UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

Politics of women's participation and entrenched inequalities in Land Reform at Hammarsdale, Emophela

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the academic requirements for the degree of Master of Social Sciences (Political Science) in the School of Social Sciences, College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the dissertation titled: *Politics of women participation and entrenched inequalities in Land Reform at Hammarsdale, Emophela* submitted to the University of KwaZulu Natal, is my own original work and that it has not previously been submitted at any university for a degree.

Signature: ■

Date: 06 May 2021

Place: Hammarsdale, Durban

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to my late baby Mandlakanina; being pregnant with you was the reason I registered for this degree and losing you was the hardest thing I have ever experienced but it motivated me to complete it. I also dedicate this research to my late father Thulani Maxwell Cele.

Acknowledgements

"Psalm 103. Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love."

- I would like to give praise to my Lord and Savour Jesus Christ for his grace and favour over my life. The journey was not easy, but he continuously provided me with strength. I am forever grateful.

- To my mother, Mrs Busisiwe Winile Cele, my prayer warrior and pillar of strength. You have supported me more than I can imagine. I am so grateful for you and I love you so much.

- I thank my older sister Nondumiso Azokuhle Cele for the love and support. This journey would have been difficult without you. Thank you for everything I am truly grateful.

- I would like to acknowledge my brother Xolani Ngcobo, your love and support during this journey did not go unnoticed.

- To my spiritual parents Bishop S. Zondi and Lady Pastor Z. Zondi, thank you for your prayers and endless support during this journey. I am grateful for your presence in my life.

- To all my loved ones and my friends, thank you for your support. My best friend Tanzin Chonco, thank you for your love and encourage during this time.

- Special thanks to the women of Emophela for participating in this research and for respecting and encouraging me. To the late iNkosi Mkhize from the Embo/Ilanga traditional council and Sis Bongi Owusu from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, thank you for your time and dedication. The level of respect and support I received from you was remarkable. Without you, this study wouldn't have been possible

- I am also greatly indebted to my supervisor Professor J. Ndlovu for his guidance, expertise, and supervision. I am forever grateful for your assistance and for always willing to go above and beyond to assist me. Without your guidance, the quality of this dissertation would have never been completed in such a satisfactory manner.

List of Acronyms

ANC- African National Congress

AU- African Union

CRDP- Comprehensive Rural Development Programme

DLA- Department of Land Affairs

DRDLR- Department of Rural Development and Land Reform

FTLRP- Fast Track Land Reform Programme

FAO- Food and Agricultural Organization

HSSREC- Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

IFAD- International Fund for Agricultural Development

IPU- Inter-Parliamentary Union

KZN- KwaZulu Natal

LARC- Land and Accountability Research Centre

LRAD- Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development

NDA- National Development Agency

NGO- Non-Governmental Organisation

NGP- National Gender Policy

OECD- Organisation for Economic Co-operative and Development

P.T.O- Permission to Occupy

RDP- Reconstruction and Development Programme

REID- Rural Enterprise Infrastructure Development

UKZN- University of KwaZulu Natal

UN- United Nations

WCPwD- Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities

Abstract

The post-Apartheid South African government inherited a skewed and bias land discourse, which resulted from the history of land dispossession during Apartheid. The government has since tried to address the land issue through various land reform programmes. Land plays an important role in the lives of African people and contributes immensely to their livelihood. The slow pace of the land reform programme in South Africa has created policy gaps, which has impacted the level of agitation against land inequality in South Africa. Rural women have been on the receiving end of these inequalities, which has resulted in the lack of land rights to access and own land. This is due to the ineffective gender construction in land allocation under traditional authorities. This study examined the politics of women's participation and entrenched land reform inequalities at Emophela. The study adopted a qualitative research approach where data was collected from 20 women participants from Emophela, one representative of the traditional council, one representative of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, and one representative from the eThekwini Municipality. The sample was obtained using purposive sampling and semi-structured in-depth interviews with open-ended questions. The interviews were conducted and recorded, and the data were analysed using Nvivo. The research adopted a participatory democratic theory and African Feminism (Nego-Feminism) theory. Based on the focus groups and the interviews conducted, the study found compelling evidence of discrimination experienced by women at Emophela regarding access to land. The entrenched inequalities faced by women on land-related issues affect their level of participation and willingness to participate. Gender-related discrimination is more prevalent in land allocation under the traditional council, sustained by culture and patriarchy. The study found that the women of Emophela are subleasing/ tenants and lack land ownership. Furthermore, women's land ownership at Emophela is urgent, which places responsibility on the South African government and the Traditional Councils to initiate women's education on land rights in rural areas and provide programs that promote women's land ownership. Women need to own land because it contributes to their social and economic empowerment and places them in a better position to address poverty issues.

Keywords*: women, land reform, land access, land ownership, land rights*

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Chapter One

Introduction and Background

1.1   Background to the study

The land issue has been an ongoing thorny discourse in many countries worldwide, mostly in Africa. The indigenous black population in Africa had experienced land dispossession in the hands of foreign powers and other forms of rights for decades. When the settlers began dispossession of land, they applied legal instruments through legislation to legitimize systematic segregation and land dispossession (Beck, 2000). The 1913 Land Acts in South Africa provided the colonials with a legal framework for denying the black race any form of land ownership rights. Solomon Plaatje (1995:13) recalled on the day the Native Land Act was enacted in South Africa remarked: *"Awakening on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African native found himself, not a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth."*

The 1913 Land Act resulted and contributed to the socio-economic injustices that still affect many black South Africans to date (Modise & Mtshiselwa, 2013). The Land Act formalized the limitations of black land ownership and land access. The enactment of the 1913 Land Acts was followed by the relocation of black Africans by the minority government to the unfertile homelands and townships. The Acts also provided the groundwork for racial segregation and Apartheid (Hall, 2014). The Act confirmed and concluded land dispossession that was already taking place in other parts of the country. Feinberg (1993) points out that restrictions on the indigenous African population, which also encompasses the issue of land, began long before the Act was established, pointing out the Glen Act of 1894 in the Cape Colony.

The themes centered around land and the legacy of Apartheid have received special attention from numerous scholars both locally and globally. The debates that are generated around the land question in South Africa include an essential conversation on equality. The end of Apartheid ushered the new narrative of equality, either of gender or race, in South Africa. The land has been a crucial aspect in all discussion regarding equality and in addressing all the injustices of the past. In post-apartheid South Africa, engagements concerning land have continuously emerged from time to time by liberation movements to ensure equality for all. In all things considered, African women have continuously found themselves at the bottom in land access, control, and ownership. The issue of women and land ownership was further

worsened by cultural conviction(s) and women's inability to purchase land or inherit property/land in Africa.

The issue of inequality, especially gender inequality in land ownership, can be traced back to when the Glen Act of 1894 was approved. No subleasing of land was allowed, and the rule of "one man one plot" was applied. The land was allocated according to the law of primogeniture (the first-born male inherits the land). The Act played a vital role in orchestrating gender inequality. In the present day, women have limited land access under the redistribution program because the settlement land acquisition grant was only given to household members. According to Songca (2018:4), the African National Congress Reconstruction and Development Programme of 1994 (section 2.4.11) "extends women's rights to land and includes women in the land distribution "programs (2018:4). The program prohibits laws and practices which discriminate against women's access to land.

Furthermore, during the apartheid regime, women played a prominent role in liberating South Africa and fought for land and equality. Songca (2018) argues that women's struggle for land however, their great contribution to the liberation goes unnoticed. Women involved in the liberation struggle are usually associated with a male lineage, especially in land struggle. Women tend to face cultural barriers regarding having eligible access and ownership to land/ property, such as unmarried sisters often not allowed to inherit the land after the parents deceased and can be evicted by their married brothers. Within the traditional councils, women are not considered eligible participants, which further worsens the imbalances in gender equality.

Under the African National Congress (ANC) administration, post-apartheid South Africa implemented land reform as one of the socio-economic development programs to address the past injustices. In doing so, the South African government has policies and legislation that is committed to gender equality. Regarding women's access to land, the "trajectory" of transformative land policies can be traced to South Africa's transitional period in 1992 (Songca, 2018). In the 1992 Land Policy document, there is a call for gender equality and procedures that ensure that women are granted equal rights and access to land and to participate in all policymaking (ANC Land Policy Document, 1992). The Reconstruction and Development programme and the 2011 Green paper on Land reform also recognizes and promotes women's right to land. Such policies showcase the government's commitment to ending discrimination and in ensuring gender equality in land ownership. Although there has been a significant

amount of progressive land reform policies that also promote women's rights to land access, women from rural and underdeveloped areas seem not to be benefitting as intended. Women from rural South Africa usually have limited engagement in land-related discussions and limited land access because of political, household, and family constraints. Land can be a tool to empower and better the lives of women in underdeveloped areas.

The land is an essential resource to sustaining women's livelihood in developing countries, where the rural poor highly rely on subsistence agriculture for survival. In many African countries, small-scale food production is the heart of rural livelihood. Women farmers are part of this food production, which produces more than half of the grown produce, and 60 to 80 percent of food grown in most developing countries (FAO, 2010; Namubiru-Mwaura, 2014). Women having access to and control of land (customary or statutory) provide economic entry to beneficial markets and institutions such as household and community level governance structures (Namubiru-Mwaura, 2014). This presents women with an opportunity to contribute to the decision-making. Without access to land, these opportunities become challenging for women to attain since land provides subsistence (FAO, 2010). Unfortunately, inland access, gender disparities remain prevalent worldwide, and South Africa has been no exception regardless of its gender-neutral land reform policies.

Land Acquisition in Sub-Saharan Africa

There has been a long-existing traditional barrier to women having access and acquiring land in Sub- Saharan Africa, which has begun to break down slowly. Saito *et al*. (1994) highlight that women in most African countries acquire land through inheritance or purchase, specifically women who are household heads. In countries like Kenya, land distribution is usually biased against women, and the land is inequitably distributed (1994). Although in Kenya, purchase and inheritance are the dominant channels to land acquisition for women, in Nigeria, the purchase is rare for both women and men. In Burkina Faso, the government's contributions to land tenure have ignored women's land rights. All the planned settlements areas managed by Volta Valley Authority all title to all land were bestowed to the male household head (Saito *et al*., 1994). In this case, women had to clear land away from the settlements to establish their plots. In most African countries, the traditional inheritance which placed women at a disadvantage still prevails. In death or divorce events, women lose their marital land, and they lose their rights to have access to use the land. Mostly in Burkina Faso, women are landless unless absorbed by either their birth family or by the community of their in-laws

1.2   Operational definitions of key terms and concepts

1.2.1 Land Rights

Land rights are referred to as rights to control, use, transfer, and parcel of land (Gilbert, 2013). These rights also encompass rights to occupy, enjoy, and use land and all the resources, as well as having the authority to restrict others or exclude others from the land or from having any use of the land. Gilbert (2013) also argues that a person who holds these rights should have the liberty to sell, transfer, purchase, grant or loan, inherit, develop and improve, rent and sublet, and benefit from the improved land values or rental income. Within the legality premise, land rights fall into the land laws category, land tenure agreements, or planning regulations. Land rights are fundamental for access to food, housing any form of development.

1.2.2   Land

The word land holds a different meaning to different people. The power of the word is in its context of use. Many scholars have given different terms and definitions in South Africa. Gumede (2014) maintained that land is the most contested issue, and it's so because of the importance it holds in society. Woodruff (2018) argues that land should be referred to as all-natural resources that help society produce valuable goods and services for survival. Since the Convention to Combat Desertification, FAO has defined land as:

"*a delineable area of the earth's terrestrial surface, encompassing all attributes of the biosphere immediately above or below this surface including those of the near-surface, climate, the soil and terrain forms, the surface hydrology (including shallow lakes, rivers, marshes, and swamps), the near-surface sedimentary layers and associated groundwater reserve, the plant and animal populations, the human settlement pattern and physical results of past and present human activity (terracing, water storage or drainage structures, roads, buildings, etc.).* (FAO 1995)

The above being the most basic definition of land, the term also holds a different meaning in different sectors. It may be economics, politics, geography, or for development. Mostly, the meaning of land lies in its value or use.

1.2.3   Empowerment

The Cornell Empowerment Group (1989) maintained that the concept of empowerment needs to be understood as a change process. Empowerment can be defined as the purposeful ongoing process centered in the community involving group participation, mutual respect, and group reflection. People who lack an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources (Perkins, 2010). Perkins breaks down the definition and highlights that if one aims to understand the concept of empowerment, one needs to understand the common elements found in most of its definitions. As a process, empowerment occurs in communities or organizations, and it involves active participation and involves access control over essential resources and decisions (Gutierrez & Ortega, 1991; Perkins, 2010). Furthermore, scholars have argued that empowerment is not only a process; it can also be perceived or thought of as the life and outlook-changing outcome of such a process for individuals, communities, and organizations (Perkins, 2010). Empowerment is a collective of processes rather than just an individual process. Women's empowerment is central to realising women's rights and gender equality. Through land ownership, women's ability to participate equally in existing markets and have access and control over productive resources, access to decent work, control over their own time, lives, and bodies; and increased voice, agency, and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels from household to international (UN, 2018).

1.2.4   Community

Within the study of community development, a community is a group of people who share shared living accommodation and goods. These communities share the same language, helping the people identify with the people in their community.

1.3   Significance/ Rationale of the Study

In attempts to redress the injustices of the past land dispensation, reduce poverty, and the sustainable use of land and economic development, the post-apartheid South Africa has embarked on a market-driven programme of land reform (Walker, 1998). The programme also aims at creating race and gender equality amongst the subordinate groups. Although the proportion is declining, half of the country's population resides in rural areas, with the vast majority in poverty, especially women. The livelihood and empowerment of women heavily depend upon the land (Maake *et al*., 2016). Hence, there is a need to assess women's participation in land reform. Conducting this study promotes rural women's empowerment and

gender equality by participating in land reform. The study intends to point out the loopholes in land reform in relation to gender inequalities, mostly in rural areas. The assessment of women's participation in land reform is influenced by the fact that land reform plays a significant role in minimizing socio-political, economic, and entrenched inequalities women face. Assessing this participation mechanism in land reform is tantamount to seeking ways to minimize poverty and inequality for women participating in land reform.

Moreover, scholars from various fields have researched land reform, especially on the phenomenon of gender inequality and women's subordination. However, there is not much written about politics centered on women's land access and ownership participation. Hence, this study seeks to assess women's participation in land reform, especially in rural areas, and gender equity in the land reform programme practices in rural areas and indigenous communities.

1.4   Research Problem

Emophela is a rural area situated next to Silverton in Ethekwini Metropolitan Municipality, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. The lack of women's participation in land reform in rural areas falls partly on women not having land ownership nor land access. The area of Emophela is communal land where traditional leaders are customarily the custodians of the land, the customary laws, and cultures. In most communal areas, it's a cultural norm and practice that no one is eligible to either question or challenge the customary laws, mainly on land access. This supremacy challenges equality and women's equality of land, to be specific. Although the South African Constitution perceives women and men as equal, traditional practices are usually very patriarchal, and women get limited land access. According to Odey (2013), customary laws are the major contributors to the factors that deny women their constitutional rights to own and inherit the land.

Poverty prevails as they do not have the fundamental resource to practice household food security. Land ownership affects both married and single women in rural areas because they cannot independently own land from their husbands or male relatives. Furthermore, with the country's steady unemployment rate and the low literacy rate amongst women in rural women, it becomes more difficult for them to address poverty in their household. In addition, the importance of land cannot be stressed enough in this case because it involves their livelihood, which is also important, but also their dignity and identity.

This study addresses gender inequality in land access in terms of distribution and ownership. It also seeks to investigate the politics of women's level of participation at Emophela. Furthermore, it looks at the entrenched inequalities in land reform.

Gender Component in Household Head

The term household could be defined as a "group of persons (or one person) who makes common provision for food, shelter and other essentials for living" (Bongaarts, 2001: 263; Dungumaro, 2008). Zulu and Sibanda (2005: 218) defined a household as "the residential and livelihood arrangement in which family and non-family members coexist." The October Household Survey and Population Census in South Africa define a household "as consisting of a person or group of people who live together for at least four nights a week, who share a meal and share resources (Statistics South Africa, 1999). The inconsistency of using the word household and the different ways of defining it introduces a challenge of defining who is the household head. The head of the household is an important variable as the study looks at women as the head of the household as well as the cultural and societal attachment to the household head. The United Nations defines the household head as "that person who is acknowledged as such by other members" (United Nations 1980: 70). Another definition by the United Nations (1980), ahead of house household, can be identified as a person with major responsibilities for the household's economic maintenance. A household is a primary place where individuals reproduce and confront societal norms, power, values, and privilege. The gender norms expressed within the household are reinforced and reflected in the larger institutions of society. The shaping of gender identities by bigger institutions and family members' ongoing participation in creating new gender norms is established in how gender norms are expressed within the household.

Various studies on households in Africa have suggested a shift in household structures and composition (Bongaarts, 2001; Dungumaro *et al*., 2006). A gender analysis is of interest due to literature highlighting an increasing proportion of female-headed households in developing countries (Kossoudji & Mueller, 1983; Dungumaro, 2008). Most female-headed households are dominated by poverty as it is argued that women make up a disproportionate number of the poor (Dungumaro, 2008). Literature centered on African women and poverty highlights the marginalization of women and patriarchy in African society. According to the United Nations, women form 60- 70 % of the world's poor (UNDP, 1995; UN, 1996). There is a strong relationship between poverty and women-headed households. Several factors contribute to

poverty's feminization, including disparities in rights and entitlements (Dungumaro, 2008) limited access to land resources. There is a higher dependency burden on women, as they are in most cases single earners as opposed to male-headed households who are mostly jointly earners (Dungumaro, 2008).

Women with limited access to land ownership and land always granted to men were perceived as the eligible head of households, and women's rights to land were extinguished along the way. The head of household maintains its position as the main component of social organization and the importance of understanding gender inequality in land access (Platteau, 1996). Walker (2002) asserts that land is often a symbol of male dominance and women in fighting the status quo challenge patriarchal control and social and political inequalities. For post-colonial Africa, women as heads of households have continued to threaten the patriarchal rule that existed and still have legacies to date. The household head issue is mainly motivated by assumptions that arise from comprehending gender differences in accessing land. The household's economic wellbeing, which the head of the household is mainly responsible for, is one assumption that arises when understanding household heads' role.

1.5   Research Aim and Objectives

1. Assess the level of women's participation in land reform.
2. Examine the role of land reform in minimizing socio-political, economic, and entrenched gender inequalities.
3. Measure the impact of land reform on empowering women to reduce poverty and increase food security.

1.6   Research Questions

1. What are the politics of women's participation and empowerment in land reform?
2. What is the relationship between land reform and women's empowerment?
3. What are the obstacles to women's participation in land reform?
4. What is the level of women's participation in land reform at Emophela?
5. What are the benefits associated with land reform in empowering women?
6. What is the impact of land reform on minimizing socio-economic problems faced by women?
7. How does land contribute to addressing inequality and poverty?
8. To what extent does the land reform process create a conducive space for empowering women to food security

1.7   Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter one: Introduction

This chapter provides the introduction and background of the entire study. The research aim, objectives, and questions are also entailed here. Furthermore, the justification of why the researcher chose the topic is also provided in this chapter. More importantly, it discusses the core argument on which the whole study is permitted. The outline of the fashion in which the entire dissertation is shaped is also featured in this chapter.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

An extensive and intensive review of existing literature on the phenomenon of land reform is entailed in this chapter. The relevant literature included in this chapter is on land reform policies, gender inequality, and women's land rights and access. It also looks at the role land plays in empowering women and securing a livelihood. It looks at land reform and women's access to land in Zambia and Zimbabwe. It also presents the theoretical framework that this study is founded upon. It looks at perspectives of both the theories, participatory democratic theory and African feminism espousing nego-feminism.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter discusses the research methodology and methods adopted in this study. The chapter explains the qualitative research design, which was utilized to gain more information about the politics of women's participation in land reform in Emophela. The study outlines the type of sampling used and sampling procedure; it also outlines data collection and tools used to collect data.

Chapter Four: Politics of Women's Participation in Land Reform

This chapter discusses the politics of women's participation in land reform in the area of Emophela. The chapter is a section of data presentation collected at Emophela to look at the overall level of women's participation and the politics around participation at Emophela.

Chapter Five: Entrenched Land Reform Inequalities in Emophela

This chapter discusses land reform entrenched inequalities in Emophela, which is the second part of data collection. This chapter presents data collected through secondary and primary

data. The reality of land reform, gender inequalities, and women's rights to land in South Africa, specifically Emophela, was discussed.

Chapter Six: Summary, Recommendations, and Conclusion

This chapter comprises the recommendations, summary, and conclusion of the study. This chapter provides the conclusion for this study and a summary with emphasis on results obtained.

1.8   Chapter Summary

This chapter has introduced what this study is mainly about. It has defined the key concepts and provided an overview of the study by detailing the study's background, the research problem, the significance, and rationale. It also provided the study's aims and objectives and outlined the research questions and the dissertation structure. The next chapter reviews the literature on women's participation, women's rights, and land rights. Also, it looks at the cases of land reform in other African countries (Zimbabwe and Zambia) amongst other themes.

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

The notorious land dispossession of the indigenous people of South Africa by the British and the Dutch has been known to be the most prestigious colonization in Africa which continued for a long time (Maake, Manamela & Meso, 2016). The demise of colonization kick-started the apartheid regime, a system that continued white dominance and racial discrimination. The road to liberation was quite costly, and the transition from the apartheid system to democracy was perceived as a transition from white power to inclusive power. Suffering a long history of racial injustices, most agricultural land in South Africa is owned by the white minority (Meso *et al*., 2016). This has resulted in the black population, the majority being impoverished, and a significant preponderance of these women (Chitja, 2016). Developing countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, among others in the past two decades, have been arduously in pursuit of redistributive land reform programs (Meso *et al*., 2016) to better the lives of those who experienced land dispossession. Due to land dispossession, black people in South Africa found themselves at the bottoms with regards to land ownership. According to the South African land audit report, Whites own 72% in farms, agricultural holdings by individual landowners, which is then followed by Coloured at 15%, Indians at 5% and Africans at only 4% (Land Audit Report 2018).

Gender equality is preserved in Section 9 of the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996), but women from rural areas continuously have limited access to land and resources. Such has resulted in poverty having a gender dimension, as Bentley (2004) argued that it challenges women's equal status in society. Women have been subjected to the marginalized and subordinate role, which are traditionally consigned, and any rights given to women are paralyzed by deep entrenched cultural norms of patriarchy (Bentley, 2004). Gender-based discrimination is the most predominant form of disadvantage that impacts women, mostly rural women. Women's land right and access is crucial as secure access to land, and other natural resources are fundamental to sustainable livelihood and securing food security. The ability to access land and other resources for any individual is contingent on empowerment and considering the additional hurdles women face regarding empowerment, from their household and community position. The emphasis on the importance of women's land rights is made by accessing their participation in land reform and their participation in the public sphere.

This chapter also focuses on reviewing books, articles, and all useful sources relevant to women's participation in the land reform schemes to provide a basic assessment and gain full insight into previous studies related to the study's problem. This section conceptualizes participation and land and takes a broader look at land reform in South Africa. Furthermore, it engages the concept of women's access to land in Africa. The materials used included books, unpublished articles, journal articles, magazines, and statistics. Also, the chapter looks at theoretical frameworks that were employed in this study.

2.2 Participation

The importance of participation, particularly for the poor and the previously disadvantage, presents an opportunity for empowerment and life improvement. The concept of participation has always been associated with development by implementing projects and programs that require full participation from the local population (Sapru, 2002). United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) regard participation as crucial to program planning and poverty alleviation (World Bank, 1996). Scholars of development have advocated for local people's participation in development practices (Mubita *et al*., 2017). The argument underlying the idea is based on the consideration that the population, especially the poor, could participate in projects and development programs that affect their lives. The World Bank defines participation as: "*a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them*" (World Bank, 1994:1)

Participation ranges from token dialogue and passive contribution to interactive participation, which leads to self and individual mobilization (Jackson, 2000). According to Jackson (2000), "the most meaningful participation occurs if the driving agency solicits inputs and participation from all sectors of the local community – man and women, young and old, rich and poor, those with power and those without power." When implemented appropriately, participation ultimately encourages cooperation and shared decision making, and mutual respect meanwhile building a sense of confidence leading to empowerment (Jackson, 2002). Strategically, public goods, and services such as health, equal opportunity, poverty reduction, education all require public participation and action (Putzel, 2002).

Public and community participation has achieved universal acceptance. Participation encourages and promotes public activeness and awareness on issues concerning their lives. For decades scholars such as Pateman have advocated for participation, and many others have argued that public participation has over time become a mantra and is a common practice.

Modern society seems took be undertaking a form of participatory revolution (Lee *et al.*, 2015). Modern democracy has also inspired a certain level of public participation. The activeness and awareness around issues of race, gender, and economic injustices around the world, from black lives matter (BLM) and the "me too" movement in the United States to "Am I next" in South Africa, public participation has played a significant role in empowering more people and brings awareness to such issues. Public participation allows disadvantaged communities to have one voice, an active voice.

Women's Political Participation

The gender gap in political engagement, interest, and participation consistently present an important paradox (Pyeatt & Yanus, 2017). Women play an engaging role in activities such as voting, community engagement groups such as churches, and their participation can be rated higher than their male counterparts (Burns *et al.* 2001). However, in political-related activities, women worldwide have taken a back seat (Beauregard, 2014). Pyeatt & Yanus (2017) argue that women's unwillingness to attend political meetings or be part of any political engagements or party politics may be why the number of women elected into power and policy outcomes on women's issues is low. Women who are in power are more likely to speak on issues concerning women. More women in government may adopt more equality/women-friendly based laws and legislation that will place women's issues on an important agenda (Cowell-Mayers & Langbein, 2009).

Women's political underrepresentation has had significant consequences on access to education, economic freedom, and land in South Africa. Kenny (2013) argues that the cause of women's unwillingness to participate in politics are rooted in both supply and demand in politics. When considering the supply aspect, it is essential, to begin with, the rich body of evidence that reveals that historically women have been socialized to view themselves as non-political creatures (Pyeatt & Yanus, 2017). Factors such as religion, politics, and philosophy emphasize how masculine the public world of business and politics is as well as the privacy of the feminine world of home and family. O'Neill and Gidengil (2005) argue that this has led to women frequently developing different social capital and status types, where women are more concerned about community networking and interpersonal relationships. Hence young girls transitioning to young women are less to display motivation or any form of interest to view themselves as viable political leaders (Lawless & Fox, 2013). The effect of the lesser supply of women willing to participate in politics has a lasting effect. Pyeatt & Yanus (2017) highlight one of the significant effects: the lack of role models for future generations.

The demand for women in a leadership position is closely aligned with the lack of women's political participation. The gender gap in politics might not only be a result of women's unwillingness to participate in politics. Even the most willing women face social obstacles where they are made to feel as though their gender limits their ability to hold power or make a difference (Pyeatt & Yanus, 2017). Due to the absence of adequate women political representation, it may also lead to women feeling disconnected from their government, resulting from the gender gap in political participation (Burns *et al*., 2001). Fox (2011) argues that the common solution to overcoming the significant barriers to equal political participation is reorienting women's political socialization.

Women's political participation in African and their representation in politics varies widely across countries. Uzodike & Onopajo (2013) argue that although some African countries have recorded some progress regarding women's political participation, the region's situation continues to be marginal to effective political participation. According to the July 2012 report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Rwanda ranks number one in the category of 'Women in Parliament,' and South Africa is number eight in the world ranking. Furthermore, South Africa has an exceptional ranking in the classification of women who hold titles in 'Ministerial Positions' (Uzodike & Onapajo, 2013). Women hold 40% representation in cabinet, and South Africa ranks in the world's top 10 (IPU July 2012). According to previous research conducted by DESA/UNECA (2007), it was found that socio-cultural beliefs, financial difficulty, and economic dependency are the main factors that prevent women from playing an active role in politics. Women have faced a range of difficulties and different forms of marginalization in political parties, which has affected their level of political participation (DESA/UNECA 2007:12). Perhaps, this is because political participation in the country is associated with political parties, which are typically structured to maximize the membership's control by the leadership (Uzodike & Onapajo 2013). Among other factors underpinning the outlier status of women's political participation, is the assumption that women who venture into politics are perceived as intruders in an otherwise male domain (Uzodike & Onapajo, 2013).

Women experience intimidation by male politicians using different forms of violence. In countries such as Sierra Leona, it was found that female political candidates are usually confronted with the 'all-male secret societies' that adopt forms of violence to intimidate the female candidate (Kellow, 2010). This has resulted in a decrease in the number of women in parliament since the country's post-conflict election in 2002, from 15% representation in 2002 to 13% in 2007 (Kellow, 2010). According to the IPU 2019 report, it has decreased to 12%

subsequently. The low representation of women in power in decision making bodies such as parliament is rampant in many parts of Africa. This weakens the opportunities available for women to contribute to decision making processes and national socio-economic development.

2.3 Women's Rights

Kanyoro (2018), women's right as "the fundamental human rights that were enshrined by the United Nations for every human being on the planet nearly seventy years ago" (Kanyoro, 2018). The issue of women's rights for many years received international recognition, and the United Nations (UN) Charter in 1945 acknowledged the principle of which that human rights and fundamental freedoms should be enjoyed by anyone 'without the distinction as to sex' (UN Charter, see Otto, 2013). According to Ilumoka (2012), "Women's rights are defined as the basic entitlement and rights claimed for female: girls and women. Women's right is the fight for the idea that women should have equal rights to men" (Ilumoka, 2012:423). The famous slogan 'Women's rights are human rights' was used by the women's rights movement at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (Van Leeuwen, 2013). Since the infamous conference took place, considerable effort has been made by numerous UN bodies to promote the integration of women's rights in the general international human rights framework (Van Leeuwen, 2013). The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the UN General Assembly (GA), the former UN Commission on Human Rights (CHR), and the former UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights passed supporting and encouraging resolutions in the integration of women's right into the general human rights activities of the UN (UN Human Rights Commission, 1993). The notion that all men and women should enjoy all their rights, which are human rights, is fundamental to the main international human rights instruments (Van Leeuwen, 2013).

There has been significant progress towards advancing women's rights at the regional and national level and ensuring gender equality in Africa's continent. The African Union Commission (AU) and their human rights instruments implemented numerous binding measures and binding agreements. They provided accommodating recommendations and reports that address all women's human rights (UN, 2016). The agreements include "the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights; the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Right on the rights of women in Africa; the Convention Governing the specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa; the Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and

Human Rights; and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child" (United Nation Commission, 2016).

The right to live free from violence, rights from discrimination, right to education, right from slavery, right to own property, and earn fair wages as their male counterparts. These are the basic rights women all over the world have the right to enjoy. Despite such, women, and girls worldwide and particularly in Africa, are still declined all these basic rights due to their gender. Women's rights are basic rights, which means the same opportunities to be provided for all and equality and respect. Lamba (2016) notes that

> *"Women's equal rights and influence in the key decisions that shape their lives and those of children must be enhanced in three distinct areas: the household, the workplace, and the political sphere. A change for the better in any one of these realms influences women's equality in the others and has a profound and positive impact on a child's wellbeing and development. Thus, Gender equality is not only morally right. It is pivotal to human progress and sustainable development"* (Lamba, 2016).

In the 21st century, the fight for women's rights has been eminently promoted in empowering women and gender equality in third world countries.

History of Women's Right in South Africa

The systematic subordination of black people in South Africa resulted from the Apartheid system. It was inclined with racial inequality and oppression and existed inequalities based on gender (Albertyn, 2011). The phenomenon of gender inequality could be associated with cultural elements as in most African Cultures, and patriarchy is deeply rooted. Albertyn argues that South Africa remains a deeply patriarchal society in which women have been made inferior to men in public and private life (Albertyn, 2011). Inequalities prevailing between women and men result from the gendered structure of economic, social, and political life and further undermines women's ability to make their own choices and live to their full potential. The inclusion and marginalization patterns result from social inequalities where a specific group is affirmed and privileged, and the other is lesser. According to Fraser (1997), the hierarchies of gendered recognition result in women being ranked at a lower status than men and are denied legal and practice access to resources, rights, benefits, and opportunities.

Furthermore, it increases women's level of vulnerability to psychological and physical violence and political marginalization. The issue of gendered patterns of recognition is one all South African women can identify with; however, black women have experienced gendered

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subordination, accompanied by race and class (Albertyn, 2011). Colonization and segregation meant that black women were subjected to firm sexual and racial boundaries. The law was set on maintaining these boundaries as they were enforced in their public and private lives. Chanock (1985) highlights that most black women had to be subjected to an "official" customary law that arranged flexible customary rules as a gendered set of fixed rules that privileged men over women. Although white women were also at the bottom of their fathers, brothers, and husbands, they still enjoyed many privileges carried by their race and class. Albertyn (2011) argues that greater social equality post-apartheid achieves extensive changes to cultural values, social institutions, and practices.

Class plays a significant role in signifying inequality in the capitalist economic order. Gender differences create essential economic inequalities. According to Albertyn (2011:142), "these emerge most obviously from the sexual division of labor, and the attendant ideologies and practices that place women in a subordinate position in the labor market, in terms of access to and ownership of property and resources, and within the economy as a whole." Women in South Africa were and still are subjected to the issue of division of pay. The subordination of white and black women and the relative treatment of different back groups under Apartheid place the black Africa women at the bottom ladder of the socio-economy with black men just above them. Black African women, among the poor, have had less income. They were likely to be unemployed and had little education and limited access to facilities and services than any other group in 1994 (Chanock, 1985). With the government's attempt to reduce poverty and introducing social grants, poverty declined slightly, but inequality deepened among the African and Coloured racial groups (Leibrandt *et al*., 2010). Women, specifically black women, have continued to suffer lower income, higher unemployment rates, and less access to assets than men (Seidman-Makgetla, 2004). Black African women from rural South Africa remain the poorest citizens even though there have been poverty-alleviation strategies by the government (Everatt, 2008). Rural black women are still among the poorest and marginalized to date. Achieving a more equitable gendered economy requires more attention to the gendered nature of the economy and the various conditions, subordinate women to men.

2.4 Land Reform Defined

Land reform as a concept has been subjected to the approaches and its justification, which has proved to be an exceedingly contested arena. Griffin *et al*. (2002) note that redistributive land reform is a public policy that transfers property rights from large private landholdings to small farmers and landless farmworkers. Therefore, land reform can change property/land rights

ownership, which usually involves a change from large, privately owned property to landless small-scale farmers (Tarisayi, 2013). According to Akinola and Wissink (2018), land reform can be

"*viewed as mild reforms that account for the improvement of landlord-tenant relations or the provision of better agricultural credit facilities. Others believe that land reform means the breaking-up of large landholdings with the expropriation of ownership rights. While some see it as land redistribution and an opportunity for landless people to acquire ownership of land*" (Jacob, 2010; Akinola & Wissink, 2018).

Land reform is mainly concerned with changing the institutional elements which govern human relation with land intervening in the prevailing use of land ownership and control (World Bank, 1975; Macmillan, 2000). The concept of land reform is not confined to the land ownership transfer, but it also entails the right pertaining to its control and usage (Tarisayi, 2013). Akinola (2018) defined land reform as the reallocation of rights to establish an equitable distribution of farmland and an exceptional strategy to promote environmental quality and economic development. For agricultural purposes, small-scale farmers need to secure property rights through title deeds, which provides them with an opportunity to secure funding from banks or any financial institution (Tarisayi, 2013). The legacy of settler colonialism in many African countries resulted in the unequal distribution of land, which justifies and motivates land reform. Taraji argues that land reform can be viewed as the transfer of land rights and ownership from the minority to the majority who were marginalized (Tarisayi, 2013). When looking at land reform, what is implied in practice is highly dependent on circumstances, but land reform's primary motivation is poverty alleviation by reducing economic inequality (Lipton, 1974; Tarisayi, 2013).

The land is an important strategy for African development initiatives. This is so because almost 60% of the African population draws its livelihood and earnings mainly from agricultural production and related activities (Akinola, 2018). Furthermore, in Brazil, land reform has proven economically viable (Binswanger & Deininger, 1997).

2.4.1 Approaches of Land Reform

State-Led Approach

In the state-led approach, Tarisayi (2013) alludes that the state takes a deliberate policy to redistribute land. The state introduces the process of land reform as well as guides the process. This approach is highly practiced by countries that were once under colonial rule. According

to Tarisayi, "state-led land reform programs were instigated after the independence from colonization of various countries in the 1950s to 1980s around the globe" (Tarisayi, 2013: 198). In South Africa, through government takes charge by redistributing land for the landless, it can be argued that the country practices a state-led approach. South Africa's constitution has clauses in section 25, which mandates important land reforms, encompassing the state taking reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources to foster conditions that allow citizens to have land access on an equal basis (Hall, 2014).

In other African countries that practice this type of approach, for example, in Uganda, Idi Amin placed all communal owned land and placed it in the state (Kandel, 2018). This enabled the country to distribute to the landless equally. In Central and Eastern Europe, most countries also practice state-led reform and generally nationalized land. However, in Poland, that was not the case as the land is in the hands of small family farmers (Tilley, 2007). Other countries that have high-level centralization and are state led include Cuba, Mexico, and Nicaragua.

Community-Based Approach

The community-based approach can be argued to be an alternative approach to a state-led approach. According to Akinola (2018), the approach is expected to be reactive to political demand because it is believed to be in the best interest of rural people. The approach is community-driven and is high jacked by the state. It seeks to align it with the distressed landless people who would have taken the matter into their own hands and usually would have done so illegally (Tarisayi, 2013). A community-based approach is integrated into local development where decentralized sectoral programs, organized civil society, local government, and communities themselves come together to develop plans for development (Binswanger & Nguyen, 2004). This form of land reform approach empowers communities to identify problems and solutions, empowers local governments through administrative and fiscal decentralization, reforming central government to accommodate the principle of subsidiarity, and improving local government and service providers (Binswanger & Nguyen, 2004; Hall, 2008). During the Chinese revolution, land was confiscated without compensation. The common type of reform under the community based approach is when land is redistributed from one individual to another or from individuals to groups or a large community. Countries such as Egypt, Iran, or Ireland where land of individuals may be reallocated in favour of the community at large. A similar trend exists in Tanzania where rural village elects its own government and by law, they are the legal land manager. African countries such as Ghana and Ethiopia follow a community based approached (Wily, 2009).

Market Assisted Approach

This form of land reform approach was highly promoted by the World Bank (Hall, 2008), and land ownership rights are transferred through the selling and buying of land on the market (Tarisayi, 2013). This approach embraces and understands markets to constitute the most efficient mechanisms through which land access can be regulated. The landless farmworkers are financed to get land through buying land from large farm owners (Tarisayi, 2013). Hall (2008) argues that the market-led approach's core element is that land reform would be likely decentralized. The state will not plan or implement but will facilitate the market transactions between 'willing buyer' and 'willing seller.' The State provides small grants to eligible individuals to purchase land in the open market and assist in planning projects and providing certain settlement infrastructure (World Bank, 1993; Hall, 2008). The approach is demand-led, and the programme determines the outcome. This is the least followed approach in developing countries for its financial demands and the government's financial constraints (Tarisayi, 2013). This is due to the reason that the state must grant qualified landless people grant or a subsidy on loan with which to purchase the land (Banerjee, 2000).

Some of the large scale farmers are not willing sellers and often set exorbitant prices on their land. Hence, many South African political parties have argued against this approach and always referred to the economic gap in the country. Although there could be a willing seller and a willing buyer, the concept is meaningless if the willing buyer has no means to buy. Banerjee notes that "the high cost of market assisted reform means that it cannot be expected to achieve very substantial redistribution in the near future" (Banerjee, 2000: 15).

2.5 South African Land Reform Policies

The new democratically elected government inherited a country with a lot of injustices and poverty. Land reform in South Africa carries a vast of emotions and symbolic appeal for the past struggles and injustices for most of the population. It serves as a significant political point for most political leaders and political parties. The government has a comprehensive package of programs to turn around the past major distortions. The three land reform policies are land distribution, tenure reform, and land restitution. Walker (1998) argues that there is little detailed information on the extent to which women are represented in any of the three components. This section of the literature will be reviewing the land reform policies in South African post-apartheid and viewing these policies through a gendered lens.

2.5.1 Land Redistribution

This component aims to "provide the disadvantaged and the poor with access to land for residential and productive purposes. The scopes include the urban and rural, the impoverished, labor tenants, farmworkers as well as new entrants to agriculture" (Department of Land Affairs ,1997). This pillar of land reform in South Africa proves that land reform is not predominantly concerned with land for productive purposes and residential use. Land redistribution is the aim of land reform, which was utilized to give the land back to the landless black people (Chitja, 2016). It was operated under the Settlement Land Acquisition Grant Program (SLAG) from 1995 to 1999 (DLA, 1997). The beneficiary also included married South African or anyone with recognized dependents (DLA 1997). The land redistribution program was then changed to Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD), which mainly focused on improving the black farms (NDA 2001). LRAD targeted individuals who have some knowledge of agriculture and have a business plan (NDA 2001). The beneficiary of the program would also be required to contribute at least R5000 in cash and receive R20 000 from the department (NDA 2001). The program encouraged women as individuals to apply for their land if they met the requirements but failed to take into account the fact that most women, especially rural women, could not raise the expected amount being that they were from the poorest of the poor

2.5.2 Tenure Reform

This component aims to "improve the tenure security of all South Africans and to accommodate diverse forms of land tenure, including types of communal tenure" (DLA, 1997:9). Tenure security is comprehended to ensure a wide range of tenure arrangements, including the rights in communal land and rights held in freehold (Tarisayi, 2013). This aspect of land reform in South Africa has the greatest impact on rural women by acquiring them independent rights and ownership in land and freeing them from depending on male family members and the chief's power in allocating land (Moagi, 2008). In pursuing tenure security, exists a real danger that is gender-blind. This could have had entrenched existing inequalities in access to land within households by formalizing what is informal rights and processing such rights in the name of male household heads only and fixing women's marginality in a legal grip (Abdulla, 2003). In the past, the customary practice could have been an obstacle and prevented women from owning land. The instilled power of chiefs to allocate land and the customary law that prevented widows from inheriting land are cases in point when tenure security is in question and its ability to improve the livelihood of women as head of households (Mutangadura, 2004). Tenure

security can improve the social and economic circumstances to some extent of women on commercial farms.

According to Walker (1998), tenure reform could be a threat to the integrity of landholding and economic freedom from the perspective of commercial agriculture. It appears that it is the most contested issue in land reform because it has been seen to undermine the property rights and economic rights previously enjoyed by commercial farmers.

2.5.3 Land Restitution

This pillar was hard-fought at the negotiations leading up to the interim Constitution's adoption and the first democratic elections of 1994. It intended to redress the injustices caused to the victims of the land dispossession and segregation by the former white minority government (Walker, 1998). The need for land restitution is covered explicitly in the Constitution and has been given legislative legitimacy by the Restitution of Land Rights Act (Act 22 of 1994). Land restitution aims to "return the land to the people or descendants who were removed from the land. These were previous landowners who were dispossessed of their land" (Tarisayi, 2013:198). The program involves returning or compensating victims who were dispossessed of land since June 19, 1913, due to racially discriminatory laws. Restitution is a fundamentally conservative program that traces back to when land rights were already highly circumscribed and functioning within the unequal environment (Hall, 1998). In the restitution policy, there is a tension between committing to promoting women's rights and committing to promoting to repair the rights of the people who formally held them, which, in many cases, due to the patriarchal nature of land access in the past, were man.

Women can be perceived to benefit through restitution as they have been coming forward as claimants in their individual rights and community members. Women are making these as the descendants of former dispossessed right holders (Tarisayi, 2013). The Act permits the direct descendants to claim and particularly widows. It includes customary law widows as direct descendant. However, women are outnumbered by men as claimants, and they tend to take the backseat in playing a role in the community organization around claims (Hall, 1998). Brothers and sons are the ones who take the role as the family representative, with sisters and widows are less prominent publicly but concerned about the outcome.

2.6 Women's Land Rights

Land is one of the essential livelihood resources that nature gifted human beings worldwide. It is the source of most other assets. Unequal access to land has focused on African women's

activism to reverse the oppressive system's injustices that subordinated women in their legal rights to tenure (Nadasen, 2012). Women have a significant contribution to agricultural labor, yet they have the least access and control of land (Rugege *et al*., 2007; Rural Development Institute, 2007). Women's discrimination emanating from race, class, and gender oppression, each in its degree, have influenced women's access to land. The issue of women and access to land and whether who has the right to have been extensively debated over the years. Nadasen (2012) alludes that the questions of who has the right to land, who has control over land, and by which means have dominated many African countries (Nadasen, 2012). In understanding women's access to land, it's crucial to understand gender in relation to land.

According to Claassens (2009), getting control and access to land resources is usually political and highly gendered. Furthermore, as Daley (2010) emphasized and Joireman (2008), gender has played a prominent role in constructing women and men's relationship with the land. Women have maintained the gender role in the reproductive realm, such as collecting water and fuelwood and growing food for survival purposes. On the other hand, men maintained decision-making power over land and use the land for productive use, such as crop production (Nadesan, 2012). Men having decision-making power over land places them in a position of having authority over the land. As argued by Songlewa (2009), women are subordinated and discriminated against in relation to access to land and control. The access they have is further complicated by the discrimination that originated from class and race.

According to Chu (2011), women's access to land through customary or statutory land rights systems is usually unequal to men. The disparities in land access remain an issue in most rural sub-Saharan African countries, regardless of their development level (Nadasen, 2012). The FAO (2010) notes that women are only granted secondary land rights and permitted to use land mainly through male family members but not own or have any authority over the land. Women are then at risk of losing their rights or entitlements to land in the events of divorce or death. Nadasen (2012) emphasizes this point and points out that women are then disempowered, reinforcing patriarchy. Women's rights are insubstantial, and as the land resource base shrinks due to high demand, environmental degradation, and competition, there is minimal land available for women's use and access (Nadasen, 2012). The FAO (2010) and the International Centre for Research on Women-ICRW (2011) and (Doss, 2006) have also pointed out that there has been a considerable and prevalence gender gap in asset ownership with women's land parcels which are smaller in size and lesser in quality. Social inequalities associated with customary and traditional tenure systems and the lack of implementation and enforcement of

new land policies that seek to reverse the discrimination hinders women from gaining control and access overland (Nadasen, 2012). Discrimination against women exists even in private property, where it's most visible in the prevalence of male inheritance patterns. Customary systems remain the predominant form of rural land tenure in most African countries and are deeply rooted in patriarchal practices.

Women's land rights are essential because the world setting is becoming more urbanized (Palmer, 2002). The agricultural sector is profoundly changing in most parts of the world, and it plays an important role in women's livelihood. Ownership and access to land can strengthen women's bargaining power in the national sphere and provide a platform and an opportunity to secure more social and economic rights. Furthermore, it plays a massive role in enhancing food security and nutrition for their family and providing a degree of economic independence.

In reference to the South African constitution, women and men, regardless of race, have the right to own land as individuals or as part of a group according to their rules (RSA, 1996). In various countries, including South Africa, land ownership is attested by a nationally recognized title deed (De Soto, 2000), which is changeable and transferable through selling or inheritance (Chitja 2016). Although statutory land law is presented as the ideal tenure system. It has major disadvantages for women. Firstly, the law advocates for the privatization of land, which automatically concentrates land in the hands of the elites, and one must pay to obtain title (Toulmin, 2008). Second, theoretically, women have an equal opportunity to own land; most lack the resources to participate in the market (Jacob, 2004) actively. Thirdly, although statutory law is founded on gender equity, various laws may contradict this practice (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2006). Unintentionally, some laws may put women in subservient positions, such as the inheritance laws, which usually favor sons over daughters (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2006).

Many rural African communities operate under the system of customary land tenure. According to Wily (2011), the customary land tenure order's ownership, possession, and access also regulate land use and transfer. The customs of customary tenure derive from and are sustained by the community rather than state law (Statutory land tenure). The vast majority of women in sub-Saharan Africa, under customary law, depend on men to have ownership of land (Villarreal, 2006). A great number of traditional institutions have closely regulated these rights over time. In many rural areas, these institutions have remained the principal means of determining access and ownership of land, even in countries where statutory laws have been changed to ensure gender equality (Wily, 2011). Villarreal (2006) argues that several internal

and external forces contribute to land tenure changes and land issues' gender dimensions. This includes privatization of land, scarcity of land, and the social and economic effects of HIV/AIDS, threatening women's already limited land rights (Lastarria-Cornhiel 1997; FAO 2005). Furthermore, although there is a variation from communal tenure system to another, across them exists a consistency of women not qualifying to have access to land independently from men (Mutnngadura, 2004)

The distribution of land rights is gendered and is usually associated with the institution of marriage. Palmer (2002) argued that in most African countries, women are only granted access rights to land through marriage law, as they move to their husbands' homes or villages. In the events of divorce or widowhood, they are often chased out. Hence, they tend to tolerate abusive partners due to the fear of losing access to land. As Palmer argued, this placed women in a vulnerable position in land ownership in secondary rights. He emphasizes that the institution of marriage becomes more unstable. As the demographic pressures of land increase, land acquires greater value (Palmer, 2002). Numerous countries have formulated laws that are non-discriminatory regarding socio-economic issues and gender issues (Villarreal, 2006).

Rules of access to land and inheritance tend to favor men over women. Although South Africanis' constitution is non-discriminatory, women are discriminated against within all the tenure systems, both customary and statutory (Cross *et al*., 2001; Mutungadura 2004). In addition, women's lack of independent land rights is one of the causes for women seeking sustainable livelihoods in the face of rising poverty.

Women's Land Rights and Land Reform (Case of Zambia and Zimbabwe)

Land is essential to production in many sub-Saharan African countries, especially in Zambia, where agriculture is a livelihood source for many people, especially those from rural areas (Spichiger & Kabala, 2014). Although there has been some economic growth in recent years, Zambia still has challenging poverty levels, mostly in its underdeveloped parts. Limited access to land is one of the many constraints on economic growth and poverty reduction.

Zambia is one of the African countries that undertook its first land reform straight after independence in 1964. Under Kaunda's administration, the land was affirmed to have no monetary value. As highlighted by Spichiger & Kabala (2014), through the Land (Conversation of Titles) Act of 1975, it became entrusted to the President 'to be held in perpetuity on behalf of the people' (Adams and Turner 2006: 8; Smith 2004: 1644). The state took over unoccupied land. Slowly there were changes in the government po licies, and reforms were underway under

structural adjustment programs. The new administration in the country came in 1991 under the Multiparty Democracy (MMD). It was instrumental in introducing a market-based land reform to encourage investment (Spichiger & Kabala, 2014). In 1993, the land policy was introduced, but it was never approved. The Land Bill was withdrawn because of the heated debate surrounding it (Adams, 2003). Nevertheless, in the year 1995, new land legislation was introduced along with the Land Acts, which repealed the Land (Conversion of Titles) Act of 1975 (Adams 2003: 8, UN-Habitat 2005, Spichiger & Kabala2014)

The new law was aimed at promoting foreign investment. The categories of Reserved Land and Trust Land, which was implemented during the colonial era, were merged into a new category, referred to as customary areas. Meanwhile, the category of State land remained. The Act only had recognition for existing rights to land in customary areas and provided for any customary landholder to change the holding in a lease (Adams, 2003). The purpose of supporting both Acts and the policies drafted subsequently was the slow conversion of customary land into state land.

Land in Zambia is categorized into State land and customary land. State land is owned, bought, and sold by individuals who hold registered leasehold titles of 14 or 99 years. It includes all the land that is not located within the customary area, all the land located along a broad 30-50 km stretch along the railway line from the south to the north of the country (Adams, 2003: 2; UN-Habitat 2005: 40). All the lands are administered by the central government using English common law and are bound to taxation (Brown, 2005). On the other hand, customary land is held and controlled by the chiefs and headmen on behalf of communities, and they oversee its allocation and administration. As the leaders, Chiefs are responsible for the occupancy and use of customary land and its transfer between subjects (Browns, 2005). For everyday land administration, the members of the community refer to the headman. Customary leaders and authorities have limited power in the Lands Act's conversion processes, and their role has remained the same in the past. Customary authorities are only permitted to decide on whether one can apply for a title deed. Still, their powers are limited in that they cannot register nor have the authority to grant title (Spichiger & Kabala, 2014). The process is that once the chief has approved the conversion, it goes to the district council, which has the power to issue a resolution to issue a title (Metcalfe, 2006). The process is then between the commissioner of lands, which acts on behalf of the president, the lessor, and the lessee (Metcalfe, 2006).

The Land Act of 1995 created a Lands Tribunal meant to "settle disputes relating to land," but it focused on state land disputes (Adams, 2003:5). The land tribunal claimed not to be accessible for most of the population, and it is not clear whether its jurisdiction only applies to state land.

Zambian statutory legislation upholds gender equality in issues related to land. Still, as in other sub- Saharan countries, women's access and ownership to land rely largely upon customary and cultural practices, which contradicts other legislation (Spichiger & Kabala, 2014). In the country, most of the land in rural areas is customary. The population that resides in the land live under customary law, which is not a unified body of law among the 73 ethnic groups present in the country. The country's 1991 Constitution, which was amended in 1996, prohibits sex discrimination, but it does not include personal law such as inheritance law (Keller, 2000). The constitution has been in question since 2003 and has been redrafted a couple of times. Spichiger and Kabala (2014) argued that even if this is the case, the public's process to consults the changes has been extended many times, and no final draft of the constitution has been released to the public (Spichiger & Kabala, 2014). According to Zambia's draft Constitution of 2012, men and women have equal rights to access, use, own, inherit, administer, and control land and other property. They have rights in events of divorce (GRZ, 2012). Nonetheless, it has been argued that the draft lacks ways to protects women's rights and does not address women's representation and does not clearly define female and male's quantity in institutions (Spichiger & Kabala, 2014).

The laws of marriage and inheritance affect women's access to land and any land-related assets. The purpose of the Intestate Succession Act 1989 is to eradicate discriminatory practices against female spouses and children to have equal rights of succession for both males and females. The downhill of the Act excludes land that the land has been acquired and held under customary law at the owner's death. In this case, the land is returned to the owners, which, according to customary law, are the deceased's family. The Act permits the living spouse to inherit 20% of the deceased's estate together with the children and have access and use of the house (Keller, 2000). Nevertheless, the Act falls short in terms of permitting equal inheritance rights to women, as a widow is only granted the rights to use the land but not ownership of the land. The aim behind the Intestate Succession Act, as argued by Spichiger & Kabala (2014), is more patrilineal, which contradicts with the matrilineal systems of inheritance that are commonly practiced in Zambia.

The narrative of gender equality in Zambia has played a prominent role in how land reform has assimilated the principles of gender equality. The issue of access to and control over productive resources by women remains unsolved in the country. They are also underrepresented publicly and politically, with limited participation in decision-making institutions.

On the other hand, land in Zimbabwe is also regarded as an essential resource for rural women. Its significance lies in its ability to lift them out from poverty shackles through the land (Toro, 2016). The country consists of 53% of women and 86% of those who reside in the countryside depend on the land to sustain their livelihood and provide 70% of all agricultural labor (Women and Land in Zimbabwe, 2008). Although women do most agricultural work, most men are the ones who have ownership of the land, make agricultural decisions, and control women's labor. They do so support by patriarchal social systems (Toro, 2016). There are striking similarities between Zimbabwe and South Africa's land inequality (Thomas, 2003).

The significance of Zimbabwe's land issue is undeniable because prior to the year 1980, a maximum number of 5,700 white farmers owned half of the productive area, and blacks were relegated mostly to the inferior land (Moyo & Skalness, 1990). The white large-scale commercial farmers, consisting of less than 1% of the population, occupied 45% of agricultural land (Mushuku & Ngwenya, 2014). A massive amount of about 75% of this land is situated in the country's high rainfall areas, where agriculture's potential is high (Ministry of Land and Rural Resettlement, 2013). This land distribution pattern resulted from 90 years of colonial rule over the African population, specifically the Europeans of British origin. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 formalized 51% of the land set aside for a few thousand white settlers and forbidden the indigenous people from owning and occupying land in white-dominated commercial farming areas. Land ownership in Zimbabwe has been problematic since the colonial era, as there was unfair land distribution. The country's land reform program started in 1980 to address the imbalances in land ownership and land access bought by the colonial rule.

Zimbabwe adopted two significant land reform programmmes post-independence, and the first phase of their land reform was land redistribution. The Lancaster House Agreement ended the prolonged armed struggled in 1979. The agreement introduced moderate Land Reform as the US governments and the British used it to end the war (Mushuku & Ngwenya, 2014). The Lancaster House Agreement addressed issues such as the land question and the constitutional framework for majority rule in 1980 (Ministry of Lands and Rural Resettlement, 2013). The

agreement made a significant provision regarding land reform, a 10-year grace period in which white farmers' lands couldn't be forcibly acquired. The new Zimbabwean government can still purchase following the willing buyer willing seller guidelines (Logan, 2006). The agreement also entailed full and fair market compensation for the white farmers for the land they own in their chosen currency. The British have promised to make a substantial contribution and organize donor support to fund the reform regime (Logan, 2006).

In the first phase of land reform, which was initiated in 1980, the State aimed to obtain and distribute 8.3 million hectares of land to 162,000 peasant households (Thompson, 2003). Considerable achievements were made in phase one of the program by 1990 but fell short of the Zimbabwean land question (Mushuku & Ngwenya, 2014). After the expiry of the 'willing buyer, willing seller' period made by the Lancaster House Agreement, the government then felt compelled to take up a neo-radical approach to the Land question, protected in the 1992 National Land Policy. The National Land Policy of 1992 ensured equitable and socially equal and just access to land, the security of tenure for all forms of landholdings, and the policy also aimed at promoting the sustainable and efficient use of land management (GoZ 2002: 2). The National Land Policy was premised around the objectives of the Land Acquisition Act of 1992 (Logan, 2006). The renunciation of the Lancaster House Agreement by National Land Policy objections, according to Logan (2006), forced the Western to withhold funding for land reform, which then created an impasse between the two sides, and phase two of the reform was established within the framework of these tensions. The Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) was established and formally began with the Land Acquisition Act of 2002 (Mkodzongi & Lawrence, 2019).

Women were expected to be considered an integral part of FTLRP in line with their "important roles in agricultural production and labor reproduction" (Toro, 2016:77; Mann 2000). According to Toro (2016), the FTLRP seems not to meet the necessary needs of the poor and the landless, and the needs of women are continuously being neglected. The gendered discourses on ownership, access, and land control have dominated and prevailed in pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independence Zimbabwe (Toro, 2016). Toro (2016) argues that land reform in Zimbabwe appears highly motivated by racial and political components and less by arguments regarding economic efficiency, gender balance, social equality, or poverty reduction.In both Zambia and Zimbabwe, the issues of land access emphasize on the question of equality, mainly gender equality in land reform practices. One of the most essential links is

the fact that the land reform process is turning out to be ultimately about exclusion rather than inclusion as the Zimbabwean and Zambian government claims (Worby, 2001).

2.7 Benefits of Land Reform for Rural Women

2.7.1 Self-Empowerment

The struggles of men and women, girls, and boys are experienced differently in important ways. Understanding this is essential to tackling the greater levels of deprivation and vulnerability that women continuously face (Pallas, 2011). Women's land rights are central to sustainable livelihood and in assuring food security. The ability to have access to land, rights and claim, use, defend the land, and other natural resources for individuals or groups is an excellent chance for empowerment. The patriarchal subordination and additional discrimination rural women face from their status within the household and community under statutory and customary law, causes hurdles to empowerment (Pallas, 2011). Increasing women's access to land also decreases their vulnerability to poverty and economic and social marginalization. Women's land rights are important because they empower women as a development goal in and itself (Allendorf, 2007). According to Malhotra and Schuler (2005), empowerment is a process that expands women's agency or increases their ability to make choices about their lives and environment. Gender equality and women empowerment are one of the three Millennium Development Goals (Gurmu, 2018). In this study, women empowerment signifies enabling women to have the necessary ability to have responsibilities individually or in groups to have access and control over essential societal resources (Allahdadi, 2011). Women empowerment implies equipping women to rise above oppressive and inequalities circumstances, especially for women in rural Africa. They reside mostly in underdeveloped rural areas with poorly developed infrastructure and institutions (Dorward *et al.*, 2005).

In addition, the empowerment of women in underdeveloped rural areas must prioritize developmental goals in underdeveloped nations, including South Africa. According to Chitja (2016: 33), "empowerment requires process and support at policy, institutional and program levels." The lack of land rights deprives women of the right to economic empowerment and their struggle for equity and equality within a patriarchal society (Toro, 2016)

2.7.2 Sustainable Livelihood

Land use and land are essential to rural women, mostly in countries where the primary source of income and livelihood are dependent on natural resources (Mutungadura, 2004). Meinzen-Dick *et al.* (2017) argue that rural households highly depend on a wide range of natural

resources such as water and trees for sustainable livelihoods. Still, the land is the most valuable asset in most rural households. It is the foundation for agricultural production. Li *et al*. (2008) argues that secure access to land is essential for rural livelihood. Agriculture is one of the three rural livelihood activities which contributes significantly to household food security (Aliber *et al*., 2006). Access to land improves one's access to water, which is the basic necessity of livelihood (Namara *et al*., 2010; Pellizoli, 2010). Women from rural Africa are actively participating in agriculture as a means for livelihood. It also produces a significant amount of food in the world (Kent & MacRae, 2010). However, the farm on their male relative has limited access to resources, and there are implications for the quality of those resources they can access (Akinola, 2018).

2.7.3 Poverty Alleviation

Poverty is highly concentrated in rural areas due to limited land access, especially for women (Dawood, 2017). The land policy in South Africa makes convincing claims of land reform being a prominent tool for reducing poverty and improving food security in rural areas. Making land accessible enables families to grow their food and support livestock, which results in a more effective continuous flow of food to households and potential income (Dawood, 2017). This decreases the level of poverty and enhances nutrition and human development (DLA, 1997). With the high level of poverty in women-headed households, Kent & McRae (2010) highlights the issue of women access and ownership towards the land they cultivate and claim that is the main issue of poverty in women headed households. Yngstrom (2002) alludes that the land usually belongs to their husbands and other male relatives, and the access to land depends on the male generosity. Access and control of land use could significantly affect women's agricultural production and their household food security (Kent & MacRae, 2010). Women cultivate food crops for consumption and see agriculture as a means for establishing household food security (Kent & MacRae, 2010).

In rural areas where water might be a difficult resource to get a hold of, gardens contribute significantly to household food security, with a possibility of women being able to expand from producing for household consumption to producing excess for sale to neighbors and generating profits (Backeberg & Sanewe, 2010; Kerr, 2005). Access to land is access to essential resources such as water (Namara *et al*., 2010), and as argued by Pellizoli (2010), women who don't have access to land are then disadvantaged. According to Dawood (2017), in South Africa, a handful of studies have examined land reform's effect on poverty and food security. A study carried in

1999 concluded that 80% of land reform beneficiaries are expected to plant crops, but only 22% managed to do so (Dawood, 2017). Tarisayi (2013) highlights that the initial thought of availing more land or having more land at one's disposal will be their strategy for poverty alleviation. However, giving land to the landless does not automatically translate into poverty alleviation.

2.7.4 Employment

The issue of unemployment is also one of the main challenges concentrated in rural areas. Land reform is proposed to increase employment in rural areas considering the development of smallholder agriculture, which has possible employment opportunities (Dawood, 2017). The more smallholder farms become more productive and profitable; agricultural employment is argued to increase. Dawood (2017) highlights that this applies to smallholder farms and large commercial farming, which also exhibit high employment opportunities. In countries such as Mexico, the land reform benefactors were discovered to be using less fertilizer and more manpower to obtain the same results as private-sector farms. This suggests land reform effectively increases employment as the beneficiaries utilize a more intense labor production method (Nguyen & Saldivar, 1979).

Women in Ghana accounted 49% of the economically active population, and through which agriculture employed 49.3 (Akinola, 2018). Through land access, women's employment is the agricultural sector is possible. Akinola (2018) argues that if women are able to plant and sell crops which they planted in the fields which the owned, that does not only empowerment, but creates an employment opportunity for women.

2.7.5 Forming Identity

The overall land question in Africa is pervaded with a sense of being dispossessed, displaced, and alienated from the right to land access, control, and ownership (Vorster, 2019). The importance of land ownership in forming an individual's identity or a group cannot be underestimated. Africans attach social meaning to land and consider land as a space of rootedness, where part of their identities are formed. Beinart, Delius & Hay (2017) highlights the traditional practice of burying the umbilical cord of a newborn child near the location of birth, which symbolizes the roots of the person in that place of origin, which is ancestral. Furthermore, Masenya and Ramantswana (2015) note that indigenous South Africans identified themselves according to their ethnicity and the land they resided in, which was identified according to their clan names to indicate ownership. Vorster (2019) maintains that

for most South Africans, control and access to land is not fundamentally based on livelihood but also on reconnecting to their historical roots. Gibson (2009) argues that many black South Africans regard the symbolic value of land and the issue of dignity as more essential than monetary consideration.

Land as a necessity that holds historical meaning has always been maintained during the Constitutional Review Committee hearings. The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (2018:5) defined land as directly related to the issue of "who I am, where I come from, where I belong." Such issues are essential to an individual, to know where they come from and where they are rooted. The Orania Movement (2018) argued that land is not just a commodity but a place for making culture. They described expropriation without compensation to destroy and misrecognize Afrikaner culture. On the other hand, the Vumelana Advisory Fund (2018:8) advocated that segregation (1910-1948) and the apartheid system robbed the people who were dispossessed of their dignity. Land has become a 'symbol of dispossession' and has impacted their lives tremendously. Other organizations argued that land reform is one of the basic means for the dispossessed to reconnect to historical roots. Other groups focused more on the power dynamics that influence ownership patterns (Kepe & Hall, 2018:130-131). Whereas the Land and Accountability Research Centre (LARC) shared similar concerns about prevailing power relations. They furthered their argument by pointing out that the traditional leaders and the state entrench apartheid patterns of land ownership by holding land 'on behalf of the people' (2018:15). The Rural Development Agency (2018) noted that land reform is fundamental to the restoration of people's dignity, giving them a platform to secure a sustainable livelihood.

Voster's (2019) argument outlines that land ownership's moral strength is founded upon the understanding that land ownership influences the livelihood and wellbeing of the whole communities and people's generations. With the concept of ownership comes duties and responsibility to the broader community. The decisions made about the land will generationally affect the ownership patterns, economic production, and ecology (Voster, 2019). Land signifies a sense of belonging, and it is essential to building communities and stable households. Most indigenous communities in South Africa associate a deep religious meaning to land.

Surprisingly, no published study into the impact of land reform on employment in South Africa could be found. This may be because of a lack of data on land reform projects and household employment.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

The term theoretical framework consists of two words, theory and framework, and Kerlinger (1986:9) defines a theory as "a set of interrelated constructs, definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables to explain and predict phenomena." A framework is "a set of ideas that you use when you are forming your decisions and judgments" (MacMillan English dictionary, 2002:561). A theory can be utilized to make predictions, and such ability helps researchers ask appropriate research questions. On the other hand, a framework "provides a structure within which the relationships between variables of a phenomenon are explained" (Molefe 2014:10). Grant & Osanloo (2014) defines the theoretical framework as the foundation in which knowledge is constructed. It's an essential part of the research procedure. Furthermore, a theoretical framework is described as a blueprint, which serves as a guide for a dissertation, and without it, the vision and the structure become unclear (Grant & Osanloo 2014). A theoretical framework works as a support structure for the study's rationale, problem statement, the purpose of the study, its significance, and the research questions (Grant & Osanloo 2014). In addition, basing research on a theoretical framework is essential because research is driven by a theory (Molefe 2014). It guides the researchers regarding all the research elements, such as connecting with existing literature (Smyth 2004), provides assumptions that guide research and helps the researcher select suitable research questions for the study (Miller 2007).

This study employed two theories – participatory democratic and nego- feminism as a viewing telescope through women's participation, and entrenched inequalities can be assessed. The fundamental reason for selecting participatory democratic theory for assessing women's participation in land reform is to showcase the importance of maxim participation, especially from the severely marginalized individuals by the Apartheid system. The participatory democratic theory will assist in describing and examining the politics of participation in women participating in government sectors and in sectors of society, which leads to social, economic, and political empowerment or marginalization. On the other hand, the employment of the nego-feminist theory is driven by the intention of the study to reveal the necessity for gender equality, mainly in African cultures. The theory is to provide the fundamentals on which gender equality in Africa is justified and grounded. It is argued that feminism in Africa is different from the rest of the world.

2.9 Participatory Democratic Theory

Participatory democratic theory is a specific theory of democracy that originated with Arnold S Kaufman's call for participatory politics (Kaufman, 1969; Hilmer, 2010). The basis of Kaufman's argument is that the remunerations of participatory politics are "the contribution it can make to the development of human power of thought, feeling, and action" (Kaufman 1969:184, Hilmer, 2010). Democratic activists would clearly explain Kaufman's arguments for participatory politics as participatory democracy (Hilmer 2010). Kaufman's argument of participatory politics is somewhat vague, unlike Pateman's argument, which drew from the political thoughts of the likes of J.J Rousseau and J.S Mill, in which he contracts the participatory theory with the pluralist and elite theories (Pateman, 1970, Hilmer, 2010). Pateman concludes that active participation allows the population to self-develop and stimulate positive psychological benefits, including feelings of political efficacy (Hilmer, 2010). According to Pateman, the perception of "participatory society requires that the term political scope should be extended to cover the spheres outside the national government" (Pateman, 1970: 104-105). Hilmer alludes that Pateman's research grows itself to the potential social, economic, and political system. A particular sector of society, specifically industry, has been democratized, and the citizens are educated and empowered by the democratic participation they partake in the workplace (Hilmer, 2010).

A few years after Pateman's research appeared, C.D Macpherson articulated a participatory democracy theory perspective, which functions through a parliamentary or congressional structure (Macpherson, 1977). According to Macpherson, participatory democracy aims to allow individuals to 'self-develop' while working for a more equitable and humane society. He sees it fit to democratize already existing traditional political institutions, which he perceives as not being democratized enough (Macpherson, 1977, Hilmer, 2010). Macpherson admits that there will be a form of a representative system that won't be direct democracy. He contributes to the theory with an attempt of describing a "pyramidal system with direct democracy at the base and delegate democracy at every level above that" (Macpherson, 1977: 108). The reality of Macpherson's argument is the more one goes up the pyramid, the less direct democracy participation is possible, and delegates would play the role of the citizen 'people' at higher levels of the pyramid. According to Hilmer, Macpherson's take on participatory democratic theory contains the core principles of the theory: direct participation of citizens in their workplace and communities and the "integration of political parties into the pyramidal structure" (Hilmer, 2010: 47). However, in his theory, Macpherson considers the excessive

effects that social and economic inequalities have in realizing participatory democracy (Hilmer, 2010).

Moreover, amongst other theorists who made their contributions to participatory democratic theory, Mansbridge made a distinctive contribution by highlighting a distinction between adversary and unitary democracy (Hilmer, 2010). Adversary democracy "assumes that citizen's interests are in constant conflict," and unitary democracy "assumes that citizens have a single common interest" (Mansbridge, 1980: 3). The realization of unitary democracy is ideal, but it's not always realistic or possible, especially in a modern democracy. As Pateman,s argument was centered around the workplace, a sector where existing undemocratic power structure could be replaced by worker ownership and democratic decision making. Several participatory democratic theorists argued that democratic participation influenced by Pateman's argument would produce great benefits that were unrealizable by conventional pluralist modes of democratic participation (Hilmer, 2010). Human beings would benefit psychologically by realizing their full potential; there is also a political benefit where citizens would experience the empowerment that will allow them to break free from apathy. The social benefit is mainly of the "private sphere" of society, specifically home and family life. Lastly, the economic benefit, where economic inequalities are acknowledged and addressed, and the workers have control over the aspects of their lives (Hilmer, 2010).

Lau Tse, a Chinese philosopher, argues that any form of participatory approaches includes inclusion, equal partnership, transparency, sharing power, sharing responsibility, empowerment, and cooperation of all people and representatives of all groups who will be affected by the outcome of decision making (Dennis, 1993; Conyers & Hill, 1990; & Dinbabo, 2003).

2.9.1 Application to the study

In the context of this study, the women of Emophela can be considered as a group of individuals whose participation may lead to self-development and empowerment. The democratic participatory approach to development is the participation and involvement of beneficiary groups to develop and strengthen the groups' capabilities and individuals who stand to benefit (Dinbabo, 2003). This leads to empowerment, self-transformation, and self-reliance, ensuring sustainability (Conyers & Hills, 1990; Dinbabo, 2003). Women have encountered numerous forms of marginalization in different spheres. The study seeks to understand the politics centered around women's participation. It is essential to employ a theory that advocates for

individuals or groups who need to be part of decision-making, take action, and be active in public speaking are willing and have self-rule.

The participation of women at Emophela can get more women into power for women to engage and have input about issues that concern their wellbeing. To be part of the decision body could assist women of Emophela in having a voice about land issues and the gap they experience in land access and control in the area. The setting of Emophela, which is a rural area, also has many cultural convictions that can be regarded as contributing factors to women not willing to be part of any decision-making body and 'take action' in the area.

The economic benefit advocated by the theory also makes it highly applicable to the study. The economic contributing factors associated with landless women in rural areas, and participation grants the people of Emophela an opportunity for economic inequality caused by lack of land access and control. In relation to the democratic participatory theory, such participation is part of development, 'self-development' and 'community development.' According to the theory, the women of Emophela can benefit greatly from participation as members of decision making. Women being involved in the making of decisions which concern their personal lives and that of their families can impact the livelihood of women. Full participation in community based programs by women of Emophela could have a great economic and social benefit.

2.10 The Concept of African Feminism (Nego Feminism)

The concept of feminism, in its most simple term, means opposing the patriarchal systems that reduce women to be lesser than men. According to Hooks (2010), patriarchal domination is the root of all other oppression, and feminism should be transformational to ending it. Within society, there are politics of male domination and males being superior to females, which has also influenced females' vast opportunities. Such politics has negatively impacted women's personal development because they are perceived as minors and incapable of making decisions concerning their lives or others' lives.

According to Korany, Sterb & Tong (1993), feminism consists of a theoretical paradigm and a movement. As a theory, it encourages and enhances women's emancipation in a society dominated by patriarchal values and beliefs. As a movement, it mobilized women's equality and emancipation within the patriarchal society (Korany, Sterb & Tong, 1993). The concept of African feminism provides pro-African interventions, which makes it of great importance to African women. Okome (1999) affirms the importance of using African feminism for African women by highlighting that Western feminism exhibit African women as weak and confused.

African feminism is critical to western feminist's concept and approaches toward African culture, which perceives it as barbaric and inhuman. The Nego-feminist theory provides western feminists with a pro-African perspective on African women and their realities.

In addition, this notion of feminism directly contrasts with how feminism has been practiced in the West. Therefore, Nnaemeka argues that African feminism is not western but is rooted in the African environment (Nnaemeka, 2004). African feminist theory should be built on the indigenous. As Claude Ake argued, indigenous people consider important in their lives and consider themselves authentic (Nnaemeka, 2004; Ake, 1988).

Nnaemeka defines nego-feminism as the feminism of negotiation and "no ego" feminism (Nnaemeka, 2004). She argues that the lived experiences of western feminists must not be the directive to navigating feminism and dictate how the theory should be applied in other parts of the world, especially Africa. Considering all the shared values in African cultures, there are negotiation principles, "give and take compromise, and balance" (Nnaemeka, 2004: 378). Nnaemeka assumes that negotiation has a double meaning, which is of giving and "takes/exchange," and "cope with successfully/go around" (Nnaemeka, 2004: 378). African feminism challenges through "compromise and negotiations," "it knows when, where, and how to detonate patriarchal land mines," and it also knows "when, where, and how to go around patriarchal land mines (Nnaemeka, 2004:378). It knows how, when, and where to negotiate with or negotiate around patriarchy in various contexts (Nnaemeka, 2004). Nego-feminism "also hopes to detach personal gain and pride from the overall goal of achieving equality for women, thus 'no ego' (Akin-Aina, 2011:71)

Nkealah (2016) alludes that women who have grown up in African societies that uphold similar values will embrace nego-feminism because it speaks to their ways of understanding the world. According to Oyewumi (2005), in understanding the social construction of gender, which outlines that all women across the universe are oppressed, it's essential to take into account the difference in histories, worldviews, and social organization around the world. The lived experiences of all women are then different for them to be viewed in the same telescope. Women's cultural experiences should inform and influence feminist theorization (Nkealah, 2016).

2.10.1 Key issues in African Feminism (Nego feminism)

Considering the several critical issues in African feminism, this study will focus on four of the main issues most relevant to gender inequalities and women empowerment—the issues of

patriarchy, race, tradition, and underdevelopment. African feminism is critical to the way's patriarchy devalue women through tradition, law, religion to keep women governed by men in all aspect of their lives, may it be private or public. The patriarchal system is devoted to male dominance and women's subordination. Sultana (2011) notes that patriarchy is the main obstacle to women's advancement, personal development, and personal empowerment. African society, influenced by ritual customs and traditions, gives absolute priority to men and, to a certain extent, limits women's human rights (2011:1). The male-female imbalance is not the only obstacle that affects African women, but also racial hierarchies and the political dynamics that come with it. African feminist aims to reconstruct roles and conditions that influenced both African men and women to depend on the colonizers in many ways.

African history is also identified by male dominance, and women are subordinated and devalued in relation to men. African patriarchal systems subordinated women in numerous ways, like the institution of polygamy, widow abuse, and women having absolutely no access or control over property and power in the traditional setting. African feminism does not seek to do away with culture but instead creates a conducive platform for both men and women in society. Tradition and culture are very important to African feminism because their perseverance sets African women apart from western women. Underdevelopment has been the biggest challenge for the African continent. Providing basic needs and services for both men and women has been a challenge—poverty issues have broadly impacted women due to gender imbalance.

2.10.2 Application to the Study

This theory applies to this study to explain the critical issues of African Feminism. This study adopts nego-feminism as a form of thought developed from the overview of African feminism. It looks at women who reside in an underdeveloped rural area (Emophela), which is communal. Nego-feminism emphasizes the phenomenon of negotiation, which this study adopts because it aims at providing harmony and shared understanding between constitutional and traditional practices that involve land access for women, which usually demonstrate certain forms of tension. This theory is applicable due to the emphasis it places on the value of respect for culture and tradition. The idea of the development and liberation of women requires the presence of men, and this theory advocate for that, it places aside ego and introduces the concept of negotiation, which places the women of Emophela in a position to be able to partake in land issues and issues of entrenched inequalities.

Table 1: Alignment of Theoretical frameworks with Research Questions

Research Question	Theories
What are the politics of women's participation and empowerment in land reform?	Participatory Democratic
What is the relationship between land reform and women's empowerment?	Participatory Democratic
What are the obstacles to women's participation in land reform?	Participatory Democratic/ Nego-Feminsim
What is the level of women's participation in land reform at Emophela?	Participatory Democratic
What are the benefits associated with land reform in empowering women?	Nego-feminism/ Participatory Democratic
What is the impact of land reform on minimizing socio-economic problems faced by women?	Nego-Feminism
What contribution of land in addressing inequality and poverty?	Nego-Feminism
To what extent does the land reform process create a conducive space for empowering women to food security?	Participatory democratic/Nego-Feminism

2.11 Chapter Summary

The benefits of land reform to women is endless and undeniable. Although there are many programmes in place worldwide to ensure women secure rights to land as well as programmes to address gender inequality, the women's willingness to participate in such programmes has been questioned. In South Africa, many women from rural areas refrain from any form of participation, which might be perceived as undermining men in the area. What has been identified in the previous literature is that the focus has been the role the state and government

play in addressing issues of gender inequality. This study has expanded on the research that has been done by focusing on the politics of women's participation and the role women play in participation in land reform and entrenched gender inequalities. This chapter reviewed literature which deals with land reform from an engendered perspective and women's rights.

Furthermore, the chapter included the theoretical frameworks on which the study is founded upon. It also provides the application of both participatory democratic theory and African Feminism (Nego-Feminism) to the study. The theories are relevant to the study because they advocate for equality and participation, leading to self-development. This is relevant because the research focuses on the politics of women's participation in land reform and entrench inequalities. Participatory Democratic Theory was used to explain women's participation and the impact participation has on development regarding individuals, the community, and land. The Nego-Feminism Theory was used to explain the issue of entrenched inequalities women are likely to experience regarding land access, ownership, and control at Emophela. The next chapter focuses on the research methods and methodology utilized in this study.

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methods and techniques that were engaged in this study. These methods assisted the researcher in seeking answers to questions that were proposed. According to Kothari (2004), research methodology is a systematic procedure and a theoretical analysis of the methods applied in a study field. Bhattacherjee perceives "research methodology as a standardized set of techniques for building scientific knowledge, such as how to make valid observations, how to interpret results, and how to generate those results" (2012:5). The methodology allows the researcher to test existing theories and prior findings (Bhattacherjee, 2012) independently and impartially. A research design is an essential aspect of methodology and research as a whole. They are centered on the end-product in the sense of what kind of study is being conducted, and what sort of results will be achieved (Van Wyk 2014). This research relied on empirical information to fulfil the aim of the study. The first section of this chapter will explain the study's research design and the rationale behind selecting the research design. The second section focuses on the research method that the study used to explain the politics of women's participation in and entrenched inequalities in land reform and how the selected methods are best suited for the study. The third section provides an account of the research procedure adopted, which informs the study's context, sampling procedures and methods, and data collection. The fourth section outlines data analysis, which is NVivo, followed by an overview of the methods to ensure trustworthiness. This chapter is concluded by an overview of ethical considerations employed by the study's research, which are ethical principles of UKZN's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC).

3.2 Qualitative Research Design

The researcher employed a qualitative research design for the study because the study aimed at obtaining a deeper meaning on the issue of women's participation in land reform as well as obtain their experiences of the entrenched inequalities regarding land access in the study area. Qualitative research design enables the researcher to interpret a given datum that can also be socially interpreted. According to Fox & Bayat (2007), qualitative research design provides an exceptional perception and understanding of the respondent's experience. The study's primary goal is to gain information about the women of Emophela in their natural setting and the meaning they attached to their everyday life events. The qualitative research design was

suitable for the study. Qualitative research allows the researcher to view the world through the participants' eyes and compile information that is descriptive and rich (Neuman, 2014). Unlike quantitative research, which is mainly about the estimate and using figures to prove or disprove a hypothesis, it qualitatively utilizes strict control of variables. It focuses on static reality while grounded in the positivist worldview (York, 1998 cited in Sonubi, 2011).

3.3 The area of the study

The study was conducted in Emophela in Hammarsdale, located under eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality (Durban) in KwaZulu Natal (KZN). KwaZulu Natal is the second-largest province by population after Gauteng, and according to Stats SA (2019), the population is estimated at 11 289 086. According to the KZN budget summary 2019/20, KwaZulu Natal is one of the main contributing provinces in the national gross domestic product (GDP). There is a larger unemployment rate among females at 29.5 % compared to males at 25.1%. The Province of KZN has ten district municipalities, which are mostly rural and only one metro. The capital city of KZN is Pietermaritzburg under uMsunduzi local municipality in uMgungundlovu district.

Hammarsdale is situated approximately 50 kilometres from the city of Durban in the district of Camperdown. According to Mjwara (2014), the town is famous for its historical political conflict among the ruling chiefs in the 1960s. Mpumalanga Township, Hammarsdale, was then established on the land that belonged to the missionaries (Mjwara, 2014). In the 1980s, Hammarsdale was then divided into sections: Woody Glen, Mpumalanga, Sankontshe, Georgedale, and Mophela (Moesetsa 2005 sited in Mjwara, 2014). The township area is divided into sections and units, consisting of four-bedroom houses with enough space for a small garden to plant food for household consumption. The area of Hammarsdale is still surrounded by communities that are still ruled by traditional leaders and izinduna (Mjwara, 2014).

The area of Emophela is a rural area that is under the local chief, iNkosi uMkhize. This study was conducted in the Southern part of the province, eMophela. Along with other surrounding areas such as eSankontshe, eMophela is a communal land under Ingonyama Trust, and several traditional practices are observed in this area. Traditional leaders (local chiefs) play a prominent role in administering resources in the area. The area of eMophela has approximately 1003 households.

Figure 3.1 Map showing the location of eMophela in Hammarsdale

Image taken from Google Images, 2010

The decision to choose eMophela as the study area was informed by numerous factors such as the area being communal land and black dominated. The area was also chosen because there has been little to no studies done in the area. The area is one of the deep rural areas around Hammarsdale, apart from the eHlanzeni area under ward 1. The entrenched political complexities of this area are what made it an area of interest.

3.4 Study Population

The proposed study population were women who are head of the household of all age groups, educational status, of the same race, and women who are married or nonmarried. Considering the phenomenon of a culture centred around the concept of being a head of the household, the study discovered a discrepancy in married women being head of household (still to be discussed in chapter 5). The study population then consists of women who are not married, either never married or widowed. The women are part of the community of Emophela, where half of the 1003 households are headed by women.

3.5 Sample Procedure

According to LoBiondo-Wood & Haber (1998:250), "the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population is known as sampling." The study consists of twenty-two (22) participants. The proposed participants consisted of 20 women from Emophela, the Chief, and a representative from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. The women were recruited in the nearby local tuck-shop owned by the chief, which also happens to be next to the local clinic, which became an advantage. The women were selected according to their willingness and availability to participate in the study.

Sampling is a prominent component of research because of the important impact on the quality of the findings (Neuman, 2014). The study utilized the non-probability sampling technique (purposive sampling). Purposive sampling aims to focus on specific characteristics that are of interest and will best enable the researcher to answer the research questions. It solely relies on the researcher's judgment when selecting units that are to be utilized for the study. The type of purposive sampling the study used was homogeneous sampling (Suri, 2011). Purposive sampling was employed for this study as the researcher used her knowledge of the population, as well as the elements, and nature of the research aims. In homogeneous sampling, units are specifically chosen based on them having similar characteristics that are of interest to the study. The study's initial participants comprised the local Chief of Emophela, a representative of the department of rural development and land reform, and women who are specifically head of household, married or unmarried, and resides in the area of Emophela. Due to the type of data collected and the need for clarification (to be further discussed in chapter four), a member of the eThekwini municipality was added to the sample.

The final research sample size included one local chief (Traditional leader), one representative from the department of rural development and land reform, one representative from eThekwini municipality, and twenty women who are head of household that are unmarried (never married and widowed). There were 13 women who were never married and 7 of the women participants were widowed.

The total sample size ended up being twenty-three due to the added participant from eThekwini Municipality. The sample size was suitable for the study because, for qualitative research, a large sample size can distort the findings by having a repetition of responses, especially in this case, the largest sample size having the same characteristics. All the women in the different focus groups had different experiences regarding land acquisition for women at Emophela.

This sample size of twenty-three was motivated by Creswell's (1997) argument that 20 to 30 participants are a good number that can allow the researcher to reach a saturation point, whereby no more ideas may emerge.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

According to Powell & Single (1996:499), "a focus group is a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research. Focus groups were utilized to generate information on the collective views of the women who are head of household and the role they play in land reform. Four focus groups took place at Emophela at the clinic, which was the venue provided by the local chief. Each focus group consisted of five women, each who were all head of household and unmarried. Due to the area, the focus groups were taking place, more women unaware wanted to be part of it, but the sample size required was reached.

The study also utilized in-depth interviews as a data collection tool. Interviews are usually between two individuals to explore their beliefs, motivations, and experiences based on specific phenomena. Interviews provide a deeper understanding of a social phenomenon, and they are essential in acquiring detailed insights when required from individual participants (Gill *et al*., 2008). This data collection method is guided by questions that the interviewee needs to answer for the information to be generated. Semi-structured interviews also "enable the interviewer and the interviewee to pursue an idea or response in more detail" (Gill *et al*., 2008:1). In this study, the researcher used open-ended interview questions to generate a richer understanding of women's participation and entrenched inequalities in land reform. The local chief, the representative from the department of rural development and land reform, and the eThekwini municipality representative were interviewed for this study. The in-depth interview sessions with these respondents generated information based on different questions formulated grounded on the perspective and information required from each respondent. Using this data collection tool enabled the researcher to understand the phenomenon of women's land access, acquisition, and control on communal land and efforts of the local municipality in assisting the women.

In the study a pseudonym was utilized to protect the identities of the participants. The purpose of a pseudonym is to protect the confidentiality of the respondents (Creswell, 2013). The study used the term respondents to refer to the participants in the study. Due to the challenges and limitations discussed in 3.10, it was important that the study refers to the individuals who

participated in this study as 'respondents. This is an ethical requirement of research which are discussed under ethical considerations.

3.7 Data Analysis

For a qualitative study, data analysis is a vital part of the research. This essential part has assisted the researcher in summarizing collected data, which includes data interpretation. The data was collected using analytical and logical reasoning to understand relationships, trends, and patterns. The study used NVivo to analyze the collected data. NVivo provided tools that helped the research sort out data as part of the qualitative study analysis. According to Bazeley & Jackson (2013), NVivo is meant to help the researcher manage data by organizing and keeping track of the records that make up qualitative projects.

Thematic analysis is also used in the study to present data to classify and describe how the participants understand the level of participation of women in land reform and their lived experiences of the entrenched inequalities concerning land reform. Although the study utilized NVivo as a data analysis tool, the software does not fully analyze data with the aim of presentation but sorts out the data collected. The thematic analysis then helped the researcher present the data in appropriate themes by identifying and analyzing themes that emerged from the focus groups and the in-depth interviews (Neuman, 2014).

3.8 Strategies Employed to Ensure trustworthiness

Since this is a qualitative study, the trustworthiness of the findings must be established. Qualitative studies usually rely on established metrics as instruments for validity and reliability. This study utilized qualitative strategies to ensure trustworthiness. These include transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirmability.

3.8.1 Transferability

According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), transferability in qualitative research is the degree to which the findings can be transferred to other settings or contexts with other respondents. They argue that research can achieve this by facilitating transferability judgment by a potential user through thick description (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). It is essential in qualitative research that the researcher states the extent to which their findings may or may not be relevant to other contexts (Moon *et al.*, 2016). In this study, the researcher also used thick descriptions to demonstrate that the findings can be relevant in different conditions, settings, and circumstances. The type of sampling utilized in the study enhanced the transferability of findings. Purposive sampling, which was used in this study, enhanced transferability because

participants who were encultured and provided rich and informative information were selected, which increased the findings' transferability.

3.8.2 Credibility

Korstjens and Moser (2018) state that research credibility is the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. Credibility is one of the essential methods for ensuring trustworthiness in research. Lincoln & Guba (1985) state that credibility establishes whether the research findings present plausible information drawn from the participants' data and is the perfect interpretation of their views and beliefs. This is an issue of accuracy and being precise. To have more believable findings, the researcher utilized methods to ensure credibility, such as the use of multiple sources of data. Other methods that were used were prolonged engagements and persistent observation (Long & Johnson, 2000). The researcher spent extensive time with the participants during the interviews to enhance credibility and establish rapport with the findings. Furthermore, a persistent observation was ensured to obtain holistic information and knowledge about different aspects of the study.

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability in research can be referred to as the consistency and the reliability of the findings and the extent to which the research procedures can be documented (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Dependability allows other researchers outside the research to audit and critique the research process. This strategy emphasizes the importance of documentation of research design and implementation, including the research methodology and all data collection details such as field notes and memos. Dependability encompasses the aspect of consistency of the study's findings with other researchers. For example, if another researcher is to replicate the study under similar procedures, the findings they are to obtain should be similar or comparable. In this study, the supervisor acted as the dependability auditor and examined as well as reviewed the research procedures, analytical process, and the collected data to make sure if the study is to be repeated, the findings will be consistent. The researcher also used a digital audio recorder for the focus group as well as the interviews. This ensures that the participants' responses and the information are recorded, transcribed, and presented according to how the participants have expressed themselves rather than writing the response where there are chances that the researchers will their own words, thoughts, and ideas.

3.8.4 Confirmability

According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), confirmability is mainly about neutrality. Confirmability in research is associated with the degree to which the findings can be corroborated or confirmed by other researchers. Korstjens & Moser (2018) argue that the interpretation of findings should not be based on the researcher's preferences and viewpoints, but they need to be grounded in the data. As part of the trustworthiness strategies, confirmability is focused on the process of interpretation, which is part of the analysis. Both confirmability and dependability are part of the audit trail (Korstjen & Moser, 2018). The emphasis is on the researcher being able to avoid any form of bias when presenting the findings in the study. In this study, the findings are based on the participants' responses, and the researcher's interpretation of the participant's informative responses was not influenced by any form of bias to fit specific narratives or the researcher's motives. The researcher utilized an audit trail to ensure confirmability. The researcher did so by providing a full detail of the procedure followed during data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation, done in this chapter.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research are essential, and the ones that were adhered to in this study emanate from different bodies. This research was conducted ethically to avoid any form of deception and misinterpretation in dealing with the Chief and the women of Emophela. The researcher ensured that the right to voluntary participation and informed consent were adhered to during the research process. The consent forms were translated to IsiZulu because it is the language which the participants understood and referred to as their mother tongue. The consent form was explained to the participants who can't read. The participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from participating in the study anytime they wish to do so or felt uncomfortable. The participants were assured that their privacy was going to be respected. Instead of their names being used for the study, pseudonyms were used. The researcher received permission from the participants to use an audio recorder. It was explained to the participants that the recordings would be kept safe and private, and only the researcher will have access to them. All the personal details of the participants acquired during the study were kept in confidence. Once the study has been completed, it will be destroyed after certain years as per University rules and ethical requirements.

The University of KwaZulu Natal Research Ethics Policy has required standards of conduct and principles to be followed when conducting a research study. Ethics is essential in research, especially in field related research, because it protects the researcher and the participants from

any potential harm. The institution (UKZN) has its ethical policies and principles requirements. The researcher ensured that this study adhered to the University's Research Ethics Policy to avoid any violation of ethical codes. The researcher applied for ethical clearance, followed all the necessary procedures, and no data collection occurred before clearance was granted. Since the study involved Emophela and its personnel, a gatekeeper's letter was obtained from the local Chief granting permission to conduct research in the area.

3.10 Challenges and Limitations

Saunders *et al.* (2009) argue that research procedures utilized in a study are fundamental to the findings' essence. Hence, they are recognized as the backbone of the research. One of the data collection methods utilized for this study (the focus group discussion) was one of the challenges the researcher encountered for data collection. The focus groups' participants were available for a limited amount of time and gathering them in the same venue where they all felt comfortable was also a challenge. Notably, one of the challenges was the misunderstanding and the confusion that occurred with other community members. The researcher was regarded as an official from the government rather than a student collecting data.

In the study, four focus groups consisting of five participants in each group were anticipated, but one group ended with eight participants who voluntarily wanted to participate in the study. The focus group ended up not finishing the session due to the participants being uncomfortable with the kind of information that was being shared. This limited the focus groups' information, as most of them shared similar responses and did not share their true personal points of view. Moreover, the interviews, as well as the focus groups, were conducted in IsiZulu. When that specific data was translated to English for analysis, its significance, especially for the focus groups, were lost as IsiZulu cannot be directly translated.

In the study it was discovered in the study that the issue of land at Emophela is a sensitive topic among the community. The majority of the women who participated in the study only holding secondary education which exposed the limitations of this study. The women were afraid to fully express their experiences and reality about their land access under traditional leadership. Some of the older women did not fully comprehend the extent of the study. The researcher had to continuously reassure them that their names will be kept confidential and that they can withdraw from the study anytime they wished to do so.

3.11 Summary chapter

This chapter delivered information about research methodology and focused on the methods used to conduct this study. In nature, this is a qualitative study; it used focus groups and in-depth interviews to collect data. Furthermore, this chapter included selecting sampling procedures and methods and explained how data was recorded and the methods used to organize and analyze data. It also included the ethical standards that guided the study, the strategies used to ensure trustworthiness, and briefly included the challenges and limitations the researcher encountered.

Chapter Four

Politics of women's participation in land reform

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on the women's experiences in relation to their participation in land reform at Emophela. This section of data analysis followed guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke (2006) on how qualitative data is analysed. Codes were developed which were aligned to the objectives of the study. This was done to keep the study's focus and gather the information relevant to the topic. Codes were identified and grouped, and themes were developed.

The discrimination and denial of women having access and ownership can be traced back to the colonial era that created a norm of women as landless, with no resources, with head of household responsibilities, and no means of providing for their children. Songca (2018) argues that women's contribution to the liberation struggle and their fight for land is mostly unacknowledged. Their involvement in the liberation struggle is always associated with a male lineage in their struggle for land.

There is vast literature available on women's access, control, and ownership of land with respect to their participation in land reform. Different factors influence the level of women's participation in the land, which includes cultural and traditional practices, which play a significant role when assessing the level of women's participation in land reform. Songca (2018) highlights that patriarchal, political, and legislative framework together undermines women's rights and entitlement to land, which automatically undermines their participation. Women's participation in land reform is also cemented in a large bowl of politics, which tends to question women's ability to acquire and maintain land. Various studies have shown that women from rural areas vary from each region but maintain that the factors that influence women's experiences remain the same. Women's land rights remain one of the most important keys towards women's economic, political, and social liberation (Akinola, 2018). Aiming to understand and analyze women's experiences from Emophela, focus groups were conducted with the women from the area. Extracting from their narratives and recounts as presented in this chapter, the study found that most women face issues of access to residential land and the issue of women's unwillingness to participate.

4.2 Nature of women's participation

The first theme that was identified responds to this study's objective, which was to 'assess the level of women's participation in land reform.' Taking the mentioned objective into account, subthemes were then identified, including the meaning of participation and women of Emophela's participation experience. In the following section, the participants provide their understanding of how they understand the concept of participation.

4.2.1 The meaning of participation

One of the main focuses of this paper is the politics of women's participation in land reform; hence, it was important to understand the participants regarding participation and land reform. In the focus groups, the participants had similar perspectives on the understanding of participation. The response showed that they have a certain level of understating of what participation is:

"First of all, participation is about being able to access information and getting involved. It involves expressing and our voices being heard" (Grp 2, respondent 8)

"Participation is based on change, and participation is also based on motive, the reason one participates and the change the participation is going to bring to everyone" (Grp 4, respondent 17)

A respondent from the traditional council defined participation and said:

"Participation is about willingness, whoever wants to engage or gets involved in something, a particular project for whatever reason, that participation." (Respondent 21)

The definition provided by the respondents showcased patterns around the definition of participation, which includes involvement, contribution/engagement, change, and willingness. Their perception coincided with the view that participation is about involving people in bringing about social change (World Bank, 1966; Rifikin & Kangere, 2002). Participation is about the voluntary contribution to programs without necessarily shaping the programs (Rifikin & Kangere, 2002). Participation is well centered around the notion that it will better the lives of or develop the individuals or groups involved in that particular program or project. Putzel (2004) argues that participation is politically mobilized, so, for the public to take action in public issues such as health, education, equal opportunity, and peace, there is a need for public action, which requires mobilization. The argument is similar to the perception respondents gave

regarding participation; as members of the community and public, they need to be organized to bring effective change.

4.2.2 Women of Emophela's experience of participation

To understand the nature of women's participation at Emophela, it's important to locate the general experiences of the women of Emophela with regard to participation. In the focus group, the participants were asked to share their experiences with regard to public/community participation and how they believe the participation of women has improved the standard of living in the area. From the participants' responses, it was clear that their participation was associated with the existing power (Chief & ward councilor) and how well they can co-exist and cooperate. Mhlanga's (2012) study found that traditional leaders and wards councilors facilitate public participation and engagement. Hence, they become the ones who, more especially the ward councilor, are responsible for service delivery and development.

The respondents expressed that the working relationship between the Chief and the ward councilor did not create a conducive space for the public, especially women, to participate. The political conflict in the area alone caused by party politics create intimidation and fear, and the men are usually the most active individuals on the ground. This finding is aligned with Casas-Arce and Saiz's argument (2011) that political parties or political party representatives restrict women's participation by voter's preference. This intimidates women partaking in any form of participation that involves women being part of decision-making. This is possible because, in political parties, men are usually with power.

"Political parties have their people, it's not like someone can just go and partake in something. We get recruited, you need to know people who know people, and you also need to know your place" (Grp 3, respondent 14).

Across the focus groups, all the respondents expressed how they usually "let things be" because of the political setting in the area. Participation engagement processes are informed by whose perspective and voices are permitted to participate and, in every community, especially in communal areas with pre-existing power. In the case of Emophela, what is regarded as the existing power is the traditional leader (Chief), elected to power during local government elections and is a member of the traditional council, and the ward council. In the literature, Kapingura & Mlambo (2019) stated participation engagement processes are informed by those whose perspectives and voices are permitted in community issues, especially in communal areas where there is pre-existing power.

In the focus group conducted, the participants revealed that they usually attend meetings and provide their ideas, but it just "ends in the air." The respondents felt excluded in the decision-making processes; and some of those decisions directly affected their lives. In the literature, Kapingura and Mlambo advocated for women to have an active form of participation at all decision-making levels and political engagements, hence, it is essential to achieve inclusive perspectives and experiences in decision-making processes (Kapingura &Mlambo, 2019). In settings such as community meetings called for by the ward councilor or the traditional council, a respondent further revealed that there is little input welcomed though everyone is invited to the meetings.

"We go to meetings because we are members of the community, but when we get there, we are not taken seriously; we are seat fillers. The meetings themselves are of no use to us" (Grp2, respondent 9)

The study also found that the perception of participation holds the weight of reason, why participation needs to take place, and who stands to gain from the act of participation. The respondents highlighted that participation in the area is in line with what one aims to gain from participating or what the people in power are willing to give. One participates where they know they can benefit; one of the respondents emphasized this point and said:

"The fact that we are here today, partaking in this study which won't materially benefit us in any way, it's not normal, we go and attend things and come back with food parcels, something tangible or things to do with issues which directly concern us" (Grp1, respondent 2)

The research found that the women of Emophela have a passive form of participation. They fully recognize how meaningful effective participation is in empowering the members of the community. The OECD (2018a) states that full and effective participation of the public, especially women in any sphere to better their lives, is a matter of human rights, development, and inclusive growth. The respondents' experiences regarding participation deprive them of any self-development, growth, and empowerment, which Pateman advocates for in the Participatory Democratic theory, where he states that active participation by the public stimulates positive psychological benefits (Hilmer, 2010).

Contrary to the respondents' experiences on women participation at Emophela, respondent 21 (a member of the traditional council) revealed that the women's participation depends on their willingness and highlighted that the women are unwilling to participate in anything to improve their socio-economic status. Their unwillingness has resulted in a high level of poverty.

"I have suggested that they come together as women and form a co-op which will assist them in being able to participate as a collective in starting a business, have one voice in issues concerning women, but they seem to have no interest" (Respondent 21)

However, the perspectives on the nature of participation differ drastically from the respondent (a member of the traditional council) and that of the focus group. The respondent revealed that the women of Emophela have a passive form of participation. This, he deems them lazy and unproductive. The chief described the nature of women's participation at Emophela to be of unwilling behavior and inactive. The respondent further revealed that the women expect to serve things on a 'silver platter' rather than going out of their way to engage in community projects to better their lives.

The respondent described the nature of women's participation in the area to be ineffective in bringing about change. The respondent expressed that the exclusion is due to the ineffectiveness of the women's participation and argues that the women only exhibit interest in projects but never take the initiative to participate. This has caused a lot of tension among the women in the area because it seems to be only a few who benefit from developmental projects meant for everyone. Pateman's argument in the Participatory Democratic Theory suggests that active participation would produce great and remarkable psychological benefits, leading them to realize their full potential (Hilmer, 2010)

4.3 Nature of Women's land ownership/access at Emophela

This theme presents the nature of women's land access at Emophela. This section will first provide the demographics of the women respondents who participated in this study. The demographics include age and land ownership status. Below is the graph which showcases the age of the women who are head of household who participated in this study.

Figure 4.1 The Age category of the women respondents in the study
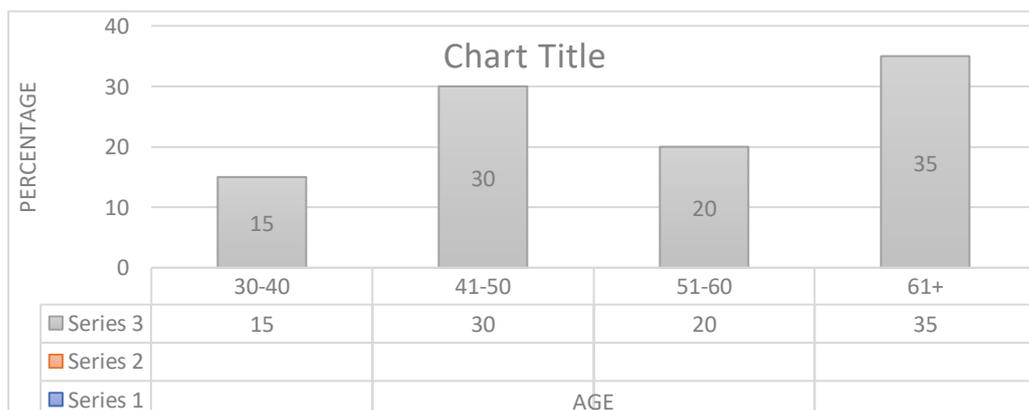
The above graph represents the age distribution of the women respondents who participated in this study. To understand the nature of women's land access at Emophola, it is essential for the study to present the participants' demographic characteristics (age). The graph indicates that 15% of the respondents who participated were between the ages of 30-40, 30% of the respondents were between the ages of 41-50 participated. The graph also exhibits that 20% of the respondents who participated are between the ages of 51-60, and 35% of the respondents who participated are 61 years or more.

The pie chart below shows the number of women respondents who participated in the study who holds land ownership and women respondents who are land subletting.

Figure 4.2 Land ownership status of women respondents
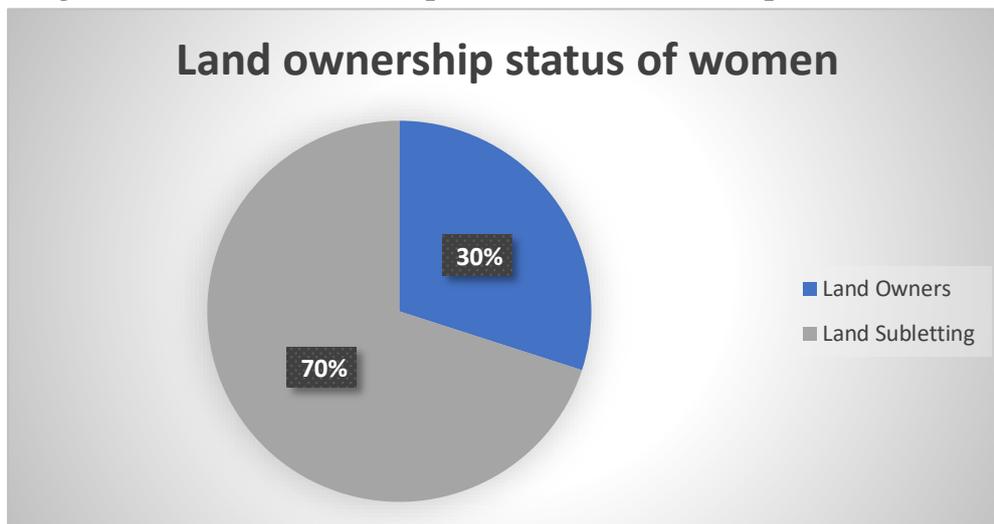
The pie chart above depicts the land ownership status of the women respondents who participated in this study. This chart shows that 30% of the women respondents own the land they reside in, while 70% of the women respondent are subletting their land. This indicates that women are in dire need of land at Emophela. The women respondents highlighted that some families at Emophela own and control large pieces of land which they then sublet to the landless. The land is believed to have belonged to their forefathers and has a strong ancestral hold.

Stiftung (2013) states that the lack of land ownership amongst women denies them the social, economic, and political autonomy essential for full membership in a given society. The majority of the focus group respondents mentioned that they do not have any form of land

ownership. The respondents who own land bought it after they were chased away by their deceased husband families, inherited the land from their husbands, or were the last responsible elder in the family accountable for the land. In the new democratic South Africa, every citizen, despite their gender or ethnicity, or even age, has a right to equitable access to land (Akinola, 2018). The respondents revealed that as heads of households, many household responsibilities fall onto their lap. Without land ownership, which allows women to build permanent residential structures, women cannot build permanent homes for their children.

Land ownership presents a person's identity, citizenship, and social standing, and for women, it holds implications at the national, family, and household level (Stiftung, 2013). The main issue facing the women of Emophela regarding land ownership is that they are subleasing the land they are currently residing in. They pay a certain amount of money every year. This amount differs from one landlord to another. Considering the status of women's land ownership at Emophela, the respondents highlight that women's land ownership influences women's participation.

4.4 Factors contributing to the lack of women's participation in land reform at Emophela

Issues associated with women's involvement in land reform or any issue that concerns women's land access have been very complex in customary rural South Africa. The respondents revealed that many factors determine who is allocated land. Literature shows that women having the power to access, and control land remains one of the most important sites for achieving sustainable livelihood and improving the political, social, and economic realities of African women. Stiftung (2013) articulates that having access to land does not only give one access to source of food, income, and employment but provides social prestige and access to political power.

Dery (2016) maintains that women's access to and control over land continues to be a contentious issue in political, economic, and social discourses in sub-Saharan Africa. The issue of access to, ownership, and control over land does encompass the issue of development and the issue of fundamental human rights. A study conducted in Ghana on land issues showed that access to and control over land plays a critical role in shaping different interest groups' livelihood and bargaining status (Dery, 2016). Many scholars have argued that land is critical in rural women's lives, and despite women's participation in the agricultural labor force and

agro-processing activities, access and control of such resources are usually premised on gender-erected binaries (Dery, 2016).

This theme explores factors that contribute to the lack of women's participation in the land at Emophela. Numerous respondents revealed that the factors highlighted under this theme had been the barriers that have actively prevented women of Emophela from participating in land reform. The following sub-themes were identified.

4.4.1 Lack of policy implementation

Within the formal and informal legal systems lies a system of violation against women's rights to land access. Various laws regulate women's right to land, and they are not enough to secure the women's right to land (Dery, 2016). The implementations and effectiveness of these systems highly depend on the awareness and social acceptance of the systems, including how traditional practices and cultural norms are practiced in a stand of formal law. The prominent issue that arises is the lack of policy of implementation which influences women's land reform participation. The participants explained that:

"The issue as the department we have been having is that there are policies that are in place to ensure women's equal access to land, but the challenge is implementation and the lack of monitoring systems" (Respondent 22, Dept RDLR).

The above comment reveals that even the structures the government placed, and the policies cannot monitor the policies in place to ensure that women have equal access to land. The government passed the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act in 2000. The Act's objectives were to eliminate discrimination, as outlined in the Constitution, to promote equality (Mann, 2000). In section 8 of the Act, it states that all forms of gender discrimination is prohibited, including the system which prevent women from inheriting family property, and any form of practice that includes a traditional, customary, or religious practice that violates the dignity of women and undermines equality (Mutangudura, 2004). However, regardless of such Act in place, women's access and security to land depend on whether or not she can persuade the authorities of her need (Mutangudura, 2004). This exhibits that regardless of laws and policies in law to ensure equality, the lack of implementation and monitoring of those laws and policies leave women vulnerable to discrimination. The respondents revealed that since they reside in customary land, their chance of becoming landowners is dependent on the traditional powers in the area. According to the IDLO, policies are implemented without thought and active participation of diverse groups of women. There is an impactful conflict

between constitutional policies and traditional practices for rural women in communal areas. Under South African constitution, policies aim to promote equality across the aboard, gender equality being one of the prominent features of the policies. Ibhawoh (2000) argues that these policies are basic human rights. The practice of traditional practices tends to undermine constitutional policies and also undermine equal land rights. Thi

4.4.2 Land Inheritance and cultural Practice

In African customary law, patriarchy is often considered a principal element in the inheritance practice (Tebbes, 2008). Women have experienced exclusion from inheriting property and barred from having traditional leadership positions (Tebbes, 2008). The study found that land inheritance practices limit women's land access at Emophela. The respondents revealed that:

"Most of the time, us women when we get married, we move into our husband's home. When he passes away, we are left to deal with a lot of inheritance and most of the time we don't get any rights to that land, and we get chased away by our in-laws" (Grp2, Respondent 6)

Inheritance practice usually involves women who are widowed. Still, they also include daughters who are not eligible to inherit their parents' land because they have brothers. The respondents revealed that the intimate disputes in land inheritance usually involve the heads of the families or the traditional council.

"Women in rural areas under the customary rule are part of what the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform consider as the vulnerable group when land is distributed. The main cause of this issue is there are women with children, and they do not have access to land. Most of them were married, and due to the inheritance practice in those areas, they don't own land. I, myself, come from the same situation, my husband died when I was very young, and my in-laws forced me to either marry his brother or leave. I chose to leave" (Respondent 22, DRDLR)

The above comment reveals that inheritance practices in many intimate families are a contributing factor in the level of women's access to land at Emophela. The study found that there is also a cultural belief that land is and will always remain the property of their forefathers. This chain of thought perpetuates the inheritance practices which take place. Akinola (2018) notes that societies give preferences to sons over daughters, men over women as custodians of the land, and other properties. These forms of traditional inheritance practices exhibit a deeply entrenched gender inequality, as discussed in chapter 5.

Land inheritance practice has affected the women in one way or another, as widows and as single/ never married women from Emophela. The respondents revealed that being household heads is dependent on their marital status, bearing in mind that the focus group consisted of women who are widowed, grandmothers, and single women. They highlighted that culturally, they could not be household heads if they are married, even if the women are responsible for the household and everyone residing in it

The control of inheritance by the in-laws or male relatives is an inheritance practice that is common across Africa, and traditional leaders play an essential role in maintaining traditional doctrines and norms. Because of culture, the respondents maintained that women are not allowed to inherit the land after their husbands' death, and they are also not allowed to inherit their family land since they are daughters, not sons. Akinola (2013) poses that the cultural limitation of actualizing women's right to property evolved from indigenous law and traditional practices. The following respondent shared their perspective on the effect traditional practices have on women's participation.

"Traditional practices are the major reason around women's participation in rural areas, and they don't participate because their voices are not heard due to traditional and cultural practices" (Respondent 22, Dept RDLR).

The respondent of the traditional council revealed that this is how the inheritance practice has been conducted and it is the law, mentioning the role democracy plays in converting those practices to accommodate the narrative of women equality. In a study conducted in Ghana by Cooper (2010), in an event where a women's partner dies, the women cannot use the land to claim the inheritance to the house or any other properties they shared, although they contributed towards its acquisition.

4.4.3 Decision-making power

Women have made exceptional contributions to almost every aspect of society (Hoque & Itohara, 2009). Opare (2005) argues that society would benefit significantly if women had adequate access to decision-making opportunities. In developing nations, women play an essential role in the family's welfare, as mothers, and homemakers (Alam, 2015).

Furthermore, women assuming community leadership positions would provide them with an opportunity to initiate projects and activities that would change their subordination (Opare, 2005). Based on gender, women have had limited decision power despite their importance in family decision power (Alam, 2015).

Rural women have minimal leadership positions in traditional counsels, which has resulted in them having no voice in the council. This study found that part of women's lack of participation comes from failing to have an adequate say in the decision-making process. Women continue to lack secure access to land, and the lack of their presence in traditional councils does not improve their land access status. The Participatory Democratic Theory outlines that the participation of an individual in decision making brings self-development and self-empowerment. As women, their lack of decision-making power impacts not only their participation but also the influences of participation on them as individual.

The respondents revealed that women do not have secure land rights, and that is due to being ignored by those in power. The major economic decisions which involve development in the area exclude women's contribution. The widowers revealed that while married, they did not have any form of decision power, which did not necessarily make them feel disempowered but secure. They only realized the level of disempowerment they were under after their spouses passed on. The cry of women to make their own decisions and be part of decision-making power is evidence from the respondents. They have traced this form of subordination back to their homestead. As young girls, they had to report to their fathers as the ones with the decision power. Entering marriage, the power was passed on to their husbands. Mostly in communal land, under defined customary law, after the husband has passed on, the decision-making power is passed on to the traditional leaders in the area or their husband's family (Moyo & Francis, 2010).

4.4.4 Level of Education

In every aspect of socio-economic life, women have faced many obstacles to achieving fulfilled lives (Opare, 2005). Due to the beliefs that women's social roles and responsibilities are limited to birthing children and caring for them, their access to educational opportunities has been restricted (Opare, 2005). Women's education level in rural areas is deficient. Considering their assumed roles within households, it poses difficulties for them to receive any form of formal education. Over the years, the level of education in Emophela has slightly increased. The Dept of Education has introduced ABET (Adult Basic Education) centres in the area which has provided women in an opportunity to complete their basic education.

However, some of the women who participated in the study are still greatly affected by such difficulties.

"The number of educated women amounts to 5% in this area that is head of household, and the main reason for this is that the times they lived in, most of them were only concerned about getting married and were not concerned about education" (Respondent 21)

The women's education level is divided into three options: secondary education, primary education, and informal education. Drawing from the respondent's perspective, rural women were conditioned to not receiving formal education and did not receive many opportunities for education in Apartheid South Africa. This has led to the women of Emophela to have a passive form of participation. The lack of formal education amongst the women of Emophela has led to them believing and being treated as though their views and input do not matter. This reality has resulted in the women of Emophela not fully participating in the economic sector. Education and economic status of women have, over the years, continued to affect their participation in land reform.

4.5 Challenges faced by women of Emophela as a result of the lack of secure land rights

Land tenure reform and land rights have been dominated by the land question in many African countries. Mutangadura (2004) notes that in many Southern African countries, customary and statutory tenure co-exist. Women living in rural areas still experience discrimination regarding land control and ownership in both customary and statutory land tenure systems. This theme explores the challenges faced by women who do not have secure land rights or ownership. The study found that the following challenges have significant contributions to how women participate in land reform.

4.5.1 Forceful removals

Women in South Africa have experienced forced removals for years, which left them landless and vulnerable. Therefore, they have had to rearrange their residential patterns. The respondents revealed that when the municipality required a large piece of land as a gravesite, the land that was offered for use was utilized by many people, and the majority of those people were women. This resulted in people being removed from the residential site they were subletting, and their homes being demolished.

"*I used to reside by the gravesite, I was also subletting, and there were about 20 more families who were subletting under the same land, and we were paying rent every year. When we were informed about having to find a new place to live, build new homes, we were very sad*" (Respondent 12, Grp 3)

The respondents shared their experiences on forceful removal, enabled by the lack of secure land rights. Since the women did not have full control and land ownership, they were relocated to different areas.

This act affected both men and women of Emophela and has a lasting effect on women's participation in land reform. Furthermore, the respondents revealed that this caused a huge conflict between the local government, the traditional council, and the community of Emophela. The conflict with the community members was caused by the need to relocate and rebuild their homes in different neighborhoods. The conflict with the traditional council was due to the gravesite in the area affecting the value of the properties at Emophela. The respondents explained that:

"Nobody will want to purchase land around Emophela with a gravesite so close to people's homes. Along with all the disagreements the traditional council has had with the people of the municipality, the issue of the gravesite takes precedence" (Respondent 21)

The area of Emophela has a graveyard, which was once land that was once leased to people. When the municipality needed land for a graveyard, the people had to be removed from that site to another. Both men and women were affected by this act. They were supposed to relocate and build homes in other areas. Women had a lot to lose in terms of relocating and rebuilding, and although they were staying in impermanent structures, it also took a lot to rebuild houses. They did not have any male support, and most of them were single women who were heads of households and unemployed. This was one of the instances were women of Emophela had to come together and fight for their land rights, and although both women and men contributed to the struggle, women were leading the fight for land access and land right. The women of Emophela prevailed in their struggle and were given sites to own, and although it was not everyone who received the land rights, the ones who were affected by the removals were able to get a better outcome. After a long struggle, the ward councilor, the local chief working alongside with the Ethekwini Municipality arrange that the families who were removed from the land must be assigned new pieces of land. The responsibility of rebuilding their new homes were left with the new landowners. This provided an opportunity for a small group of people to become landowners, while it landed them with a huge responsibility of rebuilding their homes from stretch.

In a study reviewed by Sepotokele (2018: 96) on a case in 1983, African landowners were forcefully removed from their 'freehold land' marked as belonging to them around South Africa

into land adjacent to the homelands. In the struggle against forced removals, there was extraordinary resistance, and the communities that were involved ultimately won the struggles, and many of those were led by women (Sepotokele, 2018). Women played an essential role in the struggle to resist forces removals in the 1980s.

4.5.2 Land Title Deeds/ PTO

Permission to occupy certificates (PTOs) was previously an essential form of tenure for people living in Trust land. The homelands and traditional council had the power to issue the PTOs to black people living in customary land under the Trust. With the introduction of democracy in 1994, the Buntustan legislation jeopardized the power of the PTOs. Only the province of KwaZulu Natal received the exception to continue to issue the PTO certificates by the provincial government. The subject of PTOs at Emophela has been a pressing issue. It has continued to pose a challenge to the tenure rights of women in the area. The respondents revealed that when land allocation occurs or a person purchases a piece of land, they receive PTOs as a form of a deed of ownership to land. When they purchase land from a person in the area, transferring the new owner's PTO certificate seems to be complicated.

The transfer of land does not occur properly, and the women are left vulnerable raising concerns on the rights to their land after they have managed to purchase land. The PTO certificate does not serve as title deeds, so the government or the land's nominal owner could decide that the land could be used for another purpose, and the holder of the land can be forcibly removed (Ntsebeza, 1999).

4.5.3 Acquiring Residential Site

The issue of the residential site at Emophela has been a prevalent issue that has not yet been resolved. Rural women reside in areas that fall under traditional authorities, and most live on communal land. This has resulted in most rural women living in communal land struggling to acquire residential land. According to Budlender *et al.* (2011), women, particularly single women, struggle to get residential land since traditionally residential sites are allocated to males in patrilineal areas. The respondents identified the issue of lack of access to residential sites. They revealed that they had encountered numerous issues regarding residential site allocation by the traditional council under the Trust.

Furthermore, the study found that although the land at Emophela belonged to the tribal authorities (Ngonyama Trust), the local chief and headman also held their land ownership, which they had the right to sell and distribute whichever way they wish. The respondents

revealed that resident households could apply for residential land because agricultural land in the area has been exhausted. The process is followed by an identity document and a fee, which is R500. According to Claassens (2013), this fee is standard practice during land application in rural communities around South Africa.

The agency for residential sites for landless women household heads at Emophela cannot be stressed enough. Most sites in the area conducive to the residents are for sale. The respondents revealed that since they are unemployed and have no other income besides government pension, they cannot afford to purchase the residential land.

4.5.4 Sense of loss

Identity loss

For most Africans, land is part of their identity, and the women of Emophela felt the same. Literature and the finding recorded that landlessness and being dispossessed of land affect people's identity. According to Vorster (2019: 4), "South Africans who attach social meanings to land generally tend to consider land as a space of rootedness, a locus of life and a place of history-making where identities are formed." Factors such as culture, tradition, and history have an intimate connection to land and form part of their identity. The land has a strong relationship to identity. The study found that the women of Emophela have a stronghold on the land they are currently residing in. The reality of leasing for women does not necessarily mean they have little connection to the land. The connection to land seems to be strong for leasing people and those who own the land. Issues of overdevelopment instill fear of the areas becoming a township for the people of Emophela.

"The reason why I don't want RDP houses in my area is I don't want it to be a township. I believe it will increase the crime level in the areas and destroy natural land that is still available" (Respondent 21).

Although the RDP housing program can improve many people's housing reality in the area, the traditional leaders oppose this type of housing project. He fears the loss of what sets them apart from the surrounding areas. The respondents revealed that the preservation of the area by the traditional council impacts their land rights because they perceive the government housing project as a way for them to have land access to housing. The traditional council argues that if people require housing, they have a choice of relocating to other areas but do not consider that the housing project also contributes to women having secure land rights. Furthermore, the women's unwillingness to relocate is directly linked to the strong connection to their identity.

Though the women are subleasing, relocating means they must leave behind everything they have known and become.

Loss of sense of belonging

According to Koot *et al*. (2019), belonging requires one to have a sense of connection, familiarity, comfort, and ease accompanied by the feeling of inclusion, safety, and acceptance. The form of people belonging to a place is often informed by political strategies, conscious and unconscious, through which access to various resources is sought and contested (Koot *et al*., 2019). The land has always been in the highly valued resources, and the idea of belonging frequently invokes a unique relationship and connection to land and nature. To understand the connection women of Emophela had to land and the community they are currently part of the respondents expressed layers of reason about the unwillingness to relocate and were adamant about remaining in the area. Being members of the community of Emophela provides them with a sense of belonging. And because most of them have relocated before, they expressed how difficult it was to become a member of a new community. Having access to neighbors that they are familiar with provides them with a sense of safety.

Belonging to a community goes beyond just people cohabiting in the same territory but having people turn to for help in time of need. The respondents highlighted that rural African women face the same struggles and knowing that they have someone to fall back on provides them with a sense of comfort. For them, it is as little as having someone you can ask for sugar or teabags and as big as having someone you truly trust and rely on when a loved one passes on. They help each with financial assistance, raise their children, plan for weddings and funerals, and build their homes. The impact of unsecured land rights and lack of land access threatens their place in the community and their sense of belonging.

Loss of stability

Land access and land ownership influence rural stability, and many women having temporary access to land resulting in various social problems. Land provides food, shelter, income, and social identity, and having limited access to it creates social, political, and economic instability. In response to the instabilities caused by the lack of land access, the women of Emophela found that the loss of stability resulted from unsecured land access. It has also resulted in women having no sense of stability in their lives, and the major cause for that is no land ownership.

Following the information provided by the respondents, the study found that the instability which results from not having land access and ownership has created fear among the women,

of not knowing where they will end up. Furthermore, it has resulted in women being unable to have the bravery to participate in land reform.

4.6 Support structures to improve women's participation and access to land

There is an understanding that rural dwellers' land rights are mostly governed by customary tenure, which can be argued to be patriarchal. This theme's focus is to get the overview support and structure within the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) and available structures in the traditional council to improve women's land access and participation in land reform and how those structures have reached the women of Emophela.

The researcher interviewed the manager of gender mainstream in KwaZulu Natal from the DRDLR to gather information about the operations and programs in place initiated by the Department in improving the status of rural women's land access and participation in land reform. The researcher also interviewed a member of the traditional council to understand the strategies better to improve the land access of women at Emophela and their participation in land reform. Furthermore, the women of Emophela were also interviewed to get their perspectives and experiences about the land access protocol by the traditional council available for women.

4.6.1 Promoting rural women's participation and access to land

Promoting women's rights to access in rural areas requires complex processes that stretch far beyond the basic legal changes. Under this subtheme, the study provides the response from the managing gender mainstream under the DRDLR that was interviewed regarding the Department's role in promoting women's participation and access to land in rural areas. The study identified that the gender mainstream in the Department utilizes the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development Program (LRAD) as a tool to promote women's participation in land reform. The LRAD is for previously disadvantaged groups interested in highly capitalized agriculture to meet the requirements to access the program. It has prominent gender targets intended to ensure rural women's full participation (Cross & Hornby, 2010). The respondent revealed that:

"Our role is to encourage women to be part of the LRAD program and inform rural women about the programmes government has in place to address the injustices of the past and get rural women involved in agriculture. Our duty is to go out to rural areas, identify rural women

who are involved in agriculture and are looking for funding, we are assisting them with the application, and if it is successful, they are granted almost R20 000" (Respondent 22)

The respondents explained that the women candidates are encouraged to apply for the LRAD grants individually. A minimum of one-third of LRAD-funded transfers of land is supposed to go to women for the program to meet its objectives (Cross & Hornby, 2010). The program has the potential to benefit the rural women's economic status. Through the program, the respondent reveals that women can become successful commercial and semi-commercial producers and the programs allow women to have access to land fully. In a study conducted by Cross & Hornby (2010), it was found that the program was extremely successful in the Western Cape province, and the Free State and the province of KwaZulu Natal have had lesser application since the start of the program in 2001.

The respondents mentioned the challenges they experienced as the Department in getting the LRAD in deep rural areas and reveals that some women who can benefit significantly from the program are resistant to it because they do not understand it. The respondent further argues that this is the reason for the low application rate in KwaZulu Natal. This study found that the women of Emophela have little knowledge and access to the LRAD program. The respondents mentioned that since the area does not have enough agricultural land, such a program does not reach them. Literature highlighted that land distribution as one of the pillars of the post-apartheid land reform program in South Africa aims to redistribute land to the previously disadvantaged population. The LRAD program allowed the government to distribute land and focus on the rural poor (Mokgope, 2000).

4.6.2 The Role of the Traditional Council in Promoting Women's Access at Emophela

When the respondent from the traditional council was questioned about direct and effective structures in place in promoting the access of land for women of Emophela, the following was revealed:

"*As you know, before a woman was a perpetual minor according to customary law, which made her a minor for the rest of her life. But with the adoption of the South African Constitution, women and men are equal. The land at Emophela is under the Ingonyama Trust, and as the traditional council, we assign land to individuals who request land. There are not special strategies in place which directly promote women's access to land. Women request land the same way as men, and the land is assigned to them according to*" (Respondent 21)

The respondent emphasized both men and women having access to land and expressed that the traditional council having strategies to promote women's access to land undermines the idea of gender equality promoted by the South African Constitution. The respondent, when questioned about considering that women are part of the vulnerable group, noted that the council should consider an equity strategy for the women of Emophela. The respondent revealed that when a person requests a piece of land, they identify the land they want themselves, and they consult the headman of that area where the land is situated to check whether the piece of land does not belong to anyone. When the process of verification has taken place, the required land appraises the local chief with R500, which is deposited into the Ingonyama Trust account. The process of the PTO begins which officiates land ownership. The procedure is followed for both men and women. This was conceived as a challenge as it distorts the access of land of women of Emophela, thus the need for programs which directly promote women's access to land. The women of Emophela emphasized that:

"When land allocation takes place at Emophela, the procedure is not as simple as explained, we are sitting here, with no land for many years, if it was that simple, why would we not simply go and request land and pay R500? It's not as simple; it's not women-friendly" (Respondent 16).

Respondent 18 further reiterated how this procedure does not promote women's land access at Emophela:

"*In my family, I am the fourth women in our generation to be landless, and we have been members of this community all along, not once we have succeeded in this land allocation procedure the traditional council claims to have in place. Four generations later, I am still subleasing*" (Respondent 9)

The above comments highlight the experiences of the women of Emophela regarding the land allocation procedure followed by the traditional council at Emophela. The respondents expressed that the strategy in place is ineffective in ensuring women's equal access to land. Furthermore, they revealed that the issue begins when the women approach the headman; they believe that the headman relates differently and more pleasantly to men regarding land issues than women. This has resulted in many women being landless at Emophela. In a similar study conducted by Akinola (2018), it was found that customary land tenure system and strategies which are in place in many areas in Africa limit women's access to land due to how traditional powers relate to women.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on the analysis of data that was collected from the women of Emophela. The formulated themes include the nature of women's participation, nature of women's land ownership/access, contributory factors to lack of land access, challenges, and support structures available to improving women's land access. It can be concluded that based on the experiences of the respondents, most women at Emophela do not have any access or ownership to land. This study confirmed that the lack of participation by women of Emophela is prone to lack of land access and ownership. The land ownership status of women in the area influences women's participation in land-related issues.

The following chapter five will focus on the entrenched land reform inequalities in Emophela

Chapter Five

Entrenched land reform inequalities in Emophela

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the results emanating from the critical interviews with women in entrenched land reform inequalities in Emophela. The chapter draws from the theoretical framework and the data generated from the field study to present women's experiences of Emophela's entrenched inequalities on land reform. The primary and secondary data is presented and analysed extensively in this chapter. The chapter outlines a systematic analysis of the study's findings developed through both focus groups and interviews. Furthermore, this chapter uses African Feminism (Nego- Feminism) to examine the gender inequalities experienced by women at Emophela regarding land reform.

5.2 Women's Understanding of Land, Land Reform, Equality, and Gender Equality

Land holds a significant meaning to African society, and it holds a special meaning in rural Africa. The significance of land to rural livelihood has remained the same from the post-colonization era to post-apartheid South Africa, and rural women perceive land as their primary source of livelihood. When the respondent from the DRDLR was questioned about how they have come to understand the meaning of land for rural livelihood, she responded:

"land is part of rural livelihood, the people from rural areas, especially women, still believe that everything on the land is part of them, from farmland to residential land."

A respondent from the Emophela affirmed the definition above and stated that land is part of life, "all of the day you spend on earth you spend them on land, without it, you have no identity, when you die, you still require land to be buried" (Respondent 16). The respondents revealed that land could sustain a family and make a life for the unprivileged. Aside from the economic resources associated with land, the respondents understand land to be more than an economic entity; it is part of their household livelihood. Hence, women's land deprivation is possibly associated with a lack of livelihood, food insecurity, and rural disempowerment. Land inequality in many African regions has resulted in high levels of poverty (Satge, 2020).

Furthermore, when the respondents were questioned about land reform and their experiences with the program, they expressed the land reform program as they understood it, and that they had no direct experience with the program at Emophela. The respondents revealed that there

had been a land redistribution program taking place at Stoney to improve the status of land ownership amongst women. Still, the program had been moving very slow, and it has been at least 5 years since they enlisted their names for the program.

The respondent from the traditional council revealed that the land allocation under the traditional council is not part of the land reform program; he believed that land reform is for large agricultural land under the government, not the Traditional Council/Ingonyama Trust Board. The Ingonyama Trust Board's policy mandates indicate that the board is obligated to embody all land-related policies of the National government apart from land reform (Ingonyama Trust Board strategic plan 2015-2020). Environmental affairs, water, and conservation national policies equally apply to the Ingonyama Trust land.

Due to the increase in the population, climate change, and the industrial operations around the area, he revealed that the area of Emophela no longer had agricultural land for commercial farming. The only land available for allocation were for residential use. He maintained that land reform programs are "the way the governments help and free the people from the troubles of being landless."

Unpacking and understanding the respondents' understating of equality is crucial for the study because of the historical and cultural factors embedded in concepts and their relation to land access. When the respondents were questioned about their understanding of equality, one of the respondents commented:

"equality is when you and I are on the same level, regardless of your skin color, your gender, your money, your education, or how important you think you are. Nothing matter but the fact that we are both human beings and we should be equal, and we can have access to things on an equal scale." (Respondent 12)

The respondents revealed that although they understand equality, they maintained that gender equality is impossible in African society. The women respondents strongly believe that as Zulu women, demanding gender equality is absurd because women and men will never be equal and thinking that it is a possibility undermines the Zulu and the African culture. The women of Emophela believe that the inequalities in gender bring forth a sense of stability in the community. One of the respondents queried the usefulness of gender equality when women themselves view males as superior beings. The use of Nego-feminism in this study explains the value culture and stability holds for the women of Emophela. In his book, 'Arguing for Equality' (1987), John Baker maintains the principles of egalitarianism. He highlights the

importance of Economic equality, Political equality, Racial, Ethnic and Religious equality. Gender issues are entrenched in the principles of equality. Through its policies, the South African government aims to provide equal opportunities for all people, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or religion. The concept of equality in South Africa embodies the strategies to address a particular group's discrimination and exclusion from political, social, and economic life. The exclusion could be based on gender, ethnicity, place of origin, or sexual orientation (Kenny, 2005).

This study assessed entrenched gender inequalities in the economic, political, and social aspects of women of Emophela. The study found that the limited land access and ownership women hold at Emophela directly influences their political and social standing.

5.3 The effects of the Customary Tenure System and Land Rights

The concept of customary tenure leads to land governance in many sub-Saharan Africa. The United Nations (UN) has defined customary land tenure:

 "as the rights to use or dispose of use-rights over land which rests neither on the exercise of brute force nor on the evidence of rights guaranteed by government statute but on the fact that those rights are recognized as legitimate by the community, the rules governing the acquisition and transmission of these rights being usually explicit and generally though not normally recorded in writing" (Payne, 1996:3).

Land under customary tenure is usually under traditional leadership authority (Chiefs) or the control of large families or clans (see Comaroff and Comaroff, 2018; Chimhowu, 2019). The land of Emophela is controlled by the Chiefand numerous large families who also own large pieces of land and sub-lease the small pieces of their lands to the people. The respondents revealed that the land they are subleasing belongs to individual families who own large pieces of land, and each family subleases pieces of land to approximately 10 to 15 families. The land is argued to belong to their forefathers and is protected under the customary law tenure.

 Chimhowu (2019) highlighted that obtaining accurate data on land under customary tenure in sub-Saharan Africa has been a challenge, but Bonne (2017) suggested that approximately 90 percent of land falls under customary category tenure. Willy (2011) pointed out that almost 2.2 billion hectares or two-thirds of cultivated land in the region are under the customary tenure system.

The practices of customary tenure practices differ significantly across sub-Saharan Africa. In South Africa, customary tenure may be divided into what Adams *et al.* (1999) called the 'holding' and the 'commons.' The 'holding' is the land that is occupied exclusively by individuals or households for residential, farming, or other activities (Hull, 2019). The 'commons' is the land used for multiple users to gather and graze (Hull, 2019). The land at Emophela is categorized under holding because it is used mainly by individuals for their household's residence. Land rights under customary land tenure are socially embedded, and they mirror the community's cultural values and gain legitimacy from the community's governing institutions. Land rights are acquired through kinship ties, birth, or allegiance. The land rights are dominated by the legitimacy of traditional practices (Cotula, 2007).

5.4 Women's Demand for Land and Equal Land Rights at Emophela

In South Africa, women make up 43% of the agricultural labor force and 69% of small-scale farmers (Andrews, 2018). Many rural women access land under the lease system and others through a male figure. The South African Constitution promotes gender equality and is entirely against gender discrimination in relation to property rights, but this has not been the reality for most women in rural areas. This seems to be the case at Emophela, where the women are mostly uninformed about their land rights resulting in the constant denial of women's access and control of the land. According to Ocheje (2007), land plays a multiplicity of essential roles for rural community development and argues that land access can be described as human rights. The United Nations FAO states that in Africa:

"*Gender inequalities in land rights are pervasive. Not only do women have less access to land than men, but they are also restricted by the secondary land rights, where they hold land rights through a male family member. Evidence shows that women's land parcels are generally of smaller size and lower quality than men's*" (FAO, 2010:1)

The women's land rights create change in society, and the rights have a deep reflection on male power and privilege. This results in women cultivating land without holding any form of rights (Akinola, 2018). The women of Emophela have constantly found themselves in a disadvantaged social, economic, and political position. The women require a household economic survival and advancement, with the high unemployment rates and their inability to secure employment, but when they manage to, they experience less pay. Thus, land access and equal land rights for women are crucial for women-headed households' economic survival and livelihood in the area. Meanwhile, the respondents revealed that men are more vocal in their

demand for land. Since men are believed to have more significant responsibilities, their land demands are taken more seriously than women. Furthermore, the study found a common assumption that the perspectives and demands of any sorts made by a male member in the community represent the perspective of the whole community. In chapter 4, the study founded that this is the root cause of the lack of women's participation at Emophela. The women argued that their needs differed from the needs of men with relations to land. This has resulted in women being uninformed about land reform-related issues, projects and land rights and remain excluded from land reform projects and their benefits.

In the KwaZulu Natal province, the tribal courts held a sitting in 1998 where 250 women attended. The issues raised during the meeting were concerned with women's limited rights to land and women's land demands. The women expressed that these issues needed to be fully resolved. The authorities seemed to favor men, and the women said that the elderly male councilors supported men on their issues. The women who raised land issues were labeled as unruly, incorrigible, and troublemakers. It was also reported by the women who attended that the traditional leaders refused to allocate residential land to women (Classens & Ngubane, 2008).

The refusal of women's access to residential sites has dramatically impacted the development and infrastructure of Emophela. The respondents revealed that the traditional leaders had denied them residence in the area. One of the respondents commented:

"...I have two kids and two siblings that I am taking care of; I have requested residential land from the chief and headman. I have been asked what will. I do with the residential land if I happen to get married. They said it would be better if it were my brother or my uncle."

The above comment created a sense of frustration amongst the respondents. According to Classens & Ngubane (2008), women are treated as secondary landholders. Their rights are dependent on men. Although law and policy provided for joint rights for men and women, administrative and conveyance favored rights registered in the male's name as head of the householder. Although this is a frustrating issue for the women, it was also revealed that land rights and household heads have always been a male's responsibility. The respondents revealed that the rationale behind this is that when a woman gets married, she moves into a new family and is given a new name, and she no longer belongs to her family. In many African cultures, a woman marries into a family and forfeits her birthrights and any form of land rights she holds. Women's land right and access have been based on whether she will get married one day. This

has led to women's land demands not to be considered equally to those of men. This study found that this form of discrimination is one of the main, entrenched inequalities women of Emophela faced regarding land reform.

5.5 Factors limiting women's access to land and land rights at Emophela

This section presents both primary and secondary data collected in the field during the research process. The section is a systemic analysis of results and is categorized into various sub-sections. The study found that many factors are responsible for denying women's equal land right at Emophela. These factors will be analysed using African Feminism (Nego-Feminism) as one of the theoretical frameworks adopted in this study. The theory emphasizes the phenomenon of negotiation, and the study assesses the factors responsible for women's limited access to land. There is a conducive environment of negotiation, which is created through the experiences of women in Emophela.

5.5.1 Culture and customary practices

The 1997 White Paper on Land Reform acknowledges the act of discrimination practiced under customary practices and how it is responsible for women's entrenched inequalities in many rural areas. The new democratic era called for equality across any form of discrimination and required the traditional tenure systems to accommodate the women's changing position. Culture plays a significant role in defining how life is to be lived, and it encompasses the norms and values people follow.

The respondents revealed strong opinions about how the traditional structures expect cultural practices to be followed more than the country's constitution. The respondents revealed that this had impacted women's land access and ownership as there is a strong sense that traditional structures under customary laws favor men's land ownership more than women. According to one of the respondents in the focus group:

"We are told that culture (usiko) is important, and since we stay in customary land, respecting culture is important. It is how we do things. But culture has always favored men, as the head of household (inhloko), and men owns the land."

Another respondent expressed that:

"In the area that we live in, we expect men to have power and ownership of a lot of things. They sit in the traditional council (umkhandlu), and they are the ones responsible for land

allocation in the area. The needs of men are always superior because they are the ones making decisions."

The respondents maintained that this is part of the community's culture; there are norms and ways they sustain it. One respondent revealed that *"we might all be from the ethnic group (AmaZulu), but the areas we live in hold different cultural norms and practices to be prominent than others."* The respondent further made an illustration of how culture was practiced in the area where she grew up. When a girl child was dating a boy in the community or village, the young had to confirm their relationship by doing what is called 'ukumisa iduku' at the young man's homestead. This culture was important in the community to showcase their relationship.

If ever it happens, the young women become pregnant; her family knows who the child's father is, and the young man has no opportunity of denying the child. The respondent expressed that since she relocated to Emophela, this culture is not practiced in the area. The respondents highlighted that the prominent cultural practice in different areas is related to land. One of the respondents mentioned that the individuals who happen to own land in the area still have to follow the traditional council's cultural obligation. One of the cultural obligations is not hosting an event in her homestead without informing the traditional leaders. If a person is getting married, they need to inform the traditional leaders in time. If one does not follow these cultural obligations, they are to pay a fine determined by the traditional council. Akinola (2018) poses that African culture is not homogenous and universal and argues that each community has a belief system they uphold, despite the universality of the aspect of African culture.

The land allocation preference practice by the traditional council in the area is part of the council practices' culture. The respondent mentioned that *"where I am originally from, the land is allocated to anyone who requests and requires it as long as they are the appropriate age and gives a reason for the use of land."* The respondent emphasized that the level of landlessness among women in the area is terrifying. In some areas, even when a woman's husband has passed, and the inheritance practices robs the women of the land. the traditional council sees providing the women with the residential site for her and her children as unnecessary.

The responses revealed that culture plays an essential role in women's marginalization and has contributed significantly to women's entrenched inequalities at Emophela. Culture seems to favor men, and there is a universal expectance of women having to endure all the gender inequalities accompanied by culture.

5.5.2 Patriarchal social discrimination

Customary law of patriarchy, which discriminates and marginalizes women in having full access to land rights, prevails in customary land. Kalabamu (2004) defines patriarchy as a gendered power system through which men dominate the political, social, and economic network and control women's labor, and define women's status, rights, and privilege in society. As Mutangadura (2004) argued, patriarchy has limited women's access and control over land in many African countries. Since the pre-colonial era, women have been excluded from land discussions and land ownership. The system of patriarchy has been selective to the kind of land rights women can enjoy. The structures of traditional powers are associated with patriarchal attitudes, limiting women's access to land (Walker, 1998). The patriarchal system, which seems to prevail under customary rural tenure, has resulted in entrenched gender inequalities. These have prevented women from having full access and control over land. The patriarchal attitude and behaviors among community members and leadership structures limit women's effective participation in the land reform process. Albertyn (2009) maintains that African society operates as a patriarchal society where men dominate in most sectors such as in politics, economy, family, church, and labor. African culture is dominated by male leadership structures and supports female subordination.

A respondent commented on patriarchy's case and attested to it being the 'order of society' and its societal norm. Women of Emophela view patriarchy as a social order that does not need to be disrupted. The respondent expressed that modern rights women undermine social and cultural norms. One of the respondents stated:

"*The new generation of 50/50 and that men and women are equal is not true. A woman will never be equal to a man. All these modern women who believe they are equal to men are dreaming, culture (isintu) forbids such.*"

Another respondent stated that women not being able to own land, and women being seen as vulnerable as landowners are social discrimination. This continues to perpetuate the patriarchal ideologies in the area as the social norm. it generates the question of asking if it mean that discrimination against women should also remain a social norm.' According to the respondents, patriarchy is entrenched in their community, and women also play a significant role in creating a place for patriarchal patterns. The study found that although the patriarchy system at Emophela has resulted in women's entrenched denial to land access, women are unknowingly part of the driving forces of the system of patriarchy. The women expressed that when

something is associated with a male figure, it is automatically perceived as respectable, and everyone pays more attention to it.

5.5.3 Skewed land allocation priorities

Traditional leaders and chiefs play a significant in land allocation. The process of land allocation does not promote women's land rights at Emophela. The government aims to implement laws that favor gender equality in all structures of society. However, the majority of the traditional leaders in rural communities denies women's land rights and overall rights in their communities. They still value history extensively and see no reason why women are given the same rights as men and are on the same land ownership level. Traditional rulers have refused to recognize women's independent rights.

There are many cases where there is gender bias in land allocation by the chief and the headman, despite the country's constitution advocating for gender equality and against gender discrimination in all parts of the country. Akinola (2019) poses that traditional leaders are in a more privileged position. They have a far better chance of getting closer to the people and serve at their pleasure to promote the government's plan. Since land is still held under communal tenure at Emophela, gender equality considerations seem not to be taking precede. The respondents stated that they had experienced gender bias in land allocation at Emophela. Considering that the headmen under the traditional council of Emophela serve under the chief allocate in different parts of the area, this limits their land access.

One of the respondents revealed that one of the women in her church had requested land from the traditional council to build a childcare center in the area for underprivileged children. She was informed that the piece of land she had requested is not available. There is no land available for her. Meanwhile, the traditional council provided land for a man who requested it to build a kraal for his livestock. The respondent expressed that this showcased a biased nature in the land allocation program practiced in the areas. There is the unequal land allocation between men and women at Emophela by the traditional leaders. Women cannot access and control land, even for purposes that will benefit the community.

5.6 Empowering women through secure land access, control, and ownership

The literature discovered that women's right to land is to be promoted as fundamental human rights. Women continuously being deprived of these rights directly impact their social wellbeing and social standing. Davis (2016) maintains that assuring women's rights, access,

and ownership to land has proven to transform gender relations, which results in women empowerment. Women are seen as vulnerable to land grabs' effects, especially in rural communities where communal land tenure is not favorable to women having access to land. The marginalization of women in decision-making processes results in women being disempowered. Today, women's land rights are promoted by the United Nations, World Bank, United States Agency of International Development, and other Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as a significant part of empowering women in the modern society and empowering marginalized communities (Davis, 2016). The South African government has set forth the notion that land access and ownership should be one of the focal points to women empowerment, shifting focus away from economic empowerment alone.

The land rights which the study focus on regarding women empowerment are translated into individual rights to land access, control, and ownership of residential land at Emophela. These rights speak directly to the economic, political, and social empowerment of women at Emophela. The respondent expressed that being informed about their land rights even under customary law has opened their eyes. They have recognized the power of owning land in sustaining their lives and the lives of their children, and the lives of their children's children. One of the respondent's comment:

"*Everyone wants to own a piece of land, to build a house for their children. People our age, we are thinking about our grandchildren. We are old now. We might die soon. We will be leaving our children and grandchildren with no permanent home.*" (Respondent 11)

Another respondent expressed that:

"*Owning land places a certain level of respect in your name in the community, especially since there are families who are sub-letting their land. They are well respected around here; they are well known.*" (Respondent 15)

Another respondent said women owning land could secure the future for all family generations. The respondent expressed that if she can own a piece of land and build a house for her children and grandchildren, she believes the community's people will respect her more. She expressed that in her church, she might also get an executive position. Building a home in a piece of land you own changes, even how the church members treat you. she dreams of holding church meetings in her own home. Owning land will make some of the women feel more confident in fully participating in community-oriented activities. The experiences of the women of

Emophela present the opportunity land access and control hold in promoting women's social status.

The land reform program's objectives in South Africa are the legal grounds for empowering women who are poor and marginalized. Women's emancipation in rural communities under the land reform program results in women being socially and economically empowered (Pallas, 2011). The implications of women's denial to access and control land have compromised women's access to credit facilities, among other benefits, due to lack of collateral (George *et al.*, 2019). For many rural women, the land provides a secured income opportunity and contributes immensely as the primary source of livelihood (Osabuohien, 2014). Women in rural areas use their land for agricultural activities. They can sell or lease the land for economic gains. Women's rights to access and control land enhance women's economic empowerment, and the improper implementation of land reform policies in rural communities continue the gender discrimination of women.

In confronting the issue of landless women at Emophela, the study found that women's empowerment through land reform goes beyond access and ownership. Secure land rights of women speak directly to the social and economic empowerment of women. The older women participants who were part of the study related more to the social benefits land access and ownerships holds in the community. Meanwhile, the younger women participants as head of household-related more to the economic benefits of land access and ownership. In a study done in Nigeria, George *et al.* (2014) found that younger women are more eager to use their land resources for economic reasons effectively. He argues that this can be explained by how younger women are more willing to take risks. The older women

5.7 Addressing rural poverty through availing land to women

Rural households headed by females experience intense poverty due to insecure land rights and lack of land ownership. The IFAD, in their Rural Poverty Report 2011, highlighted that land is an essential asset to move family's households out of poverty (IFAD, 2010). Land reform in South Africa has many layers of inequality. However, gender inequality is a critical challenge in the programs (Walker, 2002). There is a strong link between land access and ownership, rural livelihood, and poverty (Meinzen- Dick *et al.*, 2019). This section of the chapter will discuss the relationship between secure land access and ownership of rural women and poverty reduction for female-headed households at Emophela. Women in rural areas hold land as the primary means for generating livelihood, and control over land is essential for the rural

household (Drininger, 2003). The study found that the size of the piece of land women have access to and the pieces of land they are subleasing cannot assist with poverty issues. The women respondent expressed that there is no place for a household garden. The respondent does reveal that the space for gardening is very small to which they can only plant enough to consume, which is usually not enough to meet their needs.

The smaller the piece of land people have access to, the more they are likely to live in poverty. The women in Emophela are no exception. The pieces of land these women are given to sublease are not sufficient to provide sustainable ways to reduce poverty. This has also resulted in generational hardship for their families. The respondents revealed that 95% of the area's planting fields are owned by men and only 5% by women, and none of that 5% belongs to any of the women respondents who participated in the study.

The respondent from the traditional council expressed that the planting fields also serve as a rural enhancement project for the community where vegetables are planted and consumed or sold out to the community at a significantly cheaper rate. The traditional council initiated this as a poverty reduction strategy. For the project to succeed, the planting field owners have to take charge of their farming land and plant crops. The initiative has failed in addressing the issue of poverty facing the community of Emophela due to the owners of the planting fields failing to produce the vegetable. The respondent from the traditional council commented:

"Families own planting fields around Emophela, and you will find families planting and harvesting every season. They plant corn, potatoes, sweet potatoes, beans, and amadumbe, etc. The harvest season is usually very large, making the plating fields a suitable rural enhancement project to assist the poor. As promising as the project was, the owners of the planting fields (amasimu) have stopped planting, which paused the entire project."

Most of the planting fields are currently not in use, and those who still plant can only produce for household use. There was a high level of lack of participation from the community's male members to carried out the project as they are the ones who own the majority of the planting fields. The respondent from the traditional council revealed that the reason men own the majority of the planting fields, he explained:

"In the olden days, once a family-owned the planting fields, the ownership remains with the family forever. The head of the family, which is usually men, take over the planting fields. But you will find that they have never worked in the fields which have always been worked by women."

Furthermore, the respondents highlight that land ownership could allow them to build renting rooms because there is an excellent opportunity for earning an income as there are factories, malls, and warehouses in the surrounding and people need places to rent. The respondent revealed the extent of how land ownership and secure access can assist many women who are head of household. In a study done in Ethiopia by Holden *et al*. (2011), it was found that women who as landholders are more likely to rent out their land if they hold the full land title deed. Meinzen-Dick *et al*. (2019) argue that female-headed households are more likely to rent out when there is a lesser risk of losing their land plots due to insecure land rights.

According to Chowdhury and Sundaram (2011), women who hold no land rights or ownership lack incentives or authority to make investments in the land they live in, which might lead to higher returns. In India, about 30% of the landless and the near landless population live in poverty, and in Bangladesh, the population with less than 0.2 ha make up two-thirds of the poor (Chowdhury & Sundaram, 2011).

5.8 Emerging policy direction for Rural Women

The post-apartheid government inherited the biased land system from the apartheid government. The system was characterized by exaggerated race and gender-based inequalities and discrimination. The South African land question has been highly politicized, and African former liberation movements have perpetrated the land question as a strategy to remain influential and to remain in power. The topic of land reform remains crucial to the country's political and socio-economic discussion. Under President Jacob Zuma's administration, the former Department of Land Affairs changed to the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform to establish a wing within the Department to directly assist development in rural areas in the country. In his national address speech in 2009, the President highlighted the need for people in rural areas to enjoy the same economic benefits as those in urban areas. According to the President, the economy in rural areas can improve and accommodate the rural population. In the Department's establishment, the government introduced various branches. One of those branches in the Department was to oversee the implementation of the National Gender Policy (NGP) framework of South Africa in the land reform program.

5.8.1 National Gender Policy

The South African national gender policy framework outlines gender equality and women empowerment as articulated in its constitution. The NGP also provides guidelines to ensure that the constitution is implemented. The policy emphasizes the significance of private and

public cooperation. The policy ensures the country's commitment to addressing women's empowerment and gender inequalities is strategic and practical. The policy is the groundwork for government and NGOs to operate at a conducive level and establish instruments tasked with implementing, monitoring, and evaluating gender indicators. The NGP highlights factors that impact women's land access, control, and ownership, directly linked to the study's findings. These factors become the driving force of the NGP in DRDLP to addressing rural women's land access.

The respondent from the DRDLR highlighted factors identified by the NGP, which prohibits women's access and control over land. Women lack information about their land rights, which furthers the prohibition of women's land access. The study found that women are unaware of the land allocation process, which take place at Emophela under the traditional council. The respondent from the DRDLR revealed that many women in rural areas are unaware of their land rights and the land allocation process, which takes place under the traditional council. This has led to women having little to no access to land access and ownership. Women's land rights are threatened by traditional leaders' patriarchal attitudes, customary law practices, household and community relations, and historical factors that influence and limit women's secure rights to land. The system of patriarchy at Emophela is perceived as the order of society and as a social norm. The politics that stems from patriarchal attitudes at Emophela intimidate women and hold them back from accessing land and participating in land reform-related programs. The respondent from the DRDLR attested and said this is because, in rural areas accustomed to customary practices, the land is a sector that is regarded and reserved for men.

Women having the right to claim land entitlements is highly dependent on social status. Historically, the NGP has identified that women's access and ownership to land depends on their male partners. Chapter four highlighted that the women of Emophela believe that land access and participation are linked to the social status a person holds in the community. The women argued that their participation in the community is limited by socio-economic status and male power relations. Factors of rights of inheritance under customary law are limited. The NGP identifies the inheritance practices in rural areas as one of the main factors that prohibit women's access and control of the land. Women of Emophela highlighted that widows are usually not allowed to represent themselves in tribal courts or before the traditional council because it is assumed that they have a bad omen.

The projects under the reform programs usually do not include women. Hence women have less information than men about the procedures of accessing land and land enhancements projects. Women lack sufficient access to agricultural resources such as land, marking, technology, credit, and other significant knowledge and information that would promote any contribution to agricultural production. This factor has directly affected rural women's economic empowerment and their livelihood. There is also a lack of capacity structure targeted directly at women to increase their land reform programs and projects participation.

These afore-mentioned factors, which prohibit women's land access, become the framework for the DRDLR in addressing inequality in land access in rural areas. The respondent notes that these factors negatively impact rural development and rural livelihood. The DRDLR also established an effective stakeholder liaison approach approved by most stakeholders involved in the land sector. The approach aimed to promote partnership and empower communities, local government, and vulnerable groups. One of the main strategies the Department adopted was aimed at rural development. It involved improving the economic structures and social infrastructure, and land reform. Land reform under rural development deals with the pace at which land is redistributed, allocated, and accessed by the previously disadvantaged group. The Department's respondent highlighted that the Department has an executive wing called the land tenure, which deals directly with the land rights and security of tenure for farm dwellers and notes that the Department is not responsible for communal land under the Ingonyama Trust Board. It was also revealed during the interview that the Department has an essential office that focuses on the registration of title deeds. The office is situated at the provincial level, which poses a challenge for rural women to access the office. The respondent noted that rural women have little to no knowledge about these structures, which poses a huge disadvantage on their tenure rights and land access. In the land reform policies, there is no direct indication of women's protection with regard to land inheritance.

5.8.2 Gender Unit Policy Direction for Rural Development

The purpose of the unit for gender and women empowerment was to ensure that the Land Reform Gender policy is implemented. The DRDLR meets its target of 30% of land allocation to women. The unit is also responsible for monitoring and ensuring that the Department meets its above 50% target and carries out its directive to empower the women. From focusing solely on women, the DEDLR changed its mandate to empower people in rural areas. The unit shifted its focus from monitoring land reform gender policy implementation to a more welfare-oriented and focusing on vulnerable groups' empowerment. The directorate for Women, Children, and

Persons with Disabilities (WCPwD) is the leading section in mainstreaming designated individuals in the Department. The respondent from the DRDLR revealed that the sub-unit provides support to the Departmental strategic goals and objectives. The sub-unit also ensures rural women, and all designated persons are considered in Departmental strategic planning exercises. Within the Departmental strategic plan, the issues of rural women take precedence. The respondent from the DRDLR explained that the gender wing under the directorate focuses on women's empowerment and personal development. The respondent commented:

"The Department mainstream gender and empower women. We have initiatives based on policies that are formed under the WCPwD directorate of vulnerable groups that prioritize rural women. We have gender-responsive budgeting for developmental units. Every rural enterprise and infrastructure need to ensure that there is a budget set to empower rural women for rural development."

The directorate facilitates the policies and strategies developed to empower women, children, and people with disabilities. The respondent highlighted that since they are the rural development Department, they deal with the rural population—the rural population, which includes rural women, children, and persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the respondent reveals that prioritize cost rural areas are under traditional authorities. It is very important that they work with the traditional council. This includes ensuring that issues of gender inequality are addressed and also monitor policy implementation. Traditional leaders are respected as the community leaders, and the Department is required to negotiate with the council regarding anything concerning development in the area. As advocated by the Nego-feminism theory, the process of negotiation provides harmony and a common understanding between the Department and the traditional leaders. The respondent from the DRDLR commented:

"Negotiating with the traditional leaders is important because it shows that as the Department, we are not undermining their positions as leaders in their communities. The overall wellbeing of rural women as members of the community is dependent on it."

The theory emphasizes respect for the culture and traditional African practices and still advocates for women's development and empowerment. Men dominate the traditional council at Emophela. For development and women to access land, the theory advocates for a conducive platform for both men and women in the absence of ego to negotiate. This creates balance in the community by navigating through the patriarchal land mines (Nnaemeka, 2004).

The directorate also works like a machine to ensure women's economic empowerment through integrated program-dependent project, usually associated with the land. The respondent revealed that in rural areas, 'poverty has a face of women.' When looking at rural development, the Department aims to economically empower women to address poverty and improve their social status and land access. The directorate drives collaboration and partnership with the government, civil society, and the private sector to ensure rural women's empowerment and rural development. In the year 2009, the respondent notes that the Department formed a branch called Rural Enterprise Infrastructure Development (REID). The Department utilized this branch to empower rural people. The Department adopted a strategy called the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) to directly work with the rural people to bring infrastructure and development in rural areas. For the program to be a success, it requires cooperative participation from the rural communities. The strategy requires the partnership and cooperation of the government, civil society, and the private sector. The directorate coordinates, facilitators, and monitors the women, children, and persons with a disability within the Departmental strategic goals.

The function of the sub-unit makes it possible for the Department to impact women both negatively and positively. The functions of the WCPwD tie directly to the study and advocate for women's empowerment through the program, ensuring women's rights rather than only focusing on monitoring the implementation of the land reform gender policy. The Directorate has also helped ensure that women can access agricultural tools to assist with food production through substance farming. This form of assistance contributes greatly to food security for women who are household heads and their families.

5.9 Chapter Summary

It can be concluded that the experiences of the women at Emophela on entrenched inequalities in this chapter presented the issues women face under the traditional rule. In this chapter, the study has confirmed that although the women of Emophela faced entrenched inequalities in accessing land, the women have continued to demand access to land. Their access and rights to land have influenced their economic and social empowerment. Their lack of land access denies them the opportunity to address poverty issues, which places a form of vulnerability to their livelihood. The themes which were discussed in this chapter include women's understanding of the land, land reform, equality, and gender equality; the effects of the customary tenure system and land rights; women's demand for land and equal land rights at Emophela. Others are factors limiting women's land access and land right at Emophela;

empowering women through secure land access, control, and ownership; addressing rural poverty through availing land to women and emerging policy direction for rural women. The following chapter six will be the summary, recommendations, and conclusion.

Chapter Six

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the study's findings, which provided meaning to the objectives of the research. This chapter comprises the summary, recommendations, and it will also the general conclusion of the study. This chapter provides a summary of the research findings and recommendations based on the findings of the study. This study draws from four focus groups and three in-depth interviews. The study discussed the politics involved in women's participation in land reform at Emophela and discussed entrenched inequalities faced by women of Emophela in land reform. The study mainly focused on the women of Emophela and their lived experiences and realities on land access, control, and ownership at Emophela. During the focus group, which was held with twenty women, five in each group, it was clear that women's participation at Emophela is impacted by the lack of land ownership and access among the women. Despite the South African constitution advocating for equality and gender equality in all sectors, women are still denied access to land, resulting from the entrenched inequalities associated with women's participation in land reform.

6.2 Overview of the study

Chapter one provided the introduction and background of the study. It introduced what the study is mainly about, provided the study's key concepts, and unpacked the rationale and significance of the study and the research problem. It also provided the research aim and objectives as well as the research questions. The chapter gave a detailed outline of the structure of the full dissertation.

The second chapter provided literature regarding participation and women's political participation to provide the groundwork for the importance of participation and women's political participation. This section of the literature was essential to review because it focused on participation as a general concept. The chapter further provided literature regarding women's rights, land reform, South African land reform policies, women's land rights, and the benefits of land reform for rural women. Furthermore, the chapter looked at theories that apply to the study. The Participatory Democratic Theory was used to explain the benefits and self-development associated with participation for the women of Emophela. This was done to bring an understanding of the level of women's participation in land reform. The second theory was African feminism (Nego-feminism), which was used to explain the gender-related inequalities

addressed with respect to culture and tradition. This was done to bring understanding to women's position and the role they take in land-related issues by negotiation at Emophela.

The third chapter focused on the research design and research methodology, which were adopted in the study. The chapter provided the methods that were used to conduct the study. The researcher outlined the study area, how the study was conducted, the sampling methods, and data collection. The chapter also included how data was analysed and outlined the strategies employed to ensure trustworthiness.

The fourth chapter presented the study's findings, which focused on the politics of women's participation in land reform. The chapter used thematic analysis, codes, and themes related to the study objectives discussed in relation to the literature and the Participatory Democratic Theory.

Chapter five presented the study's findings, which related to the entrenched land reform inequalities at Emophela. In this section of the study, a systematic analysis of the study's findings was presented. The researcher created themes in relation to the last two objectives of the study and discussed them according to the literature and the African Feminism (Nego-Feminism) theory.

6.3 Summary of major objectives

6.3.1 Assessing the level of women's participation in land reform at Emophela

In addressing the above objective, the respondents were questioned about their understanding of participation and their experience in participating in the community of Emophela. Their responses revealed a somewhat diverse understanding of participation and how they relate to participation in their community. The respondents believed that participation is enabled by being informed and the willingness for one to participate. When the women were questioned about their experiences of participating at Emophela, it was founded that the conflict which is present between the local chief of the traditional council and the ward councilor did not create a conducive environment for the public, especially women, to participate in community projects actively. The women revealed that this is because if one chooses to participate in a project initiated by either side, that is perceived as supporting or choosing aside. The women fear that this will lead to having issues in accessing essential services provided by the ward councilor or by the local chief. This issue results in women not actively participating even in developmental programs. They argued that the leadership in the area contributes to their lack of participation. On the other hand, the respondent from the traditional council expressed that

the women of Emophela are unwilling to participate, even in projects that will better their lives. It was noted that regarding the nature of women's participation at Emophela, the women and the traditional community leader views were contradicting.

To assess the level of women's participation, this study provided the nature of women's land ownership and access at Emophela. This theme discussed the demographics of the women from Emophela who participated in this study. Their different age range and land ownership status were the main characteristics that were identified during data collection. This is relevant to the study because it showcased the percentage of women among the participants who own their land and the subleasing land percentage. This section of the findings also influences the findings discussed in chapter five because the age difference among household women's head creates nonlinear responses and differences in experiences and realities. To address the above objective, it was important for the study to examine factors that contribute to the lack of women's participation in land reform at Emophela. The study found that policy implementation issues contribute to women's lack of participation in land reform programs and projects.

The respondent from DRDLR revealed that the Department's main issue regarding getting women to participate in land reform is the lack of policy implementation in rural areas. The lack of policy monitoring structuring to ensure women are given equal opportunity to participate in land-related programs at Emophela contributes to their lack of participation. The second factor discussed is the land inheritance and cultural practices, where the women revealed their experiences regarding the land inheritance practices, which takes place at Emophela. These practices involve widows who lose their husbands and daughters who are discriminated against because of land inheritance and culture that favors sons than daughters. The third factor discussed was the decision-making power, which contributes to women's lack of participation. The study found that the failure to have an adequate say in the decision-making process also contributes to women's lack of participation. The women respondents revealed that this is also one reason women do not have secure land rights. They explained that they feel ignored by those in power. The fourth factor discussed were issues concerning women's level of education at Emophela. The majority of the women participants in this study had no formal education, and few only had secondary education. Furthermore, lack of participation in land reform for women of Emophela has led to them facing numerous challenges due to lack of secure land rights.

In terms of the challenges faced by women of Emophela in response to the lack of secure land rights at Emophela, the women respondents reported having challenges in relation to forceful removals, land title deeds/PTO, acquiring residential site, and experiencing a sense of loss. In terms of forceful removals, it was found that the women have experienced removals from the land they lived in due to not having secured land rights. Women of Emophela lacking rights to ownership made the removals by the municipality more possible. The women respondents revealed that this caused conflict with the community members as they had their homes demolished and had to relocate and rebuild new houses using new materials. Other findings consist of challenges relating to land title deeds/PTO. The community of Emophela receives PTO as a form of the deed for the land they own. The women respondent who bought their land expressed that PTOs certificates are not easily transferable and that to date, they still did not hold any PTO certificate under their name.

The women respondents revealed that acquiring residential sites under the traditional council has proven to be difficult. The women as head of household face this challenge as single women. As argued in the literature, single women struggle to secure residential land due to traditional authorities preferably allocating land to men. Challenges of unsecured land rights relate to a sense of loss. The respondents maintained that Emophela is the community they want to remain in, and they feel a sense of belonging. Unsecure land rights threaten their identity, sense of belonging, and stability. This has also resulted in women not being brave enough to participate in land reform-related programs.

Since one of the issues women face regarding participation in land reform is the issue of landlessness and insecure land rights, the study explored information on support structures in place to improve women's participation and access to land. The study examined the role of the DRDLR in promoting rural women's participation and access to land and the traditional council's role in promoting women's land access at Emophela. The study found that the DRDLR utilizes the LRAD program to promote rural women's participation and land access. The program can help rural women be successful commercial and semi-commercial producers and allow them to have full access to land. The traditional council emphasized that the land allocation process is the only strategy the council has to promote women's land access at Emophela.

6.3.2 Examining the role of land in minimizing socio-political, economic, and entrenched inequalities.

The above objective was addressed under the themes mentioned mainly in chapter five of this research. There were diverse subjective conceptions of land, land reform, equality, and gender inequality shared by the women of Emophela and by the member of the traditional council at Emophela. The women of Emophela who participated in the study were familiar with the concept of land, land reform and its practical importance on their livelihood. Although they understand what equality is, the concept of gender equality seemed to be of a foreign thought to them. This is because the women believe that gender equality undermines the African culture and the values they were brought up under.

Themes were identified to achieve the above objective. The respondents maintained the same sentiment regarding their demand for land access, control, and ownership. Women being regarded as secondary landholders places them in a vulnerable position when they raise their land demand before the traditional council. The entrenched gender discrimination women experience regarding land at Emophela has translated to their political and economic standing at Emophela.

In examining the role of land in minimizing socio-political, economic, and entrenched inequalities, in the study's findings, factors that limit women's access to land and land rights at Emophela were explored. This theme relates to gender entrenched inequalities, limiting women's access to land and land rights. Cultural and customary practices are one of the identified factors which limit women's access to land and land rights. The women respondents expressed that the traditional structures at Emophela expect cultural practices to be followed and maintained, which usually undermines the country's constitution. The study found that the cultural and customary land allocation values men's land ownership more than those of women. The second factor includes patriarchal social discrimination, which places women's access to land and land right in a vulnerable position. The patriarchy system at Emophela is perceived as a social norm, as it is deeply entrenched in their community. The last factor discussed was the skewed land allocation priorities, which are perpetrated by patriarchy. The women respondents revealed that they had experienced gender bias during the land allocation process at Emophela. The headman perceives men as eligible landowners than women.

6.3.3 Measuring land reform's impact on empowering women to reduce poverty and increase food security.

In terms of the impact of land reform in empowering women to reduce poverty and increase food security, the study found that women knowing their rights to land access, control, and ownership translates to women being empowered. The respondents expressed that being informed about their rights to land access even under customary law has made them realize the power behind owning land in sustaining not only their lives but the lives of their children. The women of Emophela do not only believe in land access and land rights as a means for economic empowerment, but the women also recognize the social empowerment associated with having access to land. As stated above, one of the most essential findings of the study was that the women of Emophela are landless, and in confronting the issue, the study also found that certain land rights speak directly to women's social and economic empowerment. The older women participants in the study at Emophela seemed to relate more to social empowerment, which resulted from land access and ownership. The younger women participants relate more to the economic benefit land ownership holds.

The economic empowerment and poverty reduction for women at Emophela through secure land access are closely related. The study found that the size of the land women own and have access to contributes immensely to poverty. The women respondents from Emophela who participated in the study do not only have unsecure access to land, but 70% of those women who participated are currently subleasing the land they currently reside in. The respondents revealed that one of the conditions to the lease agreement is that they cannot build permanent structures. This means the women have no right to build brick houses and only use mud to build their homes. Another issue the women raised is that the pieces of land they have access to have no space for household gardens. The women respondent who had spaces expressed that the space for gardening is very small and can only plant enough for consumption, which is not enough to meet their needs.

The respondent from the traditional council revealed that although the community is deeply entrenched in poverty, the council has introduced enhancement projects to assist the community. He argued that one of the projects which involved land was not successful due to the owners of the planting fields no longer willing to participate. The project's aim was that the owners would be supplied with equipment to plant vegetables and sell them to the community at a cheaper price. This would help address the issue of food insecurity in the area, which is a result of lack of land access.

6.4 Recommendations

Regarding data collected and analysed, the study generates recommendations that will fill the policy-gaps in land-related policies if well implemented by both the traditional council and the South African government. These recommendations will help resolve conflicts related to women's participation in land-related programs and projects and conflicts centered around the unequal land access and ownership of women at Emophela and rural KwaZulu Natal at large.

1. The traditional leaders and ward councilors at Emopphela should work together and promote all community programs and projects as a united front in promoting participation. As community leaders, they should also ensure that land-related programs are conducive for women's participation and encourage women to be more involved and engaging in land-related projects.

2. The traditional council's land allocation process should be closely monitored by the Ingonyama Trust Board and the government ensuring equal land allocation. Women should be included in both the Trust Board and the traditional council to ensure fair land allocation.

3. The traditional council can donate land for the government to build RDP houses for the people of Emophela. This will give access to residential land for women and permanent structure for their homes.

4. The Ingonyama Trust Board should work with the government in providing title deeds/ PTOs, which are recognized by government institutions and other stakeholders. This will assist with the inheritance practices and forceful removals of women after their spouse or father passed.

5. The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR), through its gender mainstream, should have initiatives in rural areas to inform rural women about their land rights. The women should know about government structures in place to strengthen and assist with issues of inheritance and ownership. In lacking knowledge about their rights, women have continued to be victims of patriarchal and cultural discrimination.

6.4.1 Recommendation for further research

This study provides a catalyst for further research on women's land access and ownership. It is recommended that further research can be conducted on a diverse sample. Furthermore, future research can be done on a larger and more inclusive sample.

6.5 Conclusion

The data which is presented in this study is based on data collected through both primary and secondary sources. This study's focus was motivated by the recent conversations centered around land reform in South Africa. The study contributes to expanding knowledge about rural women's land access and land rights in the KwaZulu Natal province. Through the land reform program, the South African government aims at addressing the injustices of the past caused by colonization and the apartheid era. The injustices mainly include racial and gender discrimination with respect to land access and ownership. Based on the field study, the research engaged the head of household women at Emophela, the traditional council member and a representative of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. They had differing perspectives on women's land access and land rights, particularly of the community of Emophela. The area of Emophela is a former rural homeland under the leadership of traditional authorities and ward councillors for service delivery purposes.

The study presented the experiences of women regarding their participation and land access and ownership. The issues of land access, land ownership, and secure land rights are the main issues raised by women, which results in their lack of participation and entrenched land reform inequalities at Emophela. The women of Emophela, specifically household heads who were participants in this study, are single women, some are widowed, and some were never married. The women highlighted that according to culture, a woman could not be a household head when married. The man is the head of the house. This made it possible for the researcher to gather women's experiences as widows and unmarried women at Emophela. This also showcased how much the women of Emophela respected culture. The level of discrimination the women have experienced during the land allocation process and the disregard for their land access translates to socio-political and economic issues.

The women also have strong ties to the community of Emophela as they feel a strong sense of belonging to the community. Apart from the women, most of the population at Emophela are tenants, and land access could transform them into landowners. This is important for their overall livelihood since land ownership is perceived as a long-term investment that can contribute to their economic standing, which minimizes the poverty rate and contributes to their generational wealth.

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