

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

**PROMOTING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN
LESOTHO: THE CASE OF MALEALEA HANDICRAFTS COOPERATIVE IN
MAFETENG DISTRICT**

A

**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AT THE
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO**

BY

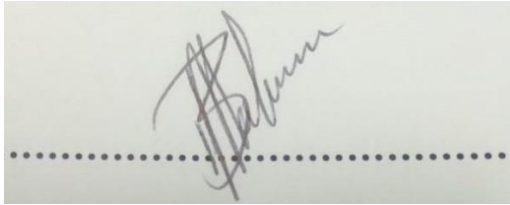
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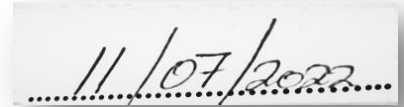
JULY 2022

DECLARATION

I, **NYALLEN BRIGIDA MOFUOA**, student number **200703638**, declare that the dissertation hereby submitted for Master of Arts in Development Studies at National University of Lesotho with Department of Development Studies, Faculty of Humanities is my own independent work and that I have not previously submitted this work for a qualification at /in another university/faculty.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored surface. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Nyalleng Brigida Mofuoa'. Below the signature is a horizontal dotted line.

NYALLEN BRIGIDA MOFUOA

A photograph of a handwritten date '11/07/2022' in dark ink on a light-colored surface. The date is written on a horizontal dotted line.

DATE

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my late father, **Khabu Bernard Mofuoa** and brother, **Nqhoba Sixtus Mofuoa** for their unconditional love and support. May you rest in eternal peace, and I will always cherish your contribution to the person I am today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank God Almighty for His guidance and giving me strength throughout my study journey.

I would also like to extend my special thanks to

- To my supervisor, **Prof Maxwell Musingafi** who made this study a success.
- To my mother, **Makhali Mofuoa** and father in-law **Moeketsi Matamane** for their support.
- To my husband **Mojese Matamane** who supported me throughout the study.
- To my daughter, **Kabelo Matamane** who suffered mother's love during my study.
- To all respondents who made this study possible through their participation.
- To all Malealea Development Trust staff for their support and assistance.

ABSTRACT

This study is about promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho using the case study of Malealea Handicrafts Cooperatives in Mafeteng district in Lesotho. While entrepreneurship research is not a new phenomenon in Lesotho, there is limited research on its links to women empowerment. This study is important because it sought to close the research gap in this regard.

In the main, study is exploratory and investigative in nature. It sought the participation of 59 respondents from Malealea who provided their views on women empowerment through entrepreneurship. To obtain respondents' views, a structured questionnaire was administered for women entrepreneurs (50) and interviews questions was administered for key informants (9) as survey instruments.

Overall, the study has established that the high number of women participation entrepreneurial initiatives is not surprising given that there is a growing global interest in women empowerment through entrepreneurship. It is indicated in the study that entrepreneurial activities do contribute to socio-economic empowerment and development of women in their respective localities, thus enabling them to address their challenges of women poverty and unemployment.

Despite high participation of women in entrepreneurial initiatives, however, the study has established that women still face socio-economic and political challenges that disempower them to take charge of their livelihoods in their localities. These challenges include but are not limited to unavailability of credit resources to enable to finance their entrepreneurial activities, socio-cultural norms that deprive women to participate in decision-making processes relating to their affair, lack of political will and commitment from government in the implementation of policies

related to empowering women, and inadequate provision of entrepreneurial infrastructure to support women's businesses in their respective localities.

In concluding, the study has found that there is a general desire for women participation in entrepreneurship initiatives in their localities, despite the socio-economic and political challenges experienced. To meet women halfway in their entrepreneurial activities as a way of empowering themselves, the study has recommended that there should be a national drive towards capacity building of women empowerment infrastructures at national and local levels. This would enable full policy implementation, integration, and oversight of women empowerment initiatives at all levels of decision making to improve effective implementation of the existing laws and policies directed towards empowering women in Lesotho.

Keywords:

Entrepreneurship

Women empowerment

Women participation

Organisations

Government

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Symptome
MDT	Malealea Development Trust
WHO	World Health Organisation
WE	Women Empowerment
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
LNCW	Lesotho National Council of Women
GOL	Government of Lesotho
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ILO	International Labour Organisation
BWP	Better Work Programme
WEDGE	Women Empowerment through entrepreneurship and Gender Equality
FIDA	Federation of Women Lawyers

IFC	International Finance Corporation
MWCA	Ministry for Women and Children's Affairs
FAO	Food Agricultural Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
CMU	Management Unity
HMM	<i>Hatooa-Mose-Mosali</i>
WMC	Warora Municipal Corporation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEC	Higher Education Commission
NGOs	National Governmental Organisations
PPPs	Public and Private Partnerships

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

1.0 Introduction

This chapter is about the research problem of the study and its setting. It is divided into eleven (11) sections. Section 1.0 introduces how the chapter is structured. Section 1.1 presents the background of the study. Section 1.2 provides a statement of the problem of the study. Section 1.3 states the purpose of the study. Section 1.4 describes the research objectives of the study. Section 1.5 outlines the research questions of the study. Section 1.6 looks at the significance of the study. Section 1.7 spells out the theoretical framework of the study. Section 1.8 states the research delimitations of the study. Section 1.9 defines the terms of the study. Section 1.10 sketches out the chapter outline of the study. Finally, section 1.11 provides the summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background to the study

In the last two decades, promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship has been a global concern (Conneley, 2021). Conneley (2021) estimates that 12 million women are deprived of participating in entrepreneurship across the globe, which is a blow to global development that desperately need women's entrepreneurial injection or contribution from a socio-economic and political perspective.

Given that women are most of the world's population, there is a sustained global appeal to influence women to fully participate in addressing economic development matters that affect their livelihoods through entrepreneurship (Abdi, 2019; Makombe, 2006). However, this appeal is hampered by less recognition of the importance of promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship, resulting in their living standards being negatively affected as they face unprecedented socio-economic and political problems. These problems include but are not limited to violation of women's rights, unemployment, and poverty.

However, the tide against women disempowerment in development has been changed by the rise of the global entrepreneurship movement focusing on women (Conneley, 2021; Kuadli, 2021; Koczberski, 2010). It is noted in Conneley (2021) that, most recently, the promotion of women's entrepreneurship has significantly overtaken the rate of general business formation regardless of the level of empowerment across developing countries. For instance, Conneley states that "13.5 – 15.7 million [i.e., 20% of women] are in entrepreneurship in developing countries" (Conneley, 2021: 85). This estimated figure of participation of women in entrepreneurship is still low. It indicates that promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship still needs to be taken seriously in socio-economic development of the developing countries around the globe, particularly those found in the continent of Africa with specific reference to Southern Africa.

Although there are no official statistics in place, media reports allude to promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship as a regional problem in Southern Africa. This is so even though, according to Hait (2021), promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship is slowly increasing in several countries in Southern Africa. However, socio-cultural, economic, and political obstacles against women empowerment through

entrepreneurship remain in some Southern African countries, mainly rural areas (Hait, 2021). Lesotho is not an exception in this regard.

That being the case, however, Lebakeng (2008) argues that promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho is (i) vital to improving the economy and (ii) the best approach for alleviation of poverty. According to Lebakeng (2015), this is a widespread socio-economic and political development view in Lesotho even though Sesotho culture and current governmental policies do not generally favor women empowerment, particularly those participating in entrepreneurship in rural areas, as in the case of Malealea in the Mafeteng district.

Here, entrepreneurship should be understood as a classical and neoclassical economic concept coined by economists in the 20th century to address the supply and demand development processes (Beattie, 2021). In this regard, entrepreneurship is the "practice of starting new [businesses or] revitalising mature [businesses] in response to identified [economic] opportunities [with the] focus of bringing social change [and] making financial gains for the beneficiaries" (Musingafi, 2017: 15). It is indicated in Musingafi (2017: 15-16) that entrepreneurship is "the mechanism in the creation of [socio-economic] value, not only for [business] owners but for all stakeholders."

It is in this regard that Lebakeng (2008: 20) sees entrepreneurship as "the process of creating and managing a business to achieve desired objectives [for social change]." In agreement, Roberts and Woods (2005:12) perceive entrepreneurship as "the process of contraction, evaluation, and pursuit of the [business] opportunities for transformative social change." With social change and transformation as its general objective, entrepreneurship connects with innovation,

competitiveness, productivity, wealth generation, job creation, and creation new business ventures in most sectors of the economy and at all levels of society (Buchholz, 2021).

1.2 Statement of the problem

In Lesotho, there is a general lack of recognition of the importance of promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship, resulting in devastating effects on women's livelihoods in poor rural communities, as in the case of the Malealea community in the Mafeteng district. As mentioned earlier in section 1.1, women empowerment through entrepreneurship is critical in alleviating widespread unemployment and poverty amongst Basotho women. Typically, unemployment and poverty limit women's opportunities to participate in decision-making on issues that concern them, resulting in their socio-economic and political isolation that is often disadvantageous to their general welfare and living standards.

1.3 Statement of the purpose

The purpose of the study was to explore ways of promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho using Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative in the Mafeteng district as a case study.

1.4 Research objectives

The following were the specific research objectives of the study:

1. to evaluate ways in which the cooperatives promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship initiatives in Lesotho;

2. to examine the effectiveness of the existing cooperatives that promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho;
3. to establish if existing laws that promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho are effectively implemented; and
4. to analyse possible policy interventions to promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho

1.5 Research questions

The following were the related research questions of the study:

1. How do the cooperatives promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship initiatives in Lesotho?
2. How effective are the cooperatives promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho?
3. How effective are the existing laws governing the promotion of women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho?
4. What changes can be made to the existing national empowerment policies to promote and support women's empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study was critical in that:

1. it breaks the silence about the importance of women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho;

- 2.it contributes towards promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho with a particular focus on poor rural communities; and
- 3.it informs policymaking and implementation to promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho.

In essence, the study attempted to advocate for promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in poor rural communities in Lesotho. Furthermore, the study was necessary for influencing policy direction to encourage women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. There was evidence in the literature that promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship had positive effects or consequences of alleviating poverty and removing unemployment in communities. These effects had a positive impact on women, and their households as their lives and livelihoods improved.

1.7 Theoretical framework

Radtke (2017: 36) defines feminist theory as "an analytical process that addresses the importance of women empowerment by breaking socio-economic and political limitations that confront them." This study was guided by liberal feminist thinking from feminist theory. As a branch of feminism, liberal feminism focuses on addressing reduced access of women to civil rights and allocating socio-economic resources such as education and employment. Its focus is to bring about social change that focuses on women. In this regard, this study employed liberal feminism as its theoretical framework to address the promotion of women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho using Malealea handicrafts as a case study.

The researcher found liberal feminism as a preferred tool to address the promotion of women empowerment through entrepreneurship because it addresses marginalised women's issues.

Again, it aims to change women's social, economic, and political status in the communities by advocating for their participation in empowerment activities through entrepreneurship that improves their living standards and that of their households and communities.

In a nutshell, the researcher found liberal feminism as a valuable framework to influence the promotion of women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho to have opportunities to participate in socio-economic and political activities that empower them. Moreover, it encourages women to take responsibility for their own socio-economic and political development through entrepreneurship as a vehicle.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

This study was about promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho using the case study of Malealea handicrafts cooperative in the Mafeteng district. It focused on promoting Basotho women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho as they are affected mainly by unprecedented unemployment and poverty. It only covered Malealea handicrafts as the area of focus.

1.9 Definitions of terms

Entrepreneur: refers to an individual who has a business idea and creates a new business with the concept, usually to disrupt the current market with a new product or service.

Entrepreneurship: refers to creating a business venture or entity that provides a new product or service in the market.

Empowerment: refers to becoming self-assertive in claiming one's socio-economic and political rights to improve one's well-being.

Women empowerment: refers to promoting women's self-worth to improve their socio-economic and political status, determine their own life choices, and influence social change for them.

Poverty: refers to the situation in which someone does not have enough resources (i.e., income) to meet her basic needs to live a decent life.

Community: refers to a group of people living in the same area or locality.

1.10 Chapter outline of the study

This study was broken down into five (5) chapters.

Chapter 1 introduced the research problem of the study and its setting. In doing so, it stated the background to the research problem, the study's statement research problem and purpose. It further presented the research objectives and questions of the study. It also discussed the study's theoretical framework and spelled out the significance of the study. It concluded by presenting the delimitations of the research and providing the definitions to be used in the study.

Chapter 2 explored the relevant literature relating to the study. It also explained the theoretical framework of the study. It further presented the conceptual framework of the study. It concluded by providing conceptual discussions that underpin the study and describing the empirical evidence that addressed the study's research problem. It then presented a summary of the chapter.

Chapter 3 discussed the research methodology and procedure of the study. It specifically addressed the research design and strategy, population and sampling, research instruments, data collection procedure, data presentation and analysis procedure, research findings, data validity and reliability. It concluded by providing ethical considerations of the study, delimitations of the study, and a summary of the chapter.

Chapter 4 presented data analysis, results, and findings of the study. Firstly, it analysed data collected from the study. It then gave and discussed the results of the study. It concluded by making general findings of the study from the results obtained from data analysis of the study. It then presented a summary of the chapter

Chapter 5 presented the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study. To this end, it first summarised the findings of the study. It then drew conclusions from the research results and made recommendations based on the study's findings for future research.

1.11 Summary

This chapter stated the research problem of the study and its setting. Background to the study, statement of the problem, statement of the purpose, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, theoretical framework and delimitations of the study were discussed. Definitions of the terms used in the study and an outline of the chapters of the study were stated. The next chapter will then discuss the overall literature review of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is about the literature review for the study. It is broken down into five (5) sections. Section 2.0 introduces how the chapter is structured. Section 2.1 explains the theoretical framework of the study. Section 2.2 presents the conceptual framework of the study. Section 2.3 provides conceptual discussions of the study. Section 2.4 spells out experiences and factors justifying the need for entrepreneurship in developing countries. Section 2.5 discusses empirical evidence addressing the research problem of the study. Finally, section 2.6 gives the summary of the chapter.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This section explains the theoretical framework of the study. In this section, feminist theory is discussed, highlighting its main branches. As indicated in 1.7 of chapter, the study has embraced feminist theory as its theoretical framework, focusing on liberal feminism as a preferred framework for underpinning the study.

2.1.1 Feminist theory

The theory underpinning the study is liberal feminist theory. However, to put both the theory and the study into its broader context, this section briefly explains the feminist theory. Though there is no consensus definition of feminist theory in the literature, feminist theory is one of the oldest

movements globally. Generally, it is concerned with women's rights, experiences, and interests (Hubbard, 2018). Its focus is to bring hope and self-esteem to women around the globe.

The feminist theory became noticeable in 1759 and 1797 as it created an empowerment-like "revolutionary atmosphere of the era, under the western feminist Mary Wollstonecraft" (Radtke, 2017: 97). It bears various labels: radical feminism, Marxist feminism, and liberal feminism. Under the three (3) brands, it has emerged out of the "concern that women are deprived of their rights to participate in social, economic and political empowerment around the globe" (Radtke, 2017: 97-98). According to Radtke (2017), it has emerged to fight for women's rights to participate in socio-economic and political development of their localities. It is important to note that it appeared to break the silence of women in their respective communities' socio-economic and political development. It is not surprising that it has become a mechanism in changing Western society to bring about women's suffrage (Hubbard, 2018). Women suffrage in Western society has transformed how women are treated worldwide from a socio-economic and political development perspective. The Beijing Conference on Women (1995), which represented, in some respects, a culmination of international positioning around women's rights, added impetus to how women are treated in socio-economic and political circles from a feminist theory perspective (1995). Today, women have greater access to education and more opportunities for participation in their respective communities' socio-economic and political development. In general terms, the mandate of feminist theory is to bring spiritual development and advocacy for women's development through socio-economic and political empowerment worldwide (Radtke, 2017).

2.1.2 Branches of feminist theory

Having highlighted what the broader feminist theory entails in 2.1.1, this section seeks to explain the branches of feminist theory: radical feminism, Marxist feminism, and liberal feminism. Each of the branches of the feminist theory is discussed below.

2.1.2.1 Radical feminism

According to Lewis (2020: 105), radical feminism refers to the "radical reordering of society in which male power is abolished in all social and economic contexts." Radical feminism was formed by an unhappy group of women, namely, New York Radical Women, in 1967 (Bryson, 1992). It is a crucial movement used by women to eradicate the most pressing problems in society like access to credit, equal pay, and equal rights arising from the patriarchal nature of their communities. In this regard, radical feminism seeks (i) to break women's patriarchal underprivileged status and (ii) to promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship to enable them to engage themselves in paid jobs for the betterment of their social welfare (Lewis, 2020).

It is noted in Lewis (2020) that radical feminists believe that the existing patriarchal social norms and institutions have increased the domination of women by men. In this regard, radical feminists see themselves as free-thinking women from the power of men in society from the socio-economic and political context. As a radical feminist, Lewis (2020) believes that getting rid of patriarchy entirely provides women with significant opportunities. First, to fully participate in their respective communities' socio-economic and political empowerment activities. Second, to access the provision of job creation opportunities, particularly for those women affected by poverty and unemployment.

2.1.2.2 Marxist feminism

Marxist feminism is a critical emancipatory framework that aims to systematically understand and explain gender oppression between men and women from an economic perspective (Sheivari, 2014). Karl Marx developed Marxist feminism in the mid – 19th century. In this regard, Karl Marx coined the Marxist feminism framework because there was a clash between the working class [bourgeois] and the ownership class. It is noted in Sheivari (2014) that Marxist feminism emerged to critically examine the inequality between women and men from an economic perspective. Marxist feminists believe that the liberalisation of women is the key to eradicating their economic oppression and mistreatment (Sheivari, 2014). In agreement, Lee (2020) notes that, unlike radical feminism, Marxist feminism believes that women's oppression results from the economic conflict between men and women as a prominent feature of capitalism, not patriarchy.

In essence, Marxist feminism advocates for removing women's economic oppression which deprive them of their economic rights. It is noted in Partpart et al. (2000) that women's economic rights integration into the empowerment agenda around the 1970s has paved the way for women to participate in poverty reduction and empowerment activities through entrepreneurship, which contribute positively toward sustainable economic growth (Rametse & Shah, 2013). Here, Rametse and Shah (2013) indicate that the highest rates of women in entrepreneurship are found in China with 26.6 %, illustrating the positive involvement of women in empowerment initiatives. This Chinese case, thus, strengthens Marxist feminism's view that when women have economic rights to participate in empowerment activities, they could do better in improving the living standards of households and communities. Kazmi et al. (2016) contend that entrepreneurship has gained popularity in empowerment because of its potential to influence

women's economic inclusion and growth positively. Broadly, women empowerment through entrepreneurship improves the living standards of households and communities (Tanga & Maliehe, 2011).

2.1.2.3 Liberal feminism

There is no consensus on the theoretical definition of liberal feminism in the literature. However, Serva (2021: 374) defines liberal feminism as "an approach to help women and men become equal in society and the workplace." Its focus is to bring equal social change rather than making financial gains for the beneficiaries. It is noted in Serva (2021) that liberal feminism advocates for the availability of equal resources between men and women for social change. It is in this regard that Gerson (2002: 73) sees liberal feminism as "the process of achieving autonomous [women] personhood as independent in pursuit of the opportunities for transformative social change." In agreement, Kahlert (2012: 19) perceives liberal feminism as "a gradual social progress and equality through laws and regulations that [promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship]." Here, liberal feminism raises questions of morality in achieving social and financial returns for women as beneficiaries to attain a sustainable solution to a social or empowerment problem they might be facing (Kahlert, 2012). In general, liberal feminism advocates for the full participation of women in empowerment activities for the betterment of their welfare from a broad socio-economic, political, and legal perspective.

The all-encompassing nature of liberal feminism compared to radical feminism (concerned with social aspects only) and Marxist feminism (concerned with economic aspects only) has made it a preferred theoretical framework for the study. In this regard, this study employed liberal feminism as the theoretical tool in addressing the promotion of women empowerment through

entrepreneurship in Lesotho using Malealea Handicrafts Cooperatives as a case study. Here, Radtre (2017) has found liberal feminist thinking as a suitable mechanism to address the promotion of women empowerment through entrepreneurship because it addresses marginalised women issues from the broader perspective, i.e., socio-economic, political, and legal aspects of empowerment. In addition, liberal feminism aims at changing women's social, economic, political, and legal status in the communities by advocating for the participation of women in development activities that improve their standards of living (Radtre, 2017). Moreover, liberal feminism empowers women to take responsibility for their development.

2.2 Conceptual Framework of the study

This section presents the conceptual framework of the study. It discusses three (3) main concepts underpinning the study: empowerment, women empowerment (WE), and entrepreneurship. Each of these concepts is discussed below.

2.2.1 Empowerment

Various authors view empowerment differently (Todaro & Smith, 2015; Rogers, 1990). According to Todaro and Smith (2015: 87), empowerment refers to "a process whereby women gain power, control over their own lives and acquire strength to make profitable choices of the entire economic and social systems." Todaro and Smith (2015: 88-89) further understand it as "a physical reality and a state of mind in which society, economic and political process secures the way of obtaining a better life." Here, Rogers (1990: 12) argues that "empowerment is a participatory process of [socio-economic development] in the society whose objective is the material and social progress for the majority of the population through a better understanding of their environment." Thus, from an economic perspective, Rogers (1990:14-15) notes that

empowerment could be seen as the "effect of the shift from the labour-intensive output, resulting to both abundant production and technology-intensive." From the definitions of empowerment provided by Todaro and Smith (2015) and Rogers (1990), one understands that empowerment is an all-encompassing socio-economic and political process to improve standards of living and welfare for the vulnerable in society.

From this understanding, promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship is necessary because the influx of more women into the workforce contributes positively to poverty reduction, economic growth, and sustainable development (Mair & Marti, 2006). According to Kali and Moeketsi (2020), Lesotho is among the few African countries that promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship. Kali and Moeketsi (2020) indicate that Lesotho adopted a gender-based policy framework for women empowerment in 2014. Here, the Government of Lesotho (2014) approved a gender and empowerment policy in 2003 to call for non-discrimination toward women. However, these policies must be revised and implemented to cover every Mosotho woman. Thus, it is imperative to consider women empowerment through entrepreneurship as it contains spillover benefits to better the living standards.

2.2.2 Women empowerment

According to Lombardini et al. (2017), woman empowerment (WE) is an approach to socio-economic development projects. For Lombardini et al. (2017), WE is a tool for addressing the problem of women's absence in development initiatives around the globe. Thus, in broad general terms, WE is an approach coined by Savitribai Phule in the 1848 AD because of the changes in thinking about women and development (Lombardini et al., 2017).

Most importantly, UNCTAD (2012) emphasises that WE emerged calling for better treatment of women's issues in development. In fact, according to UNCTAD (2012 : 2), "over the past centuries, women empowerment has increased the amount of integration [of women] into the global economies by improving their status and [contribution into development] agenda." For example, it is affirmed in UN Women (n.d) that the "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was established in 1995 to address issues concerning women around the globe." Through the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, "women's rights in development were [considered]" (UN Women, n.d). The declaration supports the view that "WE is an experiential fact as an overarching concept called for adding women-oriented projects to the existing [development] projects" (UN Women, n.d). The implication here is that WE is an integral approach to women's socio-economic development because it pays much attention to women's empowerment in all spheres of life. It has brought about the socio-economic empowerment of women in the national development agenda of countries for the achievement of sustainable development (UNCTAD, 2012: 2).

In essence, it is stated in Viljoen and Nsimbirwa (2005) that the WE framework is vital in the promotion of gender integration into the mainstream empowerment activities of cooperatives. In this regard, WE is critical in improving women's lives because of its inclusive and specific policies, programmes, and projects it advocates. In addition, Viljoen and Nsimbirwa (2005: 61) note that the WE framework is a catalyst for "promoting feminist outcome of expanding women's power and control over their own lives."

2.2.3 Entrepreneurship

There is no consensus on the theoretical definition of entrepreneurship in the literature. Mair and Marti (2006: 31) define entrepreneurship as "a process that addresses the importance of social needs by making the advanced use of resources." Its focus is to bring about social change rather than making financial gains for the beneficiaries. Thus, it is a see "the process of contraction, evaluation, and pursuit of the opportunities for transformative social change" (Roberts & Woods, 2005: 88). In agreement, Rametse and Shah (2013: 43) perceive entrepreneurship as referring to "a process of generating social value [to beneficiaries] through the strategic entrepreneurial dimensions of pro-activeness, risk management, and innovation." For them, "entrepreneurship raise[s] questions of morality in achieving social and financial returns for beneficiaries to attain a sustainable solution to a social problem they might be facing" (Rametse & Shah, 2013: 44 - 45). In this regard, Austin et al. (2006: 21) argue that "entrepreneurship is all about identifying the social problem and accomplishing a social change by employing entrepreneurial principles, routes, and processes to overcome them." For Janeja (2015), entrepreneurship is also about researching to define a particular social problem entirely and then organising, creating, and managing a social venture to attain the desired change.

Entrepreneurship is "the engine driving the economy, and this has resulted in the growing interest in the development and education programs that encourage entrepreneurship" (Gorman et al., 1997: 9). So, entrepreneurship is beneficial for growing and developing countries' economies around the world. For instance, according to Naude (2013), entrepreneurship has been phenomenally rejuvenated in the past decades in countries like China which achieved essential poverty alleviation. Apart from that, donors and international development agencies have

adopted the entrepreneurship theory to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of aid (Naude, 2013).

Thus, entrepreneurship is a fundamental source of economic development in most developing countries. The impact of entrepreneurial activity is noticeable in most sectors of the economy and at all levels of society because entrepreneurship connects with innovation, competitiveness, productivity, wealth generation, job creation, and creation of new business ventures.

2.3 Conceptual discussions of the study

This section presents conceptual discussions of the study. It discusses (i) the contribution of women empowerment development programmes; (ii) the effectiveness of cooperatives in empowering women through entrepreneurial programmes, (iii) laws promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship (iv) policy interventions that promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship

2.3.1 Contribution of women empowerment development programmes

According to Lebakeng (2008), development programmes worldwide play a crucial role in implementing projects to encourage women's empowerment through entrepreneurship as a pathway out of poverty. For instance, the Lesotho National Council of Women (LNCW) as an organisation has initiated a women's empowerment project in Rothe Ha-Mokauli to improve their living standards. LNCW, in partnership with World Vision Lesotho, started this programme to teach women how to make gardens in their homes to produce vegetables (LNCW, n.d). This initiative makes it easy for self-starting women to be self-reliant, self-sufficient, and

economically independent. Here, women with no entrepreneurial skills learn from those who had social and entrepreneurial skills through the initiative.

From a development partnership perspective, UNDP (2020) says that it is mobilising the government of Lesotho (GOL) to pass gender-responsive policies that support women's entrepreneurship, specifically those exposed to poverty, unemployment, and HIV/ AIDS, which affected their livelihoods. Through International Labour Organisation (ILO) with GOL partnership, UNDP implements projects to promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship in crop production, poultry, and handicrafts. Through the UNDP/ILO/GOL initiative, "women acquire life skills and entrepreneurial training in [income-generating activities] to improve their living standards" (ILO, 2014: 3). The UNDP/ILO/GOL initiative has become a crucial part of women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. The initiative integrates women into the mainstream economy, playing a vital role in making it easy for women to access loans and grants from the banks to start entrepreneurial projects (ILO, 2014).

2.3.2 Effectiveness of cooperatives in empowering women through entrepreneurship

According to UNDP (2020), ILO has been providing technical cooperation and economic development support in developing countries like Lesotho since the 1950s, focusing on women entrepreneurship. It is stated in UNDP (2020) that ILO, in partnership with the GOL, initiated Better Work Programme (BWP) in 2010 to improve labour standards that support Basotho women's competitiveness in the global market. Typically, BWPs are directed toward putting in place local employment policies and programmes that favor women's entrepreneurship in the national policy framework of countries (UNDP, 2020). As such, BWPs are mechanisms that

support women's empowerment through entrepreneurial activities such as factories, food processing, and manufacturing [handicraft-making] projects (ILO, 2021). From BWPs' perspective, women from most developing countries experience significant entrepreneurial empowerment and transformation as they are supported and protected by national and international labour standards to play a meaningful role in developing their countries (Tanga & Maliehe, 2011). Thus, ILO (2021) perceives BWPs as practical and resourceful in ensuring that national and international labour laws support women empowerment through entrepreneurship.

Again, in most developing countries, the support of women's entrepreneurship is highly recognised as a tool to reduce poverty. In this regard that Gender Links for Equality and Justice (2011) states that women empowerment through entrepreneurship and gender equality (WEDGE) project was established in developing countries. Typically, WEDGE supports women empowerment through entrepreneurship, focusing on removing socio-cultural and political barriers for women in entrepreneurship. WEDGE also addresses policy and regulation constraints for women in entrepreneurship. WEDGE plays a crucial role in developing countries as it provides opportunities for women to obtain better work conditions and equity (Gender Links for Equality and Justice, 2011). Thus, BWPs and WEDGES offer necessary support to the effectiveness of government existing women entrepreneurship programmes in most developing countries.

2.3.3 Laws promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship

Most developing countries are signatories of the international conventions that prohibit all forms of discrimination against women (Maepe, 2020). Among other agreements, developing countries have signed an agreement with the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) to fight violations of

women's rights resulting from socio-cultural norms and practices supported by national laws. It is stated in Maepe (2020) that cultural norms and traditions embedded in the national laws are one of the factors that deprive women of opportunities to participate fully in programmes that empower them. For instance, most cultural norms and practices consider women as legally less inferior than men, resulting in the devaluing of the contribution of women to the socio-economic development of their localities. In collaboration with the UN, FIDA works hard to fight against discrimination against women embedded in national laws that undermine their contribution to national and international development (UN, 2019).

In Lesotho, for example, FIDA has become a vital instrument in fighting violence directed at women and advancing women's access to education (FIDA, n.d). It does so by supporting the establishment of new entrepreneurship programmes that assist Basotho women in making a living (FIDA, n.d). For example, FIDA plays a fundamental role in educating women to know their rights regarding access to education that empowers them to participate in development of their countries meaningfully. Here, FIDA believes that access to education can help women have meaningful participation through entrepreneurial activities in empowering their communities and help address their socio-economic and political problems, including poverty (FIDA, n.d).

In Ghana, for example, International Finance Corporation (IFC) (2007) notes that Ghanaian national laws prohibit all forms of discrimination against women, including denial of women to have access to land. The Ghanaian Ministry for Women and children's Affairs (MWCA) supports policymaking that favors women in land issues (IFC, 2007). Generally, IFC (2007) believes that when women have access to land, they can participate fully in entrepreneurial activities that contribute meaningfully to most developing countries' socio and economic development. Like FIDA in Lesotho, IFC (2007) fights discrimination against women in land

acquisition linked to Ghanaian traditional and cultural norms regarding women's property rights in and out of marriage.

The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action have also contributed significantly to the fight against all forms of discrimination against women. In this regard, they have primarily appealed for women's rights to promote better opportunities for them to participate in the socio-economic development of their countries (UN, n.d). The pronounced national initiatives that support women's empowerment through entrepreneurship in developing countries as an agenda for governments, international organisations, civil society, and the private sector (UN, n.d). Typically, women empowerment is often directed towards improving their living standards through access to education and land, which are the heartbeat of women's entrepreneurship in most developing countries.

According to Chen (2007), an improved standard of living for women as a mechanism against their discrimination is always a fundamental goal of national social policies in most developing countries.

2.3.4 Policy interventions to promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship

The need for continuous and timeous adjustment of the existing national policies on promoting women's entrepreneurship cannot be over-emphasised (FAO, 2021; ILO, 2006). Most development agencies encourage governments in developing countries to adjust their existing national development policies to favour women's entrepreneurship. According to ILO (2006), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) was established to encourage the improvement of women's entrepreneurship and empowerment policies in most developing countries. In essence, NORAD's main set objective is to promote the national economic growth

of developing countries through women's entrepreneurship (ILO, 2006). In this regard, NORAD brings attention to women's role in poverty reduction and the removal of socio-economic and political impediments that women face in their countries. For instance, it is indicated in ILO (2006) that in Mali, for example, NORAD provides women with continuous entrepreneurship skills through innovative technical vocational education training to ensure that women have full access to economic rights to propel the development of their communities.

Another example is that of Lesotho as a developing country, which amended its Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act of 2006 to allow Basotho women access to loans (FAO, 2021). This amended Act became a policy empowerment tool in Lesotho that removed the patriarchal social norms and institutions that increased the continued domination of women by men (FAO, 2021). Thus, through the amended Act, Basotho women are encouraged to participate in entrepreneurship initiatives as they can now have access to loans to finance their entrepreneurial business initiatives to support the livelihoods of their households and communities. In essence, the amended Act encourages Basotho women to take charge of the financial running of their entrepreneurial business entities without undue interference from their husbands as 'heads of households' under the Sesotho cultural norms and practices.

2.4 Experiences and factors justifying the need for entrepreneurship in developing countries

This section spells out experiences and factors justifying the need for entrepreneurship in developing countries. It discusses socio-economic problems of (i) increased poverty, (ii) poor standards of living, (iii) lack of job creation, and (iv) lack of economic growth in connection to women entrepreneurship in most developing countries. The central argument of this section is

that women entrepreneurship is a vital essential resource for socio-economic development in most developing countries.

2.4.1 Increased Poverty

In most developing countries, the relationship between entrepreneurship and poverty reduction focusing primarily on women's livelihoods cannot be overemphasised (Rametse & Shah, 2013; Rametse & Shaw, 2013; Tanchangya et al., 2020). In these countries, encouragement of the participation of women in entrepreneurship has become a robust national approach to the alleviation of poverty. Here, women are encouraged to establish entrepreneurial business entities that provide essential goods and services that support their households and local communities to make a living (Rametse & Shah, 2013). Rametse and Shah (2013) argue that women entrepreneurship plays a fundamental role in raising financial empowerment and solving social problems to take down the poverty index in the vulnerable areas around the communities. In agreement, Tanchangya et al. (2020) note that the rapid growth of entrepreneurship in developing countries continues to significantly help in reducing poverty among its beneficiaries, mainly women, through innovative initiatives that enable the development of their localities.

For example, according to Rametse and Shaw (2013), women entrepreneurship has contributed massively toward rural development in India as a developing country. Rametse and Shah (2013) state that eye care resulted from poverty in Indian people, especially those who were women living in rural areas. Therefore, Dr. G. Venkataswamy took entrepreneurship preservative measures in partnership with a local development programme to establish the center with a mission to address the problem of blindness, whose victims were primarily women (Rametse & Shah, 2013). It is further noted in Rametse and Shah (2013) that through Dr. G. Venkataswamy's

initiated entrepreneurship efforts like the construction of health facilities to address blindness, gradual empowerment benefits began to show for beneficiaries who were mostly women. For example, through the health facilities, medication for the blind was easily accessible, and health facilities created employment for women in localities where they were constructed. This Indian example shows the contribution of entrepreneurship in bringing about transformative social change and empowerment in developing countries in reducing poverty and contributing to economic growth. In India, entrepreneurship has played a crucial role in health settings of low- and middle-income women by reducing poverty, bringing the mortality rate down, and bringing socio-economic development.

In Kenya, as a developing country, entrepreneurship is fundamental for helping poor rural women alleviate poverty in their localities. Another example of the contribution of entrepreneurship in reducing the poverty of vulnerable women living in the rural villages of developing countries is that of Kenya in the agricultural sector. Here, entrepreneurship initiatives lead to socio-economic development in rural areas of Kenya as poor women reap entrepreneurship benefits, i.e., increased income from horticultural products such as tomatoes, sweet potatoes, oranges, mangoes, and many more (Rametse & Shah, 2013). In addition, through the entrepreneurial efforts of Central Management Unity (CMU), entrepreneurs who majority are women in rural Kenya, can source loans to facilitate their gainful participation in horticulture and skills development to improve their lives (Rametse & Shah, 2013). Through CMU, women entrepreneurs can apply for plot leases or buy plots for agricultural produce. In general terms, according to Rametse and Shah (2013), the high agricultural produce obtained through the entrepreneurship efforts of CMU has become a mechanism for answering the social problems of women in rural Kenya. Here, through the entrepreneurial efforts of CMU, women entrepreneurs

in rural areas can provide for their households and communities while contributing to national economic growth in Kenya.

Finally, another example of the contribution of entrepreneurship in reducing the poverty of vulnerable women living in the rural villages of developing countries is that of Lesotho in the cultural tourism sector. As a cultural tourism entrepreneurial initiative to address women's poverty in rural Lesotho, *Hatooa-Mose-Mosali (HMM)* was established by women in the Berea district to ensure self-employment to address the lack of jobs among women and to alleviate or reduce poverty among women. Under HMM entrepreneurship initiatives, women are engaged in creative income-generating activities in their localities like weaving, spinning, and knitting to empower women to participate in the cultural tourism market. In Lesotho, as a developing country, there is no doubt that HMM entrepreneurship initiatives contribute positively to the socio-economic development of rural areas in the Berea district. They alleviate poverty among women by creating jobs for them.

2.4.2 Lack of Job creation

For most developing countries, job creation and entrepreneurship are inseparable (Tanchangya et al., 2020; Swamy, 1990). Entrepreneurship is a crucial weapon used to tackle societal most pressing problems like rampant and stubborn unemployment facing women. In this regard, Tanchangya et al. (2020) state that entrepreneurship programmes play a significant role in societies' transformation towards job creation, focusing on women as the majority in most developing countries. It is noted in Tanchangya et al. (2020) that entrepreneurship programmes provide women entrepreneurs with financial provision, market information systems, and investment incentives to support their business growth. In broad terms, entrepreneurship

programmes also offer advanced personal career growth and enhance the reputation and recognition of social entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship programmes also provide a series of advantageous provisions of job creation opportunities, particularly for those women affected by unemployment in their localities (Tanchangya et al., 2020).

It is not surprising that job creation through entrepreneurship, mainly for women, is often at the top of the agenda for empowerment programmes. For example, according to Swamy (1990), Baba Amte, through his empowerment programmes called Warora Municipal Corporation (WMC), appropriated much of his effort to help disadvantaged women by creating jobs for them and helping solve their social problems in his hometown in India. Through WMC, he established *Anandwan* – a home for leprosy patients in this hometown that created jobs for the unemployed women who were able to engage themselves in paid jobs for the betterment of their social welfare and long-term empowerment. Moreover, the *Anandwan* became a fundamental social problem solver in the community as people, mostly poor women, could access health services that improved their quality of life. Swamy (1990) notes that the *Anandwan* entrepreneurship initiative of Baba did not only provide leprosy health services. In addition, it had a ripple effect of creating job employment for local women to provide food and other socio-economic needs for their families.

In addition, Swamy (1990) notes that, through WMC, Baba introduced different entrepreneurship programmes focusing on women. These programmes were suitable for local needs such as tin-can, kitchen items, crafting, tailoring, carpentry, and other skills that were in great demand in creating job opportunities for the local women. These WMC entrepreneurship programmes helped women diversify their livelihood for empowerment as they acquired new skills. In appreciation of Baba's WMC entrepreneurship initiative, the local community bought products

sold by local women entrepreneurs in the market to enable them to generate income from their newly acquired entrepreneurship skills.

From the Indian example, one can see that entrepreneurship opportunities are a key to social identity and social bonds in communities in developing countries. Similarly, they are also crucial in advancing socio-economic growth in such communities. In this regard, Tanchangya et al. (2020) contend that women entrepreneurship enhances job creation for economic development within the communities. In like manner, it also plays a central role in transforming the livelihoods of women and their communities through gradually creating job opportunities that have a ripple effect of improving quality of life and ensuring food security.

2.4.3 Poor standards of living

In most developing countries, there is an apparent connection between the standards of living of women and entrepreneurship (Harriss, 2021; Muminov et al., 2020). In these countries, entrepreneurship has become a vital approach to addressing the poor living standards of poor women in rural and urban areas. As such, entrepreneurship programmes are often directed toward improving the living standards of the most vulnerable women in developing countries. According to Muminov et al. (2020), an improved standard of living for women through the entrepreneurial initiative is always a fundamental goal of the national social policies in most developing countries. Here, entrepreneurial initiatives enhance the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and macro and micro-distribution mechanisms in most developing countries (Muminov et al., 2020).

From an economic perspective, Muminov et al. (2020) highlight the importance of improved living standards for women as critical for national quality of life. The authors define the living

situation as “the immediate objective situation of the living standard [that includes] employment, the nature of housing, the family welfare, the empowerment of the social welfare system and the social sector” (Muminov et al., 2020: 54). Here, Muminov et al. (2020) see women entrepreneurship as offering social solutions that address the constraints faced by society to improve national standards of living. In agreement, Harriss (2021: 9) states that entrepreneurship is an enabler to "development theories [in] understanding how the processes of [development] in societies take place." Essentially, entrepreneurship-focused on women creates conditions for improved living standards for communities in developing countries. It also encourages communities in developing countries to manage their resources to better their lives.

Thus, Muminov et al. (2020) see entrepreneurship focusing on women as a catalyst for empowerment for communities in developing countries, especially where government or markets have failed. Here, entrepreneurship that is women-focused helps communities to think out of the box to improve their living and contribute to the development of their countries. Muminov et al. (2020) believe that the involvement of women as social entrepreneurs in the development of their countries influences the enhancement of their entrepreneurial abilities to provide openness to their career path. Social entrepreneurial programmes empower women to increase their business experiences, which help them find better job opportunities in the market to improve their living standards and conditions for their households and communities (Muminov et al., 2020; Juneja, n.d).

2.4.4 Lack of local economic growth

In most developing countries, entrepreneurship has become a vital approach to addressing the lack of economic growth in rural and urban communities (Kazmi et al., 2016; Shareia, 2015;

Shano, 2008; Ramsay, 1996). In recent years, there has been increased attention to cultural tourism as a vital part of rural and urban development processes in most developing countries. Indeed, the connection between entrepreneurship and cultural tourism as a means of rural and urban development is underscored. In this regard, it is not surprising that the World Bank, as a leading development agency, has taken considerable interest in how cultural tourism can influence the process of rural and urban development for the benefit of vulnerable groups in society like women (Ramsay, 1996).

According to Shano (2008), women who promote cultural tourism and heritage through entrepreneurial activities, i.e., traditional dances, directly benefit from cultural activities as sources of income and employment. This is so in the case of cultural places like the Kome caves in Lesotho. Kome caves have been identified as a potential place to launch the heritage and cultural activities to generate income and improve the local economy of the surrounding areas (Shano, 2008). This social entrepreneurial initiative premised on cultural tourism is intended to reinforce the women's socio-economic livelihoods in communities around the Kome caves. In essence, when factored into development projects, it is believed that the cultural activities can bring about women empowerment outcomes that contribute to the economic growth of rural and urban areas in developing countries.

According to Shareia (2015), improved local economic growth from women's entrepreneurial activities positively contributes to the economies of most developing countries. It has led to increased local competition [with] beneficial effects of increasing production and efficiency [leading] the developing countries to improve their economic situation (Shareia, 2015). Indeed, there is no doubt that improved local economic growth mainly resulting from women's entrepreneurial activities in rural and urban areas is "a component of [women empowerment] that

has made a significant contribution to the socio-economic development of developing countries" (Shareia, 2015: 11).

In agreement with Shareia's (2015) sentiments above, Kazmi et al. (2016) contend that entrepreneurship focused on women has gained popularity because of its potential to bring about economic inclusion and growth for developing countries positively. The authors argue that women entrepreneurship can boost the local economies of rural and urban areas and the socio-economic development of most developing countries (Kazmi et al., 2016). Citing an example of Pakistan, Kazmi et al. (2016: 23) indicate that entrepreneurship technology-related cultural tourism-driven mostly by women improved local economic growth by "creating jobs, bringing innovations to the market, promoting sustainable economy and enhancing social investment." In this regard, women entrepreneurship has played [and continues to play] a vital role in the economic development of Pakistan. It has reduced dependency on foreign aid and brought about innovation which has become noticeable as women entrepreneurship takes center stage in the economic development of Pakistan. By promoting technology-related cultural tourism entrepreneurship initiatives, Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan made it possible for the young women to participate in entrepreneurship activities in their local markets, leading to a positive spin-off on the socio-economic development of Pakistan as a developing country.

Thus, the Lesotho and Pakistan cultural tourism cases demonstrate that cultural tourism and heritage focusing on women in developing countries can constitute a significant economic growth and development engine. These cases show that cultural tourism through entrepreneurial activities is a decisive factor in economic inclusion and social innovation for mobilising development projects that are beneficial to women. Indeed, as a development resource that cannot be relocated, cultural tourism through localised entrepreneurial activities has a high

potential for attracting business, creating jobs, and generating income, and investment, while providing a matrix in which anyone can invent the term of her empowerment (Marcus & Brennan, 2005).

It is in the above regard that Marcus and Brennan (2005: 47) are of the view that "cultural production generates income [for women in] domestic industries such as homestay, hotels, and handicrafts." For them, improving the local economic growth of rural and urban areas in developing countries can be positively generated through the cultural tourism industry, where local women produce and commercialise materials of cultural nature. According to Marcus and Brennan (2005), the cultural tourism industry is among the most dynamic sectors in the world trade that promote women entrepreneurship as custodian of cultures and traditions in their communities.

2.5 Empirical evidence addressing the research problem of the study

This section presents existing empirical evidence addressing the study's research problem, as stated in section 1.2 of chapter 1. This empirical evidence is drawn from Lebakeng (2008) relating her work exploring women entrepreneurship in Lesotho.

2.5.1 Empirical evidence from Lesotho

Lebakeng (2008) explores the landscape of women entrepreneurship in Lesotho, focusing on Maseru, Mafeteng, and Mohale's Hoek districts. In her study, Lebakeng (2008) established that women's participation in entrepreneurship has a vital contribution to Lesotho's economy. However, she found less research on women entrepreneurship in Lesotho. She also found that women entrepreneurs face challenges in performing entrepreneurial activities. These include lack

of business management, lack of education and training, inter-role conflict, high risk-averse, lack of female role models, pressure from childcare, and the inequality to access credit. She further found that women entrepreneurs lack various development needs such as financial assistance, training, skills development and knowledge, and the accessibility to tools, equipment, and machinery. In addition, she found that women who participate in entrepreneurial activities are primarily married women aged between 39 and 49 years, having at least one child and either a junior certificate or COSC qualification.

2.5.2 Similarities of the study of Lebakeng (2008) and the researcher's study

This sub-section presents the similarities between the 2008 study of Lebakeng and the 2022 researcher's study. These similarities include but are not limited to:

1. Both studies talk about women entrepreneurs in Lesotho.
2. Both studies raise challenges facing women entrepreneurs in Lesotho.
3. Both studies indicate that women participating in entrepreneurship activities in Lesotho are married.
4. Both studies show that women participate in entrepreneurial activities to generate income to improve their livelihoods.
5. Both studies contribute to women entrepreneurship research in Lesotho

2.5.3 Differences between Lebakeng's 2008 study and the 2022 researcher's study

This sub-section presents the differences between the 2008 study of Lebakeng and the 2022 researcher's study. These differences include but are not limited to:

Research focus: Lebakeng's 2008 study explored women entrepreneurship in Lesotho. While the 2022 researcher's study sought to investigate the promotion of women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho.

Research scope: The 2008 study of Lebakeng explored women entrepreneurship in Lesotho, focusing on three districts of Lesotho, namely Maseru, Mafeteng, and Mohale's Hoek. While the 2022 researcher's study sought to explore the promotion of women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho, focusing on the Malealea community in the Mafeteng district.

Research emphasis: Lebakeng's 2008 study shared insights into women entrepreneurship in Lesotho, while the researcher's study sought to highlight women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho.

Gender focus: The study of Lebakeng's 2008 focused on men and women as entrepreneurs and has discovered men outnumbered women in entrepreneurship, while the 2022 researcher's study only focused on empowering women in entrepreneurship

2.6 Summary

This chapter reviewed the overall literature that underpinned the study. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpinned the study were discussed in detail. Conceptual discussions of the study and experiences/factors justifying the need for entrepreneurship in developing countries were addressed. Existing empirical evidence addressing the research problem of the study was presented. The next chapter will discuss the overall research methodology and procedures of the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology and procedure adopted in conducting the study. It is divided into nine sections. Section 3.0 introduces how the chapter is structured. Section 3.1 explains research pragmatism. Section 3.2 provides the research design. Section 3.3 states population and sampling. Section 3.4 outlines research instruments. Section 3.5 presents the data collection procedure. Section 3.6 looks at data presentation and analysis procedure. Section 3.7 present data validity and reliability. Section 3.8 spells out the ethical considerations of the study. Section 3.9 highlights the limitations of the study. Finally, section 3.10 provides the summary of the chapter.

3.1 Research pragmatism

The study was critical because it was an attempt to advocate the promotion of women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho, especially in poor rural communities. Furthermore, the study was necessary for influencing policy direction to promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. In addition, the study was instrumental toward women empowerment through entrepreneurship to expand Basotho women's ability to have resources in Lesotho. There was evidence in the literature that promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship had positive results of alleviating their poverty and unemployment. Such results positively impact livelihoods of women, and their households.

3.2 Research design

This study employed an exploratory - investigative research design. Stebbins (2001) cites that the exploratory method is usually used to find a problem that is not clearly defined. It is commonly used to find a better understanding of the problem of the study and not to provide conclusive results. In contrast, Innes (2021) argues that the investigative method is a combination of practices commonly used to unearth the secret, hidden, or obscure information that could build a more comprehensive picture of the issue under investigation.

In this regard, Kumar (2014) argues that both methods are crucial in helping the researcher gather and analyse data to draw conclusions. The selection of exploratory - investigative research design for this study was grounded on the pretext that the study sought a detailed description of participants' feelings, experiences, and perceptions about promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho.

This research study employed a case study as its research design. According to Sileyew (2019), the research design is a plan or blueprint of how one intends to conduct the research. In other words, the research design is a plan or structure of the research investigation to obtain evidence in answering research questions in the given study (Sileyew, 2019).

The reasons for the choice of case study as a research design were:

1. It brings out the distinctive rather than the uniqueness of a situation under investigation.
2. It is excellent for fact-finding.
3. It establishes the status of the variables of the study.

The following are characteristics of the case study:

1. It is more than a mere account/description of an event / a state in a situation.
2. It focuses on the specific instance.
3. Its design uses qualitative and quantitative approaches though it is inclined to the qualitative side.
4. It uses both qualitative and quantitative methods; as a result, it is a cheap and quick way to obtain information.

In this research, the case study as the research design helped the researcher to focus on establishing facts surrounding the impact of promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho.

3.3 Population and sampling

3.3.1. Population

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 15) describe the population as "a set of elements that the research focuses on, and the obtained results should be generalized." In agreement, Chaudhury and Banerjee (2010: 21) further define a population as "a theoretically specified aggregation of elements from which the sample is selected, and generalisation of the results is made."

In this study, the researcher selected the population of the study from Malealea local authority (i.e., chiefs and councillors), Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative management, Malealea Development Trust staff, Malealea women entrepreneurs, an officer responsible for women's economic empowerment from the Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sports, and Recreation (MGYSR) and a person responsible for women affairs in Lesotho National of Council of Women (LNCW) as a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs).

Overall, the population size of the study was 59 people making the total respondents in this study drawn from women entrepreneurs and key informants. The population size of the study ultimately comprised of 1 Area Chief of Malealea, 1 councillor of the Malealea area, 2 managers from Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative management, 3 staff members from Malealea Development Trust, 50 entrepreneurs from Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative, 1 officer responsible for women economic empowerment from Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sports, and Recreation (MGYSR), and 1 representative from Lesotho National of Council of Women (LNCW) as an NGO.

3.3.2. Sample and sampling technique

A sample is a small representative of a large population. Chaudhury and Banerjee (2010) state that a sample is only an integral part of the group to provide the researcher with needed information. This study drew its sample from affected women of the Malealea community who were already using the services of Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative or benefiting from the work of Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative and various authorities responsible for women's development affairs from government and NGOs.

The study employed judgmental and purposive sampling techniques. The study used a judgmental sampling technique to find a specific sample of women directly benefiting from Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative's work of promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Malealea. The study drew the sample size from 50 women entrepreneurs from the setup of Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative and 9 key informants interested in promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship from government and NGOs.

Patton (1990) argues that purposive sampling serves to select information-rich cases whose study reflects the questions under investigation and from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of research. For this reason, the researcher used the purposive sampling technique to draw a sample size from Malealea local authority (i.e., Area Chief and councillor), Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative management, Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative staff, Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation and Lesotho National of Council of Women as NGOs.

3.4 Research instruments

The study employed a literature search, structured face-to-face interviews, a questionnaire with open and close-ended questions, and documentation as its research instruments. Structured face-to-face interviews collected data from key informants, and a questionnaire with open- and close-ended questions collected data from affected Malealea entrepreneurs.

The researcher was aware that some of the entrepreneurs might not be able to read and write. The researcher used Sesotho and English to ensure the instruments' validity in completing the research questionnaire. The researcher collected two different types of data, namely, the primary data and the secondary data. The researcher collected primary and secondary data through interviews, a questionnaire, and a literature review.

3.5 Data collection and analysis procedure

The study employed a qualitative approach to data collection. It used structured face-to-face interviews and a questionnaire as data collection methods. The following procedure was applied to gather data for the study: Firstly, for data gathering through a questionnaire, the researcher

organized meetings with the Area Chief of Malealea. The meeting sought to gain permission to conduct the research and share the study's aims. A second meeting with the Area Chief introduced the researcher to MDT staff and entrepreneurs to narrate the purpose of the study in their area.

Secondly, for data gathering through face-to-face interviews, the researcher held initial meetings with the selected key informants to introduce them to the study and seek their participation. Table 3.5.1 below shows the target population, stratum, sampling type, and the number of selected respondents for the study.

Table 3.5.1: population, stratum, sampling types and number of selected respondents

Target population	Stratum	Sampling type	Respondent (s)
Malealea local authority	Key informants	Purposive	2
Malealea Handicrafts management	Key informants	Purposive	2
Malealea Handicrafts staff	Key informants	Purposive	3
Malealea women	Entrepreneurs	Judgmental	50
Officers from MGYSR	Key informants	Purposive	1
Representative from LNCW	Key informants	Purposive	1
Total sample size			59

3.5.2 Measuring instrument used

The study used a semi-structured questionnaire and face-to-face interviews with semi-structured questions and a review of relevant literature to collect data. These measuring instruments used are discussed below.

3.5.2.1 Semi-structured questionnaire

A semi-structured questionnaire facilitated by the researcher collected data from women entrepreneurs residing in Malealea and working under the setup of Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The purpose of section A was to administer demographic characteristics of respondents, while section B entailed semi-structured questions to produce information on the participation of women entrepreneurs in Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative in the study area.

The researcher used a semi-structured questionnaire to collect data from 50 Malealea women entrepreneurs expected to "produce relevant perspectives" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984: 64). In essence, these entrepreneurs completed the questionnaire themselves, except in some instances where some needed assistance from the researcher to fill out the questionnaires.

The researcher clarified the purpose of the study to the women entrepreneurs during the distribution of the questionnaire. The benefit of a self-administered questionnaire is that it is cost-effective, and a single researcher can conduct it.

The researcher ensured the quality control of the data collected from respondents in two ways:

Firstly, respondents were allowed to self-administer the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher, who could clarify any questions from them and ensure that no mistakes were made in the completion of the questionnaire.

Secondly, the researcher assisted respondents who were unable to self-administer the questionnaire by completing the questionnaire herself as the researcher went through it with the respondents. These quality controls ensured no misunderstandings between the researcher and the respondents.

Table 3.5.2 Respondents who filled out semi-structured questionnaire

Respondents	Number of participants
Malealea women entrepreneurs	50
Total	50

3.5.2.1 Face-to-face interviews

The researcher facilitated face-to-face interviews with semi-structured questions to collect data from selected key informants as policy influencers in women empowerment and development affairs. The researcher conducted the interviews in English. The face-to-face interviews were profitable because the researcher had the flexibility to adapt questions to the interviewees' responses. Table 3.5.3 below presents a breakdown of key informants with whom semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted to collect data.

Table 3.5.3 key informants with whom semi-structured face-to-face interviews

Key informants with whom face-to-face interviews were conducted	Number selected
Malealea local authorities (Area Chief and councillor)	2
Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative management	2
Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative staff	3
Officer from MGYSR	1
Representative of LNCW as an NGO	1
Total sample size	9

3.5.2.2 Literature review

The researcher used a literature review to provide an overview of promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship by analysing learnings and debates on the subject in chapter 2. It brought more clarity and focus to the research problem and discussion in the area of research, current theoretical thinking, definitions, and previous studies and their findings. It also provided the researcher with valuable scholarly information from books, journal articles, research reports, conference proceedings, thesis and dissertations, popular articles, newspapers, media reports, and information from the internet. The data from the literature review was integrated and collated to conclude the data collection.

3.6 Data presentation and analysis procedure

Data analysis is the processing of data to extract useful information and reveal significant patterns. Having collected data, the researcher edited and cleaned it for accuracy. The data from

interviews and a questionnaire was examined and separated into categories that addressed research objectives and answered the research questions. Qualitative data drawn from interviews and a questionnaire was described in the narrative, while quantitative data drawn from interviews and questionnaires was presented in pie charts and percentages. Similar ideas were grouped and sorted out to see how information collected addressed research objectives and answered research questions.

The overall data collected for the study was then processed, presented, and analysed. Nevertheless, analysis of the data collected from the questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and the literature review was limited to a descriptive level, given the relatively small sample size of the study.

3.7 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are closely related terms. Heale and Twycross (2015) define validity as the correctness or credibility of a description, explanation, interpretation, account, or conclusion. In agreement, Csikszentmihalyi (2014: 19) perceives validity as whether the variables "measure what they are intended to measure." According to Heale and Twycross (2015) and Csikszentmihalyi (2014), there are three types of validity: criterion, content, and construct validity.

To ensure the validity of the data, Heale and Twycross (2015) state that the study results must be internally and externally valid to make generalisations. In agreement with Heale and Twycross (2015), Csikszentmihalyi (2014: 54) defines the reliability of the study as "the degree to which the same results would be obtained in repeated attempts of the same test." It is also understood as "the measurements obtained from variables of interest are stable" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). In

essence, validity and credibility in research can be endorsed by using different data collection methods to analyse data (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014).

In the above regard, it was crucial to ensure the validity and credibility of the research findings. Thus, the researcher had to show that the study's research objectives and accuracy of data integrity were addressed. Here, the researcher had to make sure that the sample size was enough to get the consistency that answers the main research objectives of the study, margin of error, and empirical evidence.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Barbie and Mouton (2010: 8) conceptualise ethics in social research as “those principles and morals that provide guidance when conducting research”. They argue that “researchers must consider actions and act in a way that preserves the rights and integrity of the participants.” In this study, the researcher observed essential principles of research ethics such as culture [language] and manner of dressing in addressing the respondents in the study. The researcher protected the voluntary participation and anonymity of the participants by making it optional for them to indicate their names in completing the questionnaire.

To ensure the principle of voluntary participation, the researcher addressed participants on the purpose of the study and obtained their consent before participation. The researcher also guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality for participants who wished so. The researcher observed COVID-19 protocols as stated by the World Health Organization (WHO) (2021) to protect the researcher and the participants against the infection. To this end, the researcher always wore a mask, sanitised, and kept a recommended physical distance between her and the participants during data collection.

3.9 Limitations of the study

The study could have extended beyond the estimated budget due to failure to adhere to the drawn consultation schedules by either the researcher or study participants. The participants' failure to honour the researcher's appointments could negatively hinder the study's progress. Moreover, the communication breakdown between the researcher and participants posed a real threat to the study.

3.10 Summary

This chapter provided a detailed research methodology and procedures of the study. Research methodology and procedures of the study relating to research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedure, data presentation and analysis procedure, validity and reliability procedure were discussed in detail. The ethical considerations and limitations of the study of the study were presented. The next chapter will give data presentation, analysis/interpretation, and findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is about data presentation, analysis, and findings. It makes links to the literature review presented in chapter 2. It divided into five (5) sections. This section introduces how the chapter is structured. Section 4.1 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents. Section 4.2 presents data presentation and analysis obtained from self-administered (structured) questionnaires. Section 4.3 looks at data presentation and analysis obtained from face-to-face interviews. Section 4.4 presents the overall research findings of the study. Finally, section 4.5 provides the summary of the chapter.

4.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of respondents. The variables covered include their gender, age, marriage status, levels of education, sources of income, places of normal residence, years of residence in the area, and ruling chiefs in the area.

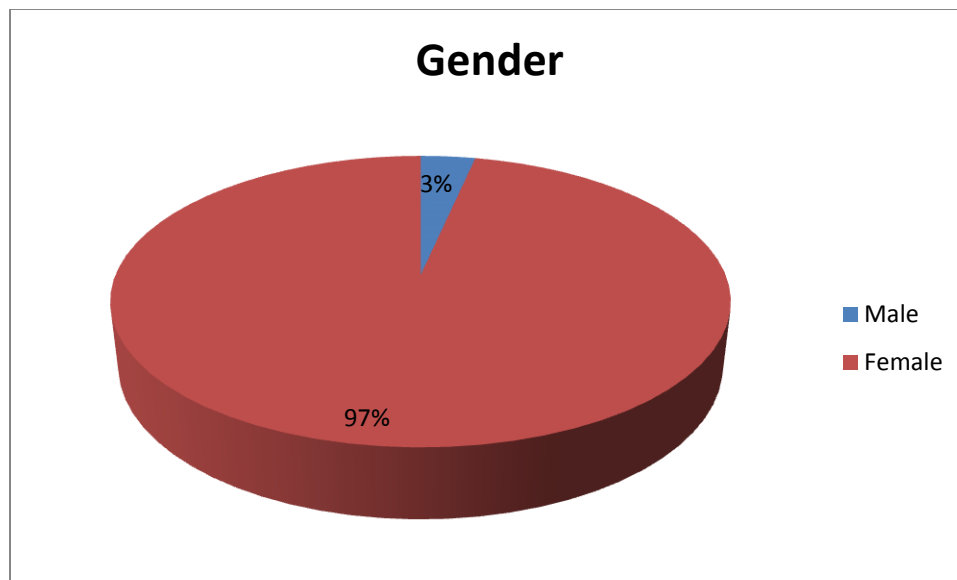
4.1.1 Gender

Figure 4.1 reflects the gender distribution of participants in the study. Out of the total sample of respondents, 97% (N=57) of the respondents were females, while 3% (N=2) of the respondents were males. This demonstrates that most of the respondents were females. Here, the researcher has established that women generally outnumber men in participating in entrepreneurial

initiatives in their respective localities. This is due to push factors that women usually encounter in their localities, such as poverty and unemployment.

As a result, women join entrepreneurial initiatives to address their livelihood problems, including poverty and unemployment.

Figure 4.1: Gender distribution of respondents



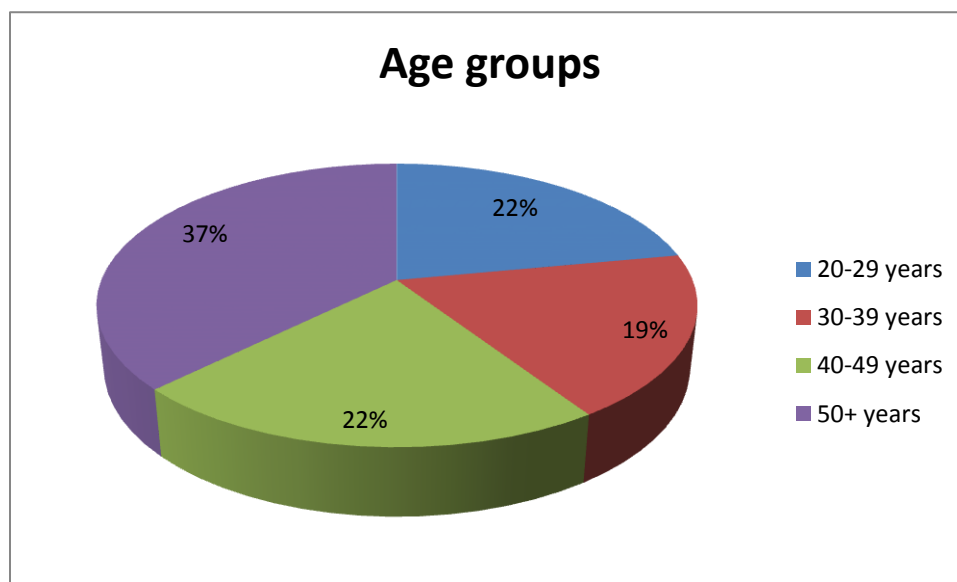
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.1.2 Age

Figure 4.2 shows the age proportion of the respondents. Out of the total sample of respondents, 37% (N=22) of the respondents were aged 50 and above, 22% (N=13) of the respondents were between the ages of 20-29, 22% (N=13) of the respondents were between the ages of 40-49 while 19% (N=11) of the respondents were between the ages of 30-39. The results showed that most of the respondents in the study area are 50 years and above. Here, the researcher has found

out that women below 50 years are not usually active in participating in entrepreneurial initiatives in their respective localities. This is because of the socio-economic problems they encounter in their age groups, such as lack of access to capital, high rate of women's poverty, and early child pregnancy, which influence their low commitment to participating in entrepreneurship initiatives.

Figure 4.2: Age groups of respondents



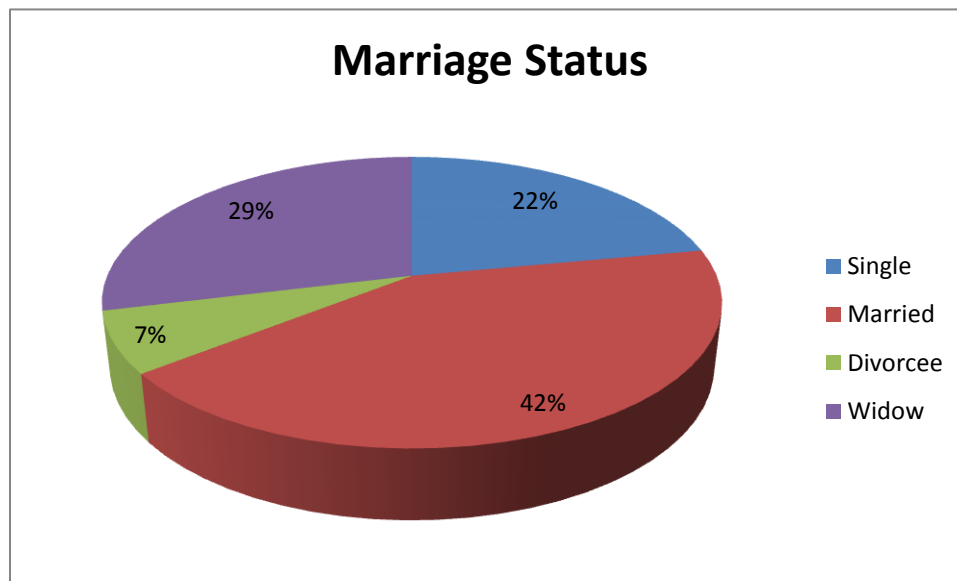
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.1.3 Marriage status

Figure 4.3 presents the marriage status of the respondents in the study area. Out of the total number of respondents, 42% (N=25) of the respondents were married, 29% (N= 17) were widows, 22% (N=13) were single, and 7% (N= 4) were divorcees. The results established that the majority of the respondents were married. Here, the researcher has found that married women are likely to participate or engage in entrepreneurial activities in their respective localities due to

family pressures to generate income for their daily living and support the livelihoods of their households.

Figure 4.3: Marriage status of respondents



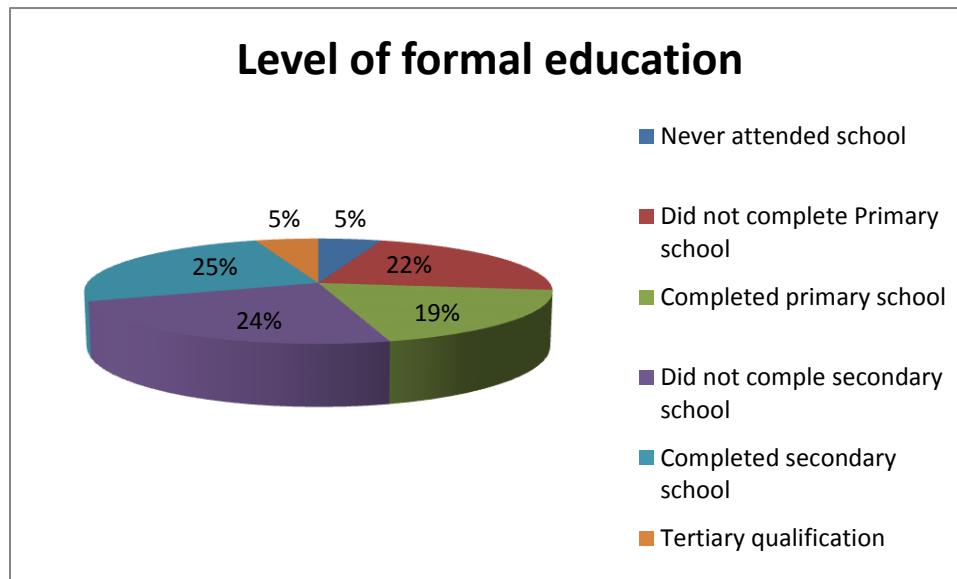
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.1.4 Level of formal education

Figure 4.4 indicates the level of formal education of the respondents. Out of the total of the respondents, 25% (N=15) of the respondents completed secondary, 24% (N= 14) of the respondents did not complete secondary school, 22% (N= 13) of the respondents did not complete primary school, 19% (N= 11) of the respondents completed primary school, 5% (N= 3) of the respondents indicated that they never attended school, and 5% (N=3) of the respondents have achieved the tertiary qualification. The results showed that the majority of the respondents were literate. As a result, the researcher has found out that most women's ability to read and write helps them manage their business books adequately and share entrepreneurial business

ideas with other entrepreneurs. This enables the cross-fertilization of entrepreneurial ideas among women to overcome the socio-economic challenges they encounter in their respective localities.

Figure 4.4: Level of education for respondents

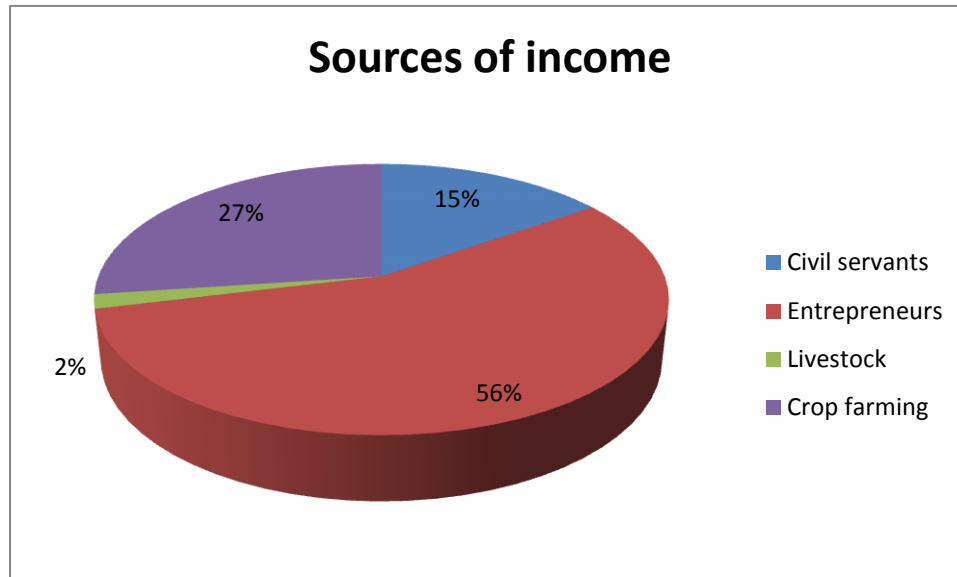


Source: Field research in March 2022

4.1.5 Sources of income

Figure 4.5 presents the respondents' source of income. Out of the total of the respondents, 56% (N=33) earn their income from entrepreneurship programmes within the study area, 27% (N=16) invest in agricultural produce for their survival, 15% (N= 9) of the respondents are working as civil servants and 2% (N=1) generate income through livestock rearing. The results indicated that most respondents obtained their income through entrepreneurial activities. This demonstrates that the livelihoods of most women and their households are supported mainly by revenue generated from entrepreneurship initiatives or activities in their respective localities.

Figure 4.5: Source of income for respondents



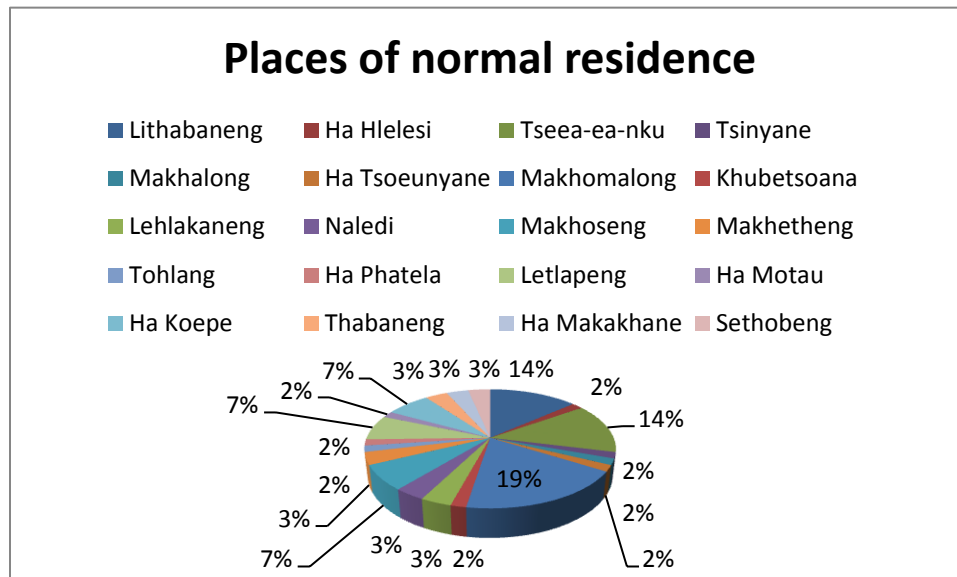
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.1.6 Places of normal residence

Figure 4.6 indicates the residential place of the respondents. Out of the total respondents, 19% (N=11) live at *Makhomalong*, 14% (N=8) live at *Lithabaneng* and *Tseea-ea-nku*; 7% (N=4) live at *Makhoseng*, *Letlapeng*, and *Ha Koepe*; 3% (N=2) reside at *Lehlakaneng*, *Makhetheng*, *Thabaneng*, and *Sethobeng*; 2% (N=1) live at *Ha Hlelesi*, *Tsinyane*, *Makhalong*, *Ha Tsoeunyane*, *Khubetsoana*, *Tohlang*, *Ha Phatela*, *Ha Motau*, and *Ha Makhakhane*. The results indicated that the majority of the respondents resided in *Makhomalong*, which is the place where women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes were established under the umbrella of Malealea Development Trust (MDT). This demonstrates that, where support in terms of infrastructure and funding is available, women would readily participate in entrepreneurial

activities in their respective localities. They would do so to improve the livelihoods of their households and that of the communities where they reside.

Figure 4.6: Places of normal residence

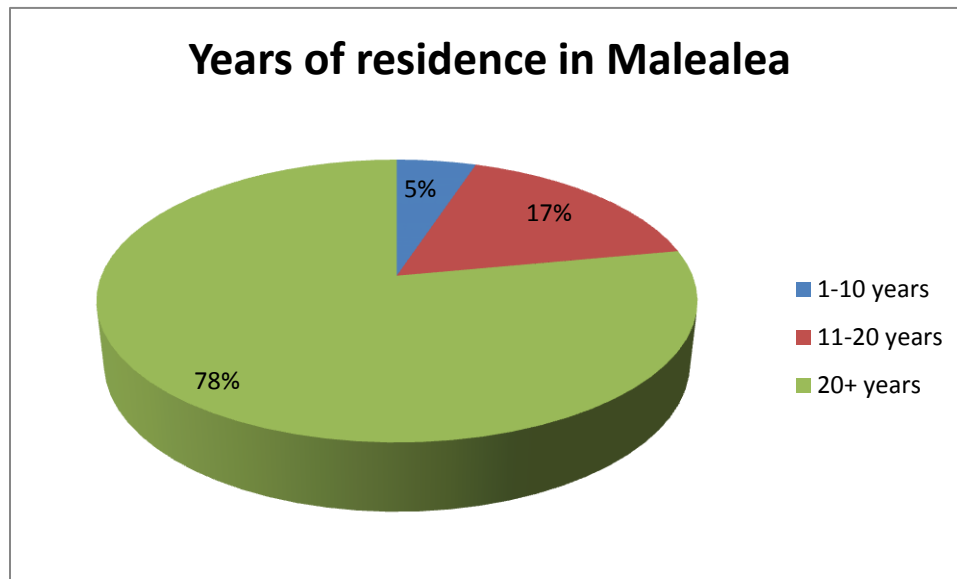


Source: Field research in March 2022

4.1.7 Years of residence in Malealea

Figure 4.7 shows the time dimension in the years that the respondents have lived in the study area. Out of the total number of the respondents, 78% (N=46) of the respondents lived more than 20 years in Malealea, 17% (N=10) of the respondents lived between 11-20 years in Malealea, and 5% (N=3) lived in Malealea for the period between 1-10 years. The results showed that most respondents lived in the study area for a lengthy period. The finding demonstrates that if people live for a more extended period in an area, they develop affection for the place of their residence. They would also be committed to the socio-economic development of their residential area through entrepreneurial activities that uplift the area in socio-economic terms for the benefit of themselves, their households, and their community at large.

Figure 4.7: Years of residence

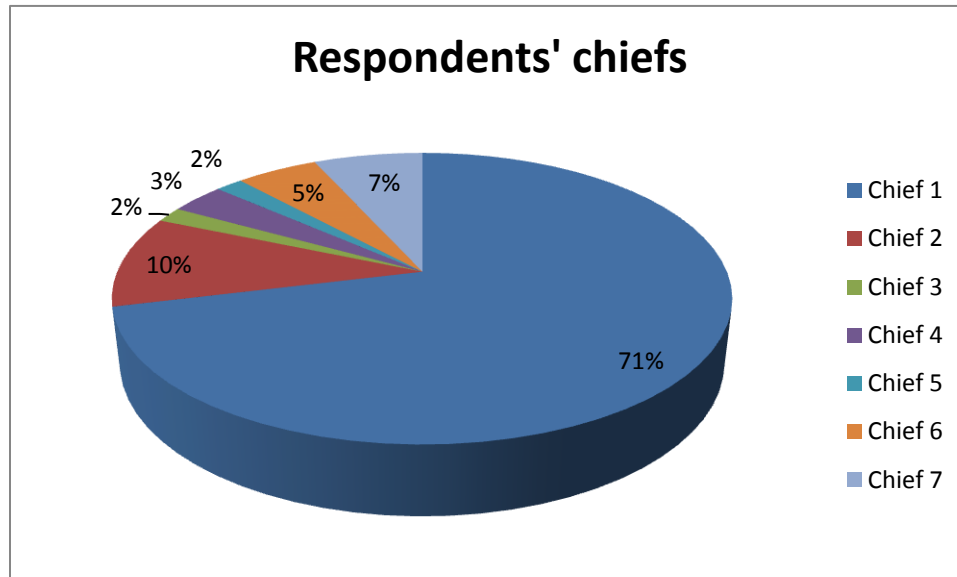


Source: Field research in March 2022

4.1.8 Respondents' chiefs

Figure 4.8 presents respondents' chiefs in the study area. Out of the total respondents, 71% (N=41) are under the rule of chief 1, 10% (N=6) are under chief 2, 7% (N=4) are under the rule of chief 7, 5% (N=3) under chief 6, 3% (N=2) under chief 4, 2% (N=1) under chief 3 and 2% (N=1) under chief 5. The results indicated that most of the respondents are under the rule of chief 1 in the study area, indicating the chief's support of women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes under his chieftom. The finding shows that chiefs' support for rural development of their localities through n entrepreneurship initiatives that reduce poverty and improve the socio-economic development of their areas is important for the well-being of communities under their chiefdoms.

Figure 4.8: Respondents' chiefs



Source: Field research in March 2022

4.2 RESEARCH RESULTS FROM SELF-ADMINISTERED (STRUCTURED) QUESTIONNAIRES

This section presents results or responses obtained from the respondents through administered (structured) questionnaire. The information is presented and analysed below.

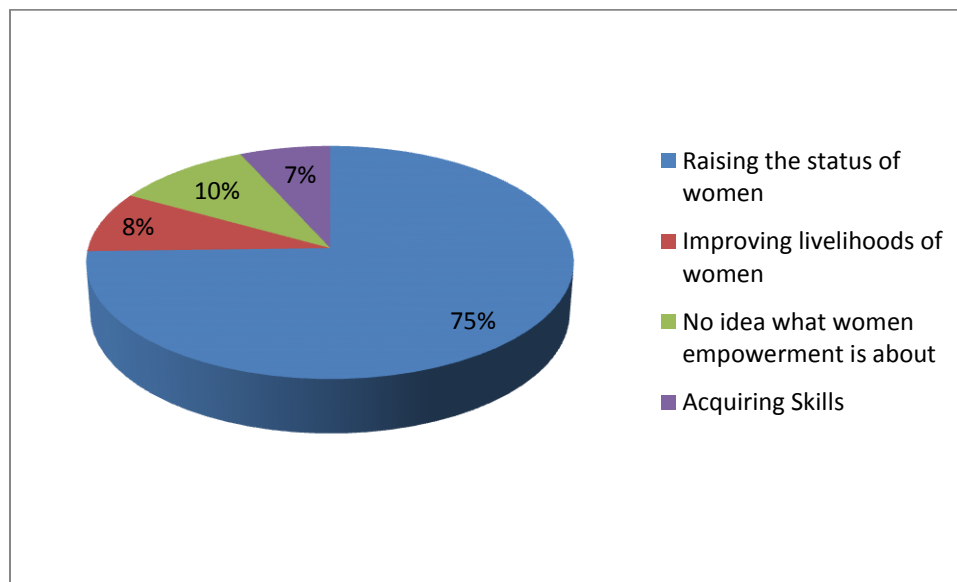
4.2.1 Understanding of the term 'women empowerment'

The respondents were asked about their understanding of the term 'women empowerment'. Figure 4.9 shows that the largest group of the respondents, 75% (N=45) of the total sample, perceived the term 'women empowerment' as raising the status of women, 10% (N=6) of the total sample indicated that they have no idea on what the term women empowerment is about, 8 % (N=5) of the total sample, understood the term 'women empowerment' as improving livelihoods

of women while 7% (N=4) of the total sample, see the term 'women empowerment' as acquiring skills by women.

As illustrated in 4.9, the researcher has found that respondents have different thoughts about 'women empowerment'. It is not surprising that the term 'women empowerment' has various meanings in the literature (Lombardini et al., 2017). For example, it is understood in the literature as referring to 'raising of the status of women through education, awareness, literacy and training' (Lombardini et al., 2017).

Figure 4.9: Respondents' understanding of the term 'women empowerment'



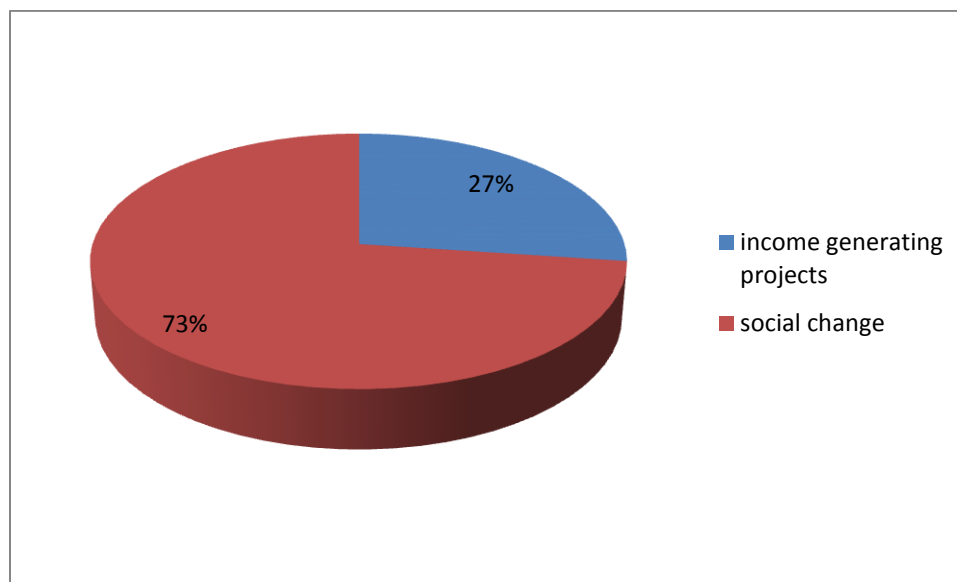
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.2.2 Understanding the term entrepreneurship

The respondents were asked about the term 'entrepreneurship', and their answers vary according to their understanding. Figure 4.10 illustrates that 73% (N=43) of the total respondents said

'entrepreneurship' is about social change, while 27% (N=16) of the respondents understood 'entrepreneurship' as income-generating projects. These demonstrate that most respondents had a broader understanding of 'entrepreneurship'. Entrepreneurship through empowerment programmes is a crucial weapon used to tackle broad societal most pressing problems like rampant and stubborn unemployment facing women. In this regard, Tanchangya et al. (2020) state that entrepreneurship through empowerment programmes play a significant role in societies' transformation towards job creation, focusing on women as the majority in most developing countries. Austin et al. (2006: 11) argue that "entrepreneurship is all about identifying the social problem and accomplishing a social change by employing entrepreneurial principles, routes and processes to overcome them."

Figure 4.10: Respondents understanding of the term 'entrepreneurship'

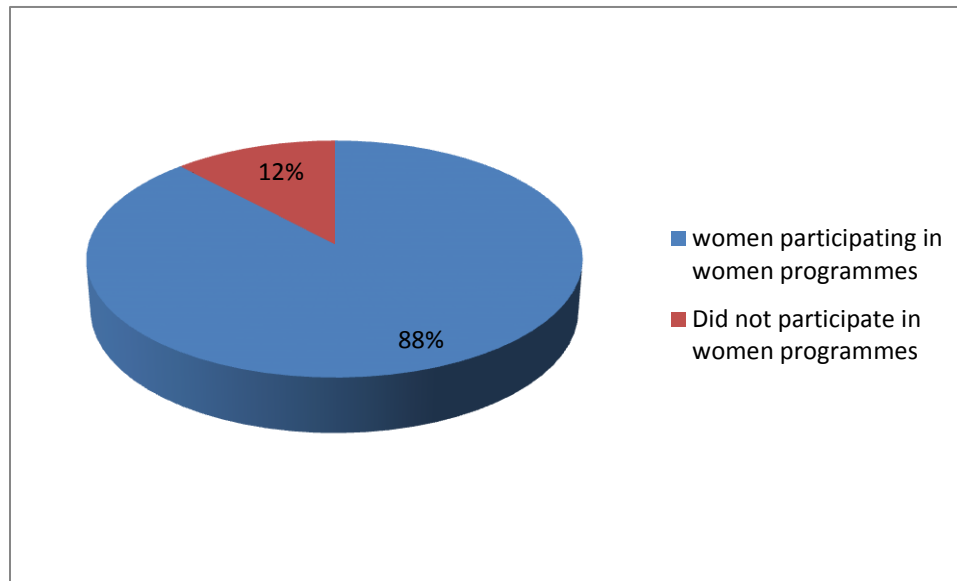


Source: Field research in March 2022

4.2.3 Importance of participating in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes

The respondents were asked if it was important to participate in women empowerment programmes in the study area. Figure 4.11 demonstrates that the most significant number of respondents, representing 88% (N=44) of the total sample, replied that participating in women empowerment through entrepreneurship is very crucial, while 12% (N=6) of the total sample of the respondents indicated that they did not participate in any women empowerment programmes though they acquired skills from the same projects. The high response to women participation is not surprising given that there is a growing global interest in women empowerment through entrepreneurship. It is noted in Tanchangya et al. (2020) that empowerment programmes provide women entrepreneurs with financial provision, market information systems, and investment incentives to support their business growth. It is noted in UNDP (2020) that the focus of women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes has now shifted from the national government to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as key sponsors. According to UNDP (2020), ILO has been providing technical cooperation and economic development support in developing countries like Lesotho since the 1950s, focusing on the empowerment of women through entrepreneurship. Most recently, it is stated in UNDP (2020) that ILO, in partnership with the GOL, initiated Better Work Programme (BWP) in 2010 to improve labour standards that support Basotho women competitiveness in the global market through entrepreneurship.

Figure 4.11: Respondents' perceptions of the importance of participating in women empowerment programmes



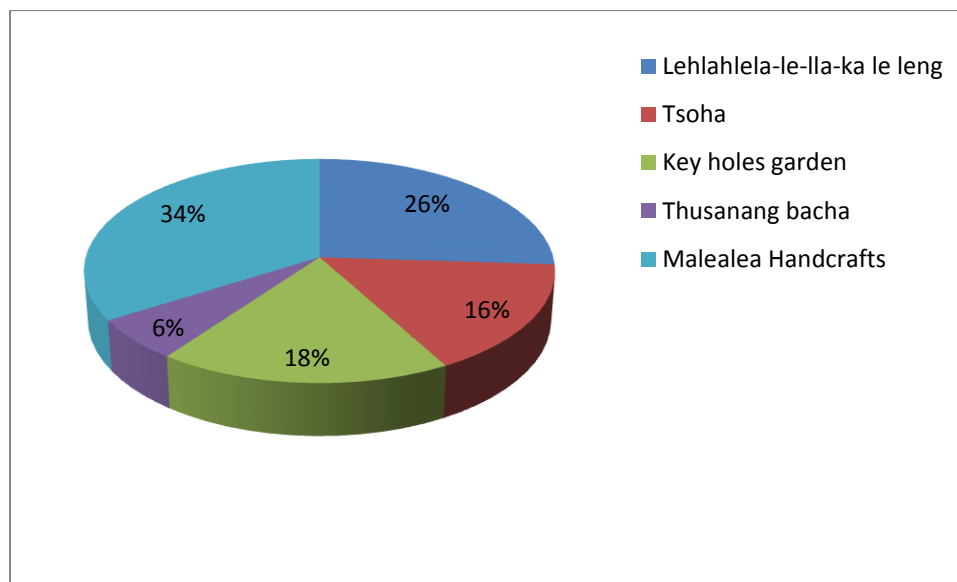
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.2.4 Entrepreneurship programmes in Malealea

The respondents were asked if they knew and could mention any entrepreneurial programmes found in Malealea as a study area. Figure 4.12 below reveals what most of the respondents, representing a 34% (N=17) of the total sample of respondents, knew about the Malealea handicrafts programme, which is specialising in general handicrafts that include but not limited to Basotho hats, pots clay, beads necklace, straw broom, etc; 26% (N=13) of the respondents pointed out they knew *Lehlalela-le-lla-ka le leng* entrepreneurial programme, specialising in green housing [tunnel farming]; 18% (N=9) of the respondents mentioned key holes garden entrepreneurial programme, specialising in *Mantloane* farming; 16% (N=8) of the respondents cited *Tsoha* entrepreneurial programme which is specialising in sewing and dressmaking while 6% (N=3) of the respondents stated *Thusanang bacha* entrepreneurial programme which is specialising in youth counselling and catering. The respondents' answers showed that they knew

about various entrepreneurship programmes in the Malealea area. The researcher found that respondents were aware that the entrepreneurship programmes are initiated to change women's status, existence, and rights, becoming economically stable through business ownership (Tanchangya et al., 2020). The entrepreneurship programmes i.e., empowerment projects shown in Figure 4.12 below, paved advantageous provision of job opportunities, particularly for women affected by unemployment in their localities, as in the case of Malealea (Tanchangya et al., 2020).

Figure 4.12: Respondents' knowledge of entrepreneurship programmes in Malealea



Source: Field research in March 2022

Pictures 1 and 2 are examples of the handicraft products produced by women in Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative, which were aimed for creation of jobs in the study area.



Picture 1: Handicrafts sample A

Source: Field research in March 2022



Picture 2: Handicrafts sample B

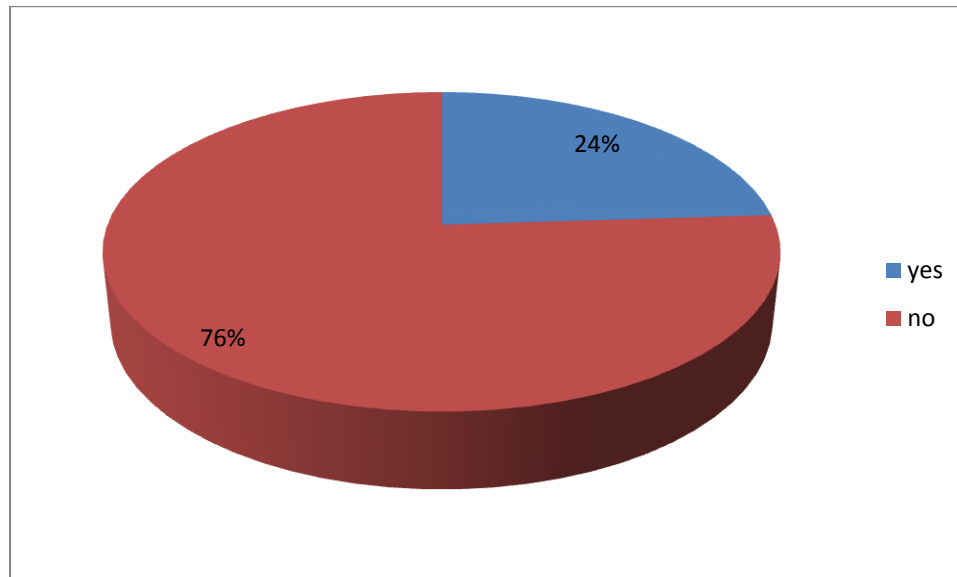
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.2.5 Communities' participation in entrepreneurship programmes in Malealea

The respondents were asked if their communities participate in the existing entrepreneurship programmes and, if so, how their communities participate in such programmes. Figure 4.13 illustrates those respondents, representing 76% (N=38) of the total sample, did not confirm that their communities participate in entrepreneurship programmes in Malealea, while 24% (N=12) of the total sample confirmed that their communities participate in the existing entrepreneurship programmes in Malealea.

As shown in figure 4.13, the researcher has found that most of the respondents confirmed that their respective communities do not participate in entrepreneurship programmes in the Malealea area, citing lack of capital, limited resources, poor market, and poor infrastructure as reasons for non-participation in such programmes. In this regard, it is stated in Lebakeng (2008) that many of the communities living under the poverty line in developing countries like Lesotho are constrained to participating in entrepreneurship programmes.

Figure 4.13: Respondents' view about community participation in entrepreneurship programmes in Malealea



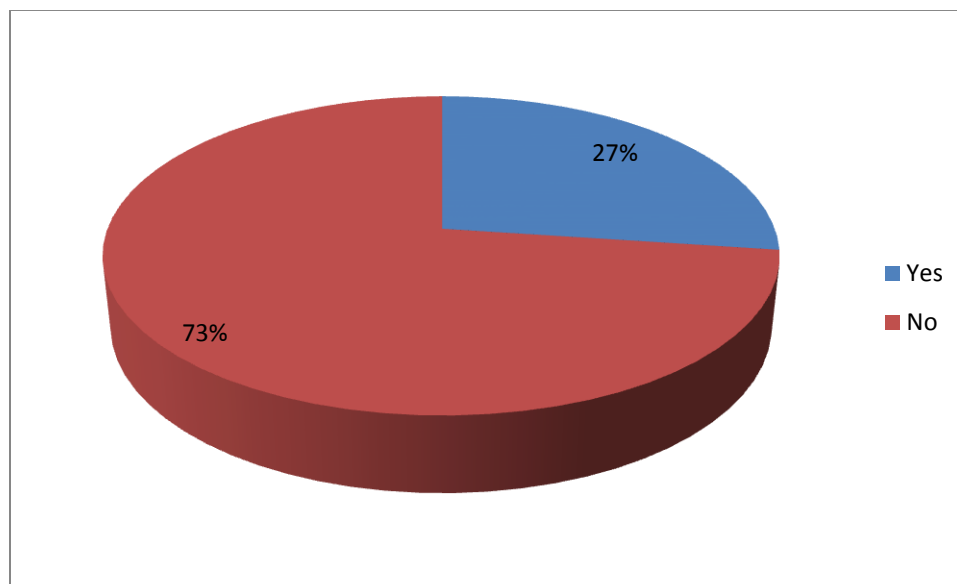
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.2.6 Community participation in entrepreneurship programmes in Malealea

The respondents were asked if their respective communities participate in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in the study area. Figure 4.14 shows that respondents, representing 73% (N=43) of the total sample of respondents, said their communities do not participate in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in the study area, while 27% (N=16) of the total sample confirmed that their communities participate in the existing entrepreneurship programmes. As illustrated in figure 4.14, the researcher has established that most of the respondents' communities in Malealea do not participate in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes, while the minorities do. This is not surprising given that communities usually participate in entrepreneurial activities indirectly

rather than directly. In this regard, Swamy (1990: 45) argues that, in most societies, "local communit[ies do indirectly] participate in [entrepreneurial activities of their localities by] buying products sold by local women entrepreneurs in the market to enable them to generate income."

Figure 4.14: Respondents' perceptions about their communities' participation in entrepreneurship programmes in Malealea



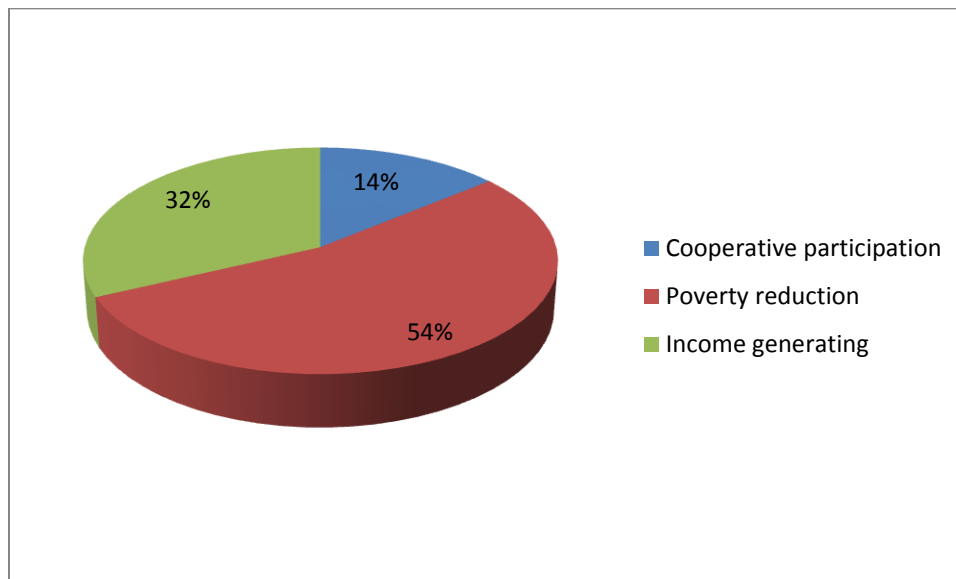
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.2.7 Role of community in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes

The respondents were asked about what they see or perceive as the role of the community in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in the study area. Figure 4.15 shows that the total sample of respondents, representing 54% (N=27) of the respondents, saw the role of community in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes as necessary in reducing poverty, 32% (N=16) of the total sample of the respondents indicated that they perceived the role of community in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes as vital in generating income while 14% (N= 7) of the total sample of respondents saw the role of

community in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes as important in promoting cooperative participation in such programmes. As illustrated in Figure 4.15, the researcher has established that most respondents recognised the importance of the role of the community in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in the alleviation of poverty. As stated in Sadek (2015), the role of the community in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes is today globally emphasised. This is so because of the necessity to involve women in entrepreneurship development to reduce poverty (Sadek, 2015).

Figure 4.15: Respondents' perceptions about the role of community in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes

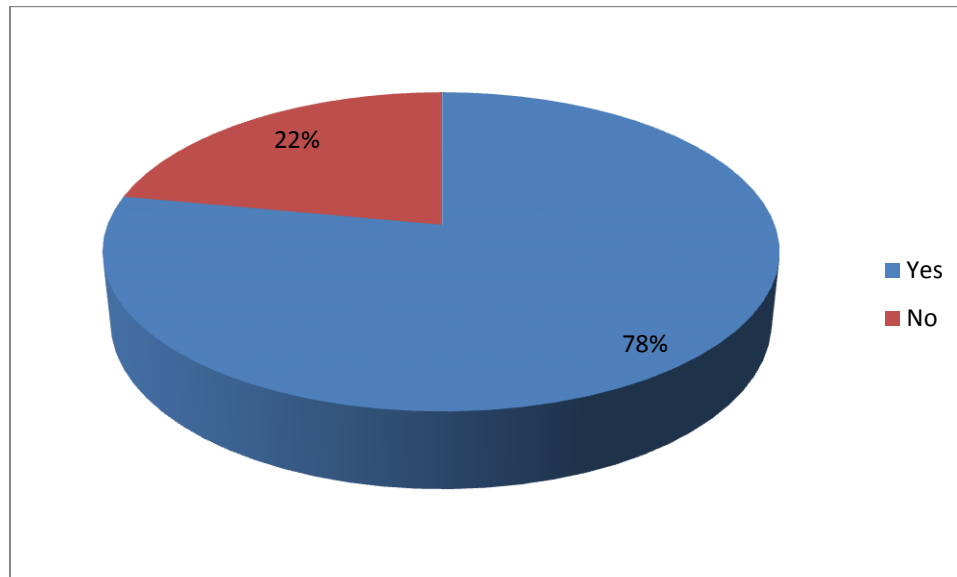


Source: Field research in March 2022

4.2.8 Respondents' participation in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes

The respondents were asked if they participated in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in the study area. Out of the total sample of the respondents, representing 78% (N=39) of the respondents said they do personally participate in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes, while 22% (N=11) said they do not. As illustrated in Figure 4.16 below, the researcher found that most respondents indicated they were personally participating in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes. This was encouraging given that "women are encouraged to establish entrepreneurial business entities to provide basic goods and services that support their households and local communities to make a living" (Rametse & Shah, 2013: 15). According to Rametse and Shah (2013: 17), women entrepreneurial business entities "play a fundamental role in raising financial empowerment and solving social problems to reduce poverty in vulnerable areas around the communities."

Figure 4.16: Respondents' perceptions about their participation in entrepreneurship programmes



Source: Field research in March 2022

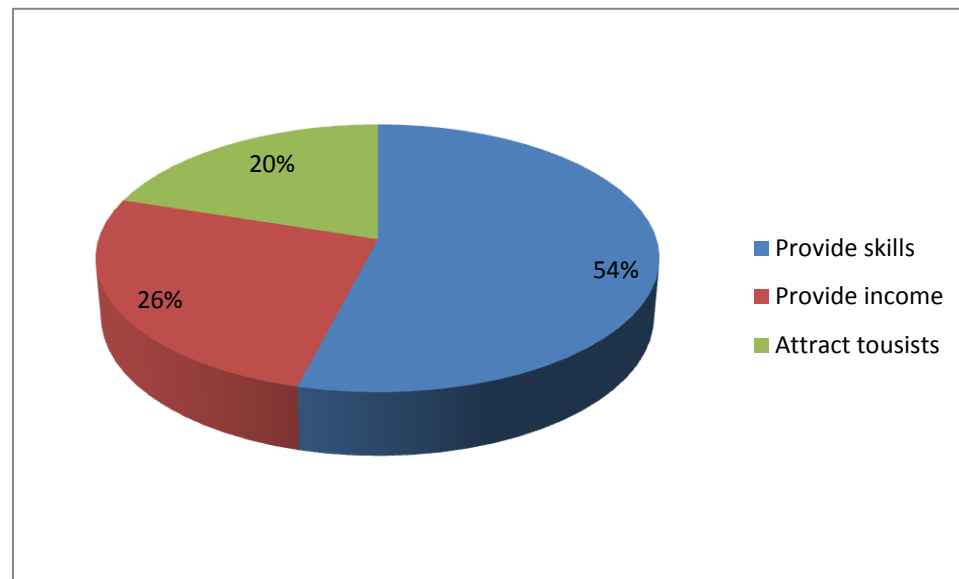
4.2.9 Benefits of women's participation in entrepreneurship programmes

The respondents were asked if, in their opinion, women in the study area do benefit from participating in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes. Out of the total sample of respondents, representing 53% (N=27) of the respondents said that women do benefit from the skills provided by the entrepreneurship programmes, 26% (N=13) of the respondents stated that entrepreneurship programmes provide income to women, while 20% (N=10) of the respondents indicated that women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes attract tourists as the study area is already known as a place of tourists' interest in Lesotho.

As shown in figure 4.17, the researcher has established that the respondents generally agree that women benefit from the entrepreneurship programmes. These programmes provide skills and income and attract tourists who purchase goods from women, thus enabling them to generate

income to improve their standard of living. As indicated in Rametse and Shah (2013), the benefits of entrepreneurship programmes to women in rural communities like the Malealea community have long been widely recognized in the literature. Here, Rametse and Shah (2013: 23) argue that "women entrepreneurship has contributed massively towards rural empowerment of women [by] addressing poverty of women in the rural areas [and] ensuring self-employment for women to alleviate poverty among women."

Figure 4.17: Respondents' views about women's benefits from entrepreneurship programmes



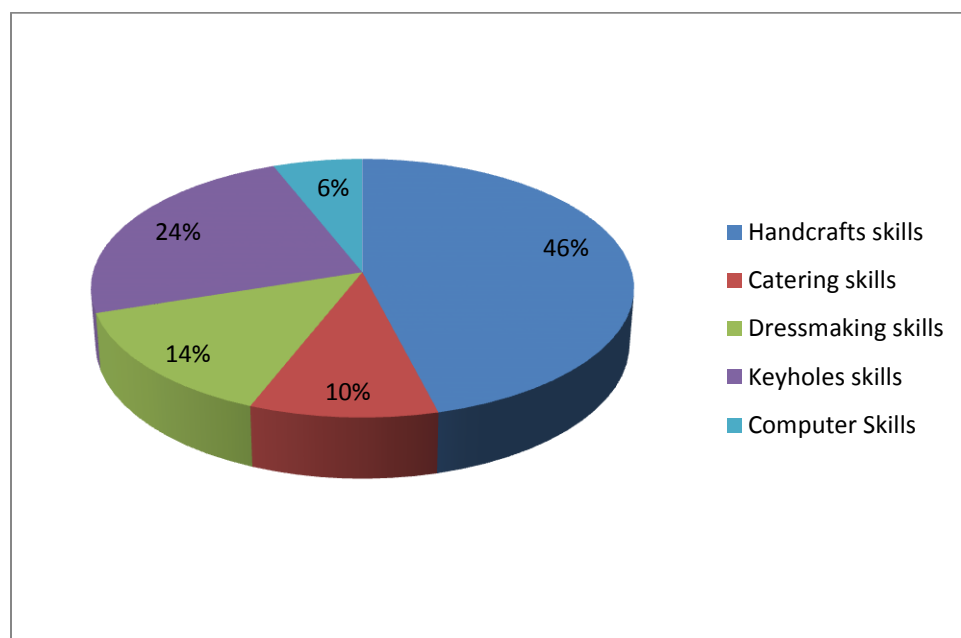
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.2.10 Importance of women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes

The respondents were asked about the importance of women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in the study area. Out of the total sample of respondents, representing 46% (N=23) of the respondents perceived entrepreneurship programmes as vital because they provide handicrafts skills to women, 24% (N=12) of the respondents stated that

women receive keyholes garden skills from the entrepreneurship programmes, 14% (N=7) of the respondents indicated that entrepreneurship programmes provide dressmaking skills to women, 10% (N=5) of the respondents said women obtain catering skills from entrepreneurship programmes, while 6% (N=3) of the respondents showed that entrepreneurship programmes provide computer skills to women. As illustrated in figure 4.18, the researcher found that entrepreneurship programmes are essential for women's empowerment as they provide skills for development. In this regard, it is stated in ILO (2014) that, through entrepreneurship programmes, considerable skills i.e., life skills, innovative skills, teamwork skills, and many more, are provided to women. As indicated through the UNDP/ILO/GOL initiative, "women [are] able to acquire life skills and entrepreneurial [skills] in [income-generating activities] to improve their living standards" (ILO, 2014: 4).

Figure 4.18: Respondents' perceptions about importance of entrepreneurship programmes to communities



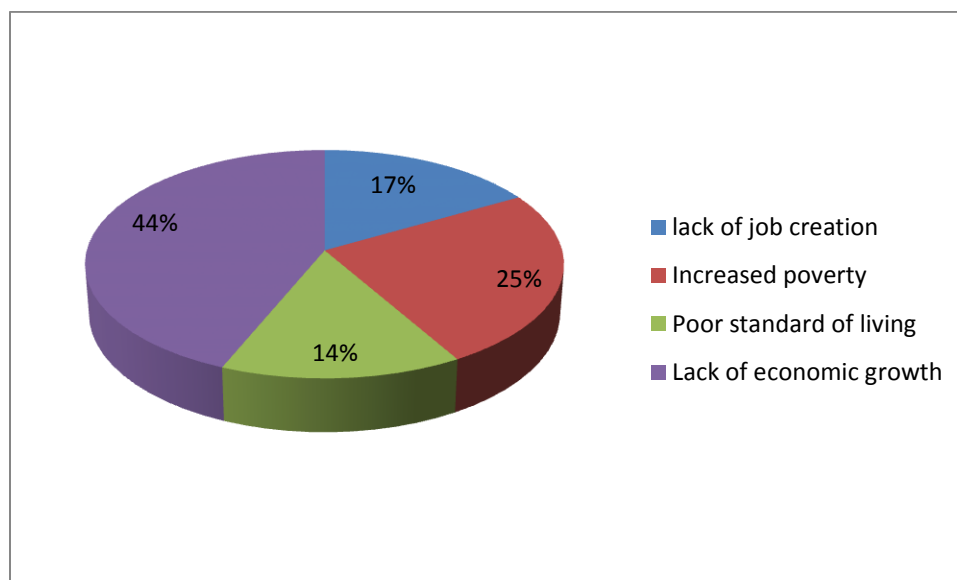
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.2.11 Challenges faced by women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes

The respondents were asked about the challenges women empowerment through entrepreneurship face in the study area. Out of the total sample of respondents, representing 44% (N=21) of the respondents said that lack of economic growth was the challenge facing women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area, 25% (N=12) of the respondents showed that increased poverty was a challenge facing women empowerment through entrepreneurship, 17% (N=7) of the respondents indicated poor standard of living as a challenge facing women empowerment through entrepreneurship while 14% (N=8) of the respondents mentioned lack of job creation as a challenge facing women empowerment through entrepreneurship.

As illustrated in figure 4.19, the researcher found that entrepreneurship programmes face challenges that hinder their effective contribution to women empowerment and the economic growth of the women's targeted localities. It is emphasised in Shareia (2015: 41) that improved local economic growth resulting mostly from women entrepreneurial activities in rural areas is “a component of women empowerment that has made a significant contribution on the socio-economic development in Lesotho.” Therefore, women empowerment initiatives should be given much attention to boosting the local economies of rural and urban areas and socio-economic development of countries.

Figure 4.19: Respondents' perceptions about challenges faced by entrepreneurship programmes in the study area

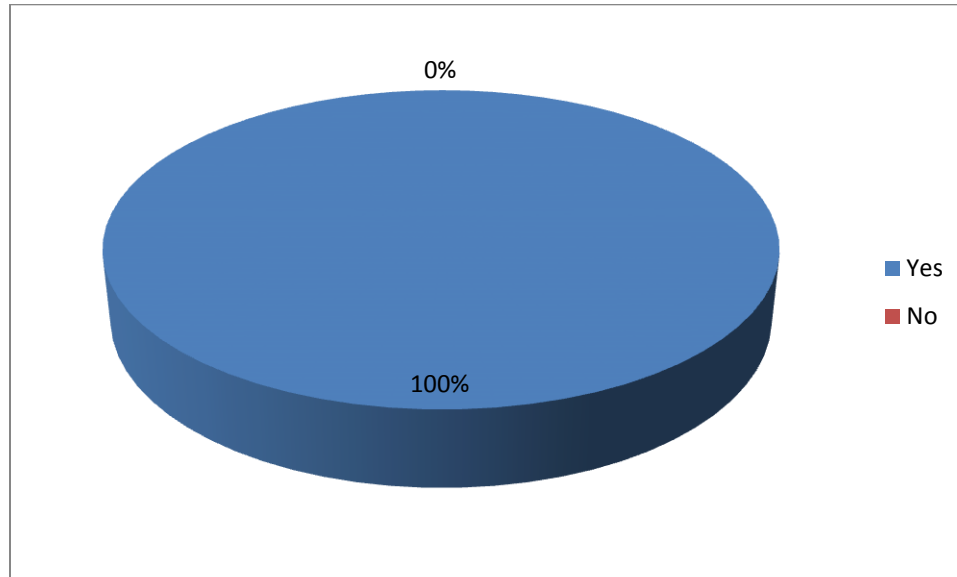


Source: Field research in March 2022

4.2.12 Importance of empowering women through the entrepreneurship programme

The respondents were asked if empowering women through entrepreneurship programmes is important in the study area. As illustrated in Figure 4.20, 100 % (N=50) of the total sample of the respondents believed that it is important to empower women through entrepreneurship programmes. In this regard, the researcher has established that empowering women through entrepreneurship in addressing the lack of economic growth for localities has been receiving increasing attention in recent years. Here, it is not surprising that the World Bank, as a leading development agency, has taken considerable interest in how entrepreneurship can influence women empowerment through entrepreneurship (Ramsay, 1996).

Figure 4.20: Respondents' perceptions about importance of empowering women through entrepreneurship programmes



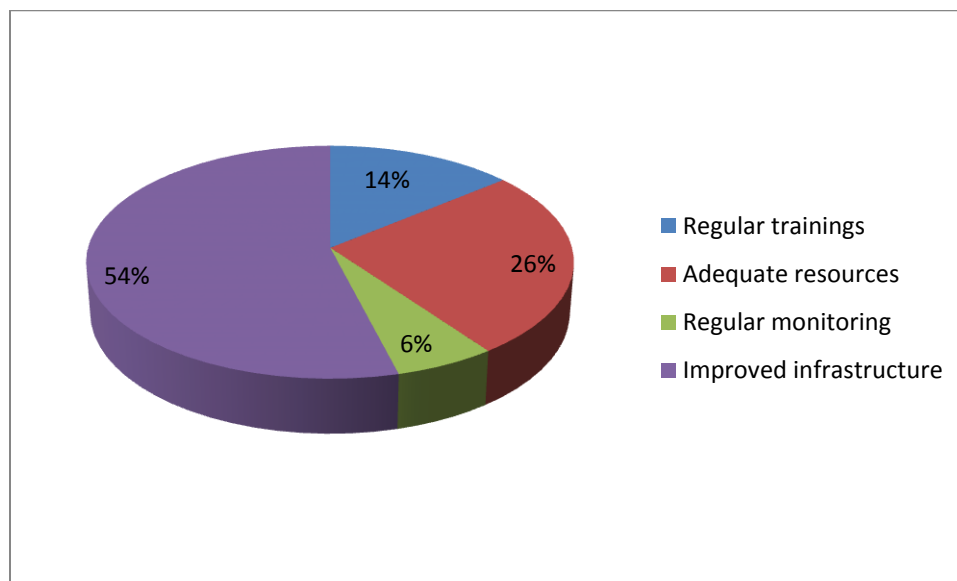
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.2.13 Ways to empower women participation in entrepreneurship programmes

Respondents were asked to give ways in which women can be empowered to participate in entrepreneurship programmes in the study area. Figure 4.21 illustrates that the majority of the respondents representing 54% (N=27) of the total sample, indicated that improved infrastructure could empower women to participate in entrepreneurship programmes, 26% (N=13) of the total sample of the respondents said the provision of adequate resources to women could empower them to participate in entrepreneurship programmes, 14% (N=7) of the total sample of the respondents mentioned that regular training could empower women to participate in entrepreneurship programmes while 6% (N=3) of the total sample of the respondents said that regular monitoring of entrepreneurship programmes could empower women to participate in them. As shown in figure 4.21, the researcher has established that there are various ways (or

initiatives) that can be used to empower women to participate in entrepreneurship programmes. In this regard, it is stated in the literature by Marcus and Brennan (2005: 85) that "promoting technology-related [infrastructure] initiatives to [empower women could] be a catalyst for them to participate in entrepreneurship activities in their local markets, leading to positive spin-off on the socio-economic development of their localities."

Figure 4.21: Respondents' perceptions on ways that empower women to participate in entrepreneurship programmes



Source: Field research in March 2022

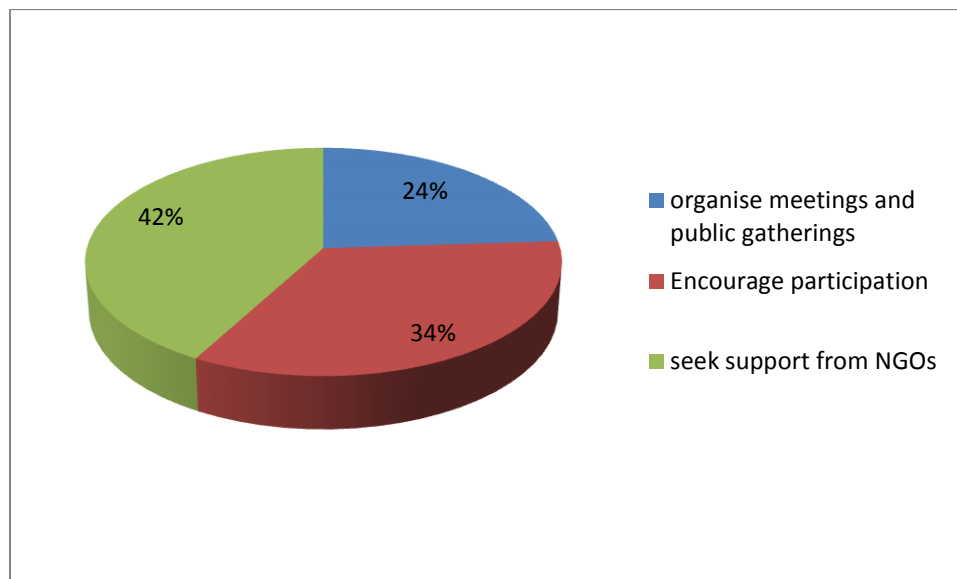
4.2.14 Roles of the Area Chief and Councillors as leaders in entrepreneurship programmes

The respondents were asked about what they perceived to be the roles of Area Chief and Councillors as leaders in women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area. Figure 4.22 illustrates that 42% (N=21) of the total sample of the respondents mentioned that the role of the Area Chief and Councillors is to seek support from NGOs for women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in the study area, 34% (N=17) of the total sample of the respondents indicated that the role of Area Chief and Councillors is to encourage participation of

women empowerment in entrepreneurship programmes in the study area, while 24% (N=12) of the total sample of respondents said that the role of Area Chief and Councillors is to organise meetings and public gatherings for communal women empowerment awareness and education.

As shown in figure 4.22, the researcher has found that the role of the Area Chief and Councillors is considered necessary in promoting women empowerment. In this regard, it is noted in Nyane (2016: 4) that communities "headed by chiefs and councillors [are] generally considered to have best practice in any form of women empowerment." Here, Nyane (2016: 5) contends that [women empowerment] public hearings led by area chiefs and councillors are often taken as the heart of the public engagement or consultation process for [localities'] sustainable development".

Figure 4.22 Respondents' views on the role of the Area Chief and Councillors in women empowerment through entrepreneurship



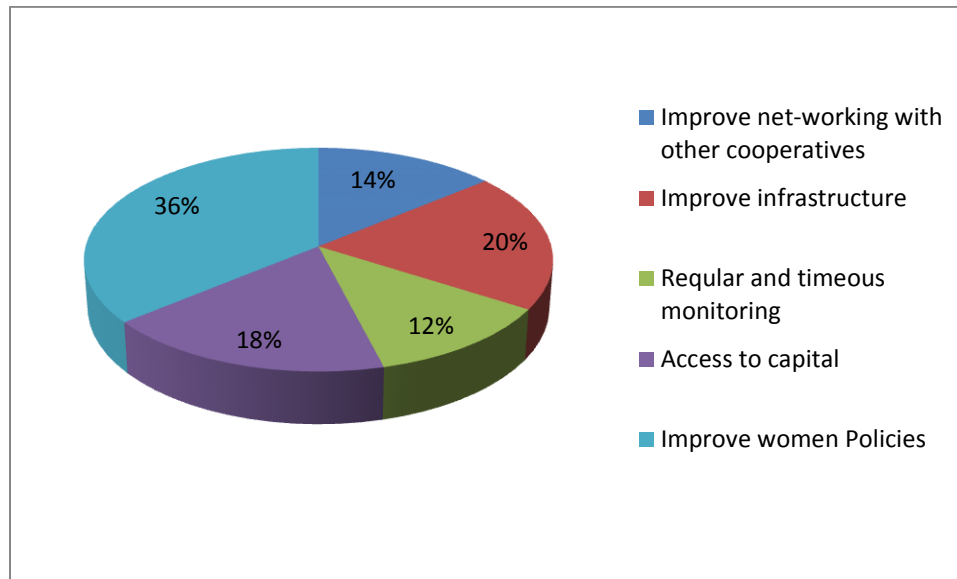
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.2.15 Ways of improving women empowerment through entrepreneurship

Respondents were asked what should be done to improve women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in the study area. Figure 4.23 shows that 36% (N=18) of the total sample of the respondents perceived improving women's focused policies as a way of advancing their empowerment, 20% (N=10) of the total sample of the respondents mentioned improving infrastructure as a way of promoting women empowerment, 18% (N=9) of the total sample of the respondents said access to capital is an empowering way of enabling women to establish businesses in the study area, 14% (N=7) of the total sample of the respondents indicated that net-working with other cooperatives and organisations is a way of promoting women empowerment while 12% (N=6) of the total sample of the respondents mentioned regular and timeous monitoring of entrepreneurship programmes in the study area as a way of promoting women empowerment.

As illustrated in figure 4.23, the researcher has found numerous ways of improving women empowerment through entrepreneurship. In this regard, UNDP (2020: 6) states that one way of enhancing women empowerment through entrepreneurship can be advanced by promoting "labour standards that support women's competitiveness in the global market." It is further mentioned in UNDP (2020) that improving employment policies to provide opportunities for women to obtain better work conditions and removing regulation constraints for women in entrepreneurship as additional ways of promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship.

Figure 4.23: Respondents' views on what should be done to improve women empowerment through entrepreneurship



Source: Field research in March 2022

4.3 RESEARCH RESULTS FROM PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH KEY INFORMANTS

This section presents key informants' responses during face-to-face interviews, which required information about women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area.

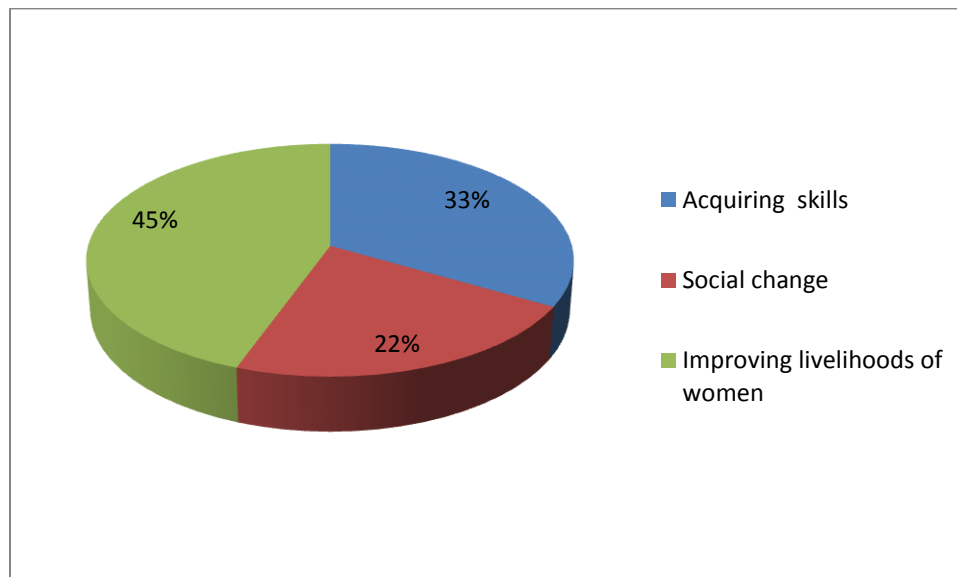
4.3.1. Understanding the terms' women empowerment' and 'entrepreneurship'

4.3.1.1 Understanding of the term 'women empowerment'

The key informants were asked about their understanding of the term 'women empowerment'. Figure: 4.24 illustrates that 43% (N=4) of the total sample of the key informants perceived 'women empowerment' as improving the livelihoods of women, 33% (N=3) of the total sample of

the key informants said 'women empowerment' is about enabling women to acquire life skills, while 22% (N=2) of the total sample of the key informants understood 'women empowerment' as promoting social change for women. As shown in Figure 4.24, the researcher has found out that the key informants' understanding of 'women empowerment' aligns well with UNCTAD (2012) definition of the term in the literature. UNCTAD (2012: 3) defines 'women empowerment' as “the socio-economic development of women in the national development agenda of countries to achieve sustainable development [beneficial to women].”

Figure 4.24: Key informants’ understanding of the term ‘women empowerment’



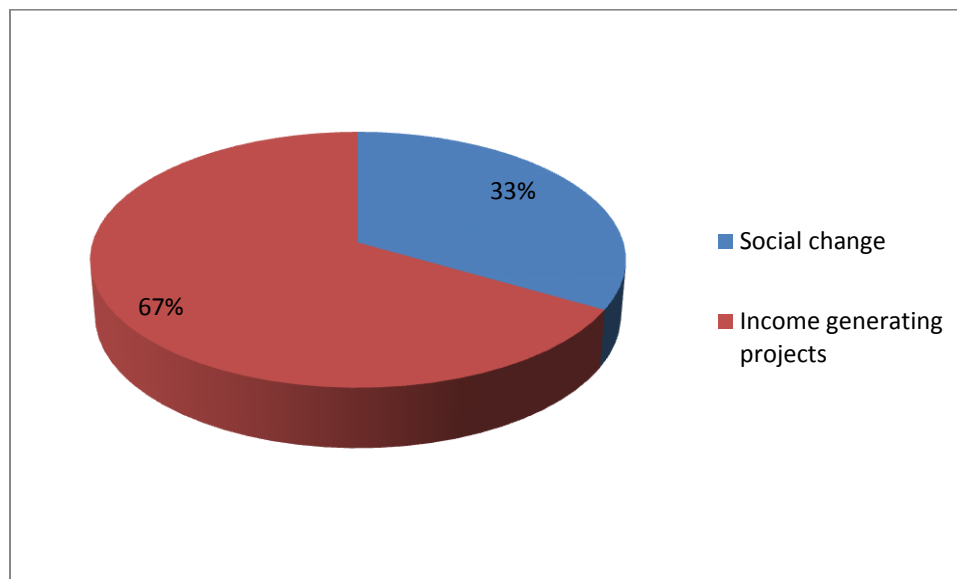
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.3.1.2 Understanding of the term 'entrepreneurship'

The key informants were asked about their understanding of the term 'entrepreneurship', and their answers vary according to their understanding. Figure 4.25 illustrates that 67% (N=6) of the total sample of the key informants said the term 'entrepreneurship' is about income-generating

projects, while 33% (N=3) of the total sample of the key informants understood the term 'entrepreneurship' as promoting social change for women. As shown in figure 4.25, the researcher has established that the key informants' understanding of 'entrepreneurship' aligns with Tanchangya et al. (2020) and Austin et al. (2006) definitions of the term in the literature. According to Tanchangya et al. (2020: 25), entrepreneurship is about "[socio-economic] transformation towards job creation focusing on women." On the other hand, Austin et al. (2006: 97) see "entrepreneurship' as "identifying the social problem [facing women] and accomplishing social change by employing entrepreneurial principles, routes and processes to overcome them [for the benefit of women]."

Figure 4.25: Key informants' understanding of the term 'entrepreneurship'

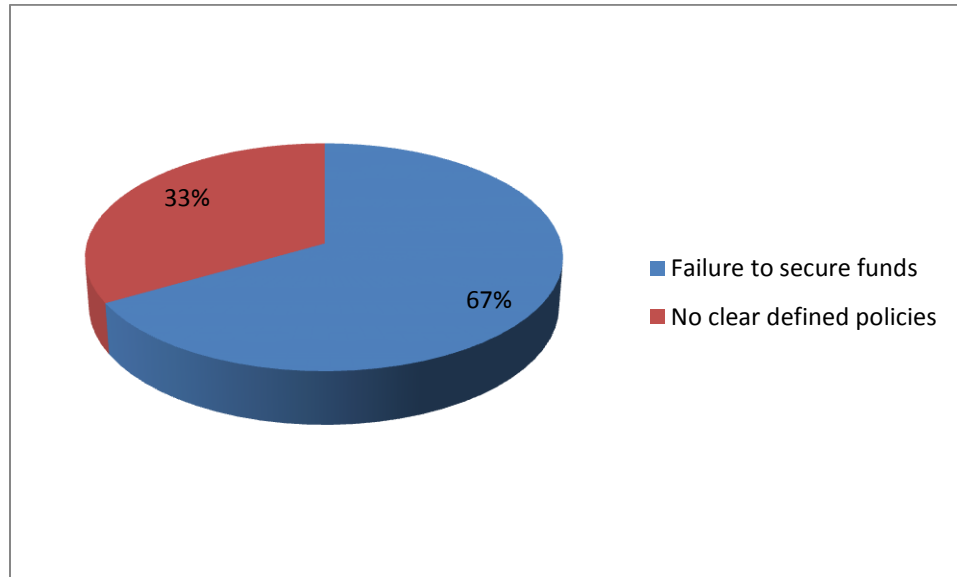


Source: Field research in March 2022

4.3.2 Organisational encouragement of women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area

The key informants were asked if their respective organisations encourage women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area. Out of the total sample of the key informants, 67% (N=6) indicated that failure to secure funds by their organisations is the major problem inhibiting innovative efforts to encourage women empowerment through entrepreneurship, while 33% (N=3) of the key informants said that there are no clearly defined policies in place to promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area. As illustrated in figure 4.26, the researcher has established that organisations face challenges or problems that prevent them from encouraging women empowerment through entrepreneurship. In this regard, FIDA (n.d) notes that "the lack of policies that seek to empower women to make a living through entrepreneurship is a hindrance to their participation in the socio-economic development of their countries."

Figure 4.26: key informants' perceptions about organisational encouragement of women empowerment through entrepreneurship



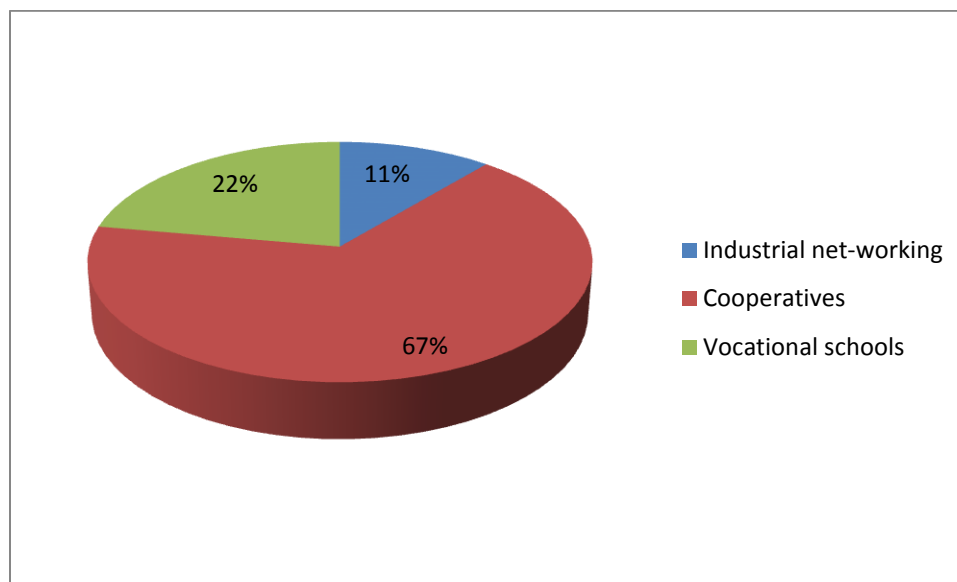
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.3.3 Mechanisms employed to facilitate women empowerment through entrepreneurship

The key informants were asked if there are communal mechanisms to facilitate women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area. Out of the total sample of the key informants, 67% (N=6) indicated that there are cooperatives in place to facilitate women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area, 22% (N=2) of the total sample of the key informants mentioned vocational schools as mechanisms in place to facilitate women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area, while 11% (N=1) of the total sample of the key informants indicated industrial net-working as a platform in place to facilitate women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area. As illustrated in figure 4.27, the researcher has established numerous mechanisms to promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship. In this regard, it is stated in the literature by FIDA (n.d) that, in general, there

are platforms (or mechanisms) to facilitate women empowerment through entrepreneurship. Here, FIDA sees itself as "a mechanism [for] use [by women] to fight discrimination of women in land acquisition and cultural norms [that deny] property rights to women, thus inhibiting them from participating in entrepreneurial activities that contribute meaningfully to their socio and economic empowerment" (FIDA, n.d).

Figure 4.27: Key informants' perceptions about mechanisms that facilitate women empowerment through entrepreneurship



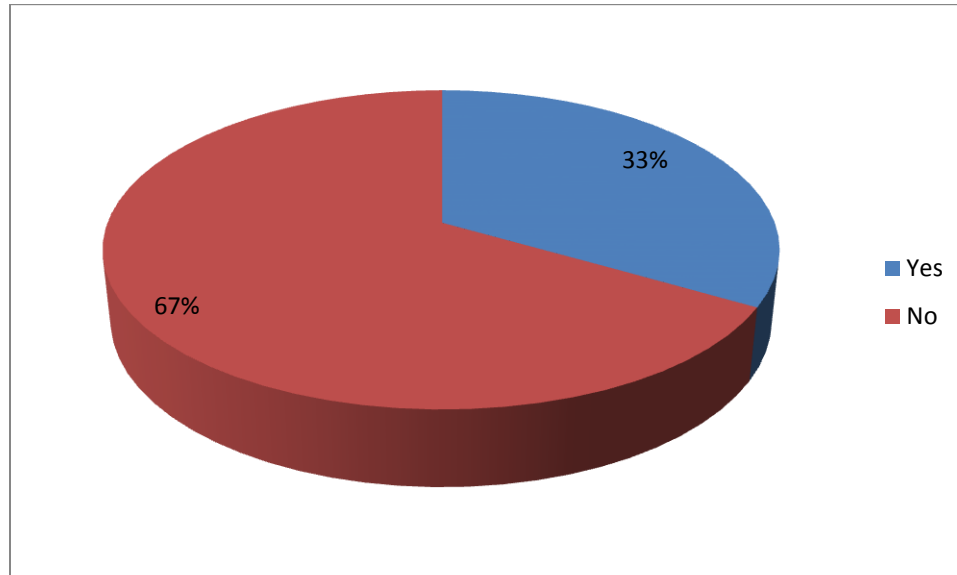
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.3.4 Organisational contributions in implementing entrepreneurship programmes in the study area

The key informants were asked about their organisations' contributions to implementing women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in the study area. Out of the total sample of the key informants, 67% (N=6) said there were no contributions made by their organisations in

the implementation of women empowerment programmes in the study area, while 33% (N=3) of the total sample of the key informants mentioned their organisations contributed to the implementation of women empowerment programmes in the study area. As illustrated in figure 4.27, the researcher has found that, in general, organisations do face or confront difficulties that prevent them from supporting the implementation of women empowerment programmes. In this regard, the Lesotho National Council of Women (LNCW) states that "because of short term funding and lack of resources for organisations to timely monitor the initiatives for development programmes [focusing on women empowerment through entrepreneurship], it is very difficult to achieve the desired output from the programmes."

Figure 4.28: Key informants' views on the organisational contribution on the implementation of women empowerment programmes in the study area

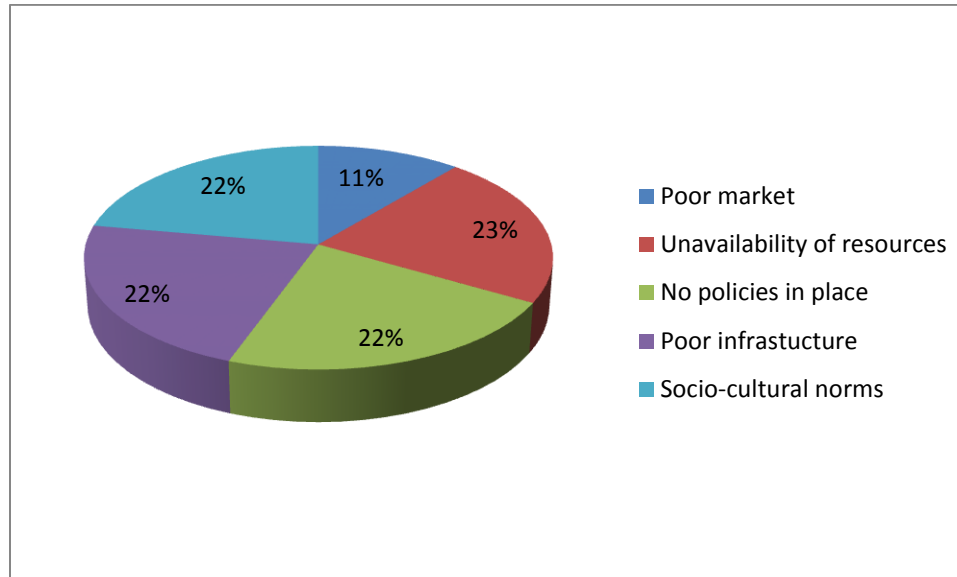


Source: Field research in March 2022

4.3.5 Obstacles encountered in encouraging women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area

The key informants were asked if there were obstacles encountered in encouraging women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area. Out of the total sample of the key informants, 23% (N=3) said the unavailability of resources is an obstacle to encouraging women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area, 22 % (N=2) of the key informants indicated that there is no policies put in place to address women empowerment through entrepreneurship, 22% (N=2) indicated socio-cultural norms as obstacles encountered in encouraging women empowerment through entrepreneurship, 22% (N=2) of the key informants mentioned poor infrastructure as an obstacle faced in encouraging women empowerment through entrepreneurship while 11% (N=1) of the key informants indicated poor market as an obstacle encountered in promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area. As illustrated in figure 4.28, the researcher has found that organisations face various challenges (or limitations) in encouraging women empowerment through entrepreneurship. In agreement, Maepe (2020) states that organisations face challenges in supporting women's empowerment initiatives. Here, Maepe (2020: 13) mentions that "cultural norms and practices that [are] embedded in the national laws [are] one of the obstacles[s] that deprive women to participate fully in programs that empower women."

Figure 4.29: Key informants' views on the obstacles encountered by organisations in encouraging women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area



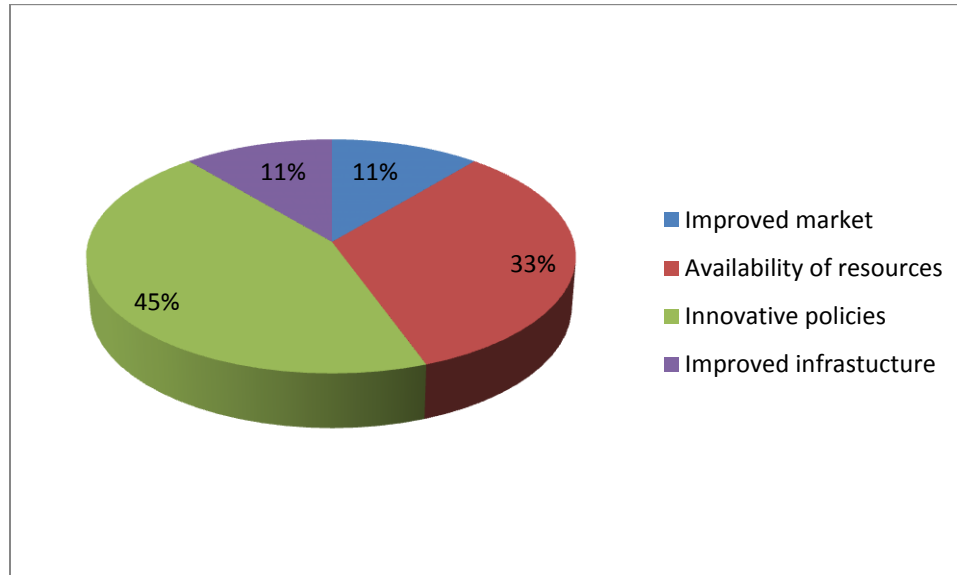
Source: Field research in March 2022

4.3.6 Ways of improving organisational contributions towards women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area.

The key informants were asked about what can be done to enhance organisational contributions towards women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area. Out of the total sample of key informants, 45 % (N=4) of the key informants indicated that the development of innovative policies could improve organisational contributions toward women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the study area, 33 % (N=3) of the key informants said that availability of resources could improve organisational contributions towards women empowerment through entrepreneurship, 11% (N=1) of the key informants mentioned that improved infrastructure could improve organisational contributions towards women empowerment through entrepreneurship, while 11 % (N=1) of the key informants indicated that

improved market could improve organisational contributions towards women empowerment through entrepreneurship. As illustrated in Figure 4.29, the researcher has found that there were various or different ways available to organisations to improve their contributions towards women empowerment through entrepreneurship. In agreement, it is noted in the literature by ILO (2006) that organisations do have ways available to improve their contributions towards women empowerment. In this regard, ILO (2006: 8) stated that "NORAD was established to encourage the improvement of women entrepreneurship policies in most developing countries." Hence, according to ILO (2006), "NORAD's main set objective is to promote the national economic growth of developing countries through women entrepreneurship."

Figure 4.30: Key informants' views about organisational contributions towards improving women empowerment through entrepreneurship



Source: Field research in March 2022

4.4 The study research findings

Having presented the research results in sections 4.2 (questionnaires) and 4.3 (interviews) above, this section provides overall research findings of the study in line with research objectives in section 1.4, read together with research questions in section 1.5 of chapter 1.

4.4.1 Ways in which the cooperatives promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship

The study's general finding is that there are various ways in which cooperatives promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. These ways include but are not limited to handicrafts making, green housing, *Mantloane* farming, sewing and dressmaking, counselling, and catering services. In handicrafts making, women generally make the Basotho hats, pot clays, bead necklaces, straw brooms, straw buckets, die and dye table clothing material, and cloth handbags. In green housing, women undertake tunnel farming, which involves planting various crops, i.e., vegetables, for selling to generate income. In *Mantloane* farming, women use keyhole gardening techniques to produce vegetables, maize, and sorghum for trading in the market to obtain income. In sewing and dressmaking, women make dresses, trousers, jerseys, table mats and cloths, and scarfs from wool and mohair for income-generating activities. In counselling and catering, women provide various free services to youth in their localities. First, they provide counselling to youth infected by HIV/AIDS and early school leavers. Second, they provide youth with cooking (catering) skills to generate income for themselves. The overall assessment of these ways is that they are essential in ensuring self-employment for women to address the lack of jobs among women and alleviate or reduce women's poverty. These ways are perceived as resourceful in helping women engage in income-generating entrepreneurial programmes to economically

empower themselves. Thus, as illustrated in Figure 4.12 under sub-section 4.2.4 in page 61, these ways allow women to participate in the advantageous provision of job opportunities, particularly for women affected by unemployment in their localities, as in the case of Malealea.

4.4.2 Effectiveness of the existing cooperatives in promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship

The overall research finding indicates that there were various existing cooperatives in promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. These existing cooperatives include but are not limited to handicrafts making cooperatives (i.e., *Lehlahlela-le-lla ka leng* handicrafts making cooperative) as in the case of Malealea depicted in pictures 1 and 2 under sub-section 4.2.4 in page 62, dressmaking cooperatives (i.e., Tsoha dressmaking cooperative) as in the case of Malealea, farming cooperative (i.e., Mantloane (Keyholes) farming cooperative in the case of Malealea as well as counselling and catering cooperatives (i.e., Thusanang bacha as in the case of Malealea). The overall examination of the effective existing cooperatives is that they are a catalyst for women to participate in entrepreneurship activities, leading to positive socio-economic development of their localities. These cooperatives play a fundamental role in solving women's social problems (i.e., unemployment) to decrease the women's poverty index in Lesotho. In addition, these cooperatives are essential mechanisms in changing women's livelihoods in their households and their socio-economic status in society. Thus, as illustrated in figures 4.16 and 4.17 under sub-sections 4.2.8 in page 68 and 4.2.9 in page 69 respectively, these cooperatives benefit women by empowering them to take charge of their lives through entrepreneurial activities in their respective localities. Overall, the cooperatives provide skills, income, and other socio-economic opportunities to women to address their socio-economic challenges such as poverty and unemployment, to mention a few.

4.4.3 Effective implementation of the existing laws in promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship

The overall research finding of the study is that there is no effective implementation of the existing laws that promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. The reasons for the ineffective implementation of the existing laws include but are not limited to lack of funding which inhibits proper monitoring of the existing laws, socio-cultural norms which still effectively prohibit women from participating in law-making decision processes relating to the implementation of the existing laws, lack of political will and commitment from government to implement the existing laws, and inadequate provision of entrepreneurial infrastructure (i.e., market facilities) to support women's businesses in their respective localities. Here, the ineffective implementation of the existing laws relating to women's empowerment means that their much-needed socio-economic development would be undermined, leading women to experience further disempowerment that results in continuous women's poverty and unemployment. Thus, as shown in figure 4.28 under section 4.3.5 in page 83, this ineffective implementation of existing laws hampers the positive contribution of entrepreneurial efforts or initiatives geared toward empowering women, as in the case of Malealea.

4.4.4 Possible policy interventions in promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship

The general finding is that there are several possible policy interventions that can be employed or used in promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. These possible policy interventions include but are not limited to (i) enacting a policy intervention that enables the creation of viable entrepreneurial markets where women entrepreneurs can easily sell their

products in their localities instead of travelling to their nearest towns, (ii) making a policy intervention that enables women entrepreneurs to access capital from financial institutions to finance their entrepreneurial entities in their localities, (iii) enacting policy intervention that creates more space for active participation of women in the law-making and decision-making processes that drive the plight of women empowerment in the socio-economic development of their localities, and (iv) passing policy intervention that breaks the socio-cultural norms that prohibit or inhibit women from accessing social and economic resources (i.e., land, property, etc.) necessary to support their entrepreneurial initiatives or activities in their respective localities. The researcher's analysis of these possible policy interventions is that they are not only necessary, but they are salient conditions for promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship to take charge of their socio-economic development. Here, as indicated in figure 4.29 under subsection 4.3.6 in page 85, the suggested possible policy interventions are seen as critical towards enabling organisations to contribute resources necessary for the empowerment of women through entrepreneurial initiatives or activities in their respective localities. They are also essential in providing women with significant socio-economic and political platforms to voice out and act upon issues (social, cultural, economic, political, etc.) related to their socio-economic development and empowerment opportunities.

4.5 Summary

This chapter gave a detailed presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the qualitative and quantitative data derived from empirical study. Literature was incorporated into the presentation of the research findings of the study. The next chapter will address the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This is a final chapter of the study aimed at promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho using Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative in the Mafeteng district as a case study. It broken down into four (4) sections. This section 5.0 introduces the chapter. Section 5.1 summarises the study'. Section 5.2 presents conclusions of the study from the study's research findings. Section 5.3 makes recommendations for promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho based on the research results of the study. Finally, section 5.4 concludes the chapter by making recommendations for further research pertaining to the study.

5.1 Summary

This study was about promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho: the case of Malealea Handicrafts Cooperative in the Mafeteng district. Chapter one discussed the research problem of the study and its setting by highlighting the background of the study, statement to the problem of the study, the purpose of the study, research objectives of the study, research questions of the study, significance of the study, the theoretical framework of the study, and delimitations of the study.

Chapter two addressed the literature review for the study by spelling out the theoretical framework of the study, the conceptual framework of the study, conceptual discussions of the

study, experiences, and factors justifying the need for entrepreneurship in developing countries, and empirical evidence addressing the research problem of the study.

Chapter three discussed the research methodology and procedure of the study by addressing research pragmatism, research design, population and sampling, research instruments, data collection procedure, data presentation and analysis procedure, validity and reliability, ethical considerations of the study, and limitations of the study.

Chapter four discussed data presentation, analysis, and findings of the study addressing demographic characteristics of respondents, data presentation and analysis obtained from self-administered (structured) questionnaires and face-to-face interviews, and overall research findings of the study.

Chapter five discussed a summary of the study, conclusions of the study, and recommendations of the study.

5.2 Conclusions

The first research objective was to evaluate ways in which the cooperatives promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship initiatives in Lesotho. This study established that there were various ways of encouraging participation of women in entrepreneurial initiatives as a way of empowering them was mentioned and stressed by the respondents in the study. These ways included but were not limited to the provision of regular entrepreneurial training to women, improvement of supporting entrepreneurial infrastructures (i.e., roads, sanitary, etc.), provision of supporting entrepreneurial resources to women (i.e., machinery, transportation, etc.) and timely monitoring of women's entrepreneurial initiatives to ensure they are successfully

implemented. The study perceived these ways of encouraging women's participation in entrepreneurial activities as crucial for empowering women to play an active role in the socio-economic development of their respective localities.

The second research objective was to examine the effectiveness of the existing cooperatives that promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. This study established that there were various existing cooperatives in promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. These existing cooperatives included but were not limited to handicrafts making cooperatives, dressmaking cooperatives, farming cooperatives as well as counselling and catering cooperatives. The study also established that these cooperatives continued to play an essential role in promoting the socio-economic empowerment of women through entrepreneurship activities in their respective localities.

The study further established that these cooperatives played a fundamental role in addressing women's poverty and unemployment in Lesotho. They provided entrepreneurial skills, income, and other socio-economic opportunities to women.

The third research objective was to establish if existing laws that promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho are effectively implemented. This study found that there was an ineffective implementation of the existing laws that encourage women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. The study established that lack of funding, socio-cultural norms, lack of political will and commitment and inadequate provision of entrepreneurial infrastructure (i.e., market facilities) were responsible for the ineffective implementation of the existing laws relating to women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. The study further established that the weak implementation of the existing laws relating to women

empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho leads women to additionally experience disempowerment that results in persistent women poverty and unemployment.

The fourth research objective was to analyse possible policy interventions to promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. This study established there are several possible policy interventions that could be employed or used in promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. These possible policy interventions include but are not limited to (i) enacting a policy intervention that enables the creation of viable entrepreneurial markets where women entrepreneurs can easily sell their products in their localities instead of travelling to their nearest towns, (ii) making a policy intervention that enables women entrepreneurs to access capital from financial institutions to finance their entrepreneurial entities in their localities, (iii) enacting policy intervention that creates more space for active participation of women in the law-making and decision-making processes that drive the light of women empowerment in the socio-economic development of their localities, and (iv) passing policy interventions that break the socio-cultural norms that prohibit or inhibit women from accessing social and economic resources (i.e., land, property, etc.) necessary to support their entrepreneurial initiatives or activities in their respective localities.

5.3 Recommendations

It is recommended that Public and private partnerships (PPPs) should establish more organisations focusing on women's affairs to promote their empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. These organisations should support women's socio-economic development through advocacy and outreach, education and training, marketing, and networking to ensure that women empowerment becomes a reality.

For instance, through the institutional support of these organisations, women can obtain access to credit or finance to support their entrepreneurial initiatives in their respective localities. Government (i.e., national and local levels) and non-governmental organisations should actively promote women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. Such a role should include but not be limited to the creation of socio-economic and political avenues for the participation of women in law-making and policy decision processes that deal with women's affairs. For instance, access to credit and finances as one of the obstacles that inhibit women from actively engaging in entrepreneurial initiatives in their localities could be tackled by the cooperation of the efforts of both government and non-governmental organisations in the quest for the plight of women.

It is recommended that the role of local authorities (i.e., chiefs and councillors) in promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in their localities as part of rural development in Lesotho should be supported by a robust and innovative legal and policy framework. Such support is a necessary condition that would go a long way in ensuring that sustainable entrepreneurial activities that empower women to take charge of their livelihoods in their localities are successfully implemented. Here, the role of chiefs and councillors as leaders has been acknowledged in the study as paramount for supporting women's participation in empowerment programmes that promote their plight in their localities.

It is recommended that promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship should form an integral part of tourism development in Lesotho. This recommendation is based on the fact that the study has acknowledged that entrepreneurial activities in the localities where women reside do attract tourists to visit these areas. The entrepreneurial benefits that accrue from tourists' visits cannot be overstressed. One of the benefits is that tourists buy entrepreneurial

goods and services women provide in their localities. From selling their entrepreneurial goods and services (i.e., handicrafts, horse-riding, etc.) to the tourists, women generate the income necessary for their livelihoods and their households. Thus, tourism becomes a viable vehicle for empowering women to take charge of their socio-economic development in their respective localities.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

The study has established that there is limited research on the promotion of women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho. In this regard, researchers could conduct future research in the areas below relating to the promotion of women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho:

- Women, culture, and entrepreneurship
- Women, economic empowerment, and entrepreneurship
- Women, entrepreneurship, and policy development
- Women, entrepreneurship, and tourism
- Women, entrepreneurship, and development

It is believed that the above suggested future research would go a long way in making necessary contributions towards promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho.

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APPENDIX A: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

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P.O. Roma 180,

Lesotho.

Africa.

Faculty of Humanities

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

22 / 02 / 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This letter serves to confirm that Mr./Mrs./Ms. NYALLEN MDFUOA is a student with the university reading for a Master of Arts in Development Studies Degree Programme. In this degree, research is a compulsory component of the programme. Please help her / him in this research endeavour.

Thank you in anticipation of your support.

Yours Sincerely

Prof. Maxwell Musingafi

APPENDIX B: COVERING LETTER TO QUESTIONNAIRE

Self-administered (structured) questionnaire for Malealea handicrafts entrepreneurs as study participants with the facilitation of the researcher

Dear Participant

I am **Nyalleng Mofuoa** (Student No.: **(200703638)**) registered for Master of Arts in Development Studies with the Department of Development Studies, Faculty of Humanities at the National University of Lesotho under the supervision of Professor Maxwell MUSINGAFI (contact #: +266 63841310).

I hereby invite you to participate in my study on women empowerment through entrepreneurship in your Area. The topic for my research study is titled *Promoting women empowerment through entrepreneurship in Lesotho: The Case of Malealea Handicrafts Cooperatives in the Mafeteng District*. The goal of this study is to assess women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the Malealea community in Mafeteng, Lesotho.

I would appreciate your willingness to participate in this study by way of completing the questionnaire below. Your responses in the questionnaire will remain confidential and no one will be able to trace them back to you. Your permission to use the responses you provide is required and this will form the first part of the questionnaire. **NB:** All personal information will remain confidential. Thanking you in advance for agreeing to participate in the study.

Kind regard,

Nyalleng Mofuoa

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions for participants to complete the Questionnaire:

1. If you are a member of Malealea Handicrafts community in the Mafeteng district, please complete the following questionnaire.
2. The questions in the questionnaire should only be answered in the context of women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the Malealea Handicrafts community in the Mafeteng district.
3. Your views are invited. It does not matter what people think. The researcher is **only** interested in your opinion regarding women empowerment through entrepreneurship in your area.
4. Read each question carefully before you provide your answer or response.

Thank you for your participation!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

SECTION A

This section consists of questions that seek to collect biological information of participants and/or demographic characteristic of participants in the study.

1. Name.....(optional).

2. Gender

Male	
Female	

3. Age

20-29	
30-39	
40-49	
50+	

4. Marriage Status

Single	
Married	
Divorcee	
Widow	

5. What is the highest level of education that you have achieved?

Never attended school	
-----------------------	--

Did not complete primary school	
Completed primary school	
Did not complete secondary school	
Completed secondary school	
Tertiary qualification	

6. Source of income

Civil service	
Entrepreneurship	
Livestock owner	
Agriculture	

7. What is your place of normal residence at Malealea.....

8. How long have you been living in the area (years)?

1-10 years	
11-20 years	
20+ years	

9. Name of your Area Chief.....

10. Name of your Counsellor.....

SECTION B

This section consists of questions that seek to collect information about your participation in women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the at Malealea community.

1. What is your understanding of the term '*women empowerment*'?

.....

.....

.....

2. What is your understanding of the term '*entrepreneurship*'?

.....

.....

.....

3. Do you think is important for women in your community to participate in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes?

.....

.....

.....

4. Is there a women empowerment through entrepreneurship programme in Malealea area that you know? If yes, mention and briefly describe those programmes.

.....

.....

.....

5. If there is such women entrepreneurship programme in Malealea area, does your community participate in the programme? Explain how.

-
-
-
6. If your community does not participate in the women empowerment through entrepreneurship programme, briefly explain why not?

-
-
-
7. How do you see the role of your community in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in Malealea area yourself?

-
-
-
8. Do you personally participate in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programme in Malealea area? If yes, please explain

-
-
-
9. In your own opinion, do women in your community benefit from participating in women entrepreneurship programme in Malealea area? Please give your reason(s) for your answer.

.....

.....

.....

10. Do you think women empowerment through entrepreneurship programme is important for your community in Malealea area? Please give your reason(s) for your answer.

.....

.....

.....

11. What challenges does women empowerment through entrepreneurship programme face in Malealea area?

.....

.....

.....

12. Do you think it is important for women to be empowered in your community through an entrepreneurship programme in Malealea? Briefly explain your answer.

.....

.....

.....

13. How would you like women in your community to be empowered to participate fully in an entrepreneurship programme in Malealea area?

.....

.....

.....

14. In your opinion, what should the role of the Area Chief and Councillors in women empowerment through entrepreneurship programme in Malealea area?

.....

.....

.....

15. In your opinion, what should be done to improve women empowerment through entrepreneurship programme in Malealea area overall?

.....

.....

.....

End

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Face-to-face interview questions with identified key informants facilitated by the Researcher

1. What is your understanding of the following terms: ‘women empowerment’ and ‘entrepreneurship’? Do you think it is important for women in your community to be empowered?
2. Does your office or institution or organisation encourage women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in Malealea area? If so, briefly describe how?
3. What communal mechanisms or platforms are in place to facilitate women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in Malealea area? What is your opinion of this empowerment process?
4. Do you think your office or institution or organization has made any difference to the way women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in Malealea area have been implemented to improve women’s livelihoods up to now, or you think your office or institution or organisation’s inputs are simply ignored?
5. What obstacles are encountered by your office or institution or organisation in women empowerment through entrepreneurship in the Malealea area? What are your biggest frustrations and/or concerns with the current process of women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in Malealea area?
6. What can be done to improve your office or institution or organisation’s contribution to the improvement of women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in Malealea area? Do you have any suggestions that may help to improve the current

process of women empowerment through entrepreneurship programmes in Malealea area?

End