



University of Fort Hare
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CENTRE FOR THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

**AN APPRAISAL OF THE METHODIST CHURCH'S ROLE IN POVERTY
ALLEVIATION IN THE ALICE REGION**

(TPT 700)

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that the work offered in this dissertation is my original work except where indicated. This work has not been submitted to any university for the purpose of obtaining a degree. All the work written by other authors and used in this dissertation has been acknowledged by full references.

.....

Xolisa Terrance Jibiliza

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ACRONYMS

MCSA	Methodist Church of Southern Africa
SG	Social Grant
SD	Social Development
CSI	Cooperative Sector Investment
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
SMG	State Maintenance Grant
JHB	Johannesburg
SW	Social Work
WBO	World Bank Organisation
PSIA	Poverty Social Impact Analysis
RSA	Republic of South Africa
DM	District Municipality
DEWCOM	Doctrine, Ethics and Worship Committee
ECSECC	Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
CSG	Child Support Grant
LPD	Local Preacher's Department
LPA	Local Preacher's Association
WM	Women's Manyano
YWM	Young Women's Manyano
YMG	Young Men's Guild
WG	Wesley Guild
YU	Youth Unit

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

“All religions emphasize the need to support charity, welfare and the disadvantaged. Obligatory giving is, thus, a manifestation of spirituality. This is why religious communities are capable, like no other sector of society, of mobilizing enormous resources for poverty alleviation and development initiative” (Maharaj & Chetty, 2007:82). Most African countries are faced with serious and worsening poverty (Wogaman, 1986:47), and one of greatest issues that demands our immediate attention within the church and society is poverty alleviation. Wogaman (1986:47) further argues that the increase in production has not served to bridge the great historic chasm between rich and poor. Hence, the church needs to direct its attention and its activity to poverty alleviation so that it becomes an advocate for the poor. Lawrence (2012:1) argued that we are created for fellowship with other people and also depend on God for our survival. Therefore, poverty touches all of God’s creatures and not simply those who experience it directly. Poverty prevents human beings from realizing their potential; it creates barriers of inequality between people, and bars people from experiencing the abundance of God’s creation.

According to Lawrence (2012) and Nürnberger (1978), the church is the only place that gives people hope. Even though people may have a spiritual life, they may still be materially poor. The researcher opines that the church must care for those people that live in poverty, even if they are not church members (Ndungane, 2003: 20).

Paget-Wilkes (1981:10) argues that poverty marks certain locations such as the spiritual side of people and not the economic side. Poverty affects specific groups of people in and outside church, namely, pensioners, one-parent families, ethnic

minorities, fixed income groups and those working people who have little leverage when it comes to increasing remuneration (Paget-Wilkes, 1981:10). As poverty is one of the key words in this research, a comprehensive definition will be offered in chapter two.

According to Genesis 1: 27 “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, he created him; as male and female he created them.” However, poverty contradicts and undermines God's decision to create human beings in the divine image, as well as God's judgment on the goodness of creation (Genesis, 1:27). God created human beings, irrespective of their status (Singer, 2006:243). Poverty can degrade the status of a person even though God created human beings with dignity. As a result, this can erode a person's self-esteem.

In the past, many have come out championing the cause of racial justice and fundamental human rights (de Santa, 1979: xxii). Poverty alleviation should also be addressed in a similar manner if positive inroads are to be achieved. Therefore, it is important that churches associate themselves with the poor in order to identify their needs within communities as this can help them to identify ways in which they can offer support.

In addition, the 1998 National Poverty Hearings organized by the South African Non-governmental Organisations Coalition stressed that many go hungry every day, are exposed to disease, are illiterate, unemployed and homeless (Ndungane, 2003: 20). Given this backdrop, the church's faith is tested with regard to its authenticity as it is expected to translate its principles into concrete action such as alleviation of poverty in and around its community. Therefore, it is paramount to identify the role played by churches in alleviating poverty. The researcher has observed that although existing

literature and data show that churches have projects and councils to help the poor, nothing much is being done with regard to poverty alleviation. The researcher also observed that the churches have soup kitchen projects for the alleviation of poverty within the district. However, people that are poverty-stricken do not only need food; they also need clothes and shelter as their basic needs. Projects such as soup kitchens and garden projects are not sustained because of ineffective and inefficient monitoring and evaluation which requires adequate accounting to funding. Thus, the role expected to be played by the church should not focus on one relief structure or programme, rather, numerous initiatives have to be identified to help with poverty alleviation as the needs of the people or communities are bound to differ.

Furthermore, mission groups like Young Men's Guild, Local Preacher's Department, Women's Manyano, Young Women's Manyano, and Youth Unit are wheels to turn around poverty alleviation projects, but this is not being done.¹ Hence, the church should also be involved in addressing these issues. Therefore, it is against this background that the researcher seeks to advance an understanding of the inherent role of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in the Alice Region on poverty alleviation.

1.2. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

Many scholars have raised the issue of alleviating poverty. Poverty is tackled in South Africa through Social Grants (SGs), Social Development (SD) with the help of Cooperate Sector Investment (CSI), Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Faith Based Organisations (FBOs). Moreover, government has also invested in these organisations for poverty alleviation purposes. The literature review on the role

¹ Women's Manyano, Young Women's Manyano, Local Preacher's Department, Young Men's Guild and Youth Unit are the Departments within the Methodist Church of Southern Africa to advance the mission of the Methodist Church.

of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa at the Grahamstown District in Alice Region in poverty alleviation has both theoretical and empirical strands. At the theoretical level, there is a link between the Methodist Church, CSI, NGO's, FBO's and Social Development in alleviating poverty.

“The lack of employment to many people in South Africa challenged South African Government. South African Government paid an attention to poverty alleviation through grants to avoid vulnerability of people and children. Lack of employment and income into many households created vulnerable people” (Mase, 2008:1). Child Support Grant, Old Age Grant and State Maintenance Grants were designed to fight against poverty.

The report to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by the Greater JHB Welfare (1999: 3) states that “the State Maintenance Grants (SMG) was designed to provide support for impoverished single parents. The 1983 Memorandum on Social work in the Republic of South Africa shows that the grant was paid to Whites, Indians and Coloureds. This is one of the imbalances created by the apartheid government whereby Whites especially enjoyed sophisticated welfare while Africans were marginalized and lived in poverty. African women were denied access to the grant. This shows how policy can be used to establish policy priorities that allow for the creation of deprivation”.

In this case, policy-makers were Whites and the social welfare policy was structured in such a way that it favoured the White minority (Patel, 1992). As a result, this deprivation exacerbated the poverty of other races. Thus, the researcher calls for the church to develop intervention programmes that can assist with poverty alleviation.

In furtherance to the foregoing views, applying the concept of poverty and unemployment is problematic. For instance, Black (2009:22) claims that “poverty exists in South Africa on a massive scale, with many individuals struggling to simply survive”. However, much of the poverty has a direct correlation to the national employment figures. Richards (2003) argues that one of South Africa’s most serious and intractable socio-economic problems is unemployment. However, there is general realisation among policy makers that “...many of the poor are simply unemployable because they lack certain basic skills demanded by the labour market” (Pauw & Mncube, 2007:7). It is not that employment is unavailable; there are barriers in either accessing available jobs or being suitably qualified to fill them. As a result, the church appears to be the only avenue that those suffering from poverty have to turn to as their hope for survival, especially in the current harsh economic situation. Ramphela (2008:186) stresses that “South Africa’s skills shortage undermines both the public and private sectors in their drive to sustain the momentum of the growing economy.”

According to Lawrence (2012: 2), to confess our belief in God as our Creator in the face of poverty is to call for a radical revision of our attitudes to possessions, land, natural resources and human worth since God gave human beings a mandate to rule over creation, but our forefathers had been in sin. Our faith gives us access to everything that God wants us to achieve. On the other hand, Anderson (2000:2) suggested that the government must not shirk its God-given responsibility to defend the poor from injustice. Poverty and human suffering around us do not only exist as a socio-economic challenge, but are a God-given opportunity and obligation to help those in need. Indeed, many words like ‘poverty alleviation’ and ‘poverty reduction’ have been used in defining programmes and policy objectives on behalf of the poor.

God owns the whole earth, including ourselves and the poor among us. Although He has endowed us with different amounts of resources, they belong to Him to be used lovingly and willingly for the benefit of all in society (Ondari, 2001: 16).

Poverty is a serious problem in South Africa, not only manifesting in the lack of sufficient income, but carrying with it a host of other complicated issues. Most often, poverty results from unemployment because without work, there is no money available for support. Poverty is a huge challenge in the face of unemployment.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem is the non-accessibility of Social Grants within the Alice Region of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa by the people who live within the territories of the Alice region of the MCSA. A pastoral care perspective or approach was used in this study.

Social grants are one of the ways which the MCSA can use in alleviating poverty. How can the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in the Alice Region enable alleviation of poverty through effective interventions?

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions of this study are:

1. How do local residents in the study community perceive poverty?
2. What factors do Alice residents perceive as barriers to poverty alleviation?
3. What support mechanisms has the Methodist Church of Southern Africa implemented to alleviate poverty in the study community, and how effective are such interventions?

1.5 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of this study are to:

- Research the role that is played by the MCSA to alleviate poverty in different circuits within the Alice Region.
- Evaluate the work of MCSA people towards poverty alleviation.
- Examine MCSA in the Alice Region and its expression against poverty.
- Encourage the congregation to support and facilitate developments of the MCSA in the lives of people.

In addition, the researcher hopes this study will provide an insight into an awareness and understanding of the MCSA in the present circumstances, and the political limitations that are based on the aspirations of alleviating poverty. It will also make people aware of the reasons why the MCSA cares for people and to also understand the role of the MCSA in the modern lives of people living in the 21st century.

1.6 THEORETICAL (OR CONCEPTUAL) FRAMEWORK

This research pertains to the important role played by the church in poverty alleviation, with special focus on social grants, social development and the role of the MCSA within the Alice Region. The researcher investigated the issue of poverty alleviation in the Alice Region utilising the pastoral theological approach. Pastoral theology is a broad approach which is distinguished from biblical, dogmatic and moral theology through its primary concern for discovering how theological understanding can find appropriate practical expression in the concrete, empirical situations of the church and the world (Richardson, 1983: 428), hence, the researcher's use of the pastoral care approach. The pastoral care approach is that

aspect of the ministry of the church which is concerned with the well-being of the individual and of the community (Campbell, 1987: 188).

Hunter (1990: 836) suggests that pastoral care derives from the biblical image of the shepherd and refers to the solicitous concern expressed within the religious community for a person's trouble or distress. Historically and within the Christian community, pastoral care exists within the cure-of-souls tradition. Hunter's definition of pastoral care restricts the work of pastoral care in its limited focus on the congregation. Whereas, Jesus said "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; those also I must bring, and they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock, one shepherd" (John 10:13). Therefore, this means there are people that are not members of the church but still need pastoral care.

Campbell and Hunter (1990: 837) further go on to state that pastoral care is the work of an ordained minister within the church. Campbell contends that when pastoral care is defined narrowly as a professional function of the clerical minority in the church, it loses sight of its main purpose which is an arduous and lifelong task of loving one's neighbour in need. Thus, the term 'Lay pastoral care' is perhaps misleading; it implies two classes of caring: one by the clerical profession, and the other by the 'ordinary' Christians. Lawrence (2012: 2) stresses that "we are created for life together, and this togetherness is a reflection of the life of the true God. To confess our belief in God as creator in the face of poverty is to call for a radical revision of our attitudes to possessions, land, natural resources and human worth." In this study, the researcher conducted an overview of past and current socio-economic status, and then identified the key challenges that the MCSA faces in the process of alleviating poverty in the Alice Region. Corbett and Fikkert (2012:3) state that it is of paramount importance that:

“Each of the members of the church is called upon to participate in the life of the church. While this participation can be in leadership or membership, each of us is responsible to participate at some level in helping our congregation to be everything in its biblical mandate to care for the poor.”

All members of the church must be involved in the programs that are focussed on poverty alleviation. To come up with the good news to the poor is to rescue those people who are living in poverty from their suffering. Moreover, it is believed that the local church has a unique role to play in poverty alleviation by promoting the resurgence in church-based, holistic ministry to the poor, both at home and abroad. At the same time, we are aggrieved when we see churches using poverty alleviation strategies that are grounded in un-biblical assumptions about the nature of poverty, and that violates best practice methodologies developed by theorists and practitioners over the course of many decades (Corbett 2012: 4).

1.7 SCOPE OF STUDY (DELINEATION AND LIMITATIONS)

This study was limited to the role played by the MCSA in the Alice Region in poverty alleviation.

1.8 RESEARCH METHOD

There are three different research methods that are used in a research, namely: the qualitative research method, quantitative research method and the mixed research method. The research method that the researcher used in this study is the qualitative research method. The qualitative research method gave dense, deep information about poverty alleviation within the Alice Region of Methodist Church of Southern Africa. Qualitative research entails collecting, analysing, and interpreting data by observing what people do and say (Babbie, 2010: 229). Quantitative research refers

to counts and measures of things, on the other hand, qualitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things. Qualitative research is much more subjective than quantitative research and uses very different methods of collecting information, mainly individual, in-depth interviews and focus groups (Mouton, 2008: 70). The nature of this type of research is exploratory and open-ended. Small numbers of people are interviewed in-depth and/or a relatively small number of focus group discussions or interviews are conducted (Hofstee, 2006:117). A mixed research method is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The goal of mixed methods research is to tackle a given research question from any relevant angle, thereby making use, where appropriate, of previous research and/or more than one type of investigative perspective (Corbin, 2008: 50). This study was conducted through utilizing interviews as primary data sources. The use of relevant material, such as books and articles was employed as secondary data sources, namely, document analysis. This was used for purposes of triangulating in the study. Literary work, such as articles and relevant books on Poverty Alleviation and the role of the MCSA (in Poverty Alleviation) in the Alice Region were also used as secondary sources. The researcher deemed it necessary to make use of critical texts from a practical theological point of view. These texts were obtained in public and private libraries as sources of information. Others sources were interviews with the ministers, stewards of the Circuits at Alice Region and also the church members. Some of these ministers mentioned above have since moved from their Circuits within the region to other Circuits outside the Region even within Grahamstown District. Regardless of this move, it was important that they be interviewed because they are ones who are dealing with poverty alleviation projects in MCSA Circuits.

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE (RATIONALE)

The church will benefit from the study in the sense that the results of this study will play an important role in the church particularly in the Eastern Cape in Alice by giving its members and others some practical theological guidance to alleviate poverty.

The study will enable the reader to know how the Methodist Church implements its project of alleviating poverty. It will specifically look at the role of mission groups that are within the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, namely: Local Preachers Association, Young Men's Guild, Women's Manyano, Women's Auxiliary, Young Women's Manyano and the Methodist Youth Unit which include the Wesley Guild, Youth Fellowship, Methodist Student Society and the Children's Ministry.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

People who are poor are vulnerable because they are over-researched. The researcher, therefore, gave due respect and compliance to the ethical values and protocol of the University of Fort Hare as an academic institution of high moral standards prior to commencing with the research work. Permission was sought from respective institutions and targeted respondents where a full explanation was provided on the purpose of the research, and an Ethical Clearance certificate from the University of Fort Hare to conduct the study was obtained. All research participants' ethical rights were considered including their right to confidentiality.

1.11 ENVISAGED STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

1.11.1 CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Chapter One comprises: Working Title, Background/Introduction, Problem Statement, Research Questions, Aims and Objective, Theoretical (or conceptual)

Framework, Scope of Study (Delineation and Limitations), Research Methods, Significance of Study, Ethical Consideration, Outline of Chapters and Summary.

1.11.2 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the researcher reviews related literature that has been conducted highlighting specifically what has been written by other authorities within and outside the church with regard to alleviating poverty in order to link this within the context of the Alice Region of MCSA. The scholars of practical theology on theology and poverty alleviation were also considered by the researcher.

1.11.3 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the researcher focuses on the introduction of the Chapter, Research Population, Regional Setting, Methodist Structure, Research Method, Research Tools, Research Sampling, Source of documents, the role of the researcher, Data collection, Face to Face Interviews, Data Presentation and Analysis, Ethical Clearance, Ethical Consideration and Conclusion of the Chapter.

1.11.4 CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the researcher presents and analyses data collected from the participants.

1.11.5 CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the researcher mainly focuses on the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

There are many definitions to the notion of poverty, which focus on the number of the poor people, the context where poor people are located and how economic conditions change their lives. Poverty is a challenge for governments throughout the African continent, and the rest of the world. The issue of poverty is a global, African and South African debate. Moreover the issue is debated on three levels, wherein Sachs (2005: 20) emphasizes the importance of distinguishing poverty within these three levels, namely: extreme poverty, moderate poverty and relative poverty.

- Extreme poverty means family cannot meet their basic needs for existence. They exist in chronic hunger, incapable of acquiring even the most basic health maintenance, unsafe drinking water and poor sanitation, have no sanitary towels, do not have enough money to pay for educating their children, have no proper accommodation and thus cannot keep the weather out of their rudimentary dwelling;
- Moderate poverty generally means that basic essentials are encountered but just hardly; and
- Relative poverty means that the household earnings' level is generally understood as a level below an assumed proportion of the average national income. This refers to those who are comparatively deprived in high income countries, lack access to social and decent entertainment and to excellent health care, education and other privileges for increasing their social motion (Sachs, 2005: 20).

Poverty is a global challenge because all countries are affected by it in the sense that most countries are experiencing the actuality of it. It is an issue that needs more focus within the South African context, specifically in the Eastern Cape (EC) because of its prevalence. The majority of EC province inhabitants are unemployed and live in the rural areas where there is a big challenge of unemployment.

2.2 REALITY OF POVERTY

2.2.1 DEFINITION OF POVERTY

Poverty is defined in a narrow sense because some scholars restrict poverty in their definition. Even though other scholars define poverty in a broader sense, it is even broader in reality. Kretzshmar (2014: 5) stated that poverty can also be defined more relationally and holistically as including the exclusion or exploitation of particular groups, historical and systemic discrimination, and the lack of education or opportunity to access the economy. There is a close relationship between hunger and poverty. In purely economic terms, poverty can be defined as 'the inability of individuals, households or communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living' (Childhood Poverty in South Africa, 2002:1 of 4).

Poverty is linked to lack of basic needs including food, clothing and shelter. Although, poverty is linked to the above, not having money does not mean one is impoverished. In attending to the realities of poverty, there are basic needs that a person must have to continue existing such as food, clothing and shelter. If a person has no means of access to these basic needs, then that person is more impoverished.

Kretzschmar (2014: 6) stresses that in personal and practical terms, poverty is a brutal human experience of ill health, unemployment, struggle and a sense of powerlessness to affect change.

The World Bank Organization (2012: 2) pronounces poverty thus:

“Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty has many faces, changing from place to place and across time, and has been described in many ways. Most often, poverty is a situation people want to escape. So poverty is a call to action -- for the poor and the wealthy alike -- a call to change the world so that many more may have enough to eat, adequate shelter, access to education and health, protection from violence, and a voice in what happens in their communities.”

The South African Constitution’s Bill of Rights states that everyone has the right to housing, health care services, sufficient food and water and social security. However, government can only provide for these rights subject to available resources. Adopting legislation to give effect to these rights is one of the means to their realisation. Several claims have also been made in the Constitutional Court to assert these rights. The legal right not to be poor is advocated, especially for Africans, but the content of the right is indeterminable (South Africa Government, 1997: 60).

2.2.1.1 FOOD SECURITY

Du Toit (2011: 8) stresses that food security is non-existent to most South Africans because there is no improved access to nutritious food as a priority to address food

insecurity. The South African government committed itself to halving poverty between 2004 and 2014, which is one of the critical mechanisms to meet the gap of household food security. Hongbo, (2015: 9) Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of United Nations stated that “despite enormous progress, even today, about 800 million people still live in extreme poverty and suffer from hunger”. This is a reference to world poverty, which includes South Africa. Greg (2015: 1) stresses that “The World Bank gave South Africa the statistics on poverty. It released a report that complemented the South Africa's “slightly progressive” tax system and “highly progressive” government spending. Around 3.6 million people have been lifted out of poverty, halving the number of South Africans living on less than \$1.25 a day. Because of grants, free basic services and taxes favouring the poor, the poverty rate dropped from 46.2% to 39%”.The link between poverty, income and household food security is, however, not at all clear. While some households are poor, they might experience food insecurity because of deficit in their own food production (Du Toit, 2011:8).

Jacobs (2009: 411) stresses that food security indicators exist within people’s personal strengths and limitations as food availability indicators focus on national food supply.

Although South Africa produces enough food to feed its entire population, many cannot access this food because of the high cost (Jacobs, 2009: 412). Having discussed the issue of food security, the section that follows discusses education within the context of poverty.

2.2.1.2 EDUCATION

The quality of education with regards to attacking global poverty is the biggest asset because education can change the lives of people totally (Fields & Pfeffermann,

2003:94). Education is the most important tool to alleviate poverty from its stand. Fields and Pfeffermann (2003:95) argue that education is also the best tool to alleviate poverty but the latter still remains as the majority of people still do not want to go to school to liberate themselves from hunger. Some poverty-stricken people are unemployed and are anxious for their survival. Those people that are impoverished lose hope. Some people are in a state of poverty as a result of violence and being victims of HIV/AIDS.

The discussion below proceeds to housing within the context of poverty.

2.2.1.3 HOUSING

The majority of poor people do not have homes (shelter). Some of them do not have homes because they do not have identity documents to facilitate the process of acquiring houses. Their children did not attend school because there was no money to buy their school uniform. The majority of these people want to escape from poverty but did not have access to resources enjoyed by the wealthy.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) is a policy framework for the government's Urban Development and Rural Development Frameworks aimed at promoting sustainable human settlements in South Africa. King, Bird and Haas (2007: 61) stress that these frameworks were in draft form and have been published for comment, and finalised in 2014 September (Integrated Urban Development Framework 2014: 12) as policy Frameworks to guide provincial and local governments. Within these policy Frameworks, various housing development programmes have been launched to alleviate poverty (King 2007:61).

Westerhoff (2010: 235) emphasized that the Government has put an emphasis on the Habitat II agreement of June 1995 in the form of integration of environmental

concerns into development plans. Government participates in national, provincial and local policy matters of direct relevance to environmental impact management through evaluation of applications for new businesses, housing developments, land re-zoning applications, and so forth, on a daily basis. Wanjiru (2013: 77a) also stresses that input is in the form of written comments, public hearings, committees and forums. This is particularly important in the implementation of the new Development Facilitation Act², which is designed to facilitate development and the formulation of the Land Development Objectives by each local authority (Wanjiru, 2013: 77b).

2.2.1.4 HEALTH CARE

Ndingaye (2005: 231) claims that there are high levels of poverty and unemployment (71%) in rural areas and 29% in the urban areas. This makes it difficult for the majority of people to pay for health services, which places immense strain on the public health sector. Others cannot afford doctors' fees while some do not have taxi fare to go for check-ups at the local public hospitals.

There have been significant improvements in some areas of basic health care delivery such as ante-natal care, combating acute childhood illnesses, and tuberculosis in clinics. However, the challenges in primary health clinics are still enormous. Cullinan (2006: 8) argued that many clinics still lack basic equipment, drugs, testing equipment for HIV, essentials like piped water, telephone access and reliable electricity supplies. Having discussed health care, the discussion proceeds to human security.

² This Act is designed to facilitate and speed up the implementations of reconstruction and development

2.2.1.5 HUMAN SECURITY

Governance at the state or local level affects human security in two ways. Good governance protects people from threats and risks and enhances improvements to their livelihoods. Bad governance exacerbates insecurity in the livelihoods of the poor and threatens their lives and dignity (Annan, 2000: 111). In many countries with prevalent power abuse, those in power tend to choose policies and budget spending that suit the purpose of rent-seeking, thus ignoring those essentials conducive to poverty reduction. Many poor people are deprived of rights and opportunities because of institutional imperfections in property rights of land and other assets, police protection and legal assistance (Hsu, 2013 4). According to Bardhan (1997:1334) household surveys, poor people tend to pay more in bribes relative to their income. Fragile countries that fail to exercise basic state functions are not only unable to deliver minimum levels of social services or protection, but are also unable to maintain law and order to confront political instability and financial crises.

In spite of various descriptions, one thing is certain, poverty is a complex societal problem. No matter how poverty is defined, it can be agreed that it is an issue that needs everybody's attention. As poverty attracts most people's attention worldwide, the discussion proceeds to global poverty.

2.3 GLOBAL POVERTY

According to the World Poverty Statistics (2014: 4), 1.4 billion people in developing countries live on \$2.50 a day or less. Rural areas account for 3 out of every 4 people living on less than \$1.25 a day. According to the above statistical data, there were 925 million hungry people in the world in 2010, which constitutes 13.1% of the global population. "With over 70% of the world's poor living in rural areas, support to

agriculture and rural development is fundamental for reducing poverty and boosting growth” (Gavinelli, Ferrara & Knypinska, 2011: 1). Furthermore, up to 90% of the inhabitants in some developed countries are contingent on agriculture and farming for their existence, as these provide income, employment and food, as well as raw materials for industry and exports (Gavinelli, Ferrara & Knypinska, 2011: 1). The majority of people do not view alleviation of poverty as their responsibility.

In this context, developed countries have a duty to help suffering regions by promoting food security strategies and rural development programmes, which strengthen support for smallholding farmers and contribute to poverty alleviation (Gavinelli, 2011:1). Therefore, poverty alleviation is not a restricted issue. It is an unlimited issue that needs all people to pay attention to it. Kügler and Gunda (2013: 165) stress that poverty is marked deprivation in well-being and includes many dimensions. It comprises low incomes and the incapability to obtain basic goods and services essential for survival with dignity. Poverty also removes the dignity of a person. In some areas, those people who are impoverished do not have a say in the communities that they live in.

Poverty also involves low standards and poor levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, insufficient physical security, inability to speak in public and inadequate capability and opportunity to improve one’s life.

World Bank implemented the Poverty Social Impact Analysis (PSIA) stand to attack poverty throughout the world to reform the continent (Coudouel et al, 2006: 1). Attention to poverty alleviation is the vital goal of development that is required to develop the position of poor people in the world. It is difficult for developed countries to identify poor people because those countries understand poverty differently. Some

people who cannot afford food, that is, 3 meals a day are regarded as poor people, but in African countries, poverty is regarded as hunger and starvation.

Alametal (2005: 1) stress that a measure of poverty is “an absolute poverty line of \$2 a day associated with household consumption per capita”. In addition to the \$2 a day poverty line, a \$4 a day line is used to capture the notion of economic vulnerability, which is to measure the number of inhabitants that are not totally poor, but could become poor in the event of an economic downturn. Decreased economic rates have an impact on the increasing levels of poverty and affect the whole world. In addition, lack of employment throughout the world is the most important factor which increases poverty.

The majority of people are self-employed because of lack of employment. Those self-employment jobs did not seem to change the lives of people who are impoverished in Alice. Fields and Pfeffermann (2003: 3) argued that “many of the informal self-employed are poor”. Fields and Pfeffermann (2003: 3) also stresses that poorly educated employees, more largely, are those in informal self-employment and those same employees are likely to be found at the bottom of the income ladder.

2.4 POVERTY IN THE MILIEU OF SOUTH AFRICA

Maluleke (2007: 53) argued that as long as the poverty gap between rich and poor spreads, even if some of those who are rich are Black and some of those poor are White, South Africa is not yet a settled nation in terms of poverty. Certainly, the local churches will have to dig deep into their own pockets if they are to address the question of poverty and reconciliation.

The issue of reconciliation goes an extra-mile because it deals with the issues of restorative justice that contains peace, love, forgiveness. De Gruchy (2002: 205)

stated that restoration of justice is more than what could be attained through the TRC. When we talk about restoring justice in the context of reconciliation in South Africa, the focus must be on social and economic justice.

South Africa's democratic government responded to the issue of poverty in filling the gap between the rich and poor by creating social grants using the Department of Social Development.

The decision taken by the first democratic government of South Africa was to prioritise social grants as an anti-poverty strategy. It was a well-justified attempt to start eliminating the extreme levels of poverty and inequalities of the past *Apartheid* system (RSA 2008: 5). Green (2012: 2013) stated that even though the government of South Africa tried to alleviate poverty by attacking it through the social grants, poverty is still increasing in South Africa. The amount of R350 for child support grants is not fulfilling the needs of the baby and his/her parents, therefore poverty is still dominating. Green (2012: 214) indicates that the classic view that poverty is just shortage of income may be well-established, but poverty has eventually to be seen as lack of various kinds of freedoms, including the freedom to achieve minimally satisfactory living conditions.

The South African government's view of poverty is in line with this approach. According to a discussion report delivered by the State President, "It regards poverty as a state of multiple deprivations, that is, insufficiency in the individual's socio-economic abilities, including income, access to basic services, assets, information, social networks or social wealth" (RSA, 2008: 5).

There are not many people in this country who are likely to disagree with the statement that poverty is rampant in South Africa and that South Africa is amongst

the most unequal societies in the world. Some surveys (Poverty Statistical Survey, Statistics South Africa and Department of Agriculture Food Security) have produced statistical data and information that supports this statement.

The fact that there is widespread agreement on the existence of poverty in South Africa (and in the rest of the world) does not mean that there is an agreement about how poverty is understood or what its causes and effects are. From October 2014 to March 2015, South Africa has witnessed a series of social unrest, many of which ended in violence by very poor communities who allege poor delivery of basic goods and services. Therefore, the South African government has an important role to play in stopping poor service delivery (Upreti, 2014: 2).

Poverty is rampant in South Africa and worldwide; the main reason for this is most definitely not because those who are poor are unwilling to work or are lazy; poor people are looking for the means to rescue themselves from hunger.

Ozoenema (2010: 1) stresses that “the majority of South African citizens are poor, and pervasive inequality exists between men and women and between black and white people of the country. Thus far, the poverty alleviation strategies of government seem unable to reduce inequalities and the consequences of poverty amongst women in rural areas.” The majority of areas that are more affected by poverty are the rural areas, and this causes inequality between men and women because men see themselves as superior to women. The inequality between men and women and also between black and white people is caused by lack of employment. The *Apartheid* government created an open-ended space of racialism and inequality between black and white people.

According to Ozoenema (2010:2), these challenges of poverty and inequality are the result of *Apartheid*. During the *Apartheid* era, people were vulnerable because of their race and gender (Liebenberg, 2007: 27). Furthermore, in the *Apartheid* era, there were special social grants for white people who were impoverished and none for the black people to assist in their impoverishment.

The report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by the Greater JHB Welfare (1999) stated that the state maintenance grant (SMG) was considered to support impoverished single parents within the country. The 1983 Memorandum on Social work in the Republic of South Africa shows that the allowance was compensated to Whites, Indians and Coloureds. This is one of the imbalances that were produced by the *Apartheid* government whereby White people especially enjoyed economic support (Mase, 2008: 9). Black people were denied access to social grants. This shows how policy can be used to establish policy priorities and allow for the formation of deprivation. In this case, policy makers were Whites and social welfare policy favoured the White majority (Patel, 1992: 30). The South African government of *Apartheid* oppressed people emotionally, physically and economically.

Ozler (2006:59) stresses that “apartheid in South Africa officially came to an end with the democratically held elections in 1994, and in its wake, left a population with vast inequality and poverty across the racial groups”. “The problem of poverty in South Africa has been down-played by the South African government for years. At the end of the *Apartheid* Era, the government opened platforms to create justice to the challenges that contributed to poverty to increase” (Moagi, 2012: 5).

It was thus inevitable that anti-poverty social grants would be important but inadequate to promote the development and self-reliance of people who are poor

(Department of Social Development, 2006: 17). Although South Africa has made significant progress since 1994, the reality of poverty is still widespread, and the level of inequality is deepening (RSA, 2009: 6). The Bill of Rights and socio-economics in the context of South Africa is discussed in the following section.

2.5 BILL OF RIGHTS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC'S IN SOUTH AFRICA

Socio-economic rights have been challenged to be one of the rights reflected in the South African Bill of Rights (Mubangizi, 2005: 283). The South African Bill of Rights does not include the socio-economic right as a clause in the Bill of Rights, the committee that formulated the Human Rights Bill did not include the socio-economic right because they assumed that all people would be treated equally in South Africa, as guided by the Bill of Rights. According to the Bill of Rights, no one is categorised as a poor person, and therefore, all people are equal. Mubangizi (2005: 283) stresses that the addition of such a right to the South African Bill of Rights is not something that is recognized for discussion.

Mubangizi (2005: 283) and Erly (2009: 1023) stress that the socio-economic right was not commonly acknowledged as an important right in the Bill of Rights. The founders were indecisive on the separation of power because the judiciary would intrude upon the territory of the government. However, the implementation of socio-economic rights was unjustifiable because of the budgetary implications involved in enforcing of socio-economic rights.

De Waal et.al (2000: 400) stress that "socio-economic rights are non-justifiable and ill-suited to enforcement by the judiciary". Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux (2008: 6) stress that the role of human rights law in combating poverty can be demonstrated further by focusing on two particular constitutional rights that have a direct attitude on

the poor. One of these is the right of access to “social security” provided for under section 27. Mungangizi (2005: 286) stresses that it is not only socio-economic rights that have a direct impact on poverty because some of the so-called civic and radical rights can also be appealed against in their challenge to deal with issues of poverty. The issue of the Church and Non-Government Organisations in combating poverty is discussed below.

2.6 CHURCH AND NGO’S ON THE ISSUE OF POVERTY

The majority of Churches and NGOs focus on poverty alleviation voluntarily. They do not benefit from poor people and from the government.

Korten (1995: 185) explains that Non-Government Organisations are dependent on donors who desire to channel funding to make a difference. Even though the founders of NGOs respond to challenges of poverty, they do so voluntarily. The South African Government must invest in NGOs and FBOs by supporting them financially.

Swart (2006: 136) stated that NGOs existence depends on the state sponsorship and resources, but their leaders are subjected to government appointments, and eventually, they are accountable to government more than the independent boards.

All people have the right to dignity and respect, and poor people have lost their place of respect given to them by the Bible and the Gospel (Mwaura, 2007:94). Poor people need money to meet their needs. Judas saw an opportunity to misuse it since he did not care for the poor (John 12: 6 “He did not say this because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it” NIV) (Weirsbe, 2007: 77).

There are some opportunities of doing good which are constant, and which we must give regular attention to for the improvement of poor people's lives. "The poor never ceased even out of the land of Israel", Deuteronomy 15:1 (Holy Bible: Contemporary Version)³. We cannot but see some in this world, who call for our charitable assistance, who are God's receivers, some poor members of Christ, to whom he will have kindness shown as to himself" (Matthew,2010ed: 214). Mathew tried to emphasize that other people care for the poor. Weirsbe (2007:339) stresses that the Sabbath Year and the Year of Jubilee were part of God's wise plan to balance the economic scales in the nation so that the rich could not exploit the poor nor for the poor take advantage of the rich. However, the Lord knew that there would always be poor people in the land (Weirsbe, 2007: 339). This emphasises the liberty of the poor under the rich. The meaning of Sabbath is rest and that of Jubilee is liberation. Therefore, the poor who work for the rich should have rest and liberty.

The MCSA Conference renews commitments of the MCSA, in keeping with the original Wesleyan imperative, to be in solidarity with the poor. The MCSA conference of 2004, therefore, requested all Circuits, Societies and Districts to strengthen ministry alongside the poor in united determination to combat poverty (Law & Discipline, 2007: 238). Poverty is the collapse of justice and solidarity, therefore, the church has to restore justice and solidarity (Barbara, 2003:72). The MCSA restored this imperative which is known as justice and service to pay attention to poor people within the Connexion of Methodist Church of Southern Africa (Storey, 2004: 40). The majority of the churches are struggling to be in solidarity with poor people because the majority of ministers do not want to associate themselves with those people that

³The researcher used different versions of the Bible like the Contemporary English Version, King James, New International Version, etc. which are acknowledged in the text.

are at lower levels because of their status. This creates loss of membership in their churches (Amudati, 1988:6).

Stassen and Gushee (2003: 413) stress that “in a context characterised by extraordinary economic exploitation in Jesus’ days and long economic depression in Matthew’s time because of the double taxation by the government of the day, people became poorer. Jesus taught about the kind of compassionate and merciful justice that delivers the poor from poverty and restores them to live in a community that formerly rejected poor people. Matthew summoned people to serve God’s compassionate reign through acts of justice, thus advancing compassion towards the economically vulnerable and oppressed. The church is working collaboratively with the NGOs, therefore, the researcher overviewed governmental departments that have resources to fight against poverty as part of this study.

2.7 THE INVOLVEMENT OF CHURCH IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development seeks to improve human development, and together with similar strategies, is aimed at empowering communities and strengthening their capacity for self-sustenance (De Beer & Swanepoel, 2000: 125). Apart from other institutions that are involved in poverty alleviation, the Church is another important institution that pays specific attention to the alleviation of poverty. Swart (2006: 57) stresses that “there is the range of opinion that stretches from the cautious operational agencies for the church to focus in the work of a caring nature which takes a much more progressive view of the nature of poverty and eradicating it”.

Kurien (1974: 202) argued that the churches’ response to the challenge of development also involved their sponsoring of projects specifically envisioned to increase productivity through agriculture. As the people received the mandate from

God to work the land from the survival (Genesis 1: 26), therefore, the church must give special focus on the issue of agriculture to develop people and fight against poverty. Haddad (2006: 12) argued for the church's role in development, suggesting that the church was a better place to work with poor people than any other religious or secular institution. Haddad also says that vast numbers of poor people in South Africa associate with the Christian faith, and the church is strategically placed in all marginalised communities to address poverty. This argument of Haddad (2006: 12) is based on the church being more involved in the process of transforming the lives of poor people.

The Poverty and Inequality Conference (2012: 6) asserted that "The church is the right place to provide a holistic response to poverty and inequality in the following three areas:

- Firstly, the church is equipped with a vocation to care for the poor, to alleviate suffering, and to stand for justice;
- Secondly, the biblical faith affirms that all are equally valued and have a part to play in God's re-counting story, according to dignity and significance to all, irrespective of their socio-economic standing; and
- Thirdly, the church provides a liberating community in which change is normative as minds are renewed and lives are transformed and caught up in God's purposes."

Based on the gospel of Mathew 25: 31 says the Church is an institution that has been ordained by God to care for vulnerable people in terms of poverty and inequality. Grusky and Kanbur (2006: 1) argued that "poverty and inequality should no longer

be treated as soft social issues that can safely be subordinated to more important and fundamental interest in maximizing total economic output.”

UNISA's ABET Department (2014: 1) stated that “economic poor and inequalities are the factors that cause poverty and inequality. Economic poor and inequality are linked to the misuse of resources”. Therefore, manipulation of trade and monetary system from the market, the exploitation of cheap labour, natural resources and the overt and covert transfer of capital from the poor to the rich denote that poverty and inequality are performed.

It is the role of the church to fight against inequality between people. The Church has more work to develop the communities economically and also spiritually. Inequality yields negative effects to poverty and negatively affects health, political participation and other life conditions. Below is a discussion of the Biblical approach to poverty.

2.8 BIBLICAL APPROACH TO POVERTY

The Bible confirmed the experiences and the realities of the challenge of poverty. In both Old and New Testaments, the issue of poverty and hunger were addressed. This is evident in the Old Testament whereby the book of Deuteronomy 15 verse 11 (NIV) proclaims: “There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore, I command you to be open-handed toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.” In support of the above proclamation, Sider (2005: 93) points out that God is always on the side of the poor and is concerned with the condition of poor people. Sider (2005: 93) further asserts that God’s desire is to eliminate the injustice and suffering that is amongst His people. Adewunmiju (1981:76) adds that God demonstrated this by freeing the oppressed Israelites from Egyptian bondage (Exodus 3:7-8) and that God releases those who are in bondage physically by sending others to liberate them.

Man was created in God's image. Poverty is demeaning to humanity and also affects human worth and creativity. God is concerned with the conditions of the poor, and sides with them. Christians are children of God's will and the Christian church is a place where God's kingdom must be manifested. God's resources (Psalm 24:1) are for all men. God is sovereign over the universe. He is the sovereign Lord of history and of all things in history. The economy of every nation forms part of all that are under his Lordship. Therefore, the issue of poverty and wealth concerns him.

Hawtrey (1992: 4) argued that "God controls human affairs, and Christian social analysis must give greater emphasis to theological categories than social categories."

The Bible reveals true righteousness as that which cares for others. Genesis 1: 27 ("So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them"). Our image reflects God's image. We are created by God to rule, with moral accountability and authority, in God's world as God's representatives (Genesis 1: 27). God is concerned when people are enslaved or oppressed. God is the liberator of the oppressed and the poor. According to the prophet Amos, God condemned the oppression of the poor by the wealthy in the Northern kingdom of Israel ("Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on Mount Samaria, you women who oppress the poor and crush the needy and say to your husband, "bring us some drinks" Amos 4:1).

Jesus' mission is to set the oppressed free and restore sight for the blind. His works are works of charity that is, healing the sick and the blind and feeding the hungry (Lk.4:18, 19). He taught his disciples that eternal damnation awaits those who do not feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit the prisoners (Matt. 25:31-46). As

Christians are truly the Disciples of Christ, they will follow Christ's example by showing concern for the poor. Nwangu (200: 18) stresses that poverty affects human dignity and challenges Christian stewardship. The effects of poverty challenge a Christian's conscience. These effects include hunger, poor health, and inadequate medical care, which include brain damages as a result of a lack of quality food with protein for babies. Illiteracy, poor living conditions, lack of good housing and so forth are also effects of poverty.

The Bible teaches us that material response to the poor and hungry is a test of Christian experience, genuine love and authentic righteousness (Isaiah 58: 10; James 2:15-17; I John 3:17, 18). To know God means doing justice to the poor and needy (Jer.22:13-16; Hosea 4:12). This is the biblical approach to poverty.

Therefore, the researcher further discusses productive resources against poverty below.

2.9 GOVERNMENT RESOURCES AGAINST POVERTY

Mubanginzi (2005: 288) argued that "social grants and all other efforts of the Department of Social Development must be seen as safety nets, or as activities planned to alleviate the impact of poverty". The Social Development Department plays an important role in alleviating poverty through provision of social grants. This department also has other projects to combat against poverty. "Poor people need to have access and control of productive resources such as: land, water and minerals. Those resources provide an opportunity for poor people to fight against poverty alleviation" (Mubanginzi 2005: 288). If people have access to land, water and minerals to work the land and produce from it, they will sell the produce to the markets and the surplus will be used by them.

Lawrence (2010: 3) states that to confess our belief in God as creator in the face of poverty is to call for radical revision of our attitudes to leadership, land, natural resources and human worth. The majority of people do not want to work the land for production. Other people are looking for employment even though they have a piece of land to work on. According to Genesis 3: 19, “by the sweat of your brow, you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return” (Contemporary English Version). God provided Adam with many kinds of food, but after the Fall, God chose not to fully provide for him. They had to find food for themselves. Due to the sin that Adam committed, God cursed him by telling him that he will live by the sweat of his brow for the rest of his life; thereby ushering in the perennial threat of poverty for humankind.

According to the Department of Social Development, the Child Support Grant (CSG) is one of the main poverty alleviation programmes implemented by the state to alleviate poverty for South African citizens. “The CSG is defined as the money paid to the primary care giver of the child who must use the grant for the assistance of the child” (Social Assistance Act No. 13 of 2004). Many parents are unemployed, therefore the government meets people halfway in terms of giving CSG to those people that qualify for it.

2.10 POVERTY INTENSITY IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE

Jonas (2013: 11) claims that the Eastern Cape is home to 6.7 million people, equivalent to 12.8% of the national population. The following are some of the salient demographic characteristics of the province: the Eastern Cape is comprises a relatively young population; a declining but higher than national average fertility rate; a working age population that is increasingly female, and a below-average life

expectancy rate (Jonas, 2013: 11). In the Eastern Cape, the majority of people that are employed are females, however, based on the SABC radio news radio report of the statistics of females that were employed in the EC province, the indication was that the some of them have love relationships with the government stewards in order to secure jobs (Umhlobo Wenene FM, Program, "Apha naphaya" 5:45 am, 17 August 2014).

This province also faces major social challenges which are: poverty, income inequality, food insecurity, and unemployment. Those challenges need to be tackled by all people working together cooperatively. The Eastern Cape is frequently mentioned as one of the poorest provinces in South Africa. Within the Eastern Cape, poverty, is widespread, but is most prevalent within Alfred Nzo District Municipality (DM), followed by O.R Tambo DM, Amatole DM, Ukhahlamba DM, Chris Hani DM, Cacadu DM and lastly NMBM (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality) (South African Statistics, 2012).

On the positive side, the Eastern Cape has managed to reduce poverty levels between 2007 and 2011, particularly, in the O.R Tambo DM (Jonas, 2013: 11). In addition, the average deprivation levels are constantly examined by DMs so that further reductions in poverty can be achieved through proper targeting of interventions (ibid). Next, social problems in the rural areas in the Eastern Cape will be discussed.

2.10.1 SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN RURAL AREAS

Carden (2007: 5) claims that rural areas in the Eastern Cape are those areas that are without access to ordinary public services such as water and sanitation and are

without a formal local authority. In most rural areas, in the Eastern Cape, there is no access to water and people fetch water from rivers and streams far away from their villages. The majority of areas in the Eastern Cape are disadvantaged since they have limited access to service delivery from government sectors.

These areas are characterised by inferior infrastructure, low income, poor site conditions, water unavailability, and poor access to health facilities. Rural areas are also plagued by lack of sufficient quantities of clean water, subsequently impairing the ability of most people in rural areas to engage in appropriate personal, food and environment hygiene practice. The majority of rural poor areas in the Eastern Cape Province are contingent mainly on agriculture for community development. In this context, the question of access to land-based natural resources such as water is crucial to any discourse and practice in relation to inclusive pro-poor rural development (Kepe, 2001:9). The problems that are affecting people in the rural areas have been highlighted, and below is a discussion of social problems in the urban areas.

2.10.2 SOCIAL PROBLEMS FROM URBAN AREAS

Yassi (2001:2) acknowledges that poverty is inter-related with other problems of under-development. In rural and urban communities, poverty can be very different. In the rural areas, the standard of living is low because people live on their properties, where as in the urban areas, the standard of living is high due to the option of renting for the shelter. In addition, in urban areas, people often have access to better health and education. But many of the problems caused by poverty became worse due issues such as overcrowding, unhygienic conditions, pollution, shacks and so on. On the other hand, in rural areas, there is often poor access to education, health and many other services, but people usually live in healthier and safer environments.

The majority of people that are living in the urban areas cannot afford to live life of similar standards because of the lack of employment as Eastern Cape Province has a enormous unemployment challenge. This province also faces the challenges of corruption by people who are supposed to deliver services. In addition, the Eastern Cape Province is declining in terms of education. The 2015 grade 12 results showed poor pass rates, yet again as the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga said that “the worst performing province was the Eastern Cape with a pass rate of 56.8%” (SABC 1 News 05 January 2016). In the Eastern Cape some people have tertiary qualifications but others have not completed their high school education. More positively, the “proportion of persons aged 20 years who have no schooling halved from 19,1% in 1996 to 8,6% in 2011” (Statistics South Africa. 2012: 34).

Williams and Collins (2005: 404) argue that in South Africa, between 1996 and 2001, there have been low numbers of people who completed high school or tertiary education. Therefore, in the Eastern Cape Province, education is the most important factor to alleviate poverty. The challenge is the lack of employment to those who passed standard 10. There is valid proof regarding corruption in the Eastern Cape. Many commissions that have investigated the misuse of state funds by those who are in power (Basopu, 2010: 3) but they have yielded no results. To use education as one of the factors to alleviate poverty is to change the lives of people totally, because a person who is well educated up to tertiary level is employable and will earn more than a person who is less educated.

2.11 POVERTY AND GENDER

The hypothesis and practices on the issue of poverty need to be taken seriously from the position of unequal powers to the relationship between men and women. Masilelaeds (2010: 23) stated that gender is one of the primary ways in which people

organize their relationships to themselves and to one another; moreover, unequal power relations between men and women have historically influenced access to resources, authority, opportunity and agency. To discover people's truths, therefore, encompasses taking gender seriously as one key effect on the lives and experiences of people.

An analysis of poverty from a gender perspective is vital as women and men experience poverty differently. Furthermore, Kabeer (1997:1) emphasizes that:

“Poverty has not always been analysed from a gender perspective. Prior to the feminist contributions to gender analysis, the poor were either seen as composed entirely of men or else women's needs, and interests were assumed to be identical too, and subsumable under those of male household heads”.

Acknowledged by these statements, gender investigation proceeds by disaggregating complex realities into different layers of concern, and to pursue to examine how men and women interact in terms of power, consciousness, roles, responsibilities, experiences, and agency (Sow, 1997: 21).

Haddad (2001: 6a) argued that the church's prophetic voice is silent about the issue of injustice and social transformation. Haddad (2001: 6b) also said people who are marginalized are the poor and women. Poverty is, thus, not a gender-neutral issue, but one restricted by patriarchy (Haddad, 2001: 9). Most women are more vulnerable to poverty and have no income to support their children. Some women only earn R350 every month from Child Support Grant for their survival. In fact inequality and women poverty are the results of *Apartheid*, as the government of that era did not allow women to have an access to better education. Swart (2006: 144) stated that

the strategic role of the churches in development constitutes one of the most important dimensions to make the use of power, values, love, brotherhood, peace and the ability of people to live in harmony with one another. Haddad (2006: 9) said that “the apartheid legacy has further entrenched poverty into the lives of women by denying them a formal education with literacy rates estimated to be a mere 50% in rural areas”. The *Apartheid* government created vulnerable and impoverished women through denying them a better education and better job opportunities.

2.12 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, extreme poverty, its meaning to the basics of people’s existence, and poverty alleviation was discussed. A clear understanding of moderate poverty and relative poverty is to have an apparent recognition of poverty in various ways. Although poverty is a challenging issue, it needs all people to focus on it. Whether or not a person is rich or poor, poverty affects people throughout the world. As the World Bank stated, most people survive on \$2 per day. Those countries that are developed have an important role to play in those regions that are not developed and are stricken by poverty. Poverty is also understood as lack of well-being because many people who are impoverished cannot meet their basic needs such as clean water. Poor people are marginalized because of their status since they are impoverished. Others think that to be self-employed will rescue them from poverty, even though they have not been empowered on their small businesses sustainability.

To focus on poverty is the key idea of the church because those people stricken with poverty are the members of the church and relatives of the members of the church. The Methodist Church of Southern Africa is obliged to function in solidarity with poor people, regardless of their church membership.

The Government has invested in poverty alleviation in South Africa with the help of NGOs and Churches. Scriptures give us a clear understanding of the status of poor people, as Jesus Christ honoured them and sent them back to give others the good news. Their good news was to say they obtained food, clothes and so on from God's people. Even though people are stricken with poverty, the church restores justice, solidarity and their lost dignity.

The Eastern Cape is one of the poorest provinces in South Africa. In this province, there are many challenges of poverty, corruption, fraud and crime which need an attention. This province is rural, and is not easy to develop.

The World Bank encourages countries to use education as the source to alleviate poverty, and there is a big problem of school dropouts prior to finishing grade 12. The majority of these school leavers are females. Their challenge is the lack of sanitary towels/pads which discourages female learners from attending school during menstruation. Even though menstruation is normal, their peers and community is construe it as shameful. Other learners laugh at them during menstruation. Various literature studies on poverty alleviation were reviewed by the researcher in this chapter, and the discussion proceeds to Chapter 3, the research methodology chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was based on a qualitative research methodology. In terms of textual research, the literature review forms an important part of this particular study as the work of a Practical theologian. Therefore, African practical theology guided the researcher to discuss social injustices targeting the poor in the MCSA. The major aim of this dissertation is to assess the gap between policy of poverty alleviation and practice in the MCSA within the context of the three research questions highlighted in Chapter One.

The policy of alleviating poverty and the practice observed in this study is examined through engaging twenty participants, namely: The Bishop of Grahamstown District of MCSA, six ministers residing in the Circuits that are within the demarcation of Alice Region of the MCSA, Circuit Stewards and eight participants who receive assistance from the MCSA in terms of alleviating poverty. The source documents of the MCSA, several key publications, lectures and seminars that empower people on how to alleviate poverty were also engaged with.

3.2 RESEARCH POPULATION

The Alice Region is one of the five Regions that fall under the Grahamstown District of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. It is located within the boundaries of the Nkonkobe Local Municipality under the Amathole District Municipality. Nkonkobe Local Municipality was established in 2000 and is currently made up of dis-established Transitional Local Councils of Alice, Middledrift, Fort Beaufort, Hogsback and Seymour/Balfour (Integrated Development Planning 2012: 17). The Nkonkobe Local Municipality is the second largest local municipality covering 3725

km², and constitutes 16% of the surface area of the Amathole District Municipality (Integrated Development Planning 2012: 17). According to Integrated Development Planning (2012: 19) of Nkonkobe Local Municipality, the Nkonkobe Municipality Area has an estimated total population of 135,660. Table 1 below presents the estimated number and percentage of the Nkonkobe Local Municipality population.

Table 1: Estimated number and percentage of the Nkonkobe Local Municipality population

Indian or Asian	White	Coloured	Black (AmaXhosa)
141	476	5,805	129,238
0%	1%	4%	95%

There are 21 wards within the Nkonkobe Local Municipality and approximately 74% of people living within the Nkonkobe Municipal Area are indigent. The majority (72%) of the population of Nkonkobe resides in both villages and farms, and 28% reside in urban settlements. Urbanization is mainly concentrated in Alice and Fort Beaufort (IDP 2012: 31).

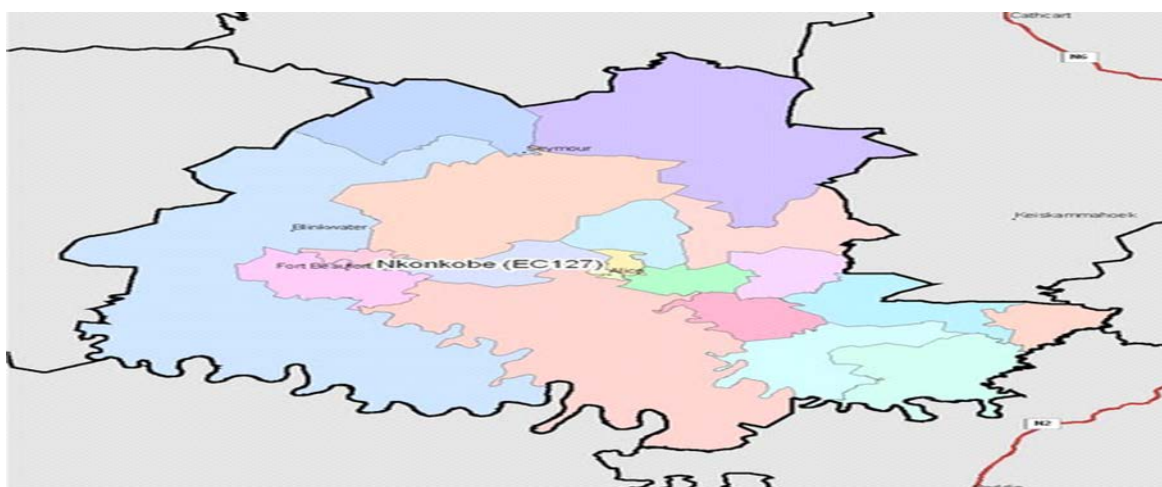


Figure 1: Map of Nkonkobe Municipality (IDP 2012: 31)

Nonetheless, the municipality has numerous strengths and opportunities which include, *inter alia*, the following: heritage sites, institutions of higher learning such as Fort Hare University, Lovedale FET College and Fort Cox Agricultural College.

3.3 REGIONAL SETTING

The territories of this region are located from Fort Beaufort in the west, to the north of Keiskammahoek, that is, it is in the south of Amahlathi Local Municipality, to Middledrift South with boundaries of Peddie in the east side and the boundary of Double-drift Game Reserve in the south. The motto of this region is "*Umntu ngumntu ngabantu*" which in Latin is "*Homo est humane per gens*" meaning a person is person through assistance by other people. This motto is used by the members of the church in this region to help people from various circuits within the Grahamstown district and also from the Circuits within the Connexion of MCSA; church members also help people who are non-Methodist Church members.

3.4 METHODIST CHURCH STRUCTURE

The structure of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa starts from the Society level. A society is formed by a group of families, and a society has a presiding officer in its structure, who is a society steward. In a society, people are grouped into classes/cells for their spiritual formation. The formation of class meetings was for collecting money for the Church buildings, as suggested by Captain Foy (cited in Hulley, 1987: 21) as saying:

"Let everyone in the society give a penny per week, and it will easily be done.' 'But many of them' said one, 'have not a penny to give.' 'True, said the Captain; 'then put ten or twelve of them to me. Let each of these give what they can weekly, and I will supply what is wanted'. Many others made

the same offer. So Mr Wesley divided the societies among them; assigning a class of about twelve persons termed leaders to each of these”.

Initially, the purpose of the class or cell system was merely to collect the contribution of members for financing the society; the class leader went from house to house to collect the money from the members (Hulley, 1987: 21). The class leaders had three functions to fulfil: firstly, they had to give pastoral care to those who are in their classes, second, they had to collect the members' contribution to the Church and lastly, to meet with the steward and the Superintendent of the Circuit. The highest meeting in a society is the leaders' meeting, and it has the authority to make final decisions; they present resolutions to the highest decision-making circuit meeting, namely, the Circuit Quarterly Meeting (CQM) (MCSA Book of Order, 2014: 82).

A group of societies form a Circuit which has its structures that manage the circuit as the Circuit Management Team (CMT). The CMT consists of a Minister, Stewards and Treasurer responsible for the finances of the circuit. There are usually about 4 employed Circuit stewards. The highest decision-making meeting authorised by the MCSA within the Circuit is the Circuit Quarterly Meeting (MCSA Book of Order, 2014: 73).

The group of Circuits form a district which has its own management led by the District Bishop (as chairperson), Secretary of the Synod, Vice Chairperson, Lay Representative, Treasurer, District Supervisor of Studies, Coordinator of Mission Unit, Presidents and Coordinator of the entities and all Circuit Superintendents. The highest decision-making meeting in a district is the Synod, and resolutions are taken there (MCSA Book of Order 2014: 64).

The group of districts form a Connexion is led by the Connexional Executive (CE) the Presiding Bishop; the Presiding Bishop-elect and the Bishops, the Lay President; the General Secretary; the past-Presiding Bishop, for two years immediately after leaving office, the Lay General Treasurer; the Director of the Finance Unit; the Lay Leader of each District, elected by Synod and a Local Preachers' representative. A Representative each of Women's work and Men's work in rotation has to be decided in consultation between the various Organisations, that is, the Youth Representative elected by the Connexional Youth Consultation; The Director of the Education for Ministry and Mission Unit; the Director of the Mission Unit; the Director of the Ecumenical Affairs Unit; the President of the Seminary; the Director of Human Resources Unit, the Warden of the Order of Deacons, the Warden of the Order of Evangelism, and the Director of Communications (MCSA Book of Order, 2014).

The regions are not included in the formal structure of Methodism but are formed to maintain the spiritual fellowship and the relationships within the Circuits that are in a particular area or local municipality. The Alice Region of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa comprises six circuits, namely, Annshaw, Perksdale, Keiskammahoek, Tyume, Katvalley and Healdtown Circuit. Each circuit has a local minister for its administration and circuit stewards to assist him/her. There are managers in the region, namely, the Coordinator, General Secretary, Recording Secretary and Treasurer. In addition, there are mission groups to fulfil the mission of the Methodist Church within the circuit and region. Those mission groups are: Local Preacher's Department, Young Men's Guild (Amadodana AseWesile), Women's Manyano, Young Women's Manyano and Youth Unity. Research methods are discussed in the following section.

3.5 RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher used one of three types of research approaches which is the qualitative research method. Those three types of research approaches are qualitative, quantitative and mixed research approach. Researchers skilled in the use of quantitative research methods/designs face real challenges when called upon to use or teach qualitative research (Stallings, 1995: 31-32).

Qualitative research entails a generic approach to research where the research takes as its exit point, the insider's perspective on action (Babbie, 2010: 229). Quantitative research, on the other hand, entails specifically measuring variables and testing hypotheses linked to general informal explanations (Mouton, 2008: 70). The mixed research method combines qualitative and quantitative research methods (Corbin 2008: 50).

Researchers have long debated the comparative value of qualitative and quantitative inquiry (Patton, 1990: 1189). Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomenon in context-specific settings (Patton, 1990: 1190 a). Quantitative research, on the other hand, uses experimental methods and quantitative measures to test hypothetical generalizations (Patton, 1990: 1190 b). Each represents a fundamentally different inquiry paradigm, and the researchers' actions are based on the underlying assumptions of each paradigm.

The research approach followed in this study is the qualitative approach. Leedy and Ormrod (2004) stress that qualitative research studies serve one or more of the following purposes:

- a) Description: the respondents can reveal the nature of certain situations, setting, processes, relationship, systems and people;

- b) Interpretation: the respondents enable the researcher to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon, develop new concepts about the phenomenon and can also discover the problems that exist within the phenomenon;
- c) Verification: the respondents allow the researcher to test the validity of certain assumption, claims and theories based on real world contexts; and
- d) Evaluation: the respondents provide a means through which a researcher can observe the effectiveness of particular policies, practices or innovations.

Qualitative research is explained as a kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 17). Where quantitative researchers look for causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings, qualitative researchers seek, instead, enlightenment, consideration, and extrapolation to comparable situations. Qualitative research method analysis results in a different type of knowledge than does quantitative inquiry.

The quantitative research approach is crucial in the evaluation of the impact of a programme. In the qualitative approach, one collects numerous forms of data and examines them from various angles to construct a rich and important picture of a complex situation. The qualitative component of the research which involves re-telling and analysing data from members of society, ministers and stewards is helpful because it is, in fact, these people who gave the researcher an opportunity to find and examine the strong features of Practical Theology in the context of poor people's experience.

Literature was reviewed to examine the work of MCSA members with the community members and the participation of the MCSA leaders in the Alice Region. Such a review, coupled with research instruments assisted the study to form a triangular shape in order to observe the gap between the poverty alleviation policy and practice of the MCSA towards poverty alleviation.

3.6 RESEARCH TOOLS

Interviews were conducted by using research questions contained in questionnaires. Research interviews involve acquiring information about one or more groups of people by asking them questions and recording their answers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2004). An interview is designed in three ways, namely: correlation, cross-sectional and longitudinal. This study followed the cross-sectional format. The cross-sectional format is a specialized method of a standard group of interviews, where different standard groups usually embrace different levels of groups that are researched in terms of one or more variables, at the same time. A cross-sectional format of interviews gives thick and straightforward information.

3.7 RESEARCH SAMPLE

The Ntselamanzi community, Methodist Church members of the Alice Region and the Ministers of the Methodist Church that are stationed in the Alice Region are the sample from which this study's findings are generalized. The sample of this study comprises 20 participants: 1 bishop, 5 ministers, 6 circuit stewards and 8 people from the congregation. These participants were of mixed gender from 18 years and above. This is a part of the group that is targeted by the Methodist Church in alleviating poverty. The sample also included Ministers from various Circuits within the Alice Region in the Grahamstown District of Methodist Church of Southern Africa. There were 13 male and 7 female participants.

Although the quantitative research method demands that a sample be representative and reliable, those statistics usually have their own limitations, as Mouton (2001:153) suggests. Qualitative research differs from a quantitative approach in the sense that the emphasis is on detailed study rather than on collecting data. Data is often helpful, and it enables the researcher to draw assumptions with regard to the research findings. Data is necessary for many and varied research programmes but for this particular study, the researcher focused on the issue of poverty alleviation by MCSA. Such data is important because the MCSA calls for quantifiable expression to focus on poverty in an attempt to address the state of the MCSA in the Alice Region, therefore, this study opted for a qualitative methodology.

The following two sub-sections of the research methodology discussion outline how the sample was assembled, which source documents of the MCSA were included, the role of the researcher, and data analysis.

3.8 SOURCE DOCUMENTS

The most important documents examined for this study were: the Laws and Discipline, Yearbook and Synod Reports of the MCSA. The Book of Order or Laws and Discipline is the book that the MCSA uses to lead the church in its right path, and it contains clauses that are compulsory to all bishops, ministers and members. The process to amend any clauses is a time-consuming, involve critical views and a challenge to motivate the addition of a new clause from the Laws and Discipline document. Usually, a resolution has to be first discussed in a Society Leaders' Meeting, and a resolution to the Circuit Quarterly Meeting (CQM) be formulated. If it is endorsed there, then it must be raised to an Annual Synod for discussion. If the Synod authorizes the resolution in question, it is then discussed in the Annual Conference.

The Conference makes the decision; either it is simply noted or it is stated in details in the Yearbook, alternatively, it may become a vital new clause for the Laws and Discipline document. If the Conference states that a resolution is a vital new clause, this may perhaps be discussed by the Doctrine, Ethics and Worship Committee (DEWCOM) of the MCSA. The DEWCOM committee would be given more time to discuss and prepare a report to Circuits for discussion in their Circuit Quarterly Meetings (CQM's) and give a report back to the following Synod.

3.9 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

The researcher's own story, as a member of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, and as a candidate for an ordained Ministry of Word and Sacrament (even although he stands as a practical theological researcher) added value to this dissertation.

In addition, the researcher is part of the groups involved in poverty alleviation within the Alice Region and supports other groups that have some potential to alleviate poverty.

The researcher deeply values spiritual and emotional connections with poor people. The researcher and those people who have some potential to alleviate poverty discuss practicalities of the word of God and support one another in various ways to fight against poverty.

As a researcher in practical theology, he, therefore, accepted the duty to state the levels of the participants in such a way that the reader learns about participants' convictions through the findings. The reader can therefore learn about some of the fundamental values to alleviate poverty, as experienced by Alice Region Circuits. The following section presents data collection and analysis.

3.10 DATA COLLECTION

In qualitative research, data collection occurs at the site where the researcher approaches the participants in their own location. This is where the researcher finds the experiences and problems of the study.

Interviews were in the form of structured questionnaires and unstructured questionnaires prepared for collecting data at the respective sites. Interviews were carried out with a group of members, namely: the Bishop of Grahamstown District; six ministers of the various circuits within the Alice Region and thirteen members that were representing the community as part of the programme; these were the six stewards from six Circuits in the Alice region and eight congregation members that are presenting the community.

The interviews were strictly confidential for the people who participated in this study. The researcher also gave due respect and compliance to the ethical value and protocol of the University of Fort Hare as an academic institution of high moral standards prior to commencing with the research work. Permission was secured with the respective institutions and targeted respondents and a full explanation was provided regarding the purpose of the research. All research participants' ethical rights were considered, including their right to confidentiality.

Experiences of all participants were taken seriously and documented for future research, and data was gathered in a practical manner.

3.11 FACE TO FACE INTERVIEWS

In this study, in-person and semi-structured interviews were used. Hofstee (2006: 135) stated that there are various ways of conducting in-person interviews. Such interviews can take the form of focus groups where a small number of participants

are asked in-depth questions about a particular topic in a semi-structured manner; these can be entirely open-ended, or one-on-one type interviews. Semi-structured interviews are easy to use to collect data. Burns (2008: 248) stresses that semi-structured interviews have more advantages as the participants respond quicker than other types of interviews.

Twenty people were interviewed irrespective of their gender, age and their status. The questions were paraphrased for the purpose of giving clarity to the respondents. One Bishop, Ministers, Circuit stewards comprised the participating sample that gave responses with regard to the work by the MCSA. Research questionnaires were used for the purpose of collecting data. In the interviews sessions, the researcher recorded and analysed responses to as a means of data management.

3.12 DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of data is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modelling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision-making. The data was analysed by using a thematic approach for the groups and individual interviews that were held.

3.13 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The researcher used the thematic analysis to analyse the data from the site. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 8a).

It forms and describes the data set in (rich) detail and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 8b). The range of different possible thematic analyses is further highlighted in relation to a number of decisions regarding utilizing it as a method (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 8c).

Thematic analysis, in its simplest form, is a grouping strategy for qualitative data. Researchers review their data, make notes and sort it into groups (Grbich, 2013: 16). Designed as a data analytic strategy, it helps researchers move their analysis from a broad reading of the data towards discovering patterns and developing themes. While researchers debate whether thematic analysis is a complete "method" *per se*, it is a process that can be used with many kinds of qualitative data, and with many goals in mind (Grbich, 2013: 17).

3.14 ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Ethical clearance is a requirement in all research that involves people; the researcher should have an ethical clearance certificate that binds him/her not to violate human rights. Ethical clearance ensures anonymity, confidentiality and gives permission to conduct the research on the participants. Kalof, Dan and Dietz (2008:46) stress that ethics in any research are very important since they prescribe what is acceptable or not acceptable in conducting research. Ethical clearance to conduct research was obtained from the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethical Committee.

3.15 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical consideration guides the researcher to act morally while conducting the research. Some researchers conduct their studies unethical, therefore, ethical consideration protects the rights of participants from being violated by the researchers. Mertens (2005:12) argued that the issue of research ethics is important for the research participants to be secured and treated civilly.

All the participants were asked to sign consent forms prior to their participation in the study to indicate that they had agreed to participate in this study.

3.16 CONCLUSION

Earlier in this chapter, the researcher highlighted that the qualitative research method is the main approach utilized in this research study; the researcher also highlighted that the literature review helped to drive this study towards a scholarly theological from various secondary sources. The work of the MCSA ministers, stewards and congregation will close the gap between poverty alleviation policy and practicalities of MCSA in the arena of alleviating poverty as the main subject in this research study.

The people who stay in the boundaries of Nkonkobe Local Municipality and also within the territory of Alice Region of the MCSA are part of the six circuits that constitute the Alice Region's mission on *Ubuntu*. There are some structures that are operating in the Alice Region to help the MCSA to move the mission forward.

The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) gave the MCSA in the Alice Region a clear understanding of the areas of focus in starting poverty alleviation initiatives. Sources that the researcher used are the MCSA documents which gave relevant information regarding operations in the MCSA. The experience of the researcher as the member of the MCSA and a candidate for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament gave deep information regarding the stance of MCSA on the issue of poverty alleviation.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the research methods utilized in the study were discussed and their choice was justified in terms of the analysis of the Alice Region work on the issue of poverty alleviation. The qualitative research method is expressed as the means of identification of the opinions of people and the MCSA's response to the issue of poverty. The qualitative research method is more concerned with the issue of prejudice and tapping the deeper connotation of human experience (Rubin & Babbie, 1989: 364).

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa developed a vision that led the church to fulfil God's mission. The vision of MCSA is: "A Christ-healed Africa for the healing of nations" (Mission Congress Report, 2004). This vision led Methodist people to have a mission statement which is: "A Methodist called to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ healing and transformation" (Mission Congress Report, 2004). In 2004, the Mission Congress met in Mthatha and resolved to direct MCSA towards this vision, mission statement, and the four imperative/pillars. Those pillars are Spirituality, Justice and Service, Evangelism and Church growth, Development and Economic Empowerment (Mission Congress Report, 2004: 2). In the 123 Conference in 2012, the Presiding Bishop Rev. Ziphozihle Siwa resolved that education must stand separately as a pillar, therefore, the church had five pillars to move the mission forward (MCSA Yearbook, 2013: 3). Those pillars, the MCSA believed, are the key pillars to alleviate poverty and to move forward the mission of the church.

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa's Book of Order (2014: 229) stresses the issue of poverty on the four key areas below:

- a) Given the inequalities that exist in the Southern African context, human and financial resources are required to redress poverty;
- b) The Conference stresses that the challenges of fighting and eradicating poverty do not lie solely with governments. Faith-based organisations are ideally positioned to address poverty amongst people;
- c) The Conference renews the commitments of The Methodist Church of Southern Africa in keeping with the original Wesleyan imperative, to be in solidarity with the poor; and
- d) The Conference, therefore, requests all Circuits, Societies and Districts to strengthen ministry alongside the poor in united determination to combat poverty.

Therefore, these key areas guided societies, circuits, regions and districts on how to reduce poverty.

The main three geographical areas with special focus in this research have been identified as: areas where the poor are most likely to reside in Alice, namely Ntselamanzi, Golf Course and Hillcrest (Nkonkobe IDP, 2012-2017). These three places are township residences that are the mostly impoverished in the Alice region and Nkonkobe Municipality. In addition, these rural areas are places where the poor were mostly located in the Nkonkobe Local Municipality during *Apartheid*, and some relocated to townships after 1994.

The government sector is the largest employer, and the unemployment problem is largely in the unskilled sector. Data was gathered from different participants of different ages.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

In this section, the researcher used Pie charts and Bar diagrams to present demographic information because both are effective methods of portraying demographic data. Bar diagrams and Pie charts are better utilised when there are more than just a few categories and for comparing two or more distributions (Lane, 2009: 4). Pie charts are useful for displaying data that are classified into nominal or ordinal categories. Nominal data are categorised, according to descriptive or qualitative information, such as demographic information (Lane, 2009: 4). The researcher used semi-structured questionnaires to collect data. The structured questions were only used for the demographic information of the participants, and unstructured questions were used to source information about poverty alleviation in response to the three research questions which are:

- How do local residents in the study community perceive poverty?
- What factors do Alice residents perceive as barriers to poverty alleviation?
- What support mechanisms has the Methodist Church of Southern Africa implemented to alleviate poverty in the study community, and how effective are such interventions?

4.2.1 AGE GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

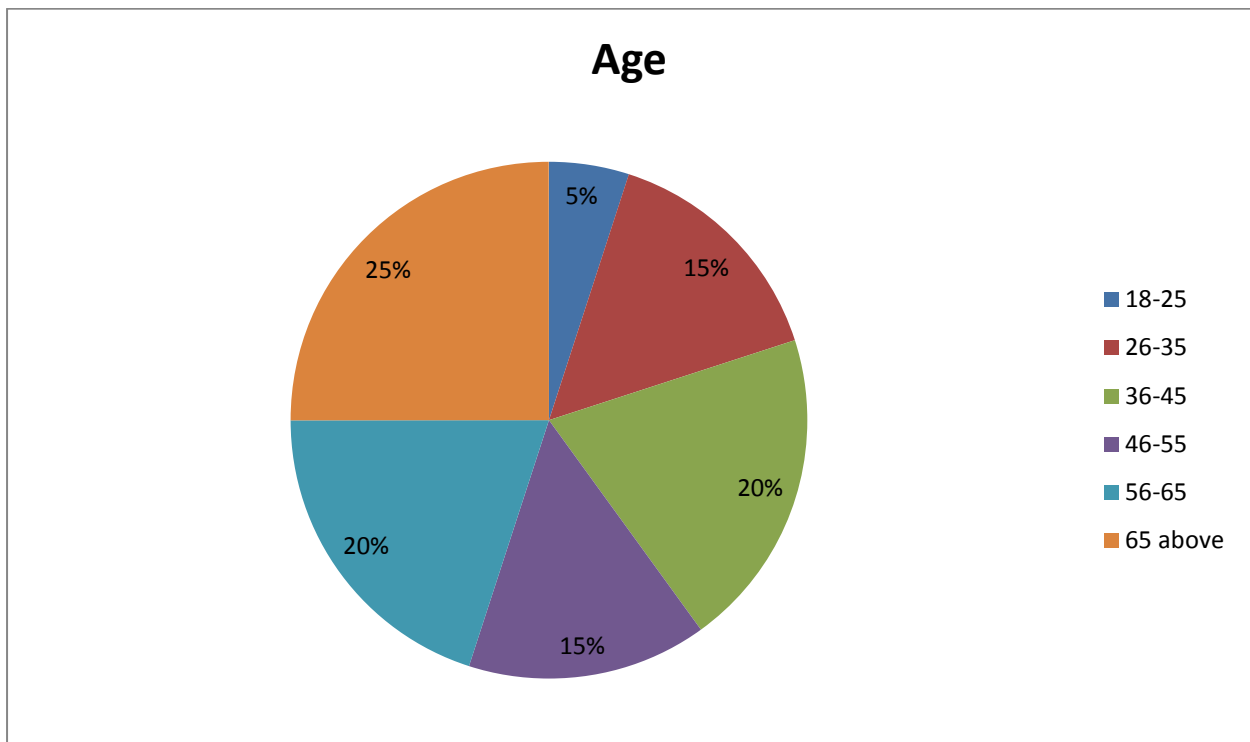


Figure 4.2.1: Age groups of respondents in the Alice Region.

From figure 4.2.1 above, the demographic information from the questionnaires showed that old aged people are more dominant in participating in the projects concerned with poverty alleviation within the small projects that are influenced by Methodist church in the community. Old people from the age of 65 and above are keen on farming projects, hence their dominance of 25% more than other ages. Young people aged 18-25 show low participation in farming projects although 5% of them did participate. As young adults mature, some of those who are in ages 26-35 are interested in the issues of poverty alleviation, and 15% of them are participating in such projects. Those who are between the ages 36 and 55 also participate in the fight against poverty, and these constitute 15% of the participants. The age groups 56-64 makes up 20% of the total number dedicated to project work against poverty.

4.2.2 GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

Gender describes socially determined attributes of men and women, including male and female roles. Gender has proven to be vital for analysing the participation roles, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities, incentives, cost and benefits from the Methodist Church with regards to this study. Gender analysis is performed by gathering data that classifies gender sensitive information of the inhabitants. It examines the difference between men and women regarding their needs, levels of participation, as well as access to resources and relates this to policy progress, opportunities and service delivery. It considers participants' level of participation in production, household and societal management (Koyenikan, 2010: 2679).

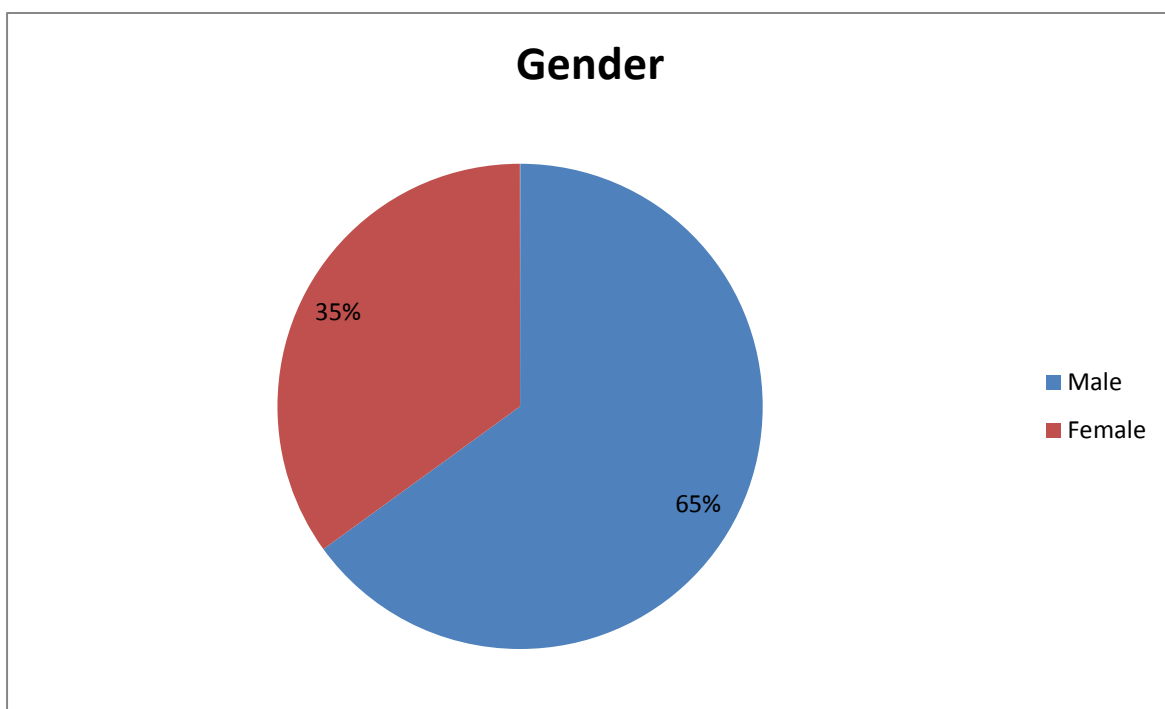


Figure 4.2.2: Gender of respondents

The results that are represented in Figure 4.2.2 show that a large proportion (65%) of the respondents is males; while 35% of the respondents are females. The results show that both genders are represented in the area of study. This also shows an

imbalance gender distribution among the Alice Region, which implies that the development strategy for progress in the area will benefit males and females.

4.2.3 MARITAL STATUS

Figure 4.2.3 below, shows the roles played by different people from different backgrounds whether married or not.

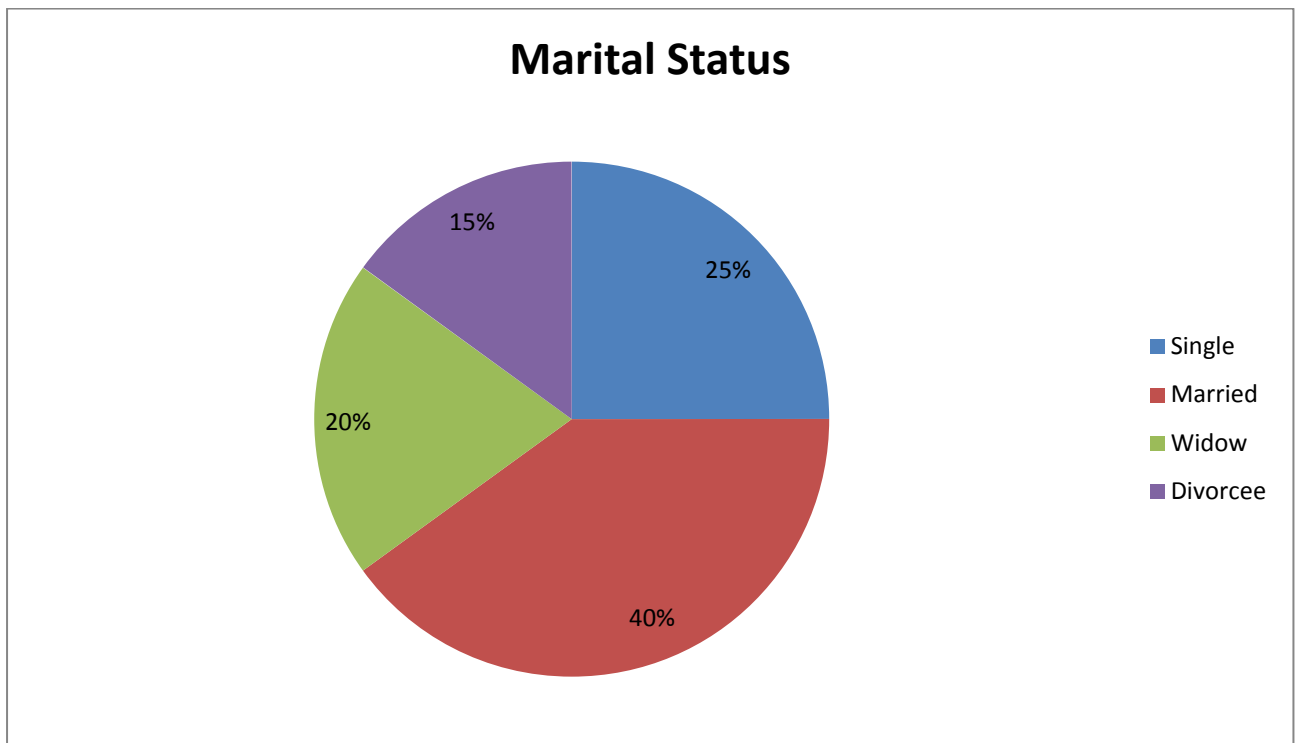


Figure 4.2.3: Marital status

Figure 4.2.3 shows that single people comprise 25% of the participants. These are people who are not married. Married people are dominant in the study area more than other marital statuses, and figure 4.2.3 shows married people as constituting 40% of the total number of participants. This figure further shows that 20% of participants are widows. Most of the time, widows are those people who are impoverished because some do not have any source of income. In the area of study, most widows are not working and are involved in the small projects such as vegetable gardens where the Methodist Church provided seeds for them to plant

vegetables for their survival. Some are given food parcels for survival while waiting for their vegetables to grow.

4.2.4 EDUCATION LEVEL

According to Bembridge (1987), people with primary education are considered illiterate. People view education as the key to open every door for employment.

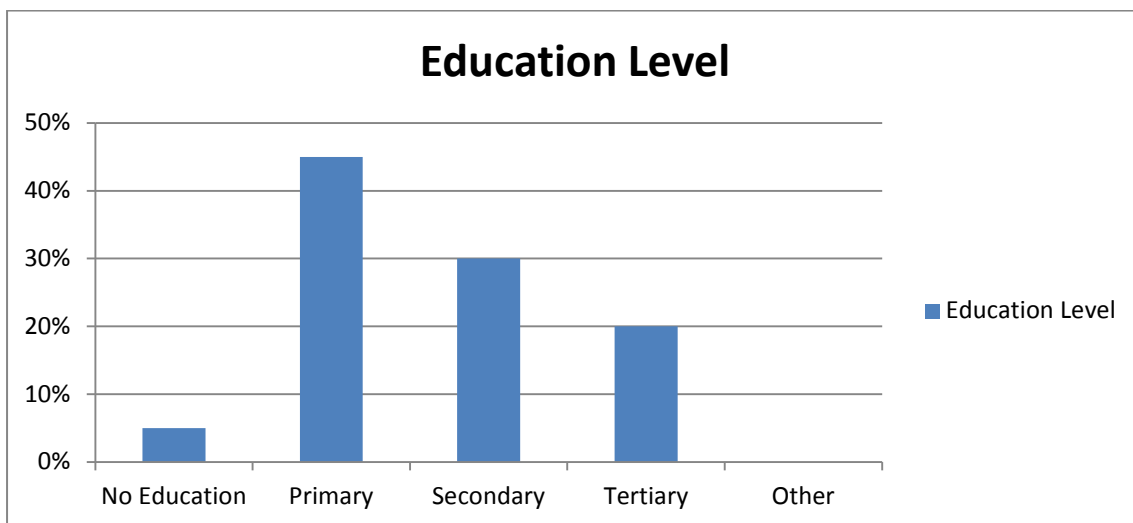


Figure 4.2.4 Education level

The majority of the people who live in the Ntselamanzi Township either do not have an education or have only primary/secondary school level education, and only a few have tertiary education. Those without formal education constituted 5% of the sample, with those with primary level education 45%. 30% of the participants have received secondary level education, and 20% are tertiary educated. Education is the key source towards alleviating poverty. The MCSA uses education as the strongest pillar to alleviate poverty. Roli stated that the church found that most people dropped out of school in their crucial stage, namely, the adolescent stage (Roli, 2001: 77). Most people who dropped out of school during adolescence were females. When they begin to mature physically, they experience difficulties. Some are impoverished

and go through menstruation without sanitary towels. Some are afraid to ask for money to buy sanitary towels; some come from poor families and feel inferior to their fellow learners when menstruating.

Some female learners feel inferior because of the cultural misunderstandings around menstruation. Most people who live in the area of study misconstrue menstruation as unclean even though it is something that is natural. Those learners, therefore, often decide to leave school due to these misunderstandings. During the menstruation, they have no access to sanitary pads but use unhygienic pieces of clothing that later cause infection (Personal Conversation with Mngxuma, 12 July 2014).

The Annshaw Circuit No.233 located within the area of the Nkonkobe Local Municipality identified some schools that were in need of sanitary towel support. Both high schools and primary schools were supported by this circuit of MCSA. The high school female learners were given a bulk of sanitary pads, and the primary school learners received the distributed bath toiletry, and school uniforms was bought for both males and females based on need.

Males drop out of school during their adolescent period due to peer pressure. There were no valid reasons for them to leave school before completing matric or tertiary education.

The Presiding bishop of MCSA, Rev ZD Siwa emphasised in his conference address regarding the issue of education to stand alone as a tool to alleviate poverty within the nation and the broader connexion of the MCSA which includes six countries. Those counties are Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique and South Africa (MCSA Yearbook, 2013).

4.3 SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY

4.3.1 LIVELIHOOD

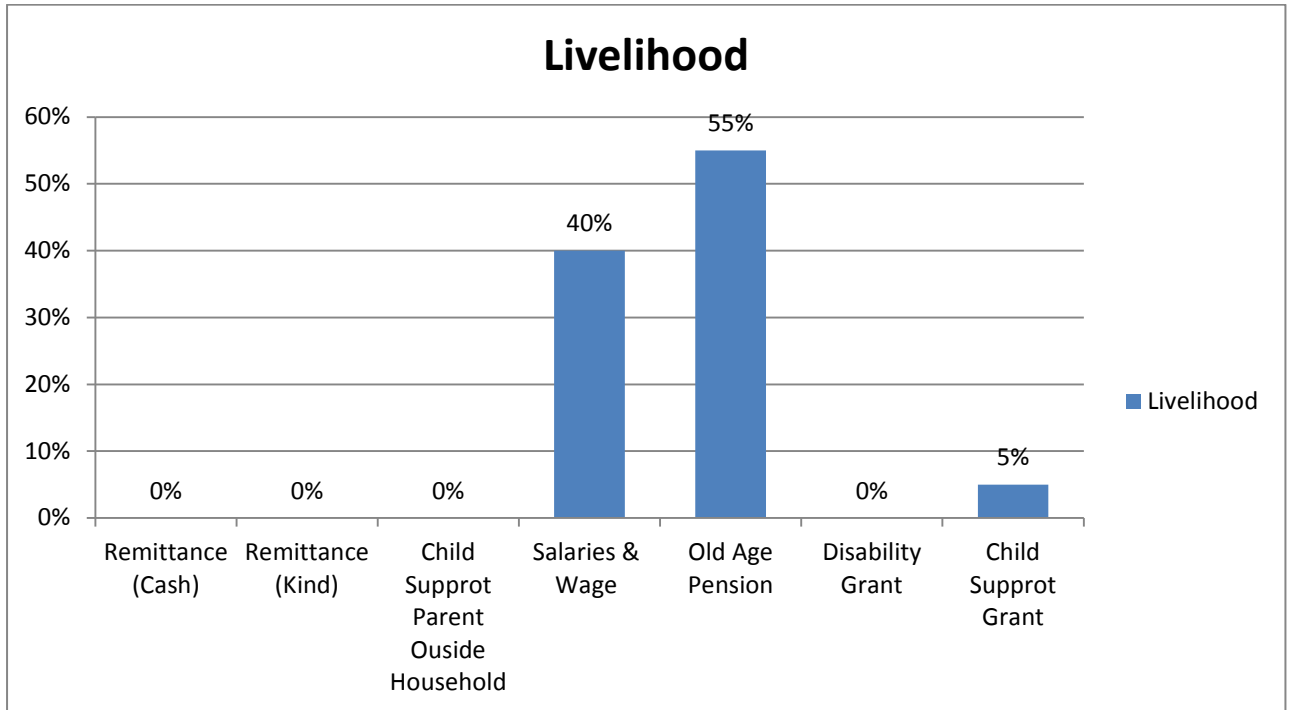


Figure 4.3.1 Livelihood

In this study, income received from social grants accounted for most income received by the respondents, with a percentage of 40% for the respondents who receive social grants. The majority (55%) of respondents are dependent on the Old Age Grant for their survival, and 5% depend on the Child Support Grant. Respondents who depend on salaries and wages for their sustenance make up 40% of the participants. Most participants are looking for employment even though government has no openings for jobs.

4.3.2 FOOD PRODUCTION

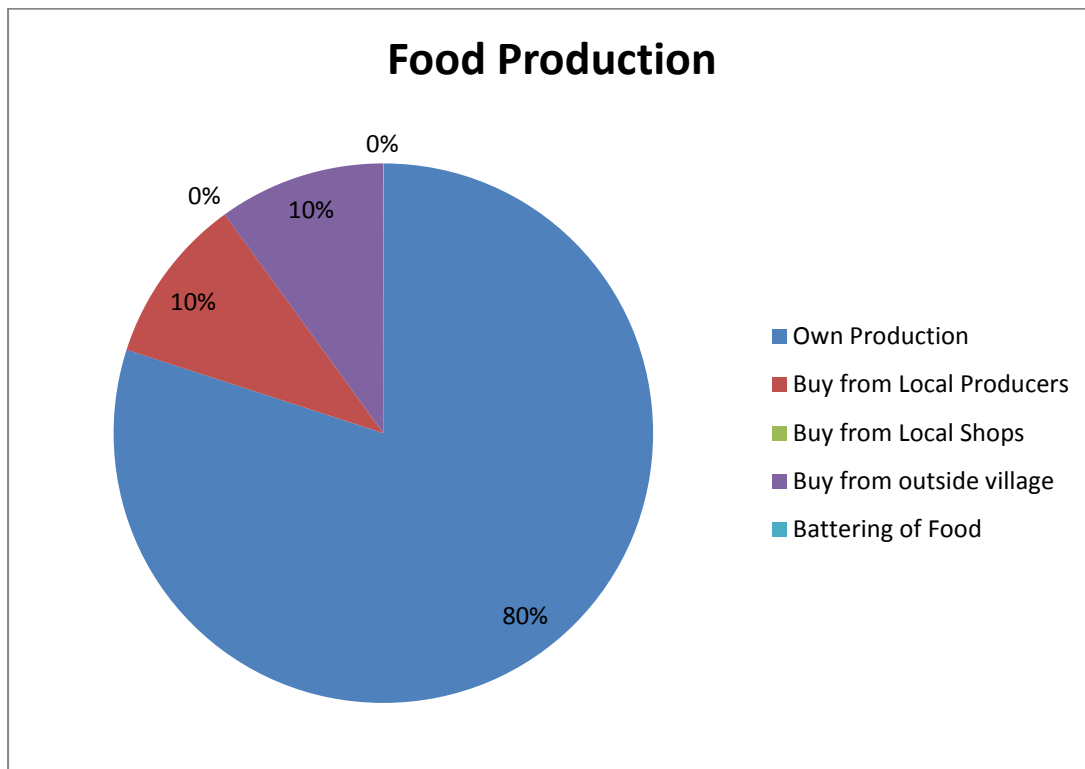


Figure 4.3.2 Food production

The results presented in Figure 4.3.2 show that 80% of the interviewees are food producers, while 10% of the respondents are not producing food and depend on buying food from others within the local shops. Small percentages (10%) of respondents buy from outside villages. The results show that there is still substantial amount work to be done in order to improve poverty alleviation in the Alice Region of MCSA.

4.3.3 MARKETS

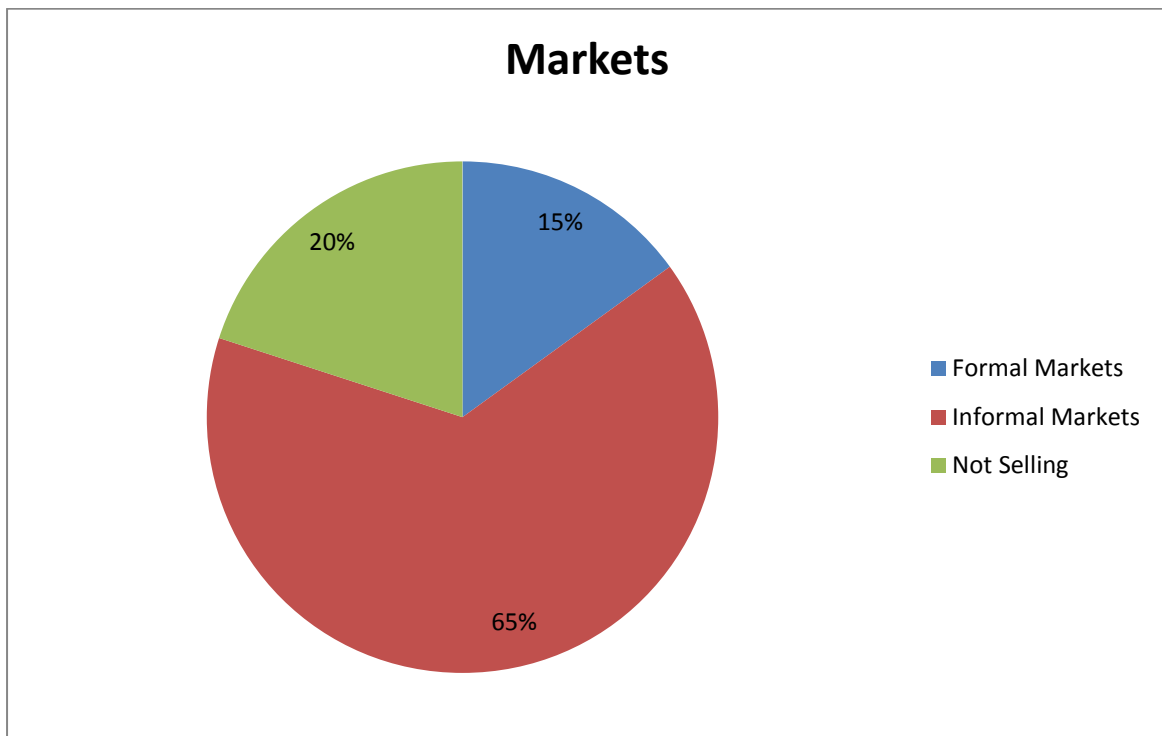


Figure 4.3.3 Markets

According to Figure 4.3.3 most of the respondents are selling their produce in the informal markets. In the findings, 15% of the respondents are selling their produce in the formal markets; most (65%) sell to the informal markets, and the rest (20%) do not sell their produce. The source of the market for these people is Umthiza Agricultural Cc, and those into animal farming are in partnership with BKB Wool to sell sheep's wool. Others sell to the community as their source of market, and those who milk their cows also sold milk to others within their community.

According to the responses of the interviews, a large proportion of the interviewees can manage to feed their families through subsistence farming, and they conclude that it is a way of fighting poverty.

Some (20%) of people who are not selling their produce see no reason to sell food to their communities. They use the principle of *Ubuntu* (tradition of sharing with other

people). The term *Ubuntu* is unpacked by the White Paper for Social Welfare (Ministry of Social Welfare and Population Development, 1995: 10) as “*Umntu ngumntu ngabantu*” derived from a Xhosa phrase. It means a person is a person because of help from other persons. The term *Ubuntu* is the community term that expresses the feeling of support between the inhabitants. This principle of *Ubuntu* is, therefore, essentially used for sharing. This takes into account that the Alice region is in the rural areas, and therefore, its communities are likely to practice the principle of *Ubuntu* more than in the urban areas. All the respondents commented positively regarding the principle of *Ubuntu* in relation to the issue of alleviating poverty.

The laziness of the fellow members of the community to meet their basic needs breaks that principle in terms of sharing. Hence, others form *umgalelo* (contribution every month towards a community club) for food, so as to help others who do not have money to buy food every month.

Other members of the community join burial clubs to cater for funeral insurance cover. When a member of the club dies, the club assumes responsibility of assisting in the funeral. Others join the clubs that are operating for purposes of saving money for a year, and sharing the money during Christmas holidays so that they have money to buy more food and clothes for their families. Majority of people called these clubs “*Stokvels*”.

The above arguments on the *Ubuntu* principle show that the Alice Region inhabitants are able to survive through joining such clubs.

4.3.4 SUPPORT SERVICES

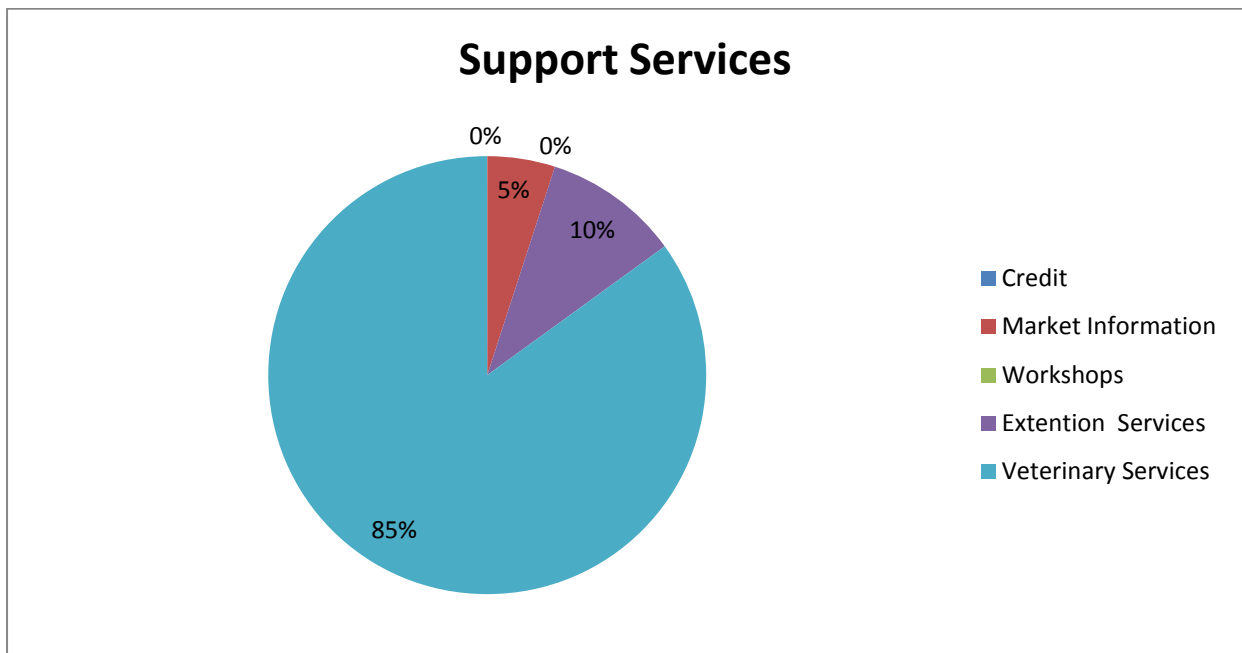


Figure 4.3.4 Support services

In terms of availability of Agricultural extension services, 85% of the respondents indicated that they were always on time, and they have access to the government veterinary doctor for their livestock from the Department of Agriculture. Some respondents (10%) indicated that these services were always late and delivered services ineffectively. However, the remaining 5% of the respondents answered that services were sometimes on time, but Department of Agriculture extension officers do not run workshops to skill them on market information. Since there was a response that indicated that extension officers were never available when small farmers needed help, this showed evidence of the poor job that some extension officers are doing.

4.3.5 RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

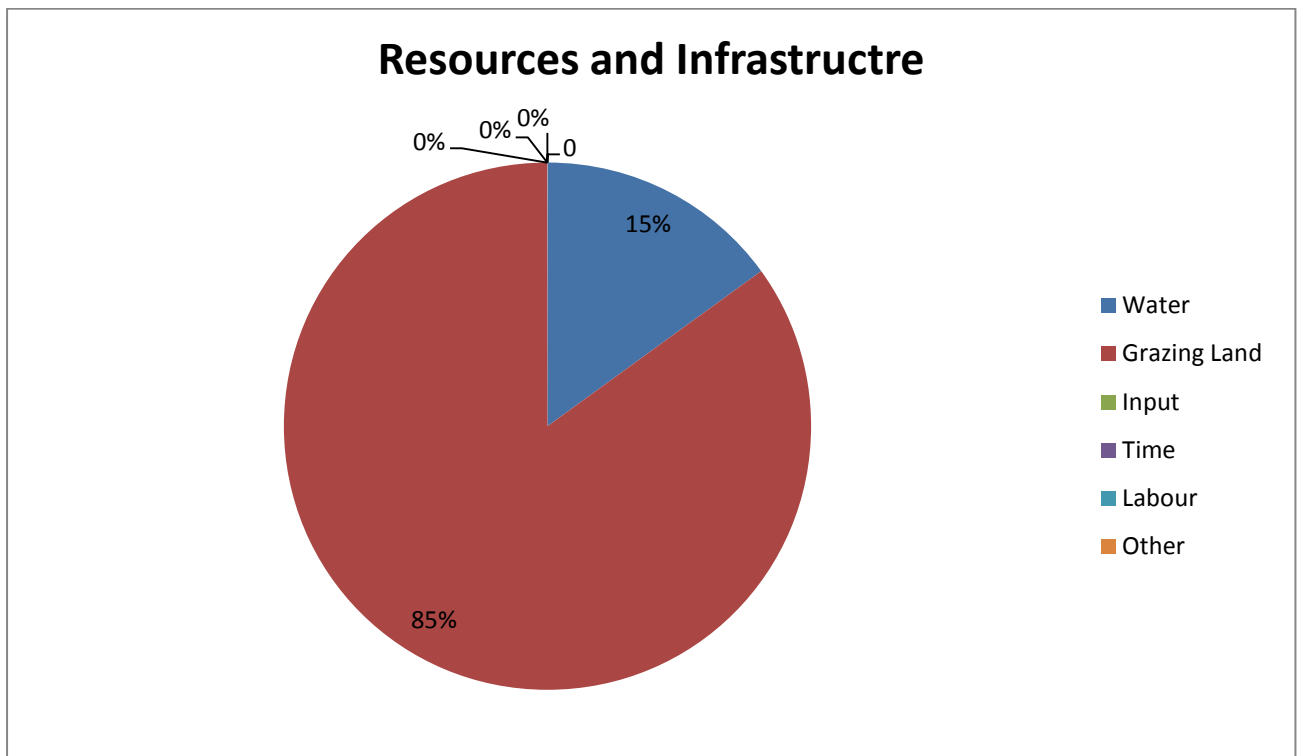


Figure 4.3.5 Resources and infrastructure

The results that are presented in Figure 4.3.5 show that 85% of the interviewees have access to grazing land for their livestock to graze on. However, participants indicated that their challenge is to manage the feeding camps because they do not have money to buy fencing material to fence around the camps. Their livestock can change camps as the seasons of the year change. Few (15%) of the respondents have no access to water to drink for themselves and their livestock and fetch water from afar.

4.3.6 POVERTY REDUCTION

The issue of poverty alleviation has not been fully addressed by the MCSA within the Alice Region in terms of skilling people on how to alleviate poverty. Since the majority of the people are not selling their produce to the Alice Region, they do not

have money for their basic needs and for buying seeds for the next planting sessions.

There is, in addition, the crisis of small farmer's inability to produce adequate grains to generate substantial income for profit-making and alleviation of poverty. Some of the circuits have made a significant contribution towards poverty alleviation, but more effort and strategy is required to go beyond this stage to address poverty meaningfully. In order to reduce poverty in the context of the poverty stricken, one has to sell substantial production to the market.

4.4 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

In this section, the researcher analyses the findings according to the thematic analysis based on the responses from the respondents. The respondents were divided into three groups, namely: six ministers, six stewards and eight congregation members. All three groups responded on each section of the interview with regards to the major research questions:

- How do local residents in the study community perceive poverty?
- What factors do Alice residents perceive as barriers to poverty alleviation?
- What support mechanisms has the Methodist Church of Southern Africa implemented to alleviate poverty in the study community, and how effective are such interventions?

From the respondents' comments, the researcher devised codes. In this coding system, the participants' anonymity was observed thus: M1-M6 stands for ministers since the researcher interviewed 6 ministers from Alice Region of MCSA, including the Bishop of the district. In addition, codes S1-S6 stand for the Stewards since the researcher also interviewed 6 stewards from various circuits in the Alice Region.

Lastly codes C1-C8 stand for congregants as the researcher also interviewed 8 congregants. Themes were guided by the groups' responses according to the research findings.

4.4.1 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

All twenty respondents, including six ministers, six stewards and eight congregants responded to structured and unstructured questions in the questionnaires. The researcher used the thematic analysis in analysing the data and coded all responses under the following collective themes:

4.4.1.1 PERCEPTIONS ON POVERTY

There were many perceptions on poverty, therefore, the researcher summed up the perceptions from the ministers, stewards and congregation members on poverty.

4.4.1.1.1 PERCEPTION OF MINISTERS ABOUT POVERTY

Poverty is understood as lack in an individual's socio-economic capability. Its manifestations include factors such as income, access to basic services, access to assets, information and social networks. This broad approach to poverty allows for engagement with the reality of poverty and the combination of work that was done to deal with it. Therefore, poverty needs our attention to prevent it so that people can have food security. Below is a *verbatim* presentation of the participants' responses. The researcher presented these in their original format so as not to change the meanings of the utterances.

M1 and M2 agreed that *"poverty is a challenge that needs all people to focus on and fight against it collaboratively, not only those who are impoverished but all people both rich and poor must do"*.

M4 perceived that *“poverty is an enemy to resources and it extremely draws the most attention. Majority of people have nothing in life because they are impoverished. The most important challenge that leaved people impoverished is the lack of job opportunities and the sustaining projects to prevent poverty”*. Poverty’s primary problem, according to M3, M5 and M6 *“is the lack of disposable income, its consequences are the high rate of prostitution, drug and alcohol abuse”*.

M4 argued that *“even though people become impoverished, on the other hand the economy of the country slowing down bit by bit. Prices from the market are rising up therefore other things we need to do by ourselves, like vegetable gardens.*

M5 said that *“poverty having its results which are divorces, family breakings, diseases, crime and large numbers in families. Poverty is grabbing more attention from people from various places to fight against it”*.

Poverty, in its general sense, is the deficiency of necessities. Basic food, shelter, medical care, and safety are necessary based on shared values of human dignity (Bradshaw, 2006: 4). A social (relative) definition of poverty allows community flexibility in addressing pressing local concerns while objective definitions allow tracking progress and comparing one area to another (Bradshaw, 2006: 4). Perhaps the most important thing poor people have to deal with is the shame inherent in the life of a poor person (Bradshaw, 2006: 5). Shame is powerful in that a person would shoplift or take part in some form of unsafe underground crime just to meet his/her needs. Shame also causes such people to lie about being homeless, so they would not be judged (Gray-Garcia, 2007: 6). Poverty seems to be chronic or temporary, and most of the time, it is closely related to inequality (Sachs, 2006: 270).

Below is the discussion of another theme solicited from the respondents' views because poverty is sometimes seen as a root cause of some diseases.

i) Poverty and Diseases

Poverty has adverse consequences on health through different ways. The most observable issue is that poor people do not have the material resources such as money necessary to buy health care. Furthermore, they can neither afford disease prevention nor doctors and medicine costs once the disease has appeared. Hence, poor people are more likely to be unhealthy than rich people (Sala-i-Martins, 2002: 2). Most respondents agreed that the majority of diseases are caused by poverty, as they stated that many HIV/AIDS positive people are poor, and some contracted the virus due to prostitution.

Additionally, poor people are more likely to live in massively overcrowded areas or in distant rural areas without clean water and sanitation. Hence, they have a larger propensity to have diarrhoea, cholera or typhoid fever (Sala-i-Martins, 2002: 3). The majority of people who stay in rural areas have no clean water in their places; they use unhygienic water from dams.

Wojcicki (2002: 275) stresses that poor young girls are more likely to be unable to refuse sex with rich-powerful men, which make them at risk to the spread of venereal diseases or AIDS. Another challenge poor young girls that live in these areas have is that of peer pressure because they see others' material possessions and have relationships with old rich men who would pay for these. Unfortunately for them, some of these men are HIV/AIDS positive. The next theme discussed below is: poverty and divorces.

ii) Poverty and Divorces

The majority of poor people in the study area are divorcees because women did not want to face the challenge of poverty by remaining with poor partners. Most of them want to maintain high standards, but their problem is that their efforts did not meet the high standards.

Lichter, Roempke and Brow (2003:1) argue that the divorce rate has stabilised among the middle class but is increasing among the poor, thereby explaining why many separated fathers pay little or no child support; in addition, financial hardship is a major cause of family breakdown. Low-income parents are more likely than others to break up, and they remain poor after the split (Lichter, Roempke & Brow, 2003:1).

Divorce affects not only the adults who make this choice, but the children as well. Children's emotional and psychological responses to divorce depend on their age. In most cases, children are often confused by the divorce and are mostly traumatised by it (Family and Marriage Society, 2009: 18). Moreover, stable marriages have an optimistic effect on the quality of family life. Nonetheless, certain cultural and religious practices lead to marriage being an oppressive institution (Popenoe, 1996: 23a). Especially rural African women are sometimes treated like slaves, also being responsible for all the domestic work. This is viewed as a bona fide part of African culture.

4.4.1.1.2 STEWARDS' PERCEPTIONS ON POVERTY

Poverty might affect a broad variety of people in different situations; the most vulnerable groups are older people, youth, unemployed people and children. Below are *verbatim* responses of the participants:

S2, S6 agreed that *“poverty was addressed by the Bible in the ancient periods”*. According to S1, S4 & S5, *“poverty is a serious concern in the Alice Region and Nkonkobe Local Municipality Area broadly moreover, it is where the half of the population lived without employment therefore that is what led to poverty. S6 agreed that the factors that act as barriers to poverty alleviation in this area are the lack of job opportunities that develop the high rate of crime and corruption”*.

S2 & S3 agreed with S6 *that crime and corruption as the factors barriers to poverty alleviation.*

S2 & S3 added that *poverty is the mother of crime and corruption, its consequences are inequality and the violation of human rights of the poor people by the rich and affording people”*. Although some of people who engaged in corruption came from poor backgrounds, the majority hailed from more economically viable families.

i) Biblical approach to poverty

The researcher developed the themes from the stewards' perceptions about poverty, based on the Biblical approach about poverty and job opportunities hence, the discussion of the themes of stewards' perceptions on poverty below.

The respondent ministers stressed that poverty in scriptures can be both social and spiritual. The words "poor" and "poverty" cover a wide range of meaning, overlapping with terms like "widow" or "orphan" which underscores the expansive nature of the topic (Boynton & Malin, 2005: 121). In addition, because not all poor people are impoverished, the meaning of these terms is heavily dependent upon context.

The church must have an interest in or concern for the poor and demonstrate this concern to them. It must condemn, prophetically, the unjust social-economic

structures that inhibit the poor from rising above their situation and teach the needy to have a non-materialistic outlook in life. The Bible stresses that “God, our Father accepts us as pure and faultless, we have to look after orphans and widows in their distress and keep ourselves from being polluted by the world” James 1:27 (New International Version). In this century, orphans and widows have very little means of economic support. Unless a family member is willing to care for them, they are reduced to begging, selling themselves as slaves, or starving. By caring for these powerless people, the church put God’s Word into practice. “When we give with no hope of receiving in return, we show what it means to serve others” (Life Application Study Bible, 1997: 2246). Henry (2010: 22131a New Edition) stated that it is the glory of religion to be pure and undefiled; not to mix with the inventions of men or with the corruption of the world. False religions may be known through their impurity and un-charitableness, and according to John, anyone who does not do what is right is not God’s child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister (1 Jn. 3:10 NIV). On the other hand, a holy life and a charitable heart show true religion. Our religion is not adorned with ceremonies, but purity and charity, and a religion which is pure should be kept undefiled (Henry, 2010: 2213b). True religion teaches us to do everything in the presence of God, to seek his favour and try to please him in all our actions.

Henry (2010: 2213c) suggested that compassion and charity, for the poor and the distressed, such as visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction form a very big and necessary part of true religion. Visiting here refers to all manner of relief which we are capable of giving to others. The fatherless and widows are particularly mentioned because they are, generally, mostly neglected or oppressed, and through them, we are to understand all who are proper objects of charity and all who are in

affliction. It is very important that religion be charitable and relieves the afflicted. An unspotted life must accompany unfeigned love and charity. To keep ourselves unspotted from the world, we should not be defiled, and this must be our constant endeavour. Henry (2010: 2214d) herein entails pure and undefiled religion. The very sins of the world taint our spirits if we are too conversant with them. 1John 3: 10 states “all that is in the world, which we are not to love, fewer than three heads: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; and to keep ourselves unspotted from all these is to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. May God, by His grace keep both our hearts and lives clean from the love of the world, and from the temptations of wicked worldly men” (Henry, 2010: 2214e). Therefore, poverty is a distress to the poor people everywhere.

ii) Job opportunities

Unemployment and under-employment lies at the base of poverty. For the poor, labour is often the only thing they can be involved in to improve their well-being. Therefore, creation of productive employment opportunities is essential for achieving poverty reduction and sustainable economic and social development. It is crucial to provide decent jobs that both secure income and empowerment for the poor, especially women and younger people (Osmani, 2003: 4). The majority of people in the study area are unemployed; therefore, this increases poverty rates. In the face of fewer job opportunities, people become poorer.

Economic growth can, hypothetically, bring a high rate of expansion of productive and remunerative employment, which can lead to reduction in poverty. However, the contribution of the growth process to poverty reduction does not depend only on the rate of economic growth, but also on the ability of the poor to respond to the

increasing demand for labour in the more productive categories of employment (Khan, 2007: 16).

Given the importance of employment for poverty reduction, job-creation should occupy a central place in national poverty reduction strategies. Many employment strategies are often related to agricultural and rural development and include using labour-intensive agricultural technologies, developing small and medium-size enterprises, and promoting micro-projects in rural areas. Many strategies promote self-employment, farm employment in rural areas, targeted employment interventions, micro-finance and credit as means of employment generation, skills-formation and training (Burroughs & Stockwell, 1998: 22).

4.4.1.1.3 CONGREGATION'S PERCEPTION OF POVERTY

The respondents' perceived poverty as the stumbling blocks to development, hence the church's focus on it. Poverty is the present challenge that needs everybody to tackle it in different ways.

C3, 6 & 8 agreed that *"poverty is a challenge that challenges people both in rural areas and urban areas. Also, they agreed that poverty came up with the divisions to people both friends and families and it left inequality amongst people"*.

C2 and 5 stressed that *"poverty is the common place to turn people's ways in which people experienced material down fall conditions. Material wealth conditions are the ways to describe a person, of which those materials are classifying people so that we can get inequality in between people"*.

C1, 4 & 7 agreed that *"poverty increases the state of the poor. They perceived that poverty is increasing and leaving conditions of the poor people unimproved. Hunger*

and homelessness are the most important problems that are faced in the Alice Region and Nkonkobe Local Municipality Area at large”.

The researcher developed the sub-headings further down, from the congregational perceptions on poverty. Inequality and homelessness are the causes of poverty hence the researcher is going to discuss those sub-headings below.

i) Homeless people and poverty

The majority of people in the Alice Region live in mud shacks and others do not have access to standard shelters because of their poor status. Some children at Keiskammahoek and Fort Beaufort stay in orphanages supported by churches, and the MCSA in the Keiskammahoek Circuit provides them with food, clothes, toiletries and blankets.

Homelessness has particularly adverse effects on children and youth, namely: hunger, poor physical and mental health, and missed educational opportunities (Rafferty, 1991: 1170). The Discussion Document (2008: 13) stresses that access to assets, particularly housing, land and capital, including public infrastructure improve economic and social security and provides the basis for economic engagement in the longer run.

Within the epistemological context of a post-foundationalism epistemology, the dimension of spirituality is a comprehensive opinion of being and the meta-theoretical input of non-theological disciplines in this regard (Van den Berg, 2008:121). Van den Berg (2008: 121) also stated that this could make a meaningful contribution to the enormous task of handling pastoral encounters within the plight of the poor. To introduce one exciting possibility, a bodily understanding of spirituality

could approach the essence of poverty-stricken sufferers in terms of their own context. Van den Berg (2008:126) confirms that we need to prevent a kind of spiritual pastoral care that fixates on comfort and compassion because it only offers 'pie in the sky' relief. Moreover, a bodily understanding of spirituality would serve to open up dimensions of poverty not previously reckoned with in pastoral care.

In terms of such an understanding, the researcher champions empowerment, the psychological dimensions of poverty and a theology of poverty, amongst other aspects of the situation.

ii) Inequality and poverty

In some villages, those people who do not own material possessions are not allowed to say anything in the societal meetings. Those who earn better are the ones who are recognised by the inhabitants.

Inequality shows how resources are disseminated across the whole society. This gives a picture of the difference between average income and what poor and rich people earn, and highlights how well different members were re-allocate or share the income they produce.

Wealth is not the same as income. There are many examples of wealthy individuals living in homes that have, over time, appreciated hugely in value, but whose incomes are dramatically lower than their wealth suggests. Many individuals with high incomes consume all they earn and may even borrow heavily to support lavish lifestyles. Their wealth may actually be very low (Schor, 2011: 88).

The practical consequence of this option for the poor is that through its conscientisation efforts, churches must seek to arouse and mobilise the poor and

oppressed to take a firm stand against poverty, oppression and suffering and join the God of the Exodus and of Jesus the Christ (the liberator) to become instruments of their own liberation (Martey, 1993:98). According to Nolan, the interesting thing about the Exodus story is that the poor and oppressed, on their part, must fight for their own cause. He clarifies the point as follows: "The option for the poor is almost thought of as a commitment which the non-poor have to make to the cause of those who are oppressed. But what is far more fundamental in the Bible is the option of the poor for their own cause" (Nolan, 1985:192).

Boff and Pixley (1989: xi) argued, "People are divided by the stand they take on poverty." These words tempt one to apply this to theologians and their theological addresses, which can also be divided by the stand they take on poverty. In the South African context, theologians must do theology to complement and stand alongside the poor. In theological work and ministry, there are no options but to side with the poor of the world. It is generally agreed that God is on the side of the poor, and the researcher subscribes to that view. Our theology and our reflections must also adopt the preferential option for the poor, which is, in fact, biblical. Therefore, the church and its theology must also concretely express this option for the poor. If God is unambiguously on the side of the poor, can the church afford to be on a different side? Can our theological address afford to ignore the realities experienced by the poor? Can the church afford to ignore the agency of the poor? Thus, theological reflection and pastoral actions cannot afford to proceed unchallenged with their usual apathy towards the socio-economic, political conditions and the plight of the poor. The researcher agrees with Pattison (1988: 83) when he stresses that pastoral care has a disregard of social and political dimensions (Pattison, 1988:83). He added that

pastoral care which precedes the social and political proportions of human existence should seriously be biased towards the poor (Pattison, 1988:103).

4.4.1.1.4 SUMMARY OF PERCEPTION ON POVERTY

Poverty has attracted massive attention from people from various places to fight against it. The ministers' perception of poverty portrayed a clear understanding of poverty as a big challenge that needs all people to focus on it. Poverty causes diseases to people and needs to be prevented. Some people contract diseases from prostitution in order to survive. Some people are married but suffer from poverty, thus leading to divorces. Stewards' perception of poverty shows a need to have sustaining projects to prevent it. The majority of people in the study area are unemployed and have no means to sustain themselves. Others do not even have money to buy seeds for planting vegetable in the pieces of land that they have, and others do not want to use their pieces of land to plough. The congregants' perceptions on poverty stress the increasing numbers of poor people in the Alice Region and Nkonkobe Local Municipality hence the rise in crime and corruption.

The discussion below proceeds to the section on the factors that serve as barriers to alleviate poverty by the MCSA in the Alice Region and Nkonkobe Local Municipality.

4.4.1.2 FACTORS THAT ACT AS BARRIERS TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY

There are many factors that act as barriers to alleviate poverty in the Alice Region and Nkonkobe Local Municipality Area, based on responses from the ministers, stewards and congregation members.

4.4.1.2.1 MINISTERS' PERCEPTIONS ON CHALLENGES FACED IN ALLEVIATING POVERTY

Poverty alleviation has barriers, and the ministers perceive those barriers in different ways. Education is the main object that helps the church to alleviate poverty because the trainings offered by the church to equip people to face big challenges of alleviating poverty are seen as effective; such trainings form part of education.

M1 agreed that *“the most notable contextual and individual factors in relation to education, work, and training that play a role in sustaining social exclusion and poverty”*. M4 and M1 agreed that *“the lack of realizing the potential and importance of education as the start to eradicate poverty in the Alice Region and in Nkonkobe Local Municipality area at large”*.

M2, M3, M5 agreed that *“the lack of education opportunities affects the job opportunities and skills opportunities which can help to fight against poverty”*.

M6 and M4 concurred that *“one of the major barriers that exist in the fighting against poverty is that many people do not feel connected to the arena of employment”*.

M6 said *“there is a lack of maximization of education opportunities between people and those people having the lack of imagination and dreaming for their lives”*.

M6 and M4 agreed that *“there is a big challenge of educated people who are impoverished as caused by the lack of job opportunities and unemployment. Also there is a lack of basic education that affects and interfere the efforts to provide people with the job skills”*.

M1 and M3 fully agreed that *“there must be full moral support and political support for the teachers in schools so that the learners and parents can see the importance of education”*.

M1 said *“there must be a collection of social resources and health that allow individual people, youth and families to engage fully in education opportunities. Even though government made an attempt to free the opportunities for tertiary education but still there is a lack of job opportunities even to those who’ve been qualified”*

The researcher developed the following themes from the ministers’ responses on factors that act as barriers to alleviate poverty, namely: education, economy and lack of employment:

i) EDUCATION AS THE PILLAR TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY

Given the central importance of education, it may be useful to consider what happens to poverty if inequalities in education are reduced, as this is likely to translate into inequalities in *per capita* expenditure. This notion is automatically appealing, although it is unclear whether it holds contingency on how education outcomes are mapped onto welfare consequences (Lam, 1999: 83).

To explore how an increase in education achievement and earnings to education might affect poverty reduction, people achieve more. If tertiary education qualifiers increase, there are job opportunities, and poverty would decline (Bhora & Kanbur, 2006: 83).

Mubanginzi (2009: 447) argued that it is necessary for the nature of training and education given to be adapted to the requirements of the labour market and the specific needs of the industry for which the training was intended.

Abolition of structural barriers to better jobs, through education and training, have been the focus of extensive manpower training and other programs, thus generating substantial numbers of success, but also perceived failures. However, in spite of perceived importance of education, funding per student in less advantaged areas lags behind that which is spent on richer students. Teachers are less adequately trained, books are often out of date or in limited supply, amenities are few, and the culture of learning is under siege. This systemic failure of the schools is, thus, thought to be the reason poor people have low academic achievement, poor rates of graduation, and few who pursue higher education (Chubb & Moe, 1996).

ii) Economy and Lack of Employment

Many scholars on poverty give an opinion that the economy is structured in such a way that poor people fall behind, irrespective of how capable they may be. The problem of the working poor is increasing, as they having wage problems that result in factors that serve as barriers to getting better jobs (Tobin, 1994: 31). Interestingly, research shows that the availability of jobs to low income people is the same as it has been before, but wages for the workers from these jobs have dropped. Fringe benefits such as health care and promotions have also become scarce for low skilled workers. Blank (1997: 10) and Quigley (2003: 19) showed that the economic changes documented systems that have created difficult challenges for those who want to work.

Below is a discussion on stewards' views on the barriers against poverty alleviation.

4.4.1.2.2 STEWARDS' PERCEPTIONS ON CHALLENGES TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY

In communities such as the one under study, people face many challenges that require attention. As a result of poverty, the Alice Region and the Nkonkobe Local Municipality Area have a big challenge of young single mothers who are impoverished with no source of income in their families. Most members of the family depend on Child Support Grants.

S2, S3, S5, and S6 agreed that *“there are young single mothers who are not working and there is no one in a family that have an income to support the entire family. They all depended to a child support grant as the source of income for the family”*.

S1 & S4 agreed that *“as the cost price changes every day, people became poorer and poorer as an impact of unemployment”*.

S1 and S4 also agreed that *“most people in the Alice Region and Nkonkobe Local Municipality area having the piece of land for the small farming to produce on it as an attempt to poverty alleviation. But their challenge is the lack of marketing and full support from the department of agriculture in assisting them on how to plant and how to work land to have a quality production so that it will be in demand for marketing. And also Nkonkobe Local Municipality Area has few fruit and vegetable markets to sell food production to it therefore majority of people used their production for household consumption”*.

Responses show that the majority of people in the study area live without employment, and there are no other ways to sustain their families. Others do not

even have money to buy seeds for planting vegetables in the pieces of land that they have. Others do not want to use their pieces of land to plough.

The researcher developed the themes from the stewards' factors that act as barriers to alleviate poverty, as: young single motherhood is a major barrier to poverty alleviation in the study area.

i) SINGLE MOTHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON CHALLENGES AGAINST POVERTY ALLEVIATION

In the study area which is Nkonkobe Local Municipality, the majority of young single mothers come from poor family background. They only focus on child support grant as the source of income for their families.

The Church emphasises the issue of no sex before marriage. On the other hand, the Church acknowledges that those women who raise children alone as single parents are increasing in numbers and at a disproportionate rate. For many, especially those in abusive relationships, marriage or remarriage is not a viable solution. Policies are needed to ensure future health and well-being of single parents and their children (Schor, 2011: 25).

There are challenges that are faced by single mothers who live in poverty however, there are some policy solutions that can rescue them out of poverty (Phillips, 2006: 28).Partly, the problem is that minimum wages do not allow single mothers or their families to be economically self-sufficient (Jencks, 1996:72).

Despite the seemingly insurmountable challenges facing poor single parents, many families have increasingly demonstrated themselves to be viable and well-adjusted (Lindbald-Goldberg, 1989).

Many are able to function well and promote education, resourcefulness, and responsibility in their children. Successful single parent families have adopted more adaptive effective styles comprising: more available personal resources, which enhance their coping effectiveness, better family organization, which balances household responsibilities and decreases task overload (Henderson, 2002: 45).

4.4.1.2.3 CONGREGATIONS' VIEWS ON CHALLENGES TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY

Some of the greatest overlooked factors delaying economic development in fighting against poverty are social, and are rooted in everyday attitudes which are beliefs and behaviour as barriers against alleviating poverty, specifically in the Alice Region and Nkonkobe Local Municipality Area. Another barrier against alleviating poverty is the lack of access to basic services like education.

C1, 3, 6, 7 and 8 agreed that *“poverty is created by the transmission over generations of a set of beliefs, values, and skills that are socially generated but individually held”*.

C2, 4 and 5 agreed that *“the culture of poverty as a set of beliefs and values passed from generation to generation”*.

C5 agreed that *another thing that is the factor barrier in alleviating poverty is the lack of education*.

The researcher developed the following themes from the congregational views on factors that act as barriers to alleviate poverty as: trainings to prevent poverty in the study area and the value of education.

i) SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY

Skills development is a vital element in encouraging the employability and potential productivity of the working poor and can be an important tool for alleviating poverty, and enhancing keenness and employability. Education and skills can enable the working poor and vulnerable groups, such as persons in rural areas, people with disabilities, or disadvantaged youth to escape the malicious circle of inadequate education, poor training, low productivity and poor quality jobs with low wages (Tukundane, 2014: 83).

Although historically church-founded, the school is a public/government and formal training institution. Information from the school indicates that the objectives of the training are to: impart hands-on practical skills in the courses offered, create a sense of self-awareness among the youth, and enhance economic independence through job acquisition and self-employment (Tukundane, 2014: 85).

ii) VALUE OF EDUCATION

Once the culture of poverty has come into existence, it tends to perpetuate itself (Ryan, 1976:120). One of the most significant barriers to learning remains the inability of learners to access the educational provision that does exist and their inability to access other services which contribute to the learning process. In most instances, the inability to access education provision results from inadequate or non-existent services and facilities which are key to participation in the learning process (Bradshaw 2009: 9).

4.4.1.2.4 SUMMARY ON CHALLENGES TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY

There are many factors that act as barriers to alleviating poverty in the Nkonkobe Local Municipality Area and the Alice Region of Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

This study's findings, based on responses from the ministers of the Methodist Church reflect that the lack of education is one of the barriers against poverty alleviation for people that live in the study area. Therefore, the MCSA provides training for alleviating poverty and providing food security to the people in the area of study which is the Alice Region of the MCSA or Nkonkobe Local Municipality at large.

The stewards of the different circuits in the Alice Region of the Methodist Church, on their journey to alleviate poverty, picked up that the majority of the poor families had young, single mothers.

The congregation members also shared that some factors that are barriers to alleviation poverty within the territory of the Alice Region are beliefs and values that are socially generated by communities. Some people believe that they are poor because they inherited this poverty from their forefathers. The discussion below, proceeds to show how the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in the Alice Region of Grahamstown District supports attempts to alleviate poverty.

4.4.1.3 MCSA's SUPPORT MECHANISMS ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

In this section, the researcher presents an overview of the work of Women's Manyano Department, Young Women's Manyano Department, Young Men's Department, Local Preacher's Department and Methodist Youth Unity as the wheels to alleviate poverty with the help of ministers, stewards and congregation members. This discussion is divided into themes.

4.4.1.3.1 CONGREGATIONS' VIEWS OF WOMEN'S MANYANO

Women's Manyano is a department of women within the Methodist Church of Southern Africa as its membership is married women. They meet every Thursday to focus on the various issues that are challenging the church at large, and their meetings mainly focus on prayers.

C1, 3, 4, 7 and 8 agreed that *"within the Alice Region, this unit of women is an important pillar to move forward the mission of the Church (Missio Ecclessia). The mission of the church lies over the mission of God (Missio Dei)"*.

C2, 5 and 6 agreed that *"this Manyano is keen on the pillar that we call education, as they adopted the Healdtown College as the project to the District level of MCSA with the leadership of Mrs Somngesi as their President; she is Rev Somngesi's wife"*.

C5 agreed that *"they brought the new furniture for the commerce classes and some book for the commercial subjects. Also they brought clothes for the needy children within the Alice Region"*.

C6 agreed that *"they encourage people to create the vegetable gardens so that people can eat healthy food for their healthy wise"*.

C1 agreed that *"in the Alice town, the Methodist church runs the soup kitchen project that is led by Women's Manyano of John Wesley Methodist Church Society and other women run the Alice Hospice to help those people that are HIV/AIDS positive"*.

They help them to eat healthy food and take their treatment at required times.

i) SCHOLARS' APPROACH TO THE "MISSION OF GOD"

The pilgrim Church is a missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance

with the decree of God the Father (Nichols, 1998: 2). Newbiggin (1995: 76) argued that the Trinitarian nature of the mission denotes an important role for the church. Communication and community lies at the heart of the Trinity and, thus, must lie at the heart of Trinitarian mission. Engelsviken (2003: 488) stated that a strong argument on the mission being God centred: “Church-centric missionary-thinking is bound to go astray because it revolves on an illegitimate centre”. This strong emphasis led to a virtual repudiation of any role for the Church in mission.

The call to conversion is a plea to become part of a community, the Church, and this comes from that community. “Both the church and the mission of the church are tools of God and instruments through which God carries out this mission” (Engelsviken, 2003: 482).

4.4.1.3.2 STEWARDS’ VIEWS ON YOUNG WOMEN’S MANYANO

Young Women’s Manyano is another unit within the MCSA that is formed by women who are not married and were never married before. The YWM is keen to address issues of the young women within the community, specifically noting those who are impoverished.

S4, 5 and 6 agreed that *“they nurtured the young girls on Christian values. They have more understanding about the challenges of being a young girl in a plight of poverty”*. Young girls know all consequences for those who do not accept their families’ economic situations as the majority of young girls were tempted to commit suicide due to their poverty.

S1,2, and 3 agreed that *“some others have the challenge of drunken parents, as the results they became the victims of rape and involved in the relationships with old*

people to satisfy their basic needs (Food, Clothes etc.)". The Young Women's Manyano gives spiritual nurturing to those people as they are in need of that.

Therefore, this Manyano of Young Women in the MCSA directs people to spiritual issues. Both the Women Manyano and Young Men's Guild (Amadodana aseWesile) use the pillar of "development and economic empowerment".

i) Substance abuse in families

There is a strong association between poverty, social exclusion and problematic drug use. Those who are unemployed, particularly long-term, in poor or insecure housing and are early school leavers have a higher rate of substance abuse than those who do not fit into these categories. It should be noted, however, that these risk factors do not determine whether a person abuses drugs or alcohol (Bradshaw, Kemp, Baldwin & Rowe, 2004: 38).

ii) Victims of Rape

Some cases of rape have been brought to public attention and have stimulated debate in several quarters on the plight and vulnerability of young girls. The rate of rape, abuse of authority and the weak position of the legal and regulatory framework in providing sufficient defence for young girls and victims of rape should be also noted (Kaifala, 2013: 2).

4.4.1.3.3 MINISTERS' VIEWS OF YOUNG MEN'S GUILD

Young Men's Guild is the fellowship of old and young men in the MCSA. They call themselves as 'young men's guild' because they believe in the renewability of spirit. They stress that their spirit will not be old regardless of their old age. They also focus on the issue of spirituality with the regards to poverty.

M1, 2, 3 and 5 stated that *“YMG used one of the five imperatives that the MCSA stresses to fulfil the vision and the mission of the church”*. The imperative that they used to fight against poverty stricken is *“Justice and Service”*.

M4 and 6 agreed that *“in July 2014, YMG of Annshaw Circuit No.233 delivered the pillows to Victoria Hospital in Alice for the patients that suffered under sickness”*.

C3 concurred that *“the members of this department visited the sick, those who lost their family members and those who are spiritually down. They also identify the individuals who are in need more within the region at large and they assist them to buy some other clothes”*.

M1, 3, 4 and 6 said *“YMG (Amadodana aseWesile) is another department for men to move forward the mission of God through MCSA. They meet to share Biblical verses and talk about the aspects of life including the poverty stricken”*.

YMG has launched many projects that focus on the issue of poverty within the Grahamstown district. The projects that they launched are the vegetable garden project to fight poverty and the *not in our Name Campaign* to support abused women and children. YMG bought text books for those learners who cannot afford to buy these. YMG also generates money through fundraising initiatives like *“Umjikelo”* per quarter. *“Umjikelo”* is a fundraising programme for the YMG and its mandate is to call all YMG members in a specific circuit to come to their service with specific amounts of donations to YMG per quarter. This programme helps in alleviating poverty. YMG's work is limited because of lack of the funds as they try to do their best for all people who are in need.

In addition, YMG took some people to attain computer studies from the University of Fort Hare for three months. Many people received computer skills with the help of YMG as part of their poverty alleviation initiatives by the MCSA.

John Wesley wrote the General Rules and one of the most important of these is: “Doing good of every sort to all people as you can” (Storey, 2004: 17). Therefore, YMG members hold those rules that Wesley emphasized.

i) Spiritual Holiness

The moral calamity of modern society is a pointed reminder of the need for a new morality. This goal is not achieved where there are low standards of morality (Furnham, 2009: 40).

The aim of the YMG of the MCSA is to achieve harmony with the doctrine of the holiness of God; this aim is recognized in order to achieve a new way of morality in keeping with the Scriptures and the character of God. The realization of such an aim is possible only through supernatural powers such as those provided by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (Grenz & Olson, 2010: 30).

ii) Men Against Women And Child Abuse

Domestic violence is a serious social evil, and there is a high incidence of domestic violence within South African societies (Government Gazette, 1998: 1). Victims of domestic violence are among the most vulnerable members of society (Government Gazette, 1998: 1). Domestic violence takes on many forms, and acts of domestic violence may be committed in a wide range of domestic relationships. Support currently available to the victims of domestic violence has proved to be ineffective (Government Gazette, 1998: 1).

The Constitution of South Africa, in particular, legislates the right to equality, freedom and security of all citizens. There are also international commitments and obligations of the state towards ending violence against women and children, including obligations under the United Nations Conventions on the abolition of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Rights of the Child (Government Gazette, 1998: 1).

There are many different types of domestic violence which are gazetted in South Africa namely: physical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional abuse; verbal and psychological abuse; economic abuse; intimidation; harassment; stalking; damage to property; entry into the complainant's residence without consent, where the parties do not share the same residence; any other controlling or abusive behaviour towards a complainant where such conduct harms or may cause imminent harm to the safety and health or well-being of the complainant (Government Gazette, 1998: 2).

Practical Theology is theology that is concerned with the well-being of humans and it mostly uses the pastoral care approach. The role of Pastoral care in theology is to “have conversations between the Christian, social theory and insight of the poor and marginalised, thus leading to action for change” (Rowland, 1999: xii). Mbambo (2006: 24) argued that with regards to the issue of domestic violence, some men who perpetrate violence sometimes justify their actions based on their interpretation or misinterpretation of the word of God.

4.4.1.3.4 CONGREGATIONS' VIEWS ON THE YOUTH UNITY

The Youth Unity is the structure of young people in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa which includes: Wesley Guild, Youth Fellowship, Children's Ministry and Methodist Student Society (MethsSoc). The region under study is not diverse in

terms of race and culture. Black people dominate in this region; actually, there are no other races other than Blacks in the regions' Methodist church. Therefore in this region, there are few entities that fall under Youth Unity which are: Wesley Guild, MethsSoc and Children's Ministry.

The Wesley Guild motto is "One heart, One way", and it comes from the book of Jeremiah 31: 30 when God said, "They will be my people, I will be their God and I will give them one heart and one way". This motto brings unity amongst the members of the Wesley Guild as a forward moving youth movement. That motto also guides the members of this entity to work together collaboratively.

C1,3,5,6 and 8 agreed that "Wesley Guilders of the Alice Region found a family of two people which was an old woman with a 12 year child; they stayed in a mud shack. They found them during their outreach program; that family was in need of the basic needs such as food, clothes and shelter".

C2, 4 and 7 agreed that "Wesley Guild came up with an idea a project that was called as "One Guilder, One Brick". That project was meant to build a house for an old woman who lived with her grandchild in a small mud shack at Middledrift in Trust No.2 village".

The researcher witnessed the event as a member of MCSA and states:*"it was so successful because all young people were interested to build that house for the old woman and raised funds to buy furniture for the house and it was so successful. They finalized their work by helping the old woman to apply for an Identity Document to have an access to the social grant. Regarding the social grant, Wesley Guilders worked hand in hand with the Department of Social Development".*

C2 and C7 agreed that *“when they doing handing over of the house to the owner they also handing over the food parcel to the owner of the house to start staying in her new house with food. The woman was so crying and said God is revealed Himself to her in deferent ways. Therefore, that woman started to worship regularly at MCSA in one of the societies of the Perksdale Circuit within the territories of Alice Region. But the money that was generated from guilders and the donors, there was no one that is accountable for that”*.

The Methodist Student Society (MethsSoc) within the University of Fort Hare established programs that were focusing on the program of alleviating poverty and tried to rescue some people from poverty.

According to the findings from the members of MethsSoc, they also found a family of both parents with two children staying in a dilapidated shack at Ntselamanzi Township in Alice. C1, 3, 5, 6 and 8 agreed, *“They found this family during the community engagement program by MethsSoc. During that time they found this family, was the time for the children to have graduation ceremony at their pre-school. The members managed to generate money to buy clothes for children and food for the day. At a later stage, MethsSoc executive had many meetings with the minister of the Department of Human Settlement in the EC, to find a house for this needy family”*.

Finally, they found a house for that family and handed this over to the family. The discussion proceeds to the Department of Local Preachers as the pillar of Methodist Church.

Shelter

The church has traditionally viewed housing, not as a commodity, but as a basic human right. The MethsSoc members recognized shelter as a human right as they struggled to secure a house for the poor family they found in Ntselamanzi Township.

This conviction is grounded in our view of the human person and the responsibility of society to protect the life and dignity of every person by providing conditions where human lives and human dignity are not undermined, but enhanced (Pope John Paul II, 1988: 640).

4.4.1.3.6 LOCAL PREACHERS AS THE PILLARS OF THE CHURCH

The Department of Local Preachers is also an important pillar for the Methodist Church to run the mission of God (*Missio Dei*). Jesus Christ said in Luke 4: 19 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free (Holy Bible: New International Version)". The preacher must preach to the poor who are materially deprived in this world to work towards transforming their lives. The work of local preachers is huge in the whole world, and the Alice region local preachers are striving to transform the lives of those who live in bondage of poverty; these preachers face challenges of getting resources to alleviate poverty. Even though they motivate people to focus on the garden projects, they still have a lot work to achieve increased levels poverty alleviation.

4.4.1.3.7 SUMMARY OF THE MCSA's SUPPORT MECHANISMS ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Stewards, as participants to the study, agreed that the Women's Manyano (WM) is an important pillar focused on moving forward the mission of God within the MCSA in the area of the study. They encouraged people to be steadfast in the vegetable gardens and support those who suffered from HIV/AIDS. They also guide the Young Women's Manyano (YWM) towards the challenges that they face as young women in the Church and Society.

Ministers listed the work that was done by the Young Men's Guild (YMG) to move forward the mission of the Church as YMG visited sick people and hosted fundraising events to assist those who are in need. YMG also meet for sharing scriptures, praying and fasting for their Social and Spiritual Holiness. They also fight against women and child abuse.

Furthermore, congregation participants reported on the work of young people within the church. As young people, they did well in realizing the need for shelter as a priority to human beings. Therefore, local preachers preach the good news of Jesus Christ's healing and transformation in this study's context which is poverty alleviation.

4.4.1.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From the findings, the ministers admitted that some of the consequences of poverty are diseases and divorce. They also agreed that poverty breaks relationships within friends, families and communities. Poor people do not have material resources such as money which is necessary to buy health care and cannot afford prevention before contracting diseases. They also cannot afford doctors and medicines when they are

sick. Therefore, the findings show that poor people are more likely to be unhealthy than rich people (Sala-i-Martins, 2002: 2). Stewards reported that lack of job opportunities caused poverty to the communities, and they all agreed that poverty is the mother of crime and corruption. Therefore, both poverty and income inequality are considered to be reasonable commissions of resource deprivation. Nonetheless, other types of crimes are different in their connection with poverty. Fafchamps and Minten (2002: 17) argued that “crimes are largely perpetuated by the demand for illegal commodities and services such as drugs, prostitution or organized crime”. In this case, an increase in poverty would increase the supply of criminals, but at the same time, reduce demand for illegal products”. Although congregants came up with the view that poverty divides families and friends, it also results in inequality, hunger and homeless people.

The ministers identified lack of training and education as the factors that act as barriers to poverty alleviation in the Alice Region. This results in economic decline and lack of employment in this context, according to the ministers. Stewards pointed that young poverty-stricken single mothers, faced challenges of bringing up their children without having any income to buy basics.

There is a phenomenon where people become entrenched into poverty due to a number of different factors. Family experience, lack of education, limited access to employment and health care all contribute to this destructive progression. Poverty may exist for generations, thus resulting in negative role models that continue the cycle of poverty. Without outside intervention to give people access to education and employment, the cycle may continue for generations.

With regard to addiction, there is some evidence to suggest that those in the cycle of poverty who also suffer from substance abuse problems have a significantly more difficult time breaking the cycle and removing themselves from this harmful life than those who are not poor. Additionally, if parents suffer from addiction to drugs or alcohol, their children may have a higher risk of also suffering from this disease.

4.4.2 CONCLUSION

The MCSA has a vision to lead the church to fulfil its responsibility that God gave them as the mission. The 2004 Mission Congress came up with the mission and vision statement that MCSA could focus on (Mission Charter, 2004: 2). That vision and mission statement is based on the five pillars that the MCSA believes in as the wheels to alleviate poverty. The graphs that were used in this chapter show the demographic information of the respondents as poverty stricken.

The comments from the respondents showed that the MCSA offers support to people who are impoverished. The departments within the MCSA also offer their support to tackle the challenge of poverty. The congregation members' perceptions highlighted the increasing numbers of poor people in the Alice Region and the Nkonkobe Local Municipality and report that poverty gives birth to crime and corruption.

The MCSA supplied training and food security to alleviate poverty in the people in the area of study which is the Alice Region of MCSA and the Nkonkobe Local Municipality.

The stewards of the different Circuits in the Alice Region of the Methodist Church, in their attempts to alleviate poverty, supported some families who had young single mothers.

The congregation members also shared their views on some of the factors that serve as barriers to alleviating poverty within the territory of Alice Region as negative beliefs and values that are socially generated by people. Some other people believed that they are poor because they inherited poverty from their forefathers. Although MCSA supports people who are poverty-stricken, they also support those who suffer certain disease such as HIV/AIDS.

The discussion proceeds to the next chapter, Chapter 5, which presents a summary of the research and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the data analysis of ministers, church members and individual interviews of people from Ntselamanzi Township was discussed according to the objectives of the study.

This final chapter includes a summary of the research, and makes recommendations for providing support to the groups that are fighting poverty and encourages the MCSA in the Alice Region.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

This research was undertaken to make a contribution regarding the Methodist Church's role in poverty alleviation in the Alice Region, and the study was conducted throughout the Alice Region.

5.2.1 THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY WERE:

- To research the role that is played by the MCSA to alleviate poverty in different circuits within the Alice Region.
- To evaluate the work of MCSA towards poverty alleviation.
- To examine MCSA in the Alice Region and its expression against poverty.
- To encourage the congregation to support and facilitate developments of the MCSA in the lives of people.

5.2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do local residents in the study community perceive poverty?
- What factors Alice do residents perceive as barriers to poverty alleviation?

- What support mechanisms has the Methodist Church of Southern Africa implemented to alleviate poverty in the study community, and how effective are such interventions?

5.2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Although poverty is a challenging issue and has different levels, it needs all people to focus on it. Whether a person is rich or poor, poverty affects and infects all people throughout the world as there are many countries that are impoverished as the World Bank stated that most people survive on only 2 US dollars per day. Those countries that are developed have an important role to play in those regions that are not developed, in terms of alleviating poverty. Poverty is also construed as lack of one's well-being because many people who are impoverished cannot meet their basic needs, even just to have clean water for health purposes. Poor people are marginalized because of their economically impoverished status.

Others participants promoted self-employment as a way out of poverty, even though they did not consider whether their small businesses would be sustaining or not.

To focus on poverty is important to the church because most people stricken with poverty are the members of the church and some are relatives of the members of the church. The Methodist Church of Southern Africa is obliged to be in solidarity with poor people, regardless whether they are members of this church or not.

Government has invested in attacking poverty in South Africa with the help of NGOs and churches who work voluntarily to address this challenge of poverty.

Scriptures give us a clear understanding of the status of poor people, as Jesus Christ honoured them and sent them back to give others good news. Their good

news was that they received food, clothes and so on from the church. Even though people are stricken with poverty, the church restores justice, solidarity and their lost dignity.

Eastern Cape is one of the biggest provinces in South Africa and is one of those provinces that struggle under poverty. This province is too rural and it is not easy to develop. In this province, there are many challenges in addition to poverty, namely: corruption, fraud, crime, and these challenges need attention. The World Bank encourages countries to use education as their source of alleviating poverty. However, there is a big problem whereby most adolescents drop out of school without finishing grade 12. Most of them are females, and their additional challenge is the lack of sanitary towels/pads, which discourages them from attending school; they end up staying at home during menstruation. Even though menstruation is a normal thing, some societies view it as shameful and harmful.

Chapter one of this study presented the purpose of the research study and also described the research problem and the analysis. The research aims and objectives, theoretical framework and the research methodology were explained. Chapter two of this study discussed and covered many areas of literature concerning poverty alleviation. Chapter three of this study discussed the research population, regional setting, and structure of Methodist Church and research methods adopted in this study.

5.2.3 QUALITATIVE APPROACH

A qualitative approach was utilised to understand the issues and importance of alleviating poverty by the MCSA at the Grahamstown District in the Alice Region. This is a descriptive study which required understanding the work that was done in

the Alice Region of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. The respondents were to partake in individual interviews.

The criterion for selection of the sample for inclusion of the participants was that the participants had to be: Methodist Ministers, Methodist Circuit Stewards and Methodist Members.

The participants were selected purposely for the individual interviews and guided to the topic by the research questionnaires.

Three focus groups, each one of the two groups consisted of 6 participants and one group consisted of 8 participants.

Individual interviews with church ministers, church members who also include circuit stewards and members of the church from Ntselamanzi Township were carried out to provide in-depth knowledge of the issues that cause poverty.

Consent was sourced from the participants after they were informed about the objectives of the study and their right to withdraw from the study participation any time. All the interviews were conducted in a local language which is *IsiXhosa*, and responses were recorded and translated into English.

5.2.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of data from individual interviews was done manually using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a relatively straightforward form of qualitative analysis which does not require the same detailed theoretical and technical knowledge. It is relatively easy to conduct a good thematic analysis on qualitative data, even when you are still learning qualitative techniques. However, there are a number of things which can result in poor analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 25). Liamputtong (2011:

1730) says that thematic analysis is referred to as a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within the data. It is perceived as a foundation method for qualitative analysis. Laimputtong (2011: 1173) further states that in thematic analysis, the researcher needs to read through each transcript and try to make sense of the interview data from interviews or focus groups.

5.2.5 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings reveal that poverty is caused by the high unemployment rates and lack of training to prevent poverty. The consequences of poverty are diseases and family divorces. Participants also agreed that poverty breaks friendships, families and communities. Although congregation members came up with the view that poverty divides families and friends, it also caused inequality, hunger and homeless people.

Furthermore, the ministers identified the lack of training and education as the factors as barriers to alleviate poverty in the Alice Region. And it resulted in economic decline and lack of employment in this context. Stewards pointed out that young single mothers in the plight of poverty, faced the challenges of growing their children without having any income to buy basic needs.

There is a phenomenon where people become entrenched into poverty due to a number of different factors. Family experience, lack of education, limited access to employment and health care all contribute to this destructive progression. Poverty may commence in generations before the existing one and the role models set up people to continue to live in this way. Without outside intervention to give people access to education and employment, the cycle may continue for generations.

With regard to addiction, there is some evidence to suggest, that those in the cycle of poverty are addicted to substances. They have more difficulty in breaking the

substance abuse cycle and returning to a peaceful life than those who are not poor. Additionally, if parents suffer from addiction to drugs or alcohol, their children may have a higher risk to replicate this.

The high standard of living, between people living in rural and urban areas dissuaded people from focusing on agriculture in small farming for food security. The majority of people have a piece of land to work on but they do not cultivate it for their food security.

Coercion was also found on those who left school before completing their grade 12; this was due to their poor understand about natural functions of a body like menstruation, and they were laughed at by their fellow learners when menstruating. Others left school because they did not have school uniform and access to books. The economic hardship to some families resulted in the high rate of prostitution, crime and corruption.

5.2.6SUMMARY

Research on the MCSA in the Grahamstown district in the Alice region was conducted in order to find the realities of how to alleviate poverty. Poverty affects and infects people regardless of social standing.

Poverty is caused by a number of factors such as large families without income, cultural influences and lack of job opportunities. The perceptions, factors that act as barriers to poverty alleviation and support mechanisms should be addressed. People should be encouraged to alleviate poverty; this can be achieved if they are empowered economically in order for the rich not to take advantage of their poverty. Ministers should be responsible enough to know the challenges of alleviating poverty

in the Nkonkobe Local Municipality and Alice Region, and should be especially knowledgeable on projects that attack poverty.

People face significant challenges when they are poor. Some of the challenges include: inequality, homelessness, divorces, diseases, and young, single, drunken parents.

Generally, poor people lack support from governmental sectors. Poor people also lack social, financial and emotional support from their fellow communities. The most painful experience is when they do not get support from the church; the MCSA, however, restores their hope by supporting them.

The Methodist Church has a responsibility to train people to alleviate poverty. Another responsibility of the Methodist Church is to encourage young people and teach them to appreciate the value of education.

5.2.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Further research is obligatory to investigate why ministers, stewards and congregation members report difficulties in alleviating poverty.

- There is need for the MCSA to have a committee that will formulate the structures for the sustaining projects for poverty alleviation to give an account of finance utilization.
- The MCSA should take into account all the special conditions that are associated with poverty alleviation. The church should also be concerned about people who are impoverished, and have no accommodation, food and clothes, for instance, and ascertain their actual living conditions.

- MCSA, Department of Social Development, NGOs and the Department of Health should work together to strategize on fighting against poverty in the Alice Region.
- The Methodist Church of Southern Africa should integrate policy formulation, so that the fight against poverty should be established within the MCSA policy.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaires

University of Fort Hare - Centre for Theology and Religion

Ethical Clearance Certificate Number: CHE011SJIB01

An Appraisal of the Methodist Church's role in Poverty Alleviation in the Alice Region

A.GENERAL INFORMATION

Enumerator's name.....

Questionnaire reference number.....

Date of the interview 20-11-2014

B. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION STARTING WITH HOUSEHOLD HEAD

Fill in the relevant information and where possible mark with an X.

B1	B2		B3				B4				
Age	Gender		Marital status				Education				
	1.M	2.F	1.S	2.M	3.W	4.D	1.N	2.P	3.S	4.T	5.O

Gender: 1.Male 2.Female Marital status: 1.Single, 2.Married, 3.Widowed, 4.Divorced Education: 1.No education, 2.Primary, 3.Secondary, 3.Tertiary, 4.Other

B5 Number of adults (Age ≥ 21)	
B6 Number of children (Age ≤ 20)	

B7 Number of individuals bringing in income	
--	--

Mark with X

B8 Employment status of the household head			B9 Income class in R/month					
			<700	700- 1500	1500- 3000	3001- 5000	5001- 10000	>10000
Unemployed		1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Formally Employed	Full time							
	Part time							
Informally employed	Full time							
	Part time							
Self- employed								
Pensioner								
Other (Specify)								

C. LIVELIHOODS

C1. What are the external sources of income for household members? Indicate the number of individuals deriving income from each source

Source	Number of individuals
Remittances (Cash)	
Remittances (Kind)	
Child support from parent outside household	
Salaries & Wages	
Old age pension	
Disability grant	
Child support grant	
Other government grants, specify	

C2 What are the local sources of income? Indicate the number of individuals deriving income from each source

Source	Number of individuals
Hawking (Food)	
Hawking (Other)	
Spaza shop	
Selling liquor/shebeen	
Taxi business	
Lending money	

Carpentry	
Plumbing	
Building houses	
Crops kinds	
Crops cash	
Animals kind	
Animals cash	
Cooperative income	
Other (Specify).....	

D. FOOD PRODUCTION: CROP & ANIMAL FARMING

D1. Which of these sources of food are the major sources for your household in each season?

Source		Season			
		Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer
Own production					
Buying from local producers					
Buying from local shops					

Buying from outside the village					
Battering of food					
Other					

D2 Do you have a garden on your residential site?

1.Yes	2.No
-------	------

D3 What is its size? 0.5 hectares

1.Yes	2.No
-------	------

D4 Do you grow crops or vegetables in your garden?

1.Yes	2.No
-------	------

D5 Please indicate the kinds of crops or vegetables you grow, the extent as well as what you do with the produce

Crop	Extent	Yield for the previous season	Variations in yield	What do you do with the produce?
Maize				
Dry beans				
Dry peas				
Pumpkins				
Butternut				

Potatoes				
Cabbages				
Carrots				
Beet				
Spinach				
Onions				
Other (specify)				

Extent: 1.Larger, 2.Lesser; Yields: e.g maize= 40bags; Beans= 2 bags; potatoes=100bags:

Variation in yields: 1.High, 2.Almost constant, 3.Low; Reason for growing: 1.Selling, 2.Consumption, 3.Both.

D6 Do you have access to one or more arable fields?

1.Yes	2.No
-------	------

D7 If yes, state how many fields you have access to 1

D8 What is the size of each of the fields? 0.5 hectares

D9How did you obtain access to each of the fields?

Bought (title deed)	
Leased	
Inherited	
Given by government	
Allocated by headman	
Renting and/or share cropping	
Other (Specify).....	

D10 Did you grow any crops or vegetables on your arable land during the past three cropping seasons?

1.Yes	2.No
-------	------

D11 If yes, please indicate the kinds of crops or vegetables you grow, the extent as well as the reasons for growing them

Crop	Extent	Variations in yield	Reason for growing
Maize			
Sorghum			
Dry beans			
Dry peas			
Pumpkins			
Butternut			
Potatoes			
Other (Specify)			

Extent: 1.Larger, 2.Lesser; Yields: e.g. maize= 40bags; Beans= 2 bags; potatoes=100bags:

Variation in yields: 1.High, 2.Almost constant, 3.Low; Reason for growing: 1.Selling, 2.Consumption, 3.Both

D12 If not, please provide an explanation.

.....

D13 Which factors influence your choice of crops in any growing season? Name them in order of importance.

Climate	Food security	Market	Easy to manage	Other (Specify).....

D14 What method of cultivation does your household normally use?

Tractor	Animal traction	Hand ploughing

D15 Please indicate the source of labour (family, exchange or hired) for the following farming activities in your household. Where family labour is used, state who in the household is responsible.

Activity	Labour source	Person responsible
Ploughing		
Cultivating		
Planting		
Weeding		
Spraying		
Harvesting		
Marketing		

Labour source: 1.Family, 2.Exchange, 3.Hired, 4.Family and exchange, 5.Family and hired, 6.Exchanged and hired, 7.All

D16 Do you sometimes improve the fertility of the soil?

1.Yes	2.No
-------	------

D17 If yes, how do you improve soil fertility?

Apply	fertilizer	Apply kraal manure	Both Other (Specify).....

D18 Have you received any training on how and when to apply fertilizers (e.g. rates of application, timing. etc.)?

1.Yes	2. No
-------	-------

D19 Is there anybody in your household who has received training on agriculture in general?

1.Yes	2. No
-------	-------

D20 If yes, indicate where and when the training was obtained

.....

D21 Where do you get money to invest in farming?

Source	Amount
Borrowing from banks	
Borrowing from friends	
Your own savings	
State aid	

Other (specify).....	
----------------------	--

D 22 Have you noticed any changes in the planting season?

1.Yes	2.No
-------	------

D23 If yes how long, how long have you noticed change?

2 years	5 years	10 years	More than 10 years
---------	---------	----------	--------------------

D24 Which of the following animals do you keep? Indicate numbers owned and reasons for keeping them?

TYPE	Number owned	Reason for keeping
Chicken		
Pigs		
Sheep		
Goats		
Cattle		
Donkeys		
Horses		
Mules		
Other (specify).....		

1. Household consumption, 2.Ritual slaughter, 3.Sales, 4.Savings, 5.Draught power, 6.Traditional reasons (e.globola), 7.Other

D25 What are the challenges hindering livestock productivity?

Diseases (Specify)	Inadequate rainfall	Poor grazing pastures	Other (specify)
--------------------	---------------------	-----------------------	-----------------

E. MARKETS

E1 Which markets do you usually use for selling your product?

Formal markets	Informal markets	I do not sell
----------------	------------------	---------------

E2 Do you have regular customers who buy from you?

1.Yes	2.No
-------	------

F. SUPPORT SERVICES, RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

F1 Indicate the type of support services you have access to

Credit	
Market information	
Workshops	
Extension services	
Veterinary services	

F2 Indicate the type of resources you have access to

Water	
Grazing land	
Inputs	
Time	
Labour	
Other (Specify).	

F3 Which of the following equipment do you own? Please indicate whether it is yours, borrowed or hired.

Equipment	Own	Borrowed	Hired
Plough			
Planter			
Cultivator			

Spade			
Rake			
Fork spade			
Hoe			
Other (specify)			

1. Own 2. Borrowed 3. Hired

F4 Indicate the type of infrastructure you have access to

Infrastructure	Condition		
	1. Bad	2. Fine	3. Good
Telephone			
Electricity			
Water			
Roads			
Storage facilities	Modern		
	Old		
Other (specify).....			

G. WATER SOURCES, AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY

G1 Where do you get water for household use? Indicate whether the water sources are adequate?

Source	Distance	State whether adequate/unreliable
Dam		
Borehole		
Spring		
Communal Well		
Own well		

Communal tape		
Own tape		
Rainwater tank		
River/stream (Name the river)		

G2 What are the sources of drinking water for your livestock?

	Dam	Borehole	River	Well	Spring	Other (Specify)
Cattle						
Sheep						
Goats						
Pigs						
Donkeys						
Horses						

H1 How do you perceive poverty?

.....

H2 How do you perceive factors as barriers to poverty alleviation?

.....

H3 How is the Methodist Church of Southern Africa had been supportive to the projects of alleviating poverty? And how effective are any of these interventions?

.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!!!!!!

Appendix B



Ethics Research Confidentiality and Informed Consent Form

Please note:

This form is to be completed by the researcher(s) as well as by the interviewee before the commencement of the research. Copies of the signed form must be filed and kept on record

(To be adapted for individual circumstances/needs)

Our University of Fort Hare / Department is asking people from your community / sample / group to answer some questions, which we hope will benefit your community and possibly other communities in the future.

The University of Fort Hare / Department/ organization is conducting research regarding We are interested in finding out more about We are carrying out this research to help (adapt for individual projects)

Please understand that you are not forced to take part in this study, and the choice whether to participate or not is yours alone. However, we would really appreciate it if you do share your thoughts with us. If you choose not take part in answering these questions, you will not be affected in any way. If you agree to participate, you may stop me at any time and tell me that you don't want to go on with the interview. If you do this, there will also be no penalties and you will NOT be prejudiced in ANY way. Confidentiality will be observed professionally.

I will not be recording your name anywhere on the questionnaire, and no one will be able to link you to the answers you give. Only the researchers will have access to the unlinked information. The information will remain confidential, and there will be no “come-backs” from the answers you give.

The interview will last around (X?) minutes (this is to be tested through a pilot). I will be asking you a questions and ask that you are as open and honest as possible in answering these questions. Some questions may be of a personal and/or sensitive nature. I will be asking some questions that you may not have thought about before, and which also involve thinking about the past or the future. We know that you cannot be absolutely certain about the answers to these questions but we ask that you try to think about these questions. When it comes to answering questions there are no right and wrong answers. When we ask questions about the future, we are not interested in what you think the best thing would be to do, but what you think would actually happen. (Adapt for individual circumstances)

If possible, our organisation would like to come back to this area once we have completed our study to inform you and your community of what the results are and discuss our findings and proposals around the research and what this means for people in this area.

Appendix C

INFORMED CONSENT

I hereby agree to participate in research regarding I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally.

I have received the telephone number of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issues which may arise in this interview.

I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the questionnaire, and that my answers will remain confidential.

I understand that if at all possible, feedback will be given to my community on the results of the completed research.

.....

Signature of participant

Date:.....

I hereby agree to the tape recording of my participation in the study

.....

Signature of participant

Date:.....

Appendix D



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Certificate Reference Number: CHE011SJIB01

Project title: **An appraisal of the Methodist Church's role in poverty alleviation in the Alice Region.**

Nature of Project: Masters

Principal Researcher: Xolisa Terrance Jibiliza

Supervisor: Prof IG Chetty
Co-supervisor:

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

Special conditions: Research that includes children as per the official regulations of the act must take the following into account:


Note: The UREC is aware of the provisions of s71 of the National Health Act 61 of 2003 and that matters pertaining to obtaining the Minister's consent are under discussion and remain unresolved. Nonetheless, as was decided at a meeting between the National Health Research Ethics Committee and stakeholders on 6 June 2013, university ethics committees may continue to grant ethical clearance for research involving children without the Minister's consent, provided that the prescripts of the previous rules have been met. This certificate is granted in terms of this agreement.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
 - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
 - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
- In addition to the need to comply with the highest level of ethical conduct principle investigators must report back annually as an evaluation and monitoring mechanism on the progress being made by the research. Such a report must be sent to the Dean of Research's office

The Ethics Committee wished you well in your research.

Yours sincerely


Professor Gideon de Wet
Dean of Research

23 October 2014

