Investigating the role of traditional leadership in fostering gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality

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DECLARATION

I, Luyanda Ncengwa, declare that:

1. The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.

2. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

3. This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs, or other information unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

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Signature of candidate [redacted]

Signature of supervisor: [redacted]

Date: 28/08/2024

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents. Your support, love, and guidance have been the reason to keep going and finally complete this dissertation. Thank you for all the sacrifices you have made for me and my siblings. Due to those sacrifices I have come this far, and I will forever be grateful. Your teachings and wisdom have made me the person that I am today. *Mpangazitha*!

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whether I would ever make my dream of completing a master's degree come true, I hope I have made you proud.

ABSTRACT

Historically, traditional leadership was a respected institution. Colonialism and apartheid transformed traditional leaders from community leaders to agents of colonial and apartheid regimes. The advent of democracy in South Africa aims to restore the status and authority of traditional leadership. This study investigates the role of traditional leadership in fostering gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality. A sample of 11 participants was purposely selected, comprising traditional leaders, members of traditional councils, and ordinary community members. The research investigated their perspectives on the role of traditional leadership in gender relations and strategies employed to address these issues. The Intersectionality perspective and Asset-Based Community Development were adopted as a theoretical framework for the study. Observations and interviews were employed to collect data.

The findings indicate that traditional leaders operate in a paradoxical space that requires them to balance traditional values and democratic principles. Balancing tradition and modernity poses challenges in a community in flux due to poverty and unemployment. In such contexts, the findings demonstrate how the prevailing socioeconomic context characterised by poverty, unemployment and the marginalisation of rural communities impacts gender relations. Members rely on traditional leaders who act as the first line of defence against cases of abuse due to their proximity to the community. It also emerged that while the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act no. 41 of 2003 promotes the participation of women in traditional communities, factors such as cultural barriers, women's traditional roles and financial constraints prevent women from full participation. Financial support from the government intends to assist traditional leaders but limits their autonomy and impacts decision-making processes. The strategies that traditional leaders use to promote healthy gender relations comprise mediation in disputes, fining perpetrators, involving law enforcement agencies, raising awareness and implementing GBV programmes, enforcing government legislation and restoring traditional cultures and values.

The conclusion reiterates the strategic significance of traditional leaders in promoting healthy gender relations in Jozini. The study proposes an approach that values and builds on existing leadership structures and knowledge systems. Recommendations include reviewing and strengthening gender policies within traditional leadership structures to address socioeconomic

challenges and gender disparities. Ultimately, it is fundamental to invest in education and awareness programmes to promote healthy gender relations and encourage the participation of both women and men in leadership roles.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABCD:	Asset-Based Community Development
AIDS:	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANC:	African National Congress
CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COGTA:	Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
COVID-19:	Corona Virus Disease of 2019
GBV:	Gender-Based Violence
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
KZN:	KwaZulu-Natal
LGBTQI +:	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or questioning, Intersex, and more
NDP:	National Development Plan
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHTL:	National House of Traditional Leaders
NPA:	National Prosecuting Authority
SA	South Africa
SADC:	Southern Africa Development Community
SANAC:	South African National AIDS Council
SAPS:	South African Police Service
SGB:	School Governing Body
SLA:	Service Level Agreement
TC:	Traditional Councils
UKZN:	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNAIDS:	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

The White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance maintains that traditional leadership "predates the colonial invasion and the apartheid era" (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2003:20) It was a respected and honourable institution in pre-colonial times that impacted the quality of life of the people it governed, including matters of culture and agriculture. Ensuring food security and passing down cultures from one generation to the next was mostly the responsibility of traditional leaders. Jackson et al. (2009:41) declare that traditional leadership is "viewed as a type of government that has pre-colonial roots but has been substantially interfered with by colonialism". In this regard, Reddy and Naidu (as cited in Nxumalo, 2012) concur that traditional institutions' ability to function was severely harmed after colonial rule began. The traditional leadership was reduced to caring for their subjects on behalf of the colonists. The claim made by Cumbe (2010, p.4) that "Chiefs were considered as a tool to contact people and make colonial power successful and respectable.", further echoes and emphasizes this assertion. The situation deteriorated further during the apartheid era since the traditional leadership structure was disregarded. The institution was transformed into a state tool to achieve separate development goals and segregation along racial, religious, and gender lines. Women were the group most negatively impacted because they held the lowest status within the traditional communities. This did not occur in the pre-colonial era when men occasionally sought advice from women before making decisions that would affect their families or the community (Nxumalo, 2012).

The advent of democracy in South Africa aims to promote human rights and social justice for the previously marginalised. The Constitution of South Africa ensures that every citizen is entitled to a society founded on the principles of social justice and democracy, along with other aspects. Within the Bill of Rights of the South African Constitution, a core value is the promotion of gender equality, a vital component of the emphasis on social justice. Beyond safeguarding and advocating for the rights of women, the principle of equality explicitly prohibits any form of discrimination solely based on gender (RSA, 1996).

In South Africa, the problem of gender inequality is still very much alive (Akala, 2018). Each community has rules about what conduct is proper for men and women. There are different

expectations for men and women. For instance, society thinks that men and women should perform different types of jobs (Dunkle et al., 2004). Although they are founded on biological sex, these gender roles are not inherently acceptable. Some are shaped by prejudice in culture and society (Wittmann, 2012). The Constitution grants the country's citizens the right to gender equality. All state institutions, including traditional leaders, are therefore legally and constitutionally required not only to observe but also to work toward realising this right. Failure to uphold a crucial clause of the South African Constitution also constitutes a failure to ensure that its residents enjoy their human rights (Commission for Gender Equality, 2018). It is upon this premise that this study will seek to investigate the role of traditional leadership in fostering gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality. This chapter provides the background of the study, problem statement, rationale, study aims, research questions and objectives, the theoretical framework and research design. It also describes the structure of the dissertation and concludes with a summary of the chapter.

1.2 Problem Statement

This study investigates the role of traditional leadership in fostering gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality. Research demonstrates that traditional leaders play a pivotal role in addressing social issues due to their respected positions and ability to mobilise community members (Kanyinga, 2014). They hold substantial authority and influence within their communities, making them key figures in influencing social norms and behaviours (Albertyn, 2015). Despite their potential impact, existing GBV interventions often neglect to involve traditional leaders, resulting in missed opportunities for more effective interventions. The unique cultural and social contexts that traditional leaders operate within are ignored (Oomen, 2005). However, traditional leaders have the power to enforce laws and provide support to GBV survivors.

Involving traditional leaders in GBV initiatives has been shown to enhance the effectiveness of community programmes. As shown in Hatcher et al. (2014) community-based interventions with the participation of traditional leaders lead to significant reductions in GBV incidents. The scholars concluded that integrating traditional leaders into community-based GBV initiatives can create more culturally sensitive approaches, thus increasing community support and the sustainability of interventions. However, there is a paucity of research investigating traditional leaders in GBV programmes, despite their proximity to the people they serve (Nxumalo, 2012).

Perceptions that traditional leadership structures are oppressive to women and undemocratic contribute to this challenge (Saungweme, 2021; Walker, 2013), resulting in this area being understudied. Hence, the current study has identified a problem in policies and programmes that leave traditional leaders behind when they are the first point of defence for people in rural communities. As reflected in the National Strategic Plan on GBV and Femicide (RSA, 2020), linking traditional leaders and GBV is a recent development in South Africa. The Plan is targeting them, among other groups, to address "specific harmful practices with a province-specific focus" (RSA, 2020, p. 92). To address the research problem, this study examined the perspectives of traditional leaders and community members on the role of traditional leadership in promoting gender relations. It further examined the strategies employed by traditional leaders to address GBV and other gender-related issues, providing insights into how traditional structures can be leveraged to promote gender equity and social justice within rural communities.

1.3 Rationale

Despite numerous policies and programmes aimed at promoting gender equality, gender-based disparities in South Africa persist. This highlights a gap in the effectiveness of current interventions. Traditional leaders hold positions of authority and influence deeply rooted in cultural and societal norms (Albertyn, 2015). Their proximity to and intimate knowledge of the communities they serve make them potentially powerful agents of change in promoting equitable gender relations (Kanyinga, 2014). Understanding the role that traditional leaders currently play in influencing gender dynamics, this research seeks to uncover untapped potential within these traditional structures to enhance the reach and impact of gender equality initiatives.

Furthermore, integrating traditional leadership into broader gender equality frameworks could offer a culturally sensitive approach that resonates more deeply with community members. This alignment may increase the acceptance, effectiveness, and sustainability of such programmes. Therefore, this study investigates the role of traditional leaders in influencing gender relations in Jozini. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners, offering pathways to promote gender equality in rural and traditional communities in South Africa. Given their influential role, how traditional leaders approach and

manage gender relations has the potential to positively or negatively impact the communities they serve.

My interest in this research stems from a deep-seated passion for addressing gender disparities, particularly in contexts where cultural norms and traditional leadership play a significant role. Growing up in a rural community, I observed firsthand the profound influence traditional leaders wield over societal practices and beliefs. While this influence often reinforces community cohesion, I also witnessed how entrenched gender biases could perpetuate inequality, leaving women and girls marginalised in decision-making processes and access to opportunities. These experiences sparked my commitment to understanding how traditional structures can be leveraged to promote gender equity rather than hinder it. I am particularly drawn to exploring the intersections of cultural authenticity and progressive change. Sustainable solutions for gender equality in South Africa must integrate deeply rooted traditions with modern frameworks. This research allows me to combine my experiences and academic interests to uncover strategies that harmonise traditional leadership with gender equality goals. I am motivated by the opportunity to contribute to actionable solutions that empower marginalised groups while respecting the cultural integrity of the communities they belong to.

1.4 Study Aim

The aim of this research is to investigate the role of traditional leadership in fostering gender relations in selected communities within Jozini Local Municipality.

1.5 Research Questions

- What are traditional leaders' perspectives on the role they play in fostering gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality?
- What are peoples' perceptions of the role of traditional leaders in fostering gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality?
- Which strategies are traditional leaders using to address gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality?

1.6 Research Objectives

- To understand traditional leaders' perspectives on their role in fostering gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality.
- To establish people's perceptions of the role of traditional leaders in fostering gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality.
- To examine strategies used by traditional leaders in addressing gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality

1.7 Theoretical Framework

Collins and Stockton (2018) posit that a theoretical framework is a set of concepts, assumptions, and expectations that guide and inform a research study. It provides a foundation for understanding the research problem and helps to establish the researcher's perspective (Ormston et al., 2014). The purpose of a theoretical framework is to provide a clear and concise explanation of the research problem and to establish a logical connection between the research questions and the methods used to address them. It also helps to identify gaps in existing research and provides a basis for future research (Collins & Stockton, 2018). It is upon these premises that this study will use two theories, the Intersectionality theory and the Asset-Based Community Development theory.

1.7.1 Intersectionality Theory

Kimberle Crenshaw (1989, 1991) introduced the concept of Intersectionality theory. This theory acknowledges that among groups of individuals who share a common identity such as gender, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, or other defining characteristics, there exist internal distinctions or variations. Essentially, every individual's interaction with the societal framework is somewhat distinct due to the convergence of their multiple identities, which results in overlapping forms of marginalisation (Berard, 2014). Consequently, overarching generalizations about the struggles, influence, and power of a specific social group overlook the reality that group members also hold memberships in other social categories, potentially subjecting them to diverse forms of marginalisation (McRobbie, 2014). Consequently, institutions and social movements formed around a unified identity often neglect to recognize the presence of distinct marginalised identities within the group itself.

The term intersectionality denotes the notion that various forms of discrimination, such as those based on race, gender, class, disability, sexual orientation, and other facets of identity, do not exist independently but rather intersect to give rise to specific kinds of societal subjugation (Berard, 2014). The concept of intersectionality appreciates the intricate interplay of power dynamics, social structures, and institutions. It also acknowledges that individuals can face multiple forms of discrimination simultaneously, encompassing racism, sexism, classism, ableism, ageism, and homophobia. This convergence, as noted by Taylor (2019), gives rise to distinct oppressive experiences. This theory recognises that individuals might encounter various forms of oppression and privilege concurrently, influenced by elements like race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability.

Using an intersectional perspective, the research examines the role of traditional leadership on gender dynamics within Jozini Local Municipality. The theory was relevant in understanding the intersecting identities of people living in traditional communities. It also revealed how these factors interact with traditional leadership structures and practices.

1.7.2 Asset-Based Community Development

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) are the pioneers behind the formulation and application of the Asset-Based Community Development theory. This theory is grounded in the fundamental perspective on strengths, which involves a cooperative approach between community residents and professionals. This collaborative process facilitates their joint efforts to identify results that leverage the strengths and resources of community members (Pretorius et al., 2012). Asset-Based Community Development promotes community appreciation of its resources and mobilisation of its strengths (Zamisa & Mutereko, 2019). Everyone has a sense of identity and purpose because of their assets (Morse et al., 2022). The Asset-Based Community Development theory is intended to recognise the skills and abilities of everyone, regardless of age, gender, or class, and to highlight areas where community members can work together for their mutual benefit.

Resources are only one aspect of an asset. Engagement with resources is made easier by awareness of assets (Pretorius et al., 2012). In the context of this study, the Asset-Based Community Development theory can be used to explore how traditional leadership structures

and practices can be leveraged to promote gender equity and social justice in Jozini Local Municipality. In this regard, the study will examine how traditional leaders have historically served as community organisers and mediators, and how these roles can be expanded to promote gender equity. The study will also seek to identify existing community assets, such as women's groups or youth organisations, that could be mobilised to promote gender equity. By using an asset-based approach, the study can provide a more holistic understanding of the community's strengths and assets, and how these can be leveraged to promote gender equity and social justice. This approach can also help to build community ownership and engagement in the research process, which can lead to more sustainable and effective interventions.

1.8 Research Design

A research design refers to a blueprint outlining the data to be collected, the sources of that data, the methods used for its analysis, and the timing of that analysis. Essentially, it is a strategy developed to fulfil the research objectives (Vaus, 2006). Qualitative research methods were employed in this study. These methods are characterised as a type of social investigation that centres on how individuals interpret and give meaning to their experiences. People living in Traditional Councils in Jozini Municipality under Umkhanyakude District Municipality have been selected as a study sample. The target population and description of participants are residents of rural areas that rely heavily on traditional structures and systems to support them. In the Jozini region, there are seven Traditional Councils, all of which are active participants in Council and Portfolio Committee meetings (Integrated Development Plannig of Jozini Local Municipality, 2022/23, n.d).

This study used purposive sampling. In qualitative research, purposive sampling is applied to sample a small size that is carefully chosen for a specific purpose (Robinson, 2014). The main goal is to achieve a deeper understanding of the subject under investigation, rather than trying to cover a wide range of cases. Purposive sampling involves selecting participants who are most likely to provide relevant and valuable information (Kelly, 2010). The decision to adopt purposive sampling is grounded in the belief that traditional leaders hold crucial insights into the phenomenon being studied due to their privileged positions in society. A sample size of 11 participants was sufficient for an in-depth qualitative study. It consisted of four traditional leaders, two headmen and five community members. There was a mix between sex and age. All participants were aged 18 and over. Traditional leaders were visited in their TCs in the

company of a local non-governmental organisation (NGO). This NGO operates in the community of Jozini, where it collaborates with traditional leaders, government officials, and funders.

Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews and observations. One senior traditional leader, a female leader of the Women's Forum, and the founder of the NGO were identified as key informants who provided detailed insights into the nature and dynamics of GBV in Jozini. Ritchie and Lewis (2015) assert that the goal is to gather insights from diverse individuals. Key informant interviews entailed comprehensive discussions with individuals who possess a deep understanding of the issues being studied. In this study, these interviews were directed towards involving traditional leaders and members of TCs. Observations were also utilised to the reasons behind observing how traditional leaders interact with members of TCs during greetings, conversations and allocation of responsibilities. A detailed description of the data collection methods is presented in Chapter 4.

1.9 Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter One

This chapter introduces the study and states what it intends to achieve. The following sections are covered: problem statement, rationale, research aim, questions and objectives, the theoretical framework, and the research design.

Chapter Two

This chapter reviewed relevant literature. Previous studies that encapsulated the historical context of traditional leadership from pre-colonial Africa to the democratic era were examined. The chapter also conceptualised the social construction of gender and gender relations within traditional leadership structures.

Chapter Three

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework underpinning the study, i.e. intersectionality and Asset-Based Community Development.

Chapter Four

This chapter focuses on the research methodology. The following topics are covered: interpretive paradigm, qualitative approach, the location of the study, purposive sampling and sample, exclusion and inclusion criteria, data collection methods, techniques and instruments, thematic analysis, and ethical considerations.

Chapter Five

This chapter presents and discusses the findings under three central themes, viz: 1) Role of traditional leaders in gender relations, 2) Community members' perceptions of the role of traditional leaders in gender relations, and 3) Strategies for addressing gender relations.

Chapter Six

This chapter consists of a summary of the findings in a way that demonstrates that the objectives of the study were achieved.

1.10 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the dissertation by describing the problem statement, rationale, research aim, research questions and objectives, theoretical framework, and research design. The following chapter will review the literature relevant to the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The first chapter introduced the study. Chapter 2 reviews literature that is relevant to the role of traditional leadership in gender relations. A literature review constitutes a major part of the academic credibility of any research paper. To construct a cogent argument that leads to the description of a proposed study, this chapter extracts and synthesises the key ideas, issues, findings, and research methodologies that arise from a critical examination of studies related to the topic under investigation. This chapter explores the historical background and evolution of traditional leadership in South Africa, its structure and roles, and the social construction of gender relations. It further discusses the development of gender inequalities and patriarchy and the impact of different historical eras on gender roles within traditional leadership. Lastly, it critically evaluates the role of traditional leaders in promoting gender equality.

2.2 Historical Background of Traditional Leadership

The introduction of white settlers to Africa changed the indigenous governance structure. White invaders initially tried to utilise traditional leaders against their people as a means of capturing control (Koenane, 2017). Koenane (2017) asserts that because they were essential to the governing institutions, traditional leaders had the highest level of respect among their followers. Precolonial, colonial, apartheid, and post-apartheid are the four historical divisions of traditional leadership.

Africa was true to itself and had not yet encountered other worldviews during the pre-colonial period. During this time, there was a system of government that Mahao (2007, p.150) calls "chieftaincy," while Mkhwanazi (2012, p.18) refers to as "an ancient African institution". The institution of *ubukhosi* or *borena*, or traditional rule, was significant during the pre-colonial era (Khunou, 2011, p.278). Khunou emphasises the value of traditional leadership institutions in pre-colonial times, but one firmly believes that they are still valuable today. In the past, the institution had an interest in sociopolitical and economic issues impacting their people in addition to serving as the keeper of traditions and culture. Taking this into account in the current environment, several sociopolitical, economic, and cultural challenges could benefit from the interventions of traditional leaders (Koenane, 2017; Bryant & Pini, 2010).

People disliked traditional leaders because they were forced into serving as an extension of their colonial governments throughout the colonial era. People started to distrust traditional leaders, and as a result, some people's trust in them was eroded, while others completely lost faith in them (Mkhwanazi, 2012). Mkhwanazi further notes that although some traditional leaders caved, others persisted. Colonial governments used exile and removal as a tactic to get rid of traditional leaders who challenged white supremacy (Reddy & Naidu cited in Nxumalo, 2012). The institution of traditional rule - Ubukhosi in isiZulu, has proven to be durable throughout history when it has been tested by colonial dominance and the apartheid regime in South Africa. The conventional structure of government was utilised, if not outright exploited, by both the colonial and apartheid regimes. Where there was opposition, traditional chiefs who objected were detained and replaced with cooperative appointees (Koenane, 2017).

History reveals that the institution of traditional leadership, which is one of the highest levels of authority, endured difficult circumstances at the hands of colonial forces, and displayed fortitude that the colonial powers were unable to shatter. However, the apartheid system also used the same techniques. Therefore, colonisation was not the last attempt to steal the authority of the institution (Nxumalo, 2012). While admitting the fact that women never enjoyed complete and equal privileges with men under traditional systems of leadership, Akala (2018) asserts that women in pre-colonial Africa managed kingdoms, formed cities, began military conquests, and founded states.

It should be added that traditional leadership is not exclusive to South Africa. Monarchies and other traditional governance forms have existed worldwide. The rise of democratic administrations stemmed from revolutions seeking better working and living conditions across various countries. This shift led to the abolition of traditional leadership systems, especially in Eastern European states, with democratic governance systems taking place (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2003). While some aspects of these institutions persist, Western European countries such as the United Kingdom, Spain, Holland, Sweden, and Norway have replaced fundamental parts of traditional rule with democratic systems.

In KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, King Misuzulu kaZwelithini heads the Zulu Monarchy. Like the British Monarchy's Queen, the Zulu King holds a symbolic and ceremonial role in national affairs. He is deeply involved in promoting agriculture and encouraging people to participate in subsistence and commercial farming (Nkomo, 2023). Before colonisation, traditional

leadership was an integral part of the African political system. However, with the advent of colonisation, colonialists manipulated these traditional institutions to further their agenda of subjugation and control of people of African descent. The White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2003, p.15) supports this view by stating that the colonisation of African states served the dictates and needs of European colonisers. This is partly because these colonial powers often perceived traditional leadership as uncivilised.

2.3 Social Construction of Gender Relations in South Africa

Social construction refers to the notion that social practices and norms, rather than innate biological differences, inform individual and collective behaviours, identities, and realities (Arnold et al., 2020). As a result, many aspects of our world, including gender, are not naturally given but are created and maintained through social interactions and cultural expectations (Gergen, 2022). Society often assumes that gender is inherent and biologically ingrained due to its pervasive presence. However, the reality is that gender is continuously produced and reproduced through social interactions, making it both the structure and content of social life. It is against this background that Lyttleton-Smith (2015) insist that gender is a human creation, reliant on the ongoing performance of gender by individuals. This performance involves adhering to socially constructed norms and behaviours associated with one's perceived gender, which people often enact unconsciously. Judith Butler (1990) is the leading scholar on gender as performance. Her work introduces the concept of gender performativity, which posits that gender is not an innate quality but an ongoing performance that constructs and reinforces societal norms. As such, she questions the belief that certain gendered behaviours are natural. This questioning reveals how one's learned performance of gendered behaviour (commonly associated with femininity and masculinity) is a performance imposed upon people. Hence, gender is socially constructed and entrenched.

Lyttleton-Smith (2015) highlight how gender is an active process, continuously achieved through interaction and societal reinforcement. Similarly, scholars like Lober (2017) and Connell (2002) emphasise that gender is a social institution that organises and stratifies society, influencing individual behaviours and shaping power dynamics. To pay attention to how gender is generated typically involves a purposeful disruption of preconceived notions of how men and women should behave. Once the other person has been successfully assigned a gender

status, we are no longer uncomfortable because doing so makes us feel socially at ease (Lober, 2017). In the current society, the status can also be transvestite (someone who wears clothing of the opposite gender) or transsexual (someone who has undergone sex-change surgery), in addition to man and woman. Transvestites and transsexuals, like any normal person, create their gender identity by wearing, speaking, moving, and gesturing in ways that are appropriate for whichever gender they wish to be perceived as (Butler, 2012).

The social construction of gender starts with assigning sex at birth based on the child's genitalia. To avoid constant inquiries about their baby's gender, parents dress and accessorise their newborns to indicate whether they are boys or girls. Naming, clothing, and other gender markers then transform this sex category into a gender status. Once a child's gender is apparent, they are treated differently based on gender, and children respond by developing distinct feelings and behaviours. They then begin to identify as members of their gender as soon as they can speak (Johnson, 2021; Unger, 2020, Street & Cardis, 2018; Leaper, 2014).

Although sexual thoughts, urges, and behaviours are not influenced by sex again until puberty, by that time, they have already been shaped by gender norms and expectations. In a complex, gendered social interaction, adolescent boys and girls either approach or avoid each other. Employment and parenting are gendered, with different expectations for mothers and fathers. The life experiences of women and men are influenced by their roles as parents, employees, and leaders, resulting in distinct emotions, awareness, relationships, skills, and behaviours labelled as feminine or masculine. These actions collectively form the social construction of gender, which plays a critical role in how individuals organise their lives (Jonhson, 2021; Leaper, 2021).

Nicholas (2019) asserts that gender relations refer to the social relationships and power distribution between men and women in both the private (personal) and public spheres. Numerous key events that occurred before and after 1994 have accelerated the process of creating a non-racial and non-sexist society. A variety of progressive laws and policies in South Africa have created the conditions for gender transition (Farnworth et al., 2013). In addition, South Africa has ratified several international agreements and is a signatory to others. Priyashantha et al. (2021) state that gender is also inclusive of the LGBTQI+ community. While this is acknowledged, this study is delineated to focus on heterosexual relationships. South Africa is one of the member states that has adopted international policies to transform

relations between men and women. It is important to highlight a few of these such as The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 5 of the SDGs aims to achieve gender equality by 2030. Moreover, the 1996 adoption of the South African Constitution firmly enshrined the idea of gender equality. In addition, the Constitution guarantees socio-economic rights which are crucial for most women, affirmative action where it is required to rectify historical inequalities, freedom, and security of person. The South African Constitution is one of the most progressive in the world in promoting human rights, including gender equality (RSA, 1996). It ensures fundamental human rights, promotes social justice, and eliminates discrimination, fostering an equitable society for all individuals regardless of gender (Commission on Gender Equality, 2000).

South Africa is one of the member states that has adopted international policies to transform relations between men and women. It is important to highlight a few of these, i.e. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). CEDAW represents governments' dedication to the values and practices aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. The provisions of CEDAW can be used by attorneys, women's organisations, and policymakers to put pressure on the government and remind it of its international commitments (Kathree, 1995). At the sub-regional level, South Africa signed both the Southern African Development Community (SADC) declaration on gender and development and the addendum on the prevention and eradication of violence against women and children as a member of the SADC. In 1997, this was approved by the SADC's top officials (Commission for Gender Equality, 2000). South Africa is a member of organisations like the Commonwealth and the United Nations, which have passed several important declarations and accords aimed at advancing and defending gender equality (Chan, 2008). South Africa has a National Strategic Plan on GBV and Femicide (RSA, 2020). The GBV and Femicide Bill was signed into law on 24 May 2024. All of this indicates that gender equality has been identified as a priority for South Africa within a national and international policy environment. In addition to expressing the government's commitment and aims, these policies, agreements, and declarations also outline how all facets of society should be involved.

2.5 Creation of Gender Inequalities and Patriarchy

The Commission on Gender Equality (2000) demonstrates that patriarchy has been crucial to the propagation of gender inequality in the past and the present, in addition to variables relating to race and socioeconomic class. This means that several of the problems faced by women in general and Black women in particular have long been linked to patriarchy. This is a system of ideas, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours that distinguish and promote unequal relationships between men and women (Facio, 2013). It relegates women to second-class status in both public and private arenas of existence. Social structures and cultural norms reinforce and perpetuate male superiority and female subordination. They assign women roles and situations that are overtly, predominately, and negatively sexist (Butler, 1990).

Women hold inferior positions since they do not participate in important decision-making processes. Butler (1990) asserts that patriarchy affects gender relations and determines advantages and disadvantages in social spaces considering the aforementioned. This entrenches women's oppression while intensifying the domination of fathers. Women do not enjoy being subordinate to men, rather, they enjoy loving, complementary partnerships that provide support and guidance. (Coetzee, 2001). Coetzee (2001) emphasizes that women aspire to loving, complementary partnerships that provide support and guidance, rather than oppressive hierarchies that stifle their potential and agency. This desire for egalitarian relationships reflects a broader resistance to patriarchal structures that limit women's roles and reinforce gender inequality. Mudau (2017, p.68) asserts that patriarchy supported men's dominance over women and served as "the common denominator of the South African nation; it is a system of domination of men over women, which transcends different economic systems, eras, regions, and classes." The fundamental belief that patriarchy is created, maintained, and reproduced through societal institutions and systems that support power disparities and hierarchical power relations has endured for millennia (Akala, 2018).

Coetzee (2001) concurs with the aforementioned opinion that patriarchy depends on the persistence of power disparities between the sexes. Men are entitled to a position of power over women because of the essentialism ideal fed by the untruth that women are subordinate to men. Patriarchy views women. as being less intelligent and physically incapable. The falsehoods have been refuted by conflicting accounts and studies (Medina-Vicent, 2020). Most women have internalised the lies over time, which has led them to accept the *status quo* that gender

stereotypes have fuelled and created. Coetzee (2021) concludes that South Africans in general, and the educational system in particular, have not altered significantly because of this observation. He bases this assertion on the notion that gender inequality is getting worse and patriarchal hegemony is still in place. Structurally speaking, South Africa is still primarily patriarchal in its social, economic, and political activities and surroundings.

The Commission on Gender Equality (1998) and Coetzee (2001) state that patriarchy was a prevalent aspect of both Black and white communities, and it was a fully-fledged ideology with a solid foundation in both Afro- and Eurocentric mythologies. While neutralising women of all races, it brutalised men. In addition, a declaration on the "Emancipation of Women in South Africa" released by the ANC National Executive Committee on May 2, 1990, supported the idea that gender oppression is in part based on resources that are in men's hands. The fact that women are collectively excluded from political, social, and economic positions of power; they find themselves paid less well for work of equal value, and women are more likely to experience poverty when compared to men.

Gender oppression is also exacerbated and expressed through deep-rooted structures of domination, socio-cultural practices, attitudes, and traditions (Coetzee, 2001). The Commission on Gender Equality (1998) acknowledges that women are the most overlooked and marginalised segment of South African people. Current laws do not challenge gender inequality; rather, they concretise male dominance (Parcon, 2020). Likewise, the emergence of capitalism did not transcend the patriarchal or cultural exclusions of earlier civilisations. Relegating women to the private sphere of the home and family has kept them out of economic opportunities in the public sphere. This was a reassertion of the supremacists' cultural and patriarchal hegemonies, which essentialised, commodified, and objectified women. The gendered division of labour defined and perpetuated men as independent, possessive, and human beings with rights (Fraser et al., 2003).

Black South African women's suffering originates from a complex historical background characterised by racism, social class and sexism, in addition to the general marginalisation of black people (Mahabeer et al., 2018). When describing supremacy and privilege for one group and inferiority and subservience for another, race frequently uses colour as a key feature. Contrarily, racism is a philosophy that supports the domination of one race group over other races (Akala, 2008). In the case of South Africa, racism and colonialism, as well as apartheid,

are inextricably linked to race. In that scenario, the dominant and political class misinterpretation of White people's domination and, social, economic, and political privilege, over black people as being inherent was a strategy for distorting and misrepresenting facts for their profit (Parsons, 2013).

Sex and sexism share the perspective that males are fundamentally superior to females. These unjustified distinctions are validated by the distorted justifications put out by innatism, who believe that women are inferior human beings to men due to biological differences. Bias, stereotypes, and biased attitudes about women are advanced and promoted by sexism (Parcon, 2022). As for South Africa, strict patriarchal systems cut across racial and cultural divides (Commission of Gender Equality, 2000). The conflict in South African women's collective liberation consciousness, which split them along racial and class lines, is at issue here. White middle-class women were mostly focused on obtaining political and legal rights. Black women, on the other hand, fought for independence and the establishment of political and economic rights (Mahabeer et al., 2018). As such, gender and racial inequality among women in the South African context took on new dimensions as a result of racial segregation and subjugation (Walker, 1990). Most indigenous cultures frequently support sexism and patriarchy. However, in certain indigenous communities, women were not entirely subjugated (Akala, 2008). Despite not having any power, they had some respect as producers in rural farming areas. Meintjies (1996) observes that even in the most difficult situations, women, particularly the few who were educated, found a way to establish some degree of independence and autonomy outside of conventional and customary law.

Comaroff (2013) and Nussbaum et al. (1999) as cited in Akala (2018) advocate for educating women about their rights to help them resist oppression. However, the introduction of modern land reform in South Africa, which took arable land away from chiefs, has diminished women's roles as producers. Due to onerous regulations that denied women agency in land-related affairs, gender marginalisation increased significantly. Historically, legal, and customary frameworks often restricted women's rights to own, inherit, or control land, perpetuating economic dependency and reinforcing patriarchal norms (Parcon, 2022; Akala, 2018). For example, in many regions, land inheritance laws favoured male heirs, while women were relegated to secondary status, receiving land only through male relatives. This systemic bias not only limited women's economic opportunities but also diminished their social and political influence within their communities. Consequently, addressing these regulatory barriers is

crucial for promoting gender equality and empowering women in land ownership and broader socio-economic spheres. Women in the 1930s realised that they needed to provide for their children and themselves, which led to a surge of women moving into urban areas in pursuit of job possibilities. The restriction of women's access to urban areas was legal and a norm (Akala, 2008). Black women continued to live in rural regions and performed sporadic farm labour. Others relocated to urban areas to work as domestics, as street vendors, or to brew or sell beer in slum areas (Walker, 1990). Even though these jobs were demeaning, loathed and poorly paid, they gave women and their families access to food and shelter.

2.6 History of Traditional Leadership in Gender Relations

2.6.1 Pre-Colonial Era

Little is known about the link between traditional leadership and gender dynamics in pre-colonial Southern Africa. Golan (1990) acknowledges the potential for the manipulation of historical records in both oral and written traditions. Extensive research has been conducted in West Africa, as shown in the work of Amadiume's (1987) book "Male Daughters, Female Husbands." In South Africa, the understanding of gender relations in pre-colonial life is premised on the Zulu royal family It is reported that Princess Mkabayi had a significant relationship with her father, King Jama. She played a role in identifying a second wife for him after her mother's passing. King Jama, who had three daughters including Princess Mkabayi, granted each daughter status and authority to lead and command military units in line with Zulu customs for princesses (Shamase, 2014). All three women remained unmarried as marriage would have required them to relinquish their leadership roles.

The gender oppression school of historical research argues that men in pre-colonial Southern Africa subjugated and imprisoned women in the home. Women are portrayed as helpless children who require supervision and protection from their male counterparts. This is invalid, given that women were neither oppressed nor confined to the home. Rather, they had significant roles in the public sphere as prophets, seers, and rainmakers, as well as in politics as princesses, queen mothers and regents (Moagi & Mthombeni, 2020; Eldredge, 2014).

Marriage gave men and women a sense of dignity that single people did not have. Women were protected by social norms in pre-colonial KwaZulu Natal (Eldredge, 2014). Those who

mistreated women received harsh punishment or were exiled from the realm. *Amabutho* (age-group regiments of male or female warriors) strongly guarded *Isigodhlo*, signifying the role of women in the Zulu Kingdom. One could argue that this effectively imprisoned them and prevented them from moving around or engaging in political and economic activities. However, throughout the pre-colonial era, KwaZulu-Natal was a region marked by constant conquest wars, which is why it needed to be protected (Moagi & Mthombeni, 2020).

Women were highly valued and cherished in these communities, as evidenced by the quantity of cattle paid for them in the form of *lobola*, which is the price a man needed to pay when he wanted to marry a woman (Eldredge, 2014). Daughters-in-law were admired in South Africa and socialised to take care of the family. They were treated like the daughters of the family they were married into rather than as strangers. In the Balobedu in the province of Limpopo, South Africa, barren women were treated just like males and had specific rights. When girls in the household were married, they received a share of the bride's wealth and cattle as inheritances (Eldredge, 2014). Barren women had the same opportunities to amass riches and exert influence in society as their male counterparts. In the Zulu Kingdom, postmenopausal women were not viewed as unclean, their being postmenopausal allowed them to perform as a particular and potent type of woman (Ndlovu, 2008). Since they could readily transition between the male and female domains, they were more like a bridge connecting the two.

In pre-colonial communities, women were praised and revered regardless of their circumstances. Women took care of their families and worked with their husbands to make decisions about the family. They served as pillars of optimism, sources of family harmony and unity, and sources of happiness for both their families and their cultures (Moagi & Mthombeni, 2020). Many of the cooking tasks were handled by men in the royal household rather than women (Ndlovu, 2008). There was no strict division of labour by gender in the Zulu Kingdom. Tasks were accomplished by both sexes. In Namibia, the Nama women held total control over the home environment (Smith & Webley, 2000). Archer (1994) asserts that the ash and ash heaps in pre-colonial Nama tribes belonged to individual women and served as a symbol of their territorial territory, which was respected by both men and women.

While working in the fields, women frequently worked with men. This demonstrates that collaboration between the sexes was widespread in Southern African tribes before colonisation. In Botswana, wives had the right to their plots of land and were permitted to keep livestock

and their husbands had no say in these matters (Hjort, 2010). They were the owners and controllers of the land where they worked and produced food. They gained respectability and social mobility in their Tswana communities. In this regard, Moagi & Mthombeni (2020) point out that women had respectable and significant positions in their societies in pre-colonial Southern Africa. He further argues that these positions were supported by their overwhelmingly significant roles in the crop production domain, which was the foundation of the economy in most pre-colonial communities.

African women maintained positions of authority in the public realm before the arrival of the colonisers, participating in decision-making and managing resources (Eldredge, 2014). Like their male counterparts, women held positions of leadership in the Zulu and other southern African kingdoms. Old royal women or senior women elevated from the *izigodlo*[1] ranks presided over the royal household where warriors were quartered in the Zulu Kingdom (Ndlovu, 2008). In the Zulu Kingdom, royal women were crucial in administering ritual domains and making decisions. Even succession issues were resolved through their mediation (Ndlovu, 2008). One of these outstanding female leaders from pre-colonial KwaZulu-Natal whose name stands out among the others is Princess Mkabayi. When her father, King Jama, passed on, she imposed herself on the Zulu throne as the regent while waiting for her younger brother, Senzangakhona, to come of age. Even when Senzangkhona took his place as the king, he still consulted and sought guidance from Mkabayi and his mother Queen Mthaniya (Ndlovu, 2008). Even when Shaka, Senzangakhona's son, took over, before going to war he would consult his aunt Mkabayi and his mother, Nandi (Tayler, 1994). This brief history demonstrates that Mkabayi was a kingmaker with excellent bargaining abilities. She was able to outsmart her opponents and establish herself as the most capable regent in Zulu history because she was familiar with the fundamentals of the political terrain at the time (Moagi & Mthombeni, 2020).

Pre-colonial Southern African women had the freedom to engage in any activities, even those that are now known as male-type pursuits, and no gender was confined to domesticity. Long before the colonists arrived, women, like their male counterparts, participated in traditional

[1] "Izigodlo" is a Zulu term that refers to royal residences or enclosures. Traditionally, izigodlo were the living quarters within the royal kraal (a traditional African village of huts) where the king's wives and their children resided (Wylie, 2006). These enclosures were part of the larger complex of the king's homestead, which included various huts and spaces allocated for different functions, including ceremonies, storage, and the accommodation of visitors and officials (Golan, 1990). The concept of izigodlo reflects the social and familial structures of Zulu royalty and the organizational layout of their communities (Wylie, 2006).

leadership, governance, production, and reproduction in pre-colonial communities. Both women and men were independent adults in charge of their own lives and resources (Moagi & Mthombeni, 2020).

2.6.2 Colonial Era

During the colonial era, women lost the position, authority, and dignity they had acquired through their pastoralist responsibilities. It suffices to say that colonialism altered the role of most women in African countries, putting them at the periphery of social, political, and economic decision-making due to new power structures (Saungweme, 2021). Women in African communities were effectively excluded from meaningful involvement because of land concessions and a loss of economic autonomy, which created an unusual economic dependence on men. Through the advent of colonialism, women lost their status in society, and a destructive version of traditional patriarchy was ingrained in the African way of life (Moagi & Mthombeni, 2020). Under the guise of racial oppression, matriarchal hegemony was supplanted by a new sort of male dominance. Patriarchy and colonialism altered gender dynamics and brought about previously unheard levels of gender inequality, which had negative effects on the economy and society. The position of female chiefs diminished because European colonial powers exclusively engaged in negotiations with male chiefs on crucial economic concerns like tax collection and governance (Saungweme, 2021).

Men and European businesses dominated the distribution of rubber, cocoa, groundnuts (peanuts), and palm oil as the economy became more and more dependent on cash commodities for export. As a result, women were pushed into the shadows and the black market. Furthermore, land commercialisation, which favoured those who gained money from the sale of cash crops, disrupted the traditional land-tenure structures that had given women in Africa access to land (Onajin, 2014). The socially created disparities between men and women that were established under colonialism grew worse during the liberation struggles across Africa. The prevalence of rapes and beatings committed against women, as well as the exclusion of women from decision-making processes and general marginalisation from male counterparts serve as examples of this (Ahikiri, 2014). As informants for the liberation groups, organisers of protests, providers of hiding places, and keepers of the domestic environment, the women who stayed in the villages also played significant roles. However, proponents of colonialism

targeted them for rape (Onajin, 2014). The conditions that led to the targeting of women for rape during colonialism were multifaceted. As stated by Onajin (2014), colonial powers often used sexual violence as a tool of oppression and control to subjugate indigenous populations and dismantle existing social structures. The dehumanisation of colonised people, racial hierarchies, and the perceived entitlement of colonisers contributed to a climate where such atrocities were justified and systematically carried out. This environment was exacerbated by the absence of legal and social protections for the victims, further entrenching GBV as a pervasive aspect of colonial rule (Onajin, 2014).

2.6.3 Apartheid Era

The reorganisation and institutionalisation of the traditional leadership system during the apartheid era signalled a time when the traditional sector was used as a tool of "divide and rule," which caused the system to stray from its original values to further the political agenda of the time (Trip, 2017). The claim is that during the apartheid era, the system of traditional leadership abandoned the historical and traditional communitarian values that were the foundation of its origin and existence and transformed into a tool that served the demands of the political agenda of apartheid. This system primarily focused on individual privileges for the leaders who cooperated with the apartheid regime (Koenane, 2009).

Black women experienced more racial and gender discrimination during the apartheid era than did their male counterparts. For instance, the Black Administration Act of 1927, which made black women legal juveniles regardless of their age or marital status, had repressed and marginalised them (Pert, 1992). As a result, they were not permitted to possess property, have independent access to the legal system, or even make contracts of any kind without the agreement of the male guardian. Their legal position as minors also restricted their ability to negotiate or dissolve the marriages, as well as their ability to obtain custody of their children in the event of a divorce (Spiegal, 1998). It is also crucial to point out that, even though women were considered to be juveniles under the law, they served as the *de facto* heads of houses in rural areas because of the migrant labour system, which drove men out of their communities in search of work and other economic prospects (Khunou, 2009).

2.6.4 Democratic Era

The 1998 Local Government White Paper recognised the demand for a follow-up White Paper to comprehensively address all issues related to traditional leadership. A White Paper on Traditional Rulership and Governance was promulgated in 2003 as a follow-up to this knowledge and the 1996 constitutional provisions that legislate on traditional rule. As a result, the publication of the White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance in 2003 was a milestone in changing attitudes towards traditional leadership and promoting stability and effective governance in rural areas. The main purpose of this White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance was to provide a legislative framework to clarify the place and role of traditional leadership institutions in new democratic forms of governance. Traditional leaders have equal responsibilities at local and regional levels. Traditional local councils should encourage partnerships with neighbouring municipalities. Local Government 1998: Sub-section 81 of Section 117 of the City Savings Act requires the establishment of a political authority to sit on city committees and attend city council meetings (RSA, 2003).

The White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance led to the adoption in 2003 of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Law 41. (RSA, 2003). This Act provides a legal framework for leadership positions in traditional leadership institutions and the roles and responsibilities of traditional leaders. It also recognises traditional communities, establishes and recognises traditional councils, and identifies traditional leaders. The roles and responsibilities of traditional leaders at the municipal level are detailed in the fifth chapter of this Act. It additionally lets traditional leaders and communities work together. The Law 41 of 2003 on Traditional Leadership and Management Systems states that local governments are designated as crucial stakeholders in the process of integrated development planning. This is primarily due to their role as the main support system for cities, ensuring that development initiatives are effectively implemented at the local level (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2003). Integrated development planning is a comprehensive approach that aims to coordinate the efforts of various stakeholders, including traditional leaders, local governments, and community members, to achieve sustainable development and address socio-economic challenges.

Furthermore, Law 41 of 2003 mandates that traditional councils, which play a significant role in local governance and community affairs, must include a minimum representation of women. Specifically, at least one-third of the members of a traditional council must be women. This provision is a deliberate effort to promote gender equality and ensure that women have a voice in the decision-making processes that affect their communities. By integrating women into these councils, the Act seeks to enhance the inclusivity and representativeness of traditional leadership structures, fostering a more equitable and balanced approach to governance (RSA, 2003). The inclusion of local governments and the stipulation of female representation in traditional councils reflect the broader objectives of Law 41 of 2003, which aims to modernise and democratise traditional leadership systems while preserving their cultural significance. These measures are intended to strengthen the collaboration between traditional leaders and local government authorities, ensuring that development plans are both culturally sensitive and aligned with the needs and aspirations of local communities.

Bekink (2006) says, that the institution of traditional leadership is undoubtedly significant and continues to play a vital role in the lives of communities. The new democratic regime identifies the role of the traditional leadership in terms of socio-economic growth and areas that fall under their jurisdiction, including the role of nation-building, advancing gender equality and accountability (Albertyn, 2015). The National House of Traditional Leaders (NHTL) has a committee on gender and development. In theory, this committee is potentially an important internal mechanism for the National House of Traditional Leaders to develop the necessary clear internal policies, programmes, and strategies to prioritise and promote gender equality and women’s empowerment (Commission on Gender Equality, 2018). The NHTL Committee's duties under the Rules and Orders of the House are as follows.

- Handle all matters relating to the care and welfare of women and older persons.
- Youth and children.
- Handle all matters relating to women with disabilities.
- Arrange capacity building relevant to the committee.
- Organise joint meetings and operations with relevant institutions.
- Ensure that the House through its Committees pays attention to women and gender issues when it conducts its activities.
- Make sure that women's issues are adequately considered when the public participates in House programmes.

- See to it that rural women take part in government programmes, and economic, agricultural, and social endeavours (Du Plessis, 2000).

The NHTL has developed a set of internal ‘Rules and Orders’ that, among others, state that “the National House should, as far as possible, ensure that women are represented on all committees” (Du Plessis, 2000, p. 385). The National House of Traditional Leaders Act of the NHTL (1997) declares that it is the institution's responsibility to make sure that gender transformation is incorporated into both its operations and those of the provincial houses of traditional leaders. The NHTL Act No. 22 of 2009 gives the National House the authority to ensure that provincial houses respect and operate within the framework of the Bill of Rights. The goal is to prevent unfair discrimination, promote equality and ensure gender representation in the succession of traditional leadership positions is advanced.

The inclusion of women in decision-making processes within traditional communities in South Africa has been a topic of significant academic interest. Johnson and Kabeer (2020) highlight that while there have been legislative efforts, such as the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, to promote gender inclusivity within traditional leadership structures, the practical implementation of these provisions often falls short. The Act emphasises the need for diverse and inclusive leadership councils, which theoretically should lead to greater involvement of women in decision-making. Johnson and Kabeer’s study further notes instances where traditional leaders have included women within these structures, reflecting a surface-level adherence to the Act’s mandates. However, the literature suggests that mere inclusion does not equate to meaningful influence, as women's participation is frequently tokenistic and does not translate into real power and decision-making (Ngubane, 2019; Johnson & Kabeer, 2020).

Despite these legislative frameworks, the reality within many traditional communities indicates that women often remain marginalised from substantive decision-making roles. Ngubane (2019), Uwumana-Nicol et al. (2021) and Stuttaford et al. (2014) indicate that traditional norms and patriarchal values still dominate these settings, severely limiting women’s influence. The tokenistic inclusion is indicative of broader systemic issues where women’s voices are present but not empowered. Furthermore, Russell et al. (2013); Singh et al. (2013) and Pitpitan et al. (2012) support this, noting that while women may be part of councils, their roles are often ceremonial or confined to issues considered 'women's affairs,' rather than having a say in

broader governance matters. This lack of genuine decision-making power highlights the gap between policy and practice and highlights the need for more robust mechanisms to ensure that women's inclusion leads to actual influence and change in traditional governance systems, despite policy and law changes. The inclusion of gender diversity within TCs represents a significant step forward in promoting gender equality and women's participation in decision-making processes. However, practical challenges hinder the effective implementation of such initiatives (Johnson & Kabeer, 2020). Although legislative mandates are highly commendable and are a step in the right direction, there is a need to address socioeconomic constraints, such as unemployment and poverty, which pose significant barriers to women's meaningful participation and inclusion (Cornwall & Rivers, 2015; Smith, 2019). Further, Smith (2019) emphasises the need for practical support and resources to overcome these barriers and facilitate women's participation (Smith, 2019).

The tension between individual rights and collective norms is a significant theme in discussions of gender-related issues in South Africa. Traditional leaders and community members often navigate a complex landscape where democratic principles, which prioritise individual rights, clash with deeply rooted collective norms. Russell et al. (2013) explore the role of traditional leaders in South Africa's new local government structure, highlighting the challenges they face in balancing these competing demands. The study underscores the difficulties in upholding traditional values within a context of evolving legal frameworks that prioritise individual freedoms, a sentiment echoed by the traditional leaders in the current study. Nixon et al. (2007) further emphasise the ethical dilemmas posed by South Africa's health system development, particularly in the realm of HIV/AIDS research. The prioritisation of individual rights can sometimes lead to perceived loopholes in the constitution. This underlines the conflict between traditional practices, which often hold collective responsibilities and a legal landscape that emphasises individual rights.

With a focus on incorporating traditional customs within a constitutional framework, South Africa's transition to democracy brought about a dramatic change in the country's political and legal landscape. A significant legislative achievement in this area is the Traditional Courts Act no. 9 of 2022, which offers a thorough framework for traditional courts to function in accordance with constitutional principles (Republic of South Africa, 2022).

Diala (2022) states that the role of traditional courts is formalised by this Act, which also guarantees that their procedures respect access to justice, gender equality, and human rights. Crucially, it highlights non-adversarial, restorative justice procedures and the voluntary character of participation in traditional courts, encouraging the participation of women as adjudicators and participants in procedures which challenge long-standing patriarchal norms.

The Act represents a significant advancement in the relationship between gender relations and traditional leadership in the democratic era by incorporating these ideals and attempting to strike a balance between the preservation of cultural traditions and the democratic rights of equality and justice.

2.7 Traditional Leadership and Gender Relations: A Contested Terrain

All citizens of South Africa are granted several fundamental human rights, including the right to be treated with respect and humanity, under pertinent articles of the Constitution and other related legislation, as well as several international agreements that the nation has confirmed (Segalo, 2015). Thus, all genders have a right to the necessities that advance their well-being and sexual and reproductive health. Moreover, women and girls have a set of fundamental rights that include protection, privacy, and access to facilities and services that are suitable for expectant mothers or mothers of young children (Commission for Gender Equality, 2018).

The creation of appropriate policies, legislation, and programmes to address the needs and rights of women to access appropriate health, welfare, and reproductive services through healthcare facilities and healthcare service providers is typically the responsibility of government departments like the national and provincial departments of health (Khunuo, 2006). But in many local rural communities across the areas of jurisdiction of these houses of traditional leaders, especially in communities where the limited provision of such healthcare and welfare services is aggravated by a lack of information and limited knowledge among women and girls, the ability of women and girls to claim their right to access these services should be advanced by the role that traditional leaders play (Akala, 2008). In this regard, the role of traditional leaders could be crucial, particularly when certain customs like underage marriage, underage virginity testing, *ukuthwala*, female genital mutilation, and even circumcision for young men endanger the health, welfare, and reproductive rights of women, girls, and boys (Kruuse, 2017; Commission for Gender Equality, 2018; Dunkle, 2004).

As there are still several issues when it comes to gender relations, traditional leaders need to stand up and practice their role, especially in the areas that they govern. Non-sexism, equality, and peace are all the roles that traditional leaders should take (Mawere et Al., 2021). However, it is quite noticeable, especially in rural areas, that women and men are not treated equally and the emphasis and growth on unfair gender roles is frightening. Traditional leaders are the primary agents of development and sorting out issues because communities can relate to them more, rather than the government. Mahole (2017) argues that now, because they are on the ground, they are representatives of the community, and the public relates more to them. They should be at the forefront of addressing issues, particularly gender relations. They should be at the forefront of solving the issue of gender relations as they are the closest institution to the community. Moreover, the Constitution and the Traditional Framework Act bind them to this responsibility.

The fact that traditional leaders are symbols of togetherness and are thus in a prime position to stop the epidemic of gender inequality must be recognised. They may go even further in addressing the social injustice and systemic disempowerment of women at the local level by encouraging more males to become activists against issues of gender inequality (Moagi & Mthombeni, 2020). Female Traditional Leaders are an important point of contact and can facilitate change by encouraging women to reject being treated unequally and to report it as inappropriate (Mahole, 2017).

2.8 Gender-Based Violence and Traditional Norms

Addressing gender-based violence (GBV) within the framework of traditional norms poses unique challenges in South Africa. Pitpitan et al. (2012) highlight the intersection of gender-based violence, alcohol use, and sexual risk among female patrons of drinking venues in Cape Town, shedding light on the broader societal context in which GBV occurs. In this regard, Russel et al. (2013) emphasise the importance of clear and comprehensive dissemination of legal information to bridge the gap between legal provisions and societal interpretations. Further, Singh et al. (2013) also emphasise the necessity for nuanced approaches that consider the interactions between individual rights, traditional norms, and government policies. Dunkle et al. (2004) discuss the prevalence of GBV and the difficulties in addressing gender inequalities within legal and societal frameworks, resonating with the sentiments shared by Pipitan et al. (2012), Russel et al. (2013), and Singh et al. (2013). This highlights the importance

of effective communication strategies and educational initiatives to promote gender equality and prevent unintended consequences within societal structures. Additionally, Treves-Kagan et al. (2019) emphasise the importance of gender-transformative community mobilisation programmes in addressing gender inequalities and violence, further validating the proactive approach taken by traditional leaders.

2.9 Traditional Leaders' Efforts in Addressing Gender-Based Violence

Traditional leaders in South Africa play a pivotal role in addressing gender-based violence (GBV). Headmen (Izinduna) engage directly with conflicted couples, emphasising reconciliation over punishment. This approach prioritises family unity and community peace, reflecting a deep-seated commitment to the well-being of the community (Kululanga et al., 2011). The influence of traditional leaders extends beyond immediate dispute resolution. Leveraging their respected positions within the community, they utilise existing cultural norms and practices to foster a supportive environment for both men and women. By incorporating traditional values into their mediation efforts, leaders can effectively transform gender relations and promote greater equity within their communities. The role of traditional leaders in advocating for social mobilisation and community cohesion is well-documented. Scholars such as Nelms and Gorski (2006) highlight the ability of traditional leaders to reach thousands through dialogue, underlining their significant influence in promoting community development. This capacity for wide-reaching impact is crucial in fostering a sense of unity and collective responsibility within communities.

Further supporting this view, Sakeah et al. (2014) emphasise the importance of community involvement in achieving successful resolutions to local issues. The proactive stance of traditional leaders in promoting reconciliation and harmony aligns with this perspective, demonstrating their commitment to addressing not only individual disputes but also broader social challenges. Additionally, the work of Kartika and Agustiya (2023) highlights the vital role of traditional leaders in implementing health policies at the community level, reflecting a broader trend of traditional authorities engaging in various aspects of community welfare. This comprehensive approach highlights the multifaceted nature of traditional leadership in contemporary South African society (Sato, 2021). Additionally, the practice of fining individuals for transgressions, including GBV-related offences, is often employed, reflecting the enduring influence of pre-colonial governance systems where traditional leaders wield

significant authority over socio-political and economic matters (Koenane, 2017). Koenane (2017) discusses the historical context of such practices, highlighting their role in maintaining social cohesion and upholding communal norms. While some critics argue that traditional authority may prioritise the community over individual rights, the fining system can be seen as a mechanism to foster communal harmony and order (Logan, 2013). Moreover, the work of Strebel et al. (2006) explores the links between GBV and broader societal issues such as unemployment, poverty, and alcohol abuse. The fines imposed for wrongdoings, including violence, aim to address these underlying behaviours and promote adherence to communal norms.

Lastly, providing the community with accurate information and traditional leaders' involvement in bridging customary and statutory legal frameworks are essential for promoting a proactive approach to combating these issues (Johnson et al., 2020; Smith, 2019). Ongoing discussions about potential amendments indicate a continuous effort to align traditional practices with formal legal frameworks. This dialogue highlights the evolving role of traditional leaders in navigating the legal landscape and ensuring the protection of women's rights within their communities (Mamdani, 2000).

2.10 Traditional Leaders and Formal Law Enforcement

Traditional leaders initially attempt to mediate and resolve domestic issues within the community framework. However, they recognise the limitations of their roles and the necessity of involving formal law enforcement when dealing with persistent or severe abuse cases. This dual approach ensures that justice and safety for survivors are prioritised, aligning with broader legal and human rights frameworks (Phiri, 2011; Mwambene, 2017). Traditional leaders encourage survivors to involve the South African Police Service (SAPS) if mediation fails. This recognition of the need for police intervention emphasises the commitment of traditional leaders to protect individuals from violence and uphold legal standards (Wittmann, 2016; Sen, 2001).

2.11 Summary

This chapter has reviewed existing literature on the role of traditional leaders in shaping gender relations in South Africa. The literature provides valuable insights into the historical, socio-political, and cultural roles of traditional leadership and gender relations in South Africa.

However, several gaps remain. While the evolution of traditional leadership from pre-colonial to post-apartheid times is well documented, there is limited research on how these structures can foster gender relations, particularly in rural settings. Studies often emphasise the historical and symbolic roles of traditional leaders, neglecting their potential to implement tangible and sustainable initiatives. Moreover, gender inequality is connected to broader socio-economic systems, yet there is limited exploration of how specific cultural and economic contexts shape gender relations in different communities. Also, research seldom addresses the disconnect between progressive gender policies and their practical implementation, especially within traditional societies.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the literature review related to the study. This chapter discusses the framework adopted as a theoretical lens. Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality and Kretzmann and McKnight's Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) are the principal theories informing this research. The discussion outlines each theory's origins, traits, applications, and critiques, beginning with intersectionality and then ABCD.

3.2 Origin of Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a strategy, a disposition, a heuristic, and an analytical tool that has its roots in black feminism and critical race theory. In the seminal essay "Demarginalising the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," published in 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality raises awareness on how Black women are marginalised both within anti-discrimination law and in feminist and anti-racist theory and politics (Carbado et al., 2013, p.305). Two years later Crenshaw (1991) expanded the theory in the book titled “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." She used intersectionality to draw attention to the ways that social movement activism and organisation around violence against women obscured the vulnerability of women of colour, especially those from immigrant and underprivileged areas.

Crenshaw’s publication (1991) exposed and sought to demolish the institutionalised discourses in disciplines such as Law that served as breeding grounds for marginalisation, while at the same time putting into stark relief how discourses of resistance, such as feminism and antiracism, could also serve as breeding grounds for marginalisation (Carbado et al., 2013). Crenshaw (1991) used the stereotypical representations of White women and African American males to illustrate the intricate ways in which the law has historically established the boundaries of sex and racial discrimination (Weber, 2007). She went on to show how this anti-discrimination strategy constrained the potential for institutional change, curtailed knowledge

of and advocacy for racism and patriarchy, and destroyed chances for sustaining meaningful solidarity by putting resistance movements against one another (Noh et al., 2003).

Before intersectionality became a well-known concept, most people believed that racism and sexism, as seen in the experiences of Black males and White women, concluded the experiences of Black women (Beniach, 2022). The fact that Black women's experiences can be wholly different from those of either group was not acknowledged. In addition to adding their own "roads" to express their lived experience, many non-Black women of colour, poor women, women in formerly colonised countries, and LGBTQ+ femmes may identify with the metaphor. One of intersectionality's advantages is its adaptability; as a framework, it may be used to address a wide range of individuals in marginalised groups (Carbado, et al., 2013).

3.3 Conceptualising Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality is an analytical tool that can be used to monitor equality and human rights to highlight the various ways that people might suffer injury, abuse, discrimination, and disadvantage when different social identity categories intersect with one another (Berghs & Dyson, 2022). It recognises that there are intragroup or internal differences within groups of people that share a common identity, regardless of gender, sexuality, religion, colour, or one of the many other characteristics that define an individual. In other words, each person has a little different experience with social structure, social identities reflect an intersection of overlapping oppressions (Berard, 2014). Thus, broad generalisations about the conflict or influence and power of a particular social group fail to consider the fact that group members also belong to other social groups and may encounter different types of marginalisation (McRobbie, 2014). However, institutions and social movements built on a shared identity frequently ignore the existence of different marginalised identities inside the group.

The term "intersectionality" is used to describe the idea that different types of discrimination, such as those based on race, gender, class, disability, sexual orientation, and other aspects of identity, do not operate in isolation but rather interact to create specific types of social oppression (Berard, 2014, p.333). Intersectionality recognises the complexity of power relationships, social systems and institutions, as well as the fact that people can be subjected to numerous forms of discrimination at once, including racism, sexism, classism, ableism,

ageism, and homophobia. The intersectionality approach is comprehensive enough to cover and address "factors relating to the forces of oppression, subjugation, domination, and privilege" (Nasima, 2012, p.22). Nash (2010) adds that intersectionality research includes even the emotional and psychological elements of research subjects, which is often ignored by research that focuses on perspectives and uses structural elements.

Another scholar who has influenced in developing of the term is Essed (1991). The focus of Essed (1991, p.1) was on gendered racism which he defined as "racism and genderism are rooted in specific histories designating separate as well as mutually interwoven formations of race, ethnicity, and gender". Meaning that race and gender are intertwined to offer all women unique prospects and experiences. A few misconceptions exist. The goal of intersectionality is not to simply tally up various forms of oppression such as gender, race, and disability, nor does it aim to establish a hierarchy of inequality in which some forms of oppression such as racism, sexism, and ableism are prioritised over others (Berenji, 2020). Instead, intersectionality illuminates how various systems and dimensions of inequality interact with one another to produce unique experiences and results (Hapke et al., 2018). Furthermore, the goal of intersectionality is not to compare the marginalisation or disadvantage of various people or groups. Rather, it seeks to comprehend how many forms of oppression or disadvantage interact to shape the experiences of diverse people (Medard & Veenstra, 2019).

3.4 Significance of Intersectionality

As maintained by the intersectional theory, addressing inequality within one group may not equally address prejudice and marginalisation within all other social groups. Therefore, efforts to combat other forms of discrimination must be combined with those to prevent gender-based inequality (Beniach, 2022). Understanding how the obstacles all genders encounter and the power struggles they engage in are influenced by the interaction of their identities and positionalities, as well as how this may shift and change in various situations, contexts, and relationships. All of these are shaped by systemic and historicised forms of oppression and discrimination and are essential to understanding the challenges that both men and women face. (Hett, 2022).

Also, opportunity structures can be found when using intersectionality as a strategy. It affects the opportunities, resources, and services that are made accessible to various people as well as how they handle challenging circumstances, exercise their agency, and show resilience (Veenstra, 2011). Fighting to end poverty involves more than just economic issues. Similarly, to end human rights violations ensure healthy gender relations and promote sustainable development, there must be ideological and cultural changes in addition to technically sound programming and reliable funding. Contemporary challenges present complicated problems that call for analyses that both provide in-depth, nuanced understanding and motivate activity and advocacy for equality and justice (Kerr, 2004). One such tool is intersectionality. This observation is relevant to the current study. Intersectionality will offer the researcher an opportunity to investigate traditional leaders' roles from different perspectives. This will assist the researcher in understanding underlying factors that interact and influence gender relations (Vardeman-Winter et al., 2010).

3.5 Origin of Asset-Based Development

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) developed the ABCD strategy at the Northwestern University Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research in Illinois, United States of America to combat the problem-based approach to community development. Their concepts for ABCD were founded on observations made in the 1980s that impoverished communities possessed a high degree of institutional, associational, and individual assets that were either "under-tapped" or untapped (Mathie & Cunnigham, 2003). Their understanding of how communities might develop if residents are encouraged to engage in the process of transformation was greatly influenced by these observations (Oko, 2006). Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) created this approach in reaction to top-down development projects that provided services for needy communities. They claim that needs-based development has potentially devastating effects since it disempowers people, depletes social capital, and promotes reliance (Maclure, 2023). ABCD, on the other hand, draws inspiration for action from appreciative inquiry, which emphasises optimism, positivity, and group success (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003). The task of the ABCD researcher is to assist, not to lead, the community in discovering and amplifying existing solutions.

The popularity of ABCD stems from its underlying idea that communities can organise to take control of the development process by identifying and using already existing (but frequently underutilised and under-recognised) assets, responding to and generating local economic opportunities (Mathie, 2003). The social assets that ABCD specifically calls out are people's unique abilities and the social capital present in the connections that support informal networks and local groups (Moser, 2006). ABCD can also be seen as a reaction to significant changes in the social, political, and economic landscape in terms of its potential for use in international development practice. In the majority of nations, liberalisation policies have weakened the social contract that assigned government responsibility for implementing programme-based remedies to local issues (Coke et al., 2001).

Mathie and Cunningham (2003) warn of devastating consequences that emanate from the needs-based approach. It creates local leadership which does not enhance communal self-reliance but takes gratification from pumping in resources to their communities. Secondly, it undermines the communal belief to take charge of their lives and communities, thus developing a dependent community and dealing more with external institutions than with groups in their community. This reinforces the notion that only outside experts can provide real help, and further weakens neighbour-to-neighbour links.

As stated by Mathie and Cunningham (2003), the ABCD approach's guiding principles are as follows: community development resources must be decentralised; citizens must be at the centre of it, requiring a bottom-up approach; citizens must be encouraged to participate in their development as citizens, not as consumers of services; it must be based on relationships and networks within the community; and it must be centred on the assets and strengths of the community rather than challenges and needs. This will involve the entire community in pooling resources to achieve a shared development objective.

Mathie and Cunningham (2003) further assert that ABCD is built on several theoretical premises:

- Appreciative inquiry, which catalogues and evaluates the community's prior accomplishments. This increases people's self-assurance in their abilities and motivates them to act.

- The value of social capital as a resource is acknowledged. Because of this, ABCD places a strong emphasis on the influence of informal connections and affiliations inside communities as well as the interactions that have developed over time between these associations and outside organisations.
- Participatory methods of development are founded on the ideas of empowerment and process ownership.
- Community economic development approaches that emphasise teamwork to maximise the use of available resources for economic growth.
- Civil society strengthening initiatives. These initiatives have centred on how to involve people in development as citizens rather than clients and how to improve local governance's effectiveness and responsiveness (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003).

3.6 Conceptualising Asset Community Development

Morse et al. (2022) indicates that the ABCD approach prioritises what communities have rather than what they lack. It helps locals to get new perspectives about themselves and their surroundings, and for professionals, it shifts the conversation from thinking of citizens as objects to fix, to assets to tap. ABCD is based on the essentials strengths perspective which is a collaborative process between community members and the professional that enables them to work together to determine outcomes that draw on community members' strengths and assets (Pretorious et al., 2012). ABCD promotes community appreciation of its resources and mobilization of its strengths. The ABCD approach is intended to recognise the skills and abilities of everyone, regardless of age, gender, or class, and to highlight areas where community members can work together for mutual benefit. Resources are only one aspect of an asset. Engagement with resources is made easier by awareness of assets (Pretorius et al, 2012). Both physical assets and natural resources such as land, water, and minerals can be communally or individually owned and managed. The identification of these assets provides a fundamental understanding of the community’s economy and how it works and highlights how well local resources are maximised for local economic benefit.

The literature on ABCD places a strong emphasis on the value of a community's personal/human assets. These are the people in the community and the skills, talents knowledge and expertise that they may have, physical assets such as buildings, land, and space that can be

utilised, financial assets like cash, livestock, grain stores and savings, natural assets like land, water, fertile soil, animals, political assets like the mayor of the town, social assets like formal and informal associations, networks and extended families, spiritual assets like prayer, faith, and cultural assets like values, spirituality and traditional knowledge (McKnight, 2010).
ABCD places a lot of focus on social capital. The networks, connections, and relationships based on trust and reciprocity that people rely on to create a living are referred to as social capital. In associations whose members engage in collective action, social capital is intrinsic (Green et al., 2008). Philanthropy of community, or the horizontal relationship between those who uphold the principles of *Ubuntu*, is a component of social capital (Zohar, 2004). Mathie and Cunningham, 2003, maintain that access to other assets is made possible through social capital. Real social capital consists of spiritual capital, and according to Zohar (2004), no other kind of capital works without an underlying base of spiritual capital. Palmer et al. (2013) define spiritual capital as the individual and collective capacities generated through affirming and nurturing people as having intrinsic spiritual value.

A sense of capacity and purpose is mostly derived from the affirmation of the aforementioned assets. People base their decisions on their assets as well (Braun, 2005). The goal is to bring all assets and capital to light, strengthen them, and use them while cultivating a promising future (Pretorious et al. 2012, p.15). This is not to say that the ABCD approach discounts the presence of issues or the necessity of finding urgent solutions, but issues or needs are not where the process begins. Strengths and assets are the focus, and "problems and needs" are then given a positive connotation as chances for growth (Libanda, 2007, p. 45). This resonates with Mathie and Cunningham's (2003) conceptions of ABCD in its appreciation of existing assets rather than problems. Using ABCD, the researcher will examine traditional leaders and their experiences from an asset-based perspective. In the existing literature, narratives of people from rural communities are oversaturated with problems and needs (Haines, 2009). It is further noted that while the significance of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) approach is acknowledged, operationalising it at the community level is challenging. Hence, ABCD provides a tool to address this gap. It is a "meaning-making" approach that helps with problem-solving by drawing on the resources and assets at hand as well as successful former endeavours (Braun, 2005, p.19).

3.7 Significance of Asset-Based Community Development

The transfer of authority from external organisations to local communities is one of the major themes of ABCD. Participatory development research and practice, notably in the NGO sector, have focused on power and control for slightly over two decades. Participatory development work has pushed for change that transforms unfair social relations, whether these are within a community or inherent in the relationships the community has with external agencies. Participatory development work emerged as a reaction against mainstream approaches to development that marginalised the poor and powerless (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003, p.10). The transfer of power and authority in this study is the structures of traditional leaders, the power is in the community and not controlled externally by organisations.

Participatory development's challenge is to make sure that marginalised groups are given priority, and that participation is genuine and equitable rather than passive, co-opted, or limited to the comparatively powerful (Cooke, 2001). In other words, participatory techniques are just as interested in power dynamics inside the community and the family, between social groups and genders, to mention a few, as they are in power dynamics between the community and outside institutions (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003, p. 11).

ABCD is ingrained in the rights-based approach and honours and recognises social justice. It encourages inactive community members who wait for others to recognise and respect their rights to become active citizens and to take responsibility and accountability for their destinies and secure one another's rights (Patel, 2005). This includes the right to equitable and fair gender relations. The ABCD approach can be utilised as an analytical lens in gender. It is inclusive of it and there are initiatives to identify gender relations and remedy unequal gender relations, if any (Pretorious, 2012). Activities done by ABCD when examining and looking for assets within the community can reveal any gender disparities and marginalisations in both men and women. Recognising a community's assets can raise awareness of gender issues and lessen marginalisation and discrimination through economic empowerment of the individual and community (Chikadzi, 2011). Also, Kimberle Crenshaw's intersectionality complements ABCD to address the gender gap.

3.8 Critiques of Asset-Based Community Development

There are also quite a few critics of ABCD. While ABCD has some potential for fostering communication with the larger structures that have an impact on communities, such as the government, municipality, and businesses, the method has been criticised because it frequently downplays issues of oppression and power (Mathie et al., 2003). This strategy is likewise predicated on the idea that rather than fighting, for instance, the economic systems, communities must learn to adapt to neoliberal Western cultures (Ennis & West, 2010). It may be challenging for professionals to accept the ideologies underlying the unfair macro conditions, let alone the communities they serve. Similarly, Mathie and Cunningham (2003) assert that "neither ABCD nor appreciative inquiry directly confronts the issue of unequal power" (p. 483). As such, this study adopts the intersectionality theory to complement ABCD. Also, a significant criticism of ABCD is that the agency that oversaw the project primarily focused descriptive reports on reporting about the capacity building of community members and associations (internal-looking) without reporting on structural changes (external-looking) brought about by the approach (Ennis et al., 2010).

3.9 Application of a Theoretical Framework

Intersectionality theory was deemed suitable for analysing Objectives 1 and 2. It underlines the significance of context in understanding how identities and social relations are constructed and entrenched. According to Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), gender relations cannot be understood in isolation from their sociocultural environment (cultural norms, values, traditions, and social structures). These contexts define roles, expectations and power dynamics between genders. Thus, overlooking the sociocultural backdrop would overlook critical factors influencing how gender relations are formed and entrenched.

ABCD complements intersectionality theory by addressing all three objectives to ensure that the study draws on appreciative inquiry. This approach focuses on community assets rather than problems and deficits (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). In this way, ABCD as a framework facilitates a deeper understanding of the resources available to address gender-related issues. It also offers practical strategies for leveraging existing community assets, enabling the researcher to identify strategies to address Objective 3. The study analyses how traditional leaders utilise existing social, human, and cultural assets to promote equity, empower the

community, and strengthen social cohesion. Taken together, intersectionality theory and ABCD provide a comprehensive analysis of experiences and perceptions in Jozini.

3.10 Summary

The theoretical framework and foundation that will guide this research are presented in this Chapter. The chapter also explained and supported the rationale for selecting the intersectionality and ABCD theories, which have been applied to investigating the role of traditional leadership in fostering gender relations.

Chapter Four: Research Design and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the theoretical framework underpinning this study. This chapter discusses the research design and methodology adopted in this study. In this regard, the chapter outlines the interpretivist paradigm, emphasising subjectivist epistemology, relativist ontology, naturalist methodology, and balanced axiology. It highlights the qualitative nature of the study, the descriptive and exploratory research design, thematic content analysis, and ethical considerations.

4.2 Interpretivist Paradigm

Interpretivism is a way of thinking about subjective inquiry that is founded on understanding and believing that participants' perceptions of reality depend on how they perceive and interact with the environment (Ary et al., 2018). Creswell and Creswell (2018) insist that interpretivism takes a phenomenological position. The justification for the use of the interpretive paradigm is the idea that humans are actively involved in the process of creating a sense of their own experiences and "worlds" and actively engage, interpret, give meaning to, redefine, and justify their day-to-day interactions with reality (de Vos et al., 2011). As a result, the study drew information on the phenomenon under investigation from the participants' views and experiences in their natural environments. A subjectivist epistemology, a relativist ontology, a naturalist methodology, and a balanced axiology are the four presuppositions of the interpretivism philosophy (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These are understood as follows:

4.3 Subjectivist Epistemology

Cooksey and McDonald (2011) claim that epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge in the real world, including how humans learn, identify reality, and comprehend events. It explores the foundational facets of knowledge, such as its nature, forms, ways to acquire it, and channels for disseminating it. Epistemology investigates the different kinds of knowledge and comprehension that researchers might pick up to improve the comprehension of their research topic (Kruger et al., 2005).

Davidson (2001) underlines the significance of epistemology in developing the researcher's confidence in their data and defining their strategy for comprehending the social situation under examination. A subjectivist epistemology was used in this study, which holds that the researcher interprets the data based on their thought processes and reasoning, which are influenced by their interactions with participants. It is assumed that the researcher builds knowledge within a social framework using their personal experiences in the studied natural settings (Punch, 2013). Interactions between the researcher and the participants took the form of conversations through interviews, listening, observations, reading, writing, and documenting study findings. This arises from the researcher's commitment to contextually and culturally relevant knowledge rooted in people's lived experiences.

4.4 Relativist Ontology

The philosophical field of ontology focuses on the presumptions we make to recognise something as genuine and truthful as well as the fundamental characteristics or essence of the social reality under consideration (Scotland, 2012). Researchers can assess their underlying assumptions and philosophical frameworks regarding the nature of reality, existence, and being by using ontology. Understanding the philosophical presumptions about the nature of reality is necessary to comprehend how one understands knowledge that has been gained. These presumptions, conceptions, and claims help to clarify ideas regarding the research problem, its applicability, and potential solutions, address the research topic, understand the situation at hand, and contribute to its resolution (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

In this study, a relativist ontology was used, which means that the researcher thought that the situation being studied contained various realities. Moreover, it was believed that interactions between research participants and the researcher would present the exploration, interpretation and reconstruction of these realities (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The connection between the researcher and the study participants is therefore crucial to this study and is determined by these propositions. Ultimately, the researcher believed in the reality inherent in traditional communities. As such, the reality of GBV in Jozini was co-constructed with community members, based on their experiences and perspectives within their socio-cultural contexts.

4.5 Qualitative Nature of the Study

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of traditional leaders and community members within the traditional councils (TCs) in Jozini Local Municipality. Qualitative research is particularly suited to understanding the complex realities and social phenomena within their natural contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher delved into the subjective experiences and meanings that participants ascribed to their interactions and roles within traditional leadership structures.

The qualitative nature of this study is rooted in the interpretivist paradigm, which emphasises understanding the social world through the perspectives of the participants. This paradigm supports the use of qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews and participant observation, to capture rich, detailed data (Ary et al., 2018). In this study, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with traditional leaders and community members to explore their experiences and insights. This method facilitated the collection of nuanced data that might not be accessible through quantitative approaches (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, the researcher engaged in non-participant observation, which involved immersing herself in the community to observe interactions and practices firsthand, thus enhancing the validity and depth of the data collected.

4.6 Research Methodology

Chepp and Gray (2014) assert that a methodology refers to the overall study design, methods, approaches, and procedures used in a well-planned investigation to advance knowledge. It includes several elements, including data gathering, participants, tools, and data analysis. A research project's methodology defines the logical and methodical steps taken to carry it out and go deeper into a research subject. Research methodology is the process by which researchers must perform their research. It demonstrates the process by which the researchers define their problem and objective and then provide their findings based on the information gathered over the study period (Sileyew, 2020). A research methodology is important because it offers the study credibility and yields reliable scientific results. Additionally, it offers a thorough plan that aids in keeping the researchers on course, facilitating a simple, efficient, and manageable approach. The reader can comprehend the strategy and procedures utilised to generate the findings by understanding the researcher's methodology (Gounder, 2012).

A qualitative research method was employed. In-depth interviews were conducted with traditional leaders and members of the community who live within traditional councils in Jozini Local Municipality. The methods used in this study were based on a naturalistic methodology, where the researcher acted as a participant observer and gathered information through discussions, conversations, interviews, and observations. Thus, the researcher examined the perceptions and lived experiences of traditional leaders and community members when it came to investigating the role that traditional leaders play in fostering gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality. Secondary data was also used and was gathered from existing literature. Online academic databases such as JSTOR, Sabinet, Google Scholar and EBSCOHost were visited. University libraries were also visited for relevant books and journal articles that are not available online. Purposive non-probability sampling was utilised, and semi-structured interviews were conducted. Thematic content analysis was adopted to analyse the data. This chapter provides a detailed overview of the location of the research study area, research paradigm, research design, data collection, data analysis, and the trustworthiness of the data.

4.7 Location of Study Area

The study is located in Jozini Local Municipality, one of the four municipalities within uMkhanyakude District Municipality in the northern region of KwaZulu-Natal. Mozambique borders Jozini to the north, Swaziland to the west, uMhlabuyalingana to the east, Big Five/Hlabisa to the south, and Nongoma and Uphongolo to the west. The municipality includes six semi-formal towns: Jozini, Mkhuze, Ingwavuma, UBombo, Bhambanana, and Ndumo. The rest of the municipality is predominantly rural. The area covers 32% (3057 square kilometres) of the total 13,859 square kilometres of the uMkhanyakude District Municipality (Integrated Development Planning of Jozini Local Municipality, 2023).

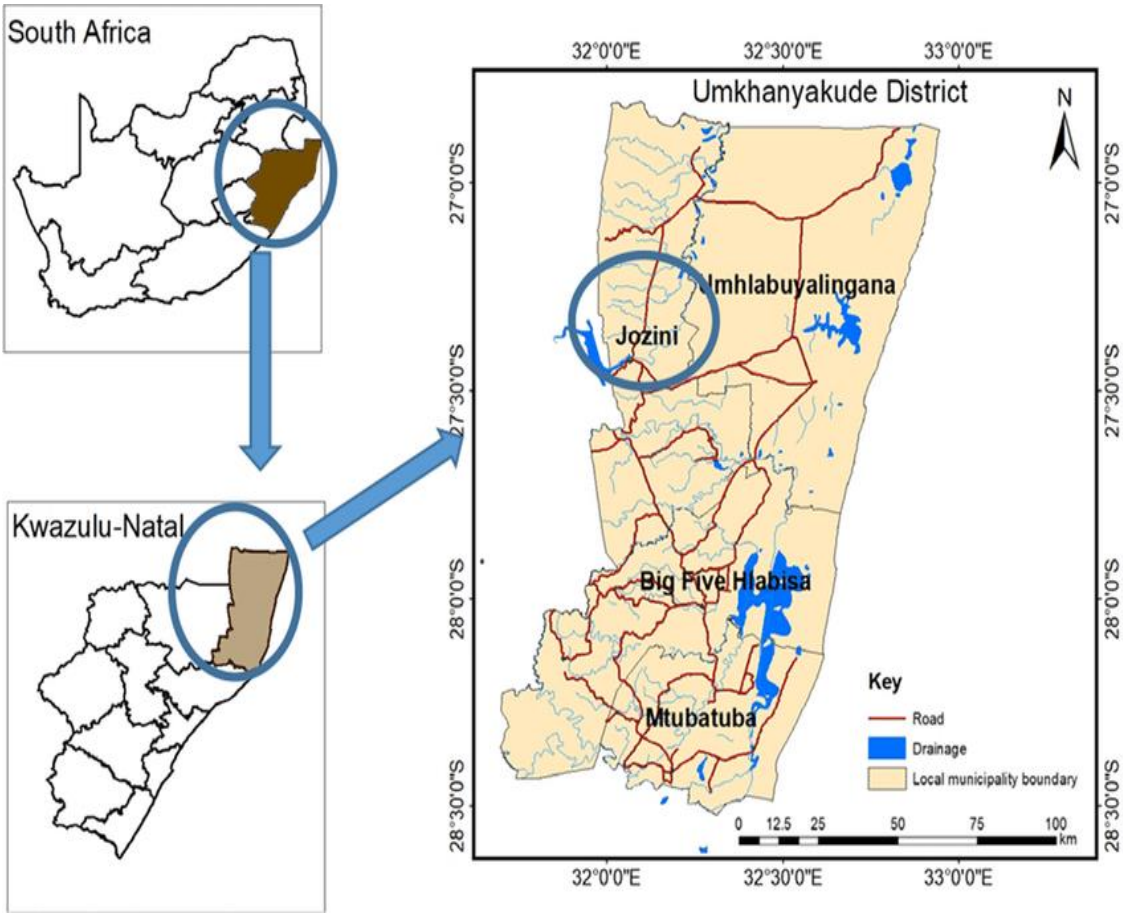

Figure 3.1: Map of Umkhanyakude and Zululand Districts, KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa (Sources: Dlamini, Rampedi & Ifegbesan, 2017).

Health care is a significant issue in Jozini. The area has eighteen clinics located in densely populated regions, along with two gateway clinics and six mobile clinics serving 91 mobile points, though 23 of these points lack shelter. The community is dissatisfied with these services. Access to health care is inadequate, with many residents needing to travel over 10 kilometres to reach these facilities. Improving health services is a top priority (Integrated Development Planning of Jozini Local Municipality, 2022/23). Limited access to portable water and electricity further hinders the quality and level of health care. Moreover, the region faces a shortage of medical doctors, particularly specialists, which further impacts the quality of healthcare available.

In South Africa, the inclusion and consideration of women's needs are fundamental in all local initiatives (Teffo-Menziwa et al., 2010). In Jozini Municipality, a Women's Forum focuses on empowering women and addressing contemporary issues they face. This forum is the most active in the municipality. Moreover, Jozini has a Men's Forum where men discuss issues

affecting women and strategies to address abuse against women (Integrated Development Planning of Jozini Local Municipality, 2022/23). Jozini has seven Traditional Authorities who sit on the Council and Portfolio Committee meetings. The Mayor of Jozini Local Municipality is The Honourable Naye Mathe of the Inkatha Freedom Party (Integrated Development Planning of Jozini Local Municipality, 2022/23).

4.8 Research Design

A research design is a plan as to what data to gather, from whom, how and when to analyse the data obtained. It is a plan to meet the research objectives (Vaus, 2006). Maxwell (2012) declares that the research design encapsulates the researcher's overall approach to solving the research topic by integrating numerous study components coherently and logically. This is similar to how de Vos et al. (2011) characterise the research design as a blueprint or plan outlining the methodology framework for the investigation. In line with these perspectives, this study employs a qualitative research design. The design is descriptive and exploratory, aiming to describe and explore the perceptions and lived experiences of traditional leaders and community members when it comes to investigating the role that traditional leaders play in fostering gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality. It is defined as a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences. It is also said to be descriptive because it describes the daily life of respondents. Qualitative research methods also focus on the process rather than the outcomes (Busetto et al., 2020). The rationale for choosing this research design was that it could give a thorough knowledge of participants' perspectives on a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Creswell and Creswell (2018) claim that qualitative research enables participants' experiences to be understood in the context of their surroundings. By analysing the meaning that participants assign to their phrases, words, and actions, qualitative research can study theories, experiences, and perceptions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As a result, the background of the research is fully captured without any interference from the researcher. In this case, the researcher conducted the interviews at the offices in Jozini Local Municipality. The phenomenon was observed in its natural setting.

4.9 Target Population and Sample Size

In rural areas like Jozini, traditional structures and systems play a significant role in people's lives, serving as sources of support and governance. Jozini encompasses seven Traditional Councils (TCs), each actively participating in Council and Portfolio Committee meetings, as noted in the Integrated Development Planning of Jozini Local Municipality for 2022/23. Thus, the target population for the study is comprised of individuals residing within Jozini Local Municipality who are affected by or have interactions with traditional leadership structures. This includes community members, traditional leaders, individuals working closely with traditional leaders, and key informants knowledgeable about the dynamics of gender relations within the municipality.

Therefore, the sample size included four traditional leaders from the seven traditional councils within Jozini. Additionally, 2 headmen and 5 local community members were also included in the sample. This approach aims to capture a range of viewpoints and experiences across different segments of the community. By including both traditional leaders and community members in the sample, the study aims to gather a holistic understanding of gender relations within the municipality, considering perspectives from both those in positions of leadership and those directly impacted by traditional leadership practices.

A sample size in qualitative research refers to the number of participants or cases included in the study. Unlike quantitative research, where sample size calculations are based on statistical considerations, qualitative research often employs smaller sample sizes focused on achieving depth and richness of data rather than generalizability (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). The sample size refers to the number of key informants who were interviewed to gather insights into the role of traditional leadership in fostering gender relations within Jozini Local Municipality. The significance of the sample size lies in its ability to provide a diverse range of perspectives and experiences that can contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Pneumol, 2018).

4.10 Exclusion and Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria refer to the key traits of the target population that researchers use to address their study topic (Montez, 2017). This study includes individuals holding traditional leadership positions (Amakhosi and Izinduna) within Jozini Local Municipality. They also include members of traditional councils who reside within the geographic boundaries of their communities. Lastly, key informants with specialised knowledge of traditional leadership's role in shaping gender relations are included. The exclusion criteria comprise those who are not traditional leaders and community members of traditional councils. Residents outside the traditional council areas and key informants lacking relevant knowledge are also excluded.

4.11 Recruitment and Sampling Technique

One strength of snowball sampling in qualitative research is its ability to access "hidden" populations or individuals who may be difficult to reach through other sampling methods (Turner, 2020). In this study, snowball sampling facilitated the selection of participants with specific expertise and backgrounds related to the phenomenon under investigation, namely, individuals within traditional councils in the Jozini community. In addition, snowball sampling facilitated the collection of rich and relevant data from participants who possess in-depth knowledge of the subject matter, aligning with the qualitative research objective of achieving a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015). By employing snowball sampling, this study demonstrated flexibility and adaptability in selecting participants based on their relevance to the research topic. This approach acknowledges the importance of subjective judgment in qualitative research and prioritises the acquisition of pertinent data from individuals with specialized knowledge, which may not be achievable through random or objective sampling methods (Ingham-Broomfield, 2014).

4.12 Data Collection Methods

Data collection involves systematically and methodically acquiring and measuring information on variables of interest to address specific research questions and evaluate results (Pneumol, 2018). This section discusses the data collection methods used in this study.

4.12.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Key-informant interviews involve engaging with individuals who possess firsthand knowledge or expertise relevant to the research topic. These interviews aim to gather insights, perceptions, and experiences from a select group of people who are likely to provide valuable information on the subject at hand (Ritchie & Lewis, 2015). In the context of this study, key informant interviews were conducted with traditional leaders and members of traditional councils within Jozini Local Municipality. The sample for these interviews is comprised of the four traditional leaders, two headmen and 5 local community members selected based on specific criteria outlined in the study's methodology.

Semi-structured interviews are in-depth conversations guided by predetermined open-ended questions (Pharm, 2014). These interviews provide flexibility while maintaining a focus on key research objectives. A semi-structured interview guide serves as a framework for the discussion, ensuring that relevant topics are covered systematically (Gray, 2009). In this study, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary method for gathering detailed information from participants. Through these interviews, participants were encouraged to provide rich descriptions of their experiences and perspectives on the role of traditional leadership in fostering gender relations within Jozini Local Municipality.

4.12.2 Observations

Observational methods involve systematically recording observable phenomena within a natural setting to capture insights that may not emerge during verbal interviews (Gorman & Clayton, 2005). Observations complement interviews to provide a nuanced understanding of non-verbal cues, group dynamics, and contextual influences and enrich the findings (Kawulich, 2005). This study utilised observations to validate information shared in interviews, observe interactions between community members and traditional leaders, and gain deeper insights into the dynamics shaping gender relations within the municipality.

During interviews, the researcher observed specific behaviours, such as gestures and body language that indicated respect and authority, and male and female participation in discussions. For example, the authority of traditional leaders was evident in the case of Inkosi, who invited Induna to the interview. Induna made himself available on short notice although he had been

shopping in town when Inkosi called. Detailed field notes and structured observation guides were used to document these interactions.

4.13 Thematic Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is a methodical approach used to identify, organise, and interpret patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data (Braun et al., 2012). Thematic analysis was employed to uncover and understand the shared experiences and perspectives of participants regarding the role of traditional leadership in fostering gender relations within Jozini Local Municipality. Thematic analysis involves several stages, each contributing to the development of meaningful themes derived from the data.

Stage 1: Becoming Familiar with Data

The first stage of thematic analysis requires complete immersion in the data. The researcher transcribed interviews, read and re-read transcripts, and listened to recordings to gain a deep understanding of the content. Initial thoughts and impressions were noted down to establish a solid foundation for subsequent analysis. The researcher meticulously examined transcripts and interviews to fully comprehend participants' responses. Attention was paid to specific details and expressions that conveyed strong emotions. These indicated shared experiences and significant insights.

Stage 2: Generating Initial Codes

Once familiar with the data, the researcher began identifying initial codes with the assistance of the NVIvo assistant appointed by the School of Built Environment and Development Studies. Interesting and significant aspects of the data emerged during the analysis. These codes provided insight into the context and content of the conversations, laying the groundwork for further exploration.

Stage 3: Constructing Themes

The third stage involved interpretive analysis where the researcher, with the assistance of the NVivo assistant, began sorting relevant data extracts into broad themes based on the identified

codes. Relationships between codes, subthemes, and overarching themes were considered, guiding the thematic development process.

Stage 4: Reviewing Themes

Thematic review involves a comprehensive evaluation of identified themes to refine, merge, separate, or eliminate initial ideas. Themes were scrutinised for coherence and consistency, ensuring that they accurately reflected the dataset and the research questions.

Stage 5: Defining and Naming Themes

In this stage, themes were further refined and defined through ongoing investigation. Precise names and definitions were assigned to each theme, capturing their essence and relevance to the research topic. A coherent narrative of the data began to emerge, strengthening the thematic framework.

Stage 6: Producing the Findings

The final stage involved synthesizing findings into a comprehensive report that effectively communicated the findings of the study. Extracts linked to each theme were used to support analysis and provide evidence of the study's validity and significance. The report aimed to present a compelling analysis grounded in empirical data, addressing the research question in depth rather than simply summarizing findings.

4.14 Trustworthiness of Data

Validation in qualitative research pertains to the degree to which the study is founded on reality or logic, aiming to minimise the impact of irrelevant data and conditions under which evidence is gathered (Heath, 2023). Validity is ensured through the rigour and trustworthiness of the data. Rigour enables researchers to portray an accurate picture of the studied population. This is essential for establishing trust and confidence in the conclusions and consistency in research procedures over time (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Creswell & Creswell (2018, p. 124) define trustworthiness as "the truth value of the study's findings." Aspers and Corte (2019) contend that consistency, stability, and repeatability of the participant data collected are key indicators

of trustworthiness. It illustrates the researcher's capacity for information gathering and documentation. Data credibility transferability, dependability, and confirmability were all considered to assess the validity and reliability of the data collected.

4.14.1 Credibility

Credibility is crucial in qualitative research as it underpins the trustworthiness and accuracy of the findings (Noor, 2008). Credibility focuses on the trustworthiness of data gathering and analysis procedures. It was ensured through in-depth interviews for the collection of accurate information. Furthermore, findings were corroborated with existing literature, enhancing the overall credibility of the study.

4.14.2Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which qualitative research findings can be applied to other contexts (Yin et al., 2018). The research context and underlying assumptions were described to enhance transferability. A detailed research background facilitated the application of findings beyond the specific study setting, thereby increasing the potential for transferability.

4.14.3 Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research pertains to the consistency of data over time and under different conditions (Pneumol, 2018). Dependability was ensured through clear documentation, record-keeping, and the ability to track decisions during the research process. Data collection instruments were developed and approved by the University's Ethics Committee. Each interview participant signed a consent form and interview questions were consistently implemented during data collection. The research process was documented and any changes during the study were recorded. Data was securely stored in audio and written formats.

4.14.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which others can independently verify research findings (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The findings were presented to the participants in Jozini on 18 October

2024 to confirm whether they accurately reflected their experiences. The participants affirmed that their views had been captured appropriately and offered additional perspectives and insights to enhance understanding.

4.15 Ethical Considerations

The concept of "axiology" describes the moral and ethical factors that must be considered when doing research. It includes the philosophical foundation that leads to morally righteous and admirable conclusions (Killam, 2013). Establishing, assessing, and comprehending concepts of suitable and inappropriate behaviour in research are all part of axiology. It includes the values attributed to the participants, the data, and the target audience for the research findings, among other parts of the study. It focuses on the fundamentals of ethics and moral conduct. To uphold and abide by the ethical standards established in research guidelines and reach ethical findings, this section covers the ethical concerns pertinent to this study.

The University of KwaZulu Natal's Research Ethics Committee gave their approval to the research proposal for this study. Additionally, letters from pertinent gatekeepers were obtained to show participants had actual access. According to Woods and Sikes (2022), a gatekeeper letter is a permission letter sent by an organization that serves as a middleman between the researcher and potential participants. The municipal authorities in this study approved the research to be done in Jozini Local Municipality. Information regarding the nature, goals, and procedures of the study was given to the participants. They were given a consent form to sign, indicating their voluntary and unassisted involvement in the research. Participants were made aware that they might revoke their agreement at any time during or following the interviews without incurring any fines or negative effects. To ensure voluntary engagement, informed consent must be established (Silverman, 2014).

Participants were respected and their privacy was maintained during the entire investigation. To protect the participants' privacy, precautions were taken. To protect participant privacy from disclosure to the public, anonymity must be maintained during the research process (Woods & Sikes, 2022). Participants in this study were not requested or asked to divulge any sensitive or personal information throughout the interview process. The study was for academic purposes, and participants were also made aware that after it was over, the data would be safely kept in

the supervisor's office for five years before being wiped out. However, the participants would be given access to the results upon request.

4.16 Limitations of Study

Jozini Local Municipality has a total of seven traditional leaders and only four participated in the interviews. The unavailability of the remaining three traditional leaders represents a study limitation. To address this challenge, the findings were presented to the Chairperson of the Local House of Traditional Leaders who has overarching oversight of the entire UMkhanyakude district. The long distances travelled on rural roads were physically exhausting and often resulted in arriving and leaving the interview sites late at night. Despite these unfavourable conditions, all interviews were completed as scheduled.

4.17 Summary

The research approach used to carry out this study was thoroughly discussed in this Chapter. To investigate the role of traditional leadership in fostering gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality, a qualitative research methodology utilizing an interpretive approach was chosen. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and observations, and it was then analysed using a thematic approach. To increase trustworthiness, the researcher made sure that the approach was as open as possible. The chapter also covered the challenges and restrictions of the investigation, how rigour and validity were attained, and the noted ethical considerations.

Chapter Five: Presentation and Discussion of Findings

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4, the research methodology and design adopted for the study were discussed. The researcher emphasised the significance of the research paradigm, encompassing key components such as epistemology, ontology, methodology, the qualitative nature of the study and axiology. Chapter 5 delves into the heart of the research, presenting findings and engaging in discussions that highlight the role of traditional leaders in promoting gender relations in Jozini. The chapter navigates these issues under three central themes: 1) Community's perspectives on their different roles in gender relations in Jozini; 2) People's perceptions of the role of traditional leaders in gender relations, and 3) Traditional leaders' strategies in addressing gender relations. The chapter outline begins with descriptions of the location and context of Jozini Local Municipality. The contrasting landscapes of wealth and poverty set the stage for a nuanced understanding of how gender intersects with class to leave some people more vulnerable than others. Theme 1 delves into the complexities that underpin gender relations within Jozini Local Municipality, shedding light on the dynamic interplay between tradition, modernity, and socio-economic realities. Theme 2 uncovers the roles traditional leaders play in shaping gender dynamics. The final theme unravels the strategies employed by traditional leaders to address gender relations, offering insights into their approaches in a contemporary socio-cultural milieu.

5.2 Study Participants and the Context in which They Live

The preliminary questions in the interview served to build rapport and set the stage for engagement. Traditional leaders and community members provided insights into the context and people of Jozini. Understanding contextual realities was crucial in a study that examined the role of traditional leaders in fostering gender relations. Therefore, this section presents the demographic profiles of the study participants in the context of Jozini.

5.2.1 Demographic Profiles

Table 5.1 presents the study participants with 11 individuals.

Table 5.1: Profile of the interviewed participants

PARTICIPANT	GENDER	AGE RANGE	STATUS
Participant 1	Male	50-57	Senior Traditional Leader
Participant 2	Male	18-25	Senior Traditional Leader
Participant 3	Male	26-33	Senior Traditional Leader
Participant 4	Male	50-57	Senior Traditional Leader
Participant 5	Male	66+	Traditional leader
Participant 6	Male	42-29	Traditional leader
Participant 7	Male	18-25	Community Member
Participant 8	Male	42-49	Community Member
Participant 9	Female	58-65	Community Member
Participant 10	Female	66+	Community Member
Participant 11	Female	66+	Community Member

In this study, the participants were purposively selected from Jozini Local Municipality's traditional communities governed by traditional leaders. According to the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Amendment Act no. 41 of 2003., all individuals exercising authority in traditional communities are considered traditional leaders. The distinction is made between senior traditional leaders (Amakhosi[2]) and headmen (Izinduna[3]). To ensure cultural sensitivity and alignment with the local terminology commonly used in the community, this study opted to employ IsiZulu terms such as senior traditional leaders

[2] According to the Traditional Governance and Leadership Act, all individuals exercising authority in traditional communities are considered traditional leaders. The distinction is made between senior traditional leaders (Amakhosi) and headmen (Izinduna).
[3] Ibid.

(Amakhosi), senior traditional leader (Inkosi[4]), headman (Induna), and headmen (Izinduna). The gender distribution among the participants mirrors the prevailing male dominance in traditional leadership and community roles within Jozini.

The traditional leadership demographics, as depicted in Table 5.1, predominantly comprise male participants (Participants 1-6), all serving as either senior traditional leaders or traditional leaders. This mirrors the broader context of Jozini, where traditional leadership is notably male-dominated. Despite the community's demographic composition of 53.3% females and 46.7% males (Statistics South Africa, 2022), it is crucial to recognise that Jozini Local Municipality currently lacks female traditional leaders. However, certain traditional councils do include female members, even though our study did not have access to their perspectives.

Within the cohort of community members interviewed, three women (Participants 9-11) emerged as significant contributors, offering invaluable insights into the dynamics of Jozini. Moreover, the profiles suggest that two of the four senior traditional leaders interviewed are relatively young. Young people participate in governance structures in rural parts of Jozini. The participant profile presented herein serves as the cornerstone for delving into the intricate interplay of gender relations within Jozini. It is pertinent to note that there were two distinct interview guides—one tailored for traditional leaders and the other for community members, to which the three women belong. Recognising this delineation is essential to appreciate the diverse perspectives that encompass both traditional leaders and community members, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the community's intricate fabric.

5.2.2 The Context of Jozini

During the interviews, participants were engaged in discussions about the socioeconomic landscape of Jozini, aiming to unravel the intricate fabric of the community's context. As depicted in the literature, Jozini, akin to major urban centres, exudes elements of affluence and privilege (Chirwa, 2019). The town's vibrant shopping centres, serving both locals and tourists, testify to its economic dynamism (Ndhlovu, 2020). Jozini boasts a rich tapestry of attractions,

[4] Traditional leader - This "means any person who, in terms of customary law of the traditional community concerned, holds a traditional leadership position, and is recognised in terms of the of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act no. 41 of 2003 (Republic of South Africa, 2003, p. 8).

from renowned wildlife encounters to adventurous activities and cultural showcases celebrating the heritage of the Zulu people, as well as the iconic Jozini Dam. The area draws visitors seeking a glimpse of its diverse offerings (Mdluli, 2018).

However, beneath this veneer lies a contrasting reality. The town itself bears witness to the enduring grip of poverty and deprivation, evident in dilapidated structures and densely populated areas (Smith, 2019). Mud houses, symbolic of rudimentary living conditions, stand as poignant symbols of economic disparities (Johnson et al., 2020). Furthermore, some participants reported that despite the presence of the Jozini Dam, they grapple with inconsistent access to clean water. This juxtaposition of wealth and poverty engenders a complex environment, and this is the context in which traditional leaders operate (Phiri, 2011). The subsequent section presents and discusses the themes and subthemes in alignment with the objectives of the study. They were generated with the use of NVivo as follows:

Table 5.2: Themes and subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
Role of Traditional Leaders in Gender Relations	- Leadership and Governance - Inclusion of Women in Traditional Councils - Addressing Gender-Based Violence - Individual Versus Collective Rights - Gender Slots in Traditional Leaders' Meetings
Community Members' Perceptions of the Role of Traditional Leaders in Gender Relations	- Traditional Leaders' Development of Gender Relations - Social Construction of Gender Roles and Responsibilities
Strategies in Addressing Gender Relations	- Mediation - Fining - Application of the Law - Raising Awareness and Implementing Gender-Based Violence Programmes - Enforcing Government Legislation - Restoring Traditional Cultures and Values

5.3 Role of Traditional Leaders in Gender Relations

One of the study's objectives was to explore the perspectives of the traditional leaders on their role in gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality. Traditional leaders discussed this role from their perspectives. The sub-themes that emerged were leadership and governance, the

inclusion of women in traditional councils, gender-based violence (GBV), individual versus collective rights, and gender slots in senior traditional leaders' meetings.

5.3.1 Leadership and Governance

The traditional leadership and governance structures were investigated. The findings revealed a distinct hierarchy within traditional leadership structures, shedding light on the roles and relationships among Amakhosi and Izinduna.

Participant 2 stated that:

> *"I have 22 Amakhosi that I work with in my traditional community. Each Inkosi is required to have a minimum of four assistants under him, and we call them amabandla ncane"* (Participant 2, Traditional Leader).

Participant 3 also shared his perceptions of the traditional council administration.

> *"According to the traditional council, it is the traditional leader first, then the head of Amakhosi, then the secretary, and then it's the Amakhosi, there are 17 Amakhosi, I have 17 Amakhosi in my traditional community"* (Participant 3, Traditional Leader).

When asked whether they participated in transforming traditional authorities to traditional councils as stipulated in the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 41 of 2003, it emerged that Participant 3 was the only Inkosi who participated in the process. The composition predominantly featured Amakhosi, Izinduna, and amabandla ncane[6], with limited female participation.

Participant 4 maintained that their leadership structures involve women in positions of power. He had this to say:

> *"I was only 11 years old when I lost my father…Inkosi of this traditional community. A female regent assumed my position because I was still a minor…This*

should tell you that there is no discrimination against women in our traditional community" (Participant 4, Traditional Leader)

Similarly, Participant 1 revealed the following:

"Yes, there are women, there are young people, and there are older women [in the traditional council] …it's just that young people and women find it hard to volunteer because most of them are unemployed. Thus, they do not have money to attend to some of their responsibilities such as attending meetings of traditional councils…" (Participant 1, Traditional Leader).

Regarding the participation of women in traditional councils, Participant 3 highlighted contextual factors that hinder women's involvement in traditional councils.

"Unemployed community members find it difficult to attend meetings of the traditional council because the work is voluntary, and there are no monetary benefits. As a result, we cannot fulfil the membership requirements of traditional councils as stipulated in the Act [Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act no. 41 of 2003]. To address this situation, Izinduna have been co-opted into our traditional council as they receive monthly salaries" (Participant 3, Traditional Leader).

The narratives presented by Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4 provide insights into the organizational structure of traditional communities in Jozini Local Municipality. Participant 2 emphasises the expansive scale of the community, highlighting collaboration among 22 Amakhosi overseeing villages with the support of a minimum of four "amabandl'ncane" each. This collaborative structure, which involves Amabandla ncane in supporting Izinduna, strengthens traditional leadership's connection to the community, ensuring governance that is responsive to the people's needs (Republic of South Africa, 2003). Participant 3 elaborates on the administrative hierarchy within the traditional council, outlining a clear chain of command from the traditional leader to the head of Amakhosi, the secretary, and the Amakhosi. This systematic governance approach, demonstrated by the 17 Amakhosi in Participant 3's community, underlines the

delineation of roles and responsibilities within the traditional community (Segalo, 2015; Bekink, 2006; Albertyn, 2015). Furthermore, Participant 4 sheds light on the collaborative nature of traditional leadership work, highlighting the close partnership between Amakhosi and Izinduna in serving the community. Despite not being directly involved in the implementation of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003, Participant 4's insights highlight the interconnected roles of Amakhosi and Izinduna in addressing community needs and facilitating the functions of the traditional council (Moagi & Mthombeni, 2020).

The narratives also reflect the nuanced understanding that specific villages within the community feature female Izinduna, indicating varied experiences across different traditional communities. While some communities have experienced female leadership, others have not, posing challenges to or complementing the predominantly male hierarchical model outlined by Participants 2, 3, and 4. This recognition adds depth to the discourse, highlighting the coexistence of contrasting yet equally valid perspectives, especially considering legislation advocating for female leadership in traditional councils (Moagi & Mthombeni, 2020). Despite legislative efforts such as the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003, which mandates gender diversity within traditional councils, challenges persist in realising gender-inclusive policies. Participant 4's observation regarding the lack of financial resources acting as a barrier to participation underscores the intersectionality of gender, rurality, and class. Economic constraints, including the lack of funds for transport, hinder women's meaningful participation in traditional councils, complicating the implementation of inclusive policies (Bryant & Pini, 2010).

In conclusion, the narratives and analyses demonstrate the complex dynamics within traditional leadership structures in Jozini. While legislative frameworks provide a foundation for gender inclusion, practical challenges and entrenched gender roles pose significant barriers. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive understanding that goes beyond legislation to tackle the practical constraints faced by the community members involved (Mahole, 2017; Segalo, 2015).

5.3.2 Inclusion of Women in Traditional Councils

The study investigated the role of traditional leaders in shaping gender relations by exploring the inclusion of women within traditional council structures. This examination extended beyond the existence of gender-inclusive policies to assess the practical measures implemented by traditional leaders to ensure gender representation within the community. The findings revealed that while formal policies such as the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 41 of 2003 emphasise gender inclusion, significant practical challenges hinder their effective implementation.

Participant 4, a traditional leader, remarked on the legislative requirements and practical challenges:

> *"There is 40% that is compulsory, whether you like it or not women have to be there. Then, some are chosen by the public. You are chosen based on whether you can speak for the people, and speak for the nation, it does not mean that you should also be chosen only based on gender. Meaning, that we are just filling in the number, but we look at the 40% of people who are fit to be in the council, but they are elected by the public. However, Inkosi is responsible for a 60% membership, so maybe 10 of them will become women, so their number can just increase. Sometimes you can end up with 60% or 50%, so yes, we have women in the council"* (Participant 4, Traditional Leader).

Participant 1 discussed the challenges young people and women face in participating:

> *"Yes, the traditional council is mixed, there are women, there are young people, and there are old women, it's just that the young people and women find it hard to volunteer because they are unemployed. Thus, most of them do not have money to attend to some of their responsibilities such as attending meetings of traditional councils. However, they remain members of the council" (*Participant 1, Traditional Leader).

The narratives reveal the intricate interplay between existing legislation on gender-inclusive policies within traditional councils and the practical challenges that hinder comprehensive gender representation and engagement in community decision-making. Participant 4 alludes to the Traditional Leadership Framework's emphasis on including women, aligning with the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003, which stresses the importance of gender diversity within traditional councils. This legal framework underlines the pivotal role traditional councils play in preserving cultural heritage and fostering community cohesion.

Participant 2 emphasised the presence of women within Amabandla ncane:

> *"There are 3 women, and from amabandla ncane, there are a lot of them, there are more women than men. We cannot name them because there are so many of them and it would take the whole day but since each village has amabandla ncane, most of them are women. If you carry on with your research, you can go to COGTA [Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs], and they will tell you that from all the Amakhosi, from almost all of them in KZN, I have the team with the most women. Meanwhile, there are just three of them who are Amakhosi, imagine…" (*Participant 2, Traditional Leader).

However, despite the inclusion of gender diversity within traditional leadership councils, practical challenges remain in implementing this Act (Johnson & Kabeer, 2020). Participant 1 highlighted that socioeconomic constraints such as unemployment and poverty pose significant challenges to women's meaningful participation and inclusion. These constraints concurred with the findings of Cornwall & Rivers (2015) and Smith (2019) who found and argued that over-reliance on legislative mandates without addressing the underlying socioeconomic issues limits the effectiveness of these policies. He thus noted that while legal frameworks are essential, they must be accompanied by practical support and resources to overcome barriers to participation (Smith, 2019).

Participant 2 pointed out the substantial presence of women within Amabandla ncane, reflecting a community-driven effort toward gender inclusion. This grassroots involvement showcases the active participation of women at the local level. However, it is essential to distinguish whether these women hold decision-making power or are primarily engaged in

grassroots activities without significant influence on broader decisions (Johnson & Kabeer, 2020). The diverse composition of the council, as acknowledged by Participant 1, aligns with the Act's emphasis on inclusivity, suggesting that despite challenges, there are instances where traditional leaders actively incorporate women within traditional leadership structures but there is no suggestion that they have meaningful decision-making influence. The intersectionality framework suggests that gender cannot be analysed in isolation but must be understood within its broader socioeconomic context (Crenshaw, 1991).

5.3.3 Addressing Gender-Based Violence

The study findings indicate that traditional leaders and Amakhosi play a crucial role in addressing GBV within their communities. The narrative from Participants number 2, 5 and 6 affirmed this by highlighting the following:

> *"So, even before women started advocating for equal rights, here, we used to be very shocked that there is still someone who assaults a woman, it is shocking to us. This thing GBV, we as the community consider it as non-existent. There is no case of rape of a woman here in our community…maybe there are cases that I am not aware of but here at the tribal court I don't remember us ever talking about a case of that nature"* (Participant 2, Traditional Leader).

Similarly, Participants 5,6, and 8 share the same sentiments when they state the following:

> *"We have always worked to protect women from any form of abuse, even before the modern ways of resolving these issues by including police. There have always been very serious repercussions for anyone abusive in our community. Presently, we work collaboratively with the police to ensure that any perpetrator is dealt with correctly"* (Participant 5, Traditional Leader).

> *"Cases of abuse and rape usually go straight to the police; we don't even listen to them because a case of abuse or rape is the same as a case of blood [murder]. We acknowledge that this is a very serious crime and cannot be resolved within us. However, we avail ourselves in any possible way to assist the police" (*Participant 6, Traditional Leader).

> *"Inkosi is paying very close attention and is saying that no one has the right to assault another person, male or female"* (Participant 8, Community Member).

The community members and traditional leaders affirmed that despite the existence of flaws in fully incorporating gender diversity, GBV cases are not tolerated. Furthermore, despite the continuation of embracing traditional and cultural gender roles in the community which might include patriarchy, GBV is not condoned in any way.

> *"There is a case of a young man who entered the school without the authority of the security. He wanted to see a certain female teacher. He approached her to talk to her against her will. The woman was insulted… a lot of things were said. The matter was reported to the SGB [School Governing Body], which decided to bring it to my attention. When the matter was brought to me, I applauded the SGB for reporting as this was a form of GBV. As traditional leaders, we quickly reported this matter to the police" (*Participant 1, Traditional Leader).

The traditional leaders indeed treat GBV cases with sensitivity and urgency and further report all cases to authorities. Additionally, traditional leaders play their role by collaborating with police to ensure justice for survivors and consequences for perpetrators.

> *"The police maintain a vigilant stance, readily available around the clock to address and respond promptly to any incidents related to gender-based violence, ensuring immediate intervention and support for those affected"* (Participant 8, Community Member).

Participant 2 also lamented that:

> *"We do not tolerate women bashing in this community"* (Participant 2, Traditional Leader).

Participant 4 (Traditional Leader) shared similar sentiments:

> *"The community is fully aware of the expected behaviour of every individual within these communities. They also know of the repercussions of any GBV perpetrator"* (Participant 4 Traditional Leader).

The narrative from the different participants suggests contradicting experiences regarding the reporting of GBV cases within the communities. In this regard, Participant 1 reveals that he had some cases of GBV reported directly to him from which he had escalated them to the police. On the other hand, Participant 6 acknowledged that they are not aware of certain cases of GBV as they are reported directly to the police and never reach them. These contradictions in experience reveal potential gaps within the traditional leadership structure and the community, as Izinduna are expected to be informed of all community occurrences, especially cases of such a crucial nature (Segalo, 2015). This suggests a potential gap in communication or reporting mechanisms within the traditional leadership structure. Moreover, each Inkosi must implement supporting mechanisms for survivors of GBV, tailored to the unique needs of their community (Moagi & Mthombeni, 2020). An example is Participant 5 whose focus is on supporting abused widows, indicating a specific response to the prevalent issues within his community.

From an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) perspective, the traditional leaders' approach to gender relations can be seen as both a resource and a challenge (Cooperrider et al., 1987). The fact that GBV cases are directly referred to the police indicates an understanding of the seriousness of such issues and a reliance on formal justice systems. The mention of proactive gender-inclusive rules in community and educational settings by Participant 1 shows an asset-based approach, where leaders are using their influence to create safer, more inclusive environments (Moagi & Mthombeni. 2020; Ndlovu, 2008). Considering the historical resilience and adaptability of traditional leadership in Africa, their current role in gender relations presents a complex terrain. The enduring impact of the colonial and apartheid eras cannot be overlooked, as they altered and exploited traditional structures, including gender dynamics (Moagi & Mthombeni. 2020). However, the recognition of women's roles in pre-colonial societies suggests an inherent capacity within these traditional structures to promote gender balance (Albertyn, 2015). Leveraging this historical knowledge, traditional leaders

could play a transformative role in gender relations by revisiting and revitalising these more equitable pre-colonial practices, aligning with the ABCD theory's emphasis on utilising existing community strengths and assets (Albertyn, 2015; Cooperrider et al., 1987).

The commitment of some traditional leaders to address GBV issues reflects a significant role played by traditional leaders in gender relations and contradicts the assumption of their undemocratic influence (Walker, 2013). However, it was observed that some traditional leaders expressed discomfort when discussing GBV, suggesting complexity in their engagement with these sensitive issues. This complexity underscores the need for further exploration and nuanced understanding of traditional leaders' roles and challenges in addressing GBV within their communities.

5.3.4 Individual Versus Collective Rights

The study ensured that all dynamics including the government are considered concerning GBV cases. Recognising the effort from the government, some participants believed the government has a role in gender-related cases. Accordingly, Participants 6, 1 and 4 indicated that:

> *"I blame democracy. Traditionally, if a girl fell pregnant out of wedlock, the traditional leader would intervene to hold the father of the man accountable. Democracy no longer allows this to happen because people have rights" (Participant* 6, Inkosi).

The Inkosi highlights a loophole in the South African Constitution that enables gender-related cases and imbalances. A traditional leader affirmed this by stating that:

> *"Only if the government can make it clear, you can't end by saying that you have a right, but they must know how far it goes and where it ends. If you are a child at home, you must follow the rules of the house. The child comes drunk, and I am here, I am the father, and I do not drink alcohol, he comes into the house drunk and shouts for food, I am the parent, and I am disturbed but there is not much I can do because of rights"* (Participant 1, Traditional Leader).

Similarly, participant 4 states that:

> *"Sometimes, women misinterpret the law, and it becomes a political issue. I attended the NPA [National Prosecuting Authority] workshop where I observed that while there are good laws, the challenge lies in how they are communicated to the people. The Bill of Rights, which advocates for gender balance, has not been adequately explained to the public. The misunderstanding has led to misconceptions, with some interpreting equality in marriage as equal and similar rights; responsibilities; and roles resulting in disruptions within households. It is crucial to clarify and educate on the intent of these laws to prevent unintended consequences and preserve the foundations of humanity and family structures"* (Participant 4, Traditional Leader).

The study presented delves into the complex interplay among government policies, traditional norms, and gender-related issues in South Africa. Participants expressed concerns regarding the impact of democracy on traditional practices, particularly in addressing gender-related matters. The discussions underscore the tensions between individual rights and collective norms, as well as the challenges in navigating these dynamics within South Africa's legal and societal frameworks. Participant 6, an Inkosi, highlighted a perceived loophole in the South African Constitution that may contribute to gender-related imbalances due to the prioritisation of individual rights under democracy. This observation sheds light on the conflict between traditional practices, such as holding fathers or men accountable for certain actions, and the evolving legal landscape that emphasises individual rights over collective responsibilities (Dunkle et al., 2004). Participant 1, identified as a Traditional Leader, further stressed the necessity for government clarity on the scope and limitations of individual rights, especially concerning familial and societal norms. The participant highlighted the difficulties in upholding traditional values within a context of evolving legal frameworks that prioritise individual freedoms. This emphasises the challenges of balancing individual rights with traditional norms within the South African context (Johnson et al., 2020; Smith, 2019; Ngubane, 2019).

Participant 4, another Traditional Leader, raised concerns about the misinterpretation of laws, particularly regarding gender equality and the Bill of Rights. The participant emphasised the

significance of effectively communicating and educating the public on the intent and implications of these laws to prevent misunderstandings and disruptions within households. This highlights the importance of clear and comprehensive dissemination of legal information to bridge the gap between legal provisions and societal interpretations (Mamdani, 2001). These findings align with existing literature on GBV and gender norms in South Africa. Studies have highlighted the prevalence of GBV and the difficulties in addressing gender inequalities within legal and societal frameworks. The intersections between individual rights, traditional norms, and gender-related issues underscore the complexities of navigating gender dynamics in a rapidly changing society like South Africa (Russell et al., 2013; Singh et al., 2013; Pitpitan et al., 2012). The narratives and findings from the study shed light on the multifaceted nature of gender-related issues in South Africa, emphasising the necessity for nuanced approaches that consider the interactions between individual rights, traditional norms, and government policies. Addressing these complexities demands a thorough understanding of legal frameworks, effective communication strategies, and educational initiatives to promote gender equality and prevent unintended consequences within societal structures.

Ultimately, the leaders' perspectives when analysed reveal underlying complexities in how gender equality is perceived and implemented. For instance, the emphasis on respect and traditional values in Participant 4's statement can be reframed as assets in the ABCD model, promoting a community-driven approach to gender equality that aligns with local values and practices. In conclusion, integrating these findings with the ABCD theory provides a more holistic understanding of gender dynamics in traditional leadership, emphasising the need for culturally sensitive and community-driven approaches to gender equality.

5.3.5 Gender Slots in Traditional Leaders' Meetings

When asked if meetings of traditional leaders highlight gender-related issues, traditional leaders revealed that during the meetings, there is always a slot to discuss gender issues such as GBV. Hence, Participants 2 and 3, state that:

> *"Almost all the time, in all programmes, there is something called Local House. So, every time before the programme ends, there is a GBV slot, and there are*

presentations about GBV. We are even shown case studies on the rates of the abuse of women" (Participant 2, Traditional Leader).

The assertion is affirmed by Participant 3.

> *"Yes, our Local House of Traditional Leaders discuss GBV during its gatherings…every meeting consists of presentations about GBV. This information is then relayed to young people in the community who live and work with others as they are the ones who deal with people the most. It's not only Izinduna who raise awareness about GBV… social workers, SAPS [the South African Police Service], and the Department of Health also share that responsibility"* (Participant 3, Traditional Leader).

The narratives from the study shed light on the proactive approach taken by traditional leaders in South Africa to address GBV within their communities. The discussions revealed that traditional leaders allocate specific slots during their meetings to discuss gender-related issues, particularly GBV. This practice demonstrates a commitment to raising awareness and addressing the challenges posed by GBV within the community. Participants emphasised the importance of these discussions and the dissemination of information to community members, including young people, to enhance awareness and promote actions to combat GBV effectively. Analysing these narratives through the lens of the ABCD theory provides valuable insights. The ABCD approach focuses on leveraging existing community strengths and resources to address challenges and foster positive change. In this context, the traditional leaders' initiative to incorporate discussions on GBV in their meetings aligns with the ABCD principle of asset mobilisation. Creating dedicated slots for discussions and involving various stakeholders addresses GBV effectively. Stakeholders include social workers, the South African Police Service (SAPS), and the Department of Health to harness community resources. The integration of relevant literature further enriches the analyses. Studies on GBV in South Africa, such as those by Dunkle et al. (2004) andPitpitan et al. (2012), underline the significance of addressing GBV as a key health risk for women in the country. The narratives from the traditional leaders align with the findings of these studies, emphasising the importance of community-based interventions and multi-sectoral collaboration in combating GBV. Moreover, the narratives resonate with the work of (Treves-Kagan et al., 2019), which

highlights the importance of gender-transformative community mobilization programmes in addressing gender inequalities and violence. The traditional leaders' efforts to discuss GBV and disseminate information within the community reflect a gender-transformative approach that seeks to challenge harmful gender norms and promote gender equality.

5.4 Community Members' Perceptions of the Role of Traditional Leaders in Gender Relations

In this section, we delve into the theme of People's Perceptions of the Role of Traditional Leaders in Gender Relations, unravelling key subthemes that shed light on the intricate dynamics within Jozini Local Municipality. The perceptions of ordinary community members about the role of traditional leaders in gender relations are very important as they determine their attitude toward receiving directives from the leadership. For traditional leaders to guide the community accurately and successfully into a balance in gender roles, willingness is a key requirement from the community members. Moreover, how community members believe and respect their traditional leaders also has a role in their acceptance of the strategies implemented by their leaders.

5.4.1 Traditional Leaders' Development of Gender Relations

The findings regarding the Role of Traditional Leaders in the Development of Gender Relations unveil a multifaceted landscape within Jozini Local Municipality. Participants 7 and 11 stated that:

> *"Things are changing slowly. We are starting to have more discussions about women's roles and rights in our community. The traditional leaders are listening more, but we still have a long way to go. Women are finding their voices, and the leaders are beginning to recognise that women have valuable contributions to make"* (Participant 7, Inkosi).

This indicates that community members are slowly acknowledging the need to encourage the eradication of gender imbalance and gender-related cases. Furthermore, community members

are actively engaging in the various strategies to address these. For example, Participant 11 stated that:

> *"We recently had a meeting where the traditional leader encouraged women to participate in decision-making. It was a positive step, but there is still a need for more opportunities for women to lead and influence community matters. The traditional leaders need to actively involve us in shaping the future of our community"* (Participant 11, Community Member).

Furthermore, Participant 11 comments that:

> *"We as women were not allowed to arrange and sit in a meeting with Inkosi, now we can, but before, a woman meeting with Inkosi, it was taboo, but we are happy that has changed"* (Participant 11, Community Member).

The role of traditional leaders in the development of gender relations within Jozini Local Municipality presents a complex interplay of cultural, social, and political dynamics. As reflected in the narratives provided by Participants 7 and 11, there is an emerging recognition and slow transformation towards gender equality within the community.

Participants noted a gradual shift in gender relations, with traditional leaders beginning to acknowledge and encourage the participation of women in community discussions and decision-making processes. This shift is significant as it marks a departure from deeply entrenched patriarchal norms. The inclusion of women in leadership roles within traditional structures is critical for fostering societal progress (Mahole, 2017). The narrative from Participant 7 underscores this, highlighting that traditional leaders are increasingly open to listening to women's voices and recognising their contributions.

The active encouragement from traditional leaders for women to participate in decision-making, as described by Participant 11, aligns with the principles of the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) theory. ABCD emphasises leveraging existing community assets and strengths to drive development (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). In this context, women's participation and their recognised roles can be seen as valuable community assets

that traditional leaders are beginning to harness for broader societal development. Akala (2018) supports this notion, arguing that empowering women within traditional societies not only promotes gender equality but also enhances overall community resilience and development.
The change in norms, where women can now meet with the Inkosi, represents a significant cultural shift. Historically, such meetings were taboo, as highlighted by Participant 11. Mawere et al. (2021) emphasise that cultural taboos and norms have long restricted women's roles in many African societies. The breaking of these taboos indicates a positive step towards dismantling gender barriers. It reflects a broader trend where traditional institutions are adapting to contemporary gender norms, thus promoting more inclusive governance practices.

Despite these positive changes, the narratives indicate that there is still a considerable journey ahead to achieve full gender equality. The need for more opportunities for women to lead and influence community matters, as mentioned by Participant 11, points to persistent structural barriers. Theoretical perspectives suggest that such barriers are often rooted in long-standing cultural and institutional norms (Connell, 2002). Continuous efforts to engage traditional leaders and the community in dialogue and education about gender equality are crucial for sustaining progress (Cornwall & Rivers 2015).

From an academic perspective, the involvement of traditional leaders in promoting gender equality can be seen as a strategic integration of modern and traditional governance systems. Mahole (2017) argues that the integration of female traditional leaders can serve as a pivotal point for encouraging broader societal changes towards gender equality. Similarly, Akala (2018) highlights the importance of traditional leaders in shaping societal values and norms, suggesting that their active support is essential for meaningful gender transformation.

The ABCD theory further provides a useful framework for understanding these changes. By focusing on community strengths and assets, ABCD encourages the identification and mobilization of women’s contributions as critical resources for development (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). This approach not only fosters community-driven development but also ensures that the benefits of such development are equitably shared.

5.4.2 Community Members' Perceptions of the Role of Traditional Leaders in Gender Relations

The findings in this section illustrate a progressive yet cautious evolution in the role of traditional leaders in gender relations. During our conversation, Participant 7 shared her views on the evolving role of traditional leaders in addressing gender relations. She stated that:

> *"I have noticed a gradual shift in how our traditional leaders interact with the community, especially concerning women's issues. In the past, women's voices were often marginalised, but now there is a noticeable effort to include us in important discussions. For instance, our traditional leader recently held a community meeting where women were encouraged to speak up about their concerns and ideas (Similar sentiments were also shared by Participant 11). This was a significant change from the usual practice, where women were expected to remain silent. It feels like we are finally being seen and heard."*

Participant 7, reflecting on the changing dynamics, stated:

> *"Things are changing slowly. We are starting to have more discussions about women's roles and rights in our community. The traditional leaders are listening more, but we still have a long way to go. Women are finding their voices, and the leaders are beginning to recognize that women have valuable contributions to make."*

She added:

> *" The widows' forum in my community was once addressed by Inkosi. Amakhosi have affirmed and collaborated with the widows in a community that looks down upon them."*

The narratives provided by community members reveal a progressive yet cautious evolution in the role of traditional leaders concerning gender relations. This section analyzes these findings,

integrating relevant literature and the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) perspective to offer a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.

Participant 7's narrative highlights a noticeable shift in the approach of traditional leaders towards women's issues. She observes a gradual shift in how traditional leaders interact with the community, especially concerning women's issues. This sentiment echoes the findings of Mahole (2017), who emphasises the critical role of incorporating female traditional leaders to facilitate societal progress and gender equality. This suggests an evolving recognition of women's contributions within the community, aligning with Akala (2018), who discusses the need for traditional leadership structures to adapt and support gender-inclusive practices. However, the acknowledgement of progress being slow indicates the persistence of deep-rooted gender biases that still need to be comprehensively addressed.

Participant 7 also highlights the significant role traditional leaders play in affirming and collaborating with marginalised groups within the community, such as widows. This collaboration is crucial as it demonstrates traditional leaders' potential to support and uplift marginalised groups, fostering a more inclusive community environment. Mawere et al. (2021) emphasise the importance of traditional leaders in mediating social issues and supporting vulnerable groups, which is reflected in this narrative.

The narratives from Participant 7 and others illustrate a cautious yet significant shift towards more inclusive gender relations within Jozini Local Municipality. Traditional leaders are beginning to recognize the importance of women's contributions and are taking steps to involve them more actively in community affairs. However, as highlighted, there is still a long way to go to achieve full gender inclusion. Integrating insights from Mahole (2017), Akala (2018), and Mawere et al. (2021) provide a comprehensive understanding of the ongoing transformation and the potential for further progress. Traditional leaders, by embracing more inclusive practices, can play a pivotal role in fostering a more equitable and just community.

5.5 Traditional Leaders' Strategies for Addressing Gender Relations

This theme discusses the strategies adopted by traditional leaders in addressing gender-related issues in Jozini Local Municipality. The discussion aligns with Objective 3 of the study, which

examines strategies used by traditional leaders in addressing gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality. The following sub-themes were identified: mediation, fines, application of the law, raising awareness and implementing programmes, enforcing government legislation, restoring traditional culture and values, and gender slots in traditional leaders' meetings.

5.5.1 Mediation

Mediation was one of the most cited strategies used by most of the traditional leaders and *Amakhosi* interviewed. Consequently, Participants 4 and 5 stated that:

> *"Izinduna initiate conversations with conflicted couples, emphasising a non-punitive approach distinct from the legal system. Acknowledging the limitations of Amakhosi in handling certain cases, particularly those involving intimate matters, the senior traditional leader encourages parties to seek mediation at his office. He emphasises understanding both perspectives, striving for acknowledgement of mistakes and facilitating reconciliation for peaceful coexistence"* (Participant 4, Traditional Leader).

Other participants also highlighted the same strategy of mediation being employed not only at the community leadership level but also among families.

> *"If the man and woman of the house, father and mother, have disagreed, we used to meet as trustworthy men with the father, and trustworthy women used to meet with the wife, we used to speak to them and advise them"* (Participant 5, Community Member).

The narratives of Participant 4 shed light on the proactive approach taken by traditional leaders in South Africa to address GBV within their communities. Induna, as highlighted by Participant 4, initiates dialogues with conflicted couples, prioritising reconciliation over punishment. This is consistent with the Traditional Courts Act No. 9 of 2022 which promotes and preserves "values which are based on reconciliation and restorative justice" (Republic of South Africa, 2022, p.8). This restorative-centric strategy prioritises community and family unity, harmony

and social cohesion. In this sense, the traditional leader's role extends beyond immediate dispute resolution to protect the community's well-being and address issues impacting the broader social fabric (Kululanga et al., 2011).

The ABCD framework provides a valuable lens for understanding these mediation strategies. Leveraging existing community assets, such as the influence and respect commanded by traditional leaders, becomes instrumental in transforming gender relations towards greater equity. Mediation efforts not only resolve disputes but also contribute to creating an environment where both women and men can participate in community development, fostering understanding and resolution (Zamisa & Mutereko, 2019). Scholars like Nelms and Gorski (2006) emphasise the pivotal role of traditional leaders in advocating for social mobilisation within communities. This entails their ability to engage people through dialogue within their communities. In addition, the work of Sakeah et al. (2014) highlights the significance of community participation in advocating for successful community solutions, aligning with the narrative of traditional leaders promoting reconciliation and community harmony. Furthermore, the narratives align with the findings of Kartika and Agustiya, (2023), which analyse the role of traditional leaders in implementing health policies at the community level. The emphasis on community leaders' role in nurturing relationships and fostering community harmony resonates with the commitment to maintaining social cohesion in the broader social fabric of the community (Sato, 2021).

5.5.2 Fining

It was established that fines were implemented when community members violate the regulations of traditional communities. The strategy of fining people when they have done wrong is still prevalent in some traditional communities. Three of the participants interviewed had this to say:

> *"These are rural areas and nothing else works besides to fine people, so that is what Inkosi does. If you have done wrong, you get a fine in the form of a cow, and a cow is not cheap, so people are scared of getting fined, so they behave appropriately"* (Participant 8, Community Member).

Participant 4 shared similar sentiments:

> *"In this instance, the penalty will be in the form of a cow. The cow will remain with you (suspended sentence), but if there is a recurrence of violence, we will claim ownership of the cow. This approach is designed to make the individual contemplate their actions, even if they lack the financial means to pay the fine initially, prompting improved behaviour"* (Participant 4, Traditional Leader).

Similarly, Participant 2 stated:

> *"A fine in the shape of a cow is imposed; you are obligated to pay it, and if you're unable to, arrangements can be made through your parents to settle the penalty. These are the consequences individuals must confront"* (Participant 2, Traditional Leader).

Participant 2 further emphasised that:

> *"The imposition of fines helps to prevent repeated offences. People think twice before acting against communal norms because they know the repercussions are immediate and tangible. This system of fines is deeply embedded in our traditional governance, ensuring that everyone understands their responsibilities to each other and the collective"* (Participant 2, Traditional Leader).

The practice of imposing fines in the form of a cow for wrongdoings as described by the participants, including GBV-related transgressions and assault, illustrates a unique interplay between traditional leadership practices and gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality. This practice, deeply rooted in the historical contexts of traditional leadership as outlined by Koenane (2017), reflects the enduring influence of pre-colonial governance systems where traditional leaders wield significant authority over sociopolitical and economic matters.

Scholars like Logan (2013) have critiqued traditional authority, arguing that it places the community above the individual and may be viewed as anti-democratic. However, the practice

of imposing fines in traditional communities, as observed in Jozini, can be seen as a mechanism to maintain social cohesion and uphold communal norms (Koenane, 2017). The fines serve as a deterrent, prompting individuals to reflect on their actions and potentially modify their behaviour, contributing to community harmony and order. Moreover, the work of Strebel et al. (2006) highlights the prevalence of GBV in communities and its link to broader societal issues such as unemployment, poverty, and alcohol abuse. The fines imposed for wrongdoings, including cases of violence, aim to address such behaviours and promote adherence to communal norms, emphasising the collective responsibility of community members (Koenane, 2017). The practice of imposing fines in the form of a cow for transgressions within traditional communities reflects a complex interplay between traditional leadership, cultural norms, and community values. While some scholars may critique such practices as anti-democratic, the fines serve as a mechanism to maintain social order, uphold communal norms, and foster community cohesion. The integration of traditional practices with contemporary perspectives underscores the dynamic nature of governance and social regulation within traditional settings.

5.5.3 Application of the Law

As mentioned earlier, the findings also demonstrate that serious cases of GBV are reported to the SAPS. Accordingly, Participant 4 states that:

> *"…and if it seems like he doesn't understand and does not stop the abuse, that's where we say to the survivor of violence, go and open a case, we have tried meditating and fixing the home so we are now taking the route that if it happens and he hits her again, you, as the survivor of violence, we ask that you file a case, or you can come to us and we will call the police"* (Participant 4, Traditional Leader).

This is in line with Participant 6's view:

> *"Cases of abuse and rape usually go straight to the police; we don't even listen to them because a case of abuse or rape is the same as a case of blood [murder]. We acknowledge that this is a very serious crime and cannot be resolved within us.*

However, we avail ourselves in any possible way to assist the police" (Participant 6, Traditional Leader).

The narratives provided by Participants 4 and 6 reveal the intricate dynamics of handling gender-based violence (GBV) within traditional communities. The approach of traditional leaders in addressing GBV highlights the limitations and responsibilities they recognise in their roles. These leaders acknowledge the gravity of serious GBV cases and the necessity of involving formal law enforcement to ensure justice and safety for survivors.

Participant 4 illustrates a clear protocol followed by traditional leaders when dealing with persistent abusers. This emphasises the initial efforts made by traditional leaders to mediate and resolve domestic issues within the community framework, but also the decisive step to involve the South African Police Service (SAPS) when these efforts fail. The recognition that persistent abuse warrants police intervention aligns with broader legal and human rights frameworks that prioritise the protection of individuals from violence (Phiri, 2011).

Similarly, Participant 6 emphasises the seriousness with which cases of abuse and rape are treated. This perspective reflects a critical understanding within traditional leadership that certain crimes, particularly those involving violence and severe harm, fall outside their jurisdiction and require formal legal processes. By comparing abuse and rape to murder, Participant 6 highlights the severity of these crimes and the necessity of addressing them through established legal channels to ensure appropriate legal consequences and protection for victims (Wittmann, 2016).

The involvement of traditional leaders in reporting and supporting the prosecution of GBV cases resonates with the theoretical underpinnings of community-based interventions and the ABCD framework. ABCD emphasises leveraging existing community assets to address local issues. (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993). Traditional leaders, as respected and influential figures within their communities, play a crucial role in bridging the gap between customary practices and formal legal systems. Their proactive stance in serious GBV cases serves as a valuable community asset, reinforcing the importance of legal accountability while providing support to survivors.

Furthermore, the narratives indicate a collaborative approach where traditional leaders work alongside formal institutions to ensure comprehensive support for GBV survivors (Wittmann, 2016). This collaboration is essential in contexts where cultural practices may initially discourage external intervention. The willingness of traditional leaders to involve the police underlines a significant shift towards recognising the importance of formal justice systems in addressing GBV, aligning with broader efforts to harmonise customary law with national legal standards.

5.5.4 Raising Awareness and Implementing GBV Programmes

Raising awareness and implementing programmes were some strategies that were suggested by participants, of which some are already being implemented and done in some communities.

Hence, Participants 2, 3, 5, 6, 8 and 1 state that:

> *"As I said before, people need to be informed about GBV. People are not well informed enough; some don't even know what that is. So, if people would be informed, I think that would assist"* (Participant 8, Community Member).

Following the above, Participant 3 indicated that:

> *"I suggested establishing a committee, comprising older men who were warriors in the late senior traditional leader's era. This committee would provide a platform for mutual advice and guidance. The idea is to have the older men counsel young boys, while women would guide young girls, ensuring a firm approach to reinforce cultural norms. This mentorship process aims to revive and uphold our cultural values, with peer advice playing a crucial role in shaping the behaviour of young individuals"* (Participant 3, Traditional Leader).

In affirmation of this, Participant 6 indicated that:

> *"We have home-based caregivers who visit families in communities. I ask them to assess cases of abuse and report them [to me]. In every community, we've asked a traditional leader to have a leader of young men to discuss with them the abuse of*

children, grandmothers, and other related issues. Then we have an Iqhikiza who cares for the maidens who attend the Zulu reed dance. We sometimes talk to her to see if the children are well and without any issues. We met with COGTA to tell us about our work" (Participant 6, Traditional Leader).

In a traditional leader's perspective, it was stated that:

> *"There is a community event that we had this year. We have agreed to say that when I deliver my speeches as a leader, I include GBV awareness for people to get along well at home"* (Participant 1, Traditional Leader).

Another traditional leader suggested that:

> *"Yes, there are, and the councillor can advise on that. We emphasise that before you have an event, there are Amaqhikiza who guard the young maidens, and there is the Inkosi of the young men. We ensure that young men when a cow is slaughtered, sit down, and advise the boys and the girls before they go to see the King of the Zulu nation. They are advised on how to behave and stuff like that. For example, if you are taken for marriage as a woman, this is how you should behave as a young girl and this is how you should behave when you have come to the stage where you want to start dating"* (Participant 2, Traditional Leader).

Moreover, Participant 5 lamented that:

> *"There is an existing Men's Forum. The forum was initiated by the Inkosi, who recognized the necessity for a dedicated space where men could openly discuss and reflect upon their roles within both their families and the broader community. One of the forum's early sessions focused on the traditional responsibilities of men and how these have been impacted by modern societal changes. The forum also addressed sensitive issues such as gender-based violence and the harmful effects of rigid gender roles"* (Participant 5, Traditional Leader).

The narratives from participants in Jozini reveal diverse strategies aimed at addressing GBV and fostering positive gender relations. Participant 8 echoes the necessity for awareness, thus reiterating the lack of understanding among individuals regarding GBV issues. As noted in the work of Johnson et al. (2020) and Smith (2019), this highlights the significance of educational initiatives and awareness campaigns to empower the community with knowledge about such matters. Educational programmes are essential in providing the community with the necessary information to understand and combat GBV, promoting a more informed and proactive approach to these issues.

Participant 3 proposes the formation of a committee comprising older men, drawing parallels with the traditional practice of amaqhikiza, women who socialise with other women in the community's way of life. This committee aims to provide mutual advice and guidance, reinforcing cultural norms through mentorship and acknowledging the influential role of peer advice in shaping youth behaviour. This reflects the importance of leveraging existing cultural practices to foster positive change within the community. The idea is to create a support system that guides young men through the wisdom and experience of their elders, similar to how amaqhikiza guide younger women, thereby promoting responsible and respectful behaviour.

Additionally, Participant 5 discusses the establishment of a Men's Forum initiated by the Inkosi. The forum provides a dedicated space where men can openly discuss and reflect upon their roles within both their families and the broader community. One of the forum's early sessions focused on the traditional responsibilities of men and how these have been impacted by modern societal changes. The forum also addressed sensitive issues such as GBV and the harmful effects of rigid gender roles. This initiative demonstrates the proactive role traditional leaders can play in addressing gender issues by creating platforms for dialogue and reflection, which can lead to a deeper understanding and transformation of harmful practices.

The strategies discussed by the participants reflect a multifaceted approach to addressing GBV and promoting gender equality. By combining educational initiatives, mentorship programs, and forums for open dialogue, the community leverages both traditional and modern methods to create a comprehensive strategy for positive change. This aligns with the findings of scholars like Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) and Mathie and Cunningham (2003) who emphasise the importance of building on existing community assets to drive development and improve social

outcomes. By recognising and utilising the strengths within the community, these initiatives foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for addressing gender relations.

The collaborative effort described by Participant 6 involves home-based caregivers, traditional leaders, and community events to address abuse cases. This multi-stakeholder approach demonstrates the community's commitment to combating GBV. Traditional leaders' involvement in discussions with young individuals further underscores their role in promoting awareness and addressing gender-related issues. Participant 1 emphasises integrating GBV awareness into community events, recognising leaders' speeches as essential platforms for fostering positive social norms. This aligns with the community's approach of integrating modern and traditional systems to address GBV through education and mentorship. This is consistent with Enderstein and Boozaier. (2013) who view that in order to attain the elimination of gender-related issues, it is important to consider both modern and traditional systems.

Participant 2 highlights the mentorship role of traditional leaders rooted in cultural practices, to guide young individuals on dating, marriage, and other aspects of life. Akala (2018) and Mkhwanazi (2012) insist that this highlights the importance of leveraging traditional authority to shape gender relations. Connecting these strategies to relevant literature, the preservation of traditional practices like amaqhikiza in Jozini aligns with broader discussions on maintaining cultural continuity.

The community's proactive approach to addressing GBV through education and mentorship reflects an integration of modern and traditional systems characterised by shared responsibilities between women and men and a genuine appreciation for the voices and contributions of women. Smith (2019) asserts that the involvement of external support is crucial for traditional leaders to achieve a comprehensive level of analysis. This can only be achieved with external support. The intersectionality lens reveals the multifaceted nature of factors influencing gender relations (Enderstein & Boozaier, 2013). This perspective considers how various social categories, such as gender, sexuality, and ability, intersect and interact to shape individuals' experiences. Intersectionality is strongly evident in the analysis of the context of Jozini – location (rurality), low levels of education, gender, race, and class. This goes beyond men oppressing women (binary thinking) to interrogate the socioeconomic

environment that deepens poverty and inequality, thereby leaving some people more vulnerable than others.

5.5.5 Enforcing Government Legislation

One of the strategies used by the participants was making sure that community members have rights that protect them and ensure that they are secure should any situation arise. Consequently, Participants 4 and 2 state that:

> *"In this traditional community, I said that traditional marriage also works, I even give them a letter as proof of traditional marriage so that the ones from Johannesburg [spouses from the cities] don't take everything [from spouses in Jozini]. We discussed this and there have been amendments, even though they haven't come out yet"* (Participant 4, Traditional Leader).

In accordance, participant 2 highlighted that:

> *"As Inkosi, I just made a law that if there are job opportunities, people from ages 18-35 will be the first to get a job, and there will be more women. That's the law I made as the traditional leader of this community is that when tenders are issued, the people who are hired, 100% or at least 50% should come from our community and 20% of those hired should be the youth, women, and the disabled and the elderly, that's just the law that exists in our community"* (Participant 2, Traditional Leader).

Participant 4 places significant emphasis on the institution of traditional marriage and the protection of the assets of women living in rural communities while their spouses work in big cities. The practice of issuing letters as proof of traditional marriage aligns with the provisions of the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act of 1998 in South Africa (RSA, 1998) Section 11 (iii), which states that traditional leaders may participate in providing proof of the existence of the customary marriage. This legislative framework, particularly sections 4 and 5, recognises marriages conducted according to indigenous African customs and bestows legal status upon customary marriages. The utilisation of such legal instruments emphasises the influential role

of traditional leaders, as exemplified by Participant 4. Section 4 of the Act mandates the registration of customary marriages, thereby offering women legal protection and validating their marital status (Bennett, 2004).

Ongoing discussions about potential amendments indicate a continuous effort to align traditional practices with formal legal frameworks (RSA, 1998). This dialogue resonates with the broader discourse on the evolving role of traditional leaders in navigating the legal landscape (Mamdani, 2000). By referencing the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, we see how traditional leaders engage with and enforce statutory laws, thus playing a pivotal role in the intersection of customary and formal legal systems. This integration of empirical data with the literature highlights the intricate legal terrain traditional leaders must traverse. This uncovers the evolving nature of their role in contemporary society (Bennett, 2005). The involvement of traditional leaders in the administration and enforcement of the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act exemplifies their critical role in bridging customary and statutory legal frameworks. As stated by Phiri (2011) and Mwambene (2017), this practice not only protects the rights of women but also emphasises the dynamic and evolving role of traditional leaders in modern South African society.

In parallel, Participant 2 sheds light on his role in enforcing laws aimed at addressing unemployment and fostering inclusivity in job opportunities within the community. The laws referenced, particularly those related to job allocation, illustrate the intersection of traditional authority and governance in shaping local policies. The explicit focus on prioritising youth, women, the disabled and the elderly in job allocations aligns with broader initiatives aimed at rectifying historical inequalities and advancing social justice. This showcases a proactive approach by traditional leaders in leveraging their authority for the promotion of healthy gender relations. A critical engagement with the efforts of Participants 2 and 4 in job creation reveals the potential impact of traditional leaders in addressing economic challenges within their communities. Ultimately, both participants demonstrate that Amakhosi authenticate the role of traditional leadership in fostering social cohesion in communities. They execute national laws to prioritise young people, women, and people with disabilities for job opportunities while protecting the rights of women in customary marriages. In this way, Amakhosi act as custodians of cultural heritage and conduits of internal and external resources, thereby linking the community to national imperatives. Information that would otherwise take a long time to

reach people in a deep, remote rural community is accessible through traditional leadership structures.

5.5.6 Restoring Traditional Cultures and Values

The findings indicate that there has been a distinct shift from the traditional ways of doing things to modern approaches. Participants expressed concerns about the loss of fundamental traditional cultures and values.

In this regard, Participant 1 posited that:

> *"If we could just go back, morals are important, women back then had morals, and even men made sure that they didn't sleep with someone that they were not married to. They made sure that they would do thigh sex, so they don't get a child. Not this thing of having a child here and a child there. So, in the beginning, that was avoidable for girls and boys, there used to be a man advising young boys and women advising young girls"* (Participant 1, Traditional Leader).

Participant 1 went on to share his personal experience:

> *"Every afternoon, we would sit with my father or grandfather, mother, and grandmother while the girls were in the kitchen. Older people would teach us how to be a man by providing information that was appropriate for our age group. You can see now that you are at this stage and what you need to learn is given little by little until you grow up. So, those are some of the things that are no longer there and that has caused the world to be what it is"* (Participant 1. Traditional Leader).

Additionally, participant 1 proceeded to unveil that:

> *"Here, women are not allowed to wear trousers, we're not [as men] allowed to wear a hat [inside a house]., We're still trying to follow that tradition, but right now some organisations can stop that saying we're taking away people's rights. They are changing our culture and who we are. So those things are good habits*

that were done, they held us together and taught us discipline" (Participant 1, Traditional Leader).

However, Participant 10 offered a divergent view while reflecting on her personal experience of *ukungenwa*. She maintained that traditional practices were less favourable to women in the olden days:

> *"Comparatively speaking, life is much better now for women because of how the laws and communities have changed. Women are now protected from certain cultural practices such as "ukungenwa"* (Participant 10, Community Member).

Furthermore, Participant 2 shared insights into the efforts of traditional leaders to promote job inclusivity within the community. He stated:

> *"Traditional leaders have been at the forefront of promoting laws and policies that ensure everyone, regardless of gender and age, has access to job opportunities. This proactive stance has significantly contributed to our community's development. By advocating for inclusive employment practices, traditional leaders are not only preserving our cultural heritage but also driving economic growth and social stability"* (Participant 2, Traditional Leader).

Participants 1 and 10 denote the value of revisiting cultural practices, with Participant 1 highlighting traditional moral guidance for discipline. Participant 2 discusses the promotion of laws for job inclusivity to showcase traditional leaders' proactive role in community development. However, Participant 10 presents a contrasting view, which recognises improvements in women's lives through evolving laws and challenging the idealisation of all past cultural practices. These findings emphasise the intricate interplay between tradition, legislation, and governance, highlighting the nuanced approach needed in navigating cultural preservation and societal adaptation. Most importantly, culture is dynamic and forever evolving, not static.

The narratives offer an exploration of the impact of traditional practices on moral values, cultural identity, and the status of women within the community. Participant 1 reflects on the

erosion of traditional moral values which aligns with scholarly discussions on the role of culture in shaping societal norms (Ndlovu, 2008). The emphasis on imparting wisdom through intergenerational guidance echoes the literature on the transmission of cultural values and knowledge within communities (Mwambene, 2017). However, it is essential to note that the perceived decline in moral values may also be influenced by selective memory and idealisation of the past (Kruuse, 2017).

Participant 10, who is directly affected by ukungenwa, reveals a crucial dimension by highlighting the positive impact of evolving laws and community dynamics on women's well-being. This resonates with the global discourse on women's rights and the ongoing efforts to challenge harmful cultural practices (Sen, 2001). The mention of ukungenwa aligns with studies addressing harmful cultural practices affecting women and the importance of legal interventions in protecting their rights. The divergent views presented by Participant 10 underscore the need for a nuanced analysis. The notion that cultural practices have both positive and negative aspects aligns with cultural relativism to understand practices within their cultural context (Hett, 2022). This analytical engagement acknowledges the multifaceted nature of cultural practices and their varying impacts on different individuals.

Participant 1's mention of preserving cultural traditions for societal discipline aligns with discussions on cultural appreciation contributing to social order and development. This is supported by Ndlovu (2008) who contends that traditional values play a crucial role in fostering social cohesion and stability, which are essential for the long-term development and functioning of societies. Moreover, in the context of traditional leadership and gender relations, there is a need to recognise that solutions must be tailored to address the unique challenges faced by diverse groups within the community, as the preliminary themes demonstrate that not everyone agrees with the view that emphasises the significance of cultural continuity. Specifically, the themes of gender inclusivity and resistance to change highlight varying perspectives within the community. Some people advocate for the abolition of monarchies, while others regard them as symbols of historical and cultural identity. The ABCD approach, as described by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), complements this by encouraging the identification and mobilisation of community assets such as local knowledge, cultural practices, and social networks, to promote gender relations. This approach aligns with the findings on the enduring significance of traditional leaders in local communities, indicating

their influence as catalysts for positive change in gender relations. As Mathie and Cunningham (2003) further elaborate, the ABCD approach focuses on leveraging existing strengths within the community to drive development and improve social outcomes.

Overall, the Traditional Courts Act of 2022 makes provision for promoting gender relations through its guiding principles that align with the South African Constitution. It highlights unfair systemic discrimination, "particularly in respect of gender, sex, including intersex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, language, marital status and race, as a result of unfair discrimination, certain belief systems and harmful practices" (Republic of South Africa, 2022, p.8). This observation compels traditional communities to embrace constitutional values. However, Dalia (2022) notes the challenges associated with privileging individual rights above the community in customary laws and further critiques all laws governing traditional communities as Eurocentric. This demonstrates that while the Traditional Courts Act is a welcome development in advancing human rights, its interpretation and application will likely remain contested for some time.

5.6 Overall Discussion

Jozini is a rural community situated far from economic opportunities. As a result, poverty and unemployment affect both women and men alike. Traditional leaders, as people of significant influence and custodians of cultural heritage, play an important role in prioritising job opportunities for young people, women, and people living with disabilities, in line with the objectives of the national government's National Development Plan (NDP). While traditional leadership structures have brought about law and order, they still privilege men over women. The fact that families rather than communities determine traditional leadership positions perpetuates this imbalance. Moreover, women appointed to serve in governance structures often face challenges due to the lack of funds to attend meetings. Hence, they are replaced by Izinduna who are predominantly male, as they receive monthly salaries from the government to sustain themselves. Monthly salaries provided by the government place Amakhosi and Izinduna in a position of dependence, which undermines their agency and autonomy in decision-making.

In light of this reality, the intersectionality of gender, location, and class is pronounced in Jozini due to the following reasons: 1) the socioeconomic environment of Jozini, characterised by poverty and unemployment due to its isolation from economic centres, affects all community members, women and men; 2) lack of financial resources, due to unemployment, makes it difficult for some women to actively participate in traditional councils; 3) modern traditional leaders are as financially dependent on the government as the people they lead. The intersectionality framework demonstrates that poverty and unemployment influence gender relations in Jozini, and women are disproportionately affected. Women are unable to participate in governance roles within traditional councils as they cannot cover their travel costs. In a community where this was reported, Izinduna are exclusively male. Women end up dominating amabandla ncane, which are grassroots structures with limited influence in terms of decision-making. All those interviewed, including women, did not express negative sentiments regarding the absence of women in leadership roles. The financial support received from the government leaves traditional leaders in a dilemma, making it difficult for them to exercise their agency. Taken together, the findings suggest that while traditional leaders exercise some level of power to promote gender relations, their influence is limited by the realities of the location and people's lived experiences of poverty and unemployment.

5.7 Summary

This chapter presented and discussed the findings of a study conducted in Jozini Local Municipality to understand the role of traditional leadership in addressing gender relations. The findings highlight the complexities and transformations traditional leadership has undergone, especially concerning gender dynamics. The significant role played by traditional leaders in contemporary society was demonstrated. They are not just custodians of cultural heritage but pivotal agents in promoting gender relations and addressing GBV. Through the lenses of intersectionality and the ABCD theory, the chapter illustrates how traditional leaders actively engage in discussions about gender issues and leverage their influential positions within communities. This contributes to reshaping societal norms and fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment for all genders. This aligns with national and international commitments to demonstrate the potential of traditional leadership to drive positive societal change. The subsequent chapter provides the conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter Six: Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as the culmination of an investigation into the role that traditional leadership plays in ensuring that fair gender relations are fostered, especially in the communities they govern, and particularly in the rural areas. This chapter first reiterates the research objectives. Secondly, it delves into the summary of findings. In this regard, the study sheds light on the unique contributions made to knowledge within specific contextual, theoretical, and methodological considerations. Within the contextual landscape of Jozini, the findings offer nuanced insights into how traditional leadership practices impact gender dynamics. The theoretical underpinning, grounded in the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) and Intersectionality frameworks, enriches our understanding of the complex interplay of factors influencing gender relations. Methodological considerations further enhance the robustness of the findings, ensuring a comprehensive examination of the subject matter. In conclusion, this chapter synthesises the key discoveries, acknowledging the limitations inherent in the study, and subsequently proposes actionable recommendations aimed at informing policy, practice, and future research endeavours in the realm of traditional leadership and gender relations.

6.2 Realisation of the Objectives

The study objectives collectively framed the inquiry, guiding the research toward a holistic comprehension of the roles, perceptions, and strategies employed by traditional leaders, thus laying the groundwork for the subsequent synthesis of findings in this Chapter. The study objectives successfully managed this task through the following:

6.2.1 To understand traditional leaders' perspectives on their role in fostering gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality

The first objective sought to unravel traditional leaders' perspectives on their role in shaping gender dynamics. Through in-depth interviews, the study delved into the nuanced viewpoints

of traditional leaders, providing rich insights into their beliefs, practices, and challenges in influencing gender relations.

6.2.2 To establish people's perceptions of the role of traditional leaders in fostering gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality

The second objective focused on understanding the broader community's perceptions of traditional leaders' roles in this context. Interviews and community engagements facilitated the capture of diverse viewpoints, revealing the multifaceted nature of public perceptions of traditional leadership and gender relations.

6.2.3 To examine strategies used by traditional leaders in addressing gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality

The third objective aimed to scrutinise the strategies employed by traditional leaders in addressing gender relations. Through a combination of interviews, observations, and document analysis, the study unveiled a spectrum of strategies, offering a comprehensive understanding of the approaches taken by traditional leaders in navigating the complex terrain of gender dynamics within Jozini Local Municipality.

6.3 Summary of the Findings and Contribution to Knowledge

6.3.1 Contextual Considerations

In revisiting the context of the study within Jozini Local Municipality, a rich tapestry of socioeconomic challenges emerged, painting a vivid backdrop to the exploration of traditional leadership and gender relations. Nestled in the heart of rural South Africa, Jozini faces a myriad of pressing concerns that intricately shape the lived experiences of its inhabitants. The primary concerns reverberate around fundamental needs such as employment, access to food, and securing water for agricultural endeavours. Within this context, the immediacy of these challenges often supersedes other societal issues, positioning them as the primary focus of the community. The intricate interplay of socioeconomic struggles and their implications on the

community's priorities formed a critical lens through which traditional leadership's role in fostering gender relations was examined.

The socioeconomic challenges faced by the community served as a lens to understand why addressing gender relations might be perceived as a secondary concern. The struggle for necessities has entrenched itself as the primary preoccupation, relegating issues of gender relations to a status that is viewed as a luxury the community cannot afford. As the study unfolded, it became evident that comprehending the priorities of the community is pivotal for any intervention or policy formulation related to gender dynamics. The nuanced understanding of these contextual considerations contributes significantly to knowledge by unravelling the intricate ways in which the community's socioeconomic context shapes their perceptions and priorities, providing valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars engaged in community development and gender-focused initiatives.

In essence, the contextual considerations underscore that initiatives addressing gender relations should be contextually embedded, acknowledging the existing socioeconomic realities. The study thus illuminates the imperative of adopting a holistic and context-specific approach in crafting interventions aimed at fostering fair gender relations within rural communities like Jozini.

6.3.2 Theoretical Considerations

Revisiting the theoretical framework of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) and Intersectionality illuminates the depth of insights gained throughout the study. The ABCD framework emphasises community strengths and people’s capabilities. This was useful in examining how traditional leaders leverage existing community assets in fostering gender relations. The study unfolded a narrative where traditional leaders acting as community anchors drew upon inherent strengths within the community to address gender dynamics. For instance, communal support structures were identified as crucial assets that traditional leaders tapped into, reinforcing the importance of recognising and fortifying community assets in fostering fair gender relations.

Moreover, the Intersectionality Framework deepened our understanding of the complex interplay of social identities and power dynamics within the community. It was established that certain social groups within Jozini faced heightened vulnerabilities to GBV. The framework facilitated an exploration of overlapping identities such as gender, class, and ethnicity, revealing how individuals at the intersection of multiple marginalised identities experienced compounded challenges. This understanding contributes significantly to knowledge in order to tailor interventions to acknowledge and address the unique vulnerabilities faced by specific groups within the community. Therefore, the selected theoretical framework served as a guiding compass, steering the inquiry toward a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationships between traditional leadership, community assets, and the intersecting social identities that shape gender dynamics. It emerged that the ABCD framework empowered the study to uncover the latent potential within the community, while the Intersectionality Framework shed light on the varying degrees of vulnerability experienced by different social groups. This combined theoretical approach deepened not only scholarly understanding but also holds practical implications for designing contextually relevant interventions aimed at fostering fair gender relations within the unique sociocultural landscape of Jozini.

6.4 Methodological Considerations

The study design and methodology resonate with the research objectives to elucidate the role of traditional leadership in fostering gender relations within Jozini Local Municipality. The selected research design facilitated an understanding of the experiences and perspectives of traditional leaders and community members. In this sense, the study acknowledged the significance of local structures and systems in influencing gender dynamics, thereby emphasising the significance of a qualitative research approach.

The methodological choice of purposive sampling emerged as a key consideration. The deliberate selection of traditional leaders and community members, based on their knowledge and experience, ensured a targeted and insightful exploration of the research questions. By involving individuals likely to provide relevant information, the study captured a comprehensive understanding of the role of traditional leadership in promoting gender relations in the municipality. The sample size of 11 participants, including traditional leaders and

community members, ensured depth and richness in the qualitative data for a nuanced analysis of the intricate dynamics at play.

The collaboration with local NGOs underscores the community-centric ethos of the research. This collaborative effort not only facilitated participant recruitment but also demonstrated a commitment to community engagement and ethical research practices. The involvement of key informants who possess a deep understanding of community dynamics aligned with the methodological framework to reiterate the importance of gathering insights from individuals within the community.

Furthermore, the utilisation of semi-structured interviews and observation as data collection methods strengthened the methodological rigour. These approaches created a space for in-depth qualitative discussions with traditional leaders, TC members, and community members providing a rich source of information on their roles and interactions. The inclusion of desktop data, drawing from the existing literature, complemented the primary data collection, offering a holistic understanding that combined insights from both the present study and a broader academic discourse. In summary, the methodological considerations highlight a strategic and contextually embedded approach, which ensured that the research design aligned with the objectives of the study. The combination of purposive sampling, collaboration with local stakeholders, and diverse data collection methods contributed to the robustness and relevance of the research within the unique sociocultural landscape of Jozini Local Municipality.

6.5 Conclusion

This comprehensive study embarked on a journey to delve into the intricate dynamics of gender relations within Jozini Local Municipality, placing a particular emphasis on the role of traditional leaders. The significance of this research extends beyond a mere examination of gender roles. It intricately weaves together a multifaceted situation, encompassing hierarchical structures, challenges in gender inclusion, and responses to GBV. The investigation conscientiously delved into the historical context, laying bare the deeply entrenched male predominance within traditional leadership structures. This historical lens acknowledge norms that historically limited the participation of women, setting the stage for understanding the complexities of fostering inclusive and democratic gender relations within these structures. The

primary objective was to illuminate the nuanced tension between historical traditions and the evolving dynamics within the community.

The theoretical framework guiding this exploration adopted a nuanced approach, intertwining the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) theory and the Intersectionality Framework. The ABCD provided a comprehensive lens, enabling a profound understanding of traditional leaders' potential as catalysts for gender equality by recognising the historical strengths and roles of women. In parallel, the Intersectionality Framework revealed the interconnected nature of social categorizations, emphasising the imperative need for culturally sensitive and community-driven approaches to foster substantive equality in roles and responsibilities. The chosen methodology enriched the study, employing qualitative interviews with traditional leaders and community members, thereby capturing a diverse array of perspectives, and lived experiences.

The unveiled findings illuminated a complex interplay between formal policies, practical challenges, and community-driven initiatives in the pursuit of gender inclusivity within traditional leadership frameworks. Despite facing formidable challenges, traditional leaders showcased a commendable commitment to condemning gender-based violence, thereby challenging prevailing stereotypes that portrayed them as perpetrators of gender inequality. The study's richness lay in its revelation of the diverse strategies employed by traditional leaders, ranging from traditional conflict resolution methods such as mediation and fining to more modern approaches like applying the law, raising awareness, implementing programmes, and enforcing government legislation. This multifaceted approach underscored the intricate balancing act required in addressing gender-related issues.

The exploration into the restoration of traditional cultures and values provided profound insights into the impact of cultural practices on moral values and the status of women within the community. Participants' narratives echoed a nuanced understanding of both the positive and negative aspects of cultural practices within their specific context. Furthermore, the inclusion of gender-related discussions in traditional leaders' meetings signalled an awareness of the complex layers of identity and power dynamics at play in gender relations. This alignment with national and international commitments to gender equality highlighted the potential of traditional leaders to serve as agents of change.

In summary, this study has not only contributed valuable insights but has also laid bare the multifaceted realm of traditional leadership and gender relations within Jozini Local Municipality. The findings underscore the pivotal role of traditional leaders as shapers of societal norms, mediators of disputes, and contributors to overall welfare. Despite the inherent challenges, traditional leaders emerge as potential advocates for positive change and the fostering of more inclusive and equitable gender relations within their communities. The clarion call is for nuanced, context-specific approaches that leverage traditional leadership structures, incorporate modern strategies, and actively involve the community in driving positive change towards gender relations. This study stands as a testament to the complexities inherent in unravelling gender dynamics and serves as a beacon to guide future endeavours in this critical arena.

6.6 Recommendations

6.6.1 Policymakers and Government Officials

For policymakers and government officials, the following recommendations emerge from the comprehensive findings of this study:

(a) **Review and Strengthen Gender Policies**

Policymakers should critically review existing policies, especially those related to traditional leadership structures such as the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 41 of 2003. The study highlights variations in the implementation of policies due to socioeconomic challenges and gender-based disparities. Strengthening these policies and ensuring their effective implementation can contribute to fostering more inclusive gender relations within traditional councils.

(b) **Economic Empowerment Initiatives**

Recognizing the dynamic interplay between formal policies and economic constraints, policymakers should design and implement economic empowerment initiatives targeting women in Jozini Local Municipality. These initiatives should be tailored to

address the specific challenges faced by women in the community to enhance their economic independence.

(c) **Education and Awareness Programmes**

Policymakers should invest in education and awareness programmes aimed at both traditional leaders and community members. These programmes should challenge stereotypes, promote gender equality, and highlight the importance of women's participation in leadership roles. By addressing misconceptions and fostering understanding, policymakers can contribute to a more supportive environment for gender inclusivity.

(d) **Support for Alternative Leadership Structures**

Acknowledging the potential for alternative leadership structures, policymakers should explore ways to support and integrate these structures within the broader traditional leadership system. This could involve providing resources, training, and recognition to leaders within specific villages who are working towards more inclusive and democratic gender relations.

(e) **Collaboration with Traditional Leaders**

Policymakers should actively collaborate with traditional leaders in the development and implementation of gender-related initiatives. Recognizing the commitment of traditional leaders to condemn gender-based violence, policymakers can leverage this partnership to create more effective strategies and interventions to address gender inequalities.

6.6.2 Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study open avenues for future research that can deepen our understanding of traditional leadership and gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality. Recommendations for further research include:

(a) **Longitudinal Studies**

Conducting longitudinal studies to track changes in gender relations over time can provide insights into the effectiveness of interventions and the evolving dynamics within traditional leadership structures. Understanding the long-term impact of policies and initiatives is crucial for designing sustainable interventions.

(b) **In-Depth Village-Level Studies**

While this study provides a broad overview, future research could focus on in-depth village-level studies to capture the nuances and variations within specific communities. This approach would provide an analysis of the impact of traditional leadership on gender relations and the effectiveness of community-driven initiatives.

(c) **Comparative Studies**

Comparative studies across different municipalities or regions can contribute to a broader understanding of the role of traditional leaders in shaping gender dynamics. Comparisons with areas that have implemented different policies or interventions can offer valuable insights into what works in specific contexts.

(d) **Exploration of Cultural Practices**

Further research can delve deeper into the impact of specific cultural practices on gender relations. Understanding the positive and negative aspects of these practices, as perceived by community members, can inform culturally sensitive interventions aimed at reshaping gender roles.

(e) **Evaluation of Economic Empowerment Programmes**

Future research can focus on evaluating the impact of economic empowerment programmes on women's status within the community. This could involve assessing the effectiveness of specific initiatives, identifying challenges, and exploring innovative approaches to enhance economic opportunities for women.

Policymakers and researchers can contribute to a more comprehensive and targeted approach to promoting sound gender relations within the unique context of Jozini Local Municipality.

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APPENDIX ONE: Interview Guide (Community Members)

Greetings
Introductions
Rapport building
Obtaining informed consent

Section A: Demographic profiles

1. Name
2. Position
3. Gender
4. Age range:
   18 – 25
   26 – 33
   34 – 41
   42 – 49
   50 – 57
   58 – 65
   66 and older

Objective 2: To establish people's perceptions of the role of traditional leaders in gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality

2.1 Describe gender relations in your community.

2.2 Please give me scenarios, if any, of where the issue of gender caused a stir in the community.

2.3 (*We can now turn to questions focusing on your traditional leader)* Who is your traditional leader? *(To include the profile in terms of gender and age).*

2.4 Explain your traditional leader's overall responsibility.

2.5 Which role does the traditional leader play in gender relations?

2.6 Why do you think it is vital for your traditional leader to take gender relations into account in communities?

Objective 3: To examine strategies used by traditional leaders in addressing gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality

3.1 Why do traditional leaders need to address gender relations in your community?

3.2 What are some of the strategies that traditional leaders are using to address gender relations in your community? (probe for success stories)

3.3 What additional strategies would you suggest to address gender relations in your community?

Thank you for your time

Do you have any questions to ask me?

APPENDIX TWO – Interview Guide (Traditional Leaders)

Section A: Demographic profiles

1. Name
2. Gender
3. Position
4. Age range:

   18 – 25
   26 – 33
   34 – 41
   42 – 49
   50 – 57
   58 – 65
   66 and older

Section B: Interview Questions

Objective 1: To understand traditional leaders' perspectives on their role in gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality

1. Please tell me about the traditional council you lead.
2. *(if the traditional leader was appointed after the promulgation of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 41 of 2003, probe to find out if he participated in the transformation of traditional authorities).*
3. Please share the leadership structure of your traditional council (*probe to establish gender participation in governance structures*)
4. Please tell me (more) about headmen (Izinduna) under your leadership *(pay attention to gender issues)*
5. *(The primary focus of this research is to investigate your role as a traditional leader in gender relations).* What are some of the challenges that are present in this community in terms of gender relations?
6. Please tell me about specific gender-related cases reported to you. (*Note the various scenarios carefully).*

Objective 3: To examine strategies used by traditional leaders in addressing gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality

1. As a follow-up to the previous question, what strategies do you use to resolve gender-related issues in your community? *(Note carefully the different strategies. Probe for success stories).*
2. How different are these strategies from the past? (probe to see how modern strategies differ from those adopted in the past).
3. What additional strategies would you suggest to address gender relations in your community?

Thank you for your time.

Do you have any questions to ask me?

APPENDIX THREE: Informed consent

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL
For research with human participants

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

Greetings Sir/Madam

My name is Luyanda Ncengwa from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in the School of Built Environment and Development Studies.
Contact Number: [redacted]
Email addresses: 219027838@stu.ukzn.ac.za and [redacted]

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research entitled, Investigating the Role of Traditional Leadership in Fostering Gender Relations in Jozini Local Municipality. The study investigates the role that traditional leaders play in fostering gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality.

The aim and purpose of this research is to investigate the role of traditional leadership in fostering gender relations in households and communities within Jozini Local Municipality

The study is expected to enroll 14 participants in total. The sample consists of seven traditional leaders from the seven Traditional Council (TCs) that exist in Jozini that will be interviewed, and seven community members. There will be a mix between sex and age of these locals. All participants will be aged 18 and above. Data collection will be undertaken using semi structured interviews, observations, and desktop data. The interview will not exceed 1 hour and participation is entirely voluntary, with the right being reserved to withdraw participation at any time without experiencing any harmful consequences.

The findings of this investigation will assist researchers and policy makers to identify policies that could be updated or developed by relevant national government departments or institutions to include the role of traditional leaders in promoting gender relations. Should you agree to participate in this project, you are assured that the responses will be treated confidentially, and pseudonyms will be used to ensure anonymity. The information below provides further details.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSSREC/0006137/2023).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher, Luyanda Ncengwa at [redacted] (phone number), [redacted] (email

address) at or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION
Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary with the right being reserved to the participant to withdraw participation without experiencing any disadvantage. Participants are assured that the responses will be treated in a confidential manner. Pseudonyms will be used to ensure anonymity.

The data will be retained by the supervisor. It will be stored in encrypted files. Data on which any research publication is based will be retained for at least five years after publication.

CONSENT (Edit as required)

I (Name) have been informed about the study entitled (provide details) by (provide name of researcher/fieldworker).

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study (add these again if appropriate).

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at (provide details).

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus
Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview	YES / NO
Video-record my interview	YES / NO
Use of my photographs for research purposes	YES / NO

_____ _____

Signature of Participant **Date**

_____ _____

Signature of Witness **Date**
(Where applicable)

_____ _____

Signature of Translator **Date**
(Where applicable)

APPENDIX FOUR – Ethical Approval

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

02 December 2023

Luyanda Ncengwa (219027838)
School of Built Env & Dev Stud
Howard College Campus

Dear L Ncengwa,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00006137/2023
Project title: Investigating the role of traditional leadership in fostering gender relations in Jozini Local Municipality
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 05 September 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) 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.

This approval is valid until 02 December 2024.
To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 **Email:** hssrec@ukzn.ac.za **Website:** http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX FIVE – Observation Guide

Date and Time	Setting (where?)	Actions Observed (what?)	Participants (by whom?)	Reflection

Researcher: _Luyanda Ncengwa_____

Site: __Jozini Local Municipality_____