income-generation, financial assistance, community initiative goal orientation and problem solving were each mentioned once as a factor in promoting sustainability. Community initiative as a factor in promoting sustainability is confirmed by Kamara and Kargbo (1999:108-121) who state that sustainability involves an inherent or local capacity to initiate, manage and pay for change. The writers

believed that when this local capacity is deficient it can be enhanced or developed through appropriate programmes which are tailored to the specific need in a given situation. All these factors, social worker believed, have a contributory factor in promoting sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.

#### **4.7 Committee members on factors promoting sustainability**

Community members believed that training is the most important element of sustainability, mentioned five times. This confirms Gray's (1998:56) assertion that self-sustainability projects are managed by trained personnel. Capital injection is the second most important elements, mentioned four times. Co-operation was mentioned three times as a factor in promoting sustainability. Good financial management and supervision by social workers management and supervision by social workers were mentioned two times each by the committee members as promoting sustainability. The social workers role in supervision is confirmed by Swanepoel (1988:57) who believed that it is varied, complex and delicate in the sense that a lot must be accomplished without using a hands-on approach. To this writer, the social worker's role requires more than only professional skills but a specific attitude and well-developed psycho-social skills.

The committee members also mentioned conflict resolution skills, commitment, participation and income-generation as well as available facilities and equipment as contributing towards sustainability. These were mentioned once each. In their comments committee member regarded all these factors as important elements of sustainability in poverty alleviation.

#### **4.8 Community members on factors promoting sustainability.**

Again community members regard training as the key element of sustainability. This was mentioned four times. Also, organised project members unity and co-operation, market identification as well as dedication or commitment were mentioned two times each as responsible for sustainability in poverty alleviating projects. Other factors mentioned once each, were proper financial management, diligence conflict resolution, availability of facilities to start-up and monitoring of progress in the project. In their paper discussing two initiatives for sustainable community development in Makeni, Sierra Leone, Kamara and Kargbo (1999:119) concluded that while a favourable national economy would no doubt enhance community efforts, sustainability could be achieved only with improved capacity at the community and individual level. This confirms the importance of training for sustainability at local level.

#### **4.9 Social workers on factors undermining sustainability**

Social workers blame lack of capital as the main factor that undermines sustainability of poverty alleviating projects. This was mentioned four times. Other factors responsible for lack of sustainability were lack of commitment on part of project members, conflict and lack of training. These were each mentioned three times. Corruption, low morale, culture and environment, poor management and lack of specialisation by social workers were each mentioned once, as factors undermining sustainability. An inclination towards specialisation as a form of service delivery is supported by Goldberg and Warburton (1979:21). To these authors, based on their two baseline studies on consumers and social worker attitudes, social worker experienced pressures which were related to their

caseloads. This pointed towards a need for more clearly defined aims of social work, a more explicit understanding of these by client and worker, a regular systems for reviewing progress and re-adjusting, a broader perspective and more use of outside resources which might provide relief to the social workers and a better services for the client.

This is supported by Pinker (1990:7) who quoted Olive Stevenson in her study that “The profession (of social work) runs the risk of losing credibility because of a reluctance to decide what is not social work”.

Social worker commented on the factors mentioned here above as key reasons that undermined sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.

#### **4.10 Committee members on factors undermine sustainability.**

Committee members believed that lack of training is the factor that undermines sustainability of projects. This was mentioned four times. This is followed by conflict and lack of trust as well as dishonesty— mentioned three times each. They also blame misuse of project funds and lack of co-operation, mentioned two times each, as having a factor in undermining sustainability. Absence of market, unavailability of profit or income, laziness and disorganised members were each mentioned once as factors undermining sustainability.

#### **4.11 Community members on factors undermining sustainability**

To community members, lack of co-operation by project and community members undermine

sustainability. This factor was mentioned three times. Misappropriation of funds, conflict and laziness-mentioned two times each, contribute towards undermining sustainability.

Power-mongering, irresponsibility, lack of trust, failure to maintain capital. Lack of business and project management skills, unavailability of market, lack of commitment and carelessness were each cited once as factors in undermining sustainability.

#### **4.12 Section D. Project history.**

As mentioned earlier on project 6 was established in 1992, project 4 in 1994, project 1 in 1995. Two projects, 3 and 5 were started in 1998 and project 2 in the year 2000.

All the projects were started at community level. In other words they were initiated by the community members at local level. Development at local level is supported by Burkey (1993) in the introduction of his book "People First a Guide to Self-Reliant Participatory Rural Development". His concern that too many development professionals believe that rural development will be achieved through efforts of governments and development agencies, is based on the fact that professionals do not reflect on the possibility that sustainable rural development will only be achieved thorough the efforts of the rural people themselves working for the benefit of themselves, their families and their communities.

All the projects were initiated by women. This finding confirms Burkey's (1993:66) assertion that development programmes must recognise that women's needs and problems are intergral part of rural poverty. To this writer, there is no area of rural life in which women do not constitute a

major position of not only the problem but also the solution. Any rural development therefore, the writer states, that does not place emphasis on women, has not comprehended rural realities.

In all the projects the process of development was driven by women community members. In all the projects membership seems to have started with relatively fewer at the initial stages. As the projects progressed membership increased and then decreased remarkably. Funding by the government, in all the projects came later. With their meagre contributions, all project members started projects on their own.

Despite the fact that respondents agreed that organised membership was the key to the success of the projects, no respondent had a record of membership in their projects. Again different numbers in membership were given by the social workers, the committee members and the community members.

#### **4.13 Community development process**

##### **4.13.1 Involvement and participation of the community.**

As table 4.6 shows community development process has been minimal in the six projects. On the part of involvement and participation of the community, only one project, 1 involves the community in their development process. Project 1 holds annual meetings every third day of December. In project 2 only one meeting was convened.

According to the respondent, this was when they invited the headman and the community to request land to start a project.

Project 3 also convened one meeting since their establishment only for the purpose of recruiting new members. The same thing applied to projects 4, 5 and 6. This finding is in contrast with Lombard's (1991:246) warning that the action committee of a development project should not make decisions on its own but should always keep in touch with the community. According to her the easiest way of doing this is by calling regular meetings between the committees and the community.

**Table 4.6 : Community development process**

## PROJECTS

STEPS TAKEN TO:	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.1 Ensure involvement and participation of the community	Convening annual meeting every 3rd days of December	One meeting was convened with the Headman and Community	Meeting convened once with the community to recruit members	One meeting convened to encourage members to join	One meeting announcing establishment of Project	One meeting when the idea was mooted.
2.2 Empower project members	Attending workshops on management. Expert advise from agricultural officers	One member attended workshop on vegetable gardening skills	No particular training	Two members trained in poultry farming	Members trained in baking, juice making and peanut butter making	Acquired training on business management.
2.3 Ensure self-sufficiency of project members	Conducting regular meetings	Conducting regular meetings	Conducting regular meetings. Making own decisions, planning and implementation of own decision	3 members trained in project management business management poultry farming	Drawing up own business plan. Do own fundraising. Identification of market	Encouraging independent action
2.4 Encourage management of project by project members	Attend workshops on skills development and leadership skills	No training acquired on project management	No training acquired training in project management.	Acquired training in project management	No training in project management	No training in Project Management.

N = 6

#### **4.13.2 Empowering project members**

In all the projects the process of empowerment was based on the particular activities in the project. One project member in project 1 is reported to have attended workshops on project management. In project 2 one attended workshops on vegetable gardening skills. With project 4, members were trained in poultry farming and members in project 5 acquired training in baking, juice making and peanut butter making whilst a member in project 6 was trained on business management. As mentioned earlier the empowerment of the project members is not based on life skills. This finding is in contrast with Potgieter's (1998:216) description of empowerment. To this writer empowerment is a process where the helper gives a climate, relationship, resources and procedures to develop life skills, which the client system utilises in order to take power. The author goes on to cite some of the life skills as parenting skills, an assertiveness training, decision-making, problem-solving, communication and conflict resolution.

#### **4.13.3 Self sufficiency of project members.**

In all the projects there was no training programme developed to enhance self-sufficiency of project members, except for conducting meetings in projects 1,2 and 3. Respondents in project four, a committee member attained training in business management and poultry farming. Respondent in project 5 claimed that for self-sufficiency they were able to draw up their own business plan and as well as own fundraising. Respondent in project 6 believed they were capable of independent action. There was however no life-skill-training programme designed for assertion.

#### **4.13.4 Management of project members.**

No training was acquired for project management in project 2, 3, 5, and 6. Project 4 members had acquired training in project management and one member in project 1 attended workshops on skills development and leadership skills. This finding suggested a need for developing a training programme on life skills as asserted by Potgieter (1998:217). According to the author social workers, regarded as helpers should create a climate that is conducive to the development of life skills. These skills should be appropriate both to the people's developmental tasks and to any special problems, challenges and transitions they may face.

#### **4.14 Section D : Role of social workers in promoting sustainability alleviating projects.**

##### **4.14.1 Encouraging participation of project members.**

All respondents agree that this was the role of the social worker

##### **4.14.2 Empowering members through training.**

All respondents in the six projects confirmed this as the role of the social worker. This is confirmed by Potgieter (1998:216) who regards the social worker as the "helper".

#### **4.14.3 Imparting knowledge and skill to project members.**

All respondents believe that the role of social worker is to impart knowledge and skill to the project members. This finding confirms Gray's (1987:71) assertion that the purpose of community development workers is to work themselves out of the programme. This can be achieved through imparting their knowledge and skill so that the community participants become self-sufficient and capable of independent action.

#### **4.14.4. Encouraging members to assume ownership of projects.**

All the respondents agree that this is the role of social worker. Gray (1998:56) agrees with this finding.

#### **4.14.5 Ensuring decision-making by project members.**

Again all the respondents confirmed this role as that of the social worker. Potgieter (1998:219) concurs with this finding and believes that decision-making can be taught separately to train client systems to evaluate various alternatives and make a wise choice between them.

#### **4.1.4.6 Ensuring income-generation of poverty alleviating projects.**

Respondents confirmed this as the role of the social worker. According to Gray (1998:56) self sustaining projects are those generating income.

#### **4.14.7 Ensuring that members assume overall responsibility of the projects.**

All respondents agreed that the role of the social worker is to encourage project members to assume overall responsibility of their projects. De Graaf (1986 :80) concurs with this finding that the more the community development programmes reflects the people's choice the less it depends on outside support.

#### **4.14.8 Making sure that members are capable of independent action.**

All the respondents concurred that this is the role of the social worker. This is again in line with Gray's (1998:71) assertion that capability of independent action is achieved through the social worker's imparting of knowledge to the project members.

#### **4.14.9 Comment on the social worker's role mentioned in question in 4.14**

All respondents agreed that the roles mentioned in question 4.14 promote sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.

### **5. Conclusion**

Six social workers, six committee members in each project and six community members were interviewed. From the findings discussed in Section A, social workers interviewed did not give clear-cut description of roles in the projects. Their roles range from monitoring, supervision and advising to determining training needs and sometimes assisting in all project activities.

This is not surprising as de Beer and Swanepoel (1998:56) alluded to the fact that the role of the community worker in project management has not received much attention in the literature.

All committee members interviewed were apparently the ones that initiated the projects and were placed in leadership roles. Their roles were ranging from convening and chairing meetings. Whilst they were responsible for executive committee function, they were also participating in the project activities.

No particular role was played by community members except for assisting and advising whenever called upon to do so.

In Section B, all the six projects were poverty alleviating and therefore income-generating. As is the requirement for government funded projects the projects had constitutions. The project activities included baking, poultry, sewing and some, multi-purpose. All the projects received funds from the government. Again all the projects were regarded as functioning.

Whilst most social workers believed that the projects were successful, most committee members also felt the same. Also most community members felt that the projects were successful. None of the respondents felt that the projects were very successful. The purchasing power from the projects however is dependent to a large extent on pensioners, local schools and that again depends on the government for payment. The delayed tendency of the departments to pay seems to have negatively affected the success of the projects. Most social

workers believed that poverty alleviating projects are helpful and they base this on the fact that community people buy locally instead of going to town. The same can be said about committee members most of which believed projects are helpful. The same sentiments were shared by most community members 2 of which thought the projects were very helpful.

In Section C Social workers and committee members believe that training is the key requirement for sustainability. However community members feel income-generation is the key to sustainability.

In Section D all respondents believe that the role of social workers in community development is the key to the sustainability of poverty alleviating projects. The next chapter will focus on conclusion and recommendations based on the findings.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **5.1 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The primary objective of this research study was to gain insight on what role-players in community development regard as sustainability. Role-players in this context would include social workers, members involved in poverty alleviating projects as well as local people associated with these projects.

Sustainability is a relatively new concept and there is little that has been written about the subject both in community work and community development. It would be interesting to know how role-players cope in meeting this challenge. More importantly, it would be quite significant to see how social workers, already dealing with a broad span of social work activities, rise to the new challenge of promoting sustainability in poverty alleviation.

#### **5.1.1 Recommendations on section A. Respondents roles.**

It is recommended that roles in community development be clearly spelt out to obviate any ambiguity on the part of role-players. More often than not it is difficult to separate the committee members from target groups in poverty alleviating projects. In some instances it is even more difficult to differentiate between the target groups and the community. In poverty alleviating projects, the community refers to the local people who must be consulted on a regular basis by way of meetings. It is to the community that the committee members must report the progress of the projects. Again it is with the community that decisions must

be made on how best to improve on the projects. Also it must be the community that gives the mandate to carry out certain activities to improve the quality of life of the local people.

It is however obvious that not all community members can participate directly in poverty alleviating projects. There are many reasons to this but, the most obvious one is that it is not always possible. It is because of this reasons that the record of the number of participants or target groups in each project, that is, those that are responsible for carrying out certain activities like sewing, baking, candle-making bricklaying etc. must be kept. This record is important not only for carrying out certain functions but also to measure the extent to which the projects cover the broad spectrum of participants in a particular area.

Committee members in poverty alleviating projects are that small selected group whose tasks include directing the activities of the project. Whilst these people are selected by the community most of them are endowed with certain qualities like leadership and decision making and are representative of the local people. More often than not committee members do not get involved in the actual activities of the projects but make decisions for both the participants and the larger community. Their responsibilities involve convening and chairing meetings, writing minutes, and appending signature when depositing and withdrawing projects finds. Basically committee members guide the processes in the projects.

The role of the social worker in poverty alleviating project should be explicit. It is imperative that community and committee members should know what to expect from the social worker so that they know when to call upon him or her for help. Also the social worker should not be ambiguous. The more clearer the social worker is about his or her role the more confident she or he becomes and the more effective he or she is in poverty alleviation.

The functions of the different role-players therefore must be clear-cut. There should be no blurring of functions. Specialisation by social workers needs to be considered by the government authorities. This is important to ensure responsibility and accountability.

#### **5.1.2 Recommendation on section B. Description of projects.**

In poverty alleviating projects, the government is the main source of funding. The main concern however is the failure of the department of Welfare to specify in concise terms what they mean about poverty alleviation. On many occasions large sums of money are given to many small projects spread over large areas with nothing in return to show cost effectiveness. The contribution that these small projects make towards poverty alleviation is very minimal and insignificant. Of great concern is the fact that there is no baseline data or indicators to measure the success of these projects.

The government needs to develop a policy on poverty eradication, clearly specify its intentions. This will result in the establishment of a cadres in community development trained to assist in the conscientising the community on the need to be involved in community development. Community development workers will assist communities in identifying their needs and problems as well as making decisions on how to meet their needs and overcome their problems through many development processes.

#### **5.1.3 Recommendation on section C. Sustainability.**

It was mentioned earlier on that sustainability in community development is a relatively new

concept. What is clear however is that sustainability is not a fad whose time shall soon pass as have others preceeding it (Hope Sr 1996": 193) . Conceptualising sustainability in the context of community development at the moment is such a tall order not only for community members but also for the powers that be in government. Because it is a new phenomenon, it is still opportune for the role-players in community development to find common ground in defining this concept. It is apparent that sooner later role-players in community development will find it difficult to dispense with sustainability as a concept. It is recommended therefore that the government, social workers and those involved in community development and poverty alleviation, find ways and means to develop a common understanding of the concept and inculcate it in everything they do towards poverty alleviation. This will ensure that projects funded by government not only function in so far as they receive funding but extend beyond and are capable of independent action.

#### **5.1.4 Recommendations of section D. : The role of Social Worker**

The span of social work is so broad, vast and vague that it is difficult to say what it is that is not social work. Methods of social work are no longer described in terms of casework, groupwork and community work only. The social worker is expected to be knowledgeable about everything. It is not surprising therefore that community development and poverty alleviation are regarded by many as the responsibility of social workers since many problems of social injustice land at the doorstep of the department of Welfare.

This however does not remove the need to operationally describe tasks to be performed and skills needed (Goldberg and Warburton 1979:6). Whilst the methods of social work have

always been limited to casework, groupwork and community work, social workers can no longer enjoy this luxury and need to engage themselves in community development.

It is recommended though that the role of social workers as community development workers be clearly explicit about the problems they are trying to tackle with, or on behalf of their clients, the specific goals they set themselves and the expertise and resources to attain these objectives (Goldberg and Warburton 1979<sup>6</sup>).

Again it is recommended that specialisation in social work be considered. This however must be based on a planned division of labour for the efficient use of scarce resources and facilities. At government level this would mean efficient use of vehicles, equitable distribution of poverty alleviating projects and effective supervision, monitoring and evaluation.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The government must develop a policy on poverty alleviation and community development. This policy must state in detail what the government seeks to achieve by poverty alleviation and community development. One of the purposes should be sustainability of poverty alleviating projects and programmes and mechanism built-in to achieve this.

The government then needs to develop a “cadreship” of community development workers drawn from the social work profession. Social workers, because of their position in the communities and the egalitarian nature of their profession, are ideally placed to pursue the process of community development. This suggests a need for specialisation in community

development. This can be achieved by subjecting this group in intensive training on community development.

Social workers turned community development workers must have a profile of their communities. The profile must have a baseline data of the demographic in each community. The Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is the latest and workable tool that is being used to draw a community profile. This is recommended as a useful method to be used by social workers as it has built-in mechanisms for participation and built-in guarantees for sustainability.

Depending on the practice situation social workers as community development workers must then engage the target groups in the recognised phases of community development namely the situation analysis or making the first contact, identification of needs and problems, representation by the community, planning, implementation and evaluation.

As mentioned earlier on, the process of community development is endless. The community development worker therefore must start all over again from the first phase and complete the cycle until he or she has made sure that the target group is capable of independent action and the process is replicable. It is at this stage that social workers as community development workers can decide whether or not sustainability of poverty alleviating projects has been achieved.

### **5.3. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Sustainability in poverty alleviation is a relatively new concept. It is hoped that this research study will stimulate other researchers to further probe into the concept of sustainability in poverty alleviation. It is extremely necessary that sustainability be inculcated in any project that is alleviating poverty.

Further research should be done on sustainability of poverty alleviating projects.

Again future research should include more poverty alleviating projects in the province. In-depth interviews will provide more detailed information on what the government, the project members and the social workers regard as sustainability. A bigger sample of social workers, committee members, participants as well as the community would allow for more representative findings.

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# APPENDIX 1

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE OF ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKER IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY OF POVERTY ALLEVIATING PROJECTS.

### SECTION A

1. DATE
2. NAME
3. PROJECT
4. AREA
5. POSITION IN THE PROJECT

Community Member	Social worker	Committee Member
------------------	---------------	------------------

6. BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE IN THE PROJECT

.....

.....

.....

.....

### SECTION B PROJECT

1. DESCRIBE THE PROJECT YOU ARE INVOLVED IN (PROVIDE CONSTITUTION, DOCUMENTATION OR BROCHURE IF AVAILABLE).

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE PROJECT ?

- 2.1 Income generating
- 2.2 Empowerment project
- 2.3 Social club
- 2.4 Other (describe)

3. WHEN DID IT COMMENCE ?

4. **WHO INITIATED THE PROJECT?**

5. **WHO FUNDED THE PROJECT?**

6. **IS THE PROJECT STILL FUNCTIONING**

YES	NO	OTHER
-----	----	-------

7. **RATE THE PROJECT ON THE FOLLOWING SCALES**

7.1 Very successful

7.2. Successful

7.3. Neutral

7.4 Unsuccessful

7.5 Very unsuccessful

7.6 Other describe .....

8. **COMMENT ON YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 7**

9. **RATE THE PROJECT ON THE FOLLOWING SCALES**

9.1 Very helpful

9.2 Helpful

9.3 Neutral

9.4 Very unhelpful

9.5 Other describe .....

10. **COMMENT ON YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 9**

11. **RATE THE PROJECT ON THE FOLLOWING SCALES**

11.1 Will go on for a lengthy period

11.2 Will go on for a short period

11.3 Will soon end

11.4 is ending

11.5 Has ended

11.6 Other describe .....

**12. COMMENT ON YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 11.**

.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION C**

**SUSTAINABILITY OF POVERTY ALLEVIATING PROJECTS**

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT : According to Mel Gray Project are said to be sustainable if they are.

- (a) Owned by the community
- (b) Income-generating
- © Managed by trained personnel
- (d) Organised
- (e) Recognised by other community organisations

**1. WHAT DOES SUSTAINABILITY MEAN TO YOU**

.....  
.....  
.....

**2. HOW DO YOU RATE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROJECT YOU ARE INVOLVED IN? ie on the following scale**

- 2.1 Highly likely
- 2.2 Likely
- 2.3 Neutral
- 2.4 Unliked
- 2.5 Highly unliked
- 2.6 Other, describe.....

3. PLEASE COMMENT ON YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 2

.....  
.....  
.....

4. WHAT FACTORS DO YOU BELIEVE PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY OF POVERTY ALLEVIATING PROJECTS ?

.....  
.....  
.....

5. EXPAND ON YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 4

.....  
.....  
.....

6. WHAT FACTORS DO YOU BELIEVE UNDERMINE SUSTAINABILITY OF POVERTY ALLEVIATING PROJECTS?

.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION D COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND PRINCIPLES**

1. BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE HISTORY OF THIS PROJECT IN RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1.1 WHEN WAS IT STARTED ?

1.2 HOW WAS IT STARTED ?

.....  
.....  
.....

1.3 WHO DROVE THE PROCESS ?

1.4 WHO WAS INVOLVED AT EACH STAGE ?

1.5 HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE INVOLVE AT EACH STAGE ?

1.6 WHAT HAPPENED IN THIS PROJECT ie. FROM THE BEGINNING UP TO TODAY ?

.....  
.....  
.....

1.7 HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT AT THIS STAGE ?

2. DID ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCUR IN THIS PROJECT

2.1 Steps taken to ensure involvement and participation of the community ?

YES	NO	OTHER
-----	----	-------

Expand .....

.....

.....

2.2 Steps taken to empower the community ?

YES	NO	OTHER
-----	----	-------

Expand on your answer to 2.2 .....

.....

.....

2.3 Step taken to ensure self-sufficiency of project members .

YES	NO	OTHER
-----	----	-------

Expand.....  
 .....  
 .....

2.4 Steps taken to encourage management of the project by the project members.

YES	NO	OTHER
-----	----	-------

Expand .....

**3. DO YOU THINK ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ROLES OF THE SOCIAL WORKER ARE RELEVANT FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF POVERTY ALLEVIATING PROJECTS?**

Role 3.1	Encouraging participation of project members	Yes	No	Other
3.2	Empowering project members through training	Yes	No	Other
3.3	Imparting knowledge and skill to project members	Yes	No	Other
3.4	Encouraging members to assume ownership of the project	Yes	No	Other
3.5	Ensuring decision-making by project members	Yes	No	Other
3.6	Ensuring income-generation of poverty alleviation projects	Yes	No	Other
3.7	Ensuring that members assume overall responsibility of the project	Yes	No	Other
3.8	Making sure that members are capable of independent action	Yes	No	Other

**4. COMMENT ON YOUR ANSWER TO QUESTION 3**

.....  
 .....  
 .....

