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**INFORMAL TRADING IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: AN  
EXAMINATION OF THE EXPERIENCES OF BLACK AFRICAN  
WOMEN STREET TRADERS IN DURBAN.**

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**JUNE 1, 2020**

## DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this dissertation on: *Informal trading in the post-apartheid South Africa: The Examination of the Experiences of Black African Women Street Traders in Durban* is my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at any other University. All sources and quotes cited have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

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## DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR

I supervised this MA thesis to satisfaction and is submitted with my approval.

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June 2020

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my dearest daughter, Amile, you have no idea how much you always push me to do and be my best. Thank you for your warm hugs and wet kisses, you are my pride and joy, my best gift. To my beloved mother, Marjorie Jabulisile Joyce, whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity ring in my ears. You have continually provided your moral, spiritual, emotional, and financial support. You have cheered me on when I was discouraged. I extend my gratitude for all the sacrifices you made for your children to benefit from the opportunities you never had. My brothers, Thando and Fezile, who have never left my side. Thank you for your support and counsel.

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## ABSTRACT

Gender rhetoric has increasingly gained momentum in the post-apartheid era. The increase of engagement in gender related challenges clearly presents many opportunities to debate and confront various experiences surrounding the subject. In understanding that eThekweni Municipality was the first metropolitan City to recognise and implement informal trading sector policies as part of the economy in the year 2000, this research study used gender perspectives to delve into the informal sector and explore the experiences and challenges of black African women street traders in the City of Durban in the post-apartheid era. The existence of unequal power relations in society and economy have been entrenched throughout history with institutions such as the family, organisations and governments playing a crucial role in sustaining the cause not only in South Africa but also in Africa and across the world. These unequal power relations have always favoured and supported males more than females, advancing patriarchy and blocking the capacity of women to participate in social and economic development. As a feminist-based research, the study employed a qualitative research design and method. One on one interview was used to collect data from 15 black African women street traders in Durban. Using qualitative primary data analysis, this research study found that challenges affecting women street traders are influenced by various factors such as poverty, lack of formal education, poor policy implementation by the Municipality, the capital system of formalising the informal sector, social norms of patriarchy and the historical systems of apartheid. Poverty remains an epidemic issue in South Africa. The majority of the black African communities are poor and underprivileged. The research recommends practical measures of implementing policy measures supporting women streets traders and protect them from harsh economic and social conditions that further disadvantage them.

**Key words:** Poverty, informal trading, street trading, post-apartheid, black African women.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>BEEs</b>	Business Enterprise Entrepreneur Support
<b>BSU</b>	Business Support Unit
<b>CBD</b>	Central Business District
<b>DUT</b>	Durban University of Technology
<b>DVD</b>	Digital Versatile Disk
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GNP</b>	Gross National Product
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>ITMB</b>	Informal Traders Management Board
<b>KZN</b>	KwaZulu-Natal
<b>LED</b>	Local Economic Development
<b>MDG</b>	The Millennium Development Goals
<b>MFI</b>	Monetary Financial Institution
<b>NASVI</b>	National Association of Street Vendors of India
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>SDKP</b>	Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform
<b>SEWA</b>	Self Employed Women's Association
<b>SEWU</b>	Self-Help Women's Union
<b>SMMEs</b>	Small, Medium and Micro Sized Enterprises
<b>UKZN</b>	University of KwaZulu-Natal
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>ZCIEA</b>	The Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Association

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## **CHAPTER 1: CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Informal trading refers to an economic activity by individuals or groups involving the sale of goods and facilities, within private or public places, and are generally unconventional for the exercise of such activity (Dobson, 2002). Street trading, part of informal trading, has become a supporting hub for most disadvantaged and unemployed people in post-apartheid South Africa, with black Africans the majority (Siqwana-Ndulo, 2013). A source of informal employment and income generating, street trading is increasing in South African cities, including Durban. In South Africa, democracy promised people freedom from all oppressive systems with employment opportunities (Neves et al., 2011); unemployment rates are increasing, with underdevelopment and poverty affecting mostly disadvantaged black Africans. In Africa and globally, women often bear the brunt of poverty in impoverished households (Mkhize, 2012; Chant, 2007). Literature confirms that women-headed households are associated with high levels of poverty (Mkhize and Cele, 2017; Mkhize, 2012; Zondi, 2012; Kehler, 2001; Mikell, 1997). Poverty forces many poor women, as backbones of most African families, to migrate to the cities to seek a better life for their families and children by selling in streets (Siqwana-Ndulo, 2013). Women trading in the streets is not only the case in South Africa but other African countries like Zimbabwe, Kenya, Tanzania, and some Asian countries like India (Mramba, 2015).

Most black African women in South Africa turn to street trading due to poor educational backgrounds and lack of skills for formal employment (Mwasinga, 2013). Gamieldien and Van Niekerk (2017) argued that most street traders are not in this informal employment by choice but because of desperation and a need for survival. Another argument is that street trading makes women vulnerable to diverse forms of crimes such as robbery and violence (Mkhize et al., 2013). South Africa has unprecedented levels of violence in the streets, including violence against women such as sexual assaults and murder (Sibanda-Moyo et al., 2017). There is a concern about women trading in the streets as their business is informal, and lack support (Sibanda-Moyo et al., 2017; WIEGO, 2012). It was imperative to have the study focusing on the experiences of women trading in the streets of big cities such as Durban. This backdrop, grounded on feminist theoretical thinking, the qualitative research study examined the experiences of black African women

street traders in Durban, South Africa. Using purposive and snowballing sampling techniques, I interviewed a total of 15 black African women from Durban Station, Mansel Road, Durban University of Technology (DUT) and Beach Front<sup>1</sup> area. An interview schedule with a list of semi-structured questions was presented as a form of enquiry. An informed consent form was presented to the participant, it was also read and clarified by the researcher. The participants could ask questions for clarity before consenting or not consenting<sup>2</sup>. The questions asked wanted to know and understand street trading as an informal business, the everyday running of it, and the overall experiences and challenges of the women that operate within this sector. One of the many questions I asked was on how and why the women started their businesses as informal traders, of which majority of participants raised how the issue of poverty and lack of formal education are one of the push factors into the informal sector. These highlight the overall experiences of black African women street traders in the post-apartheid era which was the main objective of this research.

Interviews as a data collection tool, in conducting this research, on the experiences of women street traders in Durban were crucial to post-apartheid South Africa's development and possible contributions to the informal sector and the livelihoods of people involved. The research findings are in line with some of the existing studies as they show informal economies are a source of survival for the poor, particularly underprivileged women (Mkhize and Cele, 2017; Sibanda-Moyo et al, 2017; Mwasinga, 2013). The women street traders interviewed for this study were all from poor and rural backgrounds. This research found that poverty and life challenges, including male centred abuse, drove the women interviewed to street trading. In support of these findings, Kehler (2001) noted that most rural women remain the poorest due to extensive poverty experiences and social inequalities enhanced by patriarchy, their life experiences are always different from men. It is important to note, most experiences faced by rural women such as abuse, unemployment and poverty, to a certain extent, are part of the large local and global oppression against women. In the South African context, the black African women interviewed had geographically dispersed backgrounds, they shared the same

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<sup>1</sup> The study aimed to focus on Durban station areas; however, because of snowballing methods, the researcher was also referred to some women trading along Mansel Road, DUT and the Beach Front, another huge tourist orientated street trading harbor.

<sup>2</sup> More on methodology and ethical consideration is covered in Chapter 3 – the Research Methodology Chapter.

experiences, because of their gender, class and racial ethnicity. Women are often confronted with various social challenges that seek to block their capacity to participate in social, political and economic development as compared to men. The World Bank (2006: 4) stipulated that, “economic empowerment is about making markets work for women (at the policy level) and empowering women to compete in markets (at the agency level)”. This means empowerment of women in economic sectors (informal or formal) at a policy level ought to lead to the successful tackling of institutional gender inequality issues. In understanding women street traders’ situations as informed by their lived experiences, this research is crucial in understanding the experiences of black African women in street trading and in engaging redemptive measures to improve their wellbeing, not only in policy and but practice.

This chapter provides the necessary background which is key in understanding the significance of this research study exploring the growth of the informal sector and its impact in the socio-economic development of South Africa. It identifies the dominance and the significance of the role of women in this sector and how they remain marginalised despite their significant contribution and outlining the Constitutional stipulations and the municipal by-laws that support informal trading in South Africa and Durban. The chapter finally highlights the problem statement, key questions and objectives that guided this research study, and end with the thesis structure.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

### **1.2.1 The growth of informal trading in South Africa**

There are various factors that have influenced the growth of informal trading sector in South Africa since the end of apartheid. These factors include poverty, unemployment, retrenchment, and lack of education or relevant skills. Willemse (2011) noted that unemployment in South Africa is one of the major economic challenges that affects a large percentage of the country’s labour force. Sidzane and Maharaj (2013) outlined that high unemployment rates in South Africa has led more people to turn to the informal sector to make a living. Calculation of the actual size of the informal sector in South Africa has been problematic as statistics are not documented on entry of its participants. In 2001, the informal trading sector, was estimated to have about 1.8 million people (Statistics South Africa, 2002), reflecting the high percentage of people who generated

income through this sector. The number increases year by year. Employment in the South African informal economy has shown an increase from 965 000 in 1997 to 1.9 million in 2003 (Mwasinga, 2013: 28). In 2010, it was estimated that approximately 2.2 million people were employed in the informal sector in South Africa (Willemse, 2011). In 2011, South African statistics (Statistics South Africa, 2011: VI) recorded an estimate of about 46,000 people that entered the informal sector in the first quarter of 2011. These numbers reflect the impact that informal trading has on the South African economy with this growth rate in the informal sector meaning there is significant impact towards the socio-economic development of the Country.

### **1.2.2 The Impact of informal trading in Socio-economic development of South Africa**

Research shows that, in many developing countries and throughout most of Africa, informal economy contributes significantly to the provision of employment of the people (Berry, 2009; Willemse, 2011). In comparison with formal retail, informal traders play an important role in distributing cheaper goods to both the rich and poor because of their affordable lower prices (Skinner, 2009). Llanes and Barbour (2007) explained that the informal sector as a key socio-economic phenomenon drives a lot of local economies.

The informal sector economy in Durban contributes to job creation. It was estimated that, “2000 street traders were recorded as involved in the informal sector economy” (eThekweni Unicity Municipality, 2001: 3). According to Sidzatane and Maharaj (2013: 374), “street traders are the most visible segment of the informal economy”. These authors further articulated that in most developing countries street traders make the most of the urban informal economy, which significantly contributes towards their economy (Sidzatane and Maharaj, 2013). In this way, the informal economy provides income for many of the labour force. Scholars such as Skinner (2006) and Willemse (2011) agreed that the incomes received by labourers in the informal sector are low, they do however, significantly contribute towards the growth of the countries’ gross domestic product (GDP). This then means the continual growth of informal sector provides alternative hope not only for the poor or the unemployed but also for the country’s economic growth measures. In understanding that most women participate actively in informal trading in South Africa, it is important to cultivate on their capacity by exploring and documenting

their experiences as part of socially and economically marginalised groups. The women in this study shared how even though they are the majority in this business, they don't feel like they really belong as their cries and complaints are still not attended to as tailor-made provisions haven't been made. Their main concern is on the lack of recognition from relevant sectors for the work that they do as they feel socially and economically excluded. Their concerns are justified as none of these women were granted funding or access to financial assistance to run and grow their businesses, and as a result their businesses struggle

### **1.2.3 Women participation in informal trading in South Africa**

The aspect of women participation in socio-economic growth is not new. Women have always been major participants in the socio-economic sector since time immemorial. This is because the role of women as household keepers in every family, is a socio-economic one. All the women respondents manage households, and while some do it with some assistance, most handle everything on their own. They must head and provide for their households; this they do by taking their children and grandchildren with them to work because there is no one to look after them. They must look after them while they are also busy working for them, the roles of a nurturer and a provider are performed interchangeably. From the time when the concept of family emerged, women have been managers of social and economic growth at household level. Ram and Radhika (2012) explained that women had to be entrepreneurs within their homes from providing a reasonable life for their families to budgeting with limited income resources. The changing role of women as entrepreneurs outside their homes is considerably important, it is also important to pay attention to the impact of this role on the socioeconomic, political and psychological change in the status of women. This is because if women gain economic strength or freedom, they will gain visibility and a voice in their homes, workplaces and communities (Ram and Radhika, 2012). The women participants in this study were given a voice, a chance to express themselves and share their experiences, and although some were reluctant to participate at first, they gained confidence in knowing that their stories will be told in the protection of their names, hence pseudonyms are used throughout this research. This is just one aspect of it, and they hope that maybe it could give them strength and visibility in their workplaces mostly as they feel that this is where they need it most.

Women have a large representation in the informal sector in South Africa and internationally in comparison to their male counterparts (Mwasinga, 2013). The informal sector is the primary source of employment for women in developing countries as most economically active women are participants. Over 70% of women are employed in domestic occupations (Motala, 2002). In this sector, women street traders usually work long hours. They have to discharge household responsibilities after a full day at work which means that they are unable to get sufficient rest and as a result stress levels are high (Mwasinga, 2013). The interviews were held in isiZulu, for ease of navigation they have been translated into English throughout the study. In the process I made sure that the original sense was maintained. Because most respondents, of this research study, were single parents, the pressure they go through to balance their responsibilities was a lot. Ntombi's life seemed to be a comparatively difficult one; she was a 47-year-old participant, raising five dependents alone:

I have been a single parent for many years now, but it doesn't get any easier. I travel to work daily from Kenville and sometimes on weekends depending on the pressure, because if I don't do it then my kids will starve. The oldest one helps me with household duties when she gets back from school, but she's still in school and I can't expect much from her (Ntombi, BF)

Oike, another 64-year-old respondent of this research, also shared her parenthood challenges:

My husband is late, for 20 years now and I have 6 dependents, my eldest son works in Johannesburg but it's a struggle every month to get him to pay for maintenance for his 3 children that I stay with he doesn't help much. I think I have bad luck because all my children are old, but they still live with me because they are struggling. I am getting too old for this job, but I worry about my grandchildren (Oike, DS).

Ntombi and Oike's stories are not foreign in most South Africa's black African communities, where females more than males are heads of single parent led households (Mkhize, 2012). Of the fifteen interviewed participants for this research, only five women were married and 3 were living with their male partners. Many of the impoverished South African black African households are faced with a big problem of absent fathers; and mothers (Mkhize, 2012) are left to take on demanding income generating responsibilities in order to take care of their children and families.

African women turn to the informal trading business due to various reasons, including poverty and lack of skills or education required for formal employment. All participants



joined this business venture because were poorer, who come from different rural areas, now live in and around Durban informal settlements, to the Central Business District (CBD) to look for jobs and earn a decent honest living for themselves. Noku and Sindi were one of the youngest participants in their late 30s, and the only participants who finished matric. At the time of research, Noku was staying with her two children in one of the shelters in Mansel (MR):

This used to be my mother's business and I joined her from Manguzi after completing matric. The plan was to help her raise money for me to further my studies, but I got pregnant with twins and she soon passed away and my life took a different turn. I had to abandon my dreams to look after them, I work hard for my boys who are in grade 12 this year and I want only the best for them (Noku, MR).

Sindi also narrated how challenges pushed her into the informal street trading business as a young girl from Ntuzuma:

I was working as a maid before I started here 8 years ago. Poverty and unemployment brought me here, there are no jobs for people like us, so we just must find our way, and that is what I'm doing here, trying to find my way (Sindi, MR).

The participants in the research viewed the informal street trading as an escape income generating route with easy access and requires little start-up capital. For instance, some of the women interviewed either started off by joining family members that were already involved in street trading, or by acquiring a small loan from relatives and/or ordinary people as no banks would provide them a business loan. In agreement with this research study, Lund (1998) noted that women street trader's start-up capital sources are either from small amounts of saved personal money or they borrow from their relatives. Literature claims that most women that venture in informal trading are often from impoverished backgrounds with no or less formal skills or education (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2004). The disadvantaged black women in South Africa and Africa at large, dominate street trading due to the need to survive in face of long term unemployment and huge dependency burdens that often marginalise them (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2004). This was also the case for the women interviewed for this research study, even though they felt that their informal businesses are still ignored and undermined. The women street traders interviewed saw this as their source of income, helping them to survive and take care of their children and families.

Street trading is significant to most women from disadvantaged and poor backgrounds, the women in informal sectors experience socio-cultural challenges and gender-specific

barriers (Onyenechere, 2009). Research showed that informal trading sometimes follows a patriarchal system where women face additional challenges (Onyenechere, 2009; Willemse, 2011). The experiences shared by the research participants reflected gender-specific barriers. The women interviewed noted that they battled to get assistance for their businesses because the stipulated requirements for financial assistance do not really consider women in street trading, they do not cater for the realities of these black African women. The women raised how the businesses of their male counterparts were much bigger than theirs; and questioned if males grew their business with help from the formal sectors. They did not have the answer, an issue for possible future research. Moreover, the women interviewed raised the issue of permits in street trading, which mostly affected women as most male street traders possess trading permits. The participants raised concerns that male street traders were reluctant to share how they were able to get permits while most women struggled. I viewed that as a question of gender; the gender barriers that continue to exist in business sectors whether informal or formal, which are discussed further in *Chapter Four* of this thesis. Willemse (2011) claims that most women in informal trading are often excluded from the labour market, resources, income, education, decision-making, social services and -networks.

### **1.3 The Constitutional Role of Government and Municipality in Informal Street Trading**

Street trading has become a common occurrence in South African cities and by-laws have been put in place to regulate it. In terms of the by-laws, informal street trading is restricted to certain areas and it can be prohibited in others (Rogerson, 1996; Skinner, 1999; Skinner, 2008). The post-apartheid government instituted key measures for the de-regulation of business activities and the removal of barriers to the operation of informal activities (Skinner, 2008). Currently, South African street trading is regulated by municipal by-laws and policies at the local government level. The Businesses Act 72 of 1991 gave municipalities the mandate to draw up and implement such by-laws. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa also informs local government.

Section 22 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (hereafter, the Constitution) guarantees freedom of trade, occupation and profession. This provision affords individuals such as street trader's protection by the Constitution. Section 152 of

the Constitution also empowers local governments to act in encouraging the involvement of local communities and community organisations in matters of local government. This section looks at the national, provincial and local laws and policies that affect street trading (Lund, Nicholson and Skinner, 2000). The aims are to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities and to provide ongoing provision of services to communities; to promote social and economic development, and to promote a safe and healthy environment. Section 156 deals with the powers and functions of municipalities and states that a municipality has executive authority in respect of, and the right to administer, certain local government matters including street trading (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

### **1.3.1 The Businesses Act**

In 1991, a new Businesses Act completely changed the legal approach to informal trading. This Act is the basis of most legislation which currently looks at informal trading (Lund, Nicholson and Skinner, 2000). The Businesses Act (1991) acknowledges street trading as an important sector which contributes to the economy and individual incomes. According to Skinner (2008) this legislation was key in deregulating business activities and removing barriers to the operation of informal activities (Mwasinga, 2013). Municipalities control street trading with by-laws which are designed to facilitate operation and prevent obstruction of public facilities. Examples of such by-laws are to not obstruct traffic and pedestrian traffic; safety and service vehicle movement; protection of the public from hazardous street trade equipment such as burning stoves; to not obstruct fire hydrants; as well as road signs and cleanliness of the street are to be observed.

Section 6A (2) of the Business Act, states that “a local authority may by resolution declare any place in its area of jurisdiction to be an area in which the carrying on of the business of street vendors, pedlar or hawker may be restricted or prohibited.” The section further adds that before such a motion is adopted, the local authority shall have regard to the effect of having many street traders in that area. The local authority must also consider whether the intended restriction or prohibition will drive a substantial number of street traders out of business. Section 6A (3) deals with the Council’s authority to allocate certain areas for trading and to “extend, reduce or disestablish” such areas. The local authority may also extend, reduce or disestablish any such stand or area (Constitution of

the Republic of South Africa, 1996). The women in this study did not say anything about acts or laws that govern and regulate their business, or even about their constitutional rights which is why their rights are violated without their knowledge.

### **1.3.2 Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000**

The Constitution sets out the objectives, powers and functions of local government. Municipalities have the mandate to draw up street trading by-laws, which may be enforced only after publication in the official gazette of the relevant province. By-laws must be accessible to the public, as per Section 162 of the Constitution. These sections are given effect by the Municipal Systems Act, which expands duties of the municipality for example municipal duties, powers and functions; the municipal drafting of by-laws; and the importance of community participation.

The Municipal Systems Act sets out legislation that enables municipalities to uplift their communities by ensuring access to essential services. The Act defines the legal nature of a municipality as including the community and clarifies the executive and legislative powers of municipalities. It seeks to boost effective local government by establishing a framework for municipal planning, performance management and use of resources. The Act also ensures that municipalities put in place service tariffs and credit control policies that take the needs of the poor into account and it promotes the participation of local communities in local governance. Section 24 and 25 allows for developments in terms of section 152 of the Constitution. The regulation of permits is a big concern as it does not take the poor into account, these women are running a business but they do so under a lot of strain as they struggle to make monthly payments toward their permits, this in turn puts them in debt and compromises their businesses. Their businesses will not grow because of the monthly expenses and challenges they must face with the business slowing, and profits low.

### **1.4 Problem Statement**

There are various socio-economic issues affecting and influencing informal trading in Africa, particularly in South Africa, and other developing societies. Generally, the issues that compel most people into the informal sector include poverty, high levels of

unemployment, poor economic growth rates, and lack of education and adequate social security. Evidence of considerable job losses during the period 1994-1998, in South Africa, affected black African women the most (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2004). The growing economic adversity, with the resulting unemployment and poverty, has led more people into the informal sector which is already overcrowded (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2004). Unemployment in South Africa is estimated to be between 20% and 33% of the population (Statistics South Africa, 2018). There are more women than men are unemployed, especially in black African dominant communities such as the rural areas and townships (Lund, Nicholson and Skinner, 2000). Most black African women, who are South Africans, come to Durban, looking for better opportunities, from rural areas because of their specific poverty and unemployment situations. South Africa's high rate of illiteracy, unemployment and landlessness among black African people is one of the main push factors seeking wage employment; reinforcing migration from rural to urban areas (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2004). The shortage of new job opportunities in a democratic South Africa – the failed promises of democracy – lead many black South Africans, who are unable to enter the formal job market to turn to the informal sectors, such as street trading, as an alternative to generate an income (Mkhize and Cele, 2017; IOA May 2013). One of the major democratic issues is the failure of translating and implementing development policies that are already in place in supporting effective informal trading for women (Mkhize and Cele, 2017). Mwasinga (2013) articulated that some policies and legislation for the informal economy are progressive on paper but may be limited on the ground in terms of implementation. The same critique has been widely raised about the constitution of South Africa (Mkhize, 2012; Overa, 2007). In most instances, countries lack national-level policies and regulations governing the informal economy, leaving local governments at the coal face of managing and facilitating the urbanisation process and its development challenges. Lack of the South Africa's democratic government to implement viable developmental policies and regulations has contributed to making the lives of many black African women extremely hard. Entering the informal market is not easy because of the confusion around the issuing of permits, and those that have them are struggling to keep with the monthly rents. This is the problem statement that led the researcher to the main objective of this research study aimed at investigating the experiences of women street traders in South Africa, with the focus in Durban.

## **1.5 Main Research Objectives**

The main aim of the study was to determine the nature and extent of the experiences of the women street traders in the city of Durban. Therefore, the objectives of the study are as follows:

- a. To examine the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban.
- b. To examine Durban black African women street traders 'daily trading life as women running business in the streets of the big city
- c. To examine Durban black African women street traders' encounters involved/associated with trading in the streets
- d. To find out if there are any support systems provided for black African women street traders.

Within the context of the objectives, this research study found experiences of black African women street traders to be vast and include, but not limited to, poverty and poor income, lower levels of formal education that limit their access into the formal economy. Most black African women continue to be marginalised and side-lined in terms of resources such as access to financial assistance for their business. As a result, their businesses are strained by financial constraints and by the balancing of domestic tasks that come with being a woman. These factors contribute to the oppressive structure that women continue to live under, and there is a need for more support to be provided by government and the formal sector to these women. The following present the key research questions that this research was founded upon to help address the main research objective.

## **1.6 Key Research Questions**

The research study sought to investigate the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban in the post-apartheid era. Therefore, the key research questions which guided this study were as follows:

- a. What are the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban?
- b. What happens/takes place in the daily life of women running businesses in the streets of Durban?
- c. What are the encounters associated with black African women street traders in Durban?

- d. Are there any systems or structures put in place to support black African women street traders?

The questions helped the study in formulating the interview schedule to answer the main objective of this research, which focused on the experiences of black African women street traders in the post-apartheid era. The questions were open and not too direct or personal, they allowed for the participants to share only what they wanted too, and that gave them control and ownership of their stories and freedom to express themselves however they felt most comfortable in. And because the questions were one on one, that gave the interviewee some privacy and the researcher an opportunity to probe further if the response was not clear enough.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The literature review, presented in *Chapter Two*, shows the vast research on the informal economy and women in street trading; however, it focuses more on poverty, the type of business street traders do; politics of economy, development and issues of security. De Vita et al (2014) argued that the informal sector has a lot of challenges and uncertainties, it can be here today and gone tomorrow, which creates a lot of insecurities and instability. Even though there is a variety of research on the informal economic sector, it lacks the voice of the street women about their experiences in this informal economic sector specifically the voice of the black African women in the post-apartheid South Africa, making this study original and significant. This study contributes to theorising gender inequality, knowledge production and awareness of current issues women street traders face in the context of democratic South Africa.

### **1.8 Summary and Research Structure**

This chapter provides an orientation of the research study by highlighting key background issues pertinent to understanding this study. The research investigates the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban by acknowledging the challenges women experience not only in Durban but across South Africa, and most developing nations; the impact of socio-economic development and the dominance of women in the informal industry outlining how women play a significant role in socio-economic development

from household to business roles in the informal trading sector. The chapter outlines how informal street trading is identified in the South African Constitution and the role of municipalities in recognising and implementing the policies in the informal sector initiatives. The problem statement, key research questions and objectives were clearly outlined with the structure of the following chapters of the study. Chapter two contains the literature reviewed and theoretical framework. Chapter three covers methods used for enquiry and how they helped to answer the main objective of this research, which is on the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban. Chapter four contains the interpretation and analysis of the research findings. Chapter five is the concluding chapter with the summary of findings as located in main objectives, and recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Existing literature shows vast research on the informal economy and women in street trading with the focus more on poverty, the type of business of street traders, politics of economy, development and issues of security. Research presented the lack of voice for



women in street trading and their lack of experiences and challenges faced in this informal economic sector. The focus of this research is specifically on black African women's voices and narratives in the post-apartheid South Africa, making this study original and significant. This chapter is divided into two sections. First section covers the literature reviewed for this research on women in informal trading. Second section presents the theories upon which this research was based.

## **2.2 Section One: Literature Review**

Lund (1998: 17) defined informal work as a form of productivity where workers are self-employed or work for those who are self-employed and is characterised by unregulated terms of employment with little or no labour protection. Sassen et al. (2018) stated that in the last quarter of 2012, there were 2.1 million people in the informal economy of South Africa and of the 2.1 million, 1.2 million were men and approximately 857 000 were of women. Making men the majority in informal trade. Street trading is among the largest sectors of the informal economy with traders ranging between the ages of 25 and 49 years, with women likely to be older than men (Skinner, 2007: 15). According to Lund et al. (2000: 33) there were more men between the ages of 21 and 30; and the women street traders were mostly between the ages of 41 and 50. This has led scholars to conclude that women venture into street trading at a later age than men do. Street traders are generally poor, unskilled people at the lower end of the socio-economic ladder (Lund, 1998: 23-29). An important role of informal trading is its ability to absorb unemployed people, young and old.

Siqwana-Ndulo (2013) found that most municipalities fail to stimulate the development of informal entrepreneurship by providing local economic development that is friendly and inclusive of informal economic policies and by-laws. Valodia (2000) asserted that most women involved in informal trading remain at the level of subsistence. Men usually emerge to take over the business when it proves to be fruitful and they tend to diversify from the original idea to incorporate other opportunities (Horn, 1994). Women make up almost half the adult population and contribute two-thirds of the world's working hours and yet only earn 1% of the world's property. In developing countries, the reality of most women is they are compelled by poverty to seek income, either as the sole earner or to supplement the income of the family. The quality of employment is limited for most

women without any skills or access. The rise of female participation in the informal sector is more due more too economic compulsion than any change in work ethos making street vending an important activity of unorganised sectors. This chapter seeks to go through the journey of informal trading, the challenges faced, reservations, the role of regulation and any additional factors pertaining to the informal sector especially in terms of black African women.

### **2.2.1 Global Guidelines Towards Gender Equality**

Historically, women have been marginalised through economic, cultural and political systems that are encouraged by patriarchy and masculine structures dominate in Africa and the rest of the world (IANWGE, 2018). These systems still exist in post-apartheid South Africa and require attention across all societal, political, economic, cultural, and policy levels (Cele and Mkhize, 2017; Mwasinga, 2013). The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 identified that “gender inequality persists worldwide, depriving women and girls of their basic rights and opportunities” (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform (SDKP), 2018). This study will provide an understanding of black African women experiences in the informal street trading in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Skinner and Valodia (2003:3) argued that the informal sector is overrepresented by women traders and are not provided with the opportunities to equal social and political leverage to discuss their issues. By-laws result in occupational injustices and limiting of certain freedoms of the traders leading to negative implications and experiences. Human Rights recognise that all work is valuable, the prevalent dominant political and economic structures reinforced norms where women street traders are seen as criminal and disenfranchised (Skinner and Valodia, 2003: 6). Women experience limited choice and control within their occupational participation affecting their ability to engage in street trading in ways that foster well-being and development beyond marginalisation.

In a study of Women and Land in Southern Africa (WLSA), the legal and factual situation regarding women’s access to land as a resource was found to be problematic (Commission on Gender Equality, 2003). The study showed no tangible programmes were introduced to facilitate access to land by women. Although changes in the legislation in some

countries provide for equal access to land for women and men, the WLSA studies revealed that customary law; conservative attitudes and behaviours further prevented women from enjoying their full land rights. The Commission on Gender Equality (2003) stated that women's own submissive nature to male dominance and their lack of enlightenment due to poor education contributes to their failure to procure land. Lack of access to credit and banking services is another constraint to acquiring land and increasing women's productivity. Lund (1998: 16) highlighted that the lack of credit services is compounded by the general poverty situation of women in Southern Africa. Poverty is directly linked to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, the lack of access to economic resources, and the lack of access to education and support services and minimal participation in the decision-making process.

Street traders in the Cape Town Central Business District (CBD) often experience criminalisation of their work and mistreatment by law enforcement officials (Lindell, 2010). Political barriers include the lack of government contribution to their street trading endeavours, no security of tenure, restrictive legislation, limited government communication, and lack of participation in decision-making affecting street trade (Skinner and Valodia, 2003). Permits are expensive and not readily available due to the limited number of trading bays in the Cape Town City Centre. Trading without a permit leads to confiscation or damage to limited stock, or a fine, which can curtail a trader's business activities or even destroy them altogether (Lindell, 2010: 3). Some traders are unable to sell goods that are in market demand because their permits are restricted to selling one product. Some traders sell goods not stipulated on their permits, anyway, risking the legal consequences to earn some money. Traders have little say in their trading activities or site and have little knowledge of the by-laws or their rights (Sassen *et al.*, 2018). The City of Cape Town relocated street traders from various sites to the then newly revamped central station deck in 2010 without consulting with the street traders regarding the layout, design and allocation of the stalls. Most street traders lost business because stalls were positioned on the outskirts of the foot traffic leading to the taxi rank (Sassen *et al.*, 2018).

Street traders are viewed as capable of actively engaging government at different levels and scales to impact on policy outcomes that are meant to regulate their economic activity (Morange, 2012). There is literature on street traders' organisations overshadowed by the

victimisation of street traders because of how many people would like to view street traders as people without voices to represent themselves. According to Lindell (2010: 3), there have been a growing number of organisations which are aimed at influencing policy on informal trading in recent years. These organisations challenge policies, demanding participation and recognition by government while fighting for their right to engage in their trading without police harassment. This has resulted in pressure on the government to allow street traders to participate in planning and policy decision making processes and to decriminalise street trading since actors in the sector have become vocal (Lindell, 2010).

The study provides an outlook on the black African women experiences critical in shaping policies and practices towards gender equality in all forms of business by advocating for a safer and supportive environment in entrepreneurship in Durban. With special focus on Durban's efforts to accommodate street traders in its constitution while advocating for gender equity, gender mainstreaming and the promotion of black empowerment. Durban is recognised as the first city in South Africa to develop a policy for street traders, contributing more resources to street trade than any other city in South Africa. Many Durban street traders have benefited from a formal Muthi Market and overnight accommodation (Skinner and Valodia, 2003). Section 22 of the South African Constitution guarantees freedom of trade, occupation and profession. Those individuals who perceive themselves as having no option other than street trading are protected by the Constitution. During the apartheid era the 'move on' law was enforced where many street traders were forced to move from their site every half hour or they would face harassment.

IOA (2013) noted that the political changes in the 1980s saw an influx into the cities of populations whose movement was formerly restricted by the Group Areas Act. The result was initiatives by government to promote Black businesses. The 'move on' law was out ruled by the Business Act enacted in 1991 acknowledging street traders as business people entitled to assistance as they contributed to the economy. Municipalities controlled street trading with by-laws designed to facilitate operation and prevent obstruction of public facilities (IOA, 2013). Examples of these by-laws are to not obstruct vehicle and pedestrian traffic and cleanliness of the street are to be observed.

The City of Durban acknowledged the contribution of the informal economy to the City's economy by quantifying the value of the street trade (Skinner and Valodia, 2003). The eThekweni Municipal Council Policy of 2001 was adopted in February 2001 and it recognised the importance of the informal economy for both jobs and income. The City viewed street trading as a part of economic planning and development than poverty alleviation or a welfare project with the interdependence of formal and informal parts of the economy allocating resources for infrastructure development for traders (Skinner and Valodia, 2003).

The Durban policy guidelines included job creation opportunities, planning for informal street trading spaces and markets, proper management of existing markets, informal trader registration, rental policy, commitment to support small enterprises with basic skills training, legal advice, health education, and access to financial services (Skinner and Valodia, 2003).

### **2.2.2 Conceptualisation of Street Trading as an Informal Economy**

Street trading is an ancient and important type of informal economy found in virtually every country and major city (Bromley, 2000: 1). Informal trade can include many activities and most often occurs in public spaces. Informal traders, sometimes called street traders, street vendors, pedlars, or hawkers trade goods in a stationary, temporary, or moving location. It could also include providing services such as washing cars, collecting waste, recycling, hair dressing, or photography (Handbook on The Rights of Informal Traders, 2016).

Informal trading is mostly referred to as street trading and Scholars define street trading differently whilst others consider it small business enterprising (Masonganye, 2010; Bhowmik, 2010). Masonganye (2010) considered street trading to be an extension of informal sector businesses mostly run without licenses or any registration, referred to as informal enterprises. Donovan (2008: 63) provides a subtle definition, in which he regards street trading as an entrepreneurial (informal) practice for those who cannot afford renting premises or buying fixed business premises. A widely used definition suggests that street traders are those who belong to the informal economy and who trade in the streets.

Understanding the conceptualisation of street trading as part of informal economy provides a clear perspective of the challenges and push factors.

Black African women engaged in this study are not only known as informal traders but commonly referred as street traders because they set up markets and sell their goods along the roadside pavements, corridors and in some instances move from place to place (Bhowmik, 2010). The street pavements they occupy are mostly undesignated areas for trading purposes hence their conduct is considered “informal”. The women sampled in this study view informal street trading as the fastest way for survival and ensuring close customer contact in achieving their socio-economic gains to feed their families.

The informal sector plays an important role in the creation of job opportunities, in particular when viewed in the context of developing economies, which tend to be characterised by high levels of unemployment and poverty (Moloi, 2014; Solomon-Ayeh, 2009; Lyons and Brown, 2001). The informal sector can be defined as “an economic sector that is largely untaxed, excluded from the government's Gross National Product (GNP) and not monitored closely by government” (Masonganye, 2010). The informal sector is largely an unlicensed employment industry, characterised by ease of entry, further complicating control efforts by municipal authorities (Callaghan and Gwatidzo, 2013). The informal sector can also be viewed as comprising of economic activity, conducted by self-employed individuals, who trade lawful products in public spaces (Mokgatetswa, 2014). In the South African environment, Statistics South Africa (2015: 3) defined individuals operating in the informal economy as “employees who do not have a written contract of employment, are not registered for income tax or value-added tax, and do not receive basic benefits such as pensions or medical aid contributions from their employers”. These characteristics are in stark contrast to the formal economy, where written contracts, registration with authorities, taxation and provision of employee benefits are commonplace.

There is a wide variety of literature in South Africa which traces the involvement of women in informal trading back to the apartheid era during the 1950s and 1980s when the government sought to remove street vendors from cities (Gamieldien and Van Niekerk, 2017; Siqwana-Ndulo, 2013; Donovan, 2008). Literature reveals that political, social and economic setbacks affecting women in postcolonial countries are manifested in unjust

racial prejudices, masculine legacies and gender inequalities (Alemu and Alebachew, 2018). Research further claimed that colonial (and apartheid) harmful legacies continue to manifest in neoliberal practices evident in uneven economic, educational and political structures, affecting black African women (Alemu and Alebachew, 2018; Mkhize, 2012). Donovan (2008) highlighted the income variations that exist in South Africa and street traders are no exception to these variations. Literature also showed that in South Africa from 2000 to 2007, the number of street traders had almost doubled from 500 000 to 987 000 across the country (Mail and Guardian, 2009). Globally, Siqwana-Ndulo (2013) identified that women dominate the street trading as permanent participants, and men often come and exit the industry quickly when they get employment. Mitullah (2003) noted that the women involved in street trading are mostly unemployed individuals trying to find ways to overcome their poverty situations. The women interviewed for this study supported the theory that they were involved in street trading to provide for their families; considering that women street traders had little training, education and work experience, street trading emerged as the most viable option for each of them. Van der Heijden (2012) stated street traders are mainly black women desperate for work. Women are forced to work in the informal economy to sustain their household and reproductive responsibilities as poverty drives women into flexible, low risk economic activity. Sassen et al., (2018) further attested that the involvement of women in street trading is not a result of business opportunities, rather it is a necessity in pursuit of livelihood solutions. Grace et al., (2014) argued that in most developing countries across the world, the informal sector through street trading accounted for the highest number of people employed who are formally unemployed, hence the need to understand international informal street trading. Though South Africa has advanced economically, as a country, redistribution of wealth hasn't been realised and the formal unemployment rate has remained between 24% and 30% since 2000 (Skinner and Valodia, 2003). Those who fail to get formal employment turn to street trading for income generation rendering informal trading as a haven for the unemployed people in South Africa.

### **2.2.3 International Informal Street Trading**

Literature examined indicates that the economies of most of the developing countries are largely characterised by the informal sector consisting of between 50% to 75% of non-agricultural employment (Chen, 2007). An example of these percentages are: “48 percent in North Africa, 51 percent in Latin America, 65 percent in Asia and 72 percent in Sub-

Saharan Africa (which is 78 percent if excluding South Africa alone” (Chen, 2007:3). The informal trading sector ranges from 35% of the economy in Kenya, that is 25% of non-agricultural GDP, to over 77% of the total economy in Zimbabwe and Botswana (Lyons and Snoxell, 2005). Literature revealed the way street trading is viewed in Africa differs compared to other continents. In Africa, street trading is regarded as an economic activity practiced by the underprivileged, mostly women, to sustain their livelihoods (Willemse, 2011). Popke and Ballard (2004) found that street trading is viewed as a symbol of social economic decline by most urban residents.

African cities have tried to address economic informality without understanding how it functions. Women constitute an important constituency of the urban population and the majority are in the informal economy and this may be due to the deterioration of chances of employment in the formal sector. One cannot speak of the informal sector in Africa without thinking about women. For example, like in many other African country’s urban markets in Nairobi, Lagos and Accra are dominated by women, who are responsible for a massive trade in food and clothes. According to Lund (1998: 20) most street traders in South Africa are black women who trade in a range of goods such as sweets, knick knacks, cigarettes, clothing, and fruit and vegetables. A survey conducted of four South African cities namely, Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg and Durban, revealed that most street traders were male constituting 54% of the total number of street traders. In Durban, the women were in the majority constituting 58% of the total population of street traders. Any analysis of the role of women in African city dynamism is limited and tends to treat women as victims (Potts, 1995). Women encounter the reality of the African city as it is presented in both theory and practice in their everyday livelihood.

Harris (1992) observed that cities in developing countries are characterised by vast squatter settlements, shanty towns, and a poor supply of basic amenities, rapid environmental degradation, traffic jams, violence, crime and urban sprawl that eats into the countryside. The observation of Murray and Myers (2006) of African city life has been reduced to a dystopian nightmare manifested by limited opportunities for formal employment, a lack of decent and affordable housing, failing and neglected infrastructure, the absence of social services, pauperisation, criminality and increased inequalities. Cities in Africa and the developing world are then considered structurally irrelevant in the realm



of world cities and attract hardly any global investment due to these flaws (Robinson, 2002). Hence the informal sector is left as the only feasible alternative for survival.

Estimates are that there are between 1 and 2.3 million informal businesses in South Africa, which contribute between 7% and 12% to South Africa's GDP (Dewar, 2005). An estimated 45.5% of informal enterprises are owned and managed by women and approximately 54.5% by men. Another estimated 91.3% are owned and managed by Africans (Dewar, 2005), while black Africans represent approximately 83% of the informal economy (Valodia, 2000). Overall, women constitute approximately 57% of the informal economy, of which approximately 49% are black African women. The contributions of informal businesses vary considerably as it is difficult to measure. Seven microlevel studies suggest that between 3 and 7 out of every 10 households in informal settlements are involved in informal income generation activity (Napier *et al.*, 2002). In many countries, especially in Africa, many street vendors are women: 88% in Ghana, 68% in South Africa, and 63% in Kenya (ILO, 2013 and WIEGO, 2013). Only in a few countries where cultural norms restrict women's economic activities do women account for 10% or less of street vendor activity.

An Inclusive Cities Research Project completed in 2009 found that economic downturns have a big impact on vendors' earnings. Many street vendors reported a drop in consumer demand and an increase in competition as the newly unemployed turned to vending for income. The increase in demand did not decrease and for most vendors who to raise prices due to the higher cost of goods and increased competition as large retailers aggressively tried to attract customers. The 2012 Informal Economy Monitoring Study confirmed that rising prices and increased competition were still affecting street vendors in several cities. Vendors said their stock was more expensive, but they had difficulty passing on rising costs to consumers who expect to negotiate lower prices on the streets lowering the take home for vendors.

Street vending generates enormous controversy in cities throughout the world (Bromley, 2000). Debates involve registration and taxation, individual versus collective rights, health and safety regulations, especially where food is involved, and urban planning and governance. Membership-based organisations help street vendors navigate their relationship with the authorities, build solidarity and solve problems with other vendors.

Several organisations have even developed innovative ways to work with cities to keep the streets clean and safe while gaining a secure livelihood for vendors. An example is The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), members of the WIEGO Network, instrumental in making India's National Law on Street Vending a reality. This national law recognises, regulates and protects the livelihoods of street vendors.

Various moves have been made in trying to integrate, empower and give one voice to street traders in different countries. Street Net International is an alliance of street vendors launched in Durban, South Africa in 2002 focusing on two issues, the right to be recognised as workers and the right to public space. Membership-based organisations (unions, co-operatives or associations) directly organising street vendors, market vendors and/or hawkers among their membership, are entitled to be affiliated to the Street Net International. Street Net had 49 affiliates from countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas and Eastern Europeans in December 2018. The aim of Street Net is to promote local, national and international solidarity between organisations of street vendors, market vendors and hawkers (mobile vendors), stimulate the development of national alliances of such organisations, and stimulate cities around the world to adopt and implement street vendor friendly urban policies. Street Net (2019) firmly supports collective negotiations between street vendors, informal traders and local governments and advocates for full participation by the workers in all matters affecting them.

The informal sector throughout the world impact on the economy positively though critics would try to always overshadow this fact. In Zimbabwe, it is estimated that at least US \$7,4 billion is circulating in the informal economy and the government has made a deliberate move to formalise operations in that market in fulfilment of the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation provisions. On April 3, 2014, Small and Medium Enterprise and Co-operative Development Minister Sithembiso Nyoni had said the country was losing substantial amounts of money from this untapped sector. Research completed in 2012 has shown this sector was sustaining the country and according to a Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZNSA) report of November 2012, Zimbabwe's majority is now employed in the informal economy. In 2017, the Zimbabwean first lady went on to publicly announce the operation of these informal traders wherever they wished in a bid to reduce the dormant public spaces in the streets

to reduce crime. According to the Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations (ZCIEA), 67% of this fast growing sector was made of women.

Informal traders face the same kind of problems and criticism globally. Informal firms, according to critics, do not pay tax consequently disadvantaging the formal business sectors which are taxpayers. Reports abound of child labour, low wages (especially for women) and low job security and high incidences of HIV. The Swedish International Development Co-operation (SIDC) points out, many governments are unaware of the contribution of the informal economy, particularly the high involvement of women. The report also suggested that the informal sector was expanding and here to stay. The World Bank report identified a trend of people with higher levels of education entering the informal sector as a career of choice (Jackson 2016), showing it's not a last act of desperation but be a way of self-development. Today the informal economy appears to be as important as ever to Africa and its future development.

#### **2.2.4 Informal Trading in South Africa**

Literature on informal economy in South Africa views it as key component of strategies in addressing unemployment and poverty and supporting the creation of sustainable livelihoods (Cele and Mkhize, 2017; Mwasinga, 2013; Siqwana-Ndulo, 2013; Karumbidza, 2011; Motala, 2002). The 1998 White paper on Local Economic Development (LED) outlined the majority of South African local municipalities, for various reasons, failed to provide LED<sup>3</sup>-friendly, more progressive, comprehensive informal economy policies, and by-laws that support women street traders, (White Paper, 1998). The Quarterly Labour Force Survey (2012) found that, “in South Africa, the informal economy accounted for 2.1 million people (excluding the agricultural sector), and of the 2.1 million, 857 000 were women and just over 1.2 million were men.” A further breakdown noted that the informal economy in provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Mpumalanga played a considerably important role making up to 20% of non-agricultural employment (Quarterly Labour Force Survey, 2012). In South Africa,

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<sup>3</sup> Local economic development is an economic approach utilised to encourage local people to take part in sustainable economic strategies that allow them to achieve growth and improve the quality of life. LED friendly are measures implemented by the government or municipality to support local business people to achieve growth. Informal street traders are also part of the local business community which needs to be incorporated in these LED programs. (<http://www.cogta.gov.za/?programmes=local-economic-development-led>)

like in most Africa countries, street trading is linked to poverty (Siqwana-Ndulo, 2013; Skinner, 2008; Motala, 2003).

There is no direct legislation that governs the informal business sector in South Africa, however it is generally accepted that the legal framework governing the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) sector, also governs the informal sector. According to Pillay (2008) the SMME sector has been promoted since 1995 in order to meet national economic growth objectives. Despite on-going government initiatives such as the formal launching of the Small Enterprise Development Agency by the Department of Trade and Industry in 2004, the situation of most SMMEs remains highly problematic (Pillay, 2008). The commitment of government in the small business sector is to ensure that small businesses progressively increase their contribution to growth and performance of the South African economy in critical areas, such as job creation, equity and access to markets. Since 1994, with the advent of a new democratic era, the South African government has taken measures to ensure that small business development becomes a key policy focus.

There are several laws and policies, at both the national, provincial and local level to regulate informal trade. At the national level, is the Businesses Act 71 of 1991, which defines the scope of authority for the local governments must regulate the informal trade. The province of KwaZulu-Natal has a Policy for The Informal Economy of KwaZulu-Natal, Version 1.4. At the municipality level, the eThekweni Municipality's Informal Trading By-law, 2014, spells out the specific details of the rules for informal trade in Durban. The eThekweni municipality has developed Durban's Informal Economy Policy, 2001 which serves as a guide that local authorities will use.

The people in the informal sector in South Africa tend to be enjoying the same privileges and rights as embodied in the Constitution under the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights exists to protect all people from abuse and to make sure that their rights are protected. Informal traders have the same rights as everyone else and these include the right to equality and to freedom from unfair discrimination (*Section 9*), the freedom of trade, occupation, and profession (*Section 22*), the freedom of association (*Section 18*), the right to join a trade union (*Section 23*), the right to own property (*Section 25*), and the right to access the courts (*Section 34*). These rights are of great significance to informal traders

who rely heavily on their personal property and the income they derive from such to survive. These rights also allow the traders the ability to more effectively voice their concerns by joining their resources and efforts. Street traders have the law to support them to trade profitably without fear of authority or much harassment.

The Constitution, again under *Section 1(c)* requires that the government and its agents such as police officers, and even private individuals must have legality in the actions that they take. This is also described as the rule of law. No one can exceed the scope of the laws passed and take the law into their own hands. The case of Mackwickana, the police officer who impounded the goods when there was no law on record that permitted her to do so. As Mr Mackwickana had not committed an offence the by-laws contained no permission for her so impound the goods. The police officer's actions lacked legality and were contrary to the rule of law therefore unconstitutional.

From the research conducted, some of the street traders had some knowledge of their rights to trade freely and legally without harm or harassment from municipal officials, others were also aware that operating without a license made them vulnerable to harassment and possibility of having goods confiscated by municipal officials. Some traders were ignorant and not aware of their rights. Only a few of the interviewed participants were aware of local trading policies and municipal by-laws, including their rights under the Bill of Rights and rule of law. This research discovered that many of the informal traders tend to be strategically located in the central business districts (CBDs) of major cities mostly because such areas that have high pedestrian traffic, near major arterial routes and public transportation facilities, hence a broader customer base. Popke and Ballard (2004) defined CBDs as lying in an inner-city environment such as a city centre, comprising many businesses, as well as private dwellings. According to Siqwana-Ndulo (2013), due to these characteristics, street trading over time has become common place in cities, CBDs and urban areas, in areas with recreational and public transport facilities. Informal street trading is further characterised by a lack of formalised and rented trading spaces, with municipal areas providing a temporary opportunity for income generation for the underprivileged (Brown, 2006; Solomon-Ayeh, 2009; Rosales, 2013).

Informal traders in South Africa are aided directly or indirectly in their endeavours by the private and public institutions which according to research offered a range of services.

Offers included the provision of sanitation facilities, policing services, stalls and storage facilities. In terms of sanitation facilities, although such facilities were available in the CBD, street traders who operated in stalls and in unallocated areas indicated that these facilities were located far from trading sites (Bhowmik, 2005). Traders were required to pay before being allowed to sanitation facilities. Street traders were aware of the presence of the police in the CBD, which aided in creating an atmosphere of safety. To licenced traders the relevant municipality also provided stalls and storage facilities.

When it comes to the management of street trading in South Africa, Lund et al (2000) maintained that area managers are charged with respectively the need to secure space for traders. These area managers are responsible for the development and promotion of street traders as entrepreneurs, the management of the informal economy while considering the needs and demands of pedestrians and motorists for urban spaces. According to Mitulla (2003), the Department of Informal Trade and Small Business Opportunities is responsible for managing street trading activities in Durban. The Council has also designed innovative private sector-based approach whereby street trader's organisations are leasing land from the Council and lease it to traders creating markets for street traders. In the Polokwane Municipality, street trading functions is placed under the Local Economic Development Section and it is the same unit that is responsible for designing the street trading by-laws and the general management of street trading (Polokwane Local Municipality, 2014).

However, as much as it seems well in the streets of South Africa informal traders running their businesses smoothly, this sector also encounters its problems and criticism. For example, when it came to confiscation of the vendors goods by the police vendors complained that their goods were damaged as the police did not handle their goods with care hence culminating into a lot of breakages. Fresh produce was spoiled or damaged in the process. In research conducted vendors reported that when they reclaim their goods, they usually found them in an appalling condition as the goods were just thrown in trucks. Upon retrieval, their condition will be compromised and some of them had to throw away or sold at a discount, as there would be no compensation for the loss. There were several cases reported where some of the goods and in some cases all of the goods, were not found at the police station. Vendors argued that the police were in fact stealing their goods and be a set back to their business and expansion.

Pedestrians, city authorities and the general public have also criticised street vending. They complain that vendors occupy pavements and walkways, in the event obstructing the movements of pedestrians and sometimes giving opportunities for pickpockets to steal from them or snatch their bags or for confident tricksters to dupe them. Not only do vendors obstruct pedestrians, but they sometimes occupy part of the streets, preventing the smooth flow of traffic and delivery of goods and services. Hawkers also endanger their lives and those of pedestrians, as vehicles sometimes knock them down (Skinner, 2008).

Street hawkers, particularly, the mobile hawkers are accused of selling expired, defaced, contaminated or spoilt items, especially food items to the unsuspecting public and being mobile they cannot be sought and held accountable for their mischief. They are sometimes accused of selling items of inferior quality or items that do not measure up to the right quantity given the amount paid by a customer. Despite these criticisms, street vending is still vibrant and commonplace in South Africa. Informal traders save people, especially those who may be very busy, with no time for going to the market to buy items. They pay taxes in the form of daily market tolls to the cities authorities and those who have temporary structures pay income tax to the South African municipality. To some extent it is a legal form of business organisation in South Africa.

### **2.2.5 Informal Trading in Durban**

According to the City of EThekweni Metropolitan Municipality<sup>4</sup>, “street trading by-laws, a single act of selling, offering or rendering of services in a public space shall constitute as street trading” (Durban Unicity Council, 2001). Detailed studies have been done on informal street trading by Bhowimik (2005), Skinner (2007and 2008), and Bromley (2000) all recognising street trading as an informal economic activity. Bromley (2000:12) noted that informal trading “occurs in urban areas with a number of impoverished and other people making a living out of it”. According to Skinner and Valodia (2003), the local government (municipality) of the City of Durban has instituted policies that support informal activities of street traders, which fills in the gaps that have been identified in the

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<sup>4</sup>Ethekewini Metropolitan Municipality also known as Durban Metropolitan Municipality.

national approach. Skinner (2007) found that, unlike the city of Johannesburg and Cape Town, Durban does not remove all street traders from the CBD or outsource trading areas to registered organisations. Essentially, Durban is currently the home to the head office and headquarters of the International Alliance of Street Trader Organizations and the majority of this organisation's members are mostly poor women who reside in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and operate in Durban City (Siqwana-Ndulo, 2013). eThekweni Municipality has made provisions for facilities to be used by informal traders under the supervision of Area Managers. These informal trading facilities include SMMEs<sup>5</sup> units, Markets, Hives, Kiosks, Container Parks and Storage facilities (eThekweni Municipality). Durban has the economic potential to give these people a life (Hunter and Skinner, 2001). It is important to explore the participation of women in these various platforms of business provided by the city policies.

According to the City Manager's office (interview 18 June 2013), the City has issued 44,000 vendor licences. This suggests a system of wide scale permitting in Durban, yet half of the vendors surveyed reported not being able to obtain a business licence as a problem. In the survey expensive rent was cited by 47% of vendors interviewed as vendors were charged between R40 and R120 a month. Four focus groups mentioned expensive rent as a challenge, as articulated by a male vendor: "Rent is very high, and it is being increased unnecessarily. We end up failing to pay it, which results in us losing our tables. This destroys our business". The vendors argued that the rate charged per vending site is the same for all, even though the sizes of sites vary and they feel they do not get services equivalent to the rent they pay. Vendors also complained of not getting positive response when they reported their dissatisfaction to the local authority. As one trader noted, "We report our dissatisfactions to the BSU, but they respond by reducing the same small sites to something not conducive for operating our businesses".

National and local government are regarded by most vendors as being unhelpful to vending activities. The findings suggest that for many street vendors, the only interaction they have with local government is through harassment and fines at the hands of the police. In the focus groups' interviews, the police, the municipality in general, and the BSU, were identified as institutions hindering their work. Only two vendors, of the survey sample, reported that they had received help from government.

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<sup>5</sup>Small, Medium and Micro-Sized Enterprises



In Durban alone, there were 49,739 street traders recorded in the (Statistics South Africa, 2017). Street traders operate throughout the eThekweni Municipality, with the largest numbers in inner city Durban. The average turnover was R300 per week. A 2003 survey found that 88% of street traders were the sole breadwinners in their families. Those families often have usually four to five members. Following the study of the field work for Durban which was conducted between August and November 2012, with a total of 149 street vendors interviewed and 75 of these also participating in focus groups discussions, the results detail how street vendors have been negatively affected by the difficult economic environment (characterised by increased competition in the sourcing and selling of goods), lack of access to basic and vendor related infrastructure, and a largely hostile government. The impact of these forces has not been the same for female and male vendors – the study shows that women seem to have borne the brunt of these forces. From the results indicated are not only do male respondents earn more (on average) than female respondents, but also tend to have employees or assistants and therefore have better support when unable to work. The research recognised men selling goods and services that command higher profits compared to the low margin products sold by women hence a difference in the goods sold.

The focus group findings suggest that women tend to sell goods they have made themselves. An example is a female vendor who made beaded products; she sold beaded accessories which included necklaces, bracelets, earrings and pleated beaded skirts. Male vendors, however, largely sold ready-made products like umbrellas and DVDs, an activity that entails no value addition. Street vendors in Durban sell a wide variety of products. It is clear from this and previous research on the topic that Durban residents can source almost any goods or services from informal vendors. There does seem to be differences in the products that are sold by men and women. Men dominate the more lucrative clothing accessories and electronics products while women are dominant in the areas of cooked food and traditional medicine, products which tend to command lower profits. The focus group results suggest that the activities that women are engaged in result in more value addition than those of men. Men tend to buy products from wholesalers and then go on to sell them to consumers without adding much value.

The Informal Traders Management Board (ITMB) was formed in Durban in 1995 arising out of a meeting of a range of smaller organisations of traders who agreed with councillors that street traders needed “one voice”. Its objectives were to create a united voice of street traders who would engage with local government authorities to improve working conditions and address problems they may experience. ITMB developed as a voluntary association with a constitution and without any formal registration process. Its membership grew through the establishment of street or area committees in the Durban Central Business District (CDB) and the Greater Durban area. The key focus of ITMB’s activities was on assisting traders to access trading sites, negotiating with local government on behalf of traders, and helping to stop crime. It had also tried to help traders with bulk-buying schemes and problems with pricing and corruption, which this to some extent has been successful.

The informal sector in Durban has its share of problems, especially from the police. Many vendors noted that the police were very forceful when dealing with them. Some vendors reported being verbally and physically abused. A woman complained that sometimes when they were running away, the police chasing them would spray them with teargas, hit them and swore at them. This in turn makes street vendors feel that they are being treated like criminals. Another issue rose pertained to the unreasonable fines charged. Vendors reported that they often had to turn to loan sharks as their only source of financial assistance. The impact of these police confiscations and raids are serious, setting vendors’ business back for months and in some cases destroying businesses.

### **2.2.6 Gender and Informal Trading: Situating women street traders in development**

Since the 1970s the global economy has experienced growth in atypical forms of employment that is, informalisation and flexibilisation (Standing, 1999). These developments have created gendered implications, which have resulted into the increase of women in the informal sector (Valodia, 2001). This is relevant particularly in the developing countries of Sub-Saharan Africa where more households are female-headed in comparison to male-headed households (Mkhize, 2012; Akindoadé, 2005). Matinya (2014), on female street traders in Durban, found that the majority of the full-time women traders are heads of their households, and rely on their selling to cater for their family

needs. Tansel (2001) revealed the rate of economic development and level of education of women had a positive effect on women labour. Women continue to be the most underpaid employees, the unemployed and underestimated. In developing countries women dominate the informal trading sector which leads to them being ruled out as being unemployed (Overa, 2007; Leach, 1996). The full integration of women into the economy is a desirable goal for equity and efficiency considerations (Overa, 2007). The equity aspect implies that the participation of women in the labour market (whether formal or informal) leads to an improvement in their relative economic positions and also an overall efficiency and improved development potential of the country (Tansel, 2001).

The informal economy is often referred to as the “shadow economy,” a glaring indicator of its absence from the eyes of policymakers. As discussed on The City Fix, street vendors are frequently ignored in surveys of jobs and economic productivity, despite their extensive connections to the formal economy. The specific challenges faced by women street vendors are mostly absent from public discourse. The urban poor, especially women derive their livelihood through street trading. According to the World Bank, the informal sector accounts for well over half of all urban employment in Africa and Asia and a quarter in Latin America and the Caribbean. In several African countries, informal sector income accounts for over 40% of total urban income. By supporting street vendors, cities can foster equitable development and improve the livelihood of society’s most vulnerable populations and in this instance women.

Women street vendors, like men and those in the formal sector are contributing a good amount to the society. These women have chosen street vending as the source of their livelihood as they wanted to contribute financially to their family. The entry and exit barrier in this trade is also negligible and the amount of capital and skill required is also very less. These women must face several challenges every day in order to be sustainable in this trade, despite the fact that they are hardworking to earn their livelihood. These women also have poor social protection and their working condition on the streets exposes them to a variety of health and safety issues. According to a study done by ILO it was found that about 85% of these street vendors must face health hazards including diseases like migraine, acidity problem, increased depression, high blood pressure and increased blood sugar (Donovan, 2008). Apart from these health problems women street vendors also must face problems related to sanitation, hence their health is compromised.

Street vending is not an easy undertaking for women though it is an important activity of the unorganised sectors. Various factors come into play which compel women to go into street vending like, a broken family, divorced or separated from husband, husband's insufficient income and poverty, pressure from in-laws to work and low education levels. They have low skill and poor economic conditions. In comparison with other trades it is easy to enter this trade for the poor migrants as well as lower income groups living in the city. Comparatively women face much more problems in street vending than men as women are generally affected by the crimes like eve teasing, sexual harassment and rapes just to mention a few.

Studies on the role of women in development focuses on the outcomes of development reforms and documented gender-differentiated benefits and vulnerabilities (Jones et al, 2012; Akinboade, 2005). The results from these studies show gender disparities across countries and this challenges many of them to improve women's participation in economic development (Jones et al., 2012; Akinboade, 2005). Literature shows that most women are forced into informal trading in South Africa and globally as a measure to support their families since they lack education or skills to seek formal employment (Siqwana-Ndulo, 2013). Despite the presence of policies towards supporting informal business in Durban and South Africa at large, research clarifies that most women remain neglected and lack support for their informal business (WIEGO, 2012). Literature concludes that, informal trading remains the best source of income for poor women to support families for females (Mwasinga, 2013; Siqwana-Ndulo, 2013).

Street vendors have poor social protection and their working conditions on the streets exposes them to a variety of safety and health issues, with women vendors also earning less, on average, than men. The lack of toilets has an adverse effect on women's health, and many suffer from urinary tract infections and kidney ailments. The mobile women street vendors also face security issues. Vendors are often regarded as public nuisance. They are accused of depriving pedestrians of their space, causing traffic jams and having links with anti-social activities. The municipal authorities and housing societies, aided by the media, have targeted vendors at frequent intervals. "The lack of recognition of the role of the street vendors culminates in a multitude of problems faced by them: obtaining license, insecurity of earnings, insecurity of place of hawking, gratifying officers and

musclemen, constant eviction threat, fines and harassment by traffic policemen” (Sidzatane and Maharaj: 79; Solomon-Ayeh, 2009). Compared to male traders, women are more likely to have lower levels of education, prior work experience, and relevant skills and are also mostly single heads of households, hence burdened more than men.

The study completed in Sivasagar Town, where a few women vendors were interviewed, brought out the problem these women vendors faced financially. The street vendors were not financially self-sufficient to meet their financial needs for the business; this is more prominent in the case of women street vendors. The study has examined the financing pattern of the women street vendors based on primary data and secondary data. All the sampled women street vendors were financed from their own sources and the reason being that no banks or financial institutions wanted to aid them. According to Dharmaraj (2007), there is no other financial sources open for the women street vendors since banks and other financial institutions hesitate to provide finance to the women street vendors on the ground that they are unable to provide security against credit. The private money lenders charge high rates of interest while funds from friends and relatives are not easily accessible like bank finance. The research brought out the eagerness of women street vendors to save in various schemes of banks and other financial institutions. The banks/ MFI/ NGOs should come forward with various financial services to the women street vendors. The government should take initiatives to include women street vendors through its various schemes for financial and non-financial needs. There is no doubt that women street vendors are integral part of the society.

Most women street vendors are not financially sound. They are the most neglected part of urban society. They are those women who have no permanent space from where they can conduct their business despite the significant part they play in society. The initiatives of Self-employed Women Association (SEWA) is a significant consideration though it has not covered all regions of the Country. Women form a large segment of street vending in almost every city. Street vending is not only a source of self-employment to the poor in cities and towns but also a means to provide affordable as well as convenient services to most of the urban population. Though street vendors are often those who are unable to get regular jobs in the remunerative formal sector on account of their low level of education and skills, they try to solve their livelihoods problems through their own meagre financial resource (Donovan, 2000). They are the main distribution channel for a large

variety of products of daily consumption like fruits, vegetables, readymade garments, shoes, household gadgets, toys, stationery, newspapers, and magazines (Matinya, 2014). The importance of this sector cannot be undermined, especially considering that the governments do not have the capacity to provide jobs to the millions of unemployed and underemployed women in the world. The services they provide, if they were to be dissolved, would affect most of the populace considered too busy or tied up to go acquire these commodities at the respective grocery shop or retail.

Women street vendors play a very important role in the world at large. India, like many other countries, has generated employment and income opportunities through street vending. The women sell different items like clothes and hosiery, leather, moulded plastic goods necessary for household use manufactured on smaller scale or home-based industries. These goods are acquired on a larger scale in retail shops and at a higher cost can be acquired in the informal sector at more affordable quantities (Popke and Ballard, 2004). Women street vendors provide the market home based manufactured and agricultural products necessary for everyday use.

Women's entrepreneurial activities are increasingly promoted as a means of creating growth and development. They are not a homogenous group, and their motivations for entry as well as performance of their business vary significantly (Bhowmik, 2010). According to Mitchell (2003), most rural women in the informal sector in South Africa had been raised in strict traditional homes, had little education, married relatively young and had little or no urban experience. The generation of income for profit or sustaining family livelihood, is a driving force behind women's informal entrepreneurship, there is also growing recognition that it is not only motivated by poverty. Informal enterprises may be motivated by a variety of 'voluntary' and 'opportunity' driven factors (Bhowmik, 2010). They can also be described as 'necessity' or push factors or 'opportunity' or pull factors, or a combination of both (Ali and Ali, 2013). Push factors are factors that encourage women to start business enterprises driven by financial need because of the family situation (Ali and Ali 2013). Push factors are a product of desperate conditions; entrepreneurship is the only option available to earning a living, rather than a positive choice. According to Ali and Ali (2013) push factors are factors such as insufficient family income, dissatisfaction with a salaried job, difficulty in finding work and a need for flexible work schedules because of family conditions. Opportunity or pull factors are

the factors associated with perceptions of entrepreneurship as an enticing avenue for a better, more fulfilling life and are associated with independence, fulfilment, entrepreneurial drive and desire for wealth, social status and power (Ali and Ali, 2013). Women venture into the informal sector not only out of desperation but also taking advantage of the environment conducive for boosting themselves financially and self-development.

The 'modus operandi' of street trading is for the girl-traders (in most cases) to carry wares on their heads and call attention of buyers by making 'melodious noise' to woo customers to see and purchase goods being sold. Some of the traders do not only use shouting and singing melodious songs, some even use hand bells to attract the attention of the passers-by who may be interested in purchasing the products being offered for sale (Rogerson, 2007). This roving sales technique has made the girl-traders vulnerable to sexual harassment from men disguised as potential customers. Though women try to sell their goods in the most creative way, the end up being misinterpreted and categorised as loose women and not entrepreneurs. It will take time before all men start treating women as equals with the same amount of positive contribution to offer to society.

Some steps have been taken to empower and emancipate women especially in the informal sector; women were to participate in ITMBs. From research conducted, 50% of ITMBs members were women and 28 of the 37 participants at the meeting attended by the researcher were women. I observed that in the meeting only two women spoke, and, on both occasions, it was to support a statement made by a male trader. Though women had strength in numbers in the organisation, at the level of leadership with four of the 11 office bearers being women holding the positions of Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary, they still lacked that platform to voice their views. The Chairperson's position was unusual in that ITMB also had a President as its head, and it appeared the Chairperson's position was largely ceremonial. In exploring the role and involvement of women in ITMB with the Chairperson of the Women's Task Team, her response was "women are too shy to speak up in meetings. We need to build them up to speak. That is why we set up this Women's Task team that I am the head of." According to the Chairperson, the Task Team met weekly during the afternoons to assist women traders to develop new craft skills to diversify their income base. ITMB members operated on a volunteer basis and without staff or office infrastructure. The office bearers complained

that they had to spend personal time and financial resources in undertaking ITMB work. The ITMBs shows the recognition of women in society especially those in the informal sector and the integral role they play to alleviate poverty for themselves.

In understanding the dominance of women participation in the informal sector, the international financial institutions are beginning to recognise their involvement as being a key factor in national economic growth and development (Jones et al., 2012). According to Akinboade (2005) many studies on the role of women in development have focused on the outcomes of development reforms and documented gender-differentiated benefits and vulnerabilities and the results from these studies show gender disparities across countries and the challenges many of them face to improve women's participation in economic development. This can be done by means of national gender policies that target the breaking down of the poverty cycles for both men and women. Most women are forced into informal trading in South Africa as a means to support their families since they lack education or skills to seek formal employment (Siqwana-Ndulo, 2013). Despite the presence of policies towards supporting informal business in Durban and South Africa at large, reports from research clarify that most females remain neglected and lack support for their informal business (WIEGO, 2012). Informal trading remains the best source of income to support families for females in Durban and South Africa.

Women who are poor have always had to work and in many cities around the world, they work as street vendors and formal traders. They are rarely included in a country's labour statistics because they are far more likely to be working in the informal rather than the formal sector (and are not "counted" among the employed or economically active). Faced with a paucity of statistics on street vendors in general, and women hawkers in particular, it is difficult to quantify with any precision the extent of female participation. Street vending is one of the few readily accessible avenues of employment open to women who need to earn a living. The low cost of entry into many types of hawking and vending as well as schedule flexibility is an attractive factor for some women. Most women are compelled to venture into the informal sector due to various factors, their paramount contribution of covering the demand and supply gap in society shouldn't be underestimated and they deserve to be applauded.



### **2.2.7 Gender Specific Issues for Women Street Traders**

Every form of business has got its challenges and limitations and the informal sector is without spare. There are many issues that affect the development of women entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa (De Vita et al 2014). One of the problems identified by De Vita et al. (2014) is closely related to family responsibilities, high fertility rates of five to six births per woman. This has a considerable effect on personal consequences for women who try to start their own enterprises (Amine and Staub 2009; De Vita et al., 2014). The low social recognition accorded to women entrepreneurs also affects them negatively. Sub-Saharan African men believe that independent and successful women do not deserve to be considered chaste and worthy of respect (De Vita et al. 2014). Customary patriarchal norms and rules are still in place. Sub-Saharan African women seem to be struggling to find acceptance in the market and respect from their customers (De Vita et al. 2014). This finding contradicts the results of O'Neill and Viljoen (2001) that South African women are now more accepted as equals, and government policies in South Africa favour women and women are entering the market at a faster rate than before. Mazonde and Carmichael (2016) interviewed 43 female informal traders in Zimbabwe and most of the participants reported that their husbands looked down on their entrepreneurial activities. To keep their family intact, these women were willing to bow to patriarchy.

De Vita et al (2014) argued that the inadequate education and training of businesswomen render them less competent in the business sector be it formal or informal. The impact of education on performance is more pronounced in women-owned businesses. A lack of market information, managerial skills and technical competence limits the participation of women in value-adding business and the size of the enterprises that are often small and where most employees are unskilled (De Vita et al., 2014). Education and training are key elements in successful enterprise creation (Omwenga et al., 2013). The authors, in their study of women entrepreneurs in Nairobi, Kenya, found that many more women than men lack the requisite level of education and training, including business and technical skills and entrepreneurship training. They also found that women were often disadvantaged in terms of access to training. Women were often unaware of training opportunities and less likely to be able to afford the cost of training (Omwenga et al., 2013).

According to Saunders and Loots (2006) one of the key challenges faced by the informal economy in South Africa is vulnerability to microeconomic and macroeconomic trends, for example, the sales of vegetables and fruit in major retailers negatively affect the market share of street traders. Many people would prefer buying fruits in an environment they consider healthier, in this case retail shops. Retailers manage to keep their fresh produce looking the same over a period of time compared to that of the informal trader who has to purchase fresh produce on a daily basis. The street vendors again suffer competition from other street vendors because of the fluctuation of market prices, insecure and irregular employment. The fact that they are centralised in a certain strategic position to lure customers compels an informal trader to make his goods more appealing and affordable to the customer. Another reason for decrease in income of street vendors is that they are forced to pay 15% to 20% of their daily income as bribes to local police. The informal traders without licences and allocated stalls, operating at any available space or pavements are usually at the risk of these corrupt officials having to bribe them to be left operating whether the business has been successful or not. These informal traders would be women making them more vulnerable if the officials are men who demand more everyday culminating in sexual favours. Conducting a business in such a manner would be a recipe for disaster.

### **2.3 Section Two: Theoretical Framework**

This study utilises the post-colonial feminist theory and Marxist/socialist feminist theory to capture how history and societal norms have played a major role in marginalising black African women street traders in South Africa. The Post-colonial feminist theory is the main theory used in this study considering the colonial and apartheid history of South Africa. Like in most colonial situations across Africa, the majority of black Africans were marginalised and segregated in both political and socio-economic benefits. Women suffered the most due to patriarchy and second-class citizenship status. The Marxist feminist theory helps to reflect on the hierarchies of oppression that existed and still exist against women reflecting on the exclusionary systems and thinking that might be regarded as normal but only in the lenses of patriarchy. The exploration of black African women street traders' experiences critically reflects on the struggles faced by most women in their quest for socio-economic survival not only in South Africa but across Africa and other countries.

### **2.3.1 Postcolonial Feminist Theoretical Approach**

Postcolonial feminism is a form of feminism that developed as a response to feminism focusing solely on the experiences of women in Western cultures. Post-colonial feminism seeks to account for the way that racism and the long-lasting political, economic, and cultural effects of colonialism affect non-white, non-western women in the post-colonial world. This research will explore the plight of the black women generating her income in the informal sector. Post-colonial feminism originated in the 1980s as a critique of feminist theorists in developed countries pointing out the universalising tendencies of mainstream feminist ideas and argued that women living in non-western countries are misrepresented and needed this attention and representation. In this study, the topic is ‘women’ and the attention is on ‘how they function’ as independent informal traders making the post-colonial feminist theory be an aid into the understanding of this.

Post-colonial feminism posits that women are victims of “multi colonialism”, because they “simultaneously experience the oppression of colonialism, patriarchy and sexism and sexual abuse” (Tyagi, 2014: 45). According to Mkhize (2012: 25), post-colonial feminism helps understand and acknowledge “specific women’s past and present history and culture to better understand the relationship among women around the world”. This means that it is important to identify the factors that have been critical in oppressing female participation in every aspect. Post-colonial feminist theory provides a critical reflection on lived experiences of black African women as the historically oppressed gender and disadvantaged group within the South African context (Mkhize and Cele, 2017; Mkhize, 2012, 2015; Mohanty, 2003; Spivak, 1988). This theory will therefore, in this study, help reveal unique lived experiences of black African women street traders based on their participation to informal trading in Durban and in South Africa at large.

The brutal colonial history of South Africa disadvantaged women on many fronts. For most black women, the system of apartheid did not only strip the dignity of black women, through denying their opportunities in education and socio-economic participation, but also endorsed the double-jeopardy of both racial and patriarchal oppression. It is important to acknowledge that the history of apartheid in South Africa is also primarily responsible for the poor education of black women and for sustaining female poverty. The

struggles of the black African women were faced with a triple front namely racial segregation, social marginalisation and sexual exploitation (SA History Online, 2011). Their real struggles remained under the umbrella of racial freedom and yet their challenges and exclusion from economic participation remain even in the post-apartheid era. Findings in the study by Karumbidza (2011), indicated how black African women street traders in Durban complain of racial abuse by Indian metro police. Post-colonial feminism theory helped in tracing apartheid policy measures and approaches that have been reproduced by eThekweni Municipality that remain masculine and segregate female participation in the informal sector.

Post-colonial feminist theory is primarily concerned with the representation of women in once colonised countries and in western locations. While post-colonial theorist struggle against the maiden colonial discourse that aims at misrepresenting them inferior, the task of a post-colonial feminist is far more complicated. The post-colonial feminist approach argued that a woman suffers from “double colonisation” as she simultaneously experiences the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy. The woman must resist the control of colonial power not only as a colonised subject, but also as a woman. The issue of independence argued by the post-colonial feminist theory becomes not entirely attainable. For example, in South Africa despite being in the era of democracy, the benefits of what democracy entails for black African women in street trading remain far from reality. Literature indicates that more than 60% of those involved in street trading are black African women. The condition towards supporting their cause for socio-economic survival remains highly deplorable clearly outlining how the colonial history of South Africa did enhance patriarchy and further excluded women from participating in both political and economic matters. It is this oppressive experience of women which has continued to affect women’s life experiences as they remain segregated socially, politically, and economically, in policy and mostly practices (Mkhize, 2012).

Peterson (1984), in her article “*Problems of a feminist Approach to African Literature*,” argued that an important impetus behind the wave of African writing which started in the ’60s was the desire to show that the African past was orderly, dignified, and complex, and altogether a worthy heritage in order to fight cultural imperialism. Women’s issues were not only ignored, they were also sacrificed in the service of dignifying the past and restoring African self-confidence. The African past was made the object of a quest. The

picture of a woman's place and role in these societies had to support this quest and was consequently lent more dignity and described in positive terms than reality warranted.

The post-colonial feminist movements looked at the gendered history of colonialism and how that continues to affect the status of women today. In the 1940s and 1950s, after the formation of the United Nations, former colonies were monitored by the West for what was considered social progress. The definition of social progress was tied to the adherence of Western socio-cultural norms. The status of women in the developing world has been monitored by organisations such as the United Nations. Traditional practices and roles taken up by women, sometimes where seen as distasteful by Western standards and considered a form of rebellion against colonial rule. According to Mkhize (2012) post-colonial feminism seeks to provide, "understanding and acknowledgment of specific women's past and present history and culture to better understand the relationship among women around the world" meaning it is important to identify the factors that have been critical in oppressing female participation in every aspect.

Lomba (2015) critiqued the terminology of 'postcolonial' by arguing the fact that 'post' implicitly implies the aftermath of colonisation; she posed the question, "when exactly then, does the 'post-colonial' begin?" Post-colonial feminists see the parallels between recently decolonised nations and the state of women within patriarchy taking "perspective of a socially marginalised sub-group in their relationship to the dominant culture" (Mkhize, 2012:57). In this way feminism and post-colonialism can be seen as having a similar goal in giving a voice to those that were voiceless in the traditional dominant social order. The need to incorporate this theory into the study again is to have a better understanding of women in the informal sector.

### **2.3.2 Marxist Feminist Theoretical Approach**

Marxist feminist theory is useful in exploring challenges of black African women street traders. Marxist feminism is an emancipatory theory which unifies capitalism and feminism to which establishes gender oppression as necessary and direct outcome of capitalism (KhosraviShakib, 2010). The use of this theory will help identify and analyse factors that sustain gender oppression in economic distinctions. These factors include

historical systems of colonialism, patriarchy, culture and societal norms that have always regarded women as second-class citizens. Sharon Smith (2013) advocated that the works of Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels had the interests of women liberation right from the beginning. The use of Marxist Feminism as a theory in this study helps to reveal structural dependencies and exploitative relations not only between men and women but also between the formal and informal economic sectors. It is important to acknowledge that informal sectors characterised by street trading are often at a disadvantage of policy when it comes to government support, and yet they are also predominantly disadvantaged women (Neves et al., 2011; Rogerson, 2007). Adopting Marxist Feminism in this study provides an insight to look closely into the roles of women in contributing towards economic growth and the socio-economic issues affecting them in society and business.

The Communist Manifesto outlines how the bourgeois viewed women as ‘instruments of production’, an issue which needed to be addressed to redeem women from the status of being mere instruments of production (Marx and Engels, 1848). Marxist feminist theorists’ critique economic sectors, the modes of productions, as driven by patriarchal capitalism that depends on exploited labour of women and children. It is important to understand that the setback of women’s oppression in society extends to all spheres of life which include economy and politics. In Marx’s view the liberation of women begins by doing away with the perception of women as mere instruments in the capitalist world and society.

In agreement with the literature and research findings, the Marxist approach also claims that the informal sector is marginalised and is a minor commodity sector (Moser, 1978). The removal of the informal economy would not have that much effect on the formal economy, a hostile argument (Sdonline.org., 2017), and a Marxist approach denoting the fact that even though the two economies are subordinate to each other the informal sector poses a challenge to the formal sector. This approach also helped observe gender in relation to power to view whether or not the structural barriers have a different effect on women than it does on men to see if these barriers further contribute to gender inequality.

Marxist feminism was useful in the study to identify and analyse the factors that sustain women oppression in economic distinctions. These factors include historical systems of colonialism, patriarchy, culture and societal norms that have always regarded women as

second-class citizens. The study argued that it is important to distinguish the moral right and wrong from the existing systems in society, in this case, street trading. Some of the challenges black African women traders face include lack of support from government, racial abuse, confiscation of goods by metro police, lack of access to financial support services, lack of formal education and poverty background just to mention a few. The challenges of women in street trading should not just be looked at from face value, but through the historical social, political and economic disadvantages.

It is important to note that street trading or vending is not a secure job, considering its competitive nature and limited spaces to conduct business. Informal sectors in the global South are recognised as important engines of economic growth, employment alternative and argued to account for 39% of local gross domestic product (Grace, et al., 2014). According to ILO and WIEGO (2013) most women in Africa are in informal sector employment, particularly street vending, with Ghana standing with 88%, South Africa with 68% and Kenya with 63%. Sassen (2014) argued that “the role of women in street trade is significant not only for the prevailing number of women engaging in street trade but because of their noteworthy economic contributions and position as a vulnerable group”. This clearly compliments the Marxist Feminist theoretical approach that seeks to set alight the valuable contributes of women to society and the economy.

The research established that political policies including municipal by-laws and the inconsistencies of these by-laws are often confusing and difficult for most people to understand and obtain (WIEGO, 2017). With these challenges, street vendors are often vulnerable non compliance which leads to confiscation of goods, harassment, and evictions by authorities. There is much insecurity surrounding the sustenance of the trade. To secure the survival of women and to ensure their redemption from these various challenges, there is need to consider the role of women in advancing economic growth and their disadvantages which are historical.

Engels (1848) stated that for determining the relations between the sexes, division of labour in which women did reproduction work and men produce, is important. This division he argued, originally emerged as a biological, natural division of labour, giving women an edge over men, in a situation in which reproduction was a major activity. Later it got reconstructed into a social hierarchy with men becoming powerful based on the

invention and control over the 'productive forces' (technology), a control which allowed them to create some surplus wealth, and reduced women to servitude. Women became slaves of men's lust and mere instruments to produce children going in tandem with the Marxist feminist approach research which was carried out in Durban. Women, as both mother of no less than 3 children, caring for their families, as per the chauvinist requirements, and men taking over the business once it starts blossoming to take it to another level. Engels pointed out that unless the sexual division of labour changes and women join men in public production, they cannot be liberated.

According to Engels's famous analysis of women's situation in the history of different economic modes production in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1942), women are originally equal to, if not more powerful than, men in communal forms of production with matrilineal family organisations. Women lose power when private property comes into existence as a mode of production. Men's control of private property, and the ability to generate a surplus, changes the family form to a patriarchal one where women, and often slaves, become the property of the father and husband. Various research in the world shows that women were to bow to patriarchy to save their relationships and even go on to lose their businesses in the process. The Marxist feminist's theoretical approach begins to advocate for the fair treatment of women and also brings out unfairness. This theory became the perfect theory to incorporate into this study.

## **2.4 Summary of the Chapter**

Grounded on the main research objective that aimed at examining the experiences of black African women street traders, this chapter reviewed literature on women in street trading and presented relevant key theoretical frameworks underpinning the study. Though most cases are advocating for black women empowerment and support of women in the informal sector of street trading, there are more male vendors than female vendors in South Africa. In Durban 58% of the vendors are women and though Durban has taken steps to recognise street traders as contributors to the GDP as well as helpers in poverty and unemployment that has resulted from a lack of formal jobs, women street traders still face marginalisation in the economy and law enforcement.



The Marxist feminist approach was useful in this research as the majority of women face social, economic, political and physical restrictions in street trading, which is what this theory advocates against. This theoretical thinking promotes gender equity and equality which is the basis of most of the challenges that women street traders encounter. Some of the restrictions faced by women include being ill-treated by the law enforcement officials, criminalisation of their work, lack of credit and banking services and the lack of access to land for commercial purposes. Adopting the Marxist feminist theory was useful in identifying the exploitative nature that exists between the formal and informal economy, that largely affect and oppress women in the informal sector. Street traders become criminalised because of the repressive and restrictive nature of the by-laws that are stipulated by the government. Other tough conditions included high levels of competition, an unpredictable market and harsh weather. The women participate in street trading as a productive occupation despite the systematic social, political and economic challenges they face. The postcolonial feminist theoretical approach focused on the lived experiences and the challenges that black African women street traders face as the historically marginalised group. Since many of the women's circumstances were marked by inter-generational poverty. Their continued participation in street trading allows them to meet their needs for survival, through providing a family income and opened the possibilities for future occupations in which they could generate an income. These visions of possible future opportunities to participate in occupations drove the women's continued participation and agency. The objectives of this research were to examine the experiences of the black African women street traders in Durban, to look at the daily trading life and encounters of these women, and to find out if there is any support or help provided for the women in this business. These objectives were met using two theories, namely the postcolonial feminist theory and the Marxist feminist theory. The theories highlighted the plight of poverty and low levels of education that still overwhelm the previously disadvantaged black group. Also, the sad reality of the harsh reality and uncertainty of this type of business, although the government monitors and regulates this sector, there is still a lot of work to be done to better the conditions of this sector.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research methodology used in this research study on examining the experiences black African women street traders in Durban, which is key in outlining and understanding the collection and presentation process, as well as the analysis of the research findings. The chapter discusses the research method and methodology adopted to address mainly the question on the experiences of Black African women street traders in the post-apartheid era in Durban. Data collection, sampling strategy, sampling size, interviewing techniques, data analysis and, validity and reliability of data gathering are discussed in this chapter. Research methodology is a systematic way of solving a research problem or challenge (Kothari, 2012; Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathambi, 2013). It provides various steps in which the research is being conducted and outlines how the researcher engages research methods or techniques in addressing a problem under study (Kothari, 2012). A qualitative research design was employed in this study as it allowed for the researcher to engage in in-depth exploration and investigation of the lived experience that surround the women who trade informally in and around Durban. The data was collected using one on one in-depth interviews which is discussed in detail in this chapter.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This qualitative research study sought to examine the experiences of black African women trading in the streets of Durban in post-apartheid South Africa. The research study was designed based on phenomenology, which used an exploratory design to address the objectives. Research design refers to the plan used in conducting the research. It gives guidelines on how to collect and unpack the patterns of a specific research study. Creswell (2014) explained that “research designs are types of inquiry that fall within qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods approaches to provide specific direction for procedure”. A research design assists in the effective deciphering of the evidence acquired, and to identify the best way to address the problems and challenges identified (Gorard, 2013). There are several types of research designs, which can be applied depending on the type of study under investigation. These research designs include case study, phenomenology,

explorative, ethnography, grounded theory, experimental and comparative design. Research presents a unique problem and aims in which to assist in choosing the best suitable type of research design to be used. The effectiveness of a design is determined by its ability to minimise biased information, provide alternative understanding and maximise on reliable sources in reaching conclusions. Phenomenology research helps to describe the individual's lived experiences concerning a phenomenon as described by the participants (Astalin, 2013; Creswell, 2014). The interviews were conducted using one on one in depth interviews and participant observations in exploring their experiences and to further provide descriptive narratives as Black African Women traders.

Using explorative research design, this study was able to inquire detailed accounts of the life conditions of black African women street traders in Durban. Explorative research design involves the inquiry of lives of one or more individuals to understand their life stories by the researcher (Kothari, 2012). It gives the researcher the platform and advantage to implore, reflect and provide narratives of the issues surrounding the lives of one or more individuals under study. Exploratory research provided the researcher with an opportunity to inquire about the life stories of the women involved in vending around Durban. This design was applied because it is flexible and allowed the researcher to explore different locations across the city of Durban to inquire and gather life narratives of black African women street traders. The design permitted the researcher to reflect from existing studies and compare various similarities that exist in the stories told by participants interviewed.

As highlighted, the study utilised phenomenology or descriptive research design. The use of descriptive research design allowed for the researcher to ask questions such as what, when, who and how concerning the challenges and experiences of black African women in informal trading around Durban. It enabled the researcher to probe and obtain in depth information on their experiences, to describe and analyse the existing trading conditions, and to also use the collected data to provide relevant understanding of people's perception, attitudes and practices (Creswell, 2014; Given and Saumure, 2008). The use of the descriptive design worked as a guide to the effective construction of the research questions which were used to yield and obtain rich data from the participants through interviews.

### **3.3 Qualitative Research Method**

This study used an empirical qualitative research method to conduct field research on the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban. Qualitative research refers to studies that are concerned with the phenomena of quality or kind, which means, it seeks to understand reasons behind human behaviour (Kothari, 2012). Qualitative approach was the most suitable for this research since it provided flexible methods and techniques that were relevant in conducting this exploratory research. As exploratory, this research examined the lived experiences of people in a context or setting of the street trading black African women in Durban (Creswell, 2013). This method was preferred because it is more relevant to feminist research as it allowed the women street traders' voices to emerge, be listened to and recorded. Women are marginalised, and the voices are silenced in most societies, they go through struggles and challenges that they never get to spoken about and yet they play critical roles in the development and sustenance of the livelihoods and communities. Feminist research indicates the need and importance to provide a platform to advance the voices of the marginalised, study the unstudied and unsung heroes to create a balance and awareness to eliminate inequalities across societies (Nielsen, 2019). Some of the interviewed women in this study reflected on the multiple duties and unpaid labour they partake in taking care of family and having to work as illegal street traders in an environment that does not give them opportunities. Qualitative research allowed the researcher to capture the deep and personal challenges that affect women more than their male counterparts in the street trading business.

This research applied a qualitative methodology in order to use individual in-depth interviews as a data collection tool. This type of interview allowed the researcher to probe, examine, review, and analyse the socio-economic conduct under study (Kothari, 2004). The researcher had to engage in-depth interviews to explore their experiences as women street traders and capture the key issues that influence and affect their involvement in the street trading business. The researcher asked questions with the intention to understand the family status, reasons for conducting business, how the women occupy the trading spaces, hours worked and support from local authorities. Questions like, why do you do this business? The researcher would ask follow-up questions depending with the responses given by the participant to understand more the different reasons and issues

surrounding the factors influencing the participation of black African women in street trading.

Qualitative research provides the necessary mechanisms for representation of social experiences, events, actions encountered and reactions of people to the different lived situations (Wagner and Kawulich, 2012). Through probing, the researcher managed to understand the challenges, expectations and hopes that black African women in street trading have. It also helped the interviewees to elaborate further on the different issues they face. More so, it made them more comfortable to communicate freely on the various issues that might not have been shared without probing. This means various variables can be investigated that assist and enable the researcher to reach a conclusion which is not biased by personal feelings or opinions of the research under study. For such reasons, this research adopted qualitative research method in conducting this study on women street traders in order to understand their unique daily lived experiences. The relevance of qualitative study in this research was to ensure a coherent discussion of issues that affect women in the informal trading. The researcher had an interview guide to ensure sure that all the interviewees were asked the same questions to obtain a comparable reflection on gathered information. This helped the researcher to sort gathered information in a more organised and clear manner.

### **3.4 Research Site and its Significance: Durban**

The research for this study was conducted in some of the street trading places in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Namely Durban Station, Durban Beach Front (targets tourists along the beach and hotels), Mansel Road, and Durban University of Technology. Durban Station was the initial study sampling location interest because of its prominence, and since this research also used snowball sampling; other research sites were then identified by other participants and that is how they became part of this research. Besides being a convenient location to the researcher, Durban City is also purposely chosen for population sample as it is estimated to host an estimated number of 87,541 street vendors with 94% of these being black African (Mkhize, Dube and Skinner, 2013: 9). After more than two decades of democracy Durban is battling with struggles against poverty, unemployment and hunger. Social injustices continue to be a matter of contention with major impacts on individuals and the economy at large (Statistics South Africa, 2016).

Durban was chosen because it was the first municipality in the post-apartheid South Africa to implement informal trading policies in 2001. The study chose to focus on Durban because based on the informal economy monitoring study, vending is a key source of income for at least in 60% of the household sampled population (Mkhize et al., 2013). The household characteristics of the same study suggested that street trading is the main source of income particularly in female headed households. This income also supplements households with men as breadwinners. Sixty percent of women workers are involved in the arts and craft sector (eThekweni Unicity Municipality, 2001). The informal workers are mainly seen in the central city but far outnumbered by the many home based and outside workers. In Durban, especially in the places the researcher visited, black African women are the main workers, and even though there are some black African women who are not South Africans selling in these streets, this study, because of its post-apartheid era focus, targeted black African women who are South Africans.

### **3.5 Sampling Technique of the Population Studied**

For the sampling of participants, this study applied purposive and snowballing sampling techniques of non-probability sampling method (Johnson and Christensen, 2004) to target black African women street traders to be interviewed. Johnson and Christensen (2004) defined a sample as a group of individuals, items, or events that are used to reflect or represent as a mirror perspective of a larger group being investigated in a study.

Purposive sampling in research is when there is “deliberate selection of particular units of the universe for constituting a sample which represents the universe” (Kothari, 2012:15). This means participants chosen in this study were deliberately chosen because they are black women involved in street trading. Purposive sampling was specifically used to identify the initial participant who was first to be interviewed in Durban Station. The purposively approached initial participant was chosen by the researcher based on being a black woman street trader behind the craft counter selling the products. The researcher introduced herself and requested to talk to the woman. Upon agreement, the researcher shared her interests to interview her and request for a referral in order to get more women to interview. Snowballing sampling, also known as chain-referral sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which initial purposely identified participant(s) helped the researcher identify other suitable research subjects (Creswell, 2015; O’Leary, 2010).

This first stage of this method involved the researcher picking a few individuals from the study population, these participants worked as informants and assisted in identifying other members willing to be interviewed. In applying the snowballing method, I asked the first participant to refer the researcher to other participants. After each interview, the participant would be asked to refer another potential interviewee within their location. Using purposive sampling method, the study of the initial participants was sampled from Durban Station (DS). Other Durban street locations were also included in this study based on snowballing sampling method referrals. The researcher interviewed participants from different street trading locations around Durban, which included, Mansel Road (MR), Beach Front (BF) and Durban University of Technology (DUT). The selected participants provided stories which speak about their different life journeys leading to informal trading, and their experiences and challenges in this type of business.

Demographically, the study sampled black South African women, irrespective of ethnic groups, aged 18 and above, and street trading in Durban. This allowed diverse voices of black African women because gender and racial ethnicity played a huge role in the oppression and marginalisation of segregated South African citizens during the apartheid era (Akindoade, 2005; WIEGO, 2013). Empirical research was conducted in the months of May and June in 2019, using in-depth interviews. I sampled and interviewed a total of 15 participants with the help of purposive and snowballing method. The sample size was adequate for the study as an exploratory research as interviews had been conducted on a limited scale for a deep and greater insight to be explored with the selected individuals (Creswell, 2015). Qualitative research sample sizes are often smaller than the ones used in quantitative studies, because they are focused on attaining in-depth information concerning a particular issue “which are often centred on the how and why of a particular issue, process, situation, subculture, scene or set of social interactions” (Dworkin, 2012: 1319). A small sample size for in-depth interviews is important to avoid saturation of data whereby more interviews no longer yield any new information or new theoretical insights (Dworkin, 2012; Mason, 2010; Charmaz, 2006). Fifteen interviews (see Table 1 below) were conducted to ensure that all thorough angles are exhausted, though there was repetitive information and related experiences which the researcher noticed.

**Table 1: Demographic Information of The Participants**

Sample #	Participant Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Trading Location	Home Location	Number of children/dependants	Marital Status	Education Level
1.	Flossy	40	DUT	Palmiet Road	1	Single	Grade 11
2.	Aggie	54	DUT	Umlazi	5	Single	Grade 2
3.	Weziwe	73	BF	Ebuhleni	1	Widowed	None
4.	Sibo	62	BF	Umlazi	4	Married	None
5.	Winnie	56	BF	Lindelani	4	Single	Standard 2
6.	Ntombi	47	BF	Kenville	5	Single	Grade 11
7.	Qike	64	DS	Umlazi	7	Widow	None
8.	Joyce	50	DS	eMbumbulu	2	Married	None
9.	Zandi	58	DS	eNanda	None	Single	Grade 2
10.	Nkosikhona	57	MR	eNanda(Matiko)	3	Married	Grade 1
11.	Zama	37	MR	Mount Royal	2	Single	Standard 7
12.	Noma	58	MR	Mansel Houses	3	Married	Standard 1
13.	Thembi	45	MR	Manguzi	6	Single	Standard 5
14.	Noku	39	MR	Mansel Houses	2	Single	Grade 12
15.	Sindi	37	MR	Ntuzuma	2	Single	Grade 12

### 3.6 Data collection methods

A qualitative research study can be conducted through field research or library or desktop research. Field research is empirical; the researcher engages with the people to obtain research data through interviews, questionnaires, observations or participation and interaction (Kothari, 2012). Library or desktop research refers to secondary data where research data emerges from historical documents and records, books and already published various materials concerning a subject under study (Given and Saumure, 2008). These approaches are both qualitative. Walliman (2011: 73) explained that qualitative research relies more on data collected through “observation notes, interview transcripts, literary texts, minutes of meetings, historical records, memos and recollections and documentary films”. Sources of qualitative data depend more on human interpretation, insights and impressions (Kothari, 2004; Walliman, 2011). This study was completed as a qualitative study employing one on one in-depth interviews which are discussed below.

#### 3.6.1 One on One In-depth Interview

This study used qualitative research interviews in collecting the relevant data for this study. In-depth interviews were conducted to gather detailed information on the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban. In-depth interviews involve unfolding complex situations and conducting intensive individual interviews to explore



their situations or perspectives on a topic (Creswell, 2005). I interviewed participants on the reasons for being involved in street trading, the hours they work, the legality of their business, the support rendered from relevant authorities, the safety of women street traders, and the income rate (See Appendix 1 for the Interview Guide). The interviews were conducted in four key street trading areas namely Durban Station, Beach Front, Mansel Area, and Durban University of Technology (DUT). Most of the participants showed much interest in the study, some of them expressed how the study had given them the opportunity to talk and to reflect on some of the issues that most people do not even bother to talk about. They were happy to have someone to listen to them. However, the participants, to some extent, seemed to withhold information; the researcher had to strategically and carefully probe for more with follow-up questions to ensure that the participants shared all the relevant information. In-depth interviews enabled the interviewer to probe beyond the answers given and gave the participants licence to answer more on their terms and in any way they choose to talk about the subject matter under investigation (Kothari, 2012). This allowed for understanding to be presented and narrated based on the interviewees' point of view. Informal observation was casually used from the researcher's interest standpoint. Through informal observations I took copious notes on what, for them, would appear to be their everyday happenings. This assisted me in understanding and interpreting their working and social environment (Brown, 1984). The researcher was able to provide thematic presentations from the views shared by participants.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Data analysis in qualitative research is an ongoing process which begins with the collection of research data. The data collected is categorised so that the events are better explained. This research study used a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis refers to the recurring issues, patterns, causal connections and reactions that emerge in a qualitative research (Creswell, 2015). This instrument of analysing data is critical in reflecting on common themes in literature and findings of the study. Presenting the facts found in the study through recognised approaches such as thematic analysis allowed for comparative analysis of facts and the recognition of various themes that are key to reach accurate conclusions (Creswell, 2015). This study acquired data which is grounded in human experience, it required a rigorous and methodological qualitative technique that can yield

results that are meaningful and trustworthy (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). Thematic analysis was preferred as it also provides a systematic and detailed approach that can be easily translated and communicated in a more transparent manner to other people (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). The conducted in-depth interviews, participant observations and reviewed literature were sorted and organised together and presented into themes and sub-themes.

### **3.8 Trustworthiness: Credibility, dependability and rigour**

In qualitative research it is important to make sure that the outcomes of the study are credible and dependable. Assessing credibility, dependability and rigour is meant to authenticate the research study. There is a need for considering trustworthiness and authenticity of the research outcomes. Patrick (2011) outlined that in conducting an empirical social science research, it is important to understand that trustworthiness is essential because the outcomes of such a study are used to make a wide range of decisions in various platforms more frequently. To ensure trustworthiness, credibility, dependability and rigour of the research, this study conducted interviews with participants and of authentic qualitative research approaches. Kumar (2004) argued that a research study must seek to reduce bias and maximize credible and dependable information. This study provided trustworthy, credible and dependable information by using an interview guide ensure that the questions that were asked to the participants are the same to reduce possible biases; however, probing was applied for some responses as a way of acquiring more understanding – ensuring trustworthiness of data provided. The targeted participants are not fluent in English, the interviews were conducted mainly conducted in isiZulu to ensure that more credible and authentic information was accessed. IsiZulu was chosen as the language that is widely spoken in KwaZulu-Natal and most people who trade on the street speak IsiZulu irrespective of their ethnicity. Secondary data was used to reflect on existing literature as a guideline to ensure that the findings have rigor. Literature from peer-reviewed journals, books, recognised organisational materials (e.g. UN), government policy documents and reputable news agencies were used to validate and inform as credible and dependable research process and results.

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

The research study was conducted following and abiding with the University of KwaZulu-Natal's (UKZN) Research Ethics recommendations. Research ethical approval was sought from UKZN Research Ethics Office. A gatekeeper's approval to conduct research was sought from the Municipal Institute of Learning of the eThekweni Municipality. The researcher went to the research locations which included Durban Station, Beach Front, , Mansel Road and DUT areas and approached the first women street traders she saw in each area. The researcher explained her research interests and showed them the research consent form (see Appendix 2) and asked if they were willing to participate. The researcher would ask if the participant had understood everything before signing the consent form. Upon the participant's agreement, the researcher would ask them to sign the participation consent form. All the interviewees were made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time and were informed that their real names will be coded and replaced by pseudonyms. Before the interview, the participants were asked if they were willing to be recorded and those that agreed were recorded. Every first participant interviewed in all the locations was asked to refer other potential participants who might be willing to participate in the study, sometimes out of interest and curiosity, some would volunteer to be interviewed. All the interviews were conducted in IsiZulu and then translated into English for data analysis purposes.

### **3.9.1 My role as a Researcher**

My role as a researcher in this study was to investigate the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban. This study required me to spend a great deal of time in their designated trading spaces, in order to build a relationship of friendship and trust with people with whom I had no personal affinity. Most of the women welcomed and accepted me, they allowed me to sit and spend time with them. As they began to warm up to me, they became comfortable and shared their struggles, and some got personal and emotional. They were kind enough to even allow me to audio record some of our conversations. Others, as expected, rejected me and would not speak to me. I accepted this because I understood that it was not personal or directed at me, but mostly based on lack of trust and previous bad experiences, where people used their information for selfish personal gains. Trading in the street is competition as most of the women sold more or less the same material – handmade craft such as beadwork and traditional attires, pinafores, fresh fruits and drinks and big plastic water drums. The 30 to 45 minutes spent with the

researcher meant losing potential clients; the reason why some were reluctant to talk to me. Participants became comfortable talking to me, once they knew I was referred by someone they knew.

Culture and language played a significant role in connecting with the respondents, because the researcher is Zulu speaking and of the Zulu culture, communicating and understanding them was not a problem, they were all approached with respect. The researcher did, however, experience some bit of difficulties with the younger participants, those in their mid to late 30s as they lacked trust, due to previous unfortunate encounters where they were tricked into participating in interviews and projects only to be exploited at the end, these acts really hurt them and made them lose hope in ever getting assistance for their businesses, because of this, some even refused to be interviewed which was understandable and not personal. The older women were friendlier and welcoming, and buying from them really helped with the forming of relationships between us. They opened up to me and shared their stories and tears with me and some even offered their lunch, these acts of kindness made me feel welcomed. These interactions confirmed that every human being just wants to be recognised and respected, and that's what the researcher gave them, and that's what also gave them a voice and made this research a success.

### **3.9.2 Limitations of the study**

The limitations that were encountered in this study was that some women thought that participating in the interview would result in some form of reward. After realising that there was no reward, they would show lack of interest. The researcher clarified the meaning and importance of their individual participation in sharing their experiences and how their stories will be represented, and their names changed in the study to protect them. This managed to retain some participants particularly in Mansel area. This study gathered a lot of information which took long to sort and organise. Thematic organising of ideas enabled the researcher to process the data in a clear and faster way.

### **3.10 Conclusion**

This chapter explored the methodology utilised in this research study on examining the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban in the post-apartheid era. It provided an outline on qualitative research approach and its importance in a social science research. One on one in-depth interviews were conducted with all the participants, giving each participant enough time, attention and privacy to answer the questions and tell their stories in a way most comfortable for them. From their answers, themes were derived and organised to answer the objective of this research. This study examined a challenge that exists in social setting and has much impact in the study of gender studies as it touches on challenges faced by women street traders. Therefore, the use of qualitative research methodology enabled the researcher to explore on multiple perspectives in understanding the factors that influence and contribute to the experiences of women in informal businesses.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH RESULTS AND FINIDNGS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research results and discussion of findings from the qualitative research that was conducted in 2019 using one on one interviews with the women street traders in Durban in South Africa. The main objective of the research was to examine lived experiences of black African women street traders in the post-apartheid era in Durban. As part of informal trading, street trading has become a supporting hub for most disadvantaged and unemployed people in the post-apartheid South Africa, with black Africans making the majority. The findings were derived from data analysis including various factors and challenges pertaining to the experiences of black African women street traders based on the views of the sampled participants. The study sampled black African South African women street traders in the post-apartheid era; unlike colonialism, apartheid only occurred in South Africa.

The black African population constitutes the most oppressed and segregated group, in all forms, during the era of apartheid (Mkhize, 2012). By virtue of their gender, black African women experienced multiple levels of oppression in addition to the collective racial, economic and political forms of oppression (Mkhize, 2012). It is within this context that the essentialisation of black African women to only South Africans is intentional, subjective and crucial to this study. It is to allow the historically, gender and racially oppressed group of black African population a voice; focusing on their post-apartheid lived experiences as street traders. Post-colonial feminist theory is found more relevant and effective in locating and discussing situations of women with histories embedded on colonialism (Mohanty, 2003; Mkhize, 2012), and apartheid in the case of this study. Post-colonial theory focuses on the experiences of the colonised society's point of view as it suggests that colonised countries remain excluded in contemporary global modernity (hook, 2012). In addition, socialist feminist theory is relevant in analysing, contextualising and conceptualising socio-economic situations and challenges of black African women street traders. Socialist feminist theory is a two prone theory focusing on the role of capitalism in the oppression of women and the radical theory looks at the role of gender in patriarchy (Wharton, 1991). This theory helped in highlighting disadvantages and marginalisation facing black South African women in the informal trading in post-apartheid South Africa. Postcolonial feminist and socialist feminist theories were useful in revealing several societal factors that the study found to be reinforcing and sustaining difficult conditions for black African women in street trading. Research results are presented utilising a gender lens and are discussed under the factors the study found to be

influencing and sustaining gendered socio-economic challenges specific to black African women involved in informal street trading in post-apartheid South Africa. These factors include poverty, patriarchy, exploitative nature of capitalism (men vs women; formal vs informal), and the history of apartheid segregation. It is within this context that this chapter first presents the demographic characteristics of the sampled participants, as per the interview schedule, followed by the recurring themes from the analysis of the interviews and casual observations, which is concluded by research results and the discussion of findings.

#### **4.2 Demographic Factors of Black African Women Street Traders in Durban**

This section presents the qualitative results of the interviews and observations of black African women street traders that were conducted in Durban. The women were sampled from Durban City and participants were drawn from Durban Station (DS), Mansel Road (MR), Beach Front (BF) and Durban University of Technology (DUT) areas. The research for this study was conducted on a sample of 15 black South African women, actively involved in street trading as the informal business sector. In compliance with the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) research ethical consideration, pseudonyms are used to cite the women in this study (*see Table 1 in Chapter Three*). Pseudonyms are used to protect their stories and comply with issues of confidentiality. All women interviewed were between 35 and 70 years of age. The most represented age groups ranged from 51 to 65 years of age (47%), followed by 35 to 50 years of age (43%) with just 9% above 65 years. The age is important to show representation of the younger and older women in street trading. The influx of women trading in the informal sector is mainly due poverty, which can be linked to illiteracy, low levels of formal education and incompetence caused largely by historical exclusions of blacks. Research shows that the deliberate exclusion of black people from the educational system under apartheid contributed to the high rates of poverty and unemployment today (Statistics South Africa, 2019). This exclusion is also what has placed the black African women on the streets to fend for their families. And although this is rather an unfortunate common factor, it is also what has brought them together, to work and build strong relationships with one another while they make a living and raise their children.

Unemployment continues to be a major issue in South Africa. According to Statistics South Africa (2019), the number of unemployed people in South Africa has increased at an alarming rate. For instance, from 4.5 million in 2009 to 6.7 million in 2019 with the black African women being the most vulnerable with an unemployment rate of over 30%, followed by Coloureds with 23.7% and Indians/Asians with 18.2% (Statistics South Africa, 2019). The factors that drive unemployment are many, but most black women interviewed in the informal sector are struggling because of the legacy of apartheid and poor education and training, they come from poor marginalised backgrounds and their inadequate education and productivity is costing them jobs (Statistics South Africa, 2019). The latest Quarterly Labour Force Surveys (2019) found about 3 million people working in the informal sector, which is just under 20% of total employment. While this sector is small compared to other developing countries, its role as a source of employment and livelihoods for millions of people deserves recognition. Linked to the vital role of the informal sector to create jobs, is the impact it has on poverty alleviation and was supported by the interviewees as they became involved in this business as a form of employment and survival strategy. The various reasons for venturing in this type of business, is highlighted in Table 4.1 which will be discussed below.

#### **4.3 Research Results and Interpretation: Presentation and discussion of data through themes**

The results are presented thematically and provide detailed discussions of the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban. The researcher employed thematic analysis and conducted a manual classification of common concepts derived from the respondents. From the common concepts, certain themes emerged more prominently than others, representing the voices of the women. The unexpected themes coming out of the data were regarded as *grounded*, whilst those that the researcher brought to the respondents in the form of interview questions based on literature were *contextual*.

Some of the interview questions were: *Why are you doing street trading? How did you start?* These questions were able to elicit how women were (and are) socialised (conducted and inducted) into the informal sector. Through such questions, the researcher wanted the respondents to speak around their experiences that led to them being part of the informal sector. Some of the answers were:



After struggling for years to get a job because of my illiteracy, I was introduced to this business and my life changed for the better (Sibo, BF).

Another participant said:

I joined this business after my husband passed away and I was left to take care of our 7 children, I have been selling here for over 20 years now (Oike, DS).

The data derived from the research was analysed and well interpreted into themes and subthemes as tabulated, followed by their discussion.

**Table 2: Themes Emerging from the Findings**

Themes	Sub-themes
<b>Conduction and induction - [contextual]</b> (How women sought to street trading)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty and women headed households</li> <li>• Lower-level of formal education</li> <li>• Social and economic pressures</li> <li>• Need to start own businesses</li> </ul>
<b>Informal business operation limits – [grounded]</b> (Challenges affecting black African women in street trading)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate permanent spaces and infrastructure to conduct business</li> <li>• Backlog on issuing of Trading Permits and contradictions of space ownership</li> </ul>
<b>Women marginalisation/exclusion- [grounded]</b> (Structural displacement of women to economic peripheries)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High competition increases cost of living, thus displacing poor women</li> <li>• Poor income</li> <li>• Women face gender specific obstacles</li> <li>• Child-care facilities</li> <li>• Women inaccessibility to finance</li> <li>• The personal is political</li> </ul>
<b>Government policies as barriers – [grounded]</b> (Local government legislations as technologies of exclusion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eThekweni Municipality support for women street traders</li> <li>• Poor access to information</li> <li>• Capacity building and support</li> </ul>

#### 4.3.1 Conduction and Induction (How women sought to street trading)

Research results reveal various reasons for black African women to be involved in street trading in Durban. The reasons that stood out during data analysis were derived from the

women's voices, included poverty, lower levels of formal education, scarcity of employment and increasing economic challenges, and other socio-economic push factors.

#### **4.3.1.1 Poverty and women-headed households**

Hendricks (2010) argued that even though the transition from apartheid to democracy has made remarkable progress in terms of opening opportunities for the previously disadvantaged and in job creation, the disparities between the rich and poor has widened, and the number of those living in poverty is still high, with women as the majority. South Africa has an estimated population of 10.2 million, and about 20.2% of this population live below the breadline of R321.00 per month (World Bank, 2018) making poverty alleviation the South African government's key priority. One of many government interventions was declared in the National Development Plan (NDP) which is an important policy document drafted in 2012 with an overarching objective to alleviate poverty and inequality. It aims to alleviate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030 (South Africa's National Development Plan, 2012).

Women constitute an important constituency of the urban population and the majority are in the informal economy, working either as domestic workers or street traders. They work long hours and under extreme pressures of life as they must feed their families with little or no assistance. Marginalisation and lack of formal education has denied them access to the predominantly male formal sector. According to Lund (1998), most street traders in South Africa are black women who trade in a range of goods such as sweets, snacks, cigarettes, clothing, and fruit and vegetables and the women in Durban are no different, one cannot talk about the informal sector without talking about black women. One participant told her story of how she inherited this business from her mother:

My mother worked here as a young girl in the apartheid era, she had come here to join her elder sister here at Beach Front. Her sister got a job and left the business to my mother. My mother is old now, she can barely walk, so this has become my business and I hope to one day pass it to my daughter (Ntombi, BF).

Another participant shared how she's able to work while looking after her grandchildren:

I'm so thankful for this house and the business, I stay with my daughter, one tenant and my 2 grandchildren here. I moved here from Ntuzuma over 25 years ago and I raised all my children here from selling pillows and sleeping sponge mattresses. I run my business while I also look after my grandchildren so I can't complain (Noma, MR).

The discussions and expressions of poverty are proving to be gendered and a closer look into the informal sector confirms this as women continue to enter and dominate this industry, not only do they take care of their children, but most of them are head of their households. In light of it all, it was however comforting to learn about the efforts and interventions made by the government to intervene, these are evident in the increased allocation of social grants and social wages over the past decade (Statistics South Africa, 2013). All women interviewed receive social wages of some form, and while most received monthly child support grants, a few also received older person's grant. Sibó receives a child support grant for her 3 children:

I have 3 children, and I get R430 for each child, which is a total of R1290 a month. This money helps in transport money especially on days when business is dry. I just feel bad because now I use it more on boosting this business than on my kids (Sibó, BF).

While the child support grant for her 3 children has made a difference in Sibó's life, Zama on the contrary complained about how the R430 she receives does not make much of a difference in taking care of her child:

The social grant I get for my one child is not enough to raise a child, you need an additional income stream. I make sell jockey underwear and tights, at least with that I can survive, I go around to different markets to sell there (Sindi, MR).

Flossy however, who is also a single mother of one sang a different tune:

My daughter is 15 this year and she takes a bus to school, so her social grant pays for her bus fare, that money is only enough for that, money for other essentials I get from this business. Business here at DUT is good so I can't complain much (Flossy, DUT).

Weziwe is based on Durban Beach Front, even though she's not sure of her exact age, she knows she's just over 70 years and looked very frail and tired. She was laying on the floor when I approached her open tent, she sells beaded work and beach wear. I bought some of her beads and asked if I could sit down with her, even though she looked confused she allowed me. There were other elderly women working with her and I offered to buy them something to drink and we started talking. Her story was a very touching one, even though at first, she was reluctant to talk to me, she eventually opened and shared her struggles. It made her cry, but also it relieved her as now she could finally share her story with whoever cared enough to listen:

I'm not sure how old I am, but I know I'm very old. I've lived long enough to bury all my children, I only have one grandson left, he's the reason why my pension fund is not enough, and my knees struggle to carry me (Weziwe, BF).

Noku shared how the child support grant for her 2 children assists her in her monthly expenses:

When I combine the money I get as child support for my two children and the money I make here, it does make a bit of a difference because at least I know that every month I have a guaranteed R860 that I work on, sometimes it's the only money that we have at the end of the month, because most of the money I make here gets thrown back into this money, either in the form of transportation, rent, of stock (Noku, MR).

While these grants work as emergency mechanisms to alleviate poverty, they do not tackle the root cause of poverty. What these grants have done is create a dependency which inhibits the development of potential in these women. The background of poverty and a lack of formal education as claimed in the literature research is affecting women street traders. Many of these women are caught in a poverty cycle. This research study has found that many women street traders experience severe cash-flow problems, which have ripple effects on their ability to manage profitable businesses and enough stock. One of the participants at Mansel Road containers had kept clothes on stock for months had become dirty:

I've worked here for over 20 years now, but I have nothing to show for it, I've watched my business deteriorate over the years until it had come to this. No one will buy this, if they do, they want ridiculous discounts and it's killing my business. If I can just get money to replace this old stock things would be better (Noma, MR).

Even the comparatively younger ones in their late thirties told stories on how they don't have business or savings accounts to save and monitor the performance of their business:

There's hardly any money left over to carry over to the next month, there's always an urgency for money, if it's not stock, it's transport or rent, if not it's food or something else that needs money, in fact the money is not enough for all the expenses (Joyce, DS).

The women interviewed are struggling due to the scarcity of management and innovative ways to improve their businesses. This is not a just the case here in Durban the study by Omwenga et al., (2013) of women entrepreneurs in Nairobi, Kenya, also found that many more women than men lack the requisite level of education and training, including business and technical skills and entrepreneurship training to better and improve their business. Then there is the underlying issue of poverty which is a major setback hindering

and delaying the progress of the underprivileged black Africans. South African women form the majority of those living in high levels of poverty (Mkhize and Cele, 2017; Mkhize, 2013). Dugard and Mohlahaona (2009: 546) further explains that:

Women have less access to land, agriculture, jobs and credit, and they make up only 38% of the formal labour force. In terms of the poverty indices, the poverty rate among female-headed households is 60%, compared with 31% for male-headed households. According to the 2007 General Household Survey, 'if you lived in a female-headed household in 2007 you were 63% more likely to experience hunger than if you lived in a male-headed household.

Therefore, in contrast to most women, many men are usually in a better position to secure financial assistance. Flossy said:

We don't have access to funding. The entry point is very inaccessible to black women in our business, the requirements are too high (Flossy, DUT).

Zama also shared that:

The formal requirements needed by these institutions for our businesses to be formalised are way beyond what the poor masses on the ground can provide, access to formal business mechanism is non-existent. These things don't reach ordinary people on the ground (Zama, MR).

The growth of these women's businesses is slow and hard to attain because of the pre-existing difficulties linked with being a black, poor, and uneducated women. All the women interviewed only received social grants, no funding or assistance for their businesses, and the money they make is barely enough for them and their families with nothing left as savings for future growth or development of their business. This research discovered that Durban is characterised by a comparatively high poverty-stricken majority of black African women, who have left the comfort of their homes and 'household' responsibilities in pursuit of financial freedom and independence. Most respondents, about 9 of the 15 are single parents and unmarried, they are not only responsible for their children, but for their extended families. This ratio implies that most of the women involved in street trading are breadwinners and heads of the families. Statistics South Africa (2017: 18) revealed that women-headed households remain significantly poorer than male-headed households; this is mostly the case in rural areas, which is where also, most households are run and managed by women. It also emerged that the children raised in impoverished conditions are less likely to go to school, even if they do, they are less likely to perform well or complete their formal education. This

causes a ripple effect as poor households produce poor kids who then struggle to gain access to the formal environment. One respondent said;

I started coming here to help my mother after finishing primary. When I started secondary, she passed away and I had to take over to look after my two young sisters. I still take care of them and they look after our children (Joyce, DS)

Zandi also said,

I wake up at 4am every day to prepare my grandchild for school and myself for work, her mother is irresponsible and does as she pleases. I must have done something wrong with her as I was here most of the time working while she stayed with my mother (Zandi)

Statistics South Africa (2017) revealed that the severity and poverty gap estimates are higher in women-headed households compared to male-headed households. The poverty shares in 2015 revealed that more than five out of ten (51.6%) poor households in South Africa were headed by women, whereas 48.4% accounted for those headed by men. This is a major concern as 78% of the women participants of this study are heads of their families. They spend most of their time on the streets, as means to an end. Most of them live and sleep where they trade and only go home on weekends, or some weekends, depending on how far their homes are situated as they cannot afford transport money.

Paramount in explaining the inequalities that exist in gender are the gendered societal relations perpetuated by unequal division of power and access to social and economic resources. This analysis came with a strong linkage between gender and poverty. The findings from the research interviews conducted in Durban established that the life experiences and conditions of black African women are more affiliated with the characteristics of poverty than that of men, leading the researcher to conclude that men and women don't share the same trading experiences, the way that they experience poverty is different, with women more likely to be prone to it than men. Women remain the face of poverty as most of them, at a young age, find themselves in situations that force them to mature quickly, and take care of their young siblings as a result of the absence or death of their parents. These unfortunate life events force young girls to leave school and look for alternative ways to survive and earn a living, most resorting to the informal sector as it is an open market that does not require any formal education.

#### **4.3.1.2 Lower level of formal education**

Of the 15 interviewed participants, only 2 had reached grade 12. The majority of those between the ages of 35 to 50 have primary school basic education. Many participants from the age of 51 years and up can barely read or write as most of them never went to school or left school in the early grades (grade 1-3).

I never went to school so I can't read or write. My mother worked as a domestic worker and stayed with us in her backroom. I also worked as a domestic worker as a young girl following my mother passing, and that later led me to trading here in Durban Station. I have been here for 15 years now (Noma, MR)

Another respondent said:

I left school in grade 3 because it was far, and my father stopped me from going but my brothers continued. I look at life now and wish I had the chance to finish School. I really believe that life would be so much better for me and my children (Winnie, BF)

Just like the respondents quoted above, most women that participated in this study were denied access to education due to ingrained gender inequality and norms that promoted male education in opposite to females. Hosegood (2009) wrote about how families and households in most rural South Africa have historically been shaped by social, cultural and economic processes. These, in turn, affect identities and roles in domestic and public spheres, placing women at home as wives and nurturers. This placement denied many women access to education as they were discouraged to go to school in apartheid South Africa and colonial Africa at large. About 80% of the women interviewed were from rural areas, they shared how schools, if a formal structure even exists, are usually located far and inaccessible in most rural areas. The unemployment and illiteracy of parents further multiplied the risk of non-schooling. Here we see how a history of disadvantage results in poorer households as poor men and women tend to marry each other.

The history of apartheid in South Africa pushed the marginalised group of the black African majority to the rural areas, this segregation often meant that the marginalised households had no access to wages or remittances from formal sector opportunities. This case is no different for the interviewed participants who moved to the City to generate income from petty commodity production which is R2000 per month or less. Even though there are development plans and initiatives in place, those in rural areas are still underprivileged and the post-apartheid South African government is still challenged working towards closing that gap (National Development Plan, 2030).

Women interviewed, moved to the City of Durban in search of work, because of inadequate skills for formal employment they worked as maids and in stores before they started informal trading. Lack of school education is the main reason for their lack of formal skills and unemployment. The interviewed women's lack of education can be strongly linked to social gendered norms and inequalities. Embedded in colonial (and apartheid) patriarchal systems, in many African societies, including rural communities, female education is not encouraged than that of men (Cooray and Potrafke, 2011; Mkhize, 2012). Mama (2003) argued that post-colonial Africa continues to suffer from under-provision of education. Women are the most underprivileged, because of entrenched patriarchal norms that promotes male enrolment in most skilled subjects – such as scarce skills –making men more employable than women (Arndt et al., 2011, Mkhize and Cele, 2017). Patriarchal gender roles play a role in allocation of time and tasks between boys and girls, which tends to determine the education life of children; with boys acquiring more formal education than girls. Research attests that the life chances of people are strongly influenced by the economic status of their households (Mama, 2003). The women interviewed viewed street trading as a survival alternative since they were not able to finish secondary school or attained formal job skills. The women street traders expressed that most job opportunities in South Africa require one to have at least matriculated also known as grade 12. One of the participants, Nkosikhona, left school in grade 1, when she was asked about the reasons for doing this kind of business, responded:

I cannot get employed anywhere in South Africa. I am a villager with no education. I finished school in grade 1. Selling crafts is easy for me because I do not need any education skill. I use my own home skill and make my own crafts. It's the only thing I know since I was a young girl (Sibo, BF).

To the women street traders interviewed, formal education is the key in overcoming poverty that affects most black Africans in the post-apartheid South Africa. The lack of schooling, for Nkosikhona and other women interviewed, is a disadvantage that has greatly impeded the social and economic development in post-apartheid South Africa (Mkhize and Cele, 2017). Most of the women, especially in rural areas have household domesticated education and thus referred to as illiterate as they cannot read or write. Literacy – including reading and writing – are some of the prerequisites for securing at least low paying employment in South Africa, making those who lack this unemployable (Leibbrandt et al., 2010). The informal economic sector becomes a common alternative for most of the population considered as illiterate, including most rural women like those interviewed (Devey et al., 2003). Historically, one of the disadvantaged positions of many



black Africans is the separation of their education on racial lines. The Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP, 1994) maintained that apartheid segregation in education and employment left deep scars of inequality and economic inefficiency in South Africa. In this separatist system of segregation, the whites received the lion's share, whilst the black Africans were left to pick up the crumbs. That is why the country continues to have many black Africans with no formal education and employment, with black females at the top of such a disadvantaged group. One of the women street traders, for example, explained how she had to generate income through other means since she could not further her education. As an older woman, Weziwe linked her lack of education with apartheid legacy and patriarchy saying:

I ended school in grade 2. As a woman and being the eldest, I was not encouraged to go to school back then. I was supposed to be home and do what girls do. I was taught how to make beads, baskets and hats from a young age because that was part of our upbringing. I separated with the man I had to marry, and I was left with children to take care of. With no job and struggling, I decided to start using this skill to generate income for my family as a vendor from 1971. Working as the street vendor has helped me a lot to provide for myself and my children (Weziwe, BF).

These reflections outlined why most black African women in street trading or informal sectors end up there because they lacked access to formal education or at least basic education. Weziwe's lack of education can be further credited to patriarchal oppression of women combined with apartheid racial segregation system that reinforced the male's education and domestication of women. Conversely, Connel (2002) highlighted how birth order and gender roles composition are all determined and socialised at a young age through allocation of gender tasks. Girls perform domestic chores within the household while boys work outside chores that are mainly described as masculine hard labour intensive.

These gender roles embedded on these household division of labour have long term gender implications, as they affect schooling and choice of subjects for girls and boys. Also contribute to feminisation poverty and gendered illiteracy as affecting females more than males in most African settings. Literature also indicates that in apartheid South Africa, most black girls, unlike boys, were denied fair access to education due to racial and patriarchal oppressions (Coetzee, 2001). Mostly, black girls and women were incorporated in domestic work, working as maids and nannies for the majority of white families. Since this is usually a full-time job their children are deprived and robbed of the

opportunity to be raised by their mothers (Cock, 1989). The story is no different in post-apartheid South Africa. Even though boys and girls are encouraged to go to school, most girls, especially black, are school dropouts due to pregnancy or poverty or orphanage. One respondent said:

I stopped going to school in grade 7 because I got pregnant. I never was able to go back to school since my parents died thereafter. I continued to get pregnant. I now have 3 children with different fathers, and I must take care of them since the men are not supporting us. I looked for a job, the only job I got was for cleaning in people's houses with less money. I then decided to start making beadwork and sell it. This is how I ended up here and I make much better money than the one I was getting as a maid (Flossy, DUT).

Research revealed that most black girls are still being used as sexual objects as men impregnate them and do not take care of the children (Parveen, 2010). The author attests that these women suffer from emotional and economic problems (Parveen, 2010). As a result, such women are exposed to stressful life conditions and difficulties raising and taking care of their children economically which puts them at a greater risk of desperation and vulnerability. They usually must deal with both domestic and professional work without any support, and the struggle to cope may lead them to stay in abusive relationships. Ntombi shared her story as follows:

I have 5 children, all from my previous relationships. The partner I'm with now is a serial cheater and a drunkard, but he's good to my children and supports us, we just need to be careful not to upset him as he can be very aggressive, especially when he is drunk. Life as a single parent is difficult, especially for me because I don't make much from the beadwork and traditional attires that I sell here (Ntombi, BF).

Ntombi's experience speaks to continuing struggle against abuse in intimate heterosexual relationships in most African societies (Mkhize and Njawala, 2017). Her experience shows dependence the increasing vulnerability of women to abuse by males for their financial support and that of their children. The unequal division of power in relationships oppresses women and may even cause harm to their health. Ntombi mentioned how her boyfriend was a serial cheater who was always roaming with different women, she said she doesn't really care because he always came back to her. With stories like this one, women are not only exposed to forms of abuse but are (including men) also at a higher risk of getting infected with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Women risk contracting HIV due the dominant patriarchal culture and society which exacerbates women's inferiority (Rodrigo and Rajapakse, 2010). Most African cultures regard men as head of their families, they are decision makers and control resources and finances while

women are expected to respect their husbands and accept polygamous relationships. Ramjee and Daniels (2013) argued that the cultural and societal expectations of masculinity encourage men to assume the patriarchal attitude toward their wives and girlfriends which has led to among other things, an increasing risk of HIV contraction. While Ntombi continued to pursue another relationship following her failed past relationship, another participant shared how she has remained single and raised her children after the loss of her husband:

The father of my 4 children passed away many years ago, following a short ill. Life was better when he was still alive. I worked as a live-in maid, but I had to leave that job because of my ill health. I then started selling here about 10 years ago under an Indian lady. It's not easy to raise children and grandchildren with this job but at least I get to sleep at home almost every night (Winnie, BF).

As a result of being school dropouts, with no grade 12, it is hard for the women to get jobs in formal employment sectors. They end up performing cheap labour as maids for wealthy families irrespective of race. The exploitation of black women is one that is long enduring with adverse implications. It is in this case that socialist (Marxist) feminist theory views capitalism as intertwining with patriarchy in exploiting women. Women try to exit exploitation by becoming self-employed such as Winnie and other women interviewed that sell on the streets of Durban. This means even in post-apartheid South Africa, black South African women face multiple socio-political conditions that continue to disadvantage their opportunities to advance compared to their male counterparts (O'Neill and Viljoen, 2001). Street trading as a strategy for self-income generating is echoed by all women interviewed. For instance, Zandi, who is a 58-year-old mother of four, expressed:

I have worked here for over 20 years; this business has helped me a lot as I have seen my children through high school with this money. I don't make much now, but I've had good years in this business and my business has grown over the years (Zandi, DS).

Just like Zandi, Noma also stated:

I sell household drums (traditional containers used mainly for water in most rural households, also useful as traditional Zulu beer – umqombothi – containers during household traditional ceremonies) of different sizes. The money helps a lot in taking care of my family and children. However, business is now bad; I don't get many customers. Most people now have easy access to water. I mostly rely on my regular clients, who come occasionally to stock from me, otherwise business is not what it used to be (Sibo, BF).

The narratives of Zandi and Sibó speak to all the interviewed women's narratives in terms of income-generation. They all appreciated this street trading business as it helps them as women to put food on the table and educate their children. In agreement with this research, existing literature on the informal economy in South Africa and Africa at large views it as key component of strategies that helps to address unemployment and poverty; and to support sustainable livelihoods (Cele and Mkhize, 2017; Mwasinga, 2013; Siqwana-Ndulo, 2013; Karumbidza, 2011). Making and selling home learned products such as handmade traditional crafts, beadwork, attires, hats, household products (traditional kitchen spoons, pots, calabash, trays, and mats) help the women interviewed to generate income. The products of the women who were interviewed are like those used by most rural women who engage in income-generating activities across the province of KwaZulu-Natal, as evident in Mkhize's (2012) study in Mzinto and Mzumbe and Mkhize and Cele's (2017) study on the South Coast of Durban. In agreement, the KwaZulu-Natal Province is viewed as the home to the head offices of the International Alliance of Street Trader Organizations as the majority of these organisation's members are mostly poor women residing in this Province and operate in and around Durban tourist and market spaces (Siqwana-Ndulo, 2013). Bromley (2000) also affirmed that many impoverished people in Africa, and in developing world at large, make a living out of informal economic activities.

Even though informal trading in the streets and tourist spaces is a useful strategy for most impoverished small businesspeople, including women, it is accompanied by challenges. The women interviewed as exemplified by Zama and Sibó confirmed that street trading business is now slowing down and not as productive as it used to. Challenges include the South African governments engagement in development initiatives that has, for example, made electricity and water available in most homes. Meaning, people do not need to depend more on traditional handmade products for preserving water and taking care of the home. With electricity, they can now use electric steel kitchenware instead of depending on traditional handmade clay pots. Many people, in their homes now have TVs, save and buy sofas than sitting on traditional mats. In the case of water, the government (municipality) water trucks deliver water to most households, and many use bigger water tanks to store water than those small traditional drums, as Zama explained above. In this way, many citizens are eager to catch up with development demands. Even though still stuck in huge gaps of inequalities between the rich and the poor, the democratic

government development has been initiated through social service delivery that includes infrastructure, access to water, electricity, transport and education (Mkhize, 2012; Mpehle, 2012; Reitzes, 2009; Pillay et al., 2006). Challenges come with lack of affordable shelters in the City where women sell their products. Many women stay in townships and informal settlements – *imijondolo* – because of their less costly rent than that of City flats or apartments. These women are originally from rural areas in the outskirts of Durban, they use a lot of money commuting daily to and from their working spaces – the streets of Durban. The women interviewed must allocate their money-generated to transport and family responsibilities; less or none profit invested. Aggie who travels daily from uMlazi, one of the KwaZulu-Natal biggest townships near Durban to Durban station expressed:

I work from hand to mouth. I use all profit with nothing left to invest. I spend R50 daily on transport, that's R2000 a month excluding weekends. I also pay 150 rent in a shelter – umjondolo - where I stay; I cannot afford to pay a four-room rent. I don't even make that much profit a month. As a result, some days I don't afford to come to work, so I stay at home and that compromises my business because no work no pay. I continue to do this business as it is better than nothing, then just staying at home and do not try nothing. (Aggie, DUT).

Evidently, most rural women, who migrate to cities, for income-purposes are unable to save their profit because they spend it all on food, rent and daily travelling, including sending some home for their families. This is, however, not the case for their male counterparts, as literature by Sassen et al., (2018) mentions that male street traders are more likely to have disposable income as their businesses tend to be bigger and their responsibilities minimal. Even though the research was specifically on black African women, the researcher, through observation on the visited trading sites, especially in Mansel Road, also confirmed that men, overall have larger businesses and most of them were in partnership or had people selling for me on site. This was an observation hard to ignore as this is the case especially around Mansel Road area as most of the trading areas by the main entrance are dominated by men, with women situated a bit further down from the entrance. These women complained of how this placement affects their business, as the potential clients only get to them last, often with little money left to spend. Some participants confirmed this observation to be true as they shared their narratives:

The men occupy all the good spaces here at Mansel, we are placed further down from the entrance, only our regular customers come to us (Noku, MR).

As the researcher was interviewing Noku, Thembi also supported her claims:

The positioning is destroying our business, it's even worse with the gate crashers who sell just outside the gate, something must be done about them because this is not fair (Thembi, MR).

From the concerns that they shared, there seemed to be both external and internal factors at play in bringing down their business, besides complaining from being placed further from the gate, where customers can just walk into them, they also complained about those that were trading illegally just outside the main gate. Their businesses are struggling due to a lack of market information, managerial skills and the technical competence limits their participation in value-adding business as the size of their enterprises are often small and most employees are unskilled (De Vita et al., 2014).

As a result of poor formal education, lack of formal employment, and not being able to save any profit made because of daily basic needs, including putting food on the table and having a shelter, left the women interviewed with no choice but to sought to self-income generating through street trading. WIEGO (2013) noted that levels of education among women street traders in Durban are extremely low. About 70% of women trading in the Central Business District (CBD) are illiterate. Illiteracy is a major issue that hinders the economic participation of women in most African societies. The case is no different with the women trading in the streets of Durban. The positions of the women in street trading correlate with the argument made by De Vita et al. (2014), where he denoted that the inadequate education and training of businesswomen render them less competent in the business sector be it formal or informal. Most of these women cannot read or write and the impact of education on performance is more pronounced in the way they run their businesses in the informal sector.

#### **4.3.1.3 Social and economic pressures**

A significant role in how women end up working as street traders is poverty and geographical location. Apart from lack of education, the participants of this study, women street traders, indicated how different social and economic pressures adversely forced them into street vending. The women interviewed shared challenging life situations that they experienced, which intensified their economic struggles. They shared experiences of falling pregnant as teenagers, losing their parents at a young age; and forced into

marriages at young age that resulted in abusive situations. Winnie in narrating her experience that led her to this kind of self-business, said:

I lost my parents when I was young. My uncle's wives pushed me to marrying an older man in the area so I could have someone to take care of me. The man paid lobola to my uncle and I was left to stay with him. I already had 4 kids before I was 25 with this man. The man used to cheat with other women and did not come back home. When I questioned him, he would tell me I was nothing without him. I told my uncle's wives. They told me to stay, as a woman I needed to build my marriage and be patient. They also said I could not come back to their home with so many kids, I need to stay with their father. I ended up running away and found umjondolo to stay with my kids. One woman told me about joining them to sell crafts since I was good in making tradition mats and hats. Then started selling in the streets was one of the options so I could provide for my children. I used a portion of my profit to buy products to make more crafts to push business (Winnie, BF).

The story Winne is somehow like that of other women as to how they ended, it was all because of life struggles. Zama also said:

I fell pregnant at 16 years of age. I was impregnated by a man who work in Johannesburg. The guy disappeared and never sent money or wrote to me. I waited and waited until I gave birth. The guys' family was also impoverished, they could not help. I left the child with my mother to go look for a job in Durban. I never got a job since I had no school. I got another boyfriend instead who was staying in hostel. I stayed with him and started making craft and selling in hostel, until I got space here and move to sell here. I made more money here than in hostel. I moved out of hostel because the guy also had many women, I found out later. I left and stayed with friends until I afforded my own mjondolo with street selling money (Zama, MR).

Because of their experiences of poverty intensified by loss of parents and teenage pregnancy, some of these women, at young age, were forced to early marriages and are dependent on men. These women were exposed to sexual and domestic abuse; where they were only good for baby breeding with no choices to make about their bodies and future. In agreement with the experiences of women street traders interviewed, literature affirms that, in Africa and most developing societies, reality of poverty is felt by most poor and abused women (and children) (Mkhize and Cele, 2017; Chireshe, 2010). Adding to the women's abuse is their dependence on males as breadwinners and as husbands and/or fathers of their children for survival. In this way, just as narrated by the participants, women find themselves trapped in a cycle of poverty and abuse – they cannot escape being poor and dependent on men (Slabbert, 2017). Research confirms that, globally, poverty increases women and children exposure to sexual abuses and HIV as most turn to men for transactional support (Gilroy, 2005; Rodrigo and Rajapakse, 2010). Women street traders, as expressed by those interviewed, found street trading as an escape from

male dominance and abuses; also, as a form of helping themselves not to be dependent on men for their and children's survival. Thembi stated:

I do not make much from this job, but I can at least eat and provide for my children to also eat. It is not enough but my children do not need to go around asking for food. I also do not need a man to give me money to buy food. I borrow from my friends here (referring to colleagues) if I do not have enough. We do that, we help each other (Thembi, MR).

Even though many of the women street traders were forced by harsh experiences, including abusive and poverty situations, to be involved in street vending business, I, the researcher, view street trading – even though is without challenges – as an escape and a space of safety and empowerment. Most of these women, as expressed by Zama and Thembi were forced to mature quicker and join street trading, while some joined their family members, all because of poverty and domestic abuses. They had to find ways to survive and women and to provide for their children. The women street traders' narratives all speak to the struggles and oppression of black African women that continues even post-apartheid era. The legacy of the apartheid era is a critical component when investigating the social injustices that delay and hinder the progress of black African women in the post-apartheid era (Slabbert, 2017). Chambers (2006) also asserted that with all the strategies in place to address the injustices of the past, the expectations of the underprivileged and marginalised have not been met. And therefore, the link between social injustice and poverty is accentuated. One of the participants explained the following:

I am from a deep rural area called Manguzi (North of KwaZulu-Natal), I moved to Durban in 2012 in search for work, but I could not find it. I therefore had no choice but to involve myself in some income generating project. Street vending was the quickest accessible way for me to generate money to look after my family. I met someone women from Manguzi who already were in this business and they helped me to get started (Oike, DS).

Weziwe, who was in her pinafore and looked tired, but she was warm and welcoming, shared the reality of her economic struggles and life pressures:

My only child died and left me with 2 grandchildren, and one is in tertiary now. I am old and tired now, but I must work for them to have a better life. Some days I really struggle to get out of bed, but some days are better. I really hope they find jobs and become something big in life so I can finally rest (Weziwe, BF).

Another respondent also shared:

This business belonged to my late eldest sister who was a mother. I lost my parents before I could finish high school, and my sister sacrificed her youth to come and sell here at in Durban so that she can take care of us. After matric I



joined her here as a way of raising money for tertiary. Unfortunately, she got very ill a year later and passed away. I inherited this business and just forgot about dreams which seemed unrealistic and unattainable. I have been here for over 15 years now and have grown attached to this place. I don't have any children or any close relatives, so this business is all I have. I hope to grow and expand it someday (Zandi, DS).

Different reasons, as exemplified in the participants' narratives all centred on the lack of employment and poverty, highlighted from the interviews, and informed the choices of women interviewed leading to participating in street vending. Statistics South Africa (2018) reported that women are more vulnerable to unemployment than men, with women experiencing a higher unemployment rate than men. The unemployment rate increased across all population groups with black African women leading with 33.2%. A man in South Africa, according to the Code for Africa gender gap calculator, is said to earn on average 67% more than women (Statistics South Africa, 2018). These statistics highlighted the epidemic problem of how women are more disadvantaged than men in the case of employment and wage gender gap, this is not only the case in South Africa, but it's a global phenomenon. The experiences of black African women in townships and rural areas are worse as these are historically segregated places based on apartheid. Also, their cultural practices are founded on patriarchy, subjecting women to male dominance by expecting women to mature at a very early age, marry at a young age to older men and viewing school drop out to perform wifely duties as normal. The use of post-colonial feminist theory is important in situating women's experiences to their historical and cultural specifics, although they all suffer from patriarchy, their cases and experiences are different, such as specific cases of black African women street traders in Durban. Making their stories similar to other African women but also unique because of their history. These gender, historical and cultural disparities are evident in the informal sector. Joyce narrated her story as follows:

The cultural expectations subjected me to marriage when I was 15 years and it was a polygamous marriage, to a much older man that died when I was 30 and left me with 2 kids. With no school and any job skill I didn't know what to do. I decided to join women in making handmade crafts and traditional attires to sell and take care of my children so they can go to school unlike me (Joyce, DS).

Forced marriage of young girls to older men, in developing countries like Africa, is one of global concern and viewed as a form of girl child abuse (Mwambene and Sloth-Nielsen, 2011; Chantler et al., 2009). Early and/or forced child marriage is considered as a violation of human rights and international law (Dauvergne and Millbank, 2010).

Practised in most rural South Africa, forced marriage is also known as '*ukuthwala*' in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (Monyane, 2013). Forcing young girls into marriage is a form of violence and abuse, and a violation of children's rights (Thobejane and Flora, 2014; Chantler, 2012). The culture of polygamy is abusive to some women, to whom is not a choice, as it has happened with Joyce, a participant of this study. The participant did not choose to get married; she was forced into marriage with an older man and polygamy at the age of 15 – that was an act of child abuse, sexual assault and oppression in all forms. The culture of polygamy, in South Africa, promotes male domination and condones early marriages which compels children into adulthood (Nkosi and Wassermann, 2014; Tallie, 2013). This is a violation of children's human rights that continues to rob millions of girls under the age of 18 of their childhood, but this problem begins at home, even way before they are sent into early marriages. Pelly (2011) argued that children are gendered in terms of task allocation, between boys and girls. The way in which gendered roles are reproduced is evident in how most girls, at a very young age spend more time caring for their siblings and on domestic tasks while their mothers go and work as maids or as traders in order to provide for them. Poverty has a large impact on children's subjective well-being, with poor children most likely to experience a bad and difficult life than non-poor children. Nkosikhona also added:

I never got far in School and I got married when I was 17 years old when I fell pregnant with my first child. My husband is in Mpumalanga and I haven't seen him in 5 years, He stopped sending money, and that's when I heard that he has another wife there. That's when I decided to start my own business to help myself and my children (Nkosikhona, MR).

Feminisation of parenting, adding to feminisation of poverty, is becoming a norm especially in the African communities, where women are left and expected to take care of children alone while men move on with other younger women and neglecting their responsibilities. Breaking cycles of poverty and inequality as a strategy to eradicate poverty should start with children. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has begun this by targeting children's education and increasing focus on adolescent with attention directed towards adolescent girls (here being defined as being between 10 and 19 years old). The UNICEF (2010) argued that this is a critical stage when poverty is often passed onto the next generation as poor adolescents give birth to impoverished children. And even though the analysis of gender inequalities has become mainstreamed within many poverty reduction strategies, the focus is predominantly on men and women, rather than between boys and girls (Jones and Chant, 2009). Sibho shared her story:

My eldest daughter had to drop out of school when she fell pregnant at 16. I had no choice as keeping her in school would not address her responsibility. She had to leave school to look after her baby while I work. Things would have been better if she hadn't fallen pregnant (Sibo, BF).

Some participants indicated that they had started trading as young as 15 years of age to help support their family. This is not a new thing in African families, the history of children supporting families is something that is increasing, not only in South Africa but Africa at large. Pells (2011) wrote about how children are coerced into adulthood by taking on family responsibilities from as little as 15 years of age. Some participants got involved in street trading when they realised, they were pregnant and no other means to provide for themselves and their baby. Others started this job to support their younger siblings. Ntombi who has been a street vendor since the year 2000, explained how she ended up in street vending:

My sister was a street vendor. I was not interested in following her footsteps, but as a mother of 5 children, the economic circumstances of a poor background didn't give me any options. I could not secure employment anywhere. Therefore, I decided to join my sister, and I have been here since 2000 (Ntombi, BF).

This response highlights the role of family influence in the decisions of the black African women involvement in street trading. Research results revealed that many of the participants had some of their family members involved in street trading and followed the same pattern to generate income and help look after the family. The researcher observed that some of the women had their daughters coming to work with them after school and this helped to confirm and justify the narrative given by some women of how they ended up involved in street trading. Moghadam (2005) argued that poverty is inherited by children, mostly girls, who are, based on gender roles and responsibilities, forced to leave school at a young age to carry the responsibilities of the family, hence perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

#### **4.3.1.4 Need to start own businesses**

Almost all the women interviewed did not have dreams or aspirations of being informal street traders, but life circumstances and a need for survival compelled them to venture into this type of business. Most started as employees, who with time, developed an urge and a need to start their very own businesses. Some of the interviewed black African women indicated that they got involved in street trading because they wanted to learn how

to open and manage their own businesses in the future. One of the women narrated how she started working in street trading:

I worked under a group of women who I sold traditional attires for. They taught me how to make pinafores from scratch. I worked under them for a few years until I met an old lady who taught me how to make “Izigege” [loincloth for girls]. My skill improved until I was confident enough to try my own business of making and selling these products on my own. I sat down with the women I was working for and asked if I could rent their place and sell “Izigege” at night since they worked during the day and specialised in pinafores (Thembi, MR).

Thembi further narrates how despite some challenges and barriers she managed to thrive and grow her business:

While I was renting under them [her former bosses] here at Mansel. I was busy trying to apply for my own permit. I applied for 3 years with no luck. After the third year, the municipality finally granted my trading permit. I then started trading independently and bought myself a container (Thembi, MR).

The desire to be self-sustainable is one of the key drivers identified to have influenced some black African women to be involved in street trading. There might be various negative factors that influences most black African women into street trading, it is essential to note that there are also those who get involved and are determined to build their own businesses and eliminate poverty challenges. Another respondent said:

Running your own business gives you the opportunity to be independent, you can plan your life and make your own decisions. This business has helped me a lot, it is really empowering (Joyce, DS)

Joyce, narrative was also supported by Winnie who said,

When I started trading here as a young a girl from Lindelani, I had no idea that I would one day own my own container, it took a long time to finally be able to achieve this so it’s a big achievement for me and I am proud of myself (Winnie, BF).

#### **4.3.2 Informal business operation limits (Challenges affecting black African women in street trading)**

The study found that black African women in street trading in Durban are affected by different challenges. Literature examined by Mail and Guardian (2009), revealed that the number of street traders doubled from 2000 to 2007 from 500 000 to 987 800 across the country, leading to the flooding and over population in this sector. Poverty drives the underprivileged majority into the informal sector to pursue livelihoods solutions. Most of the challenges experienced in this sector stem from the pressure and over population

exerted on this sector. These include lack of permanent spaces to conduct businesses, difficulties in accessing trading permits, high taxes or rents for trading spaces, and increasing business competition and cost of living.

#### **4.3.2.1 Inadequate permanent spaces and infrastructure to conduct business**

About 25% of women interviewed did not have trading permits, they are occupying spaces 'illegally', which as a result the lack of infrastructural support to enable the smooth operation of their businesses. Women's roles and responsibilities in Sub-Saharan Africa are made more difficult and time-consuming because of problems caused by a lack of basic infrastructure and services at the local level, such as clean water, electricity, reliable transportation and modern communication (Amine and Staub, 2009). These women traders are also victims of the crimes like eve teasing, sexual harassment, rape and human trafficking, which affects their self-esteem, integrity and health. A lack of transport, inadequate access to market stalls, toilet facilities and the high incidence of HIV and/or AIDS-related illnesses further complicates their situation (Hobson, 2011). As much as local authorities have tried to combat the issue of health by trying to build infrastructures to accommodate these informal traders with all the basic needs, the rate of unemployment rising globally is forcing the informal sector to continuously expand in the process outgrowing the available build structures in all the cities country wide, especially in Africa. A respondent that trades at Mansel narrated:

We are considered as illegal traders because we don't have stalls, we have tried to access them but failed, so we just trade by the gate and pack when the metro come. Those that are trading inside Mansel also fight us and chase us away, but we fight back (Zama, MR).

Electricity, water and sanitation, shelter and housing are critical interventions that support those working in the informal economy. The provision of housing and trading space for the traders was initiated by the women before 1994. A local branch of the ANC initiated the development of the complex, after several requests from the women who were living and trading on the pavement at that time. "Once the Block AK women joined SEWU (Self-employed Women's Union) in 1994, the organisation continued putting pressure on the city council until the complex became operational. "SEWU initiated a plan for overnight accommodation for traders" (Lund, 1998: 38). As a response to community initiatives and pressure, Mansel Road by Durban Station came into existence. A

significant high proportion of those interviewed in Mansel work from their homes that were erected by the government in the post-apartheid era (Devenish, 2004). Street traders in Mansel Road usually benefit from people who buy in large quantities and travel on overnight busses to trade in the City. The busses are accommodated alongside a complex of stalls, ablutions, relaxation facilities, and a crèche all built by emergent contractors (Harber, 1997). Mansel road houses 44 women with living quarters and a shop in a single unit. The size of the units is based on the original drum shelters as they deal with drum selling. Their houses are fronted by a small room with a sales hatch and two small living rooms lie beyond a pole-covered courtyard at the back. There is also a special alley or area provided for the washing of drums that ensures that the water goes into the sewers and not storm-water drains ([www.ihrn.gov.za](http://www.ihrn.gov.za)). Mansel Road provides 180 covered stalls for 'car boot sellers' and 180 bays for women selling beadwork, pinafores and other goods. The ablution facilities include solar-heated showers (R2 for two minutes) and facilities for the disabled with storage lockers. Most of the women still stay outside of the Durban City, but there were some who were fortunate to get a shelter in Mansel Road. Of the 15 participants, only 2 occupied the houses as owners. All the 44 houses are occupied, either by owners or relatives, or rented out to other women who are also traders, there are no vacant houses. A respondent that occupies one of the houses in Mansel said:

We have accommodated many women from Zimbabwe, we have divided our stalls and gave some to them to sell their pots. They use our ablution facilities and sleep in our houses, so they pay rent. They don't pose a threat as they only sell big 3-legged African pots (Noma, MR).

The women selling pots also rent in Mansel houses, because it's more affordable and safer (as it is fenced and secured with a security guarded entrance), compared to the surrounding places. The lease arrangements are made privately between these women, where one helps another sister in need in exchange of as little as R150 per month as rent money. This narrative highlights how this marginalised informal sector has managed to promote oneness, and created strong sustainable bonds between women from different walks of life. The two women interviewed that are situated and housed at Mansel Road reported to be struggling financially, hence the need to rent out a portion of their houses to Zimbabweans, these Zimbabwean women are women that they moved with from Durban Station, and because first preference was given to South African, they were not given houses and renting as tenants from the South African women within Mansel Road, the Zimbabwean women were also allocated trading spaces to sell their 3-legged pots. The kind of support and team spirit that exists among these women is remarkable.

This research discovered that black African women in the informal sector situated at Durban Beach Front face harsh working conditions, endure harsh physical environments, limited or lack of infrastructure, no shelter against the weather, and lack of access to water and sanitation (Lund, 1998: 30). Despite having a demarcated spot to sell from, most traders do not have electricity or refuse removal at their sites (Lund, Nicholson and Skinner 2000). The ratio has been estimated to be nearly seven out of ten traders that have access to toilets. A third of men traders have covered stalls, but only one fifth of the women traders. Urban planning has not considered informal traders. Spatial planning has been used to develop cities and towns. This usually creates designs not favourable to street traders, especially women. For example the width of the streets and pavements may not accommodate street traders if there are no policy initiatives that inform urban design in support of street trading (IOA May, 2013). Black African women in informal trading in Durban work long irregular hours. Some commute every day starting early morning and finishing later in the evening. Those who reside in Mansel Road sleep in their containers (Mansel shelters) as accommodation, which they also rent and is expensive. They then trade 24 hours in most cases as their working stations are always open for trading are trying to make more profit to cover the rent and other basic family needs, such as sending money for their families to buy food and pay for their children's education. The women interviewed also shared their experiences and views on trading permits.

#### **4.3.3 Backlog on issuing of trading permits and contradictions of space ownership**

Trading permits are issued by the municipality to regulate and control access to the informal sector. Operating without a permit is illegal and unlawful. 25% of the women interviewed were operating without permits and none of them have been there for less than five years. The interviewed black African women in "illegal" street trading indicated that it was not their desire to trade under such conditions, but the municipal authorities were not willing to provide the necessary paperwork. They have applied several times with no luck, and this is quite frustrating to the business as metro police always pose a threat. One of the participants who was based at Durban Station at the time of the interview but mostly trades by the gates at the Durban University of said the following:

Most of us here are trading without permits. I have been in this business for over 10 years, but I still don't have a trading permit. I have for a long time now, but they won't give us. The municipality says that these spaces that we occupy

belong to DUT and not them, so they can't give us permits, yet DUT does not give out permits but they don't have a problem with us trading here. The only person with a trading permit is a male and we don't know how he got it as he won't say (Aggie, DUT).

Obtaining of trading permits is a challenge that women street traders face. They are involved in the informal business sector, they still require a permit to trade in and around municipality governed premises – streets in this instance. Aggie, as mentioned above, spent years trying to secure a trading permit with no success. Accessing trading permits is not easier for most black African women street traders in Durban. With these challenges, street vendors are often vulnerable to the confiscation of goods, harassment, and evictions by authorities. As such there is much insecurity surrounding the sustenance of the trade. Sindi revealed that “illegal” street traders operating outside the Mansel Road gates are always chased and arrested by the Metro Police. More so, Sindi elaborated on some of the experiences of trading without a permit:

Selling food without a permit is very risky as we always run at a risk of having our goods confiscated. They are easily spoiled and have to be replaced. It costs R600 to release confiscated goods hey! It's a lot of money so we no longer release our goods when they have been confiscated because we always find them in a bad shape or most of them have been eaten by the police. So, it's best to just go and buy new stock. Most of the time we don't even have that money, and we would have to get some to lend it to us with an interest rate of course and this is a major setback (Sindi, MR).

Flossy also added:

Trading without a permit is very risky, you just never know what to expect or when the police are going to strike. The last time they took everything, I begged them not to destroy my tent as it is expensive and difficult to buy (Flossy, DUT)

Research results showed that the basic problem of black African women street vendors is insecurity and uncertainty as their profession is considered illegal. They do not know when and where authority will strike and with which measures. According to the government of India, an assessment conducted in 2004, showed that around 2.5% of the local poor urban population survived by working in this occupation. If the government provides license to street vendors, they can be protected from harassment and eviction by local authorities and local police. This research found that about 75% of women street traders are concentrated in the survivalist end of the sector. They just want to make enough money to buy food and feed their families, which according to the interviews conducted is a struggle as they experience severe cash-flow problems, which has ripple effects on their ability to manage profitable businesses and sufficient levels of stock (Willemse,



2011). To secure the survival of women and to ensure their redemption from these various challenges, there is need to consider the role of women in advancing economic growth and their disadvantages which are historical. The reason the study found the inclusion of post-colonial feminist theory useful to further examine structural challenges that women traders face in informal business sectors.

#### **4.3.4 Women marginalisation/exclusion (Structural displacement of women to the economic peripheries)**

There are various challenges and limitations that affect black African women in street trading because they are women. They are gendered issues which rarely affect men involved in the same trade. These issues include but not limited to taking care of children, the need for health facilities for sanitary purposes and the double responsibility that comes with women heading a household. Black African women continue to be the most neglected part of urban society. They are those women who have no permanent space from where they can conduct their business despite the significant part they play in society. The initiatives of the Self-employed Women Association (SEWA) is a significant consideration it has not covered all regions of the country. Women form a large segment of street vending in almost every city. Street trading is not only a source of self-employment to the poor in cities and towns but also a means to provide affordable and convenient services to most of the urban population. Most street traders are often those who are unable to get regular jobs in the remunerative formal sector on account of their low level of education and skills, they try to solve their livelihoods problems through their own meagre financial resource (Donovan, 2009). There are various socio-economic challenges that contribute toward hindering the growth and development of black African women in the informal sector, these challenges will be discussed below.

##### **4.3.4.1 High competition increases cost of living, displacing poor women**

The informal sector plays an important role in the creation of job opportunities, when viewed in the context of developing economies, which tend to be characterised by high levels of unemployment and poverty (Moloi, 2014; Solomon-Ayeh, 2009; Lyons and Brown, 2010). The informal sector can be defined as “an economic sector that is largely untaxed, excluded from the government's Gross National Product (GNP) and not

monitored closely by government” (Masonganye, 2010:4). The openness and easy access of this sector has created the highest number of employments for the unemployable majority as it enables the underprivileged to enter with ease, further complicating the control efforts. This was proven to be true in this study as a reasonably high percentage of women were operating unlicensed. This has led to an over saturation of the market, causing those of relatively low socio-economic status not to cope with the competitive nature of the sector. The outcome is the displacement of poor women. A few of the women shared their fears.

Street trading is a highly competitive trade. It is also essential to note that the participants revealed that their business is also associated with a very low-income margin. Of all the 15 participants interviewed, 12 of the participants indicated that their income ranged between R300-R500 per week. This reflects the financial constraints that most black African women street traders deal with. Zama, one of the participants from Mansel Road noted the demanding costs of running their business and said the following:

Everything here on the inside cost's money. We can't cook in these containers, so we must buy food. We pay to use the toilets, showers and yet we are residents here who pay rent every month (Zama, MR).

Zama is not the only one that is struggling to make ends meet as most of the women struggle to make their monthly rent to secure their trading permits, Winnie also said:

Today I haven't sold a single item, and yesterday I only sold to one customer for R60, and I worry because this is happening regularly now and I'm already two months behind with rent money, it's really frustrating because I also have other expenses to take care of (Winnie, BF).

Poor income is the most frustrating issue these women deal with daily, Winnie sounded discouraged when she told me about her money struggles, and she is not the only one running out of ideas, another participant shared:

The money I make here is not enough anymore, I wake up every day hoping for a better day, for a big order that'll help me pick up and make up for my losses, but things are getting worse and I am running out of ideas (Oike, DS).

Poor income is one of the key challenges identified affecting black African women in street trading. Their businesses are running at a loss as they end up selling their craft at a much cheaper rate just to be able to have transport money and buy some bread on their way home.

#### 4.3.4.2 Poor income

Most women who trade on the streets are not financially sound. They start up their businesses with very little capital and rely mostly on work they can do with their hands. This research concluded that about 80% of women trading in and around Durban, specifically Durban Beach Front, Durban Station, and Mansel Road are all focused on making and selling beaded work, which is a hand craft that most have practised and perfected which intensifies the competition among them. This is a skill that most of them learned as young girls at their home of origin or upbringing.

The result is that most unemployed people, rural-urban migrants and school-leavers tend to seek employment in the informal sector particularly in the retail trade (DTI, 2007; Karumbidza, 2011). This creates a problem overcrowding this economic domain of the informal economy which is traditionally understood to belong to women (Overa, 2007). A few of the women interviewed who operate from Mansel Road indicated that they had official renting spaces inside the marketplace but were now choosing to trade illegally outside the gate with the gate crashers because most customers end up buying at the gate and don't come inside. The researcher observed a lot of "illegal" street vendors just outside the gate of Mansel vending courts and majority of them were not willing to be interviewed. One of the interviewees labelled them as "gate-crashers" when she raised her concern:

They are trading there illegally and killing our business. They move away in the evening to the workshop and other places. So that's one of the reasons why most of us are always behind with rent money and run a risk of being locked out of our containers (Joyce, MR).

In support of Joyce's claims, Thembi said:

Just outside our main gate, we have gate crashers who have decided to put their stalls and sell there the same stuff that we sell. We have complained about this; about how unfair it is for us that they are taking all our customers and don't pay any rent or trading permits. They are trading there illegally and killing our business. They move away in the evening to the workshop and other spaces (Thembi, MR).

More so, another participant noted how the nature of business has now deteriorated as compared to the previous years. She shared the following with much concern and worry:

Business is bad, it's quiet, it was better in the previous years. We go and sell outside the allocated municipal spaces that we are renting and that has helped us

a lot. I have been locked outside several times because of failure to pay rent/permit which is R616 per month (Sindi, MR).

The women interviewed and studies reviewed show that there has been an increasing number of both men and women participating in the informal street trading in Durban with men coming in large numbers as a result of globalisation and rising unemployment due to retrenchment in formal sectors which dominantly employs men. Karumbidza (2011: 21) posits that “the increase in male participation has reduced the proportion of women street traders as a percentage of the total”. There is also an increasing participation of male foreign immigrants in the informal street trading market increasing competition for the local women. More competition from new entry traders can lead to a decline in consumer demand resulting in lower profits. Meaning migration hugely impacts this industry-not only local migration but also international. This has further disadvantaging poor South African black African women traders’ profits, which do not have any other alternative means of earning and supporting their families.

#### **4.3.4.3 Women traders face gender specific obstacles**

Women traders face gender specific obstacles, based on their experiences, these are the challenges they feel are personal, and directly specifically as women. This became a sub-theme because all the participants complained about the same challenges, also, literature researched, in support of these women also pointed at some gender specific limitation in this informal economic sector such as limited access to financial services, lack of collateral, and high levels of illiteracy and education. This always results into many women street traders having limited access to financial resources and even when they do get a loan for example. In South Africa, women traders receive very small loans and in aggregate the fewer men who access the same micro-finance. According to Akinboade (2005) men usually receive a higher proportion of the loans than many women put together. A combination of factors including segregation and domestic caring responsibilities are some of the major impediments highlighted and known to affect women in attaining credibility and capital assets that qualifies for the engagement of financial process (Marlow, 2002; Berry, 2009). These outcomes have precedence in history, in which dominant patriarchal systems and capitalism regarded women as second-class citizens who had no right to property. The National Gender Policy framework (2000) posits that “Apartheid laws coupled with repressive customs and traditions,

disempowered women in many ways that will take generations to reverse”. Conversely, this background places women at a disadvantage not only in society but also in business. An empirical research engaged by Carter (2000) concludes that women in business always start-up their businesses with three times less capital than males, hence women are often affected by undercapitalization. Clearly, this is an outcome of extensive roles played by women towards trying to balance domestic/family needs, whilst trying to engage in a sustainable cause. One of the participants shared her hardships:

When you are a woman in business, people don't take you seriously. It's as if you don't belong in business, and so they do all they can to bring you down and discourage you. It's tough out here in the man's world, I am even thinking of going back home to work on my garden and sell vegetables back at home (Thembi, MR).

Women such as Thembi feel like they are still not taken seriously in spaces that were previously dominated, known to be for men. They must work twice as hard to prove themselves worthy to run and manage businesses, this poses a big challenge for them as they run this alongside other domestic responsibilities.

#### **4.3.4.4 Child-care facilities**

The study found that some of these traders start working very early in the morning until much later in the day with some not travelling back home because of the long distance. Many of these women are forced to bring their children to work as they have no other means for childcare. According to IOA (2017) many childcare facilities in South Africa are still divided along racial lines and very little is being done for African children. Transport problems pose a challenge for many women, as they must commute into the city. Most of them experience very high stress levels due to a lack of rest since it is either expensive or impossible to get overnight accommodation and many of them must commute back home (Lund, 1998). The South African government provides very little in the way of childcare. It is too costly for many street traders to send their children to day care or preschools. Statistics show, the children of street traders are looked after by a variety of care-givers, and are often separated from their mothers for long periods (Lund, Nicholson and Skinner 2000: 35; Mwasinga 2013). Sometimes the parent looks after the child whilst they work (Motala 2002; Mwasinga 2013). It has been estimated that about 48% of the traders in Johannesburg with children under the age of six do not have their children living with them. This contributes to splintered family units. About 26% of

women traders and 15% of men traders in Durban have had children present with them on site where they trade (Lund, Nicholson and Skinner 2000: 36). These sites are not safe and conducive places for child development or in the best interest of the child (South African Children's Act 38, 2005). This is what Oike had to say:

As you can see, I come with my grandson to work every morning. There is no affordable day-care around here so we take turns with him and I carry him on my back most of the time especially when it's busy, it will be better once he starts to walk (Oike, DS).

Nkosikhona also said:

I lived and worked with all my children here in this house until they had to start school, they are back home now in Mkuze with my younger sister, they come to visit during school holidays (Nkosikhona).

Of all the street trading areas visited by the researcher, only Mansel houses has a *creche*. This means that many black African women street traders are forced to bring their children to work as they have no other means for childcare. According to IOA (2017), many childcare facilities in South Africa are still divided along racial lines and therefore very little is being done for African children who come from disadvantaged homes.

#### **4.3.4.5 Women inaccessibility to finance**

Of all the women interviewed only a few operating in Mansel indicated that they had resourceful links of trading supply from key manufacturing business stakeholders. When they were asked if they received any support or help from stakeholders, one of the participants said:

For now, there is nothing, but there are a lot of companies and programs that we have been exposed to, and did programs with so we are hopeful. We work with a company called Sascon and we have a deal with Jockey. Sascon is under Jockey. We buy from Jockey at a discounted rate through Sascon, we put money together for stock and deposit it into their account and have the stuff delivered for us (Thembi, MR).

The most important thing in every growing business is adequate finance and resources. There is a need to have a person or institution to aid in a starting business for it to expand. The majority of the participants interviewed revealed that they do not have such kind of support. Those at Mansel seem to be doing better, the researcher observed that most of the street traders around the Beach Front were struggling. Inadequate access to credit by the poor has been identified as one of the factors that contribute to poverty (Hobson,

2011). Women informal entrepreneurs find it extremely difficult and often impossible to access credit through the formal credit system (Otoo et al, 2012). Formal lending institutions are averse to financing smaller loans because of the high administration and information costs and high risk with little collateral (Otoo et al, 2012). Women in rural communities are especially vulnerable to the regulatory discrimination of financial institutions (Amine and Staub, 2009). As a last resort to informal money lenders proved to be unfruitful considering their high rates they charge and the short time frame they give of paying back. An increase in women's access to microfinance could potentially contribute to increasing efficiency in output and consequently reduce poverty and empower women (Akpalu et al., 2012). Informal women traders do not need large amounts of money to get started. Amine and Staub (2009) found that microloans to women of less than \$100 (R1463) have brought about profound growth in their enterprises. If there were institutions mainly committed to financing religiously the informal sector many of the informal traders' lives would be transformed. When asked about finance, this is what Nkosikhona said:

We don't have access to funding, we don't even know where to go for that. Nobody has ever received it here. It all just sounds too complicated and inaccessible (Nkosikhona, MR).

Noma said:

We are told that financing is for big established businesses with business plans, and not for small and insignificant businesses like us. I want to grow my business but I don't even have a bank account so I don't think there's any bank that would loan me money (Noma, MR).

#### **4.3.4.6 The personal is political**

The study found that all the women interviewed, by virtue of being black Africans from disadvantaged backgrounds trading on the streets also experienced other personal factors that limit and affect them also in their business. Some of these experiences include racial abuse, confiscation of goods by metro police, a lack of connections to buyers, context specific negative attitudes and gender relations towards women, customs and practices also place a limit on what a woman can or cannot do (Elson, 1999; Karumbidza, 2011). In a study conducted by Karumbidza (2011) it revealed how black African women street traders along the Beach Front in Durban complained about the increasing racism in the informal sector where White and Indian street traders are not harassed by metro police

and their designated places of trading have working toilet facilities. In this study, black African women street traders interviewed emphasised how they often endure losses due to being raided by the Metro police, who in turn ask for bribes and if they cannot pay their products are often taken away. Flossy also explained how sometimes some police officers are gracious enough to warn them, she said the following:

If you are lucky and the metro police officer is nice and understanding, they would take only the chips and ask you to pack quickly before the others come (Flossy, DUT).

Another respondent said:

Everything is about who you know, even with accessing stalls and trading permits. I have been applying for a permit for over 5 years now, I don't know why I still don't have it, I guess I haven't met the right people (Aggie, DUT).

This is clearly the persistence of oppressive systems and attitudes that are consistently marginalising women street traders. This captures the plight of South African women as they seek to liberate themselves not only from patriarchy and economic disadvantages, but also societal inconsistencies buttressed by oppressive colonial and apartheid history.

#### **4.3.4.7 Crime, theft and bribery**

About 70% of women interviewed have at some point been victims of a crime of some kind. Bribery, confiscation of goods and theft reduces the amount of profit women street traders get from their relatively small businesses and this has devastating consequences on their livelihood, as they cannot easily replace their stock (Karumbidza, 2011). The interviewed participants revealed that they are victims of different criminal activities and mostly theft. They indicated that most of their products are being stolen in storerooms and have no other way of addressing that challenge. Most black African women street traders are exposed to violent criminal threats on the street. Sexual assault puts them at increased risk of HIV or unwanted pregnancy (SEWU, 2010). They also face harassment from officials and persecution from people for being vendors. Unlike women in the formal sector, the lack of social protection in the form of insurance, disability and maternity cover means that there is no form of compensation for them working in sometimes very hazardous environments where there is high risk of exposure to several illnesses and danger. Due to a lack of knowledge, many of these street traders do not challenge unfair laws and by-laws and attempts to organise themselves have proved to be more helpful in



the past and organising is not without challenges. According to Nabeer et al (2013: 4) “one of the most powerful barriers to organizing is fear. Women have been brought up in fear of their men, their employers and their communities” (Nabeer et al, 2013). One respondent shared:

Criminals walk past and take your stuff and run. We’ve had several encounters with customers who come here to steal from us (Zama, MR).

Another respondent added:

We got tired of feeling sorry for ourselves and found a way to deal with criminals. Now we fight back hard, our male counterparts also help us deal with the chancers. We really look out for each other here (Joyce, DS).

Sibo also added how they can now easily spot the criminals and the chancers:

We’ve worked here together for years now; we can easily spot a criminal. We shout when someone tries to steal, and we gang up on that person and handle them accordingly. It’s even better because there’s a rank close by, the taxi drivers also help us as the police always arrive late (Sibo, BF).

With the understanding of these various challenges, various measures have been and are being put in place by the government and organisations to help women in trading. These measures seek to promote gender equity despite the challenges faced in the process.

#### **4.3.5 Government policies as barriers (Local government legislation as technologies of exclusion)**

This research has found that inconsistencies of municipality policies and by-laws are often confusing for most people and licenses are difficult to get (WIEGO, 2017). There is no direct legislation that governs informal business sector in South Africa, however it is generally accepted that the legal framework governing the Small, Medium and Micro sized Enterprises (SMMEs) sector, governs the informal sector. According to (Pillay, 2008) in South Africa, the SMME sector has been promoted since 1995 in order to meet national economic growth objectives. Despite on-going government initiatives such as the formal launching of the Small Enterprise Development Agency by the department of trade and industry in 2004, the situation of most SMMEs remains highly problematic (Pillay, 2008). The commitment of government in the small business sector is to ensure that small businesses progressively increase their contribution to growth and performance of the South African economy in critical areas, such as job creation, equity and access to

markets. Since 1994, with the advent of a new democratic era, South African government has taken measures to ensure that small business development becomes a key policy focus.

There are a few laws and policies, at both the national and local level, that regulate informal trade. At the national level, there is the Businesses Act 71 of 1991, which defines the scope of the authority local governments must regulate informal trade. The Province of KwaZulu-Natal also has a Policy for The Informal Economy of KwaZulu-Natal, Version 1.4. At the local level, there is the eThekweni Municipality: Informal Trading By-law, 2014. This is the law that spells out the specific details of the rules for informal trade in Durban. There is also the eThekweni Municipality's Durban's Informal Economy Policy, 2001. This policy serves as a guide that local authorities use. The people in the informal sector in South Africa tend to be enjoying the same privileges and rights as embodied in the Constitution under the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights exists to protect all people from abuse and to make sure that their rights are protected. Informal traders have the same rights as everyone else and these include the right to equality and to freedom from unfair discrimination (*Section 9*), the freedom of trade, occupation, and profession (*Section 22*), the freedom of association (*Section 18*), the right to join a trade union (*Section 23*), the right to own property (*Section 25*), and the right to access the courts (*Section 34*). These rights are of great significance to informal traders who rely heavily on their personal property and the income they derive from such to survive. These rights also allow the traders the ability to more effectively voice their concerns by joining their resources and efforts. Street traders have the law to back them up trade profitably without fear of authority or much harassment. The problem is that none of the participants mentioned anything about their rights, and that's why they don't even know when they are being violated or abused.

#### **4.3.5.1 eThekweni Municipality support for women street traders**

In terms of support, it is evident in literature that support for street traders is not gender sensitive (IOA, 2013, Durban Unicity Council, 2001; Skinner and Valodia, 2003; Pillay, 2008). The Durban informal sector is currently guided by the eThekweni Informal Economy Policy which was approved by the Durban Unicity Council in 2001. Despite mentioning that there is a need to bring the local government officials to an understanding

with non-governmental organisations such as the SEWU, the policy fails in terms of gender consideration. The eThekweni Informal Economic Policy fails to directly appeal to the needs of women traders who experience additional challenges as street traders. This is evidenced using gender-neutral terms such as traders, citizens, people, entrepreneurs etc. The policy leans towards creating a developmental role and is linked to the overall strategy for economic development in Durban (Pillay, 2008). This developmental approach focuses on creating diverse economic opportunities, areas based management and support for small enterprises, management and support for entrepreneurial development, integrating environmental health into the informal economy, organizational capacity, safety and security, participation of formal businesses in the informal economy, inclusive platform for formal and informal sector, monitoring and evaluation and finally, transactional arrangements (Durban Unicity Council, 2001). The policy states that the formulation of by-laws, should be written in gender sensitive language but it remains that there is a lack of emphasis on the importance of gender sensitivity in addressing the challenges faced by women street traders in Durban.

#### **4.3.5.2 Poor access to information and advice**

Chiloane and Mayhew (2010) and Stander (2011) found that in South Africa there was a need to restructure local business service centres in the local communities in such a way that information could be more widely disseminated and accessed. Information on business networks should have been distributed in the same way as information about social services. Hobson (2011) highlighted a lack of entrepreneurial spirit and knowledge in the field of business, a lack of acceptance in the community and male prejudices as well as a lack of management skills as barriers to entering informal business enterprises. Many informal traders are at a disadvantage not knowledgeable of the upcoming trends of business that may have impacted positively on them.

#### **4.3.5.3 Capacity building and support**

One of the crucial barriers to women succeeding in business is the lack of support systems around them. Women are socially defined as the caretakers of the family; they look after

their children, care for their husbands and family units and are more likely to be socially punished for not fulfilling this role (DTI, 2007). Women suffer from a lack of support from families and the community finds it difficult to accept the female entrepreneur and men are prejudiced towards the woman entrepreneur (O'Neill and Viljoen, 2001). This places the women traders in an unfavourable spot. It has been noted that social support from family and friends who provide positive role models and parents who promote entrepreneurial aspirations during childhood, contributes to create positive environmental conditions favouring women's entrepreneurship (Amine and Staub, 2009).

#### **4.4 Discussion of Findings**

The research was focused on black African women trading informally in Durban for various reasons. Some of these objectives included seeking to outline firstly, the importance and value of informal trading to the livelihoods of women. Secondly, to examine the challenges that affects women street traders. Thirdly, to understand the kind of help and support, if any, provided to women street traders. Lastly, to identify policies that exist in support of women street traders and explore if they are being implemented and to understand their impact in supporting of women in these informal markets. These reasons were motivated by the fact that the research subject remains understudied and the women in informal trading remain marginalised and unheard as identified in various literature. It goes without saying that implementation of policies on women street traders still neglect some of the additional roles that women play outside and beyond this business which include family support (childbearing, household chores, looking after children etc). Researched literature reveals that women involved in street trading in Durban still lack access to municipal by laws<sup>6</sup>. They operate under costly trading services, are exposed to various crime and health risks, and they still lack skills and support despite the policy stipulations on the matter (Siqwana-Ndulo, 2013).

Poverty and hunger and the need to support their families and children is the main reason why women are in the streets. They are concerned about their children more than anything. Most of these women are subjected to extreme structural poverty. The theory of structural poverty asserts that poverty is caused by unequal distribution of resources and

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<sup>6</sup>They are not available to the public and when made available the language used is difficult to understand

lack of access to materials. The framework of this theory further postulates that poverty leads to vulnerability of people, which disables their ability to respond effectively to their social problems. Patel (2009) asserted the way the people deal with the lack of assets and resources will determine how to fight against poverty. All these women who are trading on the streets are attending to their social needs by running their own businesses.

The study found that though both men and women face issues of unemployment, the severities of their encounters are largely influenced by a patriarchal society, which means that there are different social, cultural and economic difficulties and constraints that exist within the communities that must be considered when assisting street traders (Leach, 1996). Valodia (2000) stated that the street traders face economic, socio-cultural, political, policy and operational challenges. The findings on the study of the experiences of women street traders in Durban revealed that women who engage in informal trade – like those in Durban and around Durban Station, Mansel, Beach Front and DUT – are limited in their ability to benefit from trading. The various factors responsible for their limitations include poverty, gender inequality, lack of or poor implementation of policies and legislation (Jones et al, 2012; Akinboade, 2005).

Taking into consideration that the eThekweni Municipality was the first metropolitan to implement the policy in support of the informal trading policy in 2000, it was important to explore if there have been effective and impactful measures put in place in support of women street traders. This study found that many of these women are main providers in their homes while they are also providers of a range of diverse goods and services to the general public (IOA, 2013). Various goods provided by these informal retailers include traditional wear and beadwork accessories (earrings, wrist bands, neck and head pieces, etc), clothes and blankets, basic food stuffs (fruits and vegetables), and utensils (knives, plates and cups) are often at cheaper prices as compared to the formal retailers. My literature-based research found that women traders generate employment for nearly 30% of the respondents in the IEMS (2012). This is because women traders are businesswomen who also have people working for them (Mkhize et al., 2013). In terms of their linkage to the formal economy, research found that women traders do not only contribute to informal economy, they are also an integral part of the eThekweni formal economy (IOA, 2013). Some women traders source most of their goods and provide goods and services to formal enterprises (Durban Unicity Council, 2001). Fresh produce, toiletries, clothes, shoes,

hardware and fast foods are the goods and services supplied by the informal sector at cheaper prices than those supplied by formal retailers. Activities of formal retail street trading are affected since they have low overhead costs and lower profits (Skinner, 2009:3). The role of informal trading is emphasized because of its ability to supply affordable goods in proper quantities to the poorer and marginalised South Africans.

According to Charmes (1999: 2) “informal employment is generally a larger source of employment for women than for men in the developing world”. The informal employment opportunity identified by Charmes (1999) to be the biggest employer of women is vending or street trading. This is because women as compared to men usually are the majority of the unemployed and are victims of social and economic segregation. They resort to using their own entrepreneurial skills and talents as a survivalist strategy. The apartheid history of South Africa presented various harmful social circumstances that disadvantaged both men and women. Women further experienced apartheid patriarchal segregation that deprived them of chances to attain better education and skills as compared to men. The informal sector remained (and still remains) the most accessible alternative of employment (Dobson, 2002). Statistics of eThekweni Municipality (2001) stipulated that 60% of the participants in the arts and crafts industry are women. The reasons tied to this high participation of women in informal trading are connected to the lack of education, lack of skills and abandonment by their male partners who went to work in mines and never came back home (Jiyane, *et al.*, 2012). The situation is no different in democratic South Africa as men migrate to cities, just as they did during colonialism and apartheid (Mkhize, 2013). As the result of migration, many men find new female partners in the cities and abandon those they left behind. This marginalisation of women mainly in the rural areas has led to them finding other means to survive, which include migrating to the cities for kitchen jobs and informal street trading entrepreneurship.

The research discovered that the dominance of women in the informal sector is rooted in women migrants who search for economic activities outside their home locations (Jiyane and Mostert, 2010). Majority of the interviewed participants revealed that they are not originally from Durban and come from different surrounding locations to conduct business in Durban. Gender profoundly determines livelihood prospects and generates many inequalities that limit the access to participation of women in the informal economy. Women interviewed seemed to share similar experiences of domestic abuse, and a form

of childhood violence and traumas. The women shared how they were forced into marriages with older men, who then used them as baby making machines. That alone, speaks to sexual abusive experiences of these women as they did not consent to be in marriages at young age not to giving birth at young age. This links poverty to male domination and sexual abuse of women. Because of gendered abuses and poverty that the women experienced and drove them to street trading, it indicates the entrenchment of patriarchal system in rural areas and households (Monyane, 2013; Mkhize, 2012). This study's conceptual framework, the researcher considered that gender inequalities are enforced and reproduced through normalised societal and family practices. This includes the examples highlighted by the women street traders interviewed on polygamy, forced marriage, not educating a girl child, and considering men (marriage) as the only option for women. The findings indicate that women experienced more abuses in their homes than in street trading places. To the women interviewed, street trading is a space of empowerment, escape and women's solidarity (Mkhize and Cele, 2017). They would rather be in the streets generating their own income with their own small businesses than being under men's control and abuse, they experienced in their home spaces. The women seem to want more for their children, for them not to experience the kind of oppression they endured growing up. Furthermore, to bring out gender balance in informal economic sector the study found that gender equity as crucial and women to be afforded the same equal opportunities as their male counterparts. The women interviewed voiced many times that male street traders have permits and more shelters than them. They view the system as gendered and patriarchal; they see women as still been left behind in street trading despite their efforts of hard work and perseverance. The study did not dig further on gender permit queries as it involves the law but that can be considered as one of the future research recommendations, focusing of gender inequalities in street trading. Gender equity focus will help unpack and apply a more gendered lens in the situations of women street traders. According to The Commission on Gender Equality (2005) gender equity refers to a process ensuring fairness between women and men. It seeks to ensure that fairness is established through engaging measures that address the disadvantages that are embedded in history and society which prevent the existence of equal opportunities and benefits for women and men to operate on the same level. This study engaged this concept to redress of the historical and societal disadvantage of women in street vending in Durban, South Africa.

#### **4.4.1 eThekweni (Durban) Municipality by-laws**

One of the reasons why women's economic stability in the informal sector has been challenging is due to the ineffective implementation of policies and by-laws that protect their rights to do business without being limited based on their biological sex, educational level or economic status. Organisations such as WIEGO<sup>7</sup> have managed to give rise to a resistance approach against discriminatory policies of the past by creating a strong emphasis on informal micro-enterprises. It forms part of a growing international alliance of women street traders in South Africa with an aim to improve women's economic and social prospects by highlighting the importance of women employment in informal sectors (Lund, 1998). The policies have since transcended to placing an emphasis on trade liberalisation through the implementation of relatively new macro-economic strategies and Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) introduced in 1996, with many fearing that GEAR may reverse some of the gains that women have worked very hard for as it has strong neo-liberal aspects to it (Standing et al., 1996).

The study found that there are existing eThekweni municipality policies on informal trading. These policies seek to formalise the informal street trading by making street traders register or acquire a permit and pay rentals for business spaces. Despite the existence of these policies and procedures for accumulation of street trading permits or registration process in Durban, they do not prioritise the interests of the marginalised poor (Mkhize and Cele, 2017; Karumbidza, 2011). This is because the registration, permit and rental processes require certain financial standards which are quite difficult for poor people to meet. It goes without saying that women are the majority of those who have difficulties in meeting the demands of these processes. Findings clearly point out that the eThekweni Municipality has been at the forefront of accommodating informal trading, the process has however remained very exclusive from the marginalised poor, who are poor women and migrants. Skinner (2000: 17) reported that South African policies tend to restrict informal trading operations rather than facilitate them. The absence of appropriate policies can limit trading participation by constraining the expansion in the informal sector (Onyenechere, 2009: 97). The drive by the municipality to formalising the informal trading sector has mimicked the influx control policies of apartheid regime, which were highly exclusionary and brutal to the development of women identities and welfare.

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<sup>7</sup>Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organising



Karumbidza (2011: 32) concluded that “the barriers to entering the informal trade sector structurally imposed by formalisation accentuate these hurdles to access for female traders”. These policies are not cognizant of the multiple roles women play in being caretakers of households, child bearers and as breadwinners (Mkhize and Cele, 2017; Mkhize, 2013). The incurrence of any extra costs beyond the goods they purchase to trade is quite exploitative and morally wrong.

Trading permits were introduced as a strategy to promote and maintain order within the informal sector; it is used as an inclusionary or exclusionary tool as it gives street traders a right to trade. Trading permits are a form of licensing that are issued out by the Municipality as a way of granting permission or leasing out trading spaces to the street traders. Nineteen percent of the respondents reported on not being able to obtain a licence as a major problem or moderate problem respectively. Site allocation and licensing are key components to better manage and control public spaces (Skinner, 2008). Conversely, another issue directly linked to trading spaces and licensing, is the issue of earnings of street traders. Fifty percent of the women operating on the street are trading with expired licenses as they have fallen months behind with the rent money. This was clearly more of an issue for certain sectors than others as business does not operate the same way in different places. The women in Mansel and Durban Station complained less about rent and storage money as they paid less on that and saved by travelling less frequently and spending most of their nights in their working containers.

#### **4.5 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter presented the research results based on the women’s voices on their experiences as street traders and the key findings of this study. The main objective of this research was to examine the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban. The objective was met identifying common struggles black women experience, including poverty and single mother headed households, low levels of formal education leading to their domination in the informal sector. As they flood the informal sector due to social and economic pressures, the competition is intensified, and trading spaces become scarce and permits limited resulting in some trading ‘illegally’ without permits. Their lack of business and financial skills add to the struggle of creating a successful business. These findings helped to reflect the lived experiences of black African women street traders in

Durban, South Africa; the demographic background, different challenges, gendered factors and government policies as barriers. These findings were critical in revealing how black African women are affected by different issues such as poverty, inequalities and segregation. The next concluding chapter presents the summary of the study located in the objectives and offers some recommendations that could be useful in informing policy changes and identifying support networks to assist women in informal sectors to tackle challenges that they face in their everyday lives and informal business – street trading in this case.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter is a summation of the research study and its findings based on the main objective of research, which was to examine the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban from their own subjective views. African women in the apartheid era were legally recognised as second-class citizens and they were always under the guardianship of a male family member (father [or his heir] or husband). The roles of African women in this highly patriarchal society was restricted to domestic responsibilities, which included rearing children, and overseeing the well-being of the family. The economic activities beyond home excluded the ‘feminine’ contribution (Nabeer et al, 2013). The emerging of the industrial economy, growth of towns, and the increase in migrant labour, the perceptions and prescriptions on the role of women began to change. African women began to move into nearby towns and worked as domestic servants. Affected by the harsh and discriminatory laws they gradually began to protest actively against pass laws, and eventually the African National Congress (ANC) incorporated women into their political platforms in 1943 (Jones et al, 2012).

The role of women in political, social, and economic platforms took a dynamic turn following the 1952 Defiance Campaign and Pass Resistance movements throughout the 1950s. In the post-apartheid era, African women assumed different roles in political and business platforms. Despite some positive milestones towards the recognition of women in the democratic era, most African women remain trapped in the mishaps of history and they were denied equal access to education, rights, and better economic opportunities compared to men (Mokgatetswa, 2014). It is essential to note that considering this brief background, there are various aspects that research can contribute in understanding the experiences of African women during the apartheid and post-apartheid era in South Africa. It was against this backdrop that the research undertaken had its main objective to: Explore the experiences of black African women trading in the streets of Durban. The sub objectives included: (i) to examine the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban; (ii) to examine and observe Durban black African women street traders' daily trading life as women running business in the streets of the big city; (iii) to examine Durban black African women street traders' encounters involved and/or associated with trading in the streets; and (iv) to find out if there are any support systems provided for black African women street traders in Durban.

In order to address these objectives this research sought to answer the key research question as: What are the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban?

The sub key questions included:

- a) What are the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban?
- b) What happens/takes place in the daily life of women running businesses in the streets of Durban?
- c) What are the encounters associated with black African women street traders in Durban?
- d) Are there any systems or structures put in place to support black African women street traders?

Fifteen women, were sampled to address these objectives who are based in the main trading places on the streets of Durban Station, Mansel Road, and the Beach Front area (targeting tourists along the beach and hotels), all located in Durban. The study was conducted using a qualitative method. Qualitative research focuses on providing detailed experiences of a phenomenon in society to understand reasons behind human behaviour

(Kothari, 2012). One on one in-depth interviews were conducted with participants about their day to day experiences to ensure their voices, and shared encounters, and challenges of informal trading are documented.

Research results from collected data was explored in consideration of existing literature. Data collection was primarily in line with existing literature (Creswell, 2015; Nowell et al., 2017) as all women interviewed indicated experiences of poverty, patriarchy (male domination), lack of formal education and employment as some of the factors that compelled them to street trading. The study explored the literature on the informalisation of women in the informal sector as street traders in the South African and global economic landscape. The enquiry managed to provide relevant and comparative understanding of the subject matter and how it relates to the agents of informal trading (women). The Research found that women street traders in Durban experience challenges due to factors that can be traced to the history of apartheid, the legacy of patriarchy, the formalisation of the informality and the poor implementation of government policies. Therefore, this chapter summarises, concludes and gives recommendations of the research study.

## **5.2 Summary of Research Findings**

This research study examined the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban. The informal sector in South Africa is the biggest employer of women (Kubheka, 2018; Siqwana-Ndulo, 2013; WIEGO, 2011). This study discovered that Durban is not an exception to these findings. The following summaries provide brief insights on the four major findings of this study according to the guidelines of the key themes presented in the previous chapter.

### ***Theme 1 Summary: Conduction and induction of women in street trading***

There are various factors that were identified to have contributed to the involvement of black African women in street trading in Durban. The findings revealed that these factors include poverty, lack of modern education, scarcity of employment and increased economic challenges, and other socio-economic factors. The factors that push black African women into street trading are associated with challenges rather than positive influences.

This study established that most black African women are vulnerable to poverty and have very limited alternatives to employment opportunities as compared to their male counterparts. All of the women interviewed revealed that they were receiving various social grants, either child support grants or pension grants. Despite receiving these grants, the women indicated that the cost of looking after their families is very high considering that most of them are the breadwinners and heads of their households. Street trading becomes the only immediate alternative to an additional income due to poverty and lack of employment opportunities. .

This study revealed that most black African women in street trading have lower levels of formal education. Only two (13%) of the participants completed matric. Many of the black African women started street trading at a very young age during the apartheid era. The major contributory factor that was identified to the poor education is the intensity of patriarchy and the gendered laws of apartheid which discouraged the education of black African women and restricted their economic roles to household domestic chores. These factors confirmed the post-colonial feminism which stipulated how black African women were and are affected by the residues of “multi-colonialism” by being segregated on different levels including colonialism, patriarchy, sexism and sexual abuse (Tyagi, 2014). The history of black African women in South Africa played a huge role in denying black African women proper education, hence limiting their economic options. As a result, the majority of black African women ended up in the street trading business as an alternate economic opportunity they could adhere to with their lower levels of education.

Most black African women got involved in street trading due to different social and economic ills. The findings of this study outlined that most of the women could not further their education due to poverty, loss of parents or guardians at a young age, teenage pregnancy and forced marriages whilst still young and abusive situations. All these factors highlighted intensified the economic struggles that became a push factor for the women into street vending. The narratives of black African women street traders reflected their suffering continued into the post-apartheid era.

Though most of the black African women indicated that street trading was not their choice of work, a few indicated that they wanted to own and manage their own businesses and ventured into street trading. Self-sustainability and financial freedom and/or

independence was identified as one of the key factors that attracted some of the black African women street traders. It is important to note that, owning one's own business despite the formality or informality of it, was identified as an empowering gesture by the black African women in street trading.

***Theme 2 Summary: Informal business operation limits***

From understanding the factors that drive black African women into street trading, the study found limitations associated with street trading as an informal business. Various challenges were identified affecting black African women in street trading. These included: inadequate permanent spaces and infrastructure to conduct business, backlog on issuing of trading permits and contradictions of space ownership, increasing business competition and cost of living, poor income, and women inaccessibility to finance and other resources.

The findings of this study revealed that about 25% of the women interviewed have no trading permits and are 'illegally' occupying spaces they are operating in. Most black African women in street trading are negatively affected and experienced difficult challenges in transporting and securing their goods. Their lives are prone to different health hazards if they do not have permanent infrastructures and services such as clean water, electricity, reliable transportation and modern communication (Amine and Staub, 2009).

Research found that the municipal by-laws and policies treat the informal trade as a form of social security rather than facilitating it as a legitimate economic activity, this is reflected through the way that they handle the issue of permits. All the women interviewed around the Durban University of Technology (DUT) campus have been trading there for years, and doing so without trading permits. The struggle to get permits is ongoing. The women complained that the Municipality said they cannot issue out permits for them as they belonged to DUT and not to them, this then raises more confusion as DUT is not responsible for the issuing of permits. A constant challenge is the harassment they claimed to receive by the metro police which includes the confiscation of goods. The traders must pay bribes not to have their goods confiscated as releasing them costs more. This is another setback that they are subjected to due to not having trading permits.

Almost all the women interviewed borrowed their start-up capital from friends or relatives, and none from financial institutions. They said they were not aware of any government funding initiatives or intervention programs available and accessible to them. Although the individual incomes of women are very low, they still make their contribution to local economies and to local revenue. These women provide and cater for the urban poor at very reasonable prices. Their gains, considering the rent money, costs of manufacturing and daily expenses on food and traveling are minimal. With the little that they have left, they must feed and support their families.

***Theme 3 Summary: Women marginalisation/exclusion***

Women in street trading are permanent employees in the sector unlike most men who come and go when they find work in the formal sector. The study found that black African women in street trading are highly marginalised and often experience exclusion. Women always have double roles in society, that of domestic responsibility and seeking economic sustenance for the family. There are certain gendered issues that women deal with in street trading, that do not affect men in the same trade. These issues these include taking care of children and the need for health facilities for sanitary purposes. Despite the reality of these specialised needs, there is lack of proper support or infrastructure that recognises the extra-burden women have to deal with when they are involved in street trading.

The study found that street traders work longer hours than the normal formal working hours for very little profit. However, the increasing cost of living does not even match the needs of most black African women involved in the trade. For most women, informal trading is the only thing that they know and their only source of income, as most of them were introduced into this business by close friends and family members. This speaks to the long history of this type of business and how most black African families have provided for their families through this business. Despite the high number of employment that this sector has catered for, its role and significance continued to be undermined in the formal sector, even within the whole economy at large. This is evident in the ill treatment and harassment received from the metro police regarding the allocation of permits and trading spaces and permits. There seems to be confusion around the issuing of permits when traders apply for permits with no response.

The study also revealed that the black African women in street traders experience a lot of racial abuse from other white and Indian female traders, constant confiscation of their goods, robbery and theft. This brings a lot of negative consequences to their way of business and affects their livelihood. The findings also revealed that about 70% of women interviewed have at some point been victims of crime of some kind.

#### ***Theme 4 Summary: Government policies as barriers***

The study also established that there are various government policies that are identified as barriers for black African women involved in street trading. The findings revealed that the support that is offered by the eThekweni municipality to street traders in terms of infrastructure is not sensitive to the needs of women traders. The findings outline that policies towards supporting street traders are not gender sensitive, there is poor access of information to street traders, and lack of capacity to build and support black African women in street trading.

Research discovered that most women in street trading are heads of households and are often multi-tasking by attending to both household duties and conducting their street trading business. Women street traders rely on their informal businesses to feed and cater for their family needs. Despite the dominance of women street traders in Durban and the enormous pressure they must deal with, the policies put in place by the City remain poorly implemented and unassertive towards supporting women. This is however, influenced by a combination of factors which include apartheid system which enhanced patriarchy and masculine policies by completely excluding the participation of black women in political and economic spheres. The manifestation of this history is clearly noticed in the lack of child-care facilities to support women street traders with children, difficult and expensive permit or registration processes and lack of financial support or start-ups for women in the informal sector.

### **5.3 Theoretical Contribution**

This study on the experiences of black African women street traders was conducted through the use of postcolonial and marxist feminist theories. The postcolonial feminist theory sought to know and understand the representation of women in the informal sector in previously colonized countries (Tyagi, 2014). Spivak (1985), a postcolonial feminist



scholar posed a challenge to postcolonialism in her writing asking ‘Can the subaltern speak?’ Subaltern referring to members of the ‘inferior rank’, which in this study refers to the black African women trading in the streets of Durban. This group of women are still marginalised and still experience the oppression of apartheid and patriarchy simultaneously, and the use of this theory aimed at giving them an opportunity to sound their muted voices. This was achieved through in-depth interviews that enabled them to speak about their experiences and challenges in their own voices.

The Marxist Feminist posits that gender oppression is a direct outcome of a capitalist society (KhosraviShakib,2010). This theory was used in this study to outline and analyse all the factors that sustain gender oppression in economic distinctions. In adopting the Marxist feminist approach, it helped the researcher to consider the roles of women traders beyond the marketplaces. The study found out that the roles of women traders in society also include domestic responsibilities and family caretaking. In understanding these extensive roles and responsibilities, the research established that in the global South, including African countries, particularly South Africa, “informal employment is generally a more important source of employment for women than for men” (ILO and WIEGO, 2013: 11). Considering these different roles and demands women must cater for, it is important to set in place processes that brought to light the challenges that affect women and how they should be addressed. The Marxist feminist theory in this study contributed to the various economic, social and political policies and systems perpetuating the oppression of women in informal business sectors, specifically in street trading in this context.

#### **5.4 Limitation and Strengths of this Research**

The biggest limitation of the research was that it had a limited time frame. The researcher could not conduct more than 15 interviews in order to gather information pertaining to the experiences of black African women street traders around Durban. The researcher had to deal with very few participants since qualitative data generates lots of written information that demands careful attention to process and organisation to give adequate analysis and relevant interpretation of results.

This research provides a coherent and detailed qualitative examination of black African women in street trading. It offers both qualitative voices of black African women traders and the observation experiences of the researcher to edify the outsider perspective on the challenges and day to day lived experiences of street traders. The research used simple and easy to understand language along with a clear methodology that can be reproduced in conducting a similar study in a different setting. This study provided an integrative analysis of both existing literature and the field research to give a detailed understanding of the experiences of black African women street traders in the post-apartheid South Africa.

## **5.5 Conclusion and Recommendations**

This research consists of five chapters. The first chapter provides a brief orientation of the research on the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban. The second chapter reviewed the literature and detailed the key theories namely the post-colonial feminist theory and the Marxist feminist theory, that were used to frame the thought patterns of the study. Chapter three explains the qualitative methodological procedures that were carried out in conducting and analysing this research. The findings and analysis of the study were thematically presented in chapter four. And, lastly, the conclusion and recommendations of the study are presented in chapter five.

The research sought to examine the experiences of black African women involved in street trading in Durban, South Africa. Black African women in street trading are vulnerable and marginalised by the history, municipal by-laws, lack of support, poor socio-economic conditions and the deteriorating economic situation in the country. There is a lot that needs to be done to materialise the relevant support that these women need to have sustainable livelihoods in this kind of industry. The following recommendations might serve to help with some relevant ways that can be used to help improve the conditions of black African women street traders:

- 5.1.1. The involvement of women in cooperatives. Involving women in cooperatives improves their social role in society, it also helps them in the fight against their daily struggles. Cooperatives that can provide funding for these women and childcare facilities.

- 5.1.2. There is need for a gender sensitive language which prioritises the needs and concerns of women street traders in the policies by eThekwini municipality to emphasise the urgency and importance of addressing the challenges faced by women street traders. This can be achieved through workshops and policy amendments.
- 5.1.3. There is need to increase infrastructural facilities (mostly toilets) for women street traders.
- 5.1.4. The eThekwini municipality must also put in place facilities such as child care or crèches that cater for the dual role of women street traders in economic and social production.
- 5.1.5. eThekwini municipality must put in place flexible measures in the permit system that consider the dual role of women in their homes and as breadwinners. Thus, they should be more considerate and flexible in offering supportive measures that are cost efficient.

The Metro police should work closely with the street committees to ensure that all forms of abuse against women street traders are dealt with and ended.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance



19 March 2019

**Ms Ingihlengile Sinothile Ntuli (212507767)**  
School of Social Sciences  
Howard College Campus

Dear Ms Ntuli,

**Protocol reference number: H55/1988/018M**

**Project title:** Informal Trading in Post-apartheid South Africa: An examination of the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban

### **Approval Notification – Expedited Application**

In response to your application received on 30 October 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. **PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....  
**Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)**

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Gabisile Mkhize  
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Maheshvari Naidu  
cc School Administrator: Ms Nonhlanhla Radebe

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**Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee**

**Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)**

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## Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

### Informed Consent Document

Dear Participant,

My name is **IngihlengileNtuli(212507767)**. I am a Masters candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus. The title of my research is: **Informal Trading in Post-aprtheid South Africa: An examination of the experiences of black African women street traders in Durban**. The aim of the study is to find out about the experiences of women street traders from the women traders themselves, their own narratives – in their own voices. I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about 45 minutes
- You have a right to agree and not agree to recording; there will be no penalty for not agreeing to recording.
- The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.
- If you agree to participate please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at: School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus, Durban. Email: [212507767@stu.ukan.ac.za](mailto:212507767@stu.ukan.ac.za);  
Cell: **072 186 8387**

My supervisor is **Dr. Gabisile Mkhize** who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Howard College Campus, Durban of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email [mkhizeg2@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mkhizeg2@ukzn.ac.za) Phonenummer: **013 260 7614**

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: **Ms Phumelele Ximba** University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za), Phonenummer +**27312603587**.

Thank you for your contribution to this research

## IsiZulu Translation

### **Incwadi Yesivumelwane.**

Igama lami ngingu **Ingihlengile Sinothile Ntuli (212507767)**. Ngenza izifundo ze Masters eNyuvesi yakwa Zulu-Natal eHoward College Campus. Isihloko socwaningo lwami lupathelene nezinqinamba ezibhekene nabantu besmame abamnyama abenza amabhizinisi okudayisa impahla emgwaqeni edholobheni laseThekwini, eSouth Africa. Kulolu cwaningo ngifisa ukuzwa ngabo abesmame abadayisayo ngohambo lwabo, ngezinqinamba zansuku zonke, kanye nangempilo yokudayisela emgwaqeni, loluphenyo ngizolenza ngokubuza imibuzo umuntu ngamunye ukuze ngithole uvo labo mayelana nalolu cwaningo.

### **Qaphela lokhu:**

- Imininingwane etholakalayo izosebenziselwa iskole kuphela.
- Awuphoqiwe ukuba inxenye yalolu cwaningo, insqumo singesakho
- Igama lakho nesbongo kuzocineka kufihlekile uma uthula uvo lwakho mayelana naloludaba.
- Imibuzo mpendulwane izothatha imizuzu engeqile ku 45minutes umuntu ngamunye.
- Ukuqopha inkulumo mpendulwane nge recorder kuzokwenzeke ngemvumo yakho, asikho isijeziso sokunqaba lokhu.
- Uma sivumelana ngokuqopha, lokhu kuzocinwa endaweni eyimfihlo futh ekhiyelwayo ezokwaziwa yim nomphathi wami kuphela, bese kuthi emva kweminyaka emihlanu iyahlwa.
- Uma sivumelana ukuthi ube inxenye yalolu cwaningo, sizosayina isivumelwane esikushoyo lokho.

Ngiyatholakala eNyuvesi yakwa Zulu-Natal kumkhakha wakwa Social Sciences, Howard College Campus, eThekwini. Email: [212507767@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:212507767@stu.ukzn.ac.za)

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## DECLARATION

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I understand the intention of the research. hereby agree to participate.

I consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

## DECLARATION: IsiZulu Translation

Mina..... (amagama aphelele), ngiyavuma ukuthi ngiyaluqonda ngokuphelele loluhlelo locwaningo, futhi ngiyavuma ukuba inxenye lwalo.

Ngiyaqonda ukuthi kuyilungelo lami ukuma, ngingasaqhubeki, noma inini uma ngifisa ukwenza kanjalo. Ngiyasiqonda isizathu nokubaluleka salolu cwaningo. Ngakho ke ngiyavuma ukuba inxenye lwayo.

Ngiyavuma/Angivumi ukuthi inkulumo mpendulwane iqophwe.

UKUSAYINA KWE-PARTICIPANT:

USUKU:

.....

## Appendix 3: Interview Schedule

### Research Interview Schedule

#### Biographic Questions

- A. Name:
- B. Age:
- C. Trading location:
- D. Home location:
- E. Ethnic Group:
- F. Marital Status:
- G. Education

#### Research Questions

1. Do you have children? If yes, how many and how old; who looks after them?
2. Why do you do this business?
3. What are your working hours?
4. What do you sell?
5. How long have you been trading for?
6. How/Why did you start trading?
7. Do you have a trading permit?
8. Do you pay any rent for trading here?
9. What issues do you face as a woman street trader?
10. Where do you keep your trading products after work?
11. How safe are these trading/business spaces, as a woman?
12. How are trading spaces allocated? How did you occupy your trading space?
13. How much do you make weekly (roughly)?
  - Between 300-500
  - 500-1000
  - 1000-1500
  - 1500-2000
14. Where is your current accommodation? How do you get there?
15. Do you get any assistance from the Ethekwini Municipality? What and how?
16. Do you have support groups as women traders? What and how?
17. Do you have any support from male traders? What and how?
18. Do you get support any kind of support in general? What and how?
19. How do you feel about your overall experience of street trading? Why?
20. Would you encourage other women to join? Why?

## Appendix C: IsiZulu Translation

### **Imibuzo Yocwaningo**

#### **Imibuzo yokwazana (imvelaphi)**

- A. Igama :
- B. Iminyaka:
- C. Indawo Yokudayisela:
- D. Indawo Yokuhlala
- E. Ubuzwe:
- F. Ushadile Yini:
- G. Ibanga Lemfundo:

#### **Imibuzo Yocwaningo:**

1. Unazo yini izingane? Uma zikhona, zingaki? Zibhekwa ngubani?
2. Yini eyakwenza ukuth uqale loluhlobo lwebhizinisi?
3. Usebenza amahora amangaki osukwini?
4. Udayisa luphi uhlobo lwempahla?
5. Usunesikhathi esingakanani udayisa?
6. Uluqale kanjan loluhlobo lwebhizinisi?
7. Unayo yini imvumo yokuthengisela lapha?
8. Uyakukhokhela yini ukuthengisela lapha?
9. Iziphi izinkinga enibhekana nazo njengabantu besmame abadayisela lapha?
10. Uzicina kuphi izimpahla ozithengisayo uma uvala?
11. Kuphephe kangakanani ukuthengisela lapha njengomuntu wesmame?
12. Nizithola kanjani izindawo zokudayisela? Wena wayithola kanjani?
13. Wenza malini ngeviki? (Kalekisa)
  - Phakathi kuka 300-500
  - 500-1000
  - 1000-1500
  - 1500-2000
  - 2000+
14. Ikuphi indawo yakho yokuhlala njengamanje? Uhamba kanjan ukuya khona nokusuka?
15. Likhona yini uxaso/usizo olutholayo? Noma ngabe usizo olukanjani olukusizayo kulomsebenzi.
16. Ninayo yini inhlangotho yabantu besmame njengabathengisi balapha? Ikanjani? Yenzani?
17. Kukhona yini ukwesekwa njengabantu besmame enilithola kubantu beslisa eninabo kulelibhizinisi? Luyini? Lukanjani?
18. Likhona yini uxaso olutholayo kulomkhakha? Noma olukanjani
19. Uzizwa kanjan, noma ungathini ngesimo sokhlala, nohambo lwakho kuloluhlobo lwebhizinisi?
20. Ungabakhuthaza yini abanye abantu besmame ukuthi bajoyine loluhlobo lwebhizinisi? Ngobani?