

CHAPTER 2: DEVELOPMENT POLICY, GENDER AND WOMEN MARGINALITY: A REVIEW

This chapter critically reviews literature available in the corpus of scholarship related to development policy in general, with particular reference to the Growth-with-Equity Policy (1981) and the Growth Point Policy (1981). The specified policies are examined to establish how women have been affected by development policies in Zimbabwe, identifying benefits and challenges, if any. The concepts of rural development and rurality will be examined to give the different spatial, geopolitical, geographical factors affecting women, and the status of women in economic, political, and social fields globally, regionally, nationally and locally. The concept of inclusivity will also be reviewed, in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The study is guided by, and follows the centre periphery and growth poles theory by Perroux (1949) who states that growth centre or growth points were taken as a means to decongest the urban amenities by creating and offering the same resources in the rural areas. The theory argues that activities needed to be decentralised from the centre so that most of the people is able to access services and opportunities which makes it unnecessary for them to want to migrate to the centres for the same services. While Perroux emphasised that growth does not occur simultaneously at all times, the growth poles are necessary for the trickle-down effects which will end up spreading and giving many advantages to the whole economy. The central idea of the growth poles theory is that economic development is not uniform over an entire region, but takes place around a specific point because of certain characteristics which attract growth (James 1996).

Scholars like Hughes and Kozlowski (2008) emphasise that poles are usually urban locations, benefiting from agglomeration economies, but it is important to observe how even rural centres are centres of growth because of some unique characteristics they possess which favour growth and development. Planners also take advantage of this trickle-down effect and they implement policy in such a way that the people in the periphery benefit from the process (Parr, 1999; Bhadhari, 2006 and Manyanhaire *et al.*, 2011). To curb rural urban

migration, Zimbabwe introduced the same concept at independence in 1980, taking a cue from the ideas of Perroux.

Intersectionality theories also guided this study by providing ideas on how different forms of oppression intersect and compound, leading to unique experiences of marginalization. According to Crenshaw (2019), intersectionality is key in explaining the intersection and interaction of different identities like race, class, gender, sexuality and ability in producing multiple forms of oppression leading to marginalisation and exclusion. In addition, structural intersectionality examines how institutions and structure like laws, policies and education perpetuate intersectional oppression. Crenshaw(2019) argues that individuals experience multiple form of oppression simultaneously, leading to compound marginalisation. These theories guided the study by examining how women as a group can be inevitably be excluded from mainstream economic development through male dominance and exclusive policies, because of their identities and geographical location. Similarly, intersectional environmentalism is a critical framework that examines the intersections of environmental issues with social justice and human rights. It recognizes that environmental degradation and pollution disproportionately affect marginalized communities (Pellow 2017). Since the study intended to examine the plight of rural women in terms of being included in post-colonial development policies in Zimbabwe, the theory guided the study through its key principles which include; environmental justice and recognition that marginalized communities are often the most vulnerable to environmental degradation, compounding environmental injustice, poverty and a widespread violation of human rights. Intersectional Environmentalism therefore emphasizes the importance of human rights in environmental decision-making, ensuring that environmental policies prioritize the well-being of marginalized communities like rural areas.

A rural area is a countryside area where the major economic activity is largely agriculture (Conyers, 2001). However, the study observes how, due to globalisation and urbanisation, economic activities in rural areas have diversified from mainly agricultural to include other activities. Singh (2009) avers that rural development is a strategy which enables specific groups of people, especially the rural poor, essential needs and wants. It also leads to

sustainable improvement in the quality of life for the intended beneficiaries. Mapuva (2015) argues that rural development has always prioritised agriculture and forestry, but changes have been noted and the process has diversified into mining, tourism, processing and canning locally produced goods. Approaches have also changed from top-down to bottom-up through the increasing intervention of Non-Governmental Organisations. Most development practitioners now favour the bottom-up approaches since they involve the communities changing them from recipients to participants in development. In addition, Anriquez and Stamoulis (2007) define rural development as development that benefits rural populations; where development is understood as the sustained improvement of the population's standards of living or welfare.

Due to the fact that rural development is affected by ongoing processes like globalisation and urbanisation that have always brought changes, like the commercialisation of agriculture, the liberalization of trade and markets for food and other agricultural products, the increase of labour migration and the privatization of resources and services, it is essential for leaders and implementers of development policy to always monitor and evaluate the impact of any development intervention strategy, to assess the extent or level of improvement in people's livelihoods. Inclusiveness of all social groups, particularly the vulnerable, is critical in development programmes for any community to attain meaningful development. This inquiry therefore defines rural development as development that improves the standards of living, creating an enabling, inclusive economic, social and political environment for all sectors of the rural population, particularly women and children.

The concept rurality was defined by Anriquez and Stamoulis (2007) as any area that is not urban, where urban is characterised by population agglomerations which has no social ties as those found in rural set ups. By this definition of exclusion, urban spatiality has mostly been described in terms of number of population agglomerations and responsible authorities in control of the urbanised geographical locations, and the availability of services like tarred roads, electricity and piped water. This may however be subjective considering that some urban areas may have sparse population and lack electricity, thus they may erroneously be classified under rural. The concept

rurality appears to be the opposite of urban in most cases, and is highly characterized by poverty. While rural development is increasingly taking the front seat in development planning through programmes like rural electrification, housing, water treatment and devolution which is promoting the decentralisation of services, the rural area remains far behind in terms of development.

Bourke and Dillon (2018) define inclusivity as a concept in which development policies and strategies are planned and implemented in a way that includes everyone, paying particular attention to the marginalised groups in society like women, children, the disabled, the mentally challenged and many more. While the writers think diversity is critical in business, they proffer that it is not enough without inclusion, thus inclusive leaders will be noticed by the way they cast a long shadow and spread their arms wide to rope in everyone. It is therefore clear that people feel included when they are consulted and treated equitably with respect, among other things. On the same line of thought are Perch and Labbate (2009), who emphasise the need to include everyone from a human rights-based approach where every individual is valued irrespective of colour, race, ethnicity, sex among other identity differences. ILO (2017) goes further and offers inclusive growth strategies, where deliberate efforts should be made by policy planners and implementers to create employment in areas and sectors where the most impoverished people live. If leaders use this kind of approach, it shows that they care about everyone especially those without economic muscle in society. In concurrence is Include (2017) who concludes that Sub Saharan Africa can only leverage its demographic dividend through the inclusion of all segments of society including the poorest populations into the development agenda, rather than including them at policy implementation stages. Lack of inclusive and transformative development has always cost the continent and put at risk the chances of achieving its long-term sustainability and socio-economic development. Social inclusion was further defined by Bulger (2018) and the World Bank (2017) as a process of improving the terms of individuals and groups to take part in the society through markets, services and spaces. Markets include labour, land, housing and credit while services include electricity, health, water and education while spaces refer to the importance of political, physical, cultural and social environment (Bulger, 2018). This

inclusive list enables societies and Governments to identify how best they can ensure that their groups which have been traditionally excluded from the opportunities and resources can be integrated into the mainstream economy, leading to a healthy, sustainable and enabling environment for sustainable development. The whole society, not just groups, should have the capacity to participate and solve common societal problems peacefully and collectively, all included and treated equally without discrimination (Woolcock, 2013).

Social exclusion, is one ugly face of inequality because it comes along with poverty to the excluded group (Sen, 2000, in Rawal, 2008). As argued by the World Bank Report (2017), identity is a driver of social exclusion, in which the most common group identities were found to be occupational status, caste, ethnicity, age, religion gender and race among others. Based on these arguments and facts, it can be argued that women face multi-dimensional, multi-faceted challenges which deny them enjoying the same benefits as their male counterparts. Women appear to be finding it difficult to access jobs and other resources like land, education and political power because they have been treated as second class citizens in most African societies.

De koker (2015) laments the rate at which women are financially excluded in developing countries like Kenya and Nigeria. Women constitute 55% of the people without bank accounts in the world and the statistics weigh heavily on the women in developing countries in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) because the bank account opening procedures are a major barrier particularly for undocumented and illiterate women. It is a fact that identity documentation procedures are done to eliminate fraud and other financial crimes but one wonders why the banks do not even consider that women have fewer crime rates than men. As argued by the World Bank (2015), women in Nigeria comprise 2% of prisoners while in Kenya they constitute 5, 3%. Their crimes are common in shoplifting, prostitution and credit card frauds but the numbers are very low. If closely examined these small crimes still point back to the poverty and lack of basic needs at home as the major cause that could be eliminated if women are included in employment and engaged in other economic activities. The World Bank (2014) reports that financial inclusion benefits all and promotes access to other resources which will otherwise be out of reach to some marginalised groups.

Financial inclusion also helps in achieving inclusive growth, but most women in Africa are not financially stable because they are excluded from many benefits. With enough access to credit, women in Africa could improve their status significantly. As argued by Zinyemba and Changamire (2014), financial challenges have led the women in Zimbabwe's Siyaso Magaba in Mbare to rely on social capital to pool resources together, and in most cases, they are found performing in lower order activities like catering, and vegetable sales. Compared to their male counterparts who run big hard ware stalls, the women will remain in poverty without the ability to run sustainable livelihoods as individuals. This means female headed households will suffer in terms of basic need provision as compared to male headed households, a situation not conducive for equitable sustainable development.

Idris (2008) laments that, Tanzanian women constitute 2.1 million out of the 3.4 million people not in the labour force, a gross indicator of economic exclusion. Even in the employed sector, 83% are vulnerable particularly those in rural areas working in the agricultural sector where women dominate (Idris 2008). It is also critical to observe how men in the agricultural sector are the majority landholders in Tanzania, while the few women who own plots have smaller ones in size compared to males. The agricultural sector in most countries in SSA is being affected by el-Niño induced droughts due to climate change, thus irrigation has become a priority for guaranteed harvests. Most women cannot afford irrigation equipment; thus, their plots remain mainly rain-fed leading to reduced harvests as compared to their male counterparts. As argued by the FAO (2014), women in Tanzania own less livestock than men. All these challenges, exclusions lead women to end up being the labourers preferred by both male and female land owners since women have always been considered a source of cheap labour. This leads to instability and insecure livelihoods, leading to a host of other social ills like prostitution and shoplifting alluded to by Nel de koker (2015).

Some countries in Sub - Saharan Africa (SSA) still have lukewarm policies in which no one makes a follow up on the stated gender ratios in school or at least find out reasons why the girl child is dropping out of school more than her male counterparts. Fewer women are taking science subjects, mathematics and computer sciences. Women also continue to be under-

represented in technical subjects (ILO Survey 2019). Mutume (2016) observes how women in polytechnic colleges are close to 40% in Gambia and only 2% in Zambia. There is need however to further establish why these figures remain so low in some countries while in other sectors they are so high.

About half of sub-Saharan African countries have registered moderate increases towards gender parity in this area, as stated in the UNESCO reports. As argued by a UNESCO (2017) report, some countries still have high female illiteracy rates and some are higher than the regional averages of about 50%. Examples are given of Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia with rates of 82%, 79% and Ethiopia 77% respectively (UNESCO, 2017). These figures show that a lot still has to be done for sustainable gender parity, if women and girls have to claim their fair share of leadership, management and political positions in Africa. Women constitute about 50% of the total world population, thus investing in women is not a loss but a gain which most countries are losing by turning a blind eye at gender equality policies.

Singh (2014) contends that women constitute two thirds of the world's illiterate people. More than 24 million girls are not attending school for different reasons. In addition, a UNDP Human Development Report (2015) observes how an increase in women education had a 43% reduction in malnutrition and child mortality, indicating how essential it is to educate a woman. Of the estimated 40 million people living with HIV /AIDS worldwide, 2/3 are women. Statistics also show that only 6.4% of women hold parliamentary seats in the Arab States, 14.4% in Sub Saharan Africa, 17.6% in Europe, and 18.5% in the Americas (Women's Learning Partnerships, 2002; Global Monitoring Report, 2002; United Nations Population Fund, 2002; UNDP Human Development Report, 2003; BBC News, 2003 and Centre for Women Policy Studies, 2003, as cited by Global Fund for Women, 2004). The same author also observes how worldwide, 15 million girls under age 18 are married each year. These figures indicate that gender equality is nowhere near in the foreseeable future unless a multi-stakeholder approach involving all organisations, traditional structures and institutions is used at national regional and international levels. Efforts should be made, therefore, to achieve SDG number 5 and 10. It appears the challenges are more prevalent in developing countries where the rural poor women account for more than 70%

of the population. As argued by a report by UN Women (2015) academics offer solutions, strategies and recommendations, but lack of political will in most of the counties remains a hindrance, thus the situation will prevail for generations.

The status of women worldwide remains in dire need of improvement despite international cries and conferences. Some changes have been noted since the Beijing conference in 1995, but still a lot more has to be done. A steady growth in women's rights recognition and representation in politics and leadership can be observed but the figures remain below 50% worldwide. Reference is made to the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2008), a document to which 15 African states are signatories, Zimbabwe included. Some of its objectives emphasise the need to create an enabling environment for women empowerment through responsive legislation, policies and projects in the region. While article 12 pegs the 50% representation in all decision-making positions for women by 2015, article 5 spells out affirmative action which should be coupled with training, awareness and sensitisation efforts by the member states so that the representatives have the knowledge and what it takes to participate fully in decision-making and economic forums. However, despite the existence of this protocol and more, women in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) remain marginalised and at the bottom of the ladder in some aspects of life like levels of education, access to property, access to loans among other things.

In the opinion of Kaeber (2003), resources are the medium of power and excluding others by virtue of identity promotes inequality and provides power to certain sectors of the population at the expense of others. Heads of households, chiefs of tribes, directors of firms, managers of organisations and elites within a community all have decision-making authority by virtue of their positions. In most traditional set ups, women rarely have an opportunity to be very influential leaders who can make important decisions or take advantage of situations to accrue wealth or make meaningful achievements in life. However, not everyone can be a leader at the same period, but the leaders within a certain time ought to be equally represented in terms of the identity sectors previously discussed. In research carried out by the European Commission (2013), the statistics revealed that women in the developing

world are more affected by issues like malnutrition, lack of access to education, domestic violence, and non-respect of basic human rights, and lack of income. Hunger and HIV&AIDS have their highest impact on women in developing countries more than in the developed world. However, it appears women across the world have more or less the same challenges although improvements can be noted from country to country. Global Fund for Women (2004) states that women have always been disadvantaged and discriminated against worldwide. In addition, the report observes how about 1% of the world's assets are in the name of women, but \$7 trillion worth of women's work goes unpaid, a tricky situation which shows that if their labour was always paid for, women could be amongst the richest worldwide.

On a global level, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 to cater for women's rights after realising that women had always been a marginalised and discriminated group despite the presence of international instruments like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR 1948). The UN (2015) reports that many of CEDAW's 30 articles emphasise the need to give women an equal chance and opportunity in the political, leadership and education fraternities just like their male counterparts (article 7, 8 and 10 for example). Other essential international treaties and instruments include the Southern African Development Community 's (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development (8 September 1997) and its addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children (September 1998), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1976), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (16 December 1966), and the Convention on the Minimum Age of Marriage of 9 December 1964 (Gudhlanga, 2008).

Gudhlanga (2011) avers that the SADC Ministerial Declaration of 2007 stated that women should constitute 30% of decision-making positions by 2005, revised by the SADC Protocol on gender and development in 2008, so that equality figures should be at 50% representation by 2015. All these instruments and declarations are still to be achieved because women remain under-represented in leadership and politics across the world.

From this background, it is not an exaggeration to say the plight of women in equality and development issues should be tackled using the major international framework of (Sustainable Development Goals. As argued by the UN (2015), agenda 2030 combines the three pillars of sustainable development which are: economic, social and environmental. From these dimensions, goal number 5 specifically mentions gender equality while goal 10 emphasises reduced inequalities. While the rest of the goals mean a lot to the empowerment and development of women, special mention is made here to goals 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing), SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 6(clean water and sanitation) which are crucial indicators and measures of development for women in rural areas where these basic needs have been hard to access for generations, particularly during the colonial era.

A World Bank report (2008), indicates that in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, proportion of seats held by women was at 3.9% in 2006 to 8.8% in 2007, but the regional average remains the lowest in the world. The number of women involved in economic paid work remains very low since there are barriers that prevent them from entering formal work, for example factors like age and number of children at home and others. As noted by World Bank (2008), the female unemployment rate is much higher in the MENA region. In 2006, 20% young men and 30% young women were unemployed as some employers openly favour men than women. The fact that women will be expected to take the role of child-care work hinders them to enter into paid work as compared to their male counterparts, thus creating gender inequality. Most women are in rural areas, particularly in Sub Saharan Africa where they practice agriculture. More so, the land they work on is not even in their names, women do not control land. Men are the permanent holders of land, leaving women to have access to land through their husbands. Some cultural and religious beliefs have always led women to trail behind men in their pursuit of education and career opportunities, giving their male counterparts an advantage, thus fuelling gender inequality (Ajayi, 2015, Jayachandran, 2014 and Dormekpor, 2015).

While women play critical roles in child-care services, caring for the sick, food production, rural women have even more responsibilities as they take

care of livestock, and provision of water and fuel for their families, resources which are found some kilometres away from homes, unlike their urban counterparts who do not have such distances to travel for such crucial basic needs. It is also critical to observe how rural women themselves (just like their urban counterparts), are not a homogeneous group. There are many differences amongst them based on age, level of education, marital status, race, religion, and ethnicity, physical and mental health. This lack of involvement has always left women in a disadvantaged position creating insecurities for them and their children. The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2017) proffers that the balance between work and family is the greatest challenge women face globally, inhibiting them from freely taking up any employment opportunities in any geographical location as compared to their male counterparts. This indicates that more flexibility should be enabled in societies so that women can be able to take up these job opportunities without fearing for the fall of their marriages or leaving their children without enough alternative care. In addition, Bulter and Rahbari (2015:15) also emphasise the need to treat women in child-care as equally important in society as men in formal employment. In advanced economies, policy recommendations usually include providing more flexible work alternatives, eliminating legal and other discriminatory barriers, providing access to high quality affordable childcare, supporting family-friendly work environments that allow family leave (for men and women) for child or elderly care responsibilities, and removing tax disincentives, to name just a few. Women in developing countries can also benefit from these policy recommendations if domesticated and meaningfully implemented.

Plan International (2017) asserts that the challenges women face in attaining equal education status worldwide range from gender discrimination activities like son preference, patriarchal dominance, and gender stereotyping in which boys are socialised as protectors while girls are taken as caregivers. Okoronkwo-Chukwu (2013) and Tanikodi and Surgitha (2007) concur that gender discrimination remains a vicious cycle around the world as women are discriminated against from birth to old age in the form of female feticides and infanticides, girls doing more housework than boys, genital mutilation, early marriages, sexual abuse and trafficking during adolescence, maternal mortality, and lack of old age insurance and safety nets for elderly women

through property wrangles with relatives when they are widowed. The fact that the majority were never well educated means they never got formally employed, thus they do not have a personal pension to fall back on at old age like their male counterparts (UNICEF, 2007; Cosp, 2014).

When Sekar and Allargasamy (2015) examine ways to empower women in India, they conclude that the discrimination of women from womb to tomb is well known, not in India alone but across the world. It therefore remains a fact that efforts have to be made to practically and meaningfully develop programmes specifically meant for women. While cultures differ globally, it appears the challenges affecting women are more or less the same and every nation is making strides to make an impact in terms of gender equality. The truth is that the factors against gender equality are intergenerational and are very difficult to eliminate within a short time. Rather, achieving gender parity is a process not an event. As explained by the quoted authors above, India is one of the areas where women are treated with little respects or dignity. The authors further explain that women farmers are capable of increasing production and productivity if given the opportunity to access resources like inputs and agricultural loans.

Achieving gender equality depends on the kind of growth, the nature of the economy, a country's policy settings, and political will not just general economic growth. Where programmes are meant for the generality of the population, deliberate efforts should be made to disaggregate women and evaluate the benefits or strides women have made from a particular development intervention activity as a particular sector of the population. As cited by the Bureau of International Information Programmes and the United States Department of State (2012), there is wide-spread recognition that the world cannot wholesomely solve global issues, be they environmental, political, economic, social or governance issues unless women participate because they constitute more than half of the world's population.

As argued by UNESCO (2003), it is best to use gender sensitive indicators to determine whether anything meaningful has been done for women or not. These indicators have to be realistic, meaningful, time bound, qualitative and quantitative. This means any development intervention or policy should be

measured for success and relevance to the targeted population. For example, The Gender Manual (2002:28-29) and CIDA (1997) argue how professional quantitative analysis of gender sensitive indicators should show exactly how many women benefited from a programme as compared to men, thus sex disaggregated data are a priority to be realistic in addressing gender inequality. It will also be an effective way to measure success in any programme and activity.

Taukobong *et al.* (2016:1492-1514) bring to the fore the fact that investing in the empowerment of women and girls can lead to better health and development outcomes. Empowered women and girls act as agents of change in their communities and they can bring about better health and development outcomes for all. When all is well planned, monitored and evaluated, development policy can meaningfully and gainfully empower women. Without the deliberate effort to target women as beneficiaries' stakeholders may not notice that the policies planned for women are not empowering them at all. The authors suggest a focus on empowerment that requires a shift away from seeing women and girls as beneficiaries of health and development programmes to viewing them as agents of change for their own individual and collective empowerment. Beyond providing resources or benefits, programmes that aim to empower women and girls must involve a process of social transformation, ultimately enhancing the control that women and girls have over their own lives. These realities are non-existent in most communities in the world leading to gross gender disparities even in countries where statistics are indicating high women involvement.

Along the same trope of thinking is Kabeer (2005) who analyses the third Millennium Development Goal (MD3) and argues that the goal was too broad to be achieved in such a short period due to the fact that women empowerment is not an isolated activity but rather a multi-dimensional approach which involves individuals, families, communities and nations. In as much as women may be given an opportunity to attain an education, for example, one wonders if that education will be allowed to nurture the woman into a powerful decision-maker who does not need a man to be complete. The question also remains on how society will view the same woman, whether as a power-hungry woman who wants all the attention to herself or as an equal

participant in all important issues regarding development. It is also critical to identify who was supposed to empower the women or whether the male counterparts who had the power since patriarchy started will be willing to easily handover some of the power or allow women to enter into domains that were traditionally perceived male. Without laying out such strategies, gender equality may remain an illusion worldwide. In addition, O'Neil, Domingo and Valters (2014:1) maintain that there are structural and institutional challenges which hinder women empowerment which will continue inhibiting gender equality unless they are changed. Men and women are social and cultural beings, and unless some social set-ups, cultural norms and values are changed to action dynamism, the role and significance of women may continue to be overshadowed. Until patriarchy for example is demystified, women themselves will continue to accept their subordinate roles and remain subjects to discrimination.

The International Centre for Research for Women (2016) avers that woman face unique barriers to development and continue to lag behind in most if not all walks of life. This may be due to the fact that their contributions are often overlooked as they are perceived to be busy bodies without contributing much to the economy, while in actual fact when men are given the same responsibilities of caretaker functions, they do not cope, thus a holistic integrated approach is required for meaningful change in the lives of women.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2015) offers a women empowerment model in which they believe a girl can never be empowered unless she has a voice, a choice and some power. These factors can be enabled when the women have access to resources, some decision-making power which the authors called agency, and access to resources like money, property and employment opportunities. Achieving or getting access to these resources may help her to influence institutional structures to her advantage and the rest of her family and community. It takes commitment, time and effort to create a community with empowered women who can contribute meaningfully to the economies of their nations. The foundation recommended that boys and men have to be engaged so that they move together with the women without being seen as obstacles, hindrances or competitors but rather, as complementing the gender quality process.

UNFPA (online June 2019) observes that it is high time the world sets aside some time to think about effective address of gender disparities since they continue to cause intergenerational inequity, and continued feminization of poverty. If parents continue to view girls as less capable beings than boys, it will have negative impacts on the girl's education because parents will not be prepared to invest much in a girl's education. In concurrence are Wattoo *et al.* (2015) who emphasise the need to take women empowerment as a right rather than a privilege. This means in as much as the women have a right to life (Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), they also have a right to be free and equal (article 1 of the UDHR) and not to be discriminated against (Article 2 UDHR). Excluding women from the main economic activities and other opportunities therefore implies a violation of human rights for more than half of the population in most countries worldwide.

The International Development Law Organisation (IDLO, 2013) brings in another dimension as they examine the legal systems worldwide. The study reveals that women are always disadvantaged as they try to access justice due to financial constraints or even knowledge of the best lawyers. When it comes to claiming their rights, all odds are against them since they may not find it easy to report abusive husbands or male relatives for fear of victimization from families and society, thus legal systems rarely represent women objectively. Their heavy dependence on men for finance makes them think twice before they report activities like rape or physical violence, thus they are found on the receiving end in most cases. The World Bank Group (2017:10) argues that:

“By increasing access to livelihood opportunities, jobs, and income, Community Driven Development (CDD) projects can increase women's economic empowerment, to the extent that the choices regarding infrastructure, assets, and income-generating activities respond to the needs of both men and women. CDD projects can also improve access to services such as education and health, in ways that are particularly beneficial to women and girls and generate substantial time savings for women thanks to rural infrastructure, water in particular”²

² The World Bank Group(2017:10) Community-Driven Development. Available online. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjdi6_7-1_2AhXfQkEAHQRJCt0QFnoECA0QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worldbank.org%2Fen%2Ftopic%2Fcommunitydrivendevelopment&usg=AOvVaw16M6L2JoggyOmk18gY9nK6. Retrieved 18 May 2020.

When women are empowered, they are likely to influence change in sectors that affect them like the distances one travels to fetch water or to visit an antenatal clinic. Critical services like birth registration offices can be located within the reach of all women so that the rights of children are not violated when they go for years without birth registration certificates. The argument here by this inquiry is that when women are given a chance, most of the population will benefit. In most cases, mothers will not exclude their children, just as an example, from the fruits of their sweat because once excluded, the same children will remain the mother's responsibility throughout life, thus empowering a woman will cascade down to empowering the whole family.

The World Economic Forum (2018,) notes that if current efforts and commitments are maintained in the future, it will take 61 years in Western Europe to close the gender gap, 70,74 years and 135 years in South Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Sub-Saharan Africa respectively. These estimates appear unrealistic though, but they give an indication of the levels of effort required to improve the state of gender parity in the world. While these estimates reflect the pace observed to date towards achieving gender parity, policy makers and other stakeholders can fast forward this process and should take stronger actions in the years to come. It will also continue to depend on whether all the stakeholders in issues of gender equality find it fit to put a priority to gender parity and equity issues for justice and greater social equality.

In terms of productivity, for example, if the access of women farmers to productive inputs and human capital were on a par with men's access, total agricultural output would increase by an estimated 6 to 20 percent (World Economic Forum 2018). In terms of allocated efficiency, while increases in household income are generally associated with reduced child mortality risks, the marginal impact is almost 20 times as large if the income is in the hands of the mother rather than the father. Hunt and Norm (2016:6) also concur as they argue how the benefits of gender parity to society and families are shown to be extensive, leading to reduced household poverty and increased investments in children's education and health. However, Hunt and Samman

(2016) argue that there is no automatic win-win situation. More needs to be done to educate the women themselves who may be cast in the socialisation traps and still believe in the “kept woman” concept in which they believe the men should work and bring food for them while they wait in the comfort of home.

The marginalised communities have to be sensitised to stand up for their rights ensuring that mainstream economic events do not exclude them especially remote rural districts in developing countries. Most rural communities have played second fiddle to their urban counterparts as opportunities skip them. While some scholars argue that poverty is more prevalent in urban areas, the rural marginalised communities remain out of development interventions, and they seem to be the last to be considered. A random survey on women in the urban areas will indicate that very few of them would choose to stay in the rural area since it appears to be a different backward world.

The Zimbabwean government is a signatory to most international and regional treaties on gender equality and efforts were made to domesticate them. Some of the activities include the passing of the Legal Age of Majority Act as far back as 1982 which enabled women to have adult suffrage rights, thus, men and women were for the first time legally equal (Mahlaule, 1995:7). The government also passed the Equal Pay Act in the same year which enabled women employed to do the same job as men with the same qualifications to get equal salaries with their male counterparts. This move created a level playing field for women who had been economically marginalised by getting lower salaries than their male counterparts (Ngwenya, 1983: 83). The introduction of the policy of universal education was also significant in that no one was supposed to be discriminated against in terms of race, sex, ethnicity, and religious affiliation among others (Chabaya and Gudhlanga, 2001).

Another very crucial step taken by Zimbabwe in ensuring that gender equality is promoted through legislative procedures is the inclusion of a

section on gender balance in the national constitution. As shown in the extract below, the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) states;

17.Gender Balance(1)The State must promote full gender balance in Zimbabwean society, and in particular-(a) the State must promote the full participation of women in all spheres of Zimbabwean society on the basis of equality with men; (b) the State must take all measures, including legislative measures, needed to ensure that-(i) both genders are equally represented in all institutions and agencies of government at every level; and (ii) women constitute at least half the membership of all Commissions and other elective and appointed governmental bodies established by or under this Constitution or any Act of Parliament; (c) the State and all institutions and agencies of government at every level must take practical measures to ensure that women have access to resources, including land, on the basis of equality with men.(2)The State must take positive measures to rectify gender discrimination and imbalances resulting from past practices and policies(GOZ, 2013:8).

The above part of the Constitution clearly explains the role of the State in ensuring that women and men are on equal footing in all aspects and all spheres of life. In addition, the Government of Zimbabwe adopted a National Gender Policy (2013-2017) that aimed to provide guidelines and institutional frameworks to engender all sectorial policies, programmes and activities at all levels of society and economy. The main endeavour was to improve the lives of both women and men by removing the various discriminatory customs and legislations. As argued by GOZ (2013), the policy set out eight priority policy interventions around which policy objectives and strategies, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are formulated. The policy intervention areas were:

- ☐ Gender, Constitutional and Legal Rights;
- ☐ Gender and Economic Empowerment;
- ☐ Gender, Politics and Decision-making;
- ☐ Gender and Health;
- ☐ Gender, Education and Training;
- ☐ Gender-Based Violence;
- ☐ Gender, Environment and Climate Change, and

(viii) Gender, Media and ICT Section 5.3 and 5.5 of the same policy made special reference to the importance of ensuring attainment of a 50/50 representation of men and women in politics and other decision-making positions (Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development 2013).

Zimbabwe also signed the SADC Protocol on gender and development in 2008 along with other 14 African states as a way to show commitment in matters concerning gender equality. The articles in this protocol promise much measures that should be undertaken by state parties to empower women and create inclusively and enabling economic, political, and social environments for all. However, despite the existence of all these blueprints for gender equality, more still needs to be done because the 50/50 equality target has not yet been reached in Zimbabwe (Gudhlanga *et al.*, 2012).

Girls continue to be marginalised and gender parity is still an illusion for most societies, particularly the rural areas where 67% of Zimbabweans reside (ZIMSTATS, 2012). In critical fields like education and political participation, women and girls continue to be outnumbered by men. As argued by Maphosa *et al.* (2015), the patriarchal society is still dominant, especially in the political fields. Men still dominate leadership positions. Research has shown that societies and communities fare better when women are educated on the same level with their counterparts because there will be improved health through reduced child mortality and higher nutrition levels (UNESCO, 1996; Chabaya and Gudhlanga, 2013). In addition, Matera (2016) argues how policies are not working as they should, and they have to be strengthened through sanctions that punish those companies and parties that do not meet the stated local gender quotas, and giving incentives to those organisations adhering to the stated gender parity targets. Unless the State takes a leading role in effectively implementing their own blueprints in favour of gender equality, gender disparities will persist for generations to come (Gordon, 2006 and 2010).

Development policy has been tackled internationally through so many fora which should be emulated by individual nations for the benefit of their populations. Gender equality has been a priority on the development agendas for a very long time. UN (2005) avers that if the proposed strategies and action plans from the Beijing Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 are followed effectively, significant achievements can be realised worldwide. The challenge lies in that each nation addresses its own challenges at different paces so gender equality will never be achieved at the same pace worldwide. The Millennium Project Task

Force on Education and Gender Equality (2005), identified three critical dimensions of empowerment and enhanced participation of women in development which include: capabilities, access to opportunities and resources, for example, to employment or land; and agency. The indication is that it's not all about formulation of policies, but inclusive formulation and implementation. Whenever a policy is drafted and implemented, women themselves should be part and parcel of the planning team so the long-standing attitudes obtained through institutions like socialisation and patriarchy can slowly be eliminated. Empowering women and leaving out men in the whole equation will be futile since the men are a critical part of the equation, the family and socialisation. When men understand the rationality behind giving women the wings to fly and contribute to the economy and other special development sectors, it will be easy to achieve all the strategies and mechanism arranged for women.

UN (2002) emphasises the need for gender mainstreaming in development policy for effective results and offering some strategies which can be used to ensure that development policy is impacting on men and women. There is need for continuous assessment, monitoring and evaluation so that the programmes are not just for covering up and satisfying international pressure on domestication of treaties and conventions. Gender mainstreaming can reveal a need for changes in goals, strategies and actions to ensure that both women and men can influence, participate in and benefit from development processes. This may lead to changes in organisational structures, procedures and cultures and the creation of new organisational environments which are conducive to the promotion of gender equality. Periodically reviewing and consulting all the stakeholders is critical so that targets and objectives are not derailed by other endogenic and exogenic factors.

Gender mainstreaming involves the appreciation of differences between men and women which is inevitably visible when special lenses are used to view the needs of each individual. This heterogeneity will reveal the differences in approaches used by the two groups of people which should never be overlooked or overshadowed but treated with particularity. Involving everyone will ensure that that no single individual is omitted irrespective of colour, age, ethnicity or physical and mental ability. An example can be cited

where very few development programmes are lined up for women with mental challenges, for example their sexual reproductive rights. Including men and women in all development initiatives will enable such vulnerable groups of people to be included in the mainstream economy.

The Sustainable development Goals are currently the global agenda that show a universal consensus globally on the essence of gender equality in achieving sustainable development. As proffered by Kring (2017), the goals are one puzzle where jigsaw fitness is somehow expected. Achieving one goal without the rest of the goals will not make any sense as the development measures and indicators are intricately related. While Goal number 5 emphasises the need for empowering women and girls, the rest of the goals continue on the need for decent work and economic growth, social protection to address wage policies and inequalities, equal opportunities, including eliminating discriminating laws (SDG 8, targets 1.3, 10.4 and 10.5 respectively). Countries should, therefore, aim to achieve the international development policy framework. The major argument here is that there is much work done by women which no one recognizes. If the SDGs are given a rights-based approach, it means every human being will be given the dignity, the respect and the autonomy they deserve, without playing second fiddle to anyone else. Individual nations and communities should therefore be encouraged to treat women with the importance they deserve as equal partners to their male counterparts.

Bodeisten (2017) posits that development policy needs collective action to be successful. This may enable countries to tackle economic and social exclusion, state fragility and environmental degradation, particularly climate change which has become a topical issue on the global agenda. All these should never be separated from the mainstream or the main themes of development policy by Governments. The European Union has internal and external policies and the policy implementers should handle all of them with the attention the policies deserve. While Europeans have always regarded themselves as the magnets of immigrants, there is special need to consider how best to handle development policy in a sustainable, inclusive manner. Similarly, Kisman (2015) maintains that development should have a positive value so that people agree on the objectives and outcomes of development policies. The

Sustainable development policies can only be called fair and balanced when the development initiatives are keeping a balance between the present and future generations in the economic, social and environmental components. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2019) recommends that development policy in the European Union should be respecting the rights of the people, monitoring and evaluation and unity in the region. A two-way effective communication approach is highly encouraged through listening and reporting back to the people.

As argued by European Commission (2019), countries should focus on transparency and accountability, inclusive development and partnerships, country ownership and focus on results. This enables stakeholders to evaluate every policy they make and ensure the results are achieved rather than just formulating policies whose results are never achieved. The White House (2010) also argues how there is need to invest in life changing innovations with the potential to solve longstanding development challenges, and inclusive development was seen as a potential to widen horizons and leave no one behind since skills and abilities differ. The European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE 2019) strongly recommends gender equality in all development policies so that all sectors of the population are catered for through these critical initiatives for development. Stakeholders can be effective in achieving the gender equality objective when gender sensitive language is used throughout. They recommended the use of gender-neutral words like they/them, he/she, him/her instead of mankind, chairman, businessman etc. Such gender-neutral language should be used in parliament documents where men and women are equally represented and treated with the same dignity and respect while school also reflect the inclusion of boys and girls on an equal basis with strict removal of barriers to girls proceeding with their education.

It appears development policies in most developing countries are not achieving the targeted goals despite the multiplicity of the policies. As argued by Singh and Ovidia (2018), development in countries outside the industrialised West has been an elusive goal for a very long time. Developing countries should make an effort to emulate the Asian Tigers (Japan, Singapore South Korea and Taiwan) which introduced strong interventionist policies

which led to sustained rapid industrialisation and long-term economic development. Such development initiatives bring along innovation, diversity and creativity as long as other critical stakeholders are involved at policy formulation and implementation, thus development efforts become every citizen's issue. In addition, the growth strategies implemented by Argentina, Rwanda, Brazil, China, and Ethiopia involved strengthening political ties between Government and the domestic capitalists, adopting industrial policy and state backed finance to create new competitive advantage (European Commission, 2019, The White House 2010, Singh and Ovadia, 2018). Such efforts need a very positive attitude from the stakeholders, and removal of all development policy enemies such as corruption, nepotism and social exclusions. In the case of Africa, Asia and other developing countries, the success of development policy should be a priority on the national agendas.

OECD (2018) argues how the African population is rising significantly and by 2050, estimates show that Africa will constitute a quarter of the global population. This may be attributed to the lack of strict population policies like the one child policy China once implemented in their history, and other demographic characteristics promoting population growth like the increase in life expectancy due to the introduction of Anti-Retroviral Therapy drugs for HIV&AIDS, and health and sanitation improvements. Sectors with high job creation potential such as light manufacturing, agribusiness, leather, construction, light manufacturing should be given priority so that more people are absorbed there. These can also be implemented alongside good political conditions like the ones which brought the economic miracle in East Asia which are: State transformation, pro-business orientation in policy, where national elites view and focus on economic development to legitimize their political worthiness. (Singh and Ovadia, 2018). These success stories of other nations may be very useful, but there is need to domesticate them. Other developing countries can use them with a domestic touch where they use national goals, priorities norms and standards.

Kiremo (2017) avers that Africans have to stop following and reacting to the politics of the West but rather develop own policies which suit their economic environment for sustainable development. Copying the West does not help development but will just make the people remain in abject poverty

while the leaders concentrate on other people's issues, diverting the generality of the population from focusing on the real bread and butter issues which are job creation, regional integration and economic engagement. If Africa will ever consider eliminating aid in their development policies, it means there will be greater need for regional integration, compared with other regions. The 2017 trade between the African states is 12% compared to 40 % of North America, 60% of Europe and 30% for South East Asian Nations. Kiremo (2017) suggests how Africa could increase chances of economic prosperity, industrial expansion and job creation if good governance and political stability are promoted first. African unity becomes a priority to create room for this regional development.

The example of Botswana can be followed by fellow African countries since it appears to be one of the few success stories, although strains in the economy and social system may also be seen (unemployment, poverty and lack of economic diversification). Gains have been seen over the years in health, infrastructure, life expectancy, poverty reduction and education, although critics argue that these gains have been minimal than what the Government wants to portray. However, the general state of affairs is that the economy of Botswana is stable and an influx of immigrants from Zimbabwe has been seen as they run away from economic hardships from their own country. Contributions by Hanson (2007) indicate that the Government of Botswana prospered because of a very good diamond policy. The Government owns half of the only diamond mining company, Debswana, and has used the proceeds from the diamonds towards social development in a well-structured business relationship with the private sector. The country is viewed as one of those ranking highest on the indices of governance like transparency. Most scholars attribute the steady economic development in Botswana to good development policies and the shunning of corruption, bad governance, 'natural resource curse', import substitution and kleptocracy (Lewin 2015). In most African countries mineral resources have always created a 'resource curse' through internal conflicts, but Botswana managed to avoid these ills through good management (Collier and Hefler, 2004).

Beaulier (undated) highlights that Botswana's success was due to the possession of inclusive pre-colonial institutions. There was minimal effect of

British colonialism on Botswana and the colonialists did not destroy inclusive pre-colonial institutions, maintaining and strengthening the institution of private property in the economic interests of the elite. In addition, Botswana is rich in diamonds and this resource wealth created enough wealth and no group wanted to challenge the status quo at the expense of “rocking the boat.” Lastly, many critical decisions made by the post-independence leaders, particularly Presidents Khama and Masire reinforced the economic situation to the advantage of the public. Devereux *et al.* (2010) maintains that poverty still persists among the people despite the country moving from being the poorest to being a middle economy, with the vulnerable (children, the elderly and women) being the worst affected. Poverty eradication is a process not an event, and efforts should always be made to reduce it one step at a time. The Government was also showing fears that there could be a general loss of norms and customs which will eventually lead to an identity crisis. Despite having a very tiny population (2.3 million) the nation also shows signs of inequality just like other African states. These signs of inequality are biased against women, who appear to be receiving less benefits from these development policy gains, a situation which this research intends to investigate in Zimbabwe’s Gokwe district to establish the levels of economic engagement and inclusivity on the part of the women.

In Namibia, another African country with a desert environment and a tiny population (2.5 million) just like Botswana, the success in development has been attributed to sound development policy, sound economic management and the effective management of the mineral resources. However, the efforts are still to be translated into job creation because extreme socio-economic inequalities inherited from yesteryear when the country was run under an apartheid system still persist. The generous spending on social amenities is still to show fruits and benefits (World Bank, 2019). Contributions from Europa.eu (2012online) indicate that one area where Namibia was expected to be doing better is the education sector. This is attributed to the fact that the country invested 20-25% of its budget into education, but the results are not showing. The results boiled down to poverty, poor nutrition, impacts of HIV&AIDS on the families and the children which will inevitably affect the performance of the child at school negatively. In addition, The Government of the Republic of Namibia (2004) offers Vision 2030 to align development

policy with agenda 2030, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The major emphasis was put on creating an enabling environment through, sustainable development, international relations, development co-operation, peace and security, regional integration, globalisation, democratic governance, decentralisation, responsible decision-making and institutional capacity for development. While this vision promising just like the visions of other countries in Sub Saharan Africa, achieving them have always been a problem.

The plans and visions are often derailed by issues to do with corruption and poor governance. The same problems were also aired by Stiglitz (2016) who maintains that despite development policy formulation and implementation in Namibia, high rates of unemployment, poverty and inequality persist. The recommendations given include taking advantage and using natural resources to the fullest and diversification of the economy. The continuous failure of development policy to achieve targeted goals could be the reason why The National Rural Development Policy by the Government of Namibia (2012) had to recommend a multi-stakeholder approach in the policy formulation process and the role of Monitoring and Evaluation, so that challenges can be identified and crushed before they derail a whole project or programme. These problems appear to continue in most African countries as signs of colonial policy and it is taking much time to redress them. Most women appear to be excluded in most development policies because the colonial legacy still exists, the reason why this research intends to find out the levels on inclusiveness and benefits women got from development policies.

As argued by UNDP (2019), Ghana also adopted a multi-stakeholder approach in development initiatives after realising that a lot is still to be done in terms of achieving Sustainable development (UNDP 2019). The Government of Ghana (2015) emphasises the need to develop sound inclusive policies in which the corporate governance is improved, simultaneously raising the status of small and medium enterprises which make key contributions to the economy. As argued by International Labour Organisation (2004), Ghana needs partners to help in the effective implementation policy, without which many policies will be left unachieved. The elimination of childhood labour, protection of children and young

persons was the main thrust of the Childhood Care and Development Policy, all in the name of sustainable development.

The position of children requires many stakeholders and duty bearers, and this inclusivity leads to successful implementation of development Policy. In addition, UNPD (2015) avers that Ghana was designated a middle economy by 2011, showing signs of improvement, although challenges still remain. Ghana could focus on preventing further macroeconomic deterioration and improve the business environment and grow the private sector through investing in infrastructure, skills development and expanding social protection. This can be made effective with good governance, elimination of corruption and inclusivity in terms of decision-making, policy planning and implementation. The inclusivity should include women, men, the youth, and all other sectors of the population. This research seeks to explore how the experiences of other African states can be used to improve the status of women in terms of inclusivity and benefiting from development policy.

In Malawi, the population is larger as compared to Botswana (17, 4 million) and the policies are not are failing to yield much due to the challenges from El-Nino induced droughts which are common across the African region. In addition, the agricultural sector in Malawi just like everywhere else in Sub-Saharan Africa is not stable due to fluctuating world market prices of agricultural products because the region is just a price taker rather than a price negotiator. Malawi Government (2015) avers that the country is prone to natural disasters like floods, in which the 2015 floods were amongst the worst, and stronger and sustainable disaster management policies are required. When such policies are made, they have to be monitored and evaluated for success to avoid the vicious cycle of being attacked by the same disasters in the same places, with the same impacts over and over again. Agriculture accounts for 42% Malawi's Gross Domestic Product in (FAO 201). Malawi managed to set up three critical policies to revamp the agricultural sector food security and employment creation with the help of the World Bank and other donors. As argued by World Bank (2017) the Revised National Seed Policy, the National Agricultural Policy (NAP), and the Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR) Management Guidelines are among the policies implemented by the Malawi Government. The policies were meant to

address the commercialisation and improved sustainability in the agricultural sector, and prioritising research and partnerships, irrigation, regulating and protecting all seed varieties and ensuring the release and accessibility to farmers, enhancing the country's early warning systems and preparedness and timely release of funds to secure grain during the harvesting period.

The policies are still being implemented with five-year review periods. However, five years appear to be a very long period to review a policy, the reason why Monitoring and Evaluation policy frameworks recommend shorter review periods to ensure that failure of policies are minimal since errors, miscalculations and other implementation challenges can be corrected before it is too late. Malawi's situation may not be very far from the situation in Zimbabwe, where the population is also large (around 16 million as argued by Worldnomics) and poverty, inequality, inflation, food insecurity, fuel and cash shortages are common. These countries need inclusive policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation strategies in the context of a multi-stakeholder approach, unity and diversity to be able to solve the common development problems and poverty eradication challenges. If everyone is included their contribution will be meaningful to development, the reason why this research is emphasising the need to include the women in all economic activities.

BSR (2017) notes that women continue to face deep rooted problems in terms of economic engagement and empowerment in most sectors of their economies. They rarely achieve their full potential at work and this affects their self-esteem as women and at the same time impeding the potential of the region to excel in economic development. This is due to the fact that a significant percentage of the population is not contributing as they should be. The African Development Bank (2015) observes how the potential of one billion Africans can be raised if gender inequality is eliminated, thus boosting the continent's development potential.

As argued by BSR (2017), women in Kenya, Tanzania and Ghana achieve 87% of male human development outcome because they lack viable economic opportunities and have fewer chances of accessing good health facilities and higher education. The study therefore suggested six areas of action in which

business has to act to harness the talent and potential in women and these include: under sensitive workplaces and benefits, leadership and advancement, education and training, freedom from violence and harassment, entrepreneurship and business linkages and inclusive communities. This is due to the realisation that women continue to face sexual violence in workplaces, exclusion from managerial posts and lack of access to credit facilities. Full engagement of women therefore is not only good for women but business and the region at large (BSR, 2017).

As argued by Kamal (2018), the Middle East and North African (MENA) still has a long way to go in achieving gender equality. Although the figures and statistics revealed by the studies carried out in that particular region are averages for the five countries, there is general indication that the African countries included in the study (Egypt and Tunisia) had more or less the same characteristics like Lebanon, Jordan and OPT. Most literature lacks the statistics really representing the contributions of women economically, as a special demographic stratum in the population, a clear indication that women in SSA are not considered by scholars and governments as autonomous beings with economic and general developmental authority (Kamal, 2018). Most studies have shown a tendency to treat women as a homogeneous group, while in actual fact the problems affecting them are heterogeneous in nature on the basis of age, nationality, physical ability, race, ethnicity and so on. This means that for example the challenges, interests and perspectives of wealthier women are different from those of poorer ones, and such detail is rarely captured by studies.

Women in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have more challenges compared to their counterparts in developed countries or to the rest of the world. This may be due to cultural factors which continue to hinder women empowerment, economic participation and involvement and gender equality in general. Asaolu (2018) observes how empowerment describes the process of change wherein an individual without the ability to choose can make choices. That change is critical because much structures and institutions have to be changed including the attitude and perceptions of family, spouses and the whole society. For UNESCO (2017), 'empowerment of women' refers to a collective and individual process designed to ensure that women have control

over their lives, gaining skills, developing self-reliance, setting their own agendas, building self-confidence, and solving problems. This status quo requires time and effort since it involves issues of socialisation in which the African culture values patriarchal systems.

Changing such institutions is a process rather than an event. Although women are crucial to the process of family planning, bearing much of the responsibility for food security and accounting for increased wage labour in Sub-Saharan Africa, barriers still exist in terms of social, economic, political and cultural activities. It therefore becomes very difficult to address poverty issues when policies continue to exclude such a significant sector of the population across the region (Anunobi, 2002). In the opinion of Asaolu *et al.* (2018), gender equality can be achieved through empowerment which has three broad categories as useful indicators which are agency, resources and achievements as already discussed in the study. Agency is the ability to make decisions despite existing power relations while resources include skills, education and physical assets. Achievements are part of what an individual possesses including the chance to be included in economic opportunities. This means a close examination of any group of women should look for these indicators as measures of empowerment and equality in the field of women and development.

In addition, it is worth noting that women have always been economically active since the pre-colonial and colonial periods, but the responsible leaders never took time to document or acknowledge this significant contribution. As argued by Akyeampong and Fofack (2012), women are not making efforts to claim their share of gender equality or organise themselves in a way which makes them clearly heard. This means a lot has to be done to raise awareness and sensitisation in the women. They should not stay home and expect someone else to do the advocacy for them but rather, steer the wheels which can free them from oppression and exclusion. For example, the cultivation of cash crops and European missionary constructions of marriage, the individual, and family from the early decades of the 19th Century reduced female labour nothing payable, invisible in the realm of domestic production, a situation which was inherited and reinforced by the African societies themselves even after the colonial period. The women themselves could not

change the situation back then and up to now, they just accept it as part of their role to do unpaid labour. This is evidenced by the slow progress being made in terms of gender equality because the dominating patriarchal leaders will never willingly let go leadership.

Shukla (2016) asserts that the sectors that are dominated by women do not perform at full potential because of challenges associated with feminization of poverty. The statistics reveal that the region was once a food secure place in the period around 1981 but due to the fact that most rural agricultural areas have been ignored and left as a domain for women who try hard to make ends meet with little or no inputs and farm machinery is now importing basics like sugar, wheat, rice and maize. This in itself shows lack of prioritisation because food is a basic need, as shown by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Any plan which does not prioritise food security is anti-developmental.

Despite the fact that the region has all the climatic requirements for food security including arable land, the region is only found to be producing the world's 10% agricultural output, an indication that African leaders, policy planners and implementers have a long way to go to ensure that most of the people will reach other higher levels of needs like the self-actualisation postulated by Maslow since people will spend most of their life time trying to secure food for their immediate families rather than studying inventing or other self-development activities. These ideas were echoed at the 2016 World Economic Forum in Kigali where speakers focused on investment on agriculture in Africa and concluded that most of Africa must make special emphasis on issues to do with food security giving each individual in each stratum of the population to participate in food production and productivity. Failure to empower women in terms of making their own timely decisions on when, how and what to plant is a recipe for food insecurity.

Hunt and Samman (2016) contend that several factors affect the process of women empowerment and they include: education, access to quality paid work, collective action and leadership, training and skills development, the burden of unpaid care work at home, access to property and assets, among other factors. Addressing these factors will create a pathway for women to implement the ideas they have to solve their own problems in their individual

capacities, households and communities. Women empowerment therefore means they gain voices, power, the means and control of the resources around them and their families. However, Cornwall and Edwards (2016) argue how empowerment is characterized by negotiation, uncertain outcomes and compromise thus it cannot be expected to be linear, simple or easy. Rather, women themselves should be the agents of their empowerment (O'Neil *et al.*, 2014). When development policy is implemented to empower women, indications of power should be seen through the personal, rational, and collective perspectives within the individual. This means development of personal confidence, increase in the ability to negotiate and reason with all facets of life, and involvement in political structures based on cooperation rather than competition (Rahman, 2013, using ideas from Rawland, 1997).

In many developing countries like Zimbabwe, rural development deserves the highest priority particularly in the allocation of resources, since about 67% of the population resides in rural areas (ZMSTATS, 2012). Tenets of rural development which are: basic necessities of life, self-respect and freedom can be made reference to and be given priority by all development practitioners. Any policy introduced should aim to achieve these three basics for rural people (Singh 2009, Rural Poverty Report 2011).

As argued by ZIMSTAT (2012), Gross gender inequality exists in Zimbabwe and studies show that female headed households are generally more vulnerable to poverty than households headed by their male counterparts. In 2012, nationally, 35% of the households were female-headed. Rural areas had a higher proportion (38%) of female-headed households than urban areas with 29.6%. More women are always found to be amongst the poorest, less women are found in well-paying jobs or access to resources. This shows that the situation persists in most districts in the country, an indication that Zimbabwe still has much to do to achieve gender parity (ZIMSTAT, 2012).

In 2012, fewer women than men were employed at all levels, as illustrated by the gender parity indices of less than 100, at national, rural/urban, and provincial levels. Women and men do not participate equally in both economic and political decision-making. Women turn out in large numbers to vote in politics, but their representation in Parliament remains well below

that of men. In Government, the presence of women in top positions in key areas such as defence, finance and economic policy, police, and the central banking remains very low. Surprisingly, even in ministries like Women Affairs and Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education where women dominate in numbers, their chances of securing a top leadership position are still very low unless where deliberate efforts are made by the Government.

The inequality and the backwardness in the rural areas of Zimbabwe were a result of pre-independence policies which had racial segregation objectives from their formulation to implementation (Mapuva, 2015). Black women in particular were subjected to a triple discrimination on account of color, gender and geographical location, both in the world of work and society at large. As argued by Cheater (2008) women were excluded from ownership of land in their own right. They have always been the most agriculturally active, and could own some livestock, mainly obtained from the customary cow of motherhood, and owning some grains, but they never controlled the means of production in agriculture and metallurgy but instead, provided labour for those activities. Even in history, very few communities are recorded where women had political authority; otherwise, leadership remained the domain of men. During the colonial era, most women remained in the rural areas since they had no formal work in the urban areas. The women did not own much as well, despite having worked with their husband to accumulate whatever was there, an indication that the women were treated as minors. Legislation like the Native Wills Act of 1933 were created to permit the African widows to inherit their husband's wealth upon his death when a will was availed. Problems always exist between the husband's family and the widow, and in most cases, kinsmen often grabbed the property, leaving the widows and the children in absolute poverty.

FAO (2017) has brought to the fore the fact that women are not even fully equipped to perform well even in the agricultural sector where they are very active. In the past, men have always received better agricultural training compared to women, although women were the most active farmers in all rural areas across Zimbabwe. This was caused by the fact that the women had to seek permission from their husbands to attend these crucial meetings and in most cases the permission would not be granted. Recent research has

shown that women's access to education and extension training is improving, and in some cases, participation is starting to surpass that of men. Nyamudeza (2012:8) notes: "Women play a key role in subsistence agriculture in Zimbabwe". Eighty-six (86) percent of the women depend on the land for the livelihoods of themselves and their families, but women living in the communal areas are treated as dependents of men, not as landholders or farmers in their own right (Human Rights Watch, 2003). Together with men, women also perform cash-crop production or buy and sell to earn extra income (ZWRCN/SARDC, 2008). Rural women farmers play a vital role in food production and food security. They account for 70% of agricultural workers, 80% of food producers, 100% of those who process basic foodstuffs, and they undertake from 60% to 90% of the marketing (Fabiya *et al.*, 2007). The introduction of modern agricultural techniques and cash crops has increased women's workload by expanding tasks such as weeding and transplanting, but without bringing women an appropriate share of cash-crop payments.

Maphosa *et al.* (2015) posit that the SADC Gender and Development Index has highlighted how Zimbabwe still has to do more in terms of achieving set targets of gender parity, with a 41% threshold to achieving the set targets by SADC. The authors argue that recognition of women in the economic field only happens as and when the patriarchal leaders want it to happen. The agenda for that visibility is to gain political mileage internationally for the male leaders themselves rather than meaningful gender parity. The discrepancy between perceived and actual realities is not by accident but deliberate efforts by the ruling male elite to keep women in the lowest ranks where they can be used when necessary for their convenience as voters and political supporters. This is a very sad scenario since all efforts by other international players in the quest for gender equality will be fruitless. It appears the Zimbabwean situation is where women are used to empower the men rather than the women themselves as spelled out by the signed documents and instruments. Researchers and scholars are therefore realising that worrisome gap between the advocacy and sensitisation made against the actual figures of women in real political participation

In a consultation report conducted by Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA, 2013), there was a clear indication that women, particularly urban women from Harare and Bulawayo, are not happy with their status quo in terms of empowerment, political participation, economic engagement and involvement. Although the consulted women only constitute a small percentage of the women in Zimbabwe, their views may still be generalised to the rest of the country, particularly to their rural counterparts. In summary, the report concludes that despite hard work and effort to support their families through legitimate means, women are frustrated through poor governance at the hands of male leaders who are not apologetic or compassionate to the plight of women. However, it appears the women continue to lament their position without making efforts to come together and change the situation at hand. Women have so many scars today, not just from physical abuse and violence but also from emotional abuse, economic and political exclusion.

As argued by FAO (2017), the July 2013 elections in Zimbabwe saw women occupying 34 percent seats in the Parliament. Zimbabwe is also ranked 27 out of 188 countries on the Inter-parliamentary Union's World classification of women in parliament and also number 4 among Southern African development Community (SADC) countries. However, gender bias, cultural norms, gender inequalities, and gender-based violence (GBV) continue to wreak havoc in the women's lives without giving them a chance to improve their economic status. Women's representation in the urban and rural councils decreased from 19 percent to 16 percent in 2013 (FAO, 2017). Changes in the legislation is expected in the forthcoming 2023 elections, and better representation is expected of women at all levels.

As noted by Chikanyambidze (2015), Zimbabwe is trying to empower women through reducing their vulnerability and improving their welfare through initiatives like the Women Development Fund (WDF). In research carried out in Chipinge district (Ward 16 and 17), it was revealed that WDF has made a contribution in improving the livelihoods of the beneficiaries through the initiated income generating projects. The projects led to economic, psychological, social, political, and legal empowerment of women. However, the major challenge with WDF is that insufficient funds were being given,

with much delays in the disbursement of funds. Complementary initiatives are therefore needed which include capacity building so that there is enhancement of entrepreneurship skills of the beneficiaries and the creation of market linkages, among others.

In a 3-day international conference, under the theme, “Women’s Economic and Political Empowerment and Peace Building”, women from over 10 African countries were brought together to express their views on issues to do with empowerment. It was co-hosted by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development (2011) in collaboration with the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI), the Ministry of Regional Integration and International Cooperation and the Women’s Coalition. This conference was a follow up to a High-Level Dialogue delegation of eight eminent African women led by Mary Robinson, former Prime Minister of Ireland and Chairperson of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Such efforts indicate the commitment of Zimbabwe to improving the status of women in line with regional and international partners. Many issues were discussed which can help women to be aware of their human rights. However, there is need for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of such valuable conferences for meaningful change on the status of women in terms of economic engagement and involvement.

In a study carried out by The Joint Programme for Gender Equality in Zimbabwe (2017: 22), the only option women had as a solution to the unequal opportunities in formal employment is the informal sector. The study shows that most of people trading informally are women as compared to their male counterparts. Much challenges were identified in the female dominated sector which include: inadequate infrastructure, limited information, lack of credit and financing, and lack of knowledge on laws, by-laws and regulations, harassment, theft of their wares from public spaces in corrupt activities involving law enforcement agents and polarisation within the informal economy. As if working under the pathetic conditions besides streets and in overcrowded buses is not enough, the law enforcement agents are always out there to solicit bribes and, in some cases, sexual favours so that the women may not suffer at the hands of the officers. This continues every day since the

borders have been noted to be the most corrupt places in the country. Most of the officers at these border posts have enriched themselves through corruption money collected from the powerless women who have no other option but to pay the officers so that they are not left behind by the bus crew and protecting their wares from being confiscated by the ruthless corrupt officials (The New Humanitarian, 2017).

ILO (2017) recommends an increase in programmes for sustainability such as education, access to skills development and training. Lack of financial options to start viable projects is often one of the greatest challenge women may face, thus Governments can increase the opportunities for the women to access financial assistance at low interest rates. Increasing these programmes also call for monitoring and evaluation initiatives to check the levels of inclusiveness of the enrolment requirements into the programmes, and ensuring that the women who enrol into the institutions complete the programmes alongside their male counterparts. If challenges are identified, it will be necessary for the Government to offer options like assisting with loans or grants for school fees and assisting with childcare facilities which are normally some of the reasons women may drop out of education and training to take care of children, the sick and the elderly.

As argued by Bayeh (2016), Ethiopia may take time to achieve sustainable development unless women are included in developmental issues because they constitute more than half of the population, thus excluding their full potential have negative impacts on national development. Sustainable development has three underlying factors which are: economic, environmental and social dimensions. These dimensions show that development takes place in sectors, each critical stakeholder has to play their part for the good and success of national agendas. These arguments all show that a lot has to be done to identify the level of inclusiveness and economic engagement for all stake-holders. This research intends to find out these levels in women from the rural areas, because they constitute a significant percentage of population in Zimbabwe.

Uguanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013) define a policy as a course setting that provides the direction, guide and the way in which certain goals and

objectives required by the Government should be achieved. In addition, Ezeani (2006) and Ikelegbe (2006) concur as they emphasise that a policy is a government tool designed to solve a certain situation in the economic, political or social fields of development. As argued by Abor (2005), policy implementation means all activities done to achieve the goals of an established policy. Its major thrust is to convert financial, material, technical and human resources into outputs that are goods and services. Edwards (1980) (in Abor, 2005) explains that policy implementation, becomes critical stage between the establishment of a policy and the consequences of the people it affects, with its activities ranging from issuing and enforcing directives, making loans, disbursing funds, assigning and hiring personnel among others. Figure 2.1 shows the policy cycle and each stage is briefly explained.

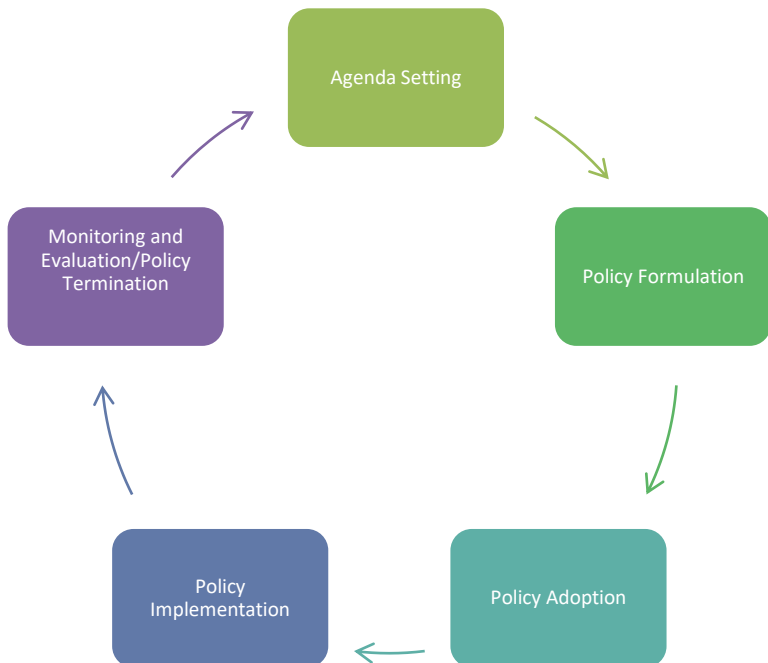


Figure 2.1 The Policy Cycle (adapted by Researcher from Chigumira *et al.*, 2018:4)

From the policy cycle shown above (Figure 2.1), agenda setting is the initial stage when a problem is identified by the stakeholders and a variety of policy options are put forward to address the problem through wide consultations. At the policy formulation stage that is the second stage, the planning team produces a draft of the proposed policy which is then given to stakeholders for comment. There should be enough research done prior to the policy formulation so that a body of evidence, pros and cons of each option is submitted in full to the stakeholders. The policy formulation process is supposed to be apolitical in nature since a wide range of stakeholders which include NGOs, Civil Society, the private sector is consulted at this stage. The third stage is policy adoption, and it involves carrying out the plans and activities listed in the policy; thus, the ball is passed from the policy formulators to the policy implementers. The threats and challenges do not only rest on the implementers but all planners because the success of any stage depends on the thoroughness of problem identification, reasons and evidence justifying the need of policy formulation. The fourth stage is policy implementation, in which all activities planned are put into effect by the stakeholders. Each stakeholder is given tasks and responsibilities which should be done in coordination, communication, transparency and objectivity. As the policy implementation continues, the next stage which is monitoring and evaluation becomes necessary. This stage is omitted by some developing countries, thus affecting the success of these policies leading to their nemesis. Here the policy team measures the success and to what extent the goals and objectives have been achieved. When new issues arise, the policy cycle begins all over but if all is well all projects under the policy can be terminated. Although the process is in a cycle, real life activities are not in such a linear pattern. Sometimes things happen concurrently or other stages maybe skipped due to unforeseen challenges.

Policy implementation is influenced by many factors which include lack of commitment on the part of the policy implementers and negative attitudes and perceptions of the policy. Brynard (2009) argues how the factors influencing policy formulation and implementation include: Institutional environment, inter-organisational cooperation, private public partnerships the way people value training, private/public partnerships, contextual factors, and the behaviour of the political and administrative players involved. In

concurrence is Salvesen *et al.* (2008) who also adds that policy implementation is influenced by the capacity and the resources available to the public agencies. While inter-governmental cooperation is also critical in the effective implementation of policy, effective conflict resolution has positive benefits in effective implementation of development policy. These factors indicate clearly that policy formulation and implementation should be a multi-stakeholder approach with transparency and objectivity. If people have different views on a certain development initiative, disagreements may occur leading to policy failure and abortion of projects. Effective policy implementation involves coordination and cooperation so that no grey areas are left. Effective communication, good governance, transparency and monitoring and evaluation are priorities for the sake of effective policy implementation otherwise there will be very limited success stories to record.

Ahmed (2016) argues that policy formulation appears to be a rationale activity for most governments, but the implementation stage becomes the graveyard for most policies. Failing to implement development policy effectively has become the nemesis of most national goals and objectives, and overshadowing the good intentions of the national leaders. The factors discussed by the author (*ibid.*) include policy content and context, corruption and lack of appropriate technology among other factors. In Nigeria, Ahmed (2016) proffers how most policies failed due to lack of continuity in the leaders. Whenever a new leader comes in, new policies and new key persons are ushered in to further the interests of the new leaders at the detriment of national development. Besides the policies will also be lacking specific goal definition, and clear-cut duties and responsibilities. Under such circumstances, it is difficult for policies to succeed or meet the intended objectives.

When development policy is implemented inclusively, women are empowered and the dependency syndrome can be reduced. This means they become self-reliant and do not have to wait for men for any basic needs like food, shelter and clothing. In the case of divorce, separation or death of spouse, the women will not be considered as a vulnerable group at the mercy of the patriarchal society since they can safely continue with their own lives with confidence. As argued by UN Women (2018), policies which benefit

women are very critical because they are central to realising women's rights and gender equality, a condition which provides them dignity and self-worth as successful leaders, business people and professionals. In addition, an increase in meaningful participation in all sectors of the economy will be realised especially in politics, advocacy, and agency. In general, when more women are recognized and given their position in society as equal participants, they have a higher chance of attaining higher education qualifications that makes them efficient and effective performers in business and economies grow that is a positive initiative in achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

In the view of the IMF (2012), deliberately including women in policy formulation and implementation increases policy choices and priorities and a variety of voices from all walks of life particularly the voice of the rural women who have always been excluded in development channels despite being the majority. In addition, if women have more control over household resources such as cash and production lines, they are more likely to spend money towards the basic needs of children which include food, shelter and education. These benefit the future generations, taking the notion that all benefits channelled towards women have been found to benefit the whole household and the whole nation at large in most cases. In concurrence is Sen (2009), who avers that development is a process of expanding freedoms equally for everyone.

Closing the gap in welfare between men and women is just as important as reducing poverty in an economy. The economic engagement of all women irrespective of class, tribe or ethnicity increases the performance of markets and institutions as the challenges and experiences of every individual at household level is heard and debated through a range of voices, thus service delivery by the government becomes more efficient in areas such as legislation, laws and the socialisation processes. The IMF (2012) summarises these benefits as follows: reduction on women and girl's mortality rates, reduction in education gaps, increasing women's access to economic opportunity, earning and productivity, giving women a voice in society and household levels and limiting intergenerational gender inequality.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2012) argues how when women are methodically included in development policy, there will be a general increase in access to resources, financial services, information and technology. As the women get involved in other activities outside the home, there is a tendency for them to have fewer children who are healthy. This will also increase the women's chances of networking, sharing, observing other role models and have a chance to access the global market for international trade rather than the local small-scale markets that they always specialise in.

Okeke (2018) buttresses the fact that Nigerian women benefited from proper policy formulation and implementation of appropriate laws and policies. These activities were matched with development of integrated farming systems and microfinance interventions. All these efforts stimulated achievements in food security and fostering national development. Okeke (2018) avers that women empowerment reduces gender gaps as women become more visible in market places and more involved on decision-making. Women inclusiveness in the policy planning process is also as powerful as the implementation process itself because they will be able to contribute and voice their concerns in sectors of the policy which are silent, ambiguous or vague in terms of addressing women issues. As the women become equal partners in most developmental spheres, the rate of violence and abuse is likely to be reduced due to the respect and dignity spouses will be offering each other.

The UN Women (2017) argues that women's empowerment and inclusiveness in development policy is key to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), goal number 8 (sustainable economic growth, decent and productive work for all) and goal number 16 (Build peaceful and inclusive societies). Inclusive policies therefore leave no one behind and increase wellbeing for all. In Namibia for example, there was general realisation that efforts to include women in economic development policy reduces legal and cultural barriers in opening and running business, making life easier for everyone so that each individual participates to the maximum potential for the benefit of national development. In Tanzania, the realisation that women are facing challenges

due to lack of awareness, information and publicity led to the promotion of access to information programmes by civil society, thus policies should be planned in such a way that channels of communication are already established during the planning phase (Fox, 2016).

Media advocacy was used to ensure the involvement of as many female stakeholders as possible for their benefit. In addition, civil society organisations helped in the lobbying, through bill reviews, community outreach, workshops and seminars. The increase in awareness increases the rate of attendance in training workshops and adult education, leading to more competency, efficiency and effectiveness in all operations (Fox 2016, Mallya 2005). In Brazil, the gender gap is still evident although much effort has been made towards increasing gender parity (Agenor and Canuto, 2013). The scholars presented the following as benefits of inclusive policy implementation in development countries: more female enrolment in institutions of higher learning than men, reduction of gender bias in the market place and improved access to infrastructure. The more women are educated, the better they understand the market operations leading to a general increase in profits, a change from low order goods production to higher order goods and better deals and performance of the produce they are trading. When infrastructure improves and women have access to it, the time spent on a single activity is reduced by cutting travelling time and use of machinery in home industries, thus increasing efficiency, production and productivity.

When a policy is established, the expected scenario is that all the intended beneficiaries get the intended benefits for the betterment of their lives. However, it is not always the case because there are much implementation challenges encountered by different communities at different times. UNCATD (2012) observes how good targets are mostly hindered by much development challenges which vary from economy to economy and from one society to another. These spatial and time differences in the way policy is implemented and succeeds, may be due to lack of effective communication, lack of resources, disposition or attitudes and the ugly impacts of bureaucratic structures. Special mention is made here of bureaucracy that Ezeani (2006) defined as a formal administrative structure with features like

division of labour, rationality, hierarchy of authority, neutrality, impersonality, all guided by a system of rules among others. The hierarchy of authority mentioned here may be very effective as an accountability tool, but usually it delays procedures as decisions may not be made unless all members in the hierarchy approves.

In Africa and other developing regions, inadequate human and material resources, corruption, lack of continuity of Government policies, among others have all led to implementation gaps in development policy, leading to the nemesis of these policies. As argued by Ajulor (2018) and Makinde (2017), policy implementation challenges in Nigeria were explained using the flaws and challenges in the Better Life Programme (BLP) and the Family Support Programme (FSP) implemented by three successive Nigerian first ladies between 1983 and 1998. The goals and objectives of empowering women could not be achieved because there was generally lack of unity or continuity. Each first lady would want to implement the programme in a different way from her predecessor, trying to prove to supporters that she is smarter. Instead of coordination and continued support from each first lady, the incoming one would change the names of the programmes and change all the structures, bringing awry ideas which did not help the success of any of the policies. These scholars recommend that any international policy should be domesticated to suit the local conditions within the state in question. It is also very critical to involve the intended beneficiaries from the planning stage to ensure ownership and avoid sabotage of the policies.

In Malawi, policy implementation has more or less the same challenges as in other African states. Hussein (2018) argues that the institutions are incapacitated because financial and human resources are always inadequate, but above all, the system of policy implementation is highly politicized, with rampant corruption like everywhere else in Africa. This calls for an urgent need for most developing countries to deal with corruption first before emphasising on policy formulation or implementation. While some of the policies may not be good enough depending on the Content, Context, Commitment, Capacity and Coalition of stakeholders (5Cs of policy implementation), the strategies and the enabling environment within the

country are critical issues for effective policy implementation (Cloette and De Coning, 2011).

No matter how good a policy may look, there is little or no chance of success without effective communication. Hussein (2018) maintains that communication is a process of transferring information, emotions, feeling, thoughts and ideas from one person to another; the exchange of ideas, among two or more people to share a common understanding. Lack of this critical effective management and accountability tool has seen the demise of many development policies, more so in developing countries. This scenario is summarised by Egonmwan (2009) who argues that successful implementation of public policy is more difficult in developing countries than it is in first world countries.

African and Latin American countries face most of the challenges because of the already existing challenges like poverty and strict traditional structures for the women which then increases the gap between plans and achieving them. Ahmed and Dantamna (2016) argue that when public policy fails, the people lose confidence in the government. The leaders should always make efforts to formulate policies which they will successfully implement to be able to regain the confidence of their people. The major targets of development policy are the people; thus, it is critical to improve the lives of most of the people rather than the individual selfish ends of a few politicians in power (Hussein, 2018).

In South Africa (Tebele (2016) asserts that new policies had to be formulated and implemented for the benefit of the poor and redressing the imbalances perpetrated by the previous regimes, just like the Zimbabwean scenario. The main emphasis was on the cultural, economic and political status in the country (Tebele, 2016; Cloete, 2011). However, most of the policies clearly indicated the 'what' and 'why' of policy formulation, grossly lacking the 'how' part. There was need to educate the policy makers and the end users of the policy, what was expected of them in the policies. In addition, lack of consultation and participation from stakeholders, lack of the necessary skills, experience and qualifications had negative impacts on South Africa in terms

of policy implementation. Western solutions were generally applied to solve the country's problems which is a serious error in the policy cycle because there is need to domesticate any policy so that it applies to local situations. Besides being haunted by ghosts of colonialism in terms of policy implementation, South Africa needs education and training, awareness and sensitisation workshops on the need to promote unity and inclusiveness of all stakeholders, that is the state and the public, particularly consultation of the targeted beneficiaries (Mtetwa, 2014; Ferim, 2013; Mkhize, 2015 in Tebele, 2016). These observations are in concurrence with Salvesen *et al.* (2008) who aver that a good policy can only be implemented successfully with enough commitment, knowledge, awareness and inter-governmental coordination. In addition, the presence of an advocate or champion is critical, and effective communication and conflict resolution, absence of which leads to the demise of the formulated policies.

The Zimbabwean experience is closely related to those of other African states, although each country has its own unique policy implementation challenges. The Zimbabwe Economic Policy Analysis and Research Unit (ZEPARU 2012) outlined many attributes which characterizes a good policy. These included: forward looking, outward looking, innovative, flexibility and creativity, evidence-based inclusiveness, communication, Monitoring and Evaluation (M and E) and review. Most policies in the country are hardly monitored for effectiveness and success levels. This leaves policy implementation in the country with so many gaps as compared to policy formulation since there are so many good policies in the country. As argued by Siambombe (2015), the rural populace is never consulted in policy formulation but just treated as policy consumers. While most policies have come and gone (Zim ASSET, Vision 2020, Growth Point policy just to name a few), the rural populace have remained where they were before. Zhou and Zvoushe (2012) argue that policies in Zimbabwe are formulated to suit the needs of the ruling elite rather than most of the population, the reason why these policies are never explained to the people or at least benefit the really poor people in the country. In the opinion of Chigudu (2014), there are too many ministries implementing different policies and the ministries are not

even coordinated. This is a clear indication that issues to do with economic development should not be politicized but rather should be assigned for implementation to professionals without interference from the politicians. Different countries use different policy models for women economic empowerment and gender equality. A few of these are discussed here from different geographical areas around the world.

Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) were used to study women issues in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. Miedema *et al.* (2018) assessed women between 15-49 years of age on how they can be helped through development policy. The model involves three key dimensions which are:

- 1) Enabling resources and assets;
- 2) Ability to exercise choice in the household (instrumental agency or power to); and
- 3) Expression of equitable gender beliefs and attitudes (intrinsic agency or power within).

The model is shown diagrammatically in figure 3 below, and it shows the three concepts and how they are related. For the woman to be empowered, there is need for enabling resources to be available in the form of finance, machinery, inputs and land. This will increase the women's ability to make purchases of what they need in time for production so that their businesses or enterprises flourish and reduce the level of dependence. In addition, the model shows the need for instrumental agency or power to exercise choice in the household. This is critical because time is important in any enterprise or initiative for sustainable development. If women are granted the ability to make choices without too many protocols in the household, they are most likely to be effective in production and productivity since time wasting is reduced. The model also shows intrinsic agency or power within that has a lot to do with the attitudes and beliefs of the woman and those around the woman in terms of gender equality. Norms and cultural beliefs are a major determining factor in the freedom of the women. How society socialises the people and view women will determine the rate at which they are accepted as equal partners who can be given a chance to control their own lives.

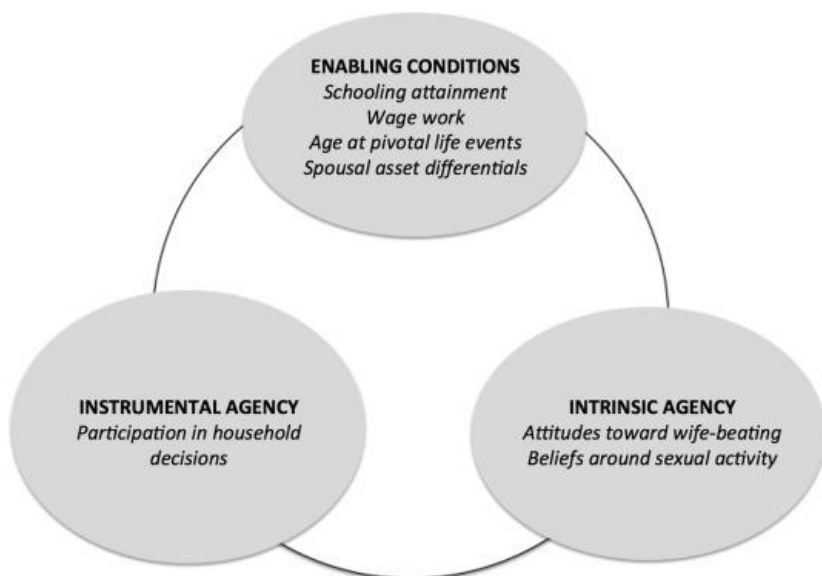


Figure 2.1: Policy Model for Women in East Africa (Sciencedirect.com. Retrieved 18/03/20)

The inclusion of spousal assets differentials in the above model (Figure 2.2) can be criticised because it promotes unequal empowerment. It means single women and widows will remain poor if the married women are going to heavily rely on their spouses' assets for empowerment. This creates inequality within a population stratum, thus a more inclusive model where all women benefit will be more effective in terms of women empowerment. On the same vein, age at pivotal events is also not clear as an enabling condition because all women cannot be the same age, thus activities done will also be different.

BSR (2018) realised the need for building blocks in women empowerment and the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach in Sub-Saharan Africa and came up with a policy conceptual framework. While the studies were done in the whole region, particular attention was paid to Ghana, Tanzania and Kenya. From the model companies have a great role to play in women's economic empowerment using the Act, Enable and Influence framework as shown diagrammatically in Figure 2.3 below. The model suggests that

companies can act by making changes that are within the company's control. There are situations when workplaces are showing much gender insensitive policies and statements but the stakeholders do not do anything. The idea is to take action once the company has increased its levels of gender awareness benefits and starts by empowering the few women at that particular organisation. Taking action involves creating mission statements, visions and organisational goals which clearly include aims and objectives on achieving gender equality by a certain period. This action should be lived and maintained, evidenced by the inclusion of women in workers' committees, heads of departments and so on. Taking action is a critical dimension because most gender equality policies are just on paper without anyone taking real action that is one of the reasons it is taking ages to reach the international and national target of 50/50 representation for men and women in terms political leadership, workplace leadership and gender equality in general.

Once empowered, same women can influence others. It is the choice of the organisation to table plans and budgets for gender equality which can be used to encourage everyone to see all men and women as equals. The government alone cannot effectively implement all women empowerment and gender equality initiatives without the help of other stakeholders; thus, companies can play a part by supporting awareness and sensitisation workshops in their communities as corporate social responsibility, but most importantly they have to implement the plans at their own organisations before asking anyone else to do it. Promoting entrepreneurship and creation of new business linkages need financial assistance from corporate entities so that business ventures do not fail. Besides financing local projects which are gender inclusive, the companies can also assist with marketing the products so that all efforts reap positive rewards so that the women are motivated. The model also suggests that companies can also influence by advocating and sharing experience. Advocacy is important so that the levels of awareness would increase and even more organisations and communities will start exercising extreme caution on gender equality and social inclusion in any programme being implemented.

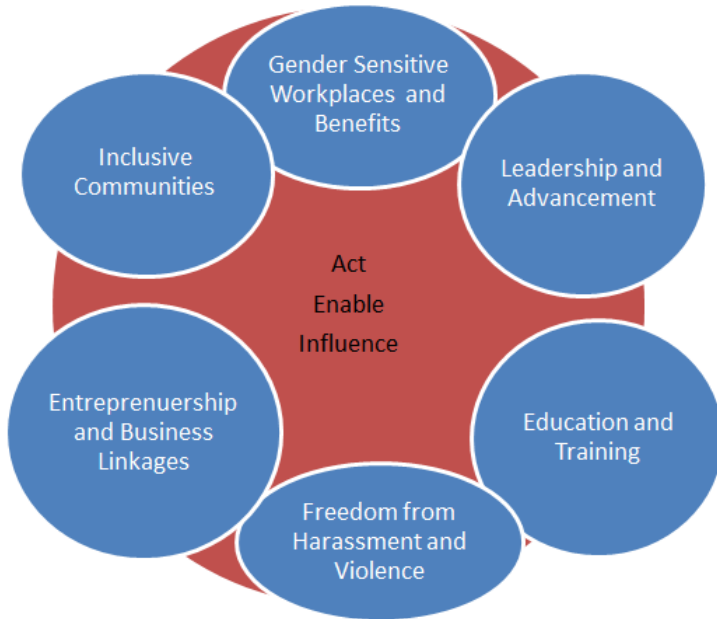


Figure 2.2: Models for women Empowerment in Sub-Saharan Africa (Adapted by Researcher from BSR, 2018:34)

The model proposes that businesses can contribute to the efforts of the governments and other stakeholders like NGOs and civil society by funding those initiatives so that the plans can be achieved. However, the model can be criticised for being over simplistic and assuming that things can be done in a simple cyclic fashion. Although organisations are strong agents of change, factors like cultural norms and values will always come into play since the organisations are affected by the communities surrounding them. The effects of politics on organisations can also be disrupting to the initiatives of the organisation's good intentions to implement gender inclusive policies and plans. Political leaders can influence decisions on who gets which posts, without having to rely on merit or gender quotas in the organisations, thus gender equality achievement is not that simple due to many factors affecting it at the macro and micro level.

IMAGO Global Grassroots (2018) presents a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Model which they used as a gender equality strategy for women and girls' empowerment.

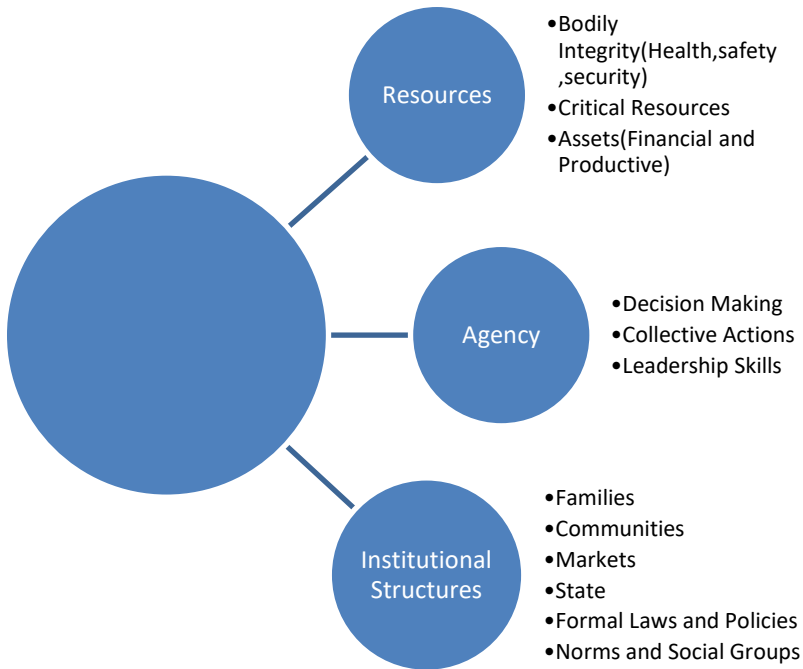


Figure 2.3: Women Empowerment Model (adapted by Researcher from BMGF-Empowerment Model (2018: 9)

The model proposes three key elements to the empowerment of women and girls in any society. These are: resources, agency and institutional structures. The foundation starts by defining empowerment which they take as the interplay between voice, choice and power. When a woman has a voice or is given back her voice, she has the ability to makes choices in her life for activities and events which matter in her future, thus enabling her to be in control of her life as an individual, in the home, in the community, in her workplace and in the nation at large. At the same time the same woman or girl has to be taught to take responsibility over the rights of other people

around her in all those environments. Agency in this particular model refers to the capacity of women and girls to take purposeful actions and pursue specific goals, free from the threat of violence or retribution. Agency has three core elements which are: decision-making, leadership, and collective action and they are ways that women and girls can exercise agency in their lives. Institutional structures are the social setups They include formal and informal rules and practices that help to shape and influence women's levels of expressing themselves as individuals. Institutional structures can be found in the spheres of the family markets, community, and state. Formal laws and policies and norms that shape relations among individuals and social groups are part and parcel of institutional structures which have a great role to play in the empowerment of girls and women. It is therefore essential to ensure that they are deliberately and intentionally analysed, monitored and evaluated all along the way as development policies are planned and formulated in all countries.

As argued by Imago Global Grassroots (2018), resources are important tangible and intangible capital and sources of power that women and girls have, own, or use individually or collectively in exercising agency. Everyone can have the resources so the model aims at evaluating the impacts of availability or unavailability of these resources in the lives of women. Key resources highlighted in the model include women and girls' bodily integrity (health, safety, and security), critical consciousness, and assets (financial and productive assets, knowledge and skills, time, and social capital). All these factors are intricately related and they have a tendency to be overlooked when policy is planned without inclusive approaches or multi-stakeholder approaches where women and girls themselves are key advocates of their own empowerment. However, the model did not include the personal attitude and preparedness of the individual woman to be empowered. Sometimes the recipients of the intended change may not be intrinsically motivated to liberate themselves and rather wait for others to do it for them. In other cases, some women appear so brainwashed and content with the oppression, to the extent that they do not see the need to make effort to be on the same status with men. Efforts should be made therefore to bring up models which start

with intrinsic motivation and empowerment before extrinsic factors are considered.

Another policy model for women empowerment is proposed by Huis *et al.* (2017:1) where they identify three distinct areas within which women empowerment can take place.

- (1) The Micro-level: an individual's personal beliefs and actions, promoting personal empowerments well;
- (2) The Meso-level: beliefs and actions but this time comparing and influenced by relevant others, like spouse and family;
- (3) The Macro-level involves the broader, societal context where societal empowerment can be observed, thus cultural differences remain important in shaping and influencing empowerment levels.

In this model, the micro-level represents the individual empowerment which should be observed in the woman herself. This measures the level of willingness, awareness and positive mind in the woman in accepting any development initiatives aimed at empowering her. At times it becomes fruitless to put much effort on an individual who is not even aware of the need to empower her or aware of her human rights as a rights bearer.

For women empowerment to take place, the intrinsic values are required. A strong resilient and resistant inner self is needed and this can only be achieved through continuous awareness and sensitisation workshops. Religious beliefs are sometimes so influential in the way people think to the extent that the recipient becomes resistant to change. Education and training can only be implemented on an individual who is willing and motivated to learn to change her status. In the case of women with negative attitude, there may be need for persistent communication, workshops, role modelling and exposure so that the individual women leave the closures of their own environment to experience, how, and why other women are embracing change (Huis *et al.*, 2017). This will play a role in the second level which is the meso level where the woman's relationships mean a lot. The level shows the way the woman interacts and influences others in terms of economic empowerment. The meso level is the immediate environment where even family and friends really matter. Empowering a woman and excluding her family and friends may cause problems in terms of relationships, be they

marital or social. This can lead to gender-based violence or abuse of power on the part of the empowered woman, thus it is necessary that the training and education involve others so that they grow and develop together for interdependence and mutual understanding. Inclusive growth therefore reduces conflicts so that leaders do not waste much time on conflict resolution rather than development initiatives. The study encourages the concept of empowering a woman and at the same time teach those around her how to live with an empowered woman for the benefit of everyone.

The macro-level involves the wider society that one cannot operate without for change and improvement. This involves activities at national and international level. Due to globalisation, modernisation and urbanisation, what happens at an international level affects how women think and act, and how nations react to or implement women empowerment policies. Factors, like international trade relations and patterns, commodity prices, inflation, international women empowerment instruments and conferences, also come into play because they influence the way women in other parts of the world think and react to their national gender policies. Trade laws are also critical because they affect the prices of commodities which women produce, thus presenting hurdles in economic growth if prices fall. Overall, this policy model provides an emphasis on the individual inner self at a household level, the immediate relationships in the home and family and lastly the outside community and the world at large. However, the model can be criticised for concentrating on the localised level of empowerment only without looking at the impacts of international relations which also affect the way gender equality policies can be accepted or challenged.

The models discussed above can help policy formulators and implementers to exhaust all dimensions of women empowerment from economic, social and political structures. While it is important to empower the woman in all facets of development, it is also critical to examine the influence of family, norms and other institutions which do not change overnight. These models combined show an exhaustive list of factors to be considered and researchers can be influenced to formulate similar development models specifically for women empowerment in Zimbabwe, after eliminating the weaknesses of the other models and utilizing the strong factors that are relevant to the

Zimbabwean scenario. The models also influence the researcher to design an inclusive research instrument comprising relevant questions which examine all facets of empowerment, livelihoods, and economic inclusiveness for the achievement of all the research objectives.

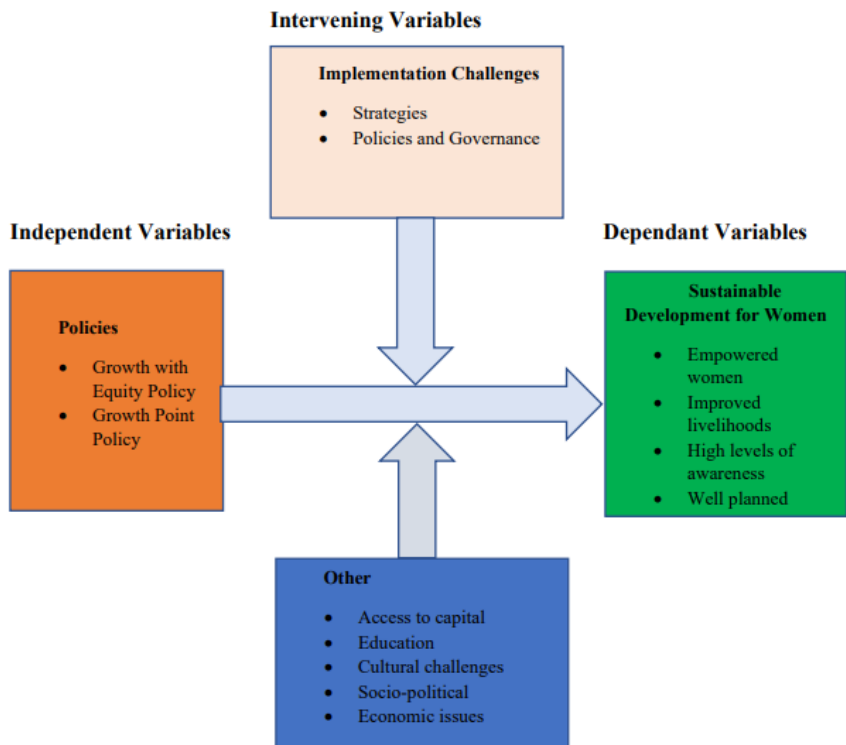


Figure 2.4: Conceptual Framework (Researcher, 2019)

Figure 2.5 above emanates from the literature reviewed so far. The inquiry is emphasising the two policies that are the independent variables. The way these policies are implemented, that is strategies used and challenges encountered will affect the livelihoods of the rural and urban women in Gokwe. Better livelihoods and empowerment of women will largely depend on the success and effectiveness of the policies being examined that is the thrust of this inquiry. This framework will shape the research questions and level of involvement and depth expected in the research results.

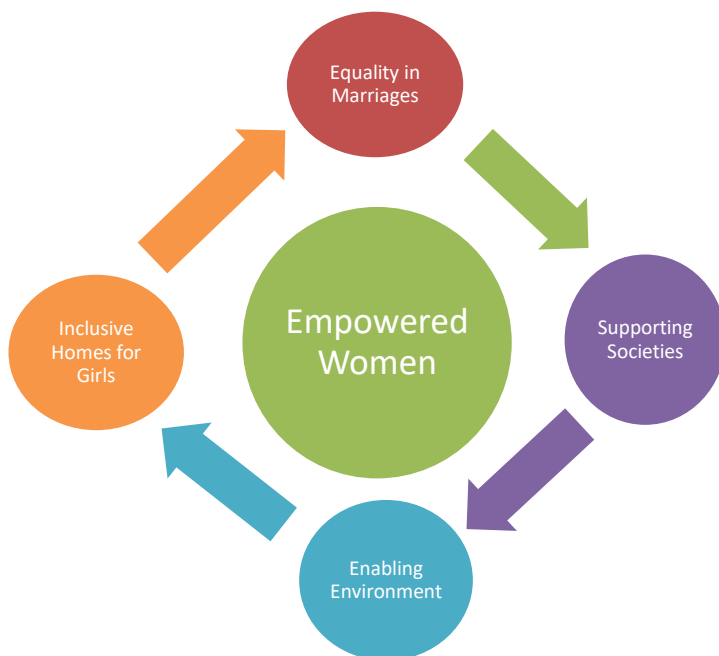


Figure 2.5: Proposed Model for Women Empowerment in Zimbabwe (Researcher, 2019)

The model (Figure 2.6) is suggested for the effective implementation of development policy for women in Zimbabwe. The study presents an argument that the efforts made by policy formulators and implementers have remained on paper without really empowering the women because the societies and the families are not empowering the girl child from infancy. This argument argues that the girl-child continues to play second fiddle to the boy-child in issues that matter so much to their developmental rights like education and health. The model, therefore, suggests the following:

Families as the primary caregivers in society should be trained continuously to treat boys and girls equally in life-shaping matters like education and health. Women's empowerment starts in the home. All girls and boys should remain in school to the tertiary level. Issues like teenage pregnancies should

be treated with a human rights-based approach where the girl child should not be the only one to suffer and be expelled out of school as if she was the single person involved in the pregnancy. If the boy-child is responsible then the consequences should be levelled against both, but if another adult person is responsible then the full wrath of the law should take its course on the offender. If a girl has access to education and training, it will be easy for her to enter marriage or the world on an equal footing with men.

From an inclusive home, the same girl would be able to have confidence in herself and discover herself without playing second fiddle to her spouse. It is not easy for a girl who has been trodden down to start raising her voice to be heard to claim her rights as equal partners in marriage. Whether married, single or widowed, the woman should be valued as an individual without depending on men for protection and recognition. This starts from a gender-sensitive background in her maiden home.

The above two concepts in the above model cannot work in separation from the wider society. Society needs education and acceptance of the fact that a woman whether single or married is an equal partner, a deserving human being, with full rights to speak, make decisions, own land and property and lead any group or organisation. This support will give the woman confidence and accept her role without the fear of neighbours or in-laws.

The above models can only work in an enabling environment where the economy, and the laws are well laid down to support women's empowerment. Socialisation should be re-oriented to match the new global trends where the call for gender equality has been ongoing for several decades now, notwithstanding the importance of sovereignty and norms and values of each society.

The chapter has critically reviewed literature on rural development and women empowerment at global, regional and national scales. In addition to the theoretical framework which hinged strongly on Perroux growth poles theory, the concepts rurality, rural development, inclusivity, social exclusion, and social inclusion were all highlighted. The effects of development policy on women empowerment, economic engagement and inclusiveness were

examined from different areas. This aimed at bringing diverse factors affecting women's empowerment globally. In addition, the chapter examined literature related to general impacts of development policy on women in the world, Africa as a region, Zimbabwe and Gokwe's two districts as specific areas of study. Factors affecting policy implementation, the challenges and benefits of development policy to women empowerment were also reviewed. Some women empowerment models used by some countries in the developing and developed world were also looked at together with their implications and lessons learnt for rural women empowerment. The conceptual framework was also included in the reviewed literature to outline the main ideas of the research. Finally, the chapter models which can be used in Zimbabwe to empower women in rural and urban areas were recommended based on empirical evidence from models which have been tried and tested in other countries. The next chapter examines the methodology used in the study.