

## **Chapter 1: ZIMBABWE'S ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENTAL TRAJECTORY AND THE WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AGENDA SINCE 1980**

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In this chapter, the study presents the subject of women empowerment outcomes in the growth point thrust of Zimbabwe's economic and developmental trajectory since 1980. Most importantly, rural women empowerment outcomes within the context of the growth point policy are critically explored with a view to ascertaining research gaps established based on reviewed literature, therefore, grounding and justifying the intellectual cogency of this study. This chapter also presents the background to the study and discusses the statement of the problem, research questions, significance, delimitation and limitation thereof with a view to anchor the study.

Rural women empowerment and the growth point policy are issues that are well documented and gaining global traction owing to their critical importance to the rural development trajectory, particularly in the Global South. Globally, women are affected by the state of not being recognised in a substantial manner by developmental policies that are not gender inclusive and gender sensitive. In essence, women constitute 70% of the poor and are discriminated in most spheres of life (Mutanana & Bukaliya, 2015). Rural women have the potential of bringing about change if they are empowered. However, studies have shown that they have limited access than men to key economic capabilities, they also lack a voice to be able to participate in policies and projects for development due to patriarchy. As claimed by Zimbizi (2007), women empowerment in patriarchal societies has achieved less progress than expected because it is more defined in rural communities. Rural women are often overlooked because the majority of them are not included in the mainstream decision-making and hardly participate in governance structures and processes, yet successful development initiatives call for women participation (Mutanana & Bukaliya, 2015).

Duflo (2012) posits that there is a two-way relationship between women empowerment and socio-economic development. Development can play a major role in driving down inequality between men and women while empowering women will benefit development. As indicated by Sen (2000), empowerment can accelerate development. This two-way relationship therefore spells out the need for policy makers to focus on creating an enabling environment for both men and women with strategies of improving the conditions of women. Such policy stimulation should progress to further development.

Empowerment has been described by Malhorta & Schuler (2005) as the ability for women to make choices, while Ranasinghe *et al.* (2020) define it as a multi-dimensional process of improving an individual's capacity and capability to make choices and to change those choices to wanted actions and outcomes. In this vein women empowerment is anchored on agency, resources and outcomes and these are crucial in the empowerment process (Alkire, 2008). In other words, agency gives one the ability to perform the action, while resources should be availed to perform a certain action and the outcomes is the result of agency and resources. So, for women empowerment to be achieved, there is need for resources and capacity for them to choose and pursue their goals.

Regardless, it has been noted that the causes and experiences of disempowerment are based on the premise that women lack access to inputs and infrastructure key for agricultural development (Mhembwe, 2019; Soharwardi & Ahmad, 2020; Vengesai, 2019; Jaji & Kleibl, 2019). This is among other intersectional factors or variables heightening their vulnerability and exclusion in social and economic spheres in many polities especially within developing worlds' contexts. Additionally, Mutanana & Bukaliya (2015) observe that patriarchal systems within rural societies are anchored on the socio-economic empowerment of rural women. Kabeer (2015) also argues that gender inequalities are more experienced by women than men, women are normally excluded in most high decision-making processes. Therefore, in contemporary times, women

empowerment is a mainstream development concern because the development discourse has largely focused on what women can do for development rather than what development can do for women (Cornwall, 2016).

Stewart *et al.* (2005) mention two forms of inequalities; horizontal and vertical and are assumed to have the power to contributing to poverty. Vertical inequalities are generally confined to economic factors, such as consumption, income and assets. On the other hand, horizontal ones are between groups (social classes). It is further confirmed that women, particularly in the rural areas, are affected by vertical inequalities on the basis that they lack access to assets that are critical for them to earn an income. Men's access to assets is more pronounced hence persistent inequalities and poverty confront women by virtue of gender. Moreover, horizontal inequalities are more focused on gender (Canelas & Gisselquist, 2018). Mancini *et al.* (2005) assume that it is critical to address and reduce vertical inequalities, since they work well in addressing the horizontal. Goswami (2013) further contends that these inequalities explain why women poverty and discrimination persist.

Mandal (2013) therefore posits that women are victims of social, political, environmental and economic deprivation hence empowerment can only occur when their freedoms are increased based on control over resources and decisions. To this end, women's choices, particularly in the third world remain obscure and tilted towards men's causes. However, efforts have been undertaken by countries across the globe to address such anomalies. A myriad of gender frameworks have been adopted and implemented as policies by governments globally. Platforms and approaches such as the Beijing Platform, Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs/Agenda 2030), Agenda 2063, Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD) have been borne out of the need to address such disparities. These encompass global, regional and local platforms that nations including

Zimbabwe have found necessary to ratify and adopt. The aim of the platforms and conferences are in recognition of world-wide gender inequalities. The assumption was that women and men would benefit equally from development initiatives, particularly in the third world (Odera & Mulusa, 2020). However, in contemporary times, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs or Agenda 2030) replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000 to focus more on issues confronting women at global level hence they are considered a bottom-up approach with emphasis on the third world (Solomon *et al.*, 2021). The SDG number 5 is specifically on achieving gender equality by 2030. Instead of the top-down approach imposed by the MDGs, SDG5 aims at engaging more women's voices in addressing gender issues. It has been regarded as a rights-based approach (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015). Such an approach will enable deeper understanding of gendered inequalities embedded in many development policies such as the growth point policy. The growth point strategy/policy as conceptualised by Francoise Perroux is not a gender-neutral economic development strategy since it's not specific or have any regard for gender or any other social category. The strategy/policy's focus on economic growth overlook gender specific needs and concerns such as access to healthcare, education and other social factors. As such, the growth point policy was initiated when the SGDs were not yet in place, however, there is still no indication that the policy has been revised to integrate SDG 5.

Additionally, at regional level, the African Union is promoting Agenda 2063 for the same purposes. It serves as a stepping stone to regional development. Sparks (2016) posits that Agenda 2063 reinforces issues in the African context by calling for a more united and stronger Africa in promoting sustainable development, cultural, human rights and other African priorities. Through aspiration 6, the promotion of women's rights is at the epicentre of Agenda 2063. It sets to achieve empowerment of women in the next 50 years. In this regard, Lefton (2013) applauds the efforts of nations in ensuring gender equality and equity. Regardless of protocol, disparities continue to increase with high poverty levels among

women. Harmful practices render women, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa helpless due to patriarchy and other harmful traditional practices (Wadesango *et al.*, 2011).

At the local level, the Zimbabwe National Gender Policy is anchored on the dictates of the global and regional frameworks. The country has shown its dedication of promoting gender equity by ratifying to these protocols. Furthermore, the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Act No. 20 of 2013 is widely recognised for its firm commitment to gender equality. The constitution provides for equality and non-discrimination for women in all areas. Direct and indirect discrimination is prohibited, providing women an equal participation in all spheres of life (Chinomona, 2013). These policies and legislature frameworks provide a firm basis to pursue gender equality and equity defined in the National Gender Policy (NGP). To this end, there have been efforts by law and policy makers to align old policies and laws to the constitution to ensure that they are gender sensitive, however, the growth point policy of the 1980s has not been revisited to integrate gender and women empowerment issues. Furthermore, the government of Zimbabwe came up with the National Development Strategy (NDS1) in 2020 in accordance with Vision 2030. Sections 741 of the NDS1 gives rise to gender mainstreaming through visible initiatives that confer equal opportunities to women under the theme ‘leaving no one and no place behind’. The NDS1 is guided by the Constitution, SADC Protocol on gender and development, SDG5 and the African Charter on Human and People’s rights and the rights of women in Africa. The NDS1 acknowledges that women still face challenges in accessing factors of production such as finance, land and property rights and limited opportunities to influence policy due to patriarchal barriers (Choruma, 2021). Interestingly, even the NDS1 is silent on policies such as the growth point policy besides having mentioning decentralisation and devolution.

That being the case, researchers such as Chingarande *et al.* (2020) and Mutopo (2014) all agree that amid the policies and frameworks, gender discrepancies continue to have negative bearing on the participation of

women as well as their access to sustainable livelihoods activities and dynamics. Moreover, Zvokuomba *et al.* (2021) also posit that lack of women empowerment is a reality in Zimbabwe while Musasa *et al.* (2022) argue that women in Zimbabwe, particularly in rural areas are excluded from mainstream development activities besides being at the forefront of development.

It therefore applies that rural development policies and interventions such as the growth point policy have not been inclusive citing the gender disparities between men and women. Furthermore, the political economy of Zimbabwe has been volatile in promoting rural women empowerment (Mhembwe, 2022). Factors such as the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), the adoption of the multi-currency banking/dollarisation, migration, hyper-inflation and the 1991/92 droughts are some of the issues impacting negatively on the empowerment of women since 1980 thereby resulting in weak livelihoods as well as negatively impacting on the efforts of the growth point policy.

The growth point/pole/centre strategy is the brainchild of French Economist, Francoise Perroux, defined as centres of economic activities created in disadvantaged regions with the intention that, eventually, these economic centres or locations, would become centres of economic growth (Nyandoro & Muzorewa, 2017; Christofakis & Papadaskalopoulos, 2011; Ke & Feser, 2008; Nhede, 2013; Manyanhai *et al.*, 2009). As a strategy to uplift underdeveloped regions, the growth point strategy was first popularised in selected countries in Asia, Latin America and Europe in the 1960s (Conyers, 2001). Europe and Latin America adopted the growth point strategy mainly to address economic growth in depressed regions. It was a success in Venezuela and some parts of Italy but was later abandoned as the anticipated results were not fully achieved (Bradford & Kent, 1987; Conyers, 2001). The USA adopted the policy in the late 1950s but later abandoned it in favour of other policies due to thin investment spread over too many growth points. (Manyanhai *et al.*, 2009). In Chile, Bolivia and Columbia, the strategy was taken up with much enthusiasm, but failed

due to what was regarded as poor economic planning (Conyers, 2001). Moreover, studies conducted in most of Latin America reveal that women's socio-economic empowerment in the depressed regions was not achieved with the implementation of growth poles. Instead, women have, over the years been calling for recognition, particularly in the agricultural sector where they play a major role in the reduction of hunger and poverty (FAO, 2018). In this vein, the success of the growth point strategy is fitting for women's empowerment as it is aimed at addressing regional inequalities (rural/depressed regions) that would resultantly improve the socio-economic development of women. However, earlier studies have not focused on the socio-economic impact of women through the growth point policy nor has the classification of women as a special group been linked to the benefits arising from the policy.

Wekwete (1998) believes that sub-Saharan African countries failed to learn from the experiences of the Western countries as they carried out a wholesale adoption of the strategy without any modifications. Naturally, countries coming out of colonialism viewed the growth point policy as critical in addressing the regional disparities that were enacted by colonial governments. Contextually, the socio-economic status of women and (men) had changed during the colonial era, as they lost autonomy to several rights, particularly land rights (Gaidzanwa, 2011, Thobejane & Nyathi, 2018). To redress this anomaly, countries like Tanzania adopted the growth point strategy and later abandoned it for the Ujamaa concept (Hwang, 1975). Nigeria, Cameroon and South Africa had similar experiences, as they cited a lack of diversification and proper coordination of economic activities. The strategy, therefore, was not successful in improving the lives and livelihoods of the populations of the implementing regions, including women. To this end, Fonjong (2004)'s views on women empowerment in Cameroon, Nigeria and South Africa revealed that the lack of women empowerment is currently an issue of concern and has produced mixed results in Cameroon while economic activities that women in rural Nigeria rely on, do not have positive outcomes, such as stable incomes for poverty alleviation (Aluko & Mbada, 2020). However, as noted by Musampa (2006), South Africa recorded some success in regions that were identified for economic growth through the growth point strategy. The results were recorded in infrastructural development and

employment creation but is not clear to what extent women benefitted. Even so, a study by Kongolo & Bamgose (2002) revealed that most women in rural South Africa are still marginalised and isolated.

In Zimbabwe, the growth point strategy was adopted at independence in 1980 under the Growth with Equity policy and the Agricultural Rural Development Act of 1981. Nhede (2013) avers that the aims and objectives of the policy were to; promote industrial growth that would, in turn, create employment opportunities and thereby minimise rural-urban migration. Additionally, the decentralisation of administration functions and reversing inequalities enacted by the colonial government were some of the aims of the growth point policy. However, Zimbabwe's growth point policy resulted in the development of 55 growth point and was well received by the once-marginalised rural communities of Zimbabwe (Nhede, 2013). Tsholotsho Growth Point is one of the main growth points in Matabeleland North province that was instituted to stimulate economic development. However, despite the growth of this centre into a semi-urban area, it is noted that economic development has been very slow-paced for all (Mushuku & Takuva, 2013). Poverty remains very high in the area, especially among women as observed by (Viceisza, 2020). Additionally, while the formation of the Tsholotsho growth point brought about service improvements such as electricity, water and better connectivity to urban centres, the conditions of women remain mostly unchanged as most have failed to lift themselves out of poverty (Sibanda & Khumalo, 2019).

This also raises the question of decentralisation (devolution) as a supporting policy for growth points. These are current and being spearheaded by the government through the 2013 Constitution and the 2020 NDS1's Vision 2030 which envisions the attainment of an empowered and prosperous upper middle-class economy by 2030. The policy instruments propel government to transfer and devolve power from the central government to lower levels of administration and governance (Choruma, 2021). Thus, decentralisation and devolution are still regarded as critical strategies for inclusive participation of communities in Zimbabwe (Moyo & Ncube, 2014). The implementation of the NDS1, according to Choruma (2021), based on the theme; 'leaving no one and no place behind' is the force driving the policy guided by SDGs and the Constitution. Musekiwa (2020) argues that, even though decentralisation

has evolved since 1980, transfer of power is limited. The government and its partners have continuously failed to consult the communities, therefore making it difficult to empower the local people to oversee their own development. Scholars such as Musekiwa (2020) and Moyo & Ncube (2014), have noted that decentralisation in most African countries including Zimbabwe have largely been about political (devolution) more than socio-economic. This could explain why both instruments (NDS1 and the Constitution) have not integrated the growth point policy to support the decentralisation strategy.

From the foregoing, Rodriguez-Pose (2011) argues that despite the introduction of growth points in low-income countries, the conditions and quality of life of the population have largely not improved as expected. The rural space is still regarded as an area of stagnation and backwardness with the poorest of the poor (ILO, 2019). It was against this background that this study sought to understand the applicability of rural women's empowerment through the growth point policy in Zimbabwe.

Even though Zimbabwe has taken strides to promote gender equality and women empowerment, rural women still find themselves far behind, and at the periphery of such equality and empowerment. A myriad of policies, covering both gender and rural development as well as projects formulated for development, seem to have failed to be catalysts for inclusive and participatory rural women empowerment. Rural womenfolk have therefore remained at the margins of socio-economic development and governance and have been unable to meaningfully participate in the economy due to patriarchal ideologies compounded by lack of gender mainstreaming in development policies (Bissewar, 2005).

The growth point policy is a rural development intervention formulated to address rural underdevelopment. It was envisaged to improve the lives and livelihoods of the rural population, including women. As such, the tenets enshrined in the growth point policy are important in addressing the key issues confronting rural women. However, contrary to a one size fits all approach (Wekwete, 1998), the policy failed to integrate the

gendered specific needs of women at both design and implementation. Although the growth point policy was not specifically formulated for women, of interest to this study is that the policy is regarded as critical for rural women empowerment outcomes based on the physical and socio-economic outcomes it was meant to produce. It is clear that the larger part of development policies, (including the growth point policy), have failed to be gender inclusive and have therefore lacked on equitable participation of women (Mhembwe, 2019). In an effort to rectify this worrisome trend, Zimbabwe has ratified quite several conventions and platforms at global and regional levels. These conventions seek to highlight women's poverty and to outline and direct the corrective measures required. The National Gender Policy of Zimbabwe guides the efforts of the government and its partners in addressing inequalities that have resulted in women being left out in the development process. To this end, despite women being the majority in the rural sector and agriculture (Mutanana & Bukaliya, 2015), they remain obscure to the development processes hence the promotion of rural women empowerment outcomes cannot be successful without involving women and women's issues in key policies for development such as the growth point policy.

The main research question premising this study is: How applicable is the growth point policy in promoting rural women empowerment outcomes at Tsholotsho Growth Point?

The following specific questions guided the study:

- How has the socio-economic status of rural women changed since the introduction of the growth point policy?
- To what extent has the growth point policy influenced rural women empowerment outcomes at Tsholotsho Growth Point?
- To what extent are factors constraining the growth point policy impacting on rural women empowerment outcomes?
- How can rural women empowerment outcomes be improved in the context of the growth point policy?

This study was informed by several assumptions during its course. Assumptions are beliefs, circumstances and ideas that are true on the part of the researcher (Simon, 2011). Firstly, the researcher assumed that the methodology selected for this study was suitable and would be able to produce the information and findings that the researcher solicited in trying to explore the rural women's empowerment outcomes through the growth point policy. It also captured the feelings, opinions and views of the participants using the qualitative/exploratory method underpinned by the interpretivist research paradigm.

The researcher also assumed that the population participating in the study possessed the experience and knowledge on the link of the growth point policy and rural women's empowerment outcomes. Thirdly, it was also assumed that women's poverty is perpetuated by inequalities underpinned by patriarchy, non-participation in rural policy formulation and implementation and that the exacerbation of poverty experienced by women could be alleviated if the growth point policy was effective and successful. It was further assumed that women were marginalised and poorly placed than men in the rural sector due to factors such as lack of access to key capital assets. Additionally, that the success of the growth point policy can be applied for rural women empowerment and has the potential to improve rural livelihoods that women depend on. The study also assumed that the Sustainable Livelihood Approach and the Women Empowerment Theory were complimentary frameworks to support rural women empowerment outcomes through the growth point policy of Zimbabwe.

The nexus between women empowerment, women's substantive and equal participation in socio-economic activities, processes and governance and the growth point policy is a dimension that has received less scholarly attention. Studies carried out by scholars such as Mungwini (2011), Kabeer (2015), and Mandinyenya (2014) have focused on women empowerment independent of the growth point policy while those carried out by Mupuva (2015), Manyanhaire *et al.*, (2009) and Chirisa & Dumba (2013) among

others have focused on the growth point policy's economic contribution to the general rural population without regard for rural women who constitute the majority in the rural sector. The connection of rural women's empowerment through the growth point policy has therefore not been made yet.

This study is so pertinent and will therefore contribute to a broader body of empirical knowledge in the field of development studies through unveiling the gendered empowerment issues in relation to the growth point policy. Mainstreaming gender issues in the growth point policy could make it effective for rural women's empowerment and ensure that women and men equally benefit from the rural development policy interventions. Poverty cannot be alleviated without the participation of women given their large representation among the poor (Mayoux, 2014).

Gendering development policies could make for a growth point policy that is effective for rural women's empowerment outcomes. The promotion of gender equality at policy formulation noting the roles women play in the rural sector as well as the livelihoods they rely on. From a gendered perspective, this would ensure that men and women equally benefit from the rural development interventions as postulated by Ester Boserup. The problem confronting this study is that there is lack of recognition of rural women empowerment issues by development policies such as the growth point policy. At the very least, there is a lack of pronouncement of the need to recognise that rural womenfolk are in dire need of upliftment and empowerment, within the growth point policy context and the various others pertinent to rural development.

In essence, understanding the importance of the socio-economic empowerment of rural women was crucial to have local studies establish the applicability of the growth point policy in locating rural women empowerment outcomes. The need to comprehend women's views and perceptions from a local point of view was significant for both growth points and women empowerment studies. This study, therefore, aimed to

contribute to the knowledge gap in this regard. An investigation was carried out to explore rural women empowerment outcomes in the growth point policy thrust of Zimbabwe. The study was carried out at Tsholotsho Growth Point, in Tsholotsho District, Matabeleland North Province. There are more than 55 growth points in Zimbabwe, data was generated from one growth point (Tsholotsho) that has, over the years experienced stunted growth. It focused on key informants from various government and non-government departments, community leaders and women participants who had extensive personal lived experience and knowledge on growth points, rural development, and women empowerment issues.



**Figure 1.1** - Site of the Study (CSO, 2012)

Tsholotsho Growth Point is found in Tsholotsho District in Matabeleland North Province and was of interest to the researcher because it is in one of the poorest provinces in Zimbabwe (Matunhu *et al.*, 2017). It is characterised by low levels of natural capital and is agro-ecologically (region 4) not suited to cropping since it is prone to droughts and flooding. The district receives an annual average rainfall of 560mm (Ncube

et al., 2007). Additionally, the poor rainfall pattern in most parts of the district has affected agricultural production which is the main livelihood for women. The district has few water sources like dams and perennial rivers. Its reliance on rain-fed agriculture is a major natural weakness and drawback that compromises food security. Additionally, diaspora remittances have proven to be the primary means of livelihood. Nzima et al. (2016) posit that remittances generally form a major part of the household income in the district.

On the other hand, infrastructural development lags hence the number of educational and health facilities are few, and under-equipped. The road network is very poor and has caused transporters and potential investors to shun the district over the years. Kodero (2005) describes tourism as one of the economic activities in addition to mining of mineral deposits like limestone that have been found in the area. However, resource exploitation is low owing to lack of investment and because of these limitations, poverty levels are high; there is over-reliance on donor hand-outs that in some cases have been politicised leading to early withdrawal and therefore vulnerability of those who depend on them.

The population of Matabeleland North province shows more females than males with 360 776 males and 388 241 females, adding up to a total of 749 017 people. It is noted that 12% of women have never been to school (CSO, 2012). The language spoken is mostly IsiNdebele. The presence of a growth point in the district has not eased the socio-economic burdens that the communities are faced with. The growth point under study (Tsholotsho) was introduced decades ago but has largely remained a service centre and is characterised by low investment and not much economic development (Nhede, 2013).

Ross & Zaidi (2019) describe limitations of the study as those characteristics of design or methodology that influence the interpretation of the findings from a research study. These are conditions that cannot be controlled by the researcher. They place restrictions on the methodology

and the conclusions of a research study. In this study, the limitations envisaged by the researcher were mainly methodological. The qualitative research approach on which this study was underpinned relied a lot on the messages, views, opinions and experiences of people (Bryman, 2011). To overcome this limitation, the researcher made use of triangulation to confirm data generated from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Using these methods improved the trustworthiness of the study as a comparison of the findings was made. Another potential limitation was bias that according to Polit & Beck (2004), is any influence that provides a distortion in the results of a study. Since qualitative research relies more on the experience and judgement of the researcher, the data generated might be subjective to the investigation or situation. To manage bias in this instance, the researcher made use of peer review. Galdas (2017) describes peer review as a process where the reviewer might see things that the author might have missed. Peer review was therefore considered necessary to ensure the trustworthiness and originality of the study. It involved scrutiny by colleagues with the same competencies as the researcher. The reviewing included identifying gaps and arguments that needed to be addressed. In addition, they also provided affirmation that the conclusions drawn were sound and reasonable, given the nature of the data. Moreover, carrying out the study in one growth point with a sample size of 30, which is regarded small, was the other limitation. However, this study did not seek to generalise the research findings to the wider population, but to understand in-depth rural women's empowerment outcomes through the growth point policy (Hennik & Hutter, 2011).

Empowerment means having agency over one's life and equal opportunities to participate in society. Women empowerment is, therefore, the process by which women gain influence and equal opportunities to pursue personal, social and economic endeavours by engaging in all parts of society on the same basis as men (Kabeer, 2005).

Mushuku & Takuva (2013) describe growth points/poles as centres that have economic potential created to catalyse development in underdeveloped regions. It is characterised by growth that starts from the pole/centre and trickles down to the periphery fostering the decentralisation of economic activities and services (Manyanhaire *et al.*, 2011). Serrat (2017) postulates that rural development is a strategy that aims to improve the socio- economic living conditions of poor people in rural areas. It assists the poorest group living in rural areas to benefit from development.

Morse & McNamara (2016) define sustainable livelihoods as the nature of one possessing assets and capabilities enabling participation in economic activities on a continuous basis without harming the environment.

Review of literature was mainly conducted and written from a level of abstraction tracing the rural women empowerment outcomes within the context of the growth point policy. It further on engages scholarly work demonstrating the views of how development interventions have been applied for women empowerment. The chapter also dwells on the concept, theories as well as the empirical evidence showing the applicability of the growth point policy to rural women empowerment outcomes. Furthermore, the chapter identifies gaps within literature and the justification of carrying out this study. In chapter 2 the researcher gives an overview of the theoretical, conceptual frameworks and the empirical evidence to further explain women's economic empowerment outcomes through the growth point policy.

In Chapter 3 –Research Methodology focus was placed on the methodology adopted for this study. This is where the process starts with identification of the research philosophy up to the ethics adopted in this study. Even though the chapter dwells much on the methodology, the whole research process is explained in detail showing and justifying the instrument used in sync with the research questions.

Chapter 4 focuses on data presentation and findings, based on the views

and opinions of the study participants. It also discusses empirical findings from data generated at Tsholotsho Growth Point. The findings are based on the views, opinions and experiences of the participants' views, about rural women empowerment outcomes through the growth point policy.

Chapter 5 discusses the study findings on women's empowerment through the growth point policy. The chapter focuses on the development of the findings in relation to literature identified during the analysis process.

Chapter 6 concludes the study; it discusses the attainment of aims and objectives set out in the study, concerning key findings and compiles the conclusions derived therefrom. It also discusses the model that this study came up with. Recommendations for the growth point policy and women empowerment concerning theories and policy for further research are also discussed. This chapter provides an overview of the study in terms of the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, definition of key terms and the structure of the thesis.