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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**EXPLORING THE STRUCTURAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO WOMEN DOING SEX WORK IN
THE SOUTHERN SUBURBS OF CAPE TOWN**

A dissertation submitted in the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of the
Degree of
MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
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by

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the research was to explore the structural, social and economic factors that contribute to women doing sex work in the southern suburbs of Cape Town in order to make recommendations that address those factors from a social development perspective. A qualitative research design was used to interview 23 street based female sex workers who worked along the Main Road from Plumstead to Kenilworth suburbs in Cape Town because of the convenience of location to the researcher. Non-probability sampling was used in identifying the participants and only 20 interviews were recorded due to technical problems. A voice recorder was used and the interviews were transcribed into text. Coding procedures were used in analysing the data.

Findings were drawn from the responses of the participants and compared with literature from previous studies on sex work and social development theories. The socio-historical context of apartheid through policies that deprived people of colour from accessing public services predisposed most women in the study to poverty and later led them into sex work. Women participants experienced vulnerability due to patriarchal oppression in away that exposed them to exploitation and being trapped in sex work. Among the social factors that led women into doing sex work was the origin of most sex workers from families at risk, a lack of social support and poor education. An overwhelming majority of sex workers entered sex work because of the need to find employment, the need to acquire capital to invest in future plans and the need to provide for necessities. Macro-economic policies such as GEAR were also found to contribute negatively to the socio-economic needs of people and exposing them to more poverty, leading into sex work.

It is recommended that the government and significant role players such as non-governmental organisations, communities, schools and families should all collaborate in a people-centred perspective to build institutional capacities. Through provision of housing, effective education, employment creation and macro-economic policies that are sensitive to the social needs of people in general, it is possible to avoid the escalation of social problems associated with sex work. By building institutional capacities and capabilities of people, it is possible to ameliorate poverty and enable women living in poverty such as the sex workers to have more sustainable livelihoods.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome
ASGISA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa
CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
DEPT:	Department
GEAR:	Growth Employment and Redistribution
HIV:	Human Immuno Virus
MDG:	Millennium Development Goals
NYP:	National Youth Policy
STD:	Sexually Transmitted Disease
SWEAT:	Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Taskforce
UNDESA:	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP:	United Nations Development Agency

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study sought to explore the perceptions of 20 female sex workers regarding their work. The study explored the various structural economic and social factors that contributed to women doing sex work across all ages and racial groups as a way of making a living in the southern suburbs of Cape Town in 2010. It was necessary to carry out the study because sex work is associated with social problems which include substance abuse, the spread of STDs and HIV/AIDS, family breakdown and exploitation of women (Sarujlul and Dhurap,2009; O'Neil 2010). Sex work thus has implications for public ethics, public health, public policy and social development. By examining the root causal factors that lead women into sex work it is possible to make recommendations to social policy and social and economic development that address the causal factors from a social development perspective as opposed to treating the symptoms. The study is located in the Social Development Department of the University of Cape Town and in the field of social development. There are many definitions of social development, however for the purpose of the study, Midgely (1995) cited in Osei-Hwedie (2007:108) defines social development as:

...a process of change starting from an individual's development of confidence, cooperativeness, awareness and skills. Social development also refers to a form of human welfare that seeks to harmonise social policy and economic development. As an approach to social welfare, social development offers an effective response to social problems through a comprehensive and universalistic focus on community processes and structures. Through participation in the decision making process by ordinary people, social development enhances a sense of community which strengthens community bonds.

Osei-Hwedie (2007:108) defines social development as

...the satisfaction of basic human needs social justice and the quest for peace. It is a process through which people are empowered to realise their social, economic and political potential to the full, and to be able to function positively in these spheres.

The researcher's own understanding of social development as influenced by the above definitions is that social development aims at increasing human development through coordinated effort of multiple role players in effective employment of resources to meet the social, economic and political needs. Osei-Hwedie (2007) states that among the goals of social development are the achievement of a balanced social and economic development, giving high priority to human development, highest possible participation of people in determining the means and goals of development, elimination of absolute poverty, elimination of barriers to development and creating processes that accelerate the pace of development. The study was therefore conducted within this social development paradigm.

This chapter will introduce the reader to the context of the study, the topic, the rationale for the study, the research questions and the objectives. The key concepts used in the study are clarified and the ethical considerations are discussed. The chapter concludes by giving a layout of the research proposal and some details of what is presented in the subsequent chapters

1.2 Context of the study

The geographical location of the study was the city of Cape Town (Main Road connecting the southern suburbs) in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. The choice of Cape Town as a location for carrying out the research was the convenience of conducting the research as the researcher was based in Cape Town at the time when the study was conducted and the fact that sex work is prevalent in Cape Town. Cape Town was also one of the major South African host cities for the 2010 Soccer World Cup in 2010, leading to a huge debate about the legalisation of sex work (Sarujlal & Dhurap, 2009). Economically, the country is experiencing the harsh effects of the global recession, which is reflected by a sharp rise in inflation, high levels of unemployment, increases in the prices of basic commodities and services, such as electricity, petrol tariffs, housing rentals and accommodation amongst other things. This results in straining consumers in general and poor households in particular in a country that manifests a high incidence of poverty and inequality (Altman, 2009; Davids, Theron & Maphunye, 2005). Against the backdrop of economic hardships, some women resort to doing sex work as a way of making a living.

The nature of sex work is contested around different conceptualisations varying from sexual relationship, work contract, private act or public commerce (Luiz & Roets, 2000). In South Africa, sex work is a criminal offence under the South African Sexual Offences Act of 1957,

specifically section 20 (1) (Aa) which provides for the punishment of any person who has sex for a reward (Luiz & Roets, 2000; Sarujlal & Dhurup, 2009). Even though sex work is criminalised, the sex industry in South Africa is composed of formal structures such as escort agencies, massage parlours and private brothels to less structured groupings such as sex work in taverns, parking lots, truck stops and streets (Gould & Fick, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2000; Lutrick & Cohan, 2009). Regarding sex work hierarchy, street-based sex workers are at the bottom in terms of status and pay whilst call girls enjoy the highest status and pay (Gould & Fick, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2000). Both male and female sex workers (heterosexual homosexual and transgender) from all racial, religious, economic, social and cultural ambits operate in South Africa (Gould & Fick, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2010).

Throughout human history sex workers have been regarded with social rejection, discrimination and stigma for cultural religious and social reasons, which prompt for the criminalisation of sex, work (Gould & Fick, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2000; O'Neil, 2010). Feminists regard female sex work as extreme exploitation and gender enslavement (Luiz & Roets, 2000; O'Neil, 2010). Proponents of sex work regard it as work and business just like any other which should be regulated by the economic principles and labour laws, hence such groups advocate the decriminalisation and legalisation of sex work (Luiz & Roets, 2000; Lutrick & Cohan, 2009; O'Neil, 2010; Sarujlal & Dhurup, 2010; www.sweat.org).

The association of sex work with a vast array of social problems has implications for social development in South Africa. This study focused on biologically female sex workers as opposed to transgender sex workers because of the female sex workers' gendered roles in society. The focus on female sex workers as opposed to transgender or male sex workers emanates from the women empowerment perspective in the context of poverty. In line with the Third Millennium Development Goal, which promotes women empowerment, and the South African Constitution on the empowerment of women, it is imperative to study female sex workers' perceptions before formulating strategies for women empowerment. Various factors prompt women to enter sex work, yet there is paucity of data in this area (O'Neil, 2010). The study sought to explore those factors that lead women to do sex work, as there are contextual gaps in literature.

1.3 Motivation/ Rationale for the study

Various reasons led to the selection of this area of study. The area of “women empowerment” is of personal interest. It is well documented that when empowered, women are more likely to invest in family, community and societal benefits than men (Pearson, 2000). Another compelling reason to do a study on women and their problems is that due to their practical and strategic gender needs, women face a vast array of social economic and political challenges that emanate from structurally imposed oppressive systems (Pearson, 2000; Taylor, 1999). These social disparities have implications for redistribution, gender-sensitive transformative policies, social inclusion and social justice as evidenced by empirical data (Dinkelman et al., 2009; Gould & Fick, 2008; Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; Luiz & Roets, 2009; Lutrick & Cohan, 2009; Sarujlal & Dhurup, 2009; Shisana et al., 2008).

The significance of the proposed study is that by exploring the structural, social and economic factors that contribute to women doing sex work, the researcher will gain some insight into causal factors that lead women into doing sex work. While the research is carried out as an academic requirement (which partially fulfils the requirements for the Master of Social Science degree in Social Development), it is hoped that the findings will stimulate the interest of the reader and be useful in formulating some recommendations and propose strategies that will influence policy making in promoting the empowerment of women. Drawing on the significance of public policy in addressing social problems, the study intended to explore the intrinsic factors that precipitate and predispose women to do sex work.

1.4 Topic formulation / Research problem

An explorative study of the structural, social and economic factors that contribute to women doing sex work in the southern suburbs of Cape Town.

The research problem clarifies what the researcher intends to study. It explains whether the research explores new ideas or describes existing phenomena and the practical significance of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). The proposed study is exploratory, descriptive and of a contextual design. The exploration of the factors that contribute to women doing sex work in

Cape Town is an under- researched area. The researcher expected the study to contribute findings that are useful in women empowerment and poverty alleviation strategies.

1.5 Main research questions

What are the structural, social and economic factors that contribute to women doing sex work?

- (a) What are the social factors that lead women in the study into doing sex work?
 - Factors include family dynamics, social support, educational factors, etc.
- (b) What are the economic factors that contribute to women in the study doing sex work?
 - Factors such as availability of employment, income earning, deprivation, etc.
- (c) What are the structural factors that contribute to women in the study doing sex work?
 - Factors include socio-historical context, macro-economic policies, patriarchy etc
- (d) What are the female sex workers' perceptions about the structural context in which they do their work?
 - For example legal framework, patriarchy, societal attitudes etc.
- (e) How do female sex workers perceive challenges of their work?
 - For example, police harassment, exploitation, health matters, etc.
- (f) How do female sex workers propose to be supported by significant role players?
 - Significant others include the government, non -governmental organisations, private sector, etc.

1.6 Main Research Objectives

- (a) To determine the social factors that contributes to women doing sex work.
- (b) To ascertain the economic factors that contributes to women doing sex work.
- (c) To explore the structural factors that contributes to women doing sex work.
- (d) To explore the female sex workers' perceptions regarding the structural context in which they operate.
- (e) To examine female sex workers' perceived challenges of their work.
- (f) To determine female sex workers' proposed support from significant role players.

1.7 Main Research Assumption

The main research assumption is that the main reason for sex workers' entry into the sex work industry is poverty.

1.8 Research Methodology

A researcher used a semi structured interview schedule to conduct in depth face-to-face interviews with 23 participants and managed to record 20 interviews using a voice recorder (Refer to appendices on page 114). The research methods enabled the researcher to gain an insider perspective and observe the participants in their natural environment (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont, 2007).

1.8.1 Research Design

A qualitative research design was used. The research is a form of applied research in the field of Social development, the research topic was specifically selected in order to gather information to guide social welfare policy, planning and practice (De Vos et al, 2007).

1.8.2 Sampling Method

A non-probability purposive sampling of 23 street based female sex workers was chosen and only 20 interviews were transcribed due to technical problems on recording. The sex workers were selected based on availability and willingness to participate in the study.

1.8.3 Data analysis method

Data was analysed according to Tesch's approach (Tesch, 1990). The approach works by categorising the main themes from the participants' responses into different themes, categories and subcategories then subjecting the findings to rigorous analysis by comparing the findings to other studies on sex work conducted in South Africa and abroad as well as theories of social development.

1.9 Clarification of concepts

Pretorius, Terblanche and Tshiwula, (2007) state that defining terms is problematic in that terms are socially constructed in such a way that they are ascribed a range of meanings by different individuals or groups in various contexts. In approaching this study, the researcher explained and clarified concepts, which were not familiar to the participants. For example,

the researcher had to clarify the term “structure” by breaking it down to refer to specific societal institutions such as the family, the community, Department of Social Development, local municipality, school, amongst others. During the data analysis, it was evident that the participants expressed clear perceptions or views as they demonstrated an in-depth and broad understanding of issues pertaining to structural factors that led them to do sex work. According to Mouton (1996), conceptualisation involves the analysis of the key concepts in the statement, and relating the problem to a broader conceptual framework or context. The problem is located in the broader framework in the following chapter. For the purpose of this study, the main concepts that will be referred to constantly in the study are now clarified:

Structural

A single succinct definition was difficult to establish. Soanes and Hawker (2006:1029) define structural as “relating to or forming part of the arrangement of and relations between the parts of something complex”. Johnson (2005:315) defines social structure as pointing to “something real and concrete that although we cannot observe it directly, profoundly affects social life, especially by limiting and constraining what people think, feel and do”. Graaff (2006:9) defines structure as “a regular pattern of behaviour in society, the grooves of accustomed, habituated activity into which people’s lives fit.” The researcher’s own understanding of the term ‘structural’ is linked to the above definitions and can be explained as pertaining to broader socio-political and economic systems and boundaries which controls how individuals should participate in mainstream social political and economic activities.

Social

Jary and Jary (2006:560) defines social as “pertaining to human society and or to human interactions in organisations, groups”. Soanes and Hawkes (2006:984) define social as “relating to society and its organisation”. Both definitions are relevant to the researcher’s understanding and use of the term “social” as it denotes how people interact with each other in groups.

Economic

Johnson (2006:99) defines economy as “a set of institutional arrangements through which goods and services are produced and distributed in a society”. Soanes and Hawkes (2006:315) define economics as “concerned with the production, consumption and transfer of

wealth”. The researcher defines economical as that which pertains to the exchange of value for goods and services for consumption and how to earn livelihoods.

Sex work

According to Sarujlal and Dhurup, (2009:81) sex work is defined as “commercial sex business which includes street prostitution, massage brothels, escort services, outcall services, strip clubs, lap dancing, phone sex, adult and child pornography”. The U.S. definition of sex work refers to “the purchase and selling of sexual services, and any associated activities” (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009). The researcher’s understanding of sex work is the exchange of sexual services for value.

1.10 Key Ethical Considerations

De Vos et al. (2007:57) define ethics as “a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group is, subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students”. In carrying out the study, the researcher was bound by the following ethical issues as outlined by De Vos et al. (2007), Babbie, and Mouton (2007).

1.10.1 Avoidance of harm:

According to De Vos et al (2007), the researcher should thoroughly inform the participants beforehand about the potential impact of the interview. The researcher was sensitive in phrasing questions that sought to draw personal information in order to avoid discomfort or emotional harm to the participant. The researcher informed the participants of their right not to answer uncomfortable questions. The researcher arranged for debriefing and counselling with SWEAT (Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Task Force) an organisation that works with sex workers in case the need arose.

1.10.2 Informed consent: The researcher informed the participants adequately of the goal of the investigation: the interview procedures, possible advantages and disadvantages, or dangers to them (De Vos et al., 2007). According to De Vos et al. (2007), subjects should be psychologically and legally competent to give consent, and they must be aware that they are at liberty to withdraw from the investigation at any time. The female sex workers were

informed about the interview procedure and the goal of the research. The researcher explained that the study aimed at making policy recommendations that addresses the causal factors that led them to do sex work. The participants were informed that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

1.10.3 Deception of participants:

Deception is deliberately misrepresenting facts and withholding information in order to make another person believe what is not true, thereby violating the respect to which every person is entitled (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; De Vos et al., 2007). Researchers should never deceive participants about any aspects of the study that could affect their willingness to participate, such as physical risks, discomfort and unpleasant emotional experiences. The researcher made sure not to deceive the sex workers about the goal of the research.

1.10.4 Violation of privacy/ anonymity/ confidentiality

“The right to privacy is the individual’s right to decide when, where, to whom, and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs and behaviour will be revealed” (De Vos et al., 2007:61). The privacy of subjects can *inter alia* be affected by using hidden apparatus such as cameras, one way mirrors and microphones. The researcher asked for permission to use a voice recorder. The researcher ensured that the participants remained anonymous by using pseudonyms. The researcher tried to conduct the interviews in a private room where possible; when conducted outside, the interview took place in a secluded private area.

1.10.5 Actions and competence of researcher

This entails the researcher being adequately skilled to undertake the research from the composition of the research population, the sampling procedure, the methodology utilised, to the writing of the report (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; De Vos et al., 2007). The researcher used her sound theoretical and practice knowledge in conducting the interviews. The researcher was professionally competent to undertake the study as she is a qualified Social worker and has a Bachelor of Social Science degree in Social Development (Honours). The researcher has also been conducting research studies since undergraduate years.

1.10.6 Cooperation with contributors

The relationship between the researcher and the sponsor can sometimes raise ethical issues. For instance, when the sponsor acts prescriptively towards the researcher or when the identity of the sponsor or findings of the study remains undisclosed in order to comply with the expectations of the sponsor (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; De Vos et al., 2007). In this case, the Social Development Department of the University of Cape Town was the sponsor. The researcher disclosed to the sex worker that she was a student at the University of Cape Town at the time of the research. The researcher reported the findings as specified by the University department conventional requirements.

1.11 Reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to “the ability to formulate an integrated understanding of one’s own cognitive world, especially understanding one’s influence or role in a set of human relations. It is a quality of meta-cognition, thinking about one’s perceptions and ideas” (De Vos et al., 2007:363). Being reflexive entails the ability to be aware of one’s own and the respondents’ subjectivity and of being conscious of one’s influence in the interviewing process (De Vos et al., 2007). Pretorius et al. (2007) points to the differences in meaning systems and interactional patterns between researcher and participant because of their contextual differences and the unique challenges this presents in research.

The researcher was aware of the transference and counter transference issues that could emerge owing to the differences in value systems and social status between the researcher and the sex workers. The researcher was aware of the sensitivity of the nature of sex work, which might have inhibited the sex worker to respond honestly. Given the sensitivity of some questions, the researcher ensured that there was privacy and interview structure as well as building rapport with the sex workers in order to deal with the ethical issues of privacy, avoidance of harm and uneasiness of participants. The researcher was also able to suspend her personal values pertaining to sex workers and respected the sex workers as human subjects worthy of their dignity when interviewing them. The researcher thus approached the research field with a non-judgmental attitude and valued the sex workers as experts in their functional community.

Through active listening, empathetic skills, warmth and respect the researcher managed to build the respect, trust and rapport with the sex workers which made them open up, as sex workers are generally distrusting owing to the way they are treated by the justice system and society at large. As a practicing social worker, the researcher also managed to refer a number of sex workers who had varied problems to respective organisations. The problems ranged from psychosocial issues such as childhood sexual abuse to practical needs such as a need for child support grant and identity documents.

1.12 Layout of the report

The research report is structured in the following way:

Chapter One: Introduction

The first chapter of the report introduces the research problem. A brief background of the research problem is given. This is followed by the rationale for the study, topic formulation, main research questions and the research objectives. Clarification of concepts and key ethical considerations and reflexivity of the study concludes the chapter.

Chapter Two: Literature review

In this chapter, a review of the literature relating to the research topic is presented using the theoretical frameworks to be used for conceptualisation and analysis of the data. The literature review is also structured around the research themes namely sex work from a global perspective and sex work in South African and sex work in Cape Town metropole area. In addition, the literature review is structured around the main research objectives relating to: Social factors contributing to women doing sex work, economic factors contributing to women doing sex work, structural factors that contribute to women doing sex work, and perceptions of female sex workers on the structural contexts in which they operate. The perceived challenges of sex work and proposed supportive interventions for addressing factors leading women into doing sex work is also discussed.

Chapter Three: The Methodology

The chapter presents the research methodology by discussing the research design, sampling considerations, data collection methods, data analysis, and limitations of the study.

Chapter Four: Findings

This chapter presents the research findings by first providing a profile of the participants, framework of analysis then discussing the findings under headings, which relate to the main themes and categories in the framework of analysis.

Chapter five: Conclusions and recommendations

The chapter uses the research objectives to discuss the conclusions that emanated from the findings. The chapter also presents the recommendations of the researcher based on the findings.

1.13 Conclusion

The chapter has introduced the study by stating that the study is an explorative and descriptive study of the factors that contribute to women doing sex work in a specific geographic area. The chapter presented the background of the problem under enquiry, the rationale for undertaking the study and the research topic. In addition, the main research questions and objectives were outlined, key concepts were clarified and ethical considerations were discussed. The next chapter presents literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

It is essential to review the relevant literature in any study to acknowledge the previous research work done and justify the relevance of the current study through exposing the gaps in the existing body of knowledge. Reviewing literature is necessary for constructing a theoretical and conceptual framework for the analysis of the data collected. Furthermore, carrying out a literature review contributes to shedding light into the nature and meaning of the problem that has been identified (De Vos, et al., 2007). The researcher has drawn on a number of theoretical perspectives to understand the complexities of sex work as outlined below.

2.2. Mapping the theoretical framework

In developing the conceptual and analytical framework, the research will be situated within an eclectic approach, which encompasses multiple theoretical paradigms. The theories include Durkheim's anomie theory, Neo-liberal theories on poverty and social exclusion, Marxist theory on poverty and social exclusion and Feminist theory on poverty and social exclusion. Other theories include symbolic interactions on crime and deviance, Amartya Sen's capability approach and the humanist theory using a people-centred approach to development (Davids, Theron & Maphunye, 2005; Graaff, 2005; Graaff, 2006; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008; Midgeley, 1997; Potgiter, 1998; Sen, 1999; Williams, 1989). An understanding of society influenced this eclectic approach as society is complex and dynamic and requires approaches to take cognisance of class, gender, race and imperial relations with attention to context and history (Ismail, 2006). The following section discusses Durkheim's anomie theory.

2.2.1 Durkheim's anomie theory

Functionalism theories have been in opposing discourse with Marxist theories for a century and a half. In modern times debates about functionalism have depicted the theory as conservative social theory in that they view society as stable and harmonious (Graaff, 2005). The proponents of this theory are functional theorists who advocate that societal members need to be well regulated and integrated in society in order for society to function effectively

(Graaff, 2005; Mishra, 1981; Babbie & Mouton, 2007). The theory was postulated by Emile Durkheim, who argued that through institutions, such as the family, community, religion and educational systems, society provides certain levels of integration and regulation by providing norms and values (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; Graaff, 2006). Durkheim's anomie theory is closely linked to the ecological systems theory, which posits that a system is constituted of subsystems, which interact with each other in a cause and effect relationship (Potgieter, 1998). A human body, for example, comprises subsystems that include cognitive, physiological and emotional subsystems (Potgieter, 1998). The individuals in society make up systems of families, communities and societies (Potgieter, 1998). Societal systems are thus interrelated in such a way that what happens in one system permeates into the other system, as systems do not live in a vacuum (Potgieter, 1998). A state of anomie results when there is too little normative regulation of individuals, which leads to the disintegration of the moral fibre of society (Graaff, 2005; Luiz & Roets, 2000; O'Neil, 2010). In this regard Durkheim would argue that the shift from a moralistic society where sex is restricted in specific settings to an unregulated state where individual choices and liberties dominate result in anomie and social problems associated with sex work which are discussed in detail in subsequent sections (Graaff, 2006; Babbie & Mouton, 2007).

Conversely, the modernisation theories, in particular the neo-liberal theory, contend that puritanical attitudes, societal values and morals should not take precedence over income generation, profit making, democratic rights and productivity (Luiz & Roets, 2000; O'Neil, 2010). Some Neo-liberalists influenced by capitalism would therefore argue that a democratic society should provide for freedom of choice in profession. Such views contend that in the absence of coercion, people have a right to choose sex work as a profession. From such neo-liberal perspective, the criminalisation of sex work thus constitutes a violation of human rights (Luiz & Roets, 2000; www.sweat.org.za). Critics of the abolitionist approach to sex work also argue that criminalising sex work on the basis of morality is rooted in ideological interests that are not plausible as morality is not absolute in this post-modern society (Luiz, & Roets, 2000; O'Neil, 2010). Neo-liberal theory is discussed further in the next section.

2.2.2 Neo-liberal theories on poverty and social exclusion

Since poverty is one of the main reason that predispose most sex workers to engage in sex work and the main research assumption of the study, it is important to explain poverty as a

causal factor for sex work from different theoretical perspectives. The neo-liberal theory uses individualistic and cultural theories of explaining poverty and social exclusion. Neo-liberal theories constitute the macro-economic policies adopted by Margaret Thatcher and John Major from 1979-1997 (Ansell, 2005; Graaff, 2006; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Influenced by neo-liberal theories such as the modernisation theories the period of the late 1980s and 1990s saw the introduction of economic structural adjustment programmes which proposed the privatisation of public services, trade liberalisation, reduction of government spending and welfare benefits. The policies also proposed lowering taxes and reforming state services such as education and health care by introducing market forces (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Their drive was to create economic growth that in turn will raise the standards of living and economic success was supposed to trickle down to those on low income levels (Davids et al., 2005; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

The neo-liberal theories explain poverty in terms of the reluctance of the poor to work and provide adequately for their own well-being (Graaff, 2006; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). From this perspective, it is clear that the individualistic theories blame the poor for their poverty. They view poverty as a characteristic of a social group such as a family or a community, which they pass on from generation to generation. The theories classify the poor people as constituting a group of people called the 'underclass' who display traits such as laziness, incompetence, dependency and an inclination towards instant gratification (Davids et al., 2005; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). From the perspective of neo-liberal theory, sex workers are a group of people who belong to the underclass who display behavioural traits that are motivated by instant gratification and lack virtuous qualities like industriousness and thriftiness. The neo-liberal theories however fail to take into account the structural causes of poverty (Davids et al., 2005; Graaff, 2006).

Structural factors such as the socio-historical context of apartheid in South Africa left a vast majority of people particularly African women, disproportionately poor, because of the discriminatory social services of the regime (Davids et al., 2005; Gumede, 2008; Patel, 2005; Ramphele, 2002). The neo-liberal theories initiated the adoption of structural adjustment programmes and trade liberalisation policies in the late 1980s, which left many families struggling because of retrenchments in the public sector. In addition, there was reduced government funding for education and public health services. Privatisation of public services

coupled with increases in prices of basic commodities created more poverty (Ansell, 2005; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007). These conditions adversely affect the economic and social empowerment of women leading some of them to engage in risky sexual behaviour as a way of coping with poverty. It is also important to note that poverty is not an aspect of cultural attitudes of fatalism and resignation passed from generation to generation through socialisation; rather, there are situational constraints and structural factors, which inhibit poor people from meeting their basic human needs (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). This argument suggests that the removal of constraints and structural inequalities is likely to culminate in social inclusion and public participation in sustainable development (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008; Mubangizi, 2007; O'Neil, 2010).

2.2.3 Conflict perspectives on poverty and social exclusion

One of the theoretical perspectives of understanding poverty is the Marxist or conflict theories. Marxism is a classical theory that was pioneered by Karl Marx in response to the plight of the working class people during the Industrial Revolution (Mishra, 1981). The theories argue that society fails to allocate resources and provide opportunities fairly that explains the problems of poverty and social exclusion (Graaff, 2004; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Marxists view those who suffer from poverty and social exclusion as victims rather than the cause of their problems as argued by the neo-liberal perspective. Conflict theorists disagree about the reasons why society has failed to eradicate poverty. Some theorists hold the welfare state responsible whilst others blame the lack of power and weak bargaining position of the poor and socially excluded (Graaff, 2004; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

The poor are unable to sell their labour or are inhibited from receiving sufficient rewards from it to uplift them out of poverty (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Conflict theories thus explain the existence of poverty and social exclusion in terms of wider structural forces in society particularly the existence of stratification systems (Graaff, 2004; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008; Mishra, 1981). Marxists believe that poverty and social exclusion are inherent and inevitable consequences of capitalism and unequal power relations (Graaff, 2005; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008; Mishra, 1981; O'Neil, 2010). From a Marxist perspective, sex workers would blame the government for failing to provide adequate employment and other income generation opportunities hence their entry into sex work whether it is legal or not. In this regard, sex work can be viewed as a way of protesting or conflicting with the

government. Marxists propose that capitalism should be replaced by a socialist society in which the forces of production are communally owned (Mishra, 1981). Marxists regard capitalism as an exploitative system and condemn the inequality it engenders. Feminism is a form of conflict theory as explained in the next section.

2.2.4 Feminist perspectives

Ismail (2006) posits that due to the diversity of feminisms, which include Liberal feminists, Cultural feminists, Third-World feminists, Black feminists, Socialist feminists and Post-modern feminists, it is problematic to assign a common meaning to the term. “Different feminist definitions have been criticised by Third-World women activists and black women in America for using definitions that are not appropriate for third world and black women” (Ismail, 2006; Nussbaum, 2000). Feminisms are therefore unstable and varied even in one cultural context such as Third-World feminism or African Feminism. Ismail (2006) identified the following definition, which informs the study, “Feminism is the awareness of the oppression, exploitation and or conscious subordination of women within society and the conscious action to change and transform the situation”. The Feminist perspective is a form of conflict theory, which argues that other theoretical perspectives neglect gender issues and concentrate too much on paid forms of work whilst ignoring reproduction and the informal economy of unpaid caring and domestic labour (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

In terms of sex work, on the one hand some feminist discourses seek to reframe sex work as work or labour within the context of capitalism and market principles. On the other hand, sex work is viewed in terms of exploitation and the women involved are deemed victims of patriarchy, power relations and traffickers and sometimes themselves (O’Neil, 2010; Surujlal & Dhurup, 2009). Ismail (2006) emphasizes the plurality of feminisms, which delineates women’s experiences, identities and constructions of realities as informed by their history, racial ethnic class and geographical locations (Nussbaum, 2000). The implications for poor women empowerment are that not all poor women necessarily utilise similar coping strategies to empower themselves or that all poor women will embrace empowerment for social change. Conflict theories have been criticised for their utopian idealism by envisaging a classless society, which is free of inequalities (Mishra, 1981; Williams, 1989). Another criticism is that their proposed solution of transforming society is destabilising. The instability could lead to the creation of more social problems (Davids et al., 2005). Conflict theories are also criticised

for failing to take cognisance of the material circumstances and conditions, which might inhibit such change (Williams, 1989). A more comprehensive approach of explaining poverty and social exclusion is discussed in the next section.

2.2.5 An integrated framework for explaining social exclusion and poverty.

Burchardt et al., (2002), as quoted in Haralambos and Holborn (2008), propose an integrated approach in understanding poverty. They propose examining both the past and present influences on the opportunities available to people and the outcomes that result from the interaction of the various factors involved (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). In South Africa, the socio-historical context of apartheid which promoted policies of social exclusion had far-reaching consequences for girls and women, particularly those from the communities of people of colour which predisposed and precipitated their entry into sex work (Davids, et al., 2005; Ramphele, 2002). Burchardt et al. (2002), as quoted in Haralambos & Holborn (2008), asserts that socio-historical contexts affect the level of capital that people acquire and these in turn shape the opportunities that are open to them. Capital can be in the form of human capital such as genetic inheritance, childhood circumstances, education and training (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Physical capital entails ownership of housing, land, equipment. Financial capital includes the ownership of financial assets or liabilities (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Due to lack of these capital resources, most women found themselves with no other options (Shisana et al, 2008).

It is apparent that the integrated framework to explaining social exclusion and poverty is multifaceted and holistic in approach. Burchardt et al. (2002), in Haralambos & Holborn (2008), goes further in delineating present influences on whether individuals and groups experience poverty and social exclusion by dividing the influences into external and internal influences. External influences are the constraints facing an individual and community, for example, the lack of jobs is likely to lead women in poverty and subsequently sex work in some cases (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Internal influences include the choices that individuals and communities make. Cultural factors can play a part in influencing choices such as pursuing a career or staying in post-compulsory education (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Drawing on Burchardt et al, policies to tackle poverty and social exclusion can be used in a holistic way by focusing on internal and external influences as well as considering

individuals, families, community and global circumstances in a systemic perspective (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008; Taylor, 1999).

Burchardt et al.'s (2002) integrated framework of explaining poverty is plausible in looking at the multifaceted nature of poverty. However, the framework is limited in contextual applications of intervention strategies. For example, understanding that apartheid left a legacy of poverty and inequality does not suffice to implementing policies that alleviate poverty effectively, as there are inherent complexities. Whilst external influences such as global opportunities and national poverty alleviation programmes may be available in a country, obstacles such as administrative obstacles, a lack of access to legal services or lack of enforcement of laws, gender discrimination and socio-economic problems that inhibit social exclusion (Davids et al., 2005; Mubangizi, 2008). The next section presents the symbolic interactionism theory of explaining sex work.

2.2.6 Symbolic Interaction on crime and deviance

The Symbolic Interactionism theory is directly linked to the work of George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer (Graaff, 2004). Symbolic Interactionism was popularised because of its emphasis on meaning, individual actors, individual identity and consciousness as opposed to larger scale structures influencing individual behaviour. This notion lies in opposition to Functionalism and Marxism, which put more emphasis on societal structures as influencing behaviour more than individual agency. Some of the principles of the Symbolic Interaction theory postulate that people engage in social action because of their being active thinking actors as opposed to action being determined by biological drives, social structure and cultural factors (Graaff, 2005). This implies that the social world has no inherent meaning, as there are subjective interpretations to the social world. For example, sex work means different things to different people, therefore one can only fully understand sex work or any social action by taking into account the insider perspective of the social actor, in this case the sex worker (Graaff, 2005).

O'Neil (2010) posits that the identity theory shapes the deviancy model, which describes dissimilar things as equalised, for example a sex worker, is equal to "dirty", "disease" and labelled as "prostitute". These labels carry negative connotations and the labelled person, (sex worker) is thus stigmatised to the extent that the labelled identity supersedes the perceived

“deviant” person’s other statuses such as mother, daughter or professional position (Graaff, 2005). The effects of being labelled deviant by the public is on the labelled individual’s self-concept in which they feel different, isolated and rejected, resulting in the formation of separate subcultures. Sex workers are likely to develop a heightened sense of estrangement and resentment against society as they find it difficult to earn money and support themselves or leave the sex industry (Graaff, 2005; Luiz & Roets, 2000; Lutrick & Conan, 2009; O’Neil, 2010; Surujlal & Dhurup, 2009). The discussion now shifts to focus on approaches of addressing poverty and social exclusion.

2.2.7 Sen’s Capability approach on poverty and social exclusion

In addressing poverty and social exclusion, it is important to follow development approaches that promote self-reliance and sustainability. Sen (1999) postulates that for development to be effective there is need to expand people’s freedoms in the broader contexts of political economic, social and security spheres. Sen (1999) articulates that the prerequisite for development are political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security. The capabilities of a person correspond to the freedom a person has to lead one kind of life or another. It is also important to point out that when the capability approach was postulated, contemporary development debates were centred on utilitarianism in which a person’s wellbeing was judged by his or her consumption of goods or benefits from welfare (Nussbaum, 2000). Nussbaum (2000) explains Sen’s notion of capability as denoting a space within which comparisons of quality of life or standard of living are most fruitfully made. For Sen (1999), development and poverty alleviation is not merely providing for subsistence living, rather it goes further in addressing other human needs such as literacy, mortality rate, standard of living and freedom from social ills such as alcoholism and family violence (Nussbaum, 2000). When addressing development issues, it is therefore necessary to build individual and institutional capacities and “functionings” (Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1999). “Functionings” refers to parts of the state of a person, in particular, things that he or she manages to do or be in leading a life in relation to satisfaction of human needs, which can be needs for nutrition, participation, and belonging.

Writing on poverty and development issues of women across the world, Nussbaum (2000) argues that an international feminist philosophy and political liberalism that focus on the urgent development needs and interests of developing countries is imperative. This is so

because most women in developing countries experience concrete material needs deprivation and acute capabilities failure (Nussbaum, 2000). South African women, like most others from developing countries, have been traditionally subject to patriarchal oppression that deprived them of social economic and political freedoms and abilities to pursue their choices in life (Nussbaum, 2000). The majority of female sex workers are not an exception as they come from socio-economic backgrounds that deprived them of education, access to ownership of property, ability to make decisions about their lives amongst others. It is therefore imperative to use the capability approach by affording such women an opportunity to live dignified lives by enhancing their abilities to earn incomes and pursue their economic and social aspirations through engagement in mainstream socio-economic activities that free them from poverty and social exclusion. Lastly, the next section discusses the people centred approach as an approach to development.

2.2.8 The people centred approach in addressing poverty and social exclusion

People centred development is a humanist paradigm which operate in a post colonial context in which mainstream development approaches have failed and neglected to include poor communities into development plans (Ismail, 2006). The people centred approach is defined as:

a process by which members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations (David's, Thereon & Maphunye, 2005:17).

People centred development includes the active involvement of people to improve their wellbeing. The principles of people-centred development are sustainability, participation, empowerment and social learning (Davids et al., 2005). Sustainability refers to the ability of the community to control resources and sustainable forms of living that conserve land, energy, and progressive cultural systems that do not undermine and oppress either women or men (Davids et al., 2005; Ismail, 2006). People-centred development is thus a development approach, which puts people at the centre of development. Public participation entails the involvement of the community in planning, choosing, creating a sense of accountability for those carrying out development.

People-centred development encompass social learning which entails “releasing the creative energies of poor people by mobilising them along with local resources and knowledge for all

round development of people” (Ismail, 2006). As most causal factors for entry into sex work are linked to poverty, it is imperative to use the people-centred approach to address poverty issues. Since sex work is associated with other social problems, therefore, in order to tackle the social problems, a people centred approach, which foster public participation, empowerment, social learning and sustainability, is proposed (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; Luiz & Roets, 2000; Surujlal & Dhurup, 2009; Shisana et al; 2009; United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs, 2007). The main critiques of people centred development are that the approach lacks an analysis of the state or broader social relations and that there is no attention to personal goals, class and gender divisions, diversity, history and colonialism (Ismail, 2006). In the next section, the policies and legislation that are pertinent in addressing factors that lead women into doing sex work are discussed.

2.3 Policy and legislation on women empowerment and poverty

Various policies are employed by the South African government to address poverty and social exclusion. For the purpose of the study, a few of these have been selected.

2.3.1 GEAR

GEAR is a macro-economic policy, which is market driven and promoted by neo-liberal theories in particular the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (Davids et al., 2005). The neo-liberal theories’ main objective is promotion of economic growth by using mechanisms such as trade liberalisation, minimising state intervention in trade and labour markets (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008; Sengendo, 2006). The South African government in the 1990s adopted GEAR as an economic growth and poverty alleviation strategy whose impetus was to reduce government spending, increasing labour market flexibility, creating significant job opportunities, increasing government investment and privatising state assets to reduce government spending (Altman, 2009; Bhorat & Oosthuisen, 2002; Davids et al, 2005). It was hoped that the economic growth would trickle down to the poor.

However, literature on such macro-economic policies has indicated their failure to offer equitable distribution of economic gains or “trickling-down effect” as an outcome of the policy (Bhorat & Oosthuisen, 2002; Sengendo, 2006). The inception of GEAR as an economic strategy generated significant controversy. Proponents of GEAR support GEAR by

arguing that the only way to redistribute wealth in a sustainable manner is through a rigorous fiscal framework (Davids et al., 2005). Critics of GEAR argued that its conservative fiscal stance would decrease rather than increase investment (Davids et al., 2005). The “trickle-down” effect of wealth redistribution did not materialise as evidenced by an enormous amount of inequality in South Africa that was perpetrated by a lack of employment opportunities, which led some women into the sex work industry (Davids et al., 2005). It is the researcher’s opinion to promote social and economic development by integrating a holistic approach of reducing poverty as a causal factor of entry into sex work and inequality through realisation of socio-economic rights and promoting access to public services in order to create equal opportunities for all.

2.3.2 ASGISA

A development strategy that follows the ethos of GEAR is the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA). The objectives of ASGISA are to halve unemployment between 2004 and 2014, half poverty, accelerate employment equity and improve broad based economic empowerment (Altman, 2009; McGrath & Akoojee, 2007). ASGISA is in line with the Millennium goals in its commitment to eradicate extreme poverty. Some of the Millennium goals include, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development (Ikapa elihlumayo, 2008; McGrath & Akoojee, 2007).

ASGISA’s objectives include the following themes namely increasing public sector investment on infrastructure programmes, industrial strategies focusing on business process outsourcing and tourism and broad-based black economic empowerment and small business development (Aliber, 2006; Ikapa elihlumayo, 2008; McGrath & Akoojee, 2007). Skills and education initiatives, second economy interventions through improved access to procurement and promoting economic opportunities for women and youth (Ikapa elihlumayo, 2008; McGrath & Akoojee, 2007). The expanded public works programme gives attention to enhancing the value of poor people’s assets (Altman, 2009; McGrath & Akoojee, 2006; Mubangizi, 2008). ASGISA seeks to ensure that macro-economic issues such as responding to exchange rate volatility, maintaining low inflation and better budgetary management do

not impede development (McGrath & Akoojee, 2006). Public administration issues seek to increase capacity of departments and agencies in delivering social and economic objectives. It is important to note that the development initiatives are coordinated at various levels of the government through the integrated development planning to increase participatory democracy (Davids et al., 2005; Ikapa elihlumayo). The relevance of ASGISA's overall objectives to sex work is that they seek to address the causal factors of sex works mainly social and economic factors that contribute to women doing sex work.

Criticisms of ASGISA include the fact that the strategy's promotion of the achievement of accelerated growth and shared growth simultaneously is not feasible, given the industrial and economic realities under which policy is implemented (McGrath & Akoojee, 2007). ASGISA has been criticised as a market oriented economic ideology that ignores the social needs of the poor (Mubangizi, 2008). Some critics also argue that infrastructural development in mega-projects and public works programmes are not likely to meet the needs of the poor due to lack of financial feasibility (Mubangizi, 2008). The Black Economic Empowerment has also been accused of benefiting the elite (McGrath & Akoojee, 2007; Mubangizi, 2008). In addition, the strategy is accused of being silent on HIV/ AIDS which is intrinsically linked to sex work and the greatest constraint to future development as well as being a social and humanitarian challenge currently facing the country (McGrath & Akoojee, 2007; Mubangizi, 2008).

2.3.3 South African National Youth Policy

It is important to note that the majority of female sex workers fall into the age bracket of the youth, which means that sex work has implications for youth development (Gould & Fick, 2008). The South African National Youth Policy (NYP) (2008: 12) defines young people "inclusively as those falling within the age group of 14 to 35 years". The definition is based on the mandate of the National Youth Commission Act 1996 and the National Youth Policy 2000. The profiling of youth in a much broader age group takes into account the socio-historical contexts of young people in South Africa, which has, predisposes them to the challenges of youth development. The National Youth Policy (2008:11) defines youth development as:

an intentional comprehensive approach that provides space, opportunities and support for young people to maximise their individual and collective creative energies for personal development as well as development of the broader society of which they are an integral part.

The definition of youth development emphasise the important role that young people contribute in developing their communities and society. In South Africa, young people constitute 36.4 per cent of the population (National Youth Policy, 2009). Youth development in South Africa is shaped by non-racist and non-sexist democracy that is built through transformation, reconstruction and development (National Youth Policy, 2008). According to the National Youth Policy (2008), the values that underpin youth development pertains to respecting the inherent worth and inborn dignity of the youth. The policy emphasizes the empowerment of youth so that they contribute meaningfully to society. The key legislative and policy framework that informs the National Youth Policy is as follows: The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, is the supreme law, which spells out the human rights of all citizens (National Youth Policy, 2009). These rights are in line with the Citizenship rights theory as outlined by Midgley (1997). The citizenship rights theory is based on the Functionalist theory, which advocate for a harmonious functioning of society (Midgely, 1997). The democratic rights give ordinary citizens the ability to shape government policy and ultimately result in the granting of social rights (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008, Midgley, 1997; Williams, 1989). The advocacy for rights is based on egalitarian principles. The principles emphasise the importance of equality between all citizens (Midgley, 1997; Mishra, 1981). It is imperative to promote the citizen rights of girls and young women as spelled out in the constitution in order to effect their optimum development. Despite the fact that the South African government has developed a youth development policy, it is important to bridge the gap between policy formulation and implementation in order to militate against factors that perpetuate the underdevelopment of youth such as poverty and social exclusion.

2.3.4 National Gender Policy Framework

The office on the status of women prepared a policy framework entitled: *South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality* (The office on the status of women, 2002). The main purpose of the Gender Policy Framework is to formulate a clear “vision, and framework to guide the process of developing laws, policies, procedures, and practices which will serve to promote equal rights of women and men in all spheres and structures of the governments, workplace, community and the family” (The office on the status of women, 2002:4). Through the 1996 Constitution, South Africans adopted the mandate to advance the country towards a democratic, non- racist and non –

sexist society. This shows the country's commitment to social inclusion of all people. In addition, South Africa has adopted a number of laws that were developed to promote equality between women and men regardless of race, class, disability and sexual orientation (The Office on the Status of Women, 2000). The laws protect the interests of men and women in the family, health, property ownership, education and training, governance, institutional support and general equality. Considering the history of women's discrimination in South Africa, these laws are only a sample of the laws that seek to reverse and redress the discrimination of women in their bid to acquire social and economic development (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009). When women are empowered, they are likely to make more informed decisions regarding their social and economic development thereby avoiding risky-sexual behaviour, gender based violence and other problems associated with sex work (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; Shisana et al, 2008).

2.3.5 The Bill of Rights

The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) gives South African citizens fundamental socio-economic rights (Davids et al. 2005). The rights enshrined in the Bill of the Rights of the Constitution include the following social and economic rights, which are relevant to all citizens as cited in Davids et al. (2005:44). The right of access to housing, health, food, water and social security is of paramount importance. The Bill promotes the right to basic education including adult basic education as well as the right not to be refused emergency medical treatment. In view of the fact that in South Africa housing is a huge problem, the bill has accommodated for the right not to be evicted or have one's home demolished without a court order. In terms of child protection, the bill advocates for the right of children to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care and social services. South Africa has also ratified certain international human rights treaties that recognise economic and social rights. Such treaties include the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. In addition, South Africa participated at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen where it pledged to eradicate poverty and in 2000, the country pledged to support the eight Millennium Development Goals at the UN-sponsored Millennium Summit. It is evident that South Africa is actively involved in seeking to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion of the poor people including the sex workers

whose basic needs are addressed in the Bill of rights. The next section discusses the main themes of the study.

2.4 Themes

When the researcher was conducting the literature review, she identified the following themes, which are relevant to the study.

- Sex work from a global South African and Cape Town Metropole perspective.
- Structural factors that contribute to women doing sex work
- Social factors contributing to women doing sex work
- Economic factors contributing to women doing sex work
- Perspectives of female sex workers on the structural contexts in which they operate
- Perceived challenges of sex work
- Proposed supportive interventions

2.4.1 Sex work

In this section, a review of the literature on the structural economic and social factors contributing to women doing sex work is presented. Around the world, studies of the experiences of sex workers have been conducted.

These studies have informed the research questions which this study seeks to answer namely:

- a) (a) What are the structural factors that led the women in the study into doing sex work?*
- b) What are the social factors that led women in the study into doing sex work?*
- c) What are the economic factors that contribute to women in the study doing sex work?*
- d) What are the female sex workers' perceptions regarding the structural context in which they do their work?*
- e) What are the female sex workers perceived challenges of their work?*
- f) How would female sex workers want to be supported by significant role players?*

Sex work: A global perspective

According to the United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs report (2007), sex workers the majority of whom are female, face a high risk of HIV infection due to their limited access to information and education. Studies conducted in Germany, Sweden, Netherlands, Australia, the UK and France indicate that sex work was legalised and reversed due to the negative effects suffered by women and society (Sarujlal & Dhurup, 2009). The negative effects included the increase of human trafficking, increased violence against women, child abuse, child “prostitution”, sexually transmitted diseases amongst others (Sarujlal & Dhurup, 2009). In terms of legislation, there are still debates on the international arena on whether sex work should be criminalised, decriminalised and legalised. Lutrick and Cohan (2009) conducted a study in the United States on the perceptions of female sex workers on the preferred legislative structure and found mixed responses. While the majority of female sex workers preferred a decriminalised system because of its benefits such as protection of sex workers from violence and autonomy to choose the type of sex work, others preferred a criminalised system because of its limitations on competition and lack of medical checks. In terms of societal attitudes towards sex work, there are contesting views influenced on the one hand by functional theories as proposed by Durkheim’s anomie theory, which advocates for the upholding of norms and values to maintain the social fabric (Graaff, 2005). Such views thus perceive sex work as a moral deviance.

On the other hand, there are modernisation theories, in particular neo-liberal theories, which influence views that perceive sex work as structured by capitalism a business for profit maximisation (O’Neil 2010). Arguing from a global perspective, O’Neil (2010) posits that debates around sex work should shift from constructing sex work around binaries; rather, debates should be contextualised within historical cultural and material analysis that explores the cultural structural and emotional experiences of the people involved. This multidimensional analysis of sex work is imperative for policy making that facilitate social justice and social inclusion of sex workers.

Sex work in South Africa

Similar to other international countries, in South African, sex work is reported to be associated with other social problems. The social problems include the erosion of societal

moral values, increase of crime, substance abuse, violence, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, human trafficking and family breakdown (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; Luiz & Roets, 2000; Surujlal & Dhurup, 2009; Shisana et al., 2009; United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs, 2007). The association of sex work with social problems has partly influenced the public opinion on legalisation of sex work in South Africa, which is highly abolitionist (Gould & Fick, 2008; Sarujlal & Dhurup, 2009). Other perspectives that are influenced by neo-liberal theories argue that a democratic society should permit liberalisation of trade as long as there is mutual consent between buyer and seller (Luiz & Roets, 2000). Such perspectives are anti-abolitionist. Despite the various contentions about sex work, the common ground for both sides of the argument is found by considering the objective facts about sex work. Firstly, sex is a commodity just like any other and falls into the ambit of the standard economic theories of supply and demand dynamics (Luiz & Roets, 2000). For this reason, the economic basis for entry into sex work for most women is motivated by the desire to earn income (Luiz & Roets, 2000; Lutrick & Conan, 2009; O'Neil, 2010). Secondly, sex work is a phenomenon that has existed as early as the ancient Greek times and has been regulated in different ways by different societies as it has always been considered a moral deviance by mainstream society (Graaff, 2006; O'Neil, 2010; Sarujlal & Dhurup, 2009). In South Africa, though sex work is illegal it has not stopped the influx of women into the sex work industry, hence sex work is a lived reality of modern society (Surujlal & Dhurup, 2009). Thirdly, the entrance of women into sex work has implications for gender and social inequalities (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; O'Neil, 2010). Lastly, sex work is intrinsically associated with other social problems such as HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence and substance abuse amongst others.

Sex work in Cape Town

Gould and Fick (2008) conducted a study in the city of Cape Town in 2006, which sought to examine the sex work industry and the evidence for human trafficking into the industry by interviewing 35 out of 245 street sex workers who were estimated to operate in the streets of Cape Town. The findings of the study include the demographic characteristics of sex workers as predominantly women, about 90 per cent, of whom 22 per cent completed only primary education whilst 56 per cent completed some high school education and 3 per cent had tertiary education. The findings also indicated that most street-based sex workers are women of

colour, who have little schooling or left school before completing their final year (Matric); their average age was 29 (Gould & Fick, 2008).

It is important to note that the average age of female sex workers according to Gould and Flick's (2008) study lies within the youth bracket according to South African Youth Policy definition of youth which defines youth as including the ages from 14 to 35 (National Youth Policy, 2008). Sex work thus has implications for youth development initiatives on social inclusion. In terms of familial backgrounds, at least a third came from poor backgrounds as indicated by informal and unstable living arrangements (Gould & Fick, 2008). The socio-economic backgrounds of female sex workers in Gould & Fick's (2008) Cape Town study, Dinkelman et al.'s (2005) Cape Town study corresponds with Luiz and Roets'(2000) in the Free State and Shisana et al.'s (2008) South African National survey. The studies found that early sexual debut, (meaning engaging in sex when too young to know the cause and effect relationships of having sex on reproduction health), families at risk, poverty and poor education are among the characteristics and causal factors for entry into sex work. This calls for the need for preventive interventions that address the causal factors. In addition, limited education and lack of access to information impacts on sex workers' ability to negotiate safe sex and respond to HIV/AIDS interventions (Dinkelman et al., 2005; Luiz & Roets, 2000; Shisana et al., 2008; Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009).

Conversely, advocacy groups such as Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) advocate for the rights of sex workers and view their work as a human right that enables them to earn sustainable livelihoods (www.sweat.org, Gould & Fick, 2008). However, characteristics like low education, poverty and unstable familial backgrounds are social dysfunctions in any case whether sex work is a human right profession or not, therefore, there is need for preventive intervention in this regard. In addition, the association of sex works with other social problems as evidenced by studies calls for re-examining it as a target for social policy intervention. It is important to begin the discussion with the perceived challenges of sex work before presenting the factors that contribute to women doing sex work in order to provide the background of the context in which sex work operates as indicated below.

Perceived challenges of sex work

Following the legal framework in which sex work takes place, it is imperative to consider how female sex workers perceive their challenges. Drawing on studies on the perspectives of sex workers stated earlier, a summary of their challenges could be drawn. Among the worst challenges that they face is the victimisation and harassment by the police (Gould & Fick, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2000; Lutrick & Cohan, 2009; Surujulal & Dhurup, 2009).

Another challenge faced by sex workers is the lack of access to health care programmes related to STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) which makes it difficult to monitor STD/HIV/AIDS infection. The inhibited access to health care programmes is attributable to distances between places of operation and health care facilities (Luiz & Roets, 2000). Sex work in a criminalised system such as South Africa is characterised by high mobility of sex workers who would be fleeing the justice system and searching for lucrative business (Gould & Fick, 2008). The high mobility affects accessibility and utilisation of health care programmes (Gould & Fick, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2000).

In addition, health care workers demonstrate discriminatory attitudes toward sex workers due to the stigma attached to sex work (Luiz & Roets, 2000). Most street based sex workers are illiterate due to poor education, hence they lack knowledge about health care matters (Gould & Fick, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2009). Many sex workers lack information about HIV and about services that might protect them from infections (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs report, 2007). A study carried out along major transport routes in Africa found that the average age of sex workers was 22.8 years, and the average level of educational attainment was upper primary school. Only 33 per cent knew that they were at risk if they had unprotected sex (United Nations Dept of Economics and Social Affairs, 2007). Among the mine workers in the Free State, some had myths regarding the STD and HIV/ AIDS infection such as that AIDS is caused by having sex with a widow and that having sex with a virgin cures AIDS (Luiz & Roets, 2000). There are also risky sexual behaviours associated with sex work that emanate from concurrent sexual partners and intergenerational sex (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; Shisana et al., 2008).

According to the United Nations Economic Department and Social Affairs report (2007), young sex workers, the majority of whom are female, are at high risk of HIV infection (Shisana et al., 2008). The results of studies undertaken in major urban areas of sub-Saharan

Africa indicate rates of HIV infection among female sex workers was as high as 73 per cent in Ethiopia, 68 per cent in Zambia, 50 per cent in Ghana and South Africa. Evidently, it is imperative for development practitioners to engage in multiple interventions on addressing the spread of HIV/AIDS not only among sex workers but on society as a whole. The high rates of morbidity and mortality within the workforce of various sectors particularly in Sub Saharan Africa clearly show that the spread of HIV/AIDS is in discriminatory (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007).

According to Luiz and Roets (2000), sex work exposes social and sexual inequalities within society (O'Neal 2009). Women are overwhelmingly the sellers of sex and men the buyers, yet penalties are primarily aimed at female sex workers (Gould & Fick, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2000). The unequal power relations pose a threat on the power of sex workers to negotiate protected sex such as condom use (Gould & Fick, 2008; Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2008), and in turn affect the wives of the clients of female sex workers in terms of control over the sex partners their husbands have and negotiating protected sex (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2008; Surujlal and Dhurup 2009). This shows that where sex work is concerned, it has far-reaching implications for the spread of HIV/AIDS, family relationships and social and sexual inequalities.

Linked to social and sexual inequalities, sex workers face exploitation and violence from their clients and pimps (Gould & Fick, 2009; Luiz & Roets, 2000; Lutrick & Cohan, 2009; O'Neil, 2010). This is evidenced by incidences of human trafficking, coercion and control, drug and alcohol use, imposed code of dress and payments (Luiz & Roets, 2000; O'Neil, 2010). Sex workers also face discrimination and social rejection from all sectors of society even from their clientele for various cultural social and religious reasons (Gould & Fick, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2000; O'Neil, 2010). This forces them to operate in unstructured ways, which do not always provide a safe environment for operation (Gould & Fick, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2000). Outlets such as truck stops, taverns, *shebeens* (home based bars usually operated in poor communities in South Africa), mines, parking lots, national roads and streets expose them to harsh conditions (Gould & Fick, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2000; Lutrick & Cohan, 2009).

In addition to the female sex workers facing the challenge of being fixed in the sex work industry, they are restricted from seeking alternative employment because of the criminal nature and stigma attached to sex work (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009). This has far-reaching implications for personal growth and employment opportunities where sex workers want to engage in alternative employment. In view of the challenges posed by sex work, it is imperative to examine the structural factors that contribute to women doing sex work as the next section indicates.

2.4.2 Structural factors

According to Graaff (2006:9), the sociological definition of structure is “a regular pattern of behaviour in society, the grooves of accustomed, habituated activity into which people’s lives fit.” Structures are the more fixed and inflexible parts of society or the unconscious forces that guide our behaviour without us being aware of the forces (Graaff, 2006). In this context, one can talk about family structures, racial structures, power structures, class structures, authority structures and patriarchal structures (Graaff, 2006). These structures guide human behaviour through religious or moral beliefs, material interests and by rewards and punishment (Graaff, 2006). Graaff (2006) takes the debate further by arguing that the influence that structures exert on people is not all- powerful because social structures are dependent of individual action. The decision-making process and human beings cannot exist outside societal structures. Structures and agents or individual actions are thus mutually constitutive (Graaff, 2006).

Even though social structures operate to a high degree beyond the control of individuals in society, this does not mean that individuals are “puppets” under the control of social structures (Graaff, 2006). Individuals have great potential to reflect on themselves, change their minds, their attitudes, their knowledge and so change the society around them though in limited ways (Graaff, 2006). It is important to identify the structures that define the sex worker such as gender, social class, ethnicity, race and geographical area of origin as broader determinants for entry into sex work. Various authors have documented that such structural factors exerts more susceptibility to poverty. For example, taking gender as structural dimension of poverty shows that women are over-represented in poverty statistics has been called the “feminisation of poverty (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

According to Borat and Oosthuisen (2006), the South African government faced a huge challenge in the first decade of the 21st century in that although employment has expanded, it was not able to keep pace with labour force growth hence labour force growth has translated into increasing numbers of broad and narrow unemployment rates since 1995 (McGrath & Akoojee, 2006). Unemployment is concentrated in specific geographically and demographically defined groups such that the worst affected by unemployment are African, female, poorly educated and young (15-24 years (Bhorat & Oosthuisen, 2006; McGrath & Akoojee, 2006; Mubangizi, 2008; Rospabe & Selodi, 2006). Rural areas specifically the former homelands are the worst hit (Bhorat & Oosthuisen, 2006). Structures also inflexibly determine specific occupations for specific groups of people. In Cape Town for example the domestic and hospitality industry, are traditional occupations for black people particularly migrating from rural areas (Cox, Hemson & Todes, 2004).

In addition to the black woman as the face of poverty in South Africa, the coloured woman is no exception particularly in the Cape Flats area of Cape Town. The Cape Flats are the area to which non- white people were forced to move during the apartheid regime as a result of legislation such as The Groups Areas' Act of 1950 (Dick, 2007). Owing to this historical context of the area, the Cape Flats became to be understood as a space associated with displacement, hardship and suffering (Dick (2007:711). The Groups Areas Act of 1950 legislated that areas be set aside for exclusive occupation by a particular "race" groups.¹ The Cape Flats area is predominantly populated by coloureds. The Cape Flats area thus covers areas that include Athlone, Belhar, Bontehuwel, Manenburg, Heideveld, Hanover Park, Mitchell's Plain, Lavender Hill, and Vrygrond.

Female-headed households are a common feature of the South African communities in particular, the black and coloured communities that are mostly affected by poverty as women play a major role as the family breadwinners. Teen pregnancies also predispose most women to a position of perpetual poverty as the single mothers strive to make a living. The state assistance of the Child Support Grant is hardly adequate to meet the expenses (Orderson, 2010). According to Orderson (2010), prior to 1990, about 40 000 women were employed in the clothing industry but in 2010 less than half, about 17600 women are employed due to

¹ The Populations Registration Act of 1950 divided racial groups into "whites, coloured, Asians and Africans" among other classifications (Dick, 2007; Davids et al., 2005).

retrenchments resulting from local South African Industries being superseded by the imported Chinese clothing and textiles (Orderson, 2010). Despite living in extreme poverty most women in the Cape Flats and rural South Africa, demonstrate remarkable resilience by enduring the harsh realities of poverty and trying hard to make a living whilst others resort to sex work as a way of earning a living (Orderson, 2010; Rampele, 2002). It is the researcher's task to ascertain if any of these social structures have exerted a particular influence in contributing to the female sex workers under study to do their preferred work. The social factors are considered next.

2.4.3 Social factors

According to Luiz and Roets (2000), the vast majority of women enter into sex work at an early age because of family problems. Such problems encompass childhood sexual or physical abuse (Luiz & Roets, 2000; Shisana et al., 2008). Luiz and Roets (2000) conducted a qualitative study on sex workers in the Free State in South Africa and found that most of their participants had a history of being neglected as a child, being given adult responsibilities like taking over the care of other children from as early as eight years old. In addition, the participants indicated that they lacked role models, were illiterate, and some entered sex work simply by being bored with their lives (Gould & Fick, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2000). Surujlal and Dhurup (2009) state that some women and children are hired into sex work through coercion by pimps and traffickers to use drugs which eventually lead to addiction and sex work related problems (O'Neil, 2010). Others cited personal reasons for entering sex work such as the provision of love, whilst others enjoyed the power it gave them (Luiz & Roets, 2000).

Shisana et al. (2008) conducted a national survey in South Africa on the HIV prevalence and sexual behaviour; the findings indicated that early sexual debut is explained in terms of the desire by young people for sexual exploration, peer pressure, acquisition of status by showing sexual desirability and seeking sexual pleasure. Although these findings relate to early sexual debut and not early entry into sex work, it is important to note the causal relationship between early sexual encounter and susceptibility to doing sex work especially in low socio-economic status communities (Gould & Fick, 2008; Luis & Roets, 2000; O'Neil 2010, Shisana et al., 2008). Luiz & Roets (2000) posits that for most women, entry into sex work is a result of socio-economic circumstances beyond their control.

Linked to early sexual encounter, is the influence of juvenile delinquency on entry into sex work. Tshiwula (2002:87) as cited in Bezuidenhout (2002) defines a juvenile delinquent as “a person who breaks the law habitually or persistently”. The definition is further broadened to refer to “antisocial behaviour of juveniles that does not fall under the normal penal provisions of the law” (Tshiwula, 2002). Juvenile delinquency can therefore be understood broadly to mean juvenile crime and other antisocial behaviour among adolescents (Tshiwula, 2002). In South Africa, since sex work is a criminal offence and is socially unacceptable by mainstream society, the researcher will allow the findings to determine whether sex work is a viable profession or not as indicated by the findings chapter discussed in chapter 4. Among the theories that explain the origins of juvenile delinquency is the social control theory postulated by Travis Hirsch. The theory asserts that most people stay out of trouble and conform to society laws because of their strong bond to society norms that are fostered through socialisation by institutions that include the family, school, work and church (Graaff, 2005; Tshiwula, 2002). Hirsch’s theory explains that the social bond consists of the attachment, commitment, involvement and belief (Graaff, 2005; Tshiwula, 2002).

Attachment refers to the psychological connection one feels towards other persons and the extent to which one values these people’s opinions and feelings (Graaff, 2005; Tshiwula, 2002). Commitment denotes to the perceptions of the investments one has made by conforming to rules and the losses one will suffer due to non-conformity. Involvement means the degree of participation in legitimate activity. Belief refers to the conviction one holds pertaining to the application of rules with equity and merit consistently as influenced by one’s attitude towards figures of authority representing those rules (Graaff, 2005; Tshiwula, 2002). Critics of the social control theory argue that controlling youths by keeping them busy and well regulated is not sufficient to avoid delinquency (Graaff, 2005; Tshiwula, 2002). As the bond weakens, non-conformists will turn to like-minded peers for support and approval (Tshiwula, 2002).

However, the social control theory sheds some light into understanding that juvenile offences forms the basis for crime and deviance from socially accepted norms in adult life. For this reason, Tshiwula (2002) asserts that delinquency is a social disease that has symptoms that can be treated at primary, secondary and tertiary levels hence preventive services rendered

should not be intermittent. Tshiwula (2002) states that some of the factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency include familial problems such as experiencing harsh, rejection, abandonment and inconsistent parental discipline, growing up in home characterised by marital discord and a lack of family affection. These factors contribute to repeated failure in school and being disadvantaged and unemployed and being marginalised from mainstream society. By undertaking the current study, it was enlightening to understand the factors that lead women into sex work from their own perspectives. In addition to social factors for entering sex work, there are economic factors as indicated below.

2.4.4 Economic factors

There is ample evidence which points out that women enter into sex work as a result of poverty, the need for money, more lucrative income, acquiring goods, services, accommodation or other basic necessities (Dinkelman et al., 2005; Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; O'Neal 2010; Shisana et al., 2008; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007). Surujlal and Dhurup (2009) state that the majority of women in South Africa came from poor rural areas to look for work but they eventually resort to sex work when no other employment is found (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; Luiz & Roets, 2000). The economic deprivation is exacerbated by the existence of insecure employment, low incomes, meagre assets and low levels of savings and these factors prompt risky sexual behaviour (Dinkelman et al., 2005; Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; Shisana et al., 2008). Due to lack of financial resources, poor women are more likely to remain in transactional sex relationships (Dinkelman et al., 2005; Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; Shisana et al., 2008).

O'Neil (2010) writing from an international perspective further argues that the women entering sex work are victims of economic injustices and gender inequalities that are rooted in capitalism and patriarchy, which calls for redistributive actions to address the needs of these women (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; Mubangizi, 2007; Taylor, 1999). Lalthapersad-Pillay (2009) cites a recent study that was conducted in Botswana and Swaziland which indicated that women who lack food are 70 per cent less likely to perceive personal control in sexual relationships, 50 per cent more likely to engage in sex and 70 per cent more likely to have unprotected sex. This situation of poor women in neighbouring Botswana and Swaziland is comparable to South Africa where poverty and inequality are rampant and women are more likely to be poor than men because of their practical gender needs and

strategic gender needs (Davids et al., 2005; Mubangizi, 2007; Patel, 2005; Ramphele, 2002; Taylor, 1999).

The lack of economic empowerment may leave girls and women either without access or with limited access to food, healthcare, education and economic opportunity, factors that predisposes them to enter into sex work (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; United Nations Dept of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007). In addition, more intensive and greater workloads, the sale of land and personal assets for medical payments and taking girls out of school all tend to render women more vulnerable to poverty and risky sexual behaviour in particular, having unprotected sex, concurrent and intergenerational transactional sexual relationships (Dinkelman et al., 2005; Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009, Shisana et al., 2008).

Haralambos and Holborn (2008:214) define poverty in terms of absolute poverty, relative poverty and social exclusion. Absolute poverty is,

A condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information". Absolute poverty is based upon the idea of subsistence and material deprivation and is measured in terms of the resources required to maintain health and physical efficiency (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

Haralambos and Holborn (2008:217) define relative poverty in the following way:

Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities, which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities.

Relative poverty is a state of deprivation that needs to be viewed in terms of the resources available to individuals and households and the styles of living that govern how those resources are used (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Poverty can be viewed in terms of inequality in which some people have higher than average income whereas others income or resources that fall so far short of the average or below poverty line (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008; O'Neil, 2010). Social exclusion is defined as "a multi-dimensional process in which

various forms of exclusion are combined: participation in decision making and political processes, access to employment and resources and integration into common cultural processes” (Haralambos & Holborn: 2008:228). The definition is pertinent and broad in that it encompasses both material inequality and inequalities of power as well as inhibition from taking part in mainstream societal activities. Poverty is thus a form of social exclusion. Drawing on this understanding of poverty and social exclusion it is apparent that female sex workers experience social exclusion in terms of strategic gender needs as women and the stigmatised nature of their work.

2.4.5 Perceptions of female sex workers on the structural contexts in which they operate

Various studies have been conducted on the perspectives of the female sex workers regarding the environment in which they work internationally and locally which generated varied responses (Lutrick & Canon, 2009; Surujulal & Dhurup, 2009). For the purpose of the study, the three main legal frameworks that address sex work that will be discussed are, criminalisation, decriminalisation and legalisation of sex work.

Perceptions on criminalisation

In the United States, sex work is a criminal offence. This entails the purchasing and selling of sexual services and any associated activities such as “prostitution, prostitution while HIV positive, pimping, pandering, soliciting prostitution, loitering with intent to commit prostitution, conspiracy to commit prostitution and keeping a house of prostitutes” (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009:38; O’Neil, 2010). In many criminalised systems, the possession of condoms may be used as circumstantial evidence of intent to do prostitution leading to prostitutes avoiding carrying condoms due to fear of prosecution (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009).

In South Africa, the criminalisation of sex work has given rise to official abuses by the judicial system including the courts and the South African Police services (Luiz & Roets, 2000). Lutrick and Cohan (2009) conducted a qualitative and quantitative study on the perspectives and experiences of a range of female sex workers in the US regarding the legal status of sex work and the impact of criminal law on their work experience. Forty women were enrolled for the qualitative phase of the study in 2004 and 247 women was enrolled for the quantitative phase of the study in 2006-2007.

The findings of the study indicated that out of the 40 sex workers from the qualitative study, “ten of them preferred sex work to remain criminalised, eight specifically called for decriminalisation, and two preferred legalisation. The remaining 20 women did not use the terminology of criminalisation, decriminalisation or legalisation at any point in the interview” (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009; 40). The reasons that were cited for preference of a criminalised system were that the women preferred the government to avoid regulation. For example, several women disliked the mandatory health examination, compulsory documentation and the loss of independence that is brought about if sex work was not criminalised (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009). Female sex workers also feared competition if sex work were to be legalised because they anticipated an increase in the number of sex workers (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009). For most female sex workers, the illegality of sex workers keeps the supply and demand balance in a way that is favourable to the sex worker (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009; Luiz & Roets, 2000). For other women the criminal justice system acts as a safety net against excessive substance abuse and violence (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009). In terms of penalty when arrested, 92 per cent preferred to be offered social services as opposed to incarceration.

Various authors argue against the criminalisation of sex work for varied reasons which include that criminalisation fosters stigmatisation and social exclusion, difficulty in controlling sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS and increasing violence against sex workers by the police. In addition, they cite that criminalisation is based on ideological puritan standards that are outdated and hypocritical (Luiz & Roets, 2000; O’Neil, 2010). Proponents of the criminalisation systems cite reasons such as that legalising sex work is motivated by the desire to have legal sexual pleasure available to tourists and a profit motive (Surijlal & Dhurup, 2009). In the context of the debate of the legalisation of sex work during the 2010 FIFA Soccer World cup in South Africa, others argue that the timing and duration of the proposed legalisation shows that the interests and protection of sex workers are not a priority; rather, the motive is profit maximisation (Surijlal & Dhurup, 2009). Other reasons that are cited by the general public supporting criminalisation are that legalisation of sex workers will promote child prostitution, human trafficking, affect family relationships and impact the public health negatively (Surijlal & Dhurup, 2009). The next section discusses the perspectives on decriminalisation.

Perceptions on decriminalisation

In a decriminalised system, the same laws that regulate other businesses regulate sex work (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009). Sex work would thus be subject to relevant tax, zoning and employment laws as well as occupational health and safety standards (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009). Unlike legalisation, a decriminalised system does not have special laws aimed solely at sex work and sex work related activities (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009). In South Africa, decriminalisation of sex work would encompass removing the statutes that sees sex work as a crime (Luiz & Roets, 2000; Surujlal & Dhurup, 2009). The women sex workers from Lutrick and Cohan's (2009) qualitative study who preferred decriminalisation, cited reasons such as the freedom, safety and support that they perceived they would get from the police. In a criminalised system for example, sex workers find it difficult to find protection from the police when robbed for example whilst doing street based sex work as they also would be committing a crime and police are reluctant to help them (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009). A decriminalised system would enable sex workers to build communities with other sex workers (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009; Surijlal & Dhurup, 2009). Decriminalisation is also preferred on the basis that the sex workers would obtain rights as workers, they would choose where they want to work, the kind of work they wanted to do, the kind of place they wanted to work and the ability to claim social insurance (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009; Surijlal & Dhurup, 2009). The sex workers saw government regulation as taking these options from them in a criminalised system (Surijlal & Dhurup, 2009). Some sex workers prefer a decriminalised system in that it would allow them open negotiation with potential customers and in turn facilitate safer encounters while doing sex work (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009). Other sex workers hoped that a decriminalised system would bring about a better understanding of sex workers and reduce moral stigma.

In addition, other sex workers felt that a decriminalised system would provide more opportunities for them such as trading sex in strip clubs, massage parlours, escort agencies and brothels (Lutrick, & Cohan, 2009). Other perspectives of decriminalisation was that many sex workers did not want regulation of sex work as it meant that they would be publicly be seen as sex workers (Surijlal & Dhurup, 2009). Luiz and Roets (2000) are of the opinion that a decriminalised system would increase exploitation through the commercialisation of the sex industry. Entrepreneurs would resort to ruthless tactics in

attempting to control the sex market restricting competition and maximising output. They argue that these conditions would be disadvantageous to sex workers (Luiz & Roets, 2000). A legalised framework of sex work is considered in the next section.

Perceptions on legalised system

According to Lutrick and Cohan (2009), a legalised system permits some and not necessarily, all types of sex work. For example in the state of Nevada, sex work that takes place in a sanctioned brothel is legal whilst other forms of sex work are outlawed. Under a legalised framework, “those businesses and individuals involved in sex work face regulations and licensing procedures that other businesses do not. In the Nevada brothel system, every sex worker must register with the police department as a brothel worker. They have restricted mobility and stipulated working conditions, and they have mandated weekly testing for gonorrhoea and Chlamydia, and monthly testing for HIV and syphilis” (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009:38). In South Africa, legalisation of sex work implies government control and regulation of sex work related activities (Surujlal & Dhurup, 2009). Surujlal & Dhurup (2009) assert that legalisation of sex work in South Africa will bring a number of challenges that include putting the necessary measures in place to address the issues of trafficking, exploitation, drug abuse, the legal and management mechanisms that would be used to regulate sex work.

A survey was conducted with 1655 sex workers in Korea on the perspectives of sex workers regarding a legalised framework of sex work (Surujlal & Dhurup, 2009). The findings indicated that 57 per cent preferred their trade to be legalised so that they would be able to benefit in terms of medical and psychological healthcare (Surujlal & Dhurup, 2009). Surujlal & Dhurup (2009) reported a study conducted in Canada, Colombia, Germany, Mexico, South Africa and Zambia. The findings indicated that most sex workers did not think that sex work would be any safer if it were legalised

From Lutrick and Cohan’s 2009, study 2 out of 40 women preferred a legalised system on the basis that sex work will be safest under a regulated system. For example, sex workers would be able to advertise their services without fear of being arrested. They also hoped to rely on police protection and create safe houses in which to work and unionise. They hoped for more access to health services and mental health services (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009). It is clear from

the studies conducted that the perspectives of sex workers on a legalised system are varied. While others think, a legalised system provides safety and security others think otherwise. Surujlal and Dhurup (2009) contend that legalising sex work would not stop exploitation by pimps and brothel owners. They maintain that legalisation would not change the attitudes of those who use females for sexual gratification and the stigma attached to sex work (Surujlal & Dhurup, 2009).

In contrast, Luiz and Roets (2000) maintain that regulation of the trade will ensure better access to health, welfare and education services. They argue that sex workers would be required to undergo regular medical checkups for sexually transmitted disease and HIV/AIDS making controls of the spread of the infection more manageable (Luiz & Roets, 2000). Surujlal and Dhurup (2009) counter-argue by saying that the regular medical checkups for sex workers are a formidable task given the insurmountable problems that are facing the health sector in South Africa. Expected revenue might not come owing to the sex workers not registering as sex workers (Surujlal & Dhurup, 2009). In Sweden, sex work was legalised and reversed owing to men and women suffering negative effects such as women suffering more abuse, taking more drugs frequently, suffering increased posttraumatic stress (Surujlal & Dhurup, 2009). Australia also legalised sex work, reversed its decision owing to brothels operating outside rules, increased sexually transmitted disease, increased public nuisance, and increased child abuse amongst other things (Surujlal & Dhurup, 2009). A two-tier system of sex work also emerged, legal and illegal sex work. Conversely, Luiz and Roets (2000) maintain that there is no evidence to support that by criminalising sex work, it reduces the incidence of crime, venereal epidemics and public nuisance.

Clearly, the topic of legalising sex work is a huge cause of disagreement, which generates varied responses and opinions. It is the aim of this study to explore the sex workers' construction of their world realities by allowing them to voice their own perceptions on the legalisation framework. The next section discusses the female sex workers' proposed supportive interventions in their struggle with poverty.

2.4.6 Proposed supportive interventions

O'Neil (2010) argues that since sex work is rooted in social and sexual inequalities there is a need for interventions that support social inclusion, social justice and redistribution. O'Neil

(2010) further argues that the entry point for most sex workers is precipitated by poverty. In a contemporary capitalist society it is imperative for the significant role players such as the state, civil society and the United Nations system to embark on creating an enabling environment that provides equal employment opportunities and poverty alleviation strategies for all (Allen & Thomas, 2000). In line with tackling poverty, Mubangizi (2008) proposes that it is important to address the broader structures that are rooted in the socio-historic context of South Africa. This calls for equity and redistributive efforts. Some authors and sex work advocate groups like SWEAT (Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Task Force) argue that sex work is work like any other (www.sweat.org.za).

However, it is important to consider the negative effects and challenges it poses as supported by empirical evidence on HIV/AIDS pandemic, exploitation and violence of female sex workers to mention a few. Other authors like Luiz and Roets (2000) argue that HIV/AIDS can be controlled and monitored in a decriminalised or legalised framework. Luiz & Roets (2000) add that a decriminalised system will help reduce the perpetration of violence on sex workers and increase staff for projects that target sex workers. However, from a development perspective, addressing the root causes of social problems and broader societal structures of social economic and gender inequalities has far-reaching outcomes than treating the symptoms of social problems (Mubangizi, 2008; O'Neil, 2010; Taylor, 1999).

In terms of gender inequalities, Taylor (1999) proposes that in establishing macro policy frameworks there is a need to set gender-neutral policies. It is necessary to have complete and accurate information about gender-based division of resources, responsibilities and challenges in order to determine that a policy is genuinely gender neutral (O'Neil 2010). Gender aware, redistributive and transformative policies are aimed at transforming existing gender relations to achieve democracy by redistributing the division of resources, responsibilities and power between men and women more evenly (O'Neil 2010; Taylor, 1999). For example the Employment Equity policy in South Africa which seeks to give women occupational opportunities that they were denied before.

Legal reforms that recognise women's rights and not only female sex workers go a long way in addressing gender inequalities. For example, enactment of laws protecting women's property and inheritance rights would enhance women's economic independence, which

assists in curbing other forms of discrimination (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009). As a way of addressing gender inequality and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, promotion of universal education is of paramount importance. Increasing education opportunities is economically empowering for girls and women. It also increases the chances of practicing safe sex (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs report, 2007). Literature on sex workers proposes a decriminalised or legalised system for sex work and there are gaps in acknowledging and addressing the factors that contribute to women doing sex work in the first place. It is also ironic to note that though advocacy groups lobby for a decriminalised system as a way of ameliorating sex work related problems, studies on the perceptions of sex workers indicate that the sex workers themselves actually prefer a criminalised system as indicated earlier (Lutrick & Cohan, 2009; Sarajlal & Dhurup, 2009). It was the aim of this study to explore those factors that contribute to entry into sex work by women in order to address those root causal factors as a way of ameliorating the problems associated with sex work.

2.5 Conclusion

The chapter has discussed sex work from a global, South African and Cape Town perspectives. Sex work was shown to be a highly contested issue with some perspectives viewing it as a social deviation and others viewing it as a commercial business and profession. Studies have indicated that sex work is associated with social problems such as the spread of HIV/AIDS, gender based violence, human trafficking, family break ups , substance abuse etc. Various factors contribute to women doing sex work. Poverty, unstable family backgrounds and legal systems are among some of the social economic and structural factors that lead to women doing sex work. Theoretical perspectives that are useful for the study were shown to include Durkheim's anomie theory, Neo-liberal theories on poverty and social exclusion, Feminist theories on poverty and social exclusion and symbolic interactionism. Despite the changing legal mandates on sex work, sex work remains a global and local reality, which needs to be explored and addressed at the root causal factors. In the following chapter, the research design and methodology is discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

According to Babbie and Mouton (2007), research methodology focuses on the research process, tools, and objective procedures to be undertaken, as well as specific tasks to be used. This chapter discusses the research design and methodology. The research design includes the approach, type of research, purpose of the research and the thinking that was applied in the research process. The methodology discusses the sampling procedures, data collection methods, tools and data analysis. There is a final comment on the limitations of the research design and methodology. The next section discusses the research design.

3.2. Research design

The research design is the plan or blueprint of how the research is to be conducted. First, there is a statement of the research problem which is followed by details of the kind of study being planned, then the kind of evidence required to address the research question adequately is covered (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). The research design and methodology were also planned with the aim of achieving the research objectives, which are:

- a) To determine the social factors that contributes to women doing sex work.
- b) To ascertain the economic factors that contributes to women doing sex work.
- c) To explore the structural factors that contribute to women doing sex work
- d) To explore the female sex workers perceptions regarding the structural context in which they operate.
- e) To examine female sex workers' perceived challenges of their work.
- f) To determine female sex workers' proposed support from significant role players.

3.2.1 The research approach

The approach that best fulfils the above research questions is the qualitative approach. The research study was a qualitative study using in-depth face-to-face interviewing. A qualitative study refers to the kind of research that elicits participants' accounts of meaning and the

interpretation of experience and perceptions (Seedat et al., 2001). The qualitative study approach employed an exploratory, descriptive and contextual design. The essence of a qualitative research study is to acquire an “inside” understanding or the “actors’ definitions of the situation” (Pretorius, Terblanche & Tshiwula, 2007). Qualitative inquiry is particularly oriented toward exploration, discovery and inductive logic. The purpose of the research is to understand phenomena rather than provide naturalistic observation or controlled measurement. By using in-depth face-to-face interviews on women sex workers, the researcher was able to get the “insider perspective” of the women themselves and gain an understanding of their subjective experiences and lived realities.

It is also important to point out that one of the strengths of the qualitative approach is the ability of the researcher to acquire rich data through observations of the participants in their natural environments as postulated by De Vos et al (2007). For this reason, the researcher is able to bring into the data analysis chapter the information that was not necessarily expressed by the participants, rather the information that was derived from the field observations. In addition, the researcher was also able to bring information from the three other interviews that were spoilt due to technical problems in the recording system.

3.2.2 Research type

The research type selected for the study was a form of “applied” research in the field of social development as the researcher specifically selected the topic in order to gather information to guide social welfare policy, planning and practice (De Vos et al., 2007). Applied research seeks to contribute towards practical issues of problem solving, decision-making, and policy analysis and community development amongst others (De Vos, 2007). The proposed research study aimed to make recommendations to policy making pertaining to how the factors leading female sex workers to do sex work, could be ameliorated.

3.2.3 Purpose of the research

The purpose of the research is exploratory. The rationale for undertaking exploratory research is to gain insight into a situation, phenomena, community or individual (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995). Exploratory research is also useful where there is a lack of basic information on a new area of interest (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995). The research study intended to gain insight into a functional community of sex workers and their motivations for the choice of

profession. In addition, though there is a vast array of information on sex workers globally, there is not much information on female sex workers in South Africa, and Cape Town specifically.

3.2.4 Thinking applied

The type of thinking that was used in this study is inductive. Qualitative methods utilise inductive logic: the researcher draws generalised conclusions about the populations from specific observations of a given sample (Babbie and Mouton, 2006; De Vos et al, 2007). Inductive thinking was used in the analysis of the qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews from a sample of 23 female sex workers in the Southern suburbs of Cape Town to develop information based on new interpretations.

3.3 Research methodology

The research methodology comprises the sampling method; data collection method and tools and the data analysis method used in the study. The researcher's initial data collection phase was the review of literature in order to understand background information about female sex workers. The researcher also consulted SWEAT (Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Task Force) in April 2010 as a key informant on sex workers and background information on previous research conducted on sex workers in Cape Town. The next phase is discussed below.

Phase 2: Empirical data collection

Phase 2 of the research study was planned with the aim of meeting the six research objectives outlined above. The researcher conducted a pilot study to test the interview schedules to make sure that the questions were constructed well and ordered in terms of meaning and sensitivity amongst other things.

3.3.1 Sampling

Criteria for selection for the study

Female sex workers were selected for inclusion in the sampling frame using the following specific criteria: that the sex workers were female, and currently engaged in sex work during the time of the study in a specific geographical location chosen conveniently and purposively. It is important to establish the truth-value of the study in terms of its applicability,

consistency, neutrality, credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (De Vos et al., 2007). The credibility construct aims to demonstrate that the inquiry is conducted in such a manner that identifies and describes the subject accurately (De Vos et al., 2007). Since the current study aims to explore the structural economic and social factors that contribute to women doing sex work, the process requires interviewing female sex workers. The study is, therefore, valid and passes the credibility test.

Transferability involves the investigator's task of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context (De Vos et al., 2007). In a qualitative study, transferability and generalisability to other settings may be problematic due to limitations of the sample. However, by using various theoretical tools, for example Durkheim's anomie theory and Neo-liberal theories on poverty to guide data collection and analysis, it was possible to apply the findings to other contexts to meet the challenge of transferability. Dependability involves the researcher's attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomena under study, as well as changes in the design which arise from the researcher's increasingly refined understanding of the setting (De Vos, 2007). The study cannot be replicated and generate similar findings as the social world is dynamic and continually being constructed (De Vos et al, 2007). Therefore, the criteria of dependability cannot be met. Conformability addresses the traditional concept of objectivity, whether others can confirm the findings of the study (De Vos et al., 2007). In the proposed study, it is important that the data help confirm the findings of previous studies (De Vos et al., 2007). The research design components of approach, type, purpose and thinking process utilised is presented below.

Development of sampling frame

In order to select a sample, the researcher initially selected 20 female sex workers who work along the main road from the Claremont to Plumstead areas of Cape Town southern suburbs. "A sample comprise of elements of the population that are considered for actual inclusion in the study" (De Vos et al., 2007:194). The researcher interviewed 23 female sex workers but transcribed 20 interviews due to technical problems with the recorders and the researcher could not access the participants of whose interviews were spoilt as the sex workers are highly mobile and some of them do not always stand in the same area of operation.

3.3.2 The sampling approach

A non-probability purposive sampling of 20 female sex workers was used for the study according to convenience of location to the researcher and purpose of the study. The sample was based on the researcher's judgment and the willingness of participants to participate. The researcher was very careful not to interview involuntary and intoxicated participants despite the fact that sober and voluntary participants were not readily available. This method was suitable because it allowed for the inclusion of elements that were most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population (De Vos et al, 2007). The researcher recruited the participants by approaching the sex workers in the streets during the day and at night. The researcher would identify the sex workers through their dressing and the way they will be soliciting for motorist clients in the streets. The researcher would introduce herself and her intention to conduct research as indicated on the interview schedule. If the participant were willing, the worker would take her contact details and schedule an appointment to conduct the interview in a quieter and private atmosphere. The researcher also collaborated with SWEAT for debriefing sessions for participants should the need arise.

The exact demographics of street-based sex workers in Cape Town are not known due to the criminal nature of the work. However, the researcher can use the estimates found by Gould & Fick (2008) on their outdoor mapping of street-based sex workers on Voortrekker Road (from Salt River to Bellville) and Main Road (connecting the southern suburbs) which was 245. According to De Vos (2007), when selecting the sample size, the researcher had to bear in mind the size of the population. Street-based sex workers constitute a small segment of the population hence a larger sample size should be utilised. A sample of 20 street-based sex workers represents about 8% of the population of street based sex workers as reported in Gould and Fick's (2008) study, which is reasonable considering the homogeneity of the population, degree of accuracy required and resources available (De Vos, 2007).

3.3.3 Data collection methods

The method of collecting data that was used was in-depth face-to-face interviews. In-depth face-to-face interviewing enables the researcher to gain a detailed picture of the respondent's beliefs, perceptions and accounts of the topic (De Vos et al., 2007). The method also gives the researcher and the participant's flexibility, for example, the researcher is able to follow up on interesting themes. The researcher conducted the individual interviews in a private room

belonging to the participant, otherwise the researcher chose a secluded and quieter place outside for the participants that lived far away. The beginning phase of the interview was characterised by the researcher introducing herself to the participant, settling in the participant to make her feel at ease. The researcher contracted and informed the participants about the reason for the interview and dealt with ethical considerations. The middle or work phase of the interview involved asking mostly open-ended questions from an interviewing schedule, which allowed for flexible responses. The termination phase was characterised by thanking the participant, an evaluation of the interview process to assess the need for debriefing and building rapport with the participants in case of need to follow up further questions with the participant. The data collection method was also limited in the sense that it was not always easy to get voluntary participants who would sit and engage with the researcher. In this regard, the researcher had to go through a rigorous hunting episode to find willing participants and build rapport with them using her persuasive social work skills.

3.3.4 Data collection tools

A Semi-structured interview schedule was used. The advantage of an interview schedule is that it can be pretested on a suitable participant. The researcher piloted the interview schedule. This allowed for the wording, ordering and layout of the questions to be refined (De Vos et al., 2007).

3.3.5 Data collection apparatus

A digital voice recorder was used with the permission of the participants. The researcher also took notes. The use of a voice recorder allowed for a much fuller record, supplemented by the notes. The participant had the right to ask for the tape after the interview (De Vos et al., 2007). Care was taken so that the voice recorder was inconspicuous during the interview in order to avoid unnerving the participant and the researcher (De Vos et al., 2007).

3.3.6 Data Analysis method

Data was analysed according to an adaptation of Tesch (1990:142-144) approach. This approach consists of content or thematic analysis of the participant's narratives and result in the identification of themes, sub-themes and categories (Pretorius et al., 2007). A body of existing knowledge was used to compare and contrast the data in order to discover the

emergence of local and substantive theory in terms of the specific context that is the focus of the study (Pretorius et al., 2007).

This approach uses the steps as outlined below:

- The researcher first got the entire sense of the transcript by reading each transcript carefully.
- The researcher selected one transcript and read it paying attention to switches from one topic to the next. She distinguished the topics by noting each topic in the margin of the document. For example, the researcher took note of switches from social factors, economic factors, structural factors and contextual challenges in each transcript.
- The researcher made a list of all topics; she allocated one column per data document and then placed all columns on the same sheet of paper. She then compared all the topics and connected similar topics by drawing lines using different colour pens on a separate piece of paper. Similar topics were clustered together under fitting labels. For example on social factors, family at risk background, peer pressure and a lack of social support were grouped under social factors as the themes emerged for each transcription, the same applied for other research themes. The researcher then made a new list that contained two or three columns. The first column held major topics, the second column unique topics and the third column any remaining topics.
- The researcher made copies of the documents that she had already worked with and used the list of topics in the first column as a preliminary organising system. She abbreviated the topics as codes and wrote the codes next to the appropriate segments of the text.
- The researcher placed common topics in one list and unique topics in the other. The researcher related topics and made sub-categories, mapping and grouping to remember the codes.
- The researcher decided on the abbreviations for each category name and alphabetised the codes to avoid duplication. She added the abbreviations to the original list for the map and coded the entire body of the available data.
- The researcher assembled the data material belonging to each category in one place and performed a preliminary analysis: She identified and summarised the content of each category, all the while looking specifically for commonalities and uniqueness of

content as well as missing information. The researcher moved on to tabulate the themes, categories and subcategories, which she used to write up the findings. The limitations of the study are discussed next.

3.4 Limitations of the research study

The qualitative research method have been criticised for being too subjective on the part of the researcher (De Vos et al, 2007). Because the researcher had to use semi-structured interviews and analyse the participant's responses, it is likely that the researcher made inferences based on her subjective experiences. The data collection method was also limited in the recording system three interviews were spoilt during the transcribing process. The researcher had to go back in the field to find additional participants. The data analysis method was also limited in that there were often responses that would overlapped into more than one category or theme. For example, when analysing the responses on factors that contributed to women doing sex work, familial problems and social class fell under both social and structural factors. In order to deal with overlaps, the researcher had to resort to differentiating social factors from structural factors by using broader and more intrinsic factors such as race, gender, government policies and social class to denote structural factors and limit social factors to less broad factors such as family and peer relationships for the purpose of the study.

3.4.1 Participant cooperation

The limitations of the one to one interviews arise from the fact that they are heavily reliant on personal interaction and the participant's cooperation (De Vos et al., 2007). Due to the sensitive and stigmatised nature of sex work, some participants were reluctant to disclose certain aspects of requested information thereby limiting the richness of the data.

3.4.2. Role dissonance

Researchers must be cautious of not acting as a therapist (De Vos et al., 2007). The researcher was a practicing clinical social worker at the time of the study. There were occasions where the researcher used therapeutic skills not necessarily relevant to the research interview. Although empathetic skills were useful considering the stigma and discrimination attached to sex workers, there was need for balance in this regard and the researcher tried her level best to maintain the balance.

3.4.3 Generalisability

The small purposive sample of 20 female sex workers is not a true and realistic representation of the entire population of sex workers involved in the sex work industry hence the findings cannot be generalised.

3.5 Conclusion related to research design and methodology

The study drew on secondary data collection through review of literature on studies conducted on sex work locally and internationally. The researcher proceeded to conduct in-depth interviews with 23 female street based sex workers and transcribed 20 interviews due to technical problems. The research can be categorized as explorative and descriptive in that it has explored and described the experiences of the participants (Babbie & Mutton, 2007). The choice of qualitative design is justified because it provided quality and rich data that generated a good understanding of the research questions investigated from the insiders' perspectives.

The rationale for using in-depth interviews was based on the notion that people's views, knowledge, understanding, experiences and interactions are meaningful in construction social realities (Kristiansen, 2008; Mason, 2000). The selected methodology gave the researcher insight into the aetiology and dynamics of reasons that led women into doing sex work. The study allowed the researcher to explore the structural, social and economic factors that contributed to women doing sex work as well as their proposed intervention for their problems from the perspective of the sex workers.

However, the research design did not give the researcher quantitative data on which she could draw general conclusions relevant outside the selected sample of the study. Since the aim of the research was not to provide numerical data, rather, it was aimed at providing deeper explorations of factors and experiences; the selected methodology was effective in achieving the goal of the research. This research has contributed to social and economic development knowledge base regarding the causal factors, context and effects of sex work in society, which has implications for youth development, women empowerment, employment creation and social inclusion policies.

3.6 Chapter summary

The chapter has discussed the research design and methodology. The secondary data analysis and in-depth interviews have been adopted to gather data in order to meet the research objectives. The proposed sample size is 20 female sex workers. The researcher did a pilot study by testing the interview schedules before the actual data collection process. The data analysis method followed Tesch (1990) steps, which include thematic and category analysis and coding of the participants' responses. Some of the limitations of the study are that the sample size is too small to allow generalisations to be made and that the cooperation of the female sex workers was not always forthcoming. Limitations on the methodology included the recording process, which led to spoiling some transcriptions, and the data analysis method, which tends to create overlaps of themes and categories. The researcher was aware of the limitations and accommodated them in the research process. The choice of the methodology was shown to meet the research goals by eliciting rich data and participants' experiences thereby enhancing the participants' construction of their world. The next chapter discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

The aim of the research was to explore the structural social and economic factors that contribute to women doing sex work in the southern suburbs of Cape Town. The research followed a qualitative research design in the form of explorative and descriptive research. The research method used is in-depth interviews with 23 sex workers even though only 20 were transcribed due to technical problems. The sex workers operate along the main road from Claremont to Plumstead southern suburbs of Cape Town. In this chapter, the findings from the interviews are presented following a rigorous analysis and comparison with findings from literature and theories of social development discussed in Chapter 2. The findings of the study are presented according to the research themes or objectives outlined in the study with an additional section of a description of the context in which sex work is conducted to provide background information.

The chapter is structured in the following way: profile of participants, framework of analysis and a discussion of the findings from the interviews using a framework of analysis. The study's findings are divided into themes, categories, and subcategories adopted from Tesch (1990). The framework of the discussion that guide the analysis is based on four themes namely: the context in which sex work takes place, structural factors, social factors economic factors, and the sex workers' proposed interventions for addressing the sex workers' development challenges. All the findings will be summarised in the last section of the chapter leading to the conclusion and recommendations chapter. Below is the framework of analysis.

4.2 Framework of analysis

The framework of analysis that guided the data analysis process is presented in the following table. Different categories emerged from the main research questions used in the interviews. Due to the nature of the in-depth interviews, the participants elicited information that is relevant but not presented in the framework of analysis due to the limited scope of the study.

Table 1: Framework of analysis

Broad interview themes	Categories arising through analysis of data
4.3 Field description	Age Level of education Race Years in operation Dwelling type Family background Parents occupation Area of origin Previous work experience
4.4 Context in which sex work is practised	4.4.1 Challenges 4.4.2 Health and safety issues 4.4.3 Sex workers' relationship with the Community
4.5 Structural factors	4.5.1 Socio-political and historical context 4.5.2 Gender i) Practical gender needs ii) Vulnerability iii) Disruption in youth development 4.5.3 Social Class 4.5.4 Institutional failures
4.6 Social factors	4.6.1 Families at risk 4.6.2 Lack of social support i) Schooling ii) Community iii) Lack of support on gender sensitive needs 4.6.3 Peer Pressure
4.7 Economic factors	4.7.1 Neo-liberal macro-economic policies 4.7.2 Lack of job opportunities 4.7.3 Need for capital to invest in long term plans 4.7.4 Deprivation and consumerism
4.8 Sex workers' Proposed Interventions	4.8.1 Transforming the legal framework 4.8.2 The role of the government 4.8.3 Social inclusion 4.8.4 Need for family support

4.3 Field description

This section provides a profile of participants, before the research findings are discussed. The profile of participants gives the background information of the participants in terms of demographic categories, and not individual characteristics in order to conceal their identities. This section comprises of graphs and charts that seek to enhance the clarity of the discussion and description of the field in which the study was conducted. The charts and graphs are to be used as a reference as the reader engages with the findings in the chapter and not as statistical information. As the study was based on female sex workers only, gender is not presented as a demographic in this profile. The profile is categorised according to age, education level, race, years of operation, type of accommodation, family background, parent's occupation, area of origin and previous occupation.

4.3.1 Profile of participants

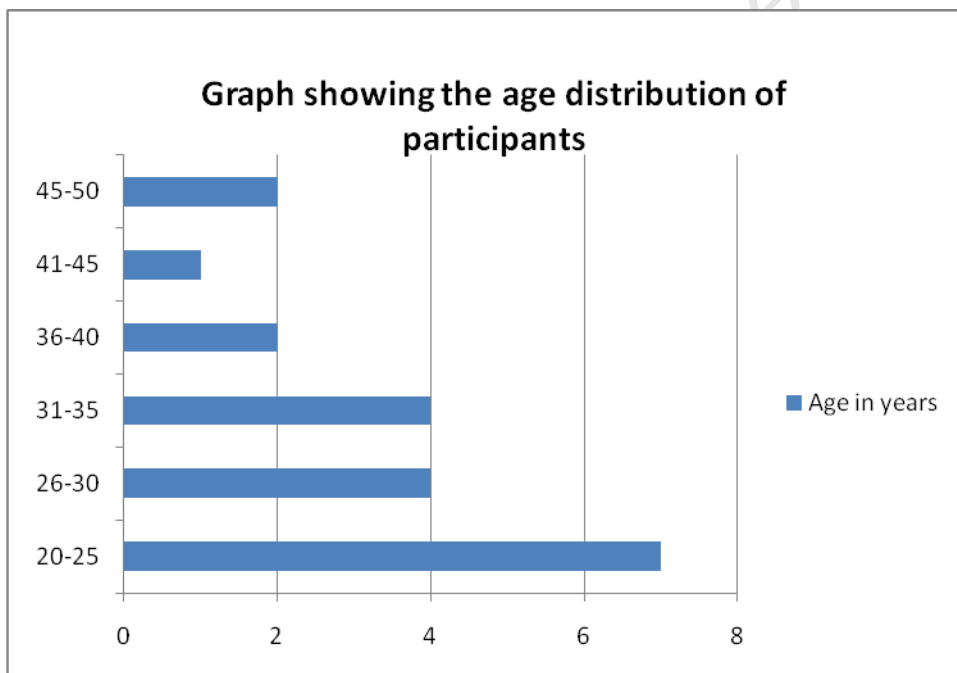
Table 2: Profile of participants

Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Ethnicity	Residential area	Area of origin
Ayanda	25	Black	Wynberg	Polokwane
Ayesha	21	Coloured	Wynberg	Bellville
Bridget	29	Black	Philippi	Philippi
Denise	32	Coloured	Salt River	Worcester
Dora	23	Black	Nyanga	Wood Stock
Kim	44	Coloured	Retreat	Retreat
Lerato	25	Black	Wynberg	Kimberly
Louise	30	Coloured	Claremont	Ceres
Marcia	23	Coloured	Wynberg	Woodstock
Mary	56	Coloured	Mitchells'Plein	Port Elizabeth
Monica	24	Coloured	Wynberg	Saldahna Bay
Myra	26	Black	Wynberg	Kwazulu Natal
Pamela	31	Black	Gugulethu	Gugulethu
Patricia	46	Coloured	Retreat	Retreat
Rachel	33	Coloured	Village Heights	Manenberg
Samantha	23	Coloured	Philippi	Cape Town City

Stacey	33	Coloured	Mitchells' Plain	Mitchell' Plain
Sugar	36	Black	Kenilworth	Port Elizabeth
Tessa	26	Coloured	Lavender Hill	Lavender Hill
Thembi	38	Black	Gugulethu	Gugulethu

Age

The average age of sex workers under study is 31 years. The age group for sex workers in the group under study conforms to the youth age group in terms of the South African definition of youth in South Africa. The overrepresentation of young women in sex work concurs with the findings in the literature of studies on sex work (Gould & Fick, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2000; O’Neil 2010, Shisana et al., 2008). The overrepresentation of young women in sex work has far-reaching implications on youth development.

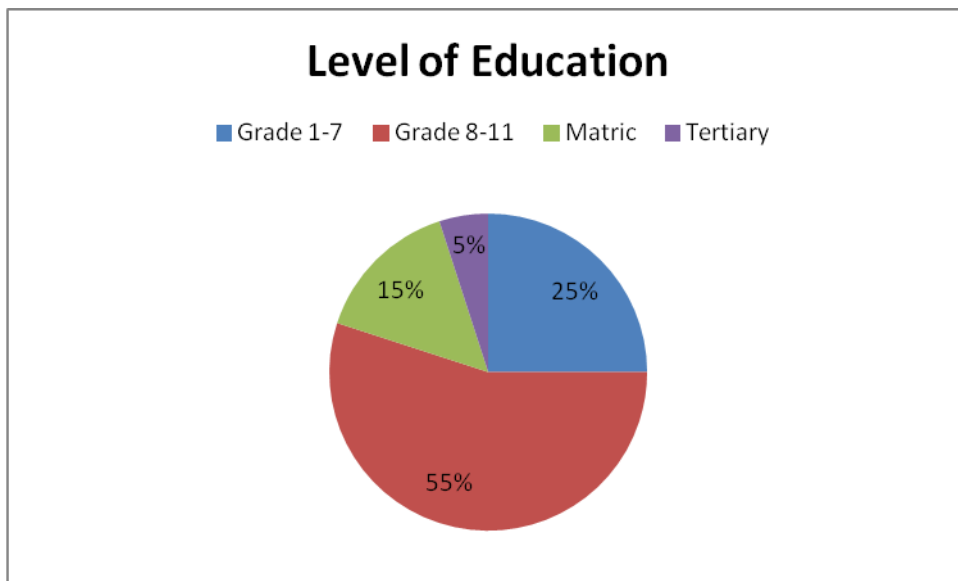


Graph 1: Age

Education levels

In this study, out of 20 participants, five had achieved only primary level of education, 11 dropped out of high school, 3 had matriculated and only one had a tertiary level of education. This descriptive data concurs with South African studies on sex workers, which indicate that most sex workers have achieved very low education levels (Gould & Fick, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2009). The

low level of education has implications for the ability of sex workers to utilise protective factors such as accessing information about health matters, services available in the community for social and economic empowerment and other options available to them.



Graph 2: Level of Education

Race

The sex workers under study fell categorically into eight black people and 12 coloured people.² This racial composition of sex workers concurs with Gould and Fick (2008) study on sex workers in Cape Town who found that the majority of street-based sex workers are among black and coloured people whilst white sex workers are predominantly in escort agencies.

Years in Sex Work

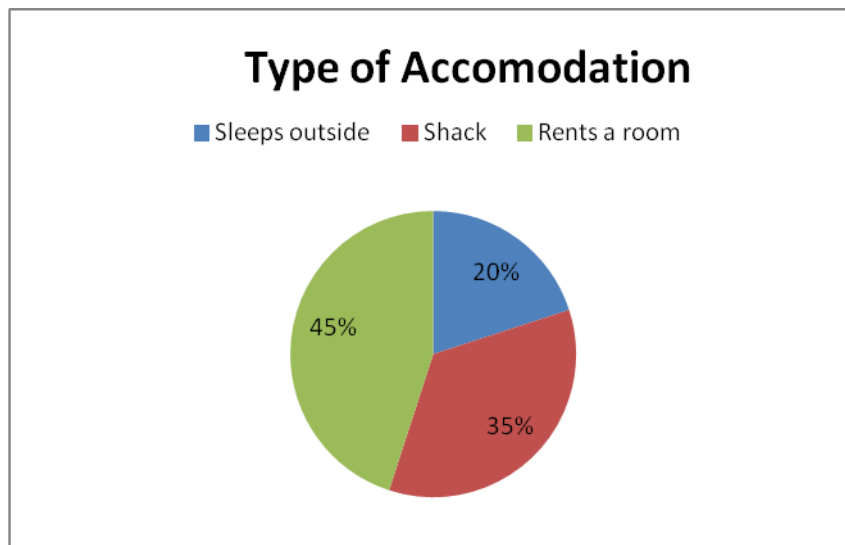
In this study, 10 sex workers have been engaged in sex work for a period of 1 to 5 years whereas the other 10 have been doing sex work for over five years. The medium to long-term engagement in sex work has implications for being trapped in the sex work industry.

Type of Accommodation

The majority of sex workers in the study demonstrated that they were vulnerably accommodated at the time of the study with 4 sleeping in the streets, 7 lived in the shacks and 9 were able to rent a

² Please note that the terms black and coloured term are used as among the main racial classification systems in South Africa including white ,Indian and Asian and are not meant to be derogatory. Black denotes people of African descent, whereas coloured refers to people of mixed race (Ismail, 2006).

room mostly sharing a flat either with fellow sex workers or other people. The type of accommodation of sex workers is important as it is a poverty indicator and shows the sex worker's current socio-economic status.



Graph 3: Type of Accommodation

Family Background

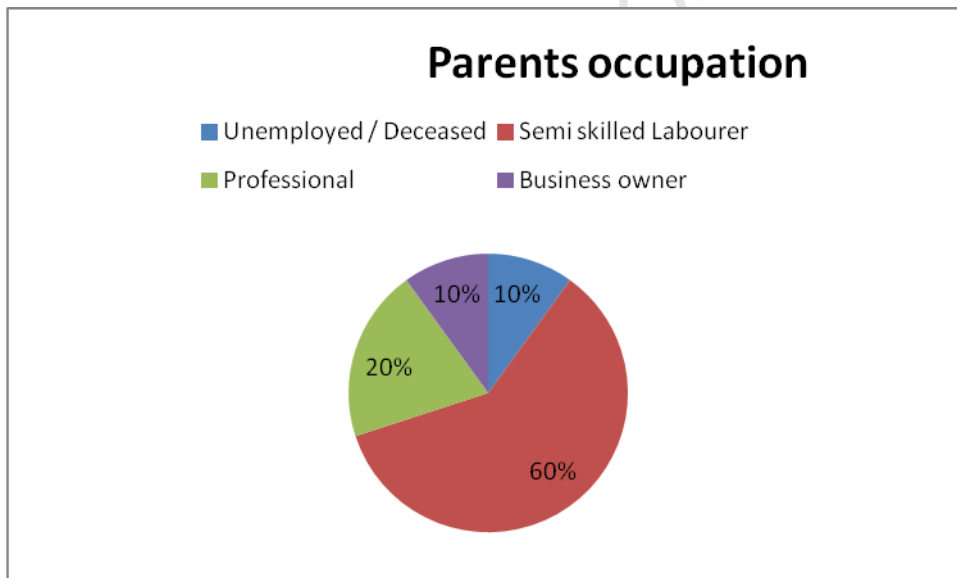
The family background of sex workers varied from those who came from families where parents have divorced never married or experienced domestic violence, alcohol abuse or being abandoned by one of their parents. Seventeen of the sex workers came from such backgrounds and only three came from stable homes with both parents working and staying together. There was a close association between coming from broken family and being exposed to absolute poverty of which nine came from families that experienced absolute poverty characterised by lack of access to basic commodities like food, clothing and schooling. About six sex workers expressed that they had engaged in delinquent behaviour, such as behavioural problems at school that led to expulsion, running away from home, living in the streets, abusing substances from adolescence, experienced teen pregnancies. Only one sex worker stated that she was sexually abused and the other sex worker whose interview was not fully transcribed also said that she was sexually abused as a child.

Whilst the familial background of the sex workers under study indicated a history of coming from broken families, absolute poverty where people struggle to get basic necessities like food, clothing and decent housing, delinquent behaviour and history of sexual abuse, this is not meant as a generalisation of all people that come from similar backgrounds nor does it mean that all sex workers come from those backgrounds. However, according to studies, there is a strong association

between such familial backgrounds and susceptibility to engaging in sex work in the absence of supportive and preventive measures (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2000; Shisana et al., 2008).

Parents Occupation

Linked to family background are the occupational circumstances of parents, which also act as an indicator of the socio-economic status of the sex worker’s family of origin. Two sex workers came from families where the parents were unemployed or both parents were deceased, 9 of the sex workers’ parents were semi-skilled labourers who worked in the domestic industry as nannies, cleaners, housekeepers or gardeners or were factory workers. Four sex workers’ parents were involved in professional work that includes nursing, engineering, and secretarial and technician. Only two sex workers reported that their families owned businesses. It is important to point out that the participants’ parental occupation of all the participants did not change from when they were growing up to their current age. For those participants who had a familial background of poverty they cited poverty as a predisposing factor for entry into sex work.

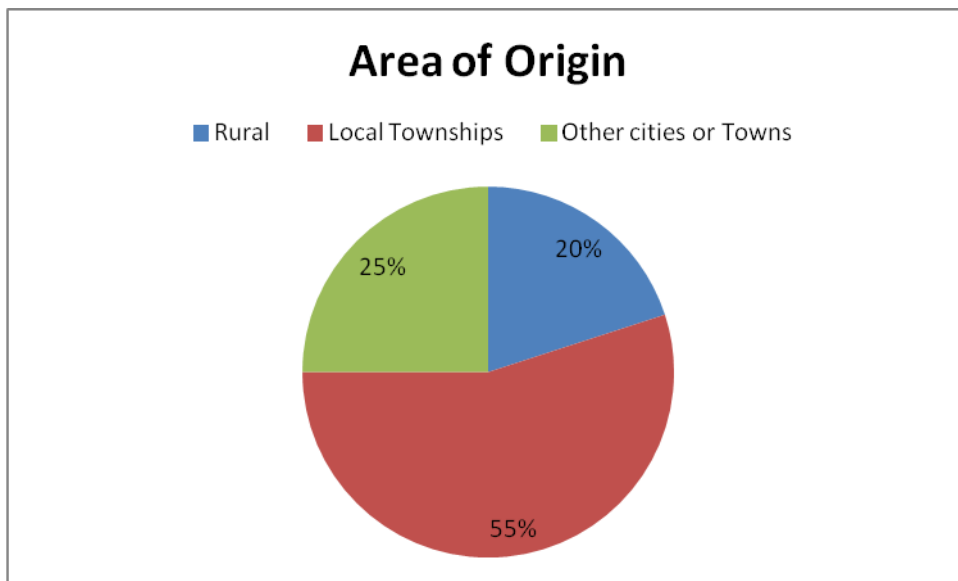


Graph 4: Parents’ occupation

Area of origin

Four of the sex workers originated from rural areas both within the Western Cape Province and outside the Western Cape. Eleven sex workers originated from the local townships such as Gugulethu, Khayelitsha, Crossroads, Athlone, Retreat, Lavender Hill and Mitchells Plain whilst five sex workers came from other cities such as Kimberley, Saldanha Bay and Port Elizabeth. The

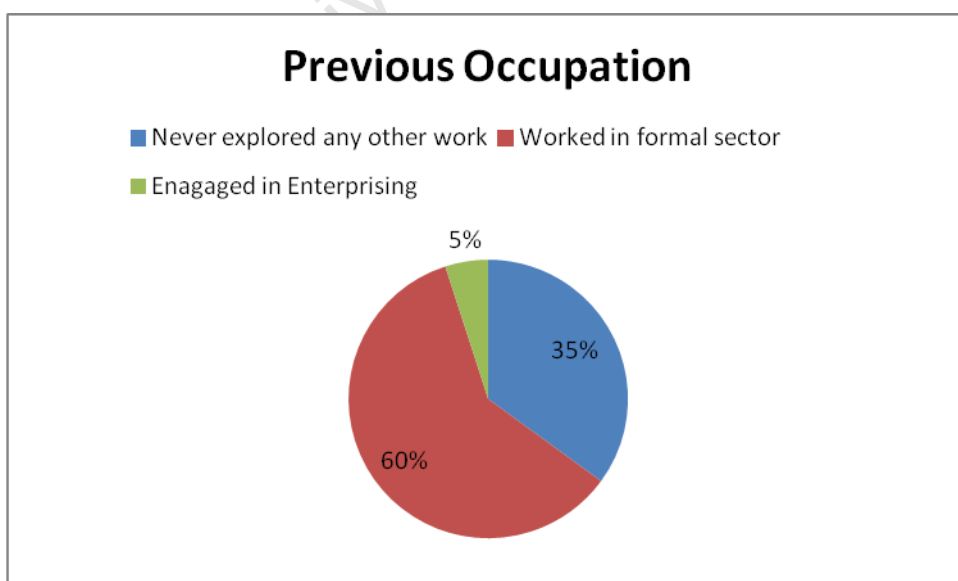
area of origin of sex workers is crucial as it shows the relationship between migration and susceptibility to poverty and the geographical distribution of the areas where sex workers originate.



Graph 5: Area of origin

Previous Occupation of participant

In the study, 7 sex workers engaged in sex work as the first point of economic entry immediately after leaving school without exploring other options, 12 worked as cleaners, domestic workers, packers in supermarkets, bar ladies, factory workers and hotel supervisor and 2 engaged in entrepreneurship through dressmaking, beadwork and selling fruits and vegetables.



Graph 6: Previous occupation

4.4 Context in which sex Work is practised

An understanding of the contextual environment in which sex work is operated is crucial in order to gain a holistic picture of the work. The names quoted in these findings are pseudonyms and any resemblance in names of sex workers is utterly coincidental. For the purpose of this study, the main topics to be discussed in this section relates to: the challenges that sex workers face, health and safety issues and sex workers' relationship with the community.

4.4.1 Challenges

All the sex workers in the group under study admitted that their work is very risky, even dangerous due to the high incidence of aggression from their clients and ordinary people. The dangers include being threatened by their clients at gunpoint after doing business with them, being exploited by the police, being robbed by clients, pimps, and ordinary robbers. Sometimes the sex workers are pushed out of cars after doing business resulting in permanent injuries, at other times they are driven into remote areas where they are left by their clients and being exposed to other life threats. The following expressions reflect these physical and psychological threats.

Yah, they [the police] wanna do business with a girl but they don't wanna pay because they think they are cops they can do it free. They talk about cop discounts (Stacey).

These police are not after me, they are after what they want, I can give them R10,00, I work my way out (Pamela).

My problem is my leg so I can't do hard work. There is a client that I took who was drunk and his passengers pushed me out of his car and I hurt my leg, so it's a problem with this leg. I can't do heavy work (Myra).

OK, everybody thinks it's easy just to get into a car and pull your pants down for a man; it's not easy. And the difficult part is that when some guy starts to threaten a person, you know, like if you get a business, then they lie and when they come to a person, they want to rape a person, you know those weird guys (Tessa).

These findings concur with studies conducted in South Africa and internationally where sex workers were found to be at risk of violence, exploitation, social rejection and inequalities that

emanate from gender disparities ((Gould & Fick, 2009; Luiz & Roets, 2000; Lutrick & Cohan, 2009; O'Neil, 2010). Because of these challenges, most sex workers remain trapped in the sex work industry as they find it hard to redeem themselves from discrimination and social stigma. Linked to the challenges faced by sex workers are the health and safety issues as discussed below.

4.4.2 Health and safety issues

Even though most studies document that sex workers are usually unaware of the health risks involved in sex work in terms of STDs and HIV/AIDS and that they face discrimination from health care workers, the findings contrasted with this view. All the participants in the study were well informed about protecting themselves sexually and received support from health care workers. All the sex workers mentioned that they would not engage in sex without the use of condoms, which are readily available in public health clinics. Most of the sex workers also get reproductive health education through SWEAT (Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Task Force), an organisation based in Cape Town that advocates the rights of sex workers and provides education on sexual health matters. However, a number of sex workers raised concerns about the safety of the condoms as expressed below.

When I am having sex, I make sure I use condoms not the cheap condoms that people get free from the public places but the ones from the shops. If it's cheap condoms I make sure, I have two condoms per round. Maybe if the client wants two rounds I make sure I have four condoms. Most of the condoms they just give they break easily (Bridget).

I do go for checkups at the clinic, like last Wednesday. I went for a check-up and I was negative, like I did tell them what work I am doing A guy can tell you he is clean and he is not clean, you understand (Tessa).

Despite the fact that most sex workers claimed to practise protected sex, the researcher observed that two of the participants were pregnant but expressed that they were not in stable relationships. This raises the question of health risks and exposure to HIV/AIDS and STDS as outlined by most researchers on sex workers (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2008; Luiz & Roets, 2000; Shisana et al., 2008; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs report, 2007). In addition, some sex workers also revealed that they engage in substance abuse as expressed below:

Often I buy drugs, I need drugs. I must buy drugs and everything... Tik, conda, everything (Louise)

The researcher observed other sex workers not in the sample of participants drinking alcohol in the streets and they cited their reasons as based on stressing and the need to help them cope with the harsh reality of their work. The abuse of substances has implications for the sex workers' ability to negotiate safe sex (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2008).

In terms of safety and protection from other forms of physical harm, sex workers in the study employ a number of strategies such as expressed below.

SWEAT gave us whistles to blow now if we have any trouble. Ummh, my mouth is how I protect myself or I don't walk with knobkerries or that kind of thing. It's just my mouth, you just have to be strong, you have to prepare (Stacey).

That's my own safety. I don't park where a client wants to go park (Tessa).

The finding concurs with the studies done on sex workers, not only in South Africa, but also across the globe. According to studies, sex workers face exploitation and violence from their clients and pimps (Gould & Fick, 2009; Luiz & Roets, 2000; Lutrick & Cohan, 2009; O'Neil, 2010). This is evidenced by incidences of human trafficking, coercion and control, drug and alcohol abuse (Luiz & Roets, 2000; O'Neil, 2010). The next section discusses the sex workers' relationship with the community.

4.4.3 Sex workers relationship with the community

Even though sex work is stigmatised for religious, moral and legal reasons as indicated earlier, the sex workers in the study expressed that they felt that they had a sense of belonging in their communities. However, their lack of involvement in the communities indicated otherwise. Sex workers stated that they preferred to live a quieter life and others felt that their community stigmatise them hence they preferred to do their work in a different geographical location where they are not known. In some cases, the behaviour of sex workers in the streets causes them to be objects of disdain in the neighbourhoods as one sex worker noted

It is the way the girls perform while on the roads, you understand. They make noise, shouting, screaming, and scolding clients. Then obviously, the people are going to have problems with that. (Marcia)

Most of the girls will stand there and do their business, and then they throw the condom right there and leave it there. Tomorrow my kid comes past and will pick it up, you see germs and all that kind of thing. You see, I don't believe in doing it like there in public. (Stacey).

In terms of social integration, some sex workers expressed the following:

I don't like to involve myself with a lot of people. I just want to be on my own (Mary).

I don't worry much about friends. Ah, I don't want friends... Only here and now it's me and my boyfriend and I am on my own. I lock myself inside here. (Laughs) (Kim).

I don't talk to a lot of people; mostly it's here. When I am outside, I talk to a few people (Rachel)

The researcher also observed that sex workers in the study formed informal networks amongst themselves and supported each other in terms of material needs, supply of information and generally a spirit of camaraderie, which they don't find in mainstream society. The researcher also observed that in addition to positive support there is also negative influence when the sex workers engage in disturbances through making noise in neighbourhoods, swearing loudly in public and public drinking as well as soliciting for clients in the streets.

The high degree of isolation of sex workers concurs with Durkheim's anomie theory, which proposes that societal members need to be well regulated and integrated in society. Through institutions such as the family, community, religion and educational systems, the society provides certain levels of integration and regulation by providing norms and values (Babbie & Mouton, 2007; Graff, 2006). Due to the deviant nature of sex work in the South African society, sex workers find themselves not socially integrated, which results in social exclusion and sub-culture formation. The lack of social integration has implication for exclusion in participating in mainstream socio-economic activities in such a way that perpetuates poverty.

4.4.4 Summary of findings with regard to the context in which sex work operates

The majority of sex workers stated that sex work is a very dangerous occupation. The cited issues include being threatened physically and being verbally abused by the clients, police and the pimps and members of the public. In terms of health and safety concerns, sex workers under study, unlike those in the literature of other studies, showed that they were utilising the health systems fully, and were aware of the need for protected sex. The sex workers also said that they use different strategies to protect themselves physically through using whistles and ensuring that their clients park in safe spaces. In terms of the sex workers' relationship with the community, it

was found that the sex workers under study are not well integrated in their communities due to the disturbing nature of their work in neighbourhoods, as a result they resorted to a life of isolation. The general impression of the context in which sex workers operate was that it is an industry that is characterised by harshness, constrained by institutional controls and leads to social exclusion owing to the way sex work is generally perceived by the larger society in South Africa. In the following section, structural factors are discussed.

4.5 Structural factors

The structural factors and themes that are subject to analysis pertain to socio-political historical context, gender, social class and institutional failures. Various authors agree that the past injustices that emanate from the socio-historical context of apartheid in South Africa utilised structurally embedded factors such as people's gender, race, and geographical location to expose people to poverty and underdevelopment (Davids et al., 2005; Mubangizi, 2008; Patel, 2005; Taylor, 1999).

4.5.1 Socio-political and historical context

The profile of the participants in the field description section indicates that 4 out of 20 of the participants only attained or could not complete their education whilst 11 did not matriculate. Even though most of these participants dropped out of school due to teen pregnancies it was evident from the participants narration of their life stories that the predisposing factor to teen pregnancies was poverty. In cases of much older participants, the occurrence of political riots during the 1970s affected their schooling whilst others had to leave school early in order to support their families. Responding to a question of why the participant could not proceed with schooling beyond grade 9, one participant stated the following:

Because our grandmother threw me and my mother out [of the house]. So I had to go and look for a job to feed the children, as my mother got sick; I had to look for work, and that work also gave me little income. So I met a friend who lives here (pointing) and she asked me if I wanted to come out at night. At first, it was scary, but afterwards I just went for it because of the money (Kim).

Another participant responded to the same question by saying:

That time there were riots and I used to go to Adoc Primary School in Diep River. There was a boycott so I just stopped and my grandmother who was raising us was struggling and I just decided I was going to leave school and work (Patricia).

In terms of housing as a poverty indicator, four of the participant sleeps outside as indicated in graph 3 because they cannot afford a roof over their head and seven are vulnerably accommodated in shacks. This aspect is more serious for those women who migrated from rural areas to Cape Town. The phenomenon of poor housing is not new to South Africa as during apartheid times, township communities were characterised mostly by women who had migrated from rural areas and who formed coalitions that aimed to address issues such as poor housing (Cole, 1987; Ismail, 2006).

As a result of migrant labour, many people were exposed to other social problems in addition to housing. One participant indicated how migrant labour affected her family:

My father used to work in the mines of Johannesburg, my mother lived in the rural areas and they used to visit each other regularly until he just disappeared (Myra).

Apartheid policies also structured the type of occupation that people had to undertake. As noted from the fieldwork description of participants under study, two of the participants' parents were either unemployed or deceased whereas 12 engaged in semi-skilled labour such as cleaning, domestic work or as gardeners and garbage collectors. Though the participants' number is too limited to generalise on all sex workers, it is an acknowledged fact that the socio-political and historical policies of apartheid trapped people in a vicious cycle of deprivation (Davids et al, 2005). The participants' area of origin, for example, shows how the apartheid policies destined people to poverty. While five of the participants originated from the rural areas, 11 came from the Cape Town townships, also known as the Cape Flats.

As discussed in chapter 2, The Cape Flats is the area in Cape Town in which the apartheid regime forcibly removed non-white people who had to contend with poverty and hardship (Cole, 1987; Davids, Theron & Maphunye, 2005; Ramphele, 2002). The following participants described the communities in which they live.

There was nothing that time [in Gugulethu in the 1980s] (Thembi)

Like in my community [Mitchells Plain]. Most of the people are proud, they have got pride, understand, like me. I can't stand at the robot and start begging, I would rather say, let me wash

your car, let me clean your house. There are lots of people that re jobless, unemployed there by us but they are willing to work (Stacey).

In Brown Farm, in Philippi where I live, there is a vibe, there are criminals, but I am not included in them, I chose my own life because I got hurt at a young age (Bridget).

It is also important to point out that although structure exerts a high degree of influence in people's lives, the individual agency also plays a vital role in choosing the lifestyle they want. Graaff (2006) asserts that structure and agency are mutually constitutive. In the above statements, it is apparent that even though the communities are characteristically poor and harsh, there is an element of agency as some individuals choose to do any type of work, lifestyle and way of earning a living that they want.

4.5.2 Gender and patriarchy

The gender dimension as a predisposing factor that contributed to women into doing sex work was also apparent from the participants' responses. According to the findings of the study, gender structurally predisposed women to doing sex work for different reasons that include the need to fulfil practical gender roles and the vulnerability that emanates from being a woman. These subcategories of the gender theme are discussed below.

i) Practical gender needs

Fifteen out of twenty women participants had at least one child. All of them had been abandoned by partners and spouses and were either unemployed or earned very low income before engaging in sex work. Due to the burdens of single parenthood, these women find themselves being structurally determined by their position as single mothers to shoulder family responsibilities. The following statements show how the sex workers motivate their entry into sex work and how they spend their money.

I have to buy my baby her diapers and her toiletries, if she is sick now medicine and with the leftovers I push the whole amount out and then I buy food a little bit food (Samantha).

My kids school fees, clothing, my mother, food. My mother doesn't work, no one works in my family so I provide for them, but they don't know what I am doing though. They think I am working at a restaurant, take away in Cavendish (Stacey)

Female-headed households are a common feature of the South African communities in particular, among the black and coloured communities, which are mostly affected by poverty as women play a major role as the family breadwinners (Rampele, 2002; Orderson, 2010). Teen pregnancies also predispose most women to a position of perpetual poverty as the single mothers strive to make a living. The state assistance of the Child Support Grant is hardly adequate to meet the expenses (Orderson, 2010). It is evident that patriarchal societies such as South Africa have structurally positioned poor women in such a way that they had to shoulder familial responsibilities without much support (Orderson, 2010; Rampele, 2002). In addition to the practical gender needs, there is vulnerability as a factor leading women into doing sex work and disruption in youth development.

ii) *Vulnerability*

The findings from the study indicated that different forms of exploitation exposed and trapped some of the sex workers in the trade. Some of the sex workers were in relationships with criminals, gangsters and drug dealers. Their boyfriends who acted as pimps were exploiting them and some were tricked by friends into doing sex work. These circumstances create a vicious cycle for the sex workers and they find it difficult to get out of sex work. The following statements show how some sex workers have been vulnerable.

Like how I ended up in this. It's quite a long story. It's about a family friend, like a cousin. I didn't know I was going to end up like this... I was at home in Eastern Cape for my family affairs, so she asked me if I could come with her to Cape Town. I came and stayed with her. She was 17 and I was 15, so we went and had a nice time, and when I came back for a week ... When I got back here in Cape Town I found out why I was going do this kind of thing, I never knew ke sissy. I only saw it on the TV, only in overseas its happening or Jo'burg (laughs). I didn't have a choice, I was far away from home, I didn't know how I was going to get money to go home or whatever. It was like "I am in, I am in". (Pauses) I never thought of going back, because I was scared.
(Ayanda)

I tried to look for a job. I tried to pick up my life. I tried and tried and nothing happened until one day when I was trying I went to look for a job somewhere and then somebody stopped me and said OK and I went there with R10,00 and he gave me R10,00 and he said " You're going come and work for us and we'll give you R150,00. I went to the house and this guy didn't give me the money for the room and for the work. He paid me for sex work, and then I started. (Pamela)

I went to Sea Point looking for a job; I went to Checkers and Shoprite to leave my C.V. I didn't find a job and I just thought God knows the right time. I didn't find a job, but as I was walking I met a friend on the way, and I told her my problem. She said to me, there is way you can get money quickly and you can support your child because you have no choice ... My transport money was short by R3, 00, I wanted to get into a train (pauses). So I told her my problems, my mother passed away, and so on ...So I decided that's how I was going to get money, no matter what it takes. I asked the lady how I was going to go about it, just standing there, and the lady said to me I needed not to worry, "You have to sell your body, you don't have a choice". (Bridget)

I don't get support from my daughter's father because he is in jail...he was a bander, you know, a gangster. (Tessa)

One of the participants, whose transcription was spoilt, related that her Nigerian boyfriend coerced her into doing sex work and took most of her money after he promised to get her a job. The researcher also noted the sex workers in their natural environment and observed that some of them would come and stand in the streets with their "reportedly" boyfriends in the vicinity controlling how they work and taking the money whilst the boyfriends sit or even sleep along the streets. Some of the pimps are very protective of the sex workers, yet they are also very violent towards them and would lash out verbally and physically abused them as they see fit.

The notion of gender based violence and exploitation can best be explained in terms of the strategic gender needs of women that Pearson (2000) postulated. Strategic gender needs of women are the needs that women identify with because of their subordinate position to men in society (Pearson, 2000). They relate to gender divisions of labour, power and control, and include issues such as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages and women's control over their bodies (Pearson, 2000). These strategic needs are extensive in poor communities and pose a huge challenge to women empowerment (Guy-Sheftal & Wallace Sanders, 1996). The next section discusses the disruption in youth development as causal factors leading some women into sex work.

iii) Disruption in youth development- the girl child

A number of participants from extreme absolute poverty circumstances stated that their schooling was disrupted because either they were disturbed by doing household chores or they had to drop

out of school completely to support the family through domestic duties and secular work. The sentiments expressed below give evidence to the fact.

I went to school up to grade 1. My people, my sister told me every day I was not going to the school, she would tell my teachers, I was looking after her children. That's what happened to me every time I went home I had to look after her children and I didn't go to school, you see (Louise).

When they stopped me from going to school when it was exam time, I dropped out because they kept me like for 4 days while we were doing exams... [I would] work in the house, cleaning.... I was not very happy because I wanted to finish school (Rachel)

According to Ansell (2005) and Lalthapersad-Pillay (2009), families that live in poverty often remove girl children from schooling because of the need to assist with domestic duties (Patel, 2005). This structural exclusion of the girl child from participating in socio-economic activities such as education contributes to underdevelopment and perpetuates poverty in that poor families utilise strategies that benefit them in the short term whilst jeopardising their long-term development. It is also ironic that parents and caregivers are supposed to provide support to their children but in these contexts, the former seek support from the latter. This reversal of roles contributes negatively to the children's formative years and negotiation of later adult roles (Dinkelman, Lam & Leibrandt, 2005; O'Neal 2010; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007; Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; Shisana et al., 2009). The phenomenon contravenes the South Africa's Children's Act of 2005 and the Bill of rights, which seek to protect the interests of the children's social psychological and mental wellbeing. The exclusion of young girls from schooling is also against the South African National Youth Charter, which seeks to create opportunities and support for young people to maximise their personal and collective development (National Youth Policy. 2009). The next section discusses the theme of social class as a contributing factor for entry into sex work.

4.5.3 Social Class

The sex workers also displayed poverty indicators such as living in vulnerable accommodation, 7 lived in shacks whilst four slept outside at the time of the study. These participants said that their upbringing was characterised by struggling and poverty as the following statements indicate:

I don't feel I belonged [in the school] because everybody had lunch money and everything else and I can't talk about it (begin to cry)... Every day I didn't have money for lunch I had to ask a friend. If the friend didn't want to give me money I couldn't force her because it was her mother's money (Bridget).

Sometimes there was no food. My mother is also a single mother. My father left when I was three. (Denise)

My grandmother used to buy clothes for me when she was still alive. After that, I used to go to Rylands to get second-hand clothes for selling and for myself, to get food for the family, that's how we grew up. (Dora)

The researcher also found that despite entering sex work, the socio-economic status of the sex workers did not improve as they are still living in poverty. From personal observation, the researcher also noticed that most of the sex workers did not enjoy eating healthy meals; they rather eat junk food and sometimes have to share a loaf of bread. The following expressions demonstrate the degree of low socio-economic status.

Even if I get R100, 00 per day so that I can buy food from Shoprite or buy myself a pair of jeans, that's all I want. (Dora)

I don't care fokoro[swear word], that's what I am thinking because I work here every day but I am not gaining anything... I am not paying anything I am not getting anything. That's the problem. (Pamela)

In terms of poverty indicators in South Africa it is noteworthy that unemployment is concentrated in specific geographically, racially and demographically defined groups such that the worst affected by unemployment are African, coloured, female, poorly educated and young (15-24 years (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2006; McGrath & Akoojee, 2006; Mubangizi, 2008; Rospabe & Selodi, 2006). In Cape Town, for example, the domestic and hospitality industry, are traditional occupations for black and coloured people particularly migrating from rural areas (Cox, Hemson & Todes, 2004). Nearly the entire group of sex workers under study originated from the Cape Flats where poverty prevails. The next section discusses institutional failures as contributors for entry into sex work.

4.5.4 Institutional failures

Among the broader structural factors that are influential in contributing and perpetuating the engaging of women in sex work are the failures in societal institutions such as the government departments.

Government institutions

The sex workers in the study indicated that they have been betrayed by the government on a number of levels that vary from the city council, the home affairs and the social development departments of South Africa. Commenting on how the government has failed them through the city council one participant echoed the sentiments of nearly every participant:

How many people sleep outside? How many people scarrel [struggle] for a house, hah? Other people have houses but people are sleeping outside because they don't have a place for themselves. Who can the government of the people help? The people are sleeping on the streets not having a house. Not for me, I don't worry with the government (protesting). (Louise)

In terms of provision of jobs, another participant stated:

It's very difficult, even though I have Matric, how many years ... look here, many students have passed last year and this year and they are looking for work. (Samantha).

Another participant expressed her discontent with the Home Affairs department

I tried to explain to them [Home Affairs] they must find my name on the computer although I have got a birth certificate but I never tried to go home to go get it... Because sometimes I just feel if I don't have an ID yah, yah, without an ID you can't get anywhere, go further, so then I just started to lose interest in whatever you see. (Ayanda)

The discontentment with institutional capacities can be explained through the conflict theories. The theories argue that society fail to allocate resources and provide opportunities fairly that explains the problems of poverty and social exclusion (Graaff, 2004; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Marxists view those who suffer from poverty and social exclusion as victims rather than the cause of their problems as argued by the neo-liberal perspective. They propose a revolution as a means of solving the problem of institutional failures. As the above statements indicate, the sex workers are

protesting against the government hence institutional failure contribute to women's entry into sex work and the women participants use sex work as a way of protesting against the government. The next section summarises the theme of structural factors.

4.5.5 Summary of structural factors

The structural factors that were identified as major contributors to women doing sex work in the southern suburbs of Cape Town discussed in this section pertained to the socio-historical context of apartheid in South Africa, gender dimension, social class and institutional failures.

The geographical displacement of people to the Cape Flats area and poor rural areas was a result of the apartheid segregation laws such as the Groups Areas Act of 1950, which legislated the repressive removal of people and allocated places according to racial groupings without consideration of availability of resources in those areas. People in the Cape Flats areas and rural areas for example were structurally located and exposed to poverty. The women from the study were structurally located in terms of gender in the sense that their schooling was disrupted because of teen pregnancies, the need for them to attend to household chores and to support their families. The gender dimension also exposes women to vulnerability, as most of them were victims of exploitation by the pimps they call boyfriends whilst friends trapped others in the sex work industry or men who promised them work. Lastly, institutional failure such as lack of support from communities and a failure to provide basic services such a housing and jobs by the government departments exposed the sex workers to susceptibility to engage in sex work as their environment was not enabling them. The next section discusses social factors.

4.6 Social factors

The majority of women in the study indicated that they were driven into doing sex work due to a number of social factors that include families at risk, breakdown in youth development, lack of social support and peer pressure. It is important to point out that some of these social factors overlap with the structural factors discussed earlier hence, this section will discuss the social factors briefly. To differentiate between structural factors and social factors the researcher has taken structural factors to relate to those more enduring, rigid broader and predetermined social framework that individuals find themselves in; they can't escape, and if they manage to escape, they do so in very limited ways. These include factors such as gender, social class, government laws etc. Social factors in this regard even though significantly influential they are more flexible in

that the individual and significant others such as families and community organisations can exercise more autonomy to change the status quo as opposed to an attempt to change a person's gender, class and race one is born in, socio-political history and macroeconomic environment one lives in. The researcher thus asserts that if significant role players are committed and have adequate resources they can influence and ameliorate social factors more readily in the short term whereas transformation of the structural factors though of paramount importance, need more long term interventions at a broader policy level. The next paragraph discusses the sub-theme of families at risk.

4.6.1 Families at risk

Sixteen out of twenty of the sex workers come from families at risk characterised by domestic violence, substance abuse, broken homes, abandonment by father or partner amongst other things. Sex workers who came from families characterised by domestic violence expressed that the adverse family environment affected their schooling as expressed by the following participant:

Ok, my mind was there but my mind was at home to my mommy. Also you see, what can happen when my daddy came home, even if he didn't come, maybe for a night or two, I know by the time he comes home, there was going to be a fight. I was so scared that he is going to come home maybe when we are not there, you know he would hit my mommy also... Yes, it affected [schooling] (Tessa)

For those sex workers who came from broken homes, most of them stated that they would have liked their families to be together and supportive as a way of restraining them from entering sex work. The following sentiments reflect that:

Ummh, In bad weather, if they didn't go out and if I had to go out, I had to see to them, but if they went out they didn't provide for me. We are not very close to each other. It's just the three of us, but we are not very close. After my mother's death, we were a little bit closer but we are not close anymore.... The quarrels drive me mad so I lie down and sometimes I lock myself up, sometimes for three days because of the stress of the family. (Kim)

In line with functional theories and the ecological system theory, the maintenance of order and harmony in subsystems such as families has a ripple effect on the individual system and affect the individual functioning adversely (Potgieter, 1998; Tshiwula, 2002). Hence, it is important to build

strong family supportive systems. Despite the fact that families at risk predispose children to delinquency behaviour as asserted by many authors, it is also important to recognise that individual characteristics and personal agency and choice play a crucial role in determining individual behaviour (Graaff, 2006; Tshiwula, 2002). For example, the sex workers who had a background of families at risk had siblings who pursued other occupations, as the next expressions indicate:

We are three children, just girls. My eldest sister is staying in Delft. She has her own business, a tuck-shop. My other sister is in Johannesburg, she is married and stuff. She is on her own. (Marcia)

My grandmother had lots of plans, you know my sister was ready to go to UNISA University, she was a teacher already but she was in this type of thing like UNISA and Damelin... So I was, like, I can't wait for standard 10 to finish my Matric, because I know I had a parent who is there for me. Mommy already made plans and had money, all that money made for me to go to Pretoria University,.. But I couldn't reach it I don't know why. (Ayanda).

Aah, I come from a decent house. The people aren't suffering and all that. It's just I am the only girl. I was always pushed to one side you understand, but no one motivated me to go stand on the road. It was my own rebellious lifestyle that pushed me to the road, no one pushed me. (Ayesha)

The notion of individual choice of behaviour can be explained in terms of the symbolic interaction theory. Symbolic interactionism put more emphasis on meaning, individual actors, individual identity and consciousness as opposed to larger scale structures influencing individual behaviour. This notion lies in opposition to Functionalism and Marxism, which emphasizes the role of societal structures as influencing behaviour more than individual agency. Some of the proponents of the symbolic interactions' theory postulate that people engage in social action because of their being active thinking actors as opposed to action being determined by biological drives, social structure and cultural factors (Graaff, 2005). Another deterring factor to development is the lack of social support as discussed below.

4.6.2 Lack of social support

i) Schooling

Some of the participants related how they were let down by the schooling system with a possible detriment to their youth development and preparation for adult roles.

No, I didn't want to be there because I knew that I was capable of doing more and there weren't more facilities at the school. You know, I wanted to do., when I was in primary school I played hockey and I played quite well but my high school didn't want to put hockey in the school although I was very good. It was mainly hall and stuff like that. I didn't want to do it again, I don't want to be in a school that have sports that I wanted to do, nothing. (Ayeesha)

The teachers were beating us too much at school at that time. If you were late for school, you were beaten. It was not nice at school those days. (Sugar)

Another participant who is black and attended predominantly white and coloured schools responded to a question on her sense of belonging in the school by stating that she did not get along with her peers for the following reasons:

*I was not their type. Let me tell you the truth. It was racism stuff, I am black, I am unhappy, hah, and here comes a kafur with f***n running with ourselves..... You know what, I have a problem. If I go to the coloured people, they don't want to accept me. If I go to the white people, they don't want to accept me. If I go to the black people, they don't want to accept me. Where am I going to be accepted? (Pamela).*

The above statement demonstrates that a sense of belonging is crucial in order to build one's identity, especially for the youth in their developmental stages to prepare them for adult roles (Ansell, 2005). A lack of sense of belonging has implications for the individual's integration in his or her community and society in general. According to Durkheim's theory, a lack of social integration leads to anomic behaviour and disrupts one's social functioning.

The findings above indicate that when schools fail to provide the required resources to learners or create an enabling environment for learners, this has implications for youth failure to negotiate adult roles leading them to engage in sex work. According to the United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs (2007), youth in developing countries face the challenge of poor preparation for adult roles leading to acquisition of poor and low educational levels, which is associated with many sex workers. However, despite the crucial role played by the community and schools, it is important to note that some individuals can still get the support and be well integrated in their communities or maybe too integrated such that they still engage in what is considered by society to be deviant behaviour. Some participants who did not come from poor families and had

good support systems and engaged well in school activities still engaged in sex work as expressed below:

I was a cleaner in the Environmental Club, we would pick up the papers in the school. I was in the public speaking team in the school. I was in community groups that speak about whatever competition subject, and in many other things like drama and choir and those sort of things. I was very busy. (Ayanda)

Graaff (2006) and Tshiwula (2002) explain the notion of how youths choose different lifestyles, in terms of structure and agency being mutually constitutive . The individual who operates in a structured environment is free to exercise his or her agency in a way that he or she pleases as indicated by some sex workers who come from families with adequate provisions, functional families and were well integrated in their communities but still turned into sex work. The next section discusses the role of the community.

ii) Community

Responding to a question on what support she would have liked to get as she was growing up one participant who came from a family of serious domestic violence said:

[The neighbours] to stand by us when they see something is wrong, almost like a family you know (Tessa).

No, the area where I am from are very conservative, Denevan in Bellville, it's a very quiet area, people are snobbish (Ayesha).

When institutions such as communities break down this has far-reaching implications in terms of the individual's growth and participation in socio-economic activities. In contrast, another participant emphasised the role of faith- based organisations in providing supportive intervention.

I now see church people come from St Martin's in Bergvliet; if they come around at the church, they help us with things such as food, money and things. (Kim)

The role of community organizations cannot be underestimated, as they are pivotal in supporting people with social problems. When they fail to support people this leads to continued social problems.

iii) Lack of support on gender sensitive needs

Some participants in the group under study stated that their parents and care givers failed to support them on gender related aspects of their lives such as preparation for adult roles, giving emotional support when needed and unfair retribution when they became unwed mothers mostly in their teens. From the perspective of such participants, they were going through a gender-based vulnerable stage of their life, which needed a special form of attention and support to enable them to be fully developed as youth in preparation for later adult roles. The following sentiments demonstrate how the participants felt let down by their significant others.

Its just I am the only girl I was always pushed one side you understand... Yah like, umm, my mother wasn't, she was there for me but not in the way umm, you know a teen-age girl actually needs more extra attention but she would treat me like the boys like you know. That is why I became more independent quickly (Ayeesha).

Participants who had teen pregnancies expressed that their families treated them in the following way:

No, when I fell pregnant my parents threw me out of the house, my parents were not really happy.... OK, my parents were very strict people, you understand. I didn't want to be told and to be locked up inside the house. When I had the baby, also they kept me in the house because I was not working (Marcia)

That time I was 16 years old, then I had a baby when I was 17 years old. In the meantime, this woman [her aunt] she told me the first day I came out of the hospital with my baby, now you must look after your own baby. You know your mother passed away and there is nobody to look after you. For example, if I wanted money for sweets, she would tell me I am not her own child. (Bridget).

It is evident that in the group of women under study, the lack of support that resulted when the teens fell pregnant exacerbated their problems and contributed to leading them into situations that are more difficult. In the context of such predicaments, some women resort to sex work. In line with this fact, Haralambos and Holborn (2008) assert that the overrepresentation of women in

poverty has been termed the feminization of poverty. It is also important to realise that through structure is a determining factor, individuals react to similar structural constraints differently (Graff, 2006). The next section discusses peer pressure as a social factor that contributes to sex work.

4.6.3 Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is a strong wave that sweep many youth into behavioural problems and lead to engagement in sex work in later adult life. The findings revealed that many of the sex workers were influenced by their peers to engage in delinquency behaviour, which culminated into sex work. The following sex workers admitted that they succumbed to peer pressure in such a way which disrupted their schooling and personal development.

I didn't like school. I used to hang around with wrong friends. We used to get in to the train in Khayelitsha as if we where going to school but we didn't go to school, we used to drink liquor and abuse drugs (Dora)

My life was good, I had everything I wanted, but it was because of friends going out and staying out. I used to sleep out with my friends, partying. My family didn't like it that much because at church it wasn't acceptable. I had to choose between family and friends and I chose friends...OK, it was like a wild experience, you see, going to joy, to clubs, smoking, sleeping at people's houses. (Marcia)

At the time, I had started drugs, then [boyfriend's sister of same age] told me one night I could go with her, I could make quick money. I was that time starting on crack and rock, and then I said "OK, go with it, go gal". You know what I mean, like first see how it is first time. She organised a client for me and that was the first time I went with the client in Constantia (Tessa).

One of the participants whose interview recording was spoilt expressed that she ran away from a children's home where she was placed because of the sexual abuse experience, to engage in sex work as influenced by peers. This shows that in some cases, child protection institutions try to safeguard the interests of the children but the children engage in delinquent behaviour. The above findings resonate well with Shisana et al., (2008) who conducted a national survey in South Africa on HIV prevalence and sexual behaviour who found that peer pressure contributes significantly to

early sexual debut among youths, which might lead to transactional sex. The notion of peer pressure as a precipitator of delinquent behaviour can be explained in terms of the social control, for individuals whose bond with the societal institutions has weakened, they turn to peers for conformity and approval as was the case with some participants (Graaff,2005; Tshiwula,2002). The next section summarise the social factors.

4.6.4 Summary on social factors

The majority of participants came from backgrounds of families at risk, had discontinuities in youth development, lacked social support and experienced a high degree of peer pressure. Families at risk were characterised by domestic violence, substance abuse, abandonment and family breakdown among other things. Studies have documented that families at risk predispose children to delinquent behaviour (Tshiwula, 2002). The discontinuities in youth development emanated mainly from disrupted schooling through extended absenteeism and teen pregnancies. When families, neighbourhoods and schools fail to provide resources and a supportive environment for the youth to maximise their potential in development, this can have far reaching implications. Some participants resorted to doing sex work despite the supportive role of significant others such as families and institutions. This indicates the role of agency in influencing behaviour as opposed to structure shaping behaviour in some individuals. Lastly, peer pressure was one of the contributors to delinquency behaviour and eventually sex work. Social factors are indeed crucial in shaping the development of the youth, as they are future leaders. The next section discusses the economic factors.

4.7. Economic factors

The precipitating factor for women's entrance into sex work is primarily for economic reasons. In the study, the findings indicated that the lack of job opportunities, the need to acquire capital to invest in long-term plans, deprivation and consumerism are the major themes that emerged from the broad economic theme. It was also noteworthy that four of the sex workers migrated from rural areas and five from other cities like Kimberly, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth to look for job opportunities in Cape Town. The remaining eleven originated from the Cape Town Townships and had to contend with the futility of job seeking efforts. In terms of previous work experience, it was found that seven of the participants have never worked whilst thirteen worked in the formal sector pursuing jobs such as working in hotels, cleaning, domestic work, working in supermarkets as counter hands, working in bars and restaurants. Only one of participants was involved in

entrepreneurship efforts like dressmaking and beadwork but stopped because of lack of a lucrative market. The neo-liberal macroeconomic policies are discussed below as contributing factors to poverty and subsequent entry in sex work.

4.7.1 Neo-liberal macroeconomic policies

The findings from the study gives evidence that some of the broader causal factors relates to what happened in the macro-economic situations, which affected their micro-lives. A number of sex workers were either directly affected by retrenchments from jobs or had their significant family member retrenched because of companies that they worked for being affected by macro-economic policies such as the neo-liberal policies. The following statements show the effect of neo liberal policies on the lives of the sex workers under study.

I was working there [factory] for 15 years as a machinist... I was retrenched (Patricia)

When I started working, by the time I stopped the job, I was working in the hotel. I looked for a job, but I couldn't find it. I was stopped by the end of my contract. (Pamela)

The consultant job I left because the company closed. The embassy changed the rules, you can't come on behalf of the clients anymore, the clients had to come by themselves, so when the company closed there was no work for us anymore.... As a counter hand, the money was too little, I worked for seven days a week before I got an off day. (Stacey)

All the sex workers that had prior work as domestic workers, cashiers in supermarkets or bar ladies complained that the money that they were paid was very little and they could not meet their daily needs.

Then the people underpaid me where I worked so I left the house and I ended up in the streets ... I was in domestic work.... Uh, R200, 00 it was too much, too little, per month, that's crazy (Denise).

These people were paying me R500, 00 for house cleaning, for the whole month. I told the people this wasn't money. I told the people I must go. OK, the people said, go, and I had to stay outside (Louise).

The employment problems such as retrenchments, non-renewal of work contracts and underpayment can be explained in terms of the neo-liberal theories. The economic structural adjustment policies of the 1980s and 1990s for example resulted in massive closedown of companies and factories leading to job losses (Ansell, 2005; Pearson, 2000).

The South African government's adoption of GEAR as an economic growth and poverty alleviation strategy in the 1990s for example resulted in failure to offer equitable distribution of economic gains or "trickling down effect" as an outcome of the policy (Altman, 2009; Borat & Oosthuizen, 2002; Davids et al., 2005; Sengendo, 2006). As stated in Chapter 2 by Orderson (2010), prior to 1990, about 40 000 women were employed in the clothing industry but in 2010 less than half, about 17600 women, are employed due to retrenchments resulting from local South African Industries being superseded by the imported Chinese clothing and textiles (Orderson, 2010). Some Neo-liberalists influenced by capitalism would also argue that a democratic society should provide for freedom of choice of profession. Such views argue that in the absence of coercion, people have the right to choose sex work as a profession. Led by organisations such as SWEAT, sex workers motivate their entry into sex work on similar grounds. The next section expands on the job opportunities theme.

4.7.2 Lack of Job opportunities

Nearly all the sex workers expressed that their reasons for entering sex work was that they could not find jobs as indicated by the participants' responses:

OK, I don't work, like I said, so I have to buy myself clothes, rent food, and things like that. I have to support myself. (Marcia)

Ummh, You know I have bills to pay also, if you don't work how you do get money, you must find something to do to get money. Otherwise how do you eat? (Monica)

No, after that I didn't find a job and went to street life. (Kim)

It was also noteworthy that one of the push factors out of the formal employment sector was that the sex workers worked before were underpaid compared to the money they perceived to get in sex work.

The work where I said I got paid R200.00 per week for 7 days a week that was from half past 8 to half past 6 in the evening every day. So R200,00 a week only covered my travelling fare and the one who was looking after my kids and ... what else, yah, that's all that's what the money covered that's why. (Stacey)

I was working in a bar, you know, every week they were giving me a small amount, you understand, and I did have ... you know, I am a woman, all women have their needs, you understand, so I just see myself there....I was, they were paying us weekly from Monday to Sunday. I was only working night shifts so that I was only getting R700,00 a week, so it was a small amount, very small. (Lerato)

In some instances, attempts at entrepreneurship skills were also futile as indicated below:

I have tried selling fruit and vegetables but there were too many people selling the same thing so that you end up eating from your own stock. (Myra)

Yes, I have tried, I have got a lot of stuff at my house but people just want stuff, but they don't want to pay, that's another problem. (Mary)

The findings concur with findings from other studies conducted internationally and in South Africa. There is ample evidence which points out that women enter into sex work as a result of poverty, the need for money, more lucrative income, acquiring goods, services, accommodation or other basic necessities (Dinkelman, Lam & Leibbrandt, 2005; O'Neal 2010; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007; Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; Shisana et al., 2009). Surujlal and Dhurup (2009) state that the majority of women in South Africa came from poor rural areas to look for work but they eventually resort to sex work when no other employment is found (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; Luiz & Roets, 2000). The next section discusses the need to earn capital for long-term investments.

4.7.3 Need for capital to invest in long term plans

A few of the sex workers pointed out that because they did not have capital to pursue economic activities such as entrepreneurship and further education and training they needed to do sex work to save money for their intended plans.

I did plan that already a long time. I have got a sewing machine already somebody gave me a machine already. I just need material and cotton. (Mary)

I must look for a job that pay me , I must put the money in the bank in the account, come at the end of the month get the money out to buy myself everything put the money for a bungalow[shelter] for me and my boyfriend. (Louise)

I need to get money from this work that I am doing so that I can start a small business like selling chips, sweets, opening a spaza shop or tuck shop. I need a job no matter which kind. (Bridget)

It is clear from the participants responses that they did not intend to stay in sex work for the rest of their lives. According to the participants, their need for economic activities have been hindered by a lack of money hence they use sex work to build investments for the future. Various authors have documented that women living in poverty circumstances are constrained by a lack of resources such as savings, capital assets and inability to own properties and land (Dinkelman et al., 2005; Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; Shisana et al., 2008). O'Neil (2010) writing from an international perspective further argues that the women entering sex work are victims of economic injustices and gender inequalities that are rooted in capitalism and patriarchy which calls for redistributive actions to address the needs of these women (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2009; Mubangizi, 2007; Taylor, 1999). In addition, deprivation is another economic factor that leads women to do sex work as discussed below.

4.7.4 Deprivation and consumerism

Unanimously, the sex workers in the study voiced that they were living in a state of material deprivation. As indicated earlier, the researcher observed some of the participants in their natural environment. The researcher noted the poverty indicators such as sleeping outside alongside Kenilworth train station, living in unstructured shelters such as shacks in the informal settlement section of the Cape Flats, cooking meagre food in tins, sharing very little and unwholesome food and in some cases wearing torn clothes. The researcher also observed that even though the sex workers lived in a state of deprivation, they always have cheap wine to drink. The following statements substantiate poverty as a contributing factor for women doing sex work. Responding to a question on what motivated them to do sex work the participants replied:

I pay rent, I buy food for myself because I stay alone. I sent money to my sister in Johannesburg so that she can send the money at home in the rural areas to provide for the children because I don't have the address. Some of the money provides for our sisters. (Myra)

As you can see, I am staying here at the shack at the back (shack behind the main house). I have a kid, the father left me when [the kid] was about 3 months old and he doesn't know his dad. In the weather, you see its winter now I hardly get money, sometimes I stay all night, If I get R50, 00 or R100,00 I come home with it to buy me the food. I haven't gone out for three days I have got nothing [food] at the moment in the house you see. (Kim)

Evidently, absolute poverty is a lived reality of most sex workers. To understand the dynamics of poverty more clearly it is imperative to link the poor women's lived realities with theoretical perspectives that explain poverty. Haralambos and Holborn (2008:214) define poverty in terms of absolute poverty, relative poverty and social exclusion. Absolute poverty is, "A condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information..." (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Absolute poverty is based upon the idea of subsistence and material deprivation and is measured in terms of the resources required to maintain health and physical efficiency (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). It is also important to note that despite the fact that some sex workers use their money for substance abuse, it is because of poverty that they seek consolation in intoxication to escape from the reality of their poverty.

Writing on poverty, Haralambos and Holborn (2008) posits one of the neo-liberal theory's explanations of poverty in terms of the underclass culture. The underclass culture is said to be characterised by poor people having a philosophy of instant gratification, laziness, incompetence, dependency and moral deviance amongst others, which are passed from generation to generation (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). The researcher found that a few of the participants displayed traits that are similar to the description of the traits outlined in the underclass culture theory as most of them displayed instant gratification by drinking, dependency and laziness in the sense that some of them never made attempts to look for alternative work ever since they left school. This shows the influence of agency in which individuals make choices that they deem fit according to their subjective experiences (Graaff, 2005). Such individual choices tend to confine the individuals in an adverse situation where they could have tried to escape the deprivation trap.

However, although a few of the participants displayed traits of the underclass culture, it is important to bear in mind that individual explanations of poverty though applicable in some cases or context specific situations, they cannot explain why poverty exist in a larger context such as the majority of poor communities of South Africa as a whole. For this reason Buchardt et al., (2000) as quoted in Haralambos and Holborn (2008) provides a more plausible explanation of the existence of poverty using an integrated framework of explaining poverty. In South Africa, the socio-historical context of apartheid, which promoted policies of social exclusion, had far-reaching consequences to girls and women particularly those from the communities of people of colour (Davids et al., 2005; Ramphele, 2002). Despite the fact that most sex workers suffered from absolute poverty, other sex workers entered sex work industry because of relative poverty as driven by the need for consumerism as quoted below:

Sometimes a day I can make a maximum of R2500, 00.... Ummh like if I get a person who wants me like for half an hour like say R400, 00 an hour is R500, 00 and you know especially the white people they pay enough if you can make them happy (laughs. It depends on how you treat the clients my most expenses are on clothes, I like clothes. (Lerato)

My father is doing Engineering at UCT and my mother is a nurse at Lavender Hospital in Cape Town... and I tried advertising on the internet as well on Sex Rider which I don't have to go to a road my clients come here you understand so if I have 2 or 3 clients I don't have to go to the road I work from home.... I buy food, I pay rent at the end of the month, I buy clothes I make sure I look nice, toiletries, and stuff. (Marcia)

The above quoted sex workers rent decent flats as opposed to the other ones who sleep outside or live in shacks and they are in a stable relationship with a man. They also do not have dependents. It is clear from the above sex workers circumstances that their motives for sex work are not because they live in absolute poverty, rather they are driven by relative poverty and profit maximisation. They employ different marketing strategies for that purpose as compared to the other sex workers who stated that they just want to buy food and other necessities. In this regard, poverty is not necessarily a state of deprivation in absolute terms, rather poverty is viewed in terms of relative poverty or resources available to individuals and households and the styles of living that govern how those resources are used in certain contexts (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Poverty can also be viewed in terms of inequality in which some people have higher than average income whereas

others income or resources fall so far short of the average or below poverty line (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008; O'Neil, 2010). The next section summarises the economic factors.

4.7.5 Summary of economic factors

The findings showed that economic factors that contributed to women in the group doing sex work were macro-economic policies, the lack of job opportunities, need for capital to invest in long term plans, deprivation and consumerism. Macro-economic policies such as GEAR were shown to exacerbate poverty due to the resultant closure of factories, companies and retrenchments. In terms of the lack of job opportunities, some participants tried to look for jobs and did not get the jobs others never attempted to look for jobs but went straight into sex work. The sex workers also expressed that they sought sex work as a means to invest in future plans, which mainly included further studying, and entrepreneurship endeavours. While some participants suffered from material deprivation, others experienced relative deprivation in that they were not living in material deprivation; rather, they compared their lifestyle to those of others and emulated those lifestyles even though they could not afford it hence they resorted to sex work. The latter sex workers employed different marketing strategies to maximise their money. The individual differences in the states of deprivation indicates the role of agency in determining human behaviour especially for those whose circumstances had nothing to do with material deprivation but chose to do sex work to satisfy their quests for consumerism. The next theme to be discussed is the sex workers' workers proposed interventions.

4.8 Sex workers' proposed intervention

It was important to elicit the sex workers' perceptions of what they thought were the way forward in their struggle with poverty and social exclusion in order to get an insider's perspective. It is also important for the sex workers to reflect on their own problems and participate in decision making that affect them from a people centred perspective (Davids et al., 2005). The sex workers' proposed interventions were centred on the preferred legal context, the government role, effective education system, youth development initiatives, women empowerment programmes, need for family support and promotion of entrepreneurship skills. The sex workers in the study's proposed intervention ranged from those that they thought assisted them in carrying on with the sex work such as changing the legal framework and those that address other structural factors like creating education that is more effective. The majority of sex workers proposed a change in the legal context as a way of ameliorating their problem as discussed in the next paragraph.

4.8.1 Transforming the legal framework

Due to the high incidence of police harassment and brutality, none of the participants preferred a criminalised system. Ten sex workers preferred a legalised system whilst five preferred a decriminalised system. Five of the sex workers preferred neither system as they felt that they wanted to leave the sex work business for varied reasons. The following sentiments give evidence of the participants' preferred legal control.

I prefer a system, which understands me, you understand. This system must know that I am supplying a job for someone. I can go to every organisation and get tested and all that. ...I don't like it for us to be treated as criminals. I am not a criminal (raising her voice in anger)... Its legal everywhere, why shouldn't it be legalised in South Africa? The fact I don't like is that there were women taken from everywhere to come here for the 2010 and they were paid for it and they happened to work and us black South African women or white South African women or whatever the colour might be. The people took over our money and they work and they got something. I don't like it. (Pamela)

Those participants that did not prefer either control system expressed the following:

I don't know what the government must do. I tell you now this is not alright for me the work of it. I keep it for the young people now. The ladies the young people are alright for them. I have come very long with this work. I am 30 years, old, this is not a life for me. (Louise)

I totally now don't feel like this work, I don't feel like doing it at all. I am not interested in doing this anymore, but it's like I am trying my best to stop it but it's just like ... it's hard because I can't help being at home without having nothing because I am used to having money. (Ayanda)

The findings are in agreement with some of the perceptions of sex workers in studies conducted abroad and in South Africa on the perceptions of sex workers regarding the legalization and decriminalization of sex work (Luiz & Roets, 2000). Sex workers who did not want either system, cited reasons such as the age factor, not wanting their girl children to follow the same path of sex work and the need to be rid of the harsh conditions and challenges under which sex work is conducted. Their reasons for preferring a decriminalised or a legalised system was based on the need to make more money without police restrictions, removal of social stigma and the desire for

the official status of sex work as a profession. The sex workers expressed how the police abused them:

Yah, they want to do business with a girl but they don't want to pay because they think they are cops they can do it for free. They talk about cop discounts. (Stacey)

I deal with them verbally or however, these police are not after me, they are after what they want, I can give them R10,00, I work my way out. (Pamela)

These statements indicate the institutional abuse of power by the police who are supposed to be enforcing the law but they resort to corruption. The sex workers reported verbal, physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse by getting excessive fines from the police. Some of the complaints posed by the sex workers were that the police were reluctant to help them when they report crime. This is because sex workers will also be perceived as criminals reflecting the same findings found by Lutrick and Cohan (2009). This unsavoury relationship with the police gave rise to most sex workers preferring a decriminalised system or a legalised system.

A few of the sex workers preferred neither system as they felt that the sex work industry was too harsh and they wanted to leave it but feel trapped. The sex workers felt that the government is inconsistent in its judiciary system and that the sex workers' interests are not a priority. Another important factor raised by the sex workers pertains to the inconsistencies in the legal system that regulate sex work as already indicated by the participant above who complained that South African women sex workers were criminalised whilst women where imported from overseas for sex work for the 2010 FIFA world cup. Street-based sex workers felt unfairly treated by the justice system in that regard as benefits went to a selected few.

I don't think it was right because they say like there is going to come like I don't know how many thousand girls coming to South Africa for the world cup you see but I don't think so, they say one thing and then they say the other thing you know some cops do that and some cops do like this to the person you understand. But with the world cup they were total different with us. They were chasing us more around than anything. So I don't think that was fair you know what I am saying. (Tessa)

Nothing happened in the 2010 Soccer World Cup my friend, nothing, nothing, and nothing. Everybody thought it's was going to be money, the only people it gave money was the government,

no one else. We did no business, the business got poorer when the world cup started. Because I am sure, they gave a lot of bad publicity. (Pamela)

In view of the inconsistencies in the justice system where sex work is concerned it is apparent that whichever system is used, the sex workers are at the mercy of the controlling institutions. This is in line with Sarijlal and Dhurup (2010) in the article entitled “*The State as a Pimp*” where they asserted that there are ideological motives for legalising sex work based on profit maximisation rather than protecting the interests of the sex workers.

4.8.2 The role of the government

Nearly all the sex workers in the study asserted that the government needs to create jobs for the people as a way of alleviating poverty.

It [the government] must give us jobs, so that we can feed ourselves. (Dora)

My needs are, I have got no place to stay, I am unemployed. The government must do something about it. That is the bottom of things.... If the government can assist and be supportive by providing work then I can work for my children. (Thembisa)

The laws, the laws must give us bloody jobs. (Denise)

Other sex workers expressed that the government through the city council should give them houses.

The council can support me by giving accommodation so that I can bring my children closer to me then I can try another way of life. (Myra)

(Pointing at her house) help me with a better place to stay, provide me a house. (Kim)

Social security also emerged as an important intervention in ameliorating the poverty problems as expressed below.

If I can find a proper, job or if I can get a social grant or of I can just get an income... like disability or something or for my daughter. (Pat)

You see us sex workers, the government must help us by paying the child support grant for my children. The government must also help by getting us jobs. (Bridget)

In line with the participant sex workers' sentiments O'Neil (2010) argues that since sex work is rooted in social and sexual inequalities there is a need for interventions that support social inclusion, social justice and redistribution. O'Neil (2010) further argues that the entry point for most sex workers is precipitated by poverty. In a contemporary capitalist society it is imperative for the significant role players such as the state, civil society and the United Nations system to embark on creating an enabling environment and build institutional capacities that provide equal employment opportunities and poverty alleviation strategies for all (Allen & Thomas, 2000; Sen, 1999). Another important intervention suggested by the sex workers pertained to the need to create inclusion that is more social.

4.8.3 Social inclusion

Some of the sex workers indicated that they were thinking way beyond the sex work industry and considered socially inclusive ways such as a good education system and creation of opportunities for all as the next statements show:

Opportunities, we need more opportunities, more persons that will give training more things that can make things that can make you advance so that you can go out and find a decent job, Free learning, education. (Ayeesha)

You see, most of us on the streets we are educated. Most of us we have finished Matric you understand. Most of us have gone to places we have found that most of us have been rejected... You can see maybe you will get someone maybe the person can do now design something there but you understand but where she is because of maybe she doesn't have a family member in that company that's why they don't want to take her. Something like that man, you see. (Lerato)

The major issues are the supportive issues of racism in Cape Town... You know what we can put down the crime of rape and we can put down the crime of everything if we put our heads together and work together and live together. (Pamela).

There is nothing that the city council must do, they must stop the favouring, like you are in a high position, now you can bring in people, you only allow your people to come work if there [is] positions available instead of giving everyone a role in community.

They [Social development department] must help to get ID, CV and stuff like that.
(Ayanda)

Ummh, that the government should train us more and give us also a chance; give us a hearing if not anything else, give us a hearing, hear what is our side. If you would like we can organise you know in our area Kenilworth, Claremont and Wynberg area us girls we can make something happen you know some everyday thing, we can give them an incentive or work to do (Ayeesha)

If anybody could like sponsor a person you know to do a course like me I want to do a nursing course. If somebody could sponsor me, then I am willing to leave this job, I drop it and I am so sick of it. (Denise)

It was also apparent that a number of sex workers expressed their desire to quit the sex work industry as a way of socially including themselves into the mainstream society.

The importance of social inclusion as a way of promoting the participation of people in social and economic activities cannot be underestimated. Haralambos and Holborn (2008) posits that a failure to include people in mainstream social and economic opportunities constitute a form of poverty through social exclusion. In South Africa, there is a high degree of inequality, which has implications for equitable distribution of resources. Sen (1999), in his argument of “development as freedom” plausibly asserts that it is the important to create an enabling social political and economic environment in states that promote the functions and capabilities of people to live the lives they choose as a way of protecting human security. The South African government is committed to promote the empowerment of all people in particular women through social inclusion as stated in the National Gender framework, the South African constitution and the Bill of rights (Davids et al, 2005; The office on the status of women, 2002). The South African National Youth Policy also promote the empowerment and social inclusion of the youth by creating spaces in which the youth can maximise their potential and participate fully in social and economic activities ((National Youth Policy, 2009).

However, it was also noteworthy from one sex worker’s responses that sometimes people are reluctant to participate in social political and economic activities.

The women are being lazy I don't blame the department, I blame the women. Even at SWEAT, they will run maybe a project and stuff, the women don't go there, and SWEAT can't do their work for them. They are not doing what they are supposed to be doing so I don't blame SWEAT, I blame the women. (Ayesha)

In this regard, the concept of agency plays a crucial role in ameliorating poverty as individuals need to take part in shaping their own destinies by maximising on opportunities that are available to them. Feminist theories also posit that poor women are autonomous in employing unique and subjective coping strategies to deal with their poverty (Ismail, 2006). In the next section, the need for family support is discussed.

4.8.4 Need for family support

Some of the participants stated that they would need family support as an intervention to ameliorate their problems through either financial support as discussed above or keeping their families together. Some of the sex workers felt that they were estranged from their families for a long time hence they needed to be reunified with their families but were scared to do so as they did not know how their families will react considering the stigma attached to sex work.

I want to, but I am scared, I don't know, they will be happy to see me but when they know what I am doing or whatever, they will never take it I want them to support, to help me rebuild my life. (Ayanda)

Like I say I miss my child I want to be with her you know, I want to be a mother to her you know I am just scared she going to start asking questions why you know what I mean. I must pick myself up and everything and get a proper job. (Tessa)

In view of the families at risk that most sex workers came from, it was also expressed and implied that the sex workers propose the importance of creating united supportive families.

I would have liked better support in that my father and my mother couldn't have stopped being together because that's why I am going the wrong way today because of the way they did it. (Samantha)

Its life problems at home. My parents passed away when I was young. You know it's part of the family problems, there are not alright, there are only right when you still have parents but when your parents die there was no-one I can call my family. (Thembe)

As families are the building blocks of society, it is important that they provide financial emotional and moral support to each other particularly to children in the formative years and throughout youth. Lack of familial support has been documented to be associated with delinquent behaviour (Tshiwula, 2002). The role of social workers cannot be underestimated as they can assist in offering preventive services that can assist in ameliorating the effects of delinquent and deviant behaviour through family support (Tshiwula, 2002). The next section provides a summary of the sex workers' proposed interventions.

4.8.5 Summary of the sex workers proposed interventions

The participants' proposed interventions included the need to transform the legal framework, the role of the government, need to promote social inclusion at all levels and the need for family support. The participants stated that they preferred either a decriminalised system or a legalised system with the majority vying for a legalised system. Among the reasons cited by the participants for their need of a transformed legal system was freedom from police harassment, social stigma and guarantees for more money. The participants proposed that the government should play a more active role in creating employment, effective education, providing social security, improving capacity and efficiency in its departments. The participants also expressed the need for a more inclusive society in terms of social and economic activities.

Key role players such as the government, non-governmental organizations, and churches should provide women empowerment activities such as offered by SWEAT, youth development empowerment activities such as assisting the youth in preparing for adult roles. The participants proposed that it was necessary to build stronger families both in the nucleus family and in the extended families. Some participants stated that they want to be re-integrated back in their families and communities. The next section summarises the findings section.

4.9 Conclusion to the chapter of findings

The themes outlined in the findings chapter were centred on the context in which sex work is operated and the challenges experienced by sex workers, the structural social and economic factors

that contributed to women doing sex work and the proposed interventions from the perspective of the sex workers. The participants stated that the context of their work is characterised by many challenges, health and safety issues, harsh weather conditions and societal stigma. Among the challenges faced by the sex workers in the study are the physical psychological sexual and financial abuse that the sex workers face at the hands of their clients, pimps and the police. To deal with social exclusion, the sex workers build their own informal networks and subculture that provide them with social capital. The participants asserted that they practice safe sex but there were concerns about the safety of publicly distributed condoms and negotiation of safe sex emanating from the abuse of substances such as alcohol and drugs.

The structural factors were shown to be mainly the socio-historical context of apartheid, gender, institutional failures and social class. The race and ethnicity of the participants predisposed them to poverty because of apartheid's segregatory laws, which deprived people of colour basic services like housing, schooling, access to health facilities and ownership of resources (Davids et al., 2005). The findings showed that the majority of the sex workers came from the Cape Flats whilst others came from the rural areas and other cities like Kimberly and Port Elizabeth. The effect of migration from rural areas to urban areas was also shown to predispose the participants to more poverty, as they had to face further problems of lack of housing and lack of job opportunities. Gender also exposed the women in the study to vulnerability because of the unequal power relations between man and women and the need to fulfil practical gender needs so much that a number of sex workers were trapped into sex work. Social class was also shown to be a structural cause for entry into sex work because the participants indicated that they come from poverty-stricken backgrounds. Institutional failures in the form of government departments failing to provide resources and opportunities were shown as a contributing factor for women's entrance into sex work. The discussion of findings also stated that even though structural factors cannot be overruled, it is important to realise that people operate within a structural parameter of rigid constraints such as gender, social class, race and political history, however they can escape though in limited ways if they maximise on the opportunities available to them.

The findings showed that the families at risk, a lack of social support and peer pressure are among the social causal factors that contributed to women doing sex work. A vast majority of sex workers originated from families that were characterised by families at risk in the form of divorced families, domestic violence and parents who abused substances. Because of their background from

families at risk, a number of the sex workers engaged in delinquent behaviour leading to sex work. Some participants cited schools that were ill equipped to provide adequately for their needs and other wished the communities were supportive to their familial problems. Despite the strong influence of social factors, individual choices and behaviour were shown to determine the participants' actions and life choices.

The findings show that the economic factors that contribute to women doing sex work is the lack of job opportunities, the need to invest capital for long-term plans and deprivation. The neo-liberal macroeconomic policies such as GEAR were shown to be one of the economic factors that contribute to women doing sex work. The policy claimed to promote economic growth but culminated in a number of factories and companies closing down leading to massive job losses, many sex workers resorted to sex work. Many participants were investing money to get better shelters for staying, invest in further studying, and invest in entrepreneurship such as tuck shops and dressmaking. It is apparent from the findings that the economic factors that drive women into doing sex work emanate from both absolute poverty and relative poverty. The next section discusses the sex workers proposed interventions.

The participants proposed that they needed a more transformed legal system, a more active government that promotes social inclusion and a community that build supportive families. In terms of the legal framework, the sex workers preferred a legalised and decriminalised system. The participants motivated their need for a transformed legal system by saying that it will free them from police harassment and social stigma and enabled them to have guaranteed income. The participants expressed that the government need to take a more active role in providing employment opportunities, housing, social security in the form of grants, and build institutional capacities through efficient systems in the government departments and other institutions. It was apparent from the participants proposed interventions that they were autonomous people capable of solving their own problems from a people centred perspective if they were given support. The next chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations that stemmed from the findings.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The research aimed to explore and describe the structural social and economic factors that contribute to women doing sex work in the southern suburbs of Cape Town. The selected methodology of qualitative design using in-depth interviews proved to be effective. The researcher carried out 23 interviews with street-based sex workers and managed to transcribe 20 interviews as the other three were spoilt during the recording process. The findings were compared with theories and other studies on street-based sex work as set out in the literature review.

This chapter presents conclusions with regard to the objectives of the study. The chapter also offers recommendations directed at the significant role-players regarding social and economic development of communities with particular attention to children, the youth, women and families.

5.2 Conclusions

5.2.1 The challenges experienced by street based sex workers

The contextual environment in which sex work is practiced is crucial in understanding the nature of street-based sex work in the southern suburbs of Cape Town. A context specific understanding of the nature of sex work is pertinent in shedding light as to whether the debates on sex work should focus on transforming the legislation of sex work or whether policy makers and significant role players should focus on addressing those causal factors that led women to sex work in the first place. This raises questions on whether sex work can be motivated as an effective poverty alleviating strategy considering the fact that all the participants in the study expressed that they entered the profession because of lack of options and that they would quit the profession if they get a formal job. In addition the responses from the participants indicate that the profession is characterised by many challenges that include, gender based violence, susceptibility to contracting sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS as some of the participants abuse substances, which affect their abilities to negotiate safe sex etc.

Despite the fact that they were earning money to pay for their necessities, the sex workers in this study were faced with a host of contextual challenges that varied from psychological physical and

financial abuses. The psychological effects were also associated with the stigma, social rejection and guilt associated with an understanding of sex work as a perceived moral legal and social deviance since sex work is a criminal offence in South Africa. The sex workers in the study suffered from being exposed to adverse weather conditions when they engage in their work, being sexually and physically abused by their clients and sometimes being exposed to situations that threaten their lives. Regardless of the fact that an overwhelming majority of sex workers in the study were aware of the health risks associated with sex work and claimed to practice safe sex, the fact remains that most of the sex workers were at risk of negotiating safe sex due to their abuse of substances that affect their mental faculties. The sex workers in the study often have to pay bribes to the police in order to escape arrests and exorbitant fines or else engage in forced sex with the police. The majority of sex workers admitted that the practice of sex work did not change their socio-economic status significantly, as most of them still experience poverty hence most of them were planning to quit their trade opting for a more mainstream work in the formal sector.

It is against the backdrop of this contextual environment that sex work is practiced in the streets of the southern suburbs of Cape Town. The researcher therefore concludes that since sex work is associated with the social problems linked to substance abuse, transmission of diseases, being physically, sexually, emotionally and financially abused it is not a viable poverty alleviation strategy. For this reason, debates about sex work should shift from advocating for the legalisation, decriminalisation and criminalisation of sex work to deal with the causal factors for entry into sex work since it is a social problem in South Africa.

5.2.2 Structural factors

The findings showed that among the structural factors that contributed to women doing sex work is the, socio-historical context of apartheid, patriarchal society, gender, institutional failures and the social class. The majority of sex workers originated from the Cape Town area known as the Cape Flats and rural areas where they had to contend with apartheid policies exposed them to poverty. The gender dimension of poverty predisposed the participants in the sense that the women participants were vulnerable to exploitation because of their gender hence they became victims of cunning men and women who trapped them in sex work under the mistaken assumption of getting work. The majority of the sex workers come from low socio-economic status and low social class such that they experienced poverty in their upbringing and still experiencing poverty. The researcher therefore concludes that, since structural factors are the more enduring framework that

the majority of the participants were inherently exposed to in terms of socio-political and historical context, gender, class, and race and ethnicity, the participants had very limited ways of escaping from poverty without external support. The exposure to structural factors has implications for addressing the structural causal factors as ways of addressing poverty in order to create more transformative, redistributive and sustainable development. Another causal factor for entry into sex work is the social factors.

5.2.3 Social factors

An overwhelming majority of sex workers came from families at risk characterised by broken families, domestic violence and suffered from substance abuse. Other sex workers suffered from disrupted youth development and a lack of social support. Disrupted youth development existed when the participants were removed from schooling by their families so that they could assist with family support, others succumbed to teen pregnancies while others engaged in delinquency behaviour which exposed them to sex work. The disrupted youth development was seen to be exacerbated by a lack of social support in terms of poor schooling, poor preparation for adult roles, and neglect by families amongst other things. Due to these social factors, the researcher concludes that it is imperative to create supportive families and communities that prepare the youth for their adult roles in such a way that they engage in more productive and socially inclusive and socio-economic activities. The next section discusses the economic factors.

5.2.4 Economic factors

The findings indicated that the majority of sex workers' reasons for entry into sex work were the need to find employment to earn an income, need to invest in longer-term plans and material deprivation and consumerism. A number of sex workers have never explored any other work prior to doing sex work. Other participants had left their jobs in search of better money whilst others were retrenched due to the effect of neo-liberal macro-economic policies such as GEAR, which saw the retrenchment of workers due to the closure of factories, which left many jobless. A number of participants expressed that they wanted to engage in mainstream economic activities but were restricted by lack of capital hence they engaged in sex work in order to get money to pay for further studies, starting businesses and building up savings and assets such as decent housing. It was also found that some women do sex work because of consumerism that is promoted by the contemporary capitalist society exposing the sex workers to relative poverty. It is the researcher's conclusion that the economic factors play a major role for the reasons for entry into sex work.

Therefore, key role players such as the government, non-governmental organizations and the international community have a major role to play in creating employment opportunities and economic activities that support society members. The last section discusses the proposed interventions.

5.2.5 Sex workers' proposed interventions

The participants proposed solutions that they perceived would make a difference in their lives and those of other people. Proposed interventions ranged from transforming the legal framework that governs sex work, the government's role in creating employment and promoting social inclusion through a more effective education system, youth development activities and women empowerment programmes. The majority preferred a decriminalised and a legalised system as criminalised system was sought to create harsh conditions such as police harassment.

Nearly all participants emphasised that the government should be more active and socially inclusive in providing jobs as they motivated their entry in the trade based of a lack of job opportunities. The participants also expressed the need for municipality councils to provide housing for people. The participants reiterated the importance of social inclusion by insisting that a more effective education system is important in preparing them for adult roles. The researcher concludes from these findings that if the key role players are more active, transparent and inclusive in provision of employment creation, youth development initiatives, women empowerment programmes and provision of housing, there is likely to be a remarkable amelioration in some of the social problems that the South African society grapple with.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Addressing structural factors

Since the findings indicated that structural factors such as socio-political historical context, patriarchy, social class, race and ethnicity and gender are among the primary causal factors that predisposed the women in the study to poverty, unemployment and subsequent entry into sex work, it is imperative to address the structural factors. Admittedly, the government, private sector and Non-governmental organizations have played a huge role in addressing the past injustices and providing employment through employment equity and social security. GEAR and ASGISA have also promoted employment creation through public works programmes, entrepreneurship, black

economic empowerment for example to ameliorate poverty, however, a more comprehensive approach is necessary in this regard.

- As a recommendation, public works programmes meant to alleviate poverty for example should incorporate skills development, human rights and HIV/ AIDS awareness so that beneficiaries are helped to build sustainable livelihoods. Similarly, an integrated input of a multiplicity of role-players through participatory democracy, transparency and good governance is pivotal in poverty alleviation programmes. Structural and community based organisations, civil society, the private sector, the state and the local people should actively participate in their own development to foster a sense of ownership, responsibility and build capacities (Davids et al., 2000; Kanbur & Squire, 2000; Taylor, 1997).
- Programmes that target women development should also be gender sensitive, redistributive, context specific and transformative by challenging existing gender relations to achieve democracy by redistributing the division of resources, responsibilities and power between men and women more evenly. This can be achieved by using gender segregated information on populations living in poverty and formulate policies that distribute resources to women more equitably. (Taylor (1999) suggested gender mainstreaming into all levels of national planning cycles.

5.3.2 Addressing social factors

As most sex works originated from families at risk, it is necessary for significant role players to work at supporting families. Although non-governmental organisations play a huge role in providing family support, family mediation and parenting skills in South Africa, it is important that the beneficiaries of these services be informed about their availability and benefits because oftentimes lack of information is a hindrance to accessing service particularly in isolated areas like rural areas and marginalised communities (Davids et al., 2005).

Non-governmental organisations and government agencies like schools, community hospitals can play this huge role in disseminating information for public use about family support programmes.

- Communities can also play a huge role by instilling in the community members a positive communal spirit of caring for one another, the spirit of *Ubuntu* can be re-orientated as it is slowly disappearing in most South African poor communities as deduced from the findings. Through community meetings and community workshops, community leaders can work on citizen education programmes that assist in binding people together so that they have a strong sense of belonging and integration and making the poor people aware of their rights and services (Mubangizi, 2008).
- It is also important to give chances to the youth in particular teen agers who fall pregnant an opportunity to re build their lives instead of shunning them into more problematic lifestyles. Rather they should be encouraged to continue with their education or engage in economic activities that are more productive.
- The participants pointed out that housing is one of the major issues that affect poor people. The researcher recommends a more rigorous approach, which is devoid of bias, nepotism and is inclusive in catering for the housing needs of people, thus strengthening institutional capacities as postulated by Sen's (1999) capability approach.

5.3.3 Economic factors

As the findings indicated that macro-economic policies such as GEAR failed to build economic growth that would eventually “trickle down” to the poor, it is important to replace these policies with policies that seek to improve growth and equality at the same time or to use pro-poor measures that militate against inequality generating growth (Kanbur & Squire, 2000). One such policy is the increasing of access to education as education has long-term benefits (Bloch, 2009; Kanbur & Squire, 2000). Studies have shown that improving the mother's education has a strong positive effect on their children's health (Kanbur & Squire, 2000; Mehrotra & Jolly, 1997). South Africa, like most African countries, faces a huge challenge in this respect because it suffers from a huge gap of inequality yet its education system is deteriorating as evidenced by poor literacy rates of learners, poor curriculum development, high school dropouts, and school violence mostly in township areas where poverty is rampant (Bloch, 2009; Mehrotra & Jolly, 1997). It is therefore imperative for the South African government to invest in effective and rationally comprehensive educational policies in the bid to reduce poverty and inequality (Bloch, 2009).

It is also important to create relatively undistorted sectoral terms of trade to avoid bias against agriculture. These encompass encouraging alternative ways of realizing sustainable livelihoods such as entrepreneurship, small-scale farming and co-operatives (Mehrotra & Jolly, 1997; Taylor, 1997). In addition, it is important to create relatively undistorted factor markets to avoid capital-intensive production and public provision of infrastructure especially to rural areas to avoid urban bias (Mehrotra & Jolly, 1997). Rural development is crucial in order to avoid rural-urban migration, which intensifies poverty as more people compete for scarce resources in urban areas.

- The government needs to adopt growth and employment strategies with the aim of effecting economic development that is broad based, equitable and sustainable over time (UNDP report, 2003). One of the ways of doing this is by encouraging labor intensive as opposed to capital-intensive exports to promote labour markets. For example instead of intensifying the importation of Chinese textiles and clothing, the government should promote the re-emergence of “proudly South African” local factories that were closed which used to provide employment to most poor families whilst at the same time generating export income.
- Because they lack access to financial security, the findings have shown that the participants’ families engaged in coping mechanisms such as manual labor, informal credit arrangements and withdrawing children from school. These mechanisms though adaptable, some of them are inadequate and costly. Micro credit programs such as group saving schemes and the Grameen Bank pioneered in Bangladesh are useful in reducing risk and vulnerability (Kanbur & Squire, 2000). This initiative lends small loans to groups of women by charging relatively low rates of interest. Governments can subsidise the administrative costs of such programmes in order to keep the interest rates low (Kanbur & Squire, 2000).

There is evidence to show that participation in micro credit programs leads to an improvement in nutritional indicators and children’s schooling and giving women greater control over various aspects of their lives (Kanbur & Squire, 2000). However, it is important to contextualise the micro lending in a more effective way to suit the South African context. Therefore the researcher recommends a more transparent and rigorous

screening effort which ensure that the beneficiaries of micro-loans have the right motives of social and economic development.

5.3.4 Suggestions for further research

Due to the limited scope of this study, this study cannot do justice to a vast array of topics that can be explored that are linked to the research topic. The researcher has identified gaps in her approach and identified topics that need further studying.

Quantitative research on the prevalence of sex workers

Since sex work is criminalised in South Africa, it is not known how many sex workers are operating in the country. This knowledge will help in providing background information on sampling procedures for related research and in knowing the extent of the social problems associated with sex work.

Reunification services

A number of sex workers indicated that they would like to go back to their families and be re-integrated in their communities but are fearful of rejection. Further research should be investigated on what needs to be done to reunite sex workers with their families and how this can be done. This is crucial in that some of the sex workers have abandoned and neglected their children in their communities of origin hence reunification services will enable them to assume their parental responsibilities to avoid a vicious cycle of social problems.

Male sex workers

It is also important to carry out studies on male sex workers to find out their motivations for entry into the trade and the challenges that they encounter as a way of building a socially inclusive society

5.4 Conclusion

The final chapter of the dissertation has concluded that sex work is associated with a vast array of social problems that include gender-based violence, exploitation of the sex worker by the pimps, police and clients and adverse weather conditions. For this reason, discourses on sex work should focus on addressing the causal factors that contribute women into doing sex work as opposed to whether it should be legalised decriminalised or criminalised. The

researcher has also concluded that since structural factors are the more enduring and hard to escape causal factors, it is recommended that policy makers should employ transformative and redistributive policies that address race, gender and socio- historic context. In terms of social factors, the researcher concluded that it is important to build more supportive communities and families that strengthen social inclusion and participation in socio-economic activities. The researcher recommended that role players such as schools, social workers and community leaders should work hard to provide preventive services that foster social inclusion. The researcher concluded that economic factors that lead women into doing sex work are linked to lack of job opportunities therefore it was recommended that economic policies should promote more labour intensive policies, create local industries and engage in rural development. The participants' proposed intervention were shown to be linked to youth development, women empowerment and social inclusion. The researcher therefore concluded that it is important to foster social and economic development by building capacities of individuals, systems and institutions in the bid to create sustainable development.

The researcher has identified topics for further research, which include the need for a quantitative study to determine the prevalence of sex workers in different South African regions as well as studies on male sex workers. It is also important to carry out a study to determine which sex workers would need to be re-united with their families of origin and how the reunification services can best be done. Sex work is indeed an important area of study because it has implications for public policy and social development.

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APPENDICES

Compulsory declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this mini dissertation from the work or works of other people has been attributed and has been cited and referenced.

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Tsitsi Jane Mpofu- Mketwa

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Date

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Interview Schedule

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