

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Poverty is a condition where people's basic needs for food, clothing and shelter are not being met. Poverty is generally of two types: absolute and relative poverty. Some of the causes of poverty include changing trends in a country's economy, lack of education, high divorce rate which causes feminisation of poverty, having a culture of poverty, overpopulation, epidemic diseases such as AIDS and malaria, and environmental problems such as lack of rainfall (business dictionary.com).

Poverty is complex and needs to be addressed holistically. The church is well placed to provide a holistic response in addressing poverty and inequality. The following churches will be visited during the research:

- Methodist Church in Kwa - Thema,
- Methodist Church in Selcourt
- Lutheran Church in Kwa-Thema,
- Agape Seventh Adventist Church

These churches will be interviewed in a quest to find out their strategic position in combating poverty amongst poor people.

Word Christian church and St Paul's apostolic church were selected for the interview but unfortunately could not make it due to work commitments.

Springs will be the geographical position of the project. Like other cities in the country, Springs is also faced with enormous poverty due to amongst others, the surrounding squatter camps and the high rate of unemployment and the migrants. It was my intention to discuss the town council plans with the responsible person but it came with challenges.

1.2 Problem Statement

“Endemic and widespread poverty continues to disfigure the face of our country. It will always be impossible for us to say that we have fully restored the dignity of all our people as long as this situation persists. For this reason, the struggle to eradicate poverty has been, and will continue to be, a central part of the national effort to build the new South Africa” (President Thabo Mbeki: 2004).

The number of people who are asking for donations on the intersections of our streets in Springs and those that are digging in rubbish bins looking for used plastic containers inside the rubbish containers raised lot of questions which I could not answer. The question, will this situation get better or will it remain the same or will it get worse’ remains unanswered to me as a Christians. If I can give a helping hand by dropping unfinished/unwanted food on the pavement of the inner city, imagine how much food would be donated if all Christians in this town would do the same.

Springs city is surrounded by four informal settlements which are structured either as single rooms built with paperboard/cardboard or by pieces of wood whereas the majority are made of corrugated iron. Informal settlements usually become home for more than ten people at a time. The living conditions in an Informal settlement are not pleasant. Children are exposed to diseases; they are starving and also are victims of malnutrition. Respiratory problems associated with Asthma and pneumonia is common among the children living in such areas. Diarrhea and untreated infections are a daily occurrence. According to Lukoto (stats SA 2014:1), there are 13 237 unemployed people and 5149 are living in an Informal settlement. The fact that people live in informal settlements is not by choice but is because of either:

- Lack of finance to purchase minimum standard houses available in the area
- Unemployment
- Unable to pay services

The question is: what is the role of the churches in the greater Springs area in helping poor people?

1.3 Research Question & Objective

The objective of this mini-thesis is to make a contribution towards uplifting the lives of poor people who go to sleep with hungry stomachs in Springs and address the question of: How **can the churches in Springs be more effective in helping the poor?**

That will be achieved by focusing on:

- (i) Describing the face of poverty in Springs
- (ii) Describing the causes of poverty in Springs [in context of Gauteng and national]
- (iii) Describing and assessing the church's responses to poverty in Springs
- (iv) Exploring how the church in Springs contributes effectively to poverty eradication in Springs
- (v) Make a summary of recommendations on how to reduce poverty in Springs.

1.3.1 Scope of the research

This section describes how the research will be structured. It highlights the areas which will be covered in the research. The research because it requires an analyses of the effectiveness of the role of the churches in Springs will be structured as follows:

- Engaging with selected churches on the issue
- The congregants of the churches described above
- Members of Springs Town council

1.4 Research Methodology

According to Leedy (1985:4), research is “the manner in which we attempt to solve problems in a systematic effort to push back the frontiers of human ignorance or to confirm the validity of solutions to problems others have presumably resolved.”

Creswell (1994:1) defines a qualitative paradigm as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, informed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. Stake (1995:37) argues, the distinction is not directly related to difference in qualitative and quantitative data but a difference in searching for causes versus searching for happenings.

The Qualitative method of research will be used for this research and the following procedures of acquiring information will be used:

- Literature review
- Church interviews
- Statistics about poverty

1.5 Structure of the research

Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of the respective chapters and the specific methodology that will be used in the research. The following sub divisions will be discussed in this chapter:

- Background
- Problem statement
- Research Question and Objective
- Scope of the research
- Research Methodology

Chapter 2 deals with the literature review of the following:

- Poverty definitions
- Types of poverty
- Causes of poverty
- Biblical review of poverty

Chapter 3 describes the four churches which will be interviewed. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the churches. The churches are:

- Kwa-Thema Methodist church
- Selcourt Methodist church
- Agape Seventh - Day Adventist church
- Kwa-Thema Lutheran church

Chapter 4 deals with the practices of poverty alleviation by using John Friedmann's model. The model deals with 8 disempowerment factors namely:

- Defensible life space
- Surplus time
- Knowledge and skills
- Appropriate information
- Social organisations
- Social network
- Instruments of work and livelihood
- Financial resources

The responses from the churches will be discussed in detail.

Chapter 5 provides the conclusion of the previous chapters and will end up with recommendations from the research, which can be accessed by interested churches and individuals.

CHAPTER 2

DESCRIPTION OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a literature review on poverty alleviation in terms of definitions , types and methods of eradicating poverty.

2.2 Definitions

2.2.1 Poverty Definitions

This portion will cover some definitions of poverty, relative and absolute poverty, causes and types of poverty.

Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon that has different meanings for different people (irrespective of whether or not it is being examined within the same subject area). Poverty can be viewed as absolute or relative, as a lack of income or failure to attain capabilities. It can be chronic or temporary, is sometimes closely associated with inequality, and is often correlated with vulnerabilities, underdevelopment and economic exclusion. It is therefore not surprising to find that the questions:

- 'What does it mean to be poor?' evokes a different response from one person to another.
- Is poverty racial?
- Is poverty discriminatory?
- Is poverty sexual?

According to O'Boyle (1999), these different responses are triggered by the fact that each person's answer is a reflection of a personal value system. Unfortunately, these value systems are bound to diverge, and when they do, wider agreement on any normative issue becomes more difficult, including how best to define poverty. This, however, is not to suggest that defining poverty is a thoroughly arbitrary, personal matter. Rather, according to Alcock (1997:28), this is to emphasise the fact that poverty is a contested problem, i.e. most people claim that their understanding of poverty is the correct one, based on a logical argument and/or scientific research.

May defines poverty as (1998: 05), “international experience of poverty alleviation programs suggests that poverty is not a static condition among individuals, households or communities. Rather, it is recognized that, although some individuals or households are permanently poor, others move into and out of poverty. This may be a result of life-cycle changes, specific events such as the illness of a main income earner, or deterioration in external economic conditions.”

The South African government describes poverty as state of living below the poverty line. In 1993, the poverty line for a rural household (two adults and three children) was defined as a monthly income of less than R740. (Parliamentary bulletin: 1996)

Poverty is described as the lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods, hunger and malnutrition, ill-health; limited access to education and other basic services (Copenhagen Declaration, United Nations, 1995:57).

Townsend, 1979:31 explains poverty as a state of a lack of resourcefulness for Individuals, families and groups in the population. Alcock 2006:6 also describes poverty as the results of not having enough resources and requires that something should be done. He also expresses that the root cause of poverty is capitalism.

Olatunde (2009:15) defined poverty from a living conditions point of view by saying it is hunger, lack of shelter, being sick with no access to treatment, not having a job, powerlessness, a state of being without, association with hardship, spiritual lack, fear for the future—living one day at a time.

Balia and Kim (2010), state that, poverty is indeed a complex, relative concept that conveys different meanings in different contexts. They confess that poverty as a multifaceted state of deprivation cannot be wholly divorced from its socio-cultural contexts. It also creates marginalisation and social exclusion, referring to relational dimensions, which bring with it inferior access for people to what they need, resulting in low mobility, low security, inferior opportunities for participation in social life and collective decision-making.

Poverty is not the real problem of the modern world, because we have the knowledge and resources that could enable us to overcome poverty. The real problem, the thing that creates misery, wars, and hatred among people, is the division of humankind into rich and poor. The significance about this division between the rich and the poor is not simply that one has more food than s/he can eat or more clothes than s/he can wear. The reality and depth of the problem arises because the one who is rich has power over the lives of those who are poor, and the rich nation has power over the policies of those that are not rich (Oborji, 2009:98).

Burghardt defines poverty from the point of who have what and who does not have what when he said that it is often easier to calculate how many homeless persons there are in a city than to ascertain how many hungry stomachs are aching to be fed. He further maintains that the gap between the haves and the have-nots is widening and when that particular gap widens, all too often waist sizes shrink. Of high importance, preachers of God's Word should gently but firmly inform their hearers that feeding the hungry is more than a matter of charity, not an option but an obligation.(Burghardt and Waldron, 2007:7)

The World Bank Organization describes poverty in this way:

“Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time.

Poverty has many faces, changing from place to place and across time, and has been described in many ways. Most often, poverty is a situation people want to escape. So poverty is a call to action -- for the poor and the wealthy alike -- a call to change the world so that many more may have enough to eat, adequate shelter, access to education and health, protection from violence, and a voice in what happens in their communities.” (World Bank Organization: 2009)

2.3 Types of Poverty

2.3.1 Absolute and relative Poverty

Absolute poverty is viewed as an objective and scientific definition that is based on the notion of subsistence. In a narrow sense, it is a state in which a person cannot secure his/her long-term physical survival (Kircher, 2002).

Absolute poverty refers to a condition where a person does not have the minimum amount of income needed to meet the minimum requirements for one or more basic living needs over an extended period of time, including:

- Food: Food is a basic requirement which all human beings need for their daily lives.
- Safe drinking water: Having to use surface water (i.e. rivers or streams), or having to spend at least 30 minutes to collect water from some source.
- Sanitation facilities: Lack of access to any type of toilet facility.
- Health: Lack of access to any type of health care, including immunisation, prenatal care, or treatment for serious illnesses.
- Shelter: Kids who live in places where there are more than four people to a room, adults who live in places with more than three people to a room, or adults and children who live in places with no floors.
- Education: School-age children who have not in the past or are not currently in school, or adults who have not attended school and cannot read or write.
- Information: Lack of access to any type of media, including radio, television, or computer.
- Access to services: Lack of access to schools, health services, etc.

2.3.2 Global Causes of poverty

The causes of absolute poverty include:

- **World population increase:** This leads to problems with inadequate housing and food shortage.
- **Natural disasters:** i.e. tsunamis and hurricanes. These can destroy entire communities, cause a shortage of food and medication, and damage infrastructure.
- **Conflict:** Instead of spending money on education, agriculture, or health, countries at war spend most of their money on weapons and machinery. Entire countries can be destroyed by advanced weaponry and many citizens are forced to flee and become refugees.
- **Debt:** An example of this is Zambia, an African country that spent 34 times more repaying debt than it did on education. As a result, many of Zambians did not get the education that they needed, resulting in absolute poverty.
- **Child labour:** In many of the poorest countries, children are forced to work to help bring in income to their family and miss out on going to school. By the time that they are adults, they have not learned how to read or write.

2.3.3 Examples of Absolute Poverty

- A 24-year-old female who has never attended school, is illiterate, and has no access to any type of media communications.
- A boy who shares a room with his five brothers, who all sleep on the floor together and have no toilet in their home.
- Adults that have to walk ten miles to a well to collect water and have body mass indexes of 15.
- A family that lives in a remote village and have no access to health services, schools, or legal services.

2.3.4 Relative Poverty

Relative poverty occurs when people do not enjoy a certain minimum level of living standards as determined by a government (and enjoyed by the bulk of the population) that vary from country to country, sometimes within the same country.

Alternatively, relative definitions of poverty are based upon comparison, often with some notion of prevailing living standards in the community being researched (Ravallion, 1998:24). In other words, the relatively poor are those people whose income or consumption level is below a particular fraction of the national average. Examples of poverty definitions in this category include people in the lowest 20% of the income distribution or people earning less than 50% of the mean income.

Relative poverty also changes over time. As the wealth of a society increases, so does the amount of income and resources that the society deems necessary for proper conditions of living.

2.3.5 Causes of Relative Poverty

“Once we recognize that poverty exists, then we... know that it must have a cause (or causes); and if we can identify the cause of poverty, then that should give us a basis to develop a policy response to it” (Alcock, 1997: 36).

There are several causes of poverty, including:

Unemployment

Poverty and unemployment are also closely related in South Africa. According to Woolard (2002), the unemployment rate among those from poor households is 52%, in comparison with an overall national rate of 29%. In addition, labour force participation is lower in poor than non-poor households. More than half of the working-age poor (or about 5 million adults) are outside of the labour market. As a result, the percentage of working age individuals from households below the poverty line who are actually working is significantly lower than the average. Only 24% of poor adults (about 2 million people) are employed, compared with 49% (or 8 million) from non-poor households.

The state of employment for an area does not really differ from the state of the country because there are 13 237 people who are unemployed and 25 234 are not economically active. There are 5 149 living in Informal dwellings (shack; not in backyard; e.g. in an informal/squatter settlement or on a farm) and 2 592 living in Informal dwelling (shack; in backyard). This means that 38% of the population is employed and 62% is unemployed. The scary part of the numbers is that there are no strategic plans to address this situation from either the central government, local government or the non-government organisations.

- **Education:** The less education you have, the higher your chances of being unemployed, which in turn increases the likelihood that you will live in poverty.
- **Poor health:** Poor health is not only a cause of poverty, but it is also a consequence of poverty. People living in poverty suffer greater levels of physical and mental illness than those who do not. Poor health also weakens impoverished communities, which prevent many people from working and earning an income. For example, an infectious disease may spread across an impoverished community, killing many. Since these communities do not have access to adequate health care services, they cannot be treated and the cycle of poverty continues.
- **Lack of access to affordable services:** Affordable services, such as low-cost child care and affordable transportation to and from work, are essential in preventing and reducing poverty, especially among families with limited income. Without access to affordable services, some people will not be able to fully participate in social, academic, and occupational activities. This in turn can lead to poverty.
- **Marginalisation:** People without current qualifications and skills find it difficult to find employment due to the fact that their knowledge of work is not required due to daily changes in technology.
- **Inequalities within the labour markets:** There are a large number of jobs available which does not pay well or pay benefits which job seekers can take them to keep them going.

- **2.3.6 Examples of Relative Poverty**

- May defined the 'poor', in line with the RDP White Paper (1994), as the poorest 40% of households, and 'ultra-poor' as the poorest 20% of households according to these definitions, households who earn less than R 352.53 per adult are regarded as poor, and households who earn less than R 193.77 per adult are regarded as ultra-poor.
- Unemployed people who still have to pay monthly expenses such as rates and taxes.
- People living in informal settlement without any income to feed themselves and clothing and other minimum needs (Williams Yolanda).

2.3.7 Transient Poverty

The transiently poor (short-term) and chronically poor (long-term) are overlapping but distinct groups. According to Uccelli (1997), the latter is characterised by a deep-rooted, impoverished condition, which is the consequence of multiple deprivations over time, such as poor health, substandard nutrition and inadequate access to productive assets, and is often associated with persistent, intergenerational poverty. As a result, chronic poverty is usually the more difficult one to address.

Hulme and Shepherd (2003), note that a particular problem in contemporary poverty analysis, seeking to rapidly reduce poverty headcounts in an era of globalisation, is to see the poor as those who are not effectively integrated into the global market economy. Thus, as a result, relative poverty is a universal and permanent feature of human society. This is because it is much easier to monitor the global trend in poverty when the yardstick that is in use is consistent.

Poverty that has been passed on from one generation to the next is likely to be neglected in such an era, given the multiple factors that constrain their prospects, and the likelihood that market-based factors may contribute to their continued deprivation.

On the other hand, transient poverty normally results from a one-time decline in living standards, from which a household gradually emerges. Alternatively, it may show itself in fluctuations in well-being that result in frequent declines in living standards. For example, seasonal variations in food security may result in some households periodically falling in and out of poverty, sometimes quite regularly, over time (Woolard & Leibbrandt, 2001:4).

2.3.8 Causes of Poverty

2.3.8.1 Pathological Cause

Pathological approach first, focussing on the role of the individuals, families and communities in creating or recreating poverty. It also includes a genetic explanation, which seeks to relate social status with supposedly inherited characteristics such as intelligence, and psychological approach.

Second, it focuses on the family or the community as the cause of poverty. This approach was very influential in debates on the emergence of an underclass as a product of social isolation and adoption of a culture of poverty (Welshman, 2002)

2.3.8.2 Structural Causes

Structural approach emphasises the importance of social circumstances and social forces in determining the life – courses and life chances of people. Economic growth, labour market opportunities, educational provision, social security systems and many other structural features of society provide a powerful contextual framework in which our living standards and social relations are created and recreated. It stresses that social security policy has no impact on the level of poverty.

2.4. Measurement of poverty

There are two schools of thought that have emerged over the years with regard to measurement issues (Klasen, 2000). The one school has defined poverty primarily in financial terms, i.e. poverty is interpreted in terms of the command over commodities that resources afford people via income and consumption (Lipton & Ravallion, 1995;

Ravallion & Chen, 1997; World Bank, 1990). The concern here is with resource adequacy, as suggested by Leibbrandt and Woolard (2001).

The other has sought a more broad-based definition of poverty, not solely based on financial resources (e.g. Human Development Report, 1997; Dreze & Sen, 1989). The latter has relied on the seminal work done by Rawls, Sen and others in order to emphasise the fact that poverty should be seen in relation to the lack of important 'basic goods' or 'basic capabilities', some of which cannot be purchased by money, as they are underprovided in a market system.

Furthermore, this school of thought contends that financial resources are just one of the several means to achieve well-being, and efforts should therefore be directed at measuring well-being outcomes, rather than focusing on one of its imperfect proxies (Klasen, 2000). Against this background, it is therefore important to acknowledge that, just like defining poverty, there is no ideal or correct way to measure the extent of poverty within a society. This is because a crucial role is played by value or ethical judgements. Hence, a number of poverty studies that have been conducted in South Africa produce results which are similar in terms of the characteristics of poverty groups, but differ in terms of the degree of incidence among them.

CHAPTER 3

POVERTY IN SPRINGS AND SOME CHURCH RESPONSES

3.1 The church as a significant role-player in alleviating poverty in Springs

Poverty is complex and needs to be addressed holistically. The church is well placed to provide a holistic response to poverty and inequality in the following three areas. First, the church is furnished with a vocation to care for the poor, to alleviate suffering, and to stand for justice. Second, biblical faith affirms that all are equally valued and have a part to play in God's face irrespective of their socio-economic standing. Third, the church provides a redemptive community in which it changes the behaviour of the people so that they become better people in the community.

In Springs, the churches could potentially play a very significant role in combating poverty and inequality. There are many of the Springs residents who regard themselves as Christian and many would have some association with the churches that I will be dealing with. The church has a potential to touch the lives of lots of the residents in the area. The church still enjoys a measure of respect in the area and is still regarded as a role-player of integrity. In fact, the church is somewhat uniquely positioned to cross racial and socio-economic divides and work at grassroots level in the area.

Currently, the churches in the area have the potential to help radically transform the face of poverty and inequality due to the fact that there are still lots of residents who believe in the church.

3.2 State of poverty in the Springs area

3.2.1 Description of Springs and people affected by poverty

Springs is a city on the East Rand in the Gauteng province of South Africa. It is one of the cities which forms part of the Ekurhuleni metropolitan municipality. It lies 50 km east of Johannesburg and 72 km southeast from Pretoria (see picture 1). The name of the city derives from the large number of springs in the area.

The area was divided during the Apartheid era into the middle- and upper-income white suburbs around the city centre, the Indian area of Bakerton east of the CBD, while blacks were relocated to Kwa-Thema southwest of the CBD. This division has faded since democracy, with mixed races in all areas. The influx of poor black families has given rise to informal settlements near all of the industrial areas, which has been blamed for higher crime rates and falling property prices.

The following groups of people are mostly affected by the state of poverty in the area:

- **The Homeless:** The reason why these people do not have houses which they can call homes is because they cannot afford them because of poverty.
- **The Poor:** people who do not have an income and dependent on donations
- **Abandoned Children:** One of the reasons why these children are abandoned is because their parents did not want to raise them because they were afraid that they will not afford to raise them due to poverty.
- **HIV/AIDS infected people:** These people end up not working and not affording the cost of living
- **Elderly:** These people do not have an income and some depend on grants and some depend on donations. There are those who are considered wealthy because they did manage to save during their working time and do not require donations.

3.2.2 Informal settlement

The three informal settlements which surround the area do have a direct impact in the economy of the area because most people who live in the informal settlements are poor. The sooner there is a plan of reducing the informal settlement in the area, the more the condition of the poor will improve. The reconstruction and development plan which was initiated by the state in order to “eliminate poverty and deprivation, eliminating hunger, providing land and housing to all the people in the area ,

providing access to safe water and sanitation for all, ensuring the availability of affordable and sustainable energy sources, eliminating illiteracy, raising the quality of education and training for children and adults, protecting the environment, and improving the health services and making them accessible to all” does not seem to work because the settlements are not reducing despite the houses which are being built. (Malley: 1994).

3.2.3 Migration into the Springs area

Although the statistics do not distinguish the number of migrants from the 7 741 people living in the informal settlement, there are a number of them staying in the area especially from neighbouring states. There are a number of ways in which migration is contributing to the condition of the poor in this area. Many migrants, particularly those who migrate through irregular channels into the Springs area, find themselves in vulnerable positions in the area because like others cities, their conditions are not conducive because many of them end up in an informal settlement. (Stats SA: 2011)

According to Skeldon (2003), one of the most obvious ways in which migration can cause poverty is through forced removals that occur without adequate planning and support. These forced removals have a direct effect on the livelihoods of the poor, in a sense that they strip the poor of their much-needed essential asset.

The number of migrants coming into the town does not decrease but it is either stable or increases. This concurs with what the EFF’s manifesto which said they will seek solutions to overcome the influx of migration (Mpofu, 4 April 2014). The effects of the migrants are seen in the following areas:

- 4th street which is one of the streets in Springs CBD that has been faced with challenges of a crime rate due to the high level of trading by migrants.
- The increased number of street vendors of which most of them are migrants(Landu.2014)

3.2.4 Stealing for survival

People are undertaking illegal means to possess what is not theirs and selling to make ends meet. The following are some of the incidents related to stealing:

- High voltage electric cable was cut (see picture 1) which interrupted the supply of electricity in the western side for a day. The cable was cut into small pieces and taken to be sold as scrap metal.
- Pipe was cut in the industrial area of Nuffield (Springs Advertiser: 2014) also to be sold at the scrap yard.

3.3 A brief history on ELCSA

The early history of Lutheranism in Southern Africa is the history of several different missionary societies, each with its own culture, working quite independently in different parts of the region. Missionary agencies from overseas that came to South Africa to spread the good news came from different churches and national backgrounds and unfortunately introduced those backgrounds and traditions among the racial groups with whom they came into contact.

According to Scriba and Lislrud (1997), FELCSA was formed and became instrumental and influential in the formation of ELCSA. Four predominantly black synods (Cape Orange Region, South Eastern Region, Transvaal Region and Tswana Region) from different parts of the country united to form ELCSA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa), which was officially birthed on 18 December 1975 in Tlhabane, Rustenburg (North-West Province) during the constituting assembly which took place from 15 to 20 December 1975.

According to Voges (1988), the dioceses of ELCSA are organised on a geographical basis. This means Lutherans speaking different languages and of different cultural backgrounds are members of the same diocese. There are two white Lutheran churches in South Africa: the Cape Church and the Natal-Transvaal Church.

ELCSA is an affiliated member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), South African Council of Churches (SACC),

Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA) and World Council of Churches (WCC). The Lutheran Church in South Africa currently comprises of three separate churches, namely: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA), Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Natal-Transvaal), and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Cape Church)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa is currently constituted by seven dioceses spreading between Botswana, South Africa and Swaziland. One of the Diocese is the Central Diocese which comprises of 5 Circuits namely: Pretoria, Soweto, Western, Eastern, and the newly formed Southern Mission.

The Eastern circuit comprises of 10 parishes namely: Heidelberg, Tsakane, Nigel, Kwa- Thema, Delmas, Daveyton, Vosloorus, Spruitview, St Christopher's [Wattville] and Natalspruit. The Kwa-Thema Parish which is based in the greater Springs area is one of the 5 churches which the research will be carried out.

The Central Diocese which is the structure above circuits and parishes, have their sub structure called the Dikonia which is responsible for social activity especially issues of the poor. Each parish has their own way of dealing with issues of poverty alleviation.

The Kwa-Thema Parish which is one of the parishes in the eastern circuit will be representing ELCSA. The Kwa –Thema parish is based in the township of Kwa – Thema which is 8 km South East of Springs. Membership is about 700 comprising of African and a few coloureds which are less than 5%. The church was asked what is their participation in terms of past, current and future activities which they are planning?

Previous activities

- The church was donating food parcels to needy people at the end of every year.
- The church was also donating clothing to needy people on a regular basis

Current Activities

- The church donated blankets to needy people within our church and to outside people as well.
- The church is planning to donate vegetables during harvest day to needy people.

Future Activities

- To make a vegetable garden and plant vegetables which will be donated to the poor
- To organise a soup kitchen which will be donated to the poor
- Visiting the sick and aged congregants to clean and bath them at their homes
- To adopt a children's home
- To distribute school uniforms to the children at our church

3.4 Methodist Church

Methodism began in the 1700's. The beginning of Methodism is inseparably linked with the brothers John and Charles Wesley. Both are Anglican priests and while they were at Oxford University, they began meeting regularly with a small group of fellow-students to study the Bible, pray, help the poor and visit people in prison. They preached a strict self-discipline and tried to be accountable to God for how they spent their money and their time. The other students gave them various nicknames, like the "Holy Club" and "Methodists" because they were so methodical about their faith. And so, what were originally a nickname later became the name of a great church, and its badge of honour (information booklet).

The message which John Wesley and others went out to proclaim was simple:

- Salvation is by faith only
- Everyone needs it and no-one is excluded
- Christians may have an inner assurance that they are saved
- God wants to rid our lives of all sin and to have perfect love for Him and for others.

Through open air preaching and extensive travelling, this message spread in a phenomenal way among the common people. New converts became members of “Societies” and met once a week in classes (small groups) for fellowship, prayer, study and accountability to one another. Wesley had a special genius for organisation and this is why the movement continued to grow and expand even after his death in 1781.

Methodism came to South Africa with the soldiers of the British garrison stationed at the Cape in the first years of the nineteenth century. It became more firmly established with the arrival of the 1820 settlers, many of whom were Methodists. Today over 700 ministers serve more than a million members.

The Methodist Church is very instrumental in helping people in the following areas:

- Grief support: The ministry of grief support is responsible to care for those affected by grief through the passing of a loved one.
- Providing comfort In the form of a meal (information booklet)

The Selcourt Parish

The Selcourt parish is based in Selcourt which 5 km on the Eastern side of Springs.

Other factors are:

Race	Majority Whites
Membership	+ - 300
Area	Suburb
Distance from Informal settlement	3 km

Source: Information Booklet

Below are some activities which the Methodists at the Selcourt branch is involved in:

Previous Activities

- The church has built a school for a small village called Nanganga
- Jungle gyms were also bought and donated to the poor
- The church donated clothing in one of the squatter camps

Current/ Future

- The church have initiated an organisation which they have called the **Samaritan Basket**. This organisation is responsible for donating food parcels every Monday to about 80 – 90 needy people
- **Springs care food packing** is another organisation within the church which uses a mobile vehicle to distribute food parcels to people in the informal settlement and to the elderly.

The Methodist Kwa-Thema Branch

Background

Location: Kwa – Thema

Distance: 8 km South Eastern Springs Town

Membership: 800

Race: African (source::Thabang, Youth Pastor: August 2014)

Distance from informal settlement: 2 km

The following are some of the activities which the church is involved in:

Previous Activities

- Feeding scheme which feeds needy people in the location
- Bakery is used and managed by the church members to bake bread and sells to the needy people at a discount of 40%.

Future Activities

- The church has planned to run a garden service and a nursery which will help the poor.
- Skills development programme is planned to be organised by the church which is aimed at bringing knowledge to the church especially with regard to children who cannot afford to travel to places where these skills are offered.

3.5 Agape Seventh - Day Adventist Church

Background

The church is based in Springs CBD. Membership is 400 comprising of local Africans and migrants. Services are held on Saturday.

The mission of Agape SDA church is to communicate to all the people the everlasting gospel of God's kingdom in the context of the three angels messages of Rev 14:6–12, and as revealed in the life, death, resurrection and high priestly ministry of Jesus Christ, leading them to accept Jesus as their personal Saviour and Lord and to unite with His remnant church; and to nurture believers as disciples in preparation for His soon return. The planning department is aimed at ensuring that key church activities continue and are planned well in advance.

The values are grounded in the Bible and the life of Jesus Christ. We believe that every person deserves respect and dignity because of the infinite value that God has placed upon them. Through God's grace every person is gifted for and needed in the diverse activities of the church family. We respect the diversity, individuality and freedom that come from being a worldwide body of believers. We also value unity – a family of faith engaged in representing the reign of God in our world through ethical conduct, mutual regard, and loving services. Our faithfulness to God involves commitment to and support of his body, the church

The church has a division called MOWCS which stands for Meals on Wheels Community Services. It is owned and operated by the church and is their ministry of compassion that patterns itself on the "*Mission DeI*" of Jesus prophesied in Isaiah 58:6 and 61:1-2. It is not funded by the tithes and offerings but is dependent on fundraising and business relations with the government and other sponsors to fulfil her God-given mission. MOWCS is a registered Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) that has spiritual and organisational accountability to our government, funders and sponsors.

MOWCS is well aware that providing a meal to the poorest is the first step in mobilising these individuals for their daily tasks. It is also critical to provide a basket of services which complement the cooked meal provided on a daily basis. Meals on Wheels no longer serve the elderly in the community only. The services have been expanded to deal with poverty in general in South Africa, focusing on the poorest of the poor.

The church was asked for their poverty alleviation programmes (previous, current and future activities).

Previous activities

- Ministering and giving material support to Hospice
- Christmas gifts for the orphanage

Current activities

- Ministering to help prostitutes
- Helping an orphanage in Delmas with food supply

Future activities

- Ministering to help prostitutes
- Helping an oprhanage in Delmas with food supply

Summary of responses from the churches

The Methodist activities are fresh and exiting unlike the other two churches where their activities are common and not innovative. The other point which is very important despite the innovative ideas of the Methodist church is the magnitude of their projects which are creating employment for the poor. A good example is the bakery which is operated by the Kwa-Thema Methodist church which employs congregants who are poor.

CHAPTER 4

THE MODEL OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION THROUGH EMPOWERMENT

4.1 Biblical vision of Poverty

The Biblical perspective confronts the view that the poor need the generosity and open-handedness of the wealthy as endless receivers of their aid. Rather the wealthy need the poor, to learn from them the nature and meaning of the deliverance God brings to both. The basis of the sharing is when those separated by distorted relationships discover that they both equally need each other. Only Jesus can bring this much needed change.

Jesus moved through the villages, towns and countryside of Galilee, which were havens for peasant life. —If we consider the poor, whom Jesus calls blessed, to be poor in the economic sense of the word, then it cannot be a matter of indifference to know what poverty meant in the world of Jesus ‘first disciples’ (Schottroff and Stegemann, 1990:6). One can clearly submit that the human way of defining what the poor and/or the rich meant at the time of Jesus will always convey an incomplete meaning.

Jesus’ focus was on the poor. He himself was poor in the context of 2 Cor. 8:9, which asserts that even though he was rich i.e. not like the poor who live in the informal settlements, for our sakes he became poor, so that through his poverty we might become rich. His ministry in Galilee (a place of the dispossessed and the outcast) was a judgment on the powerful Jerusalem; his ministry was with the sick, those branded as sinners ‘and the socially rejected’. It was not confined to such. He identified its nature by reference to them, and his proclamations and demonstrations were good news to the poor (Lk.4:18).

The meaning of Jesus 'ministry among the poor' would give the meaning of what he was doing among everybody else. The significance of the good news for the rich was to come through what Jesus was doing among the poor. The good news of the whole gospel was introduced to a whole community through the poor. How a community treats its poor is, for the Bible, the acid test of its life (Jas.2:1-7). One can submit therefore that the way a community is to be changed is through the poor as well. In the NT the poor replace Israel as the focus of the gospel. As the poor experience the good news of the kingdom, the real nature of the gospel becomes evident to others. The NT gives special attention to what that means in terms of children, women and the sick.

Jesus specifically singled out the poor as the ones to whom he brought good news. While the message Jesus proclaimed was for all, he was particularly concerned that the poor and the needy would realise that this good news was for them. They were the ones to whom Jesus was especially drawn. In the pages of the New Testament we see that the kind of people to whom Jesus paid particular attention included a blind beggar (Mark 10:46-52), a man with leprosy (Matthew 8:2-3), a widow who placed her last two coins in the offering (Mark 12:42-44), a nameless child (Luke 9:47-48) and a spiced woman whom society had rejected (Luke 7:36-50).

Poverty stricken or affluent, the biblical faith accords a fundamental dignity to all. God is shown to be no respecter of persons; all humans are equally valued before God no matter their social standing. This is strongly underlined in the New Testament where the church brings together people from every walk of life – Jew and Gentile, male and female, slave and free – for there is no favouritism with God (Ephesians 6:9). Indeed, the church on earth is intended to reflect the heavenly reality of an eternal people gathered “from every nation, tribe, people and language” (Revelation 7:9).

Furthermore, the biblical faith incorporates a deep concern to alleviate poverty and counter inequality. The Old Testament Law contained numerous provisions aimed at alleviating the plight of the poor.

For example, the regular tithes were to be used to support not only the priesthood, but also the aliens, orphans and widows in the community (Deuteronomy 14:29; 26:12), and there were detailed provisions to ensure that the indigent could gather food during the harvest. These provisions reserved the borders of the fields, the gleanings after harvesting, and the fallen fruit for the poor, the alien, the widow and the orphan, who were also to be allowed to share in the harvest celebrations (Leviticus 19:9-10; 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19-21). In addition, every third year a tenth of the agricultural produce was to be given to the poor (Deuteronomy 14:28-29; 26:12); and every seventh year fields were to be left to lie fallow, and vineyards and olive groves left unharvest, for the benefit of the poor who could help themselves to the pickings (Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:1- 7).

In the New Testament we see that Paul himself devoted a great deal of time and energy to alleviating poverty among Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. When famine struck in AD 46, Paul was involved in taking economic assistance from Antioch to Jerusalem (Acts 11:29-30). Later, in various of the New Testament letters we see Paul arranging for further gifts from church communities elsewhere to assist the poor Jerusalem Christians materially (e.g. Galatians 2:10; Romans 15:22-28; 1Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9), and in writing to the Corinthians he outlined a principle of 'equality' whereby those in need would be provided for by those who had a surplus (2 Corinthians 8:13-15). Paul reasoned that, while some may have had the ability and industriousness to gather more than they needed, others may not have gathered enough; however, as they apportioned what they had gathered so as to provide enough for each person, those who had a surplus would provide out of their surplus for those who did not have enough.

The reality was that, in the early church, many of its members were drawn from the ranks of the poor. James, one of the early church leaders in Jerusalem, commented: "Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?" (James 2:5). For James, the answer to this question was self-evident as he looked around at the members of the young church. Of course God had chosen the poor.

The inference is that God delights in taking those who are 'poor in the eyes of the world' and catching them up in what he is doing on the earth. So many of those who feature prominently in the Bible story were from humble backgrounds; as they acknowledged their need of a redeemer, God caught them up in his purposes.

Jesus taught, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (Luke 6:20). In other words, a humble acknowledgement of one's poverty before God is a prerequisite for entry into God's kingdom and inclusion among God's people. The humble poor are those "who acknowledge their bankruptcy before God. They have no righteousness to offer, no merit to plead, no power to save themselves. They know that the only way to enter God's Kingdom is to humble themselves like little children and receive it as a gift. So they come as beggars, with nothing in their hands". (Sider).

The question is "does people in our times know that in the eyes of the Lord, the poor are the blessed". When passing beggars at the intersections, passing job seekers and those who are selling boxes of cigarettes on the streets to make a living, do they know that God loves them and that they are blessed.

4.2 Different approaches to poverty

4.2.1 Poverty relief

The Oxford Dictionary defines relief as the removal or reducing of something that is painful or unpleasant. Kraai (2007:3) defines relief as the interventions that seek to give short term assistance to a person who is living in poverty, and is usually linked to some external shock that pushes people into a more severe state of vulnerability than before. It is accordingly often seen as emergency relief. Examples of these programmes include the Department of Social Development's short term, Social Relief of Distress Grant as well as food parcels and drought or flood relief. These policies are not intended primarily to be developmental, but to give aid to address immediate needs. The following are examples of poverty relief in the Springs area conducted by churches:

- The food parcels which are donated by the Lutheran Kwa-Thema parish to needy people at the end of the year.
- Also blankets which was donated during winter by the above church

4.2.2 Poverty alleviation

Poverty alleviation

Alleviate means to make something bad such as pain or problems less severe (Webster Family Dictionary: 1988). Kraai (2007:3) defines it as a process which aims to reduce the negative impact of poverty on the lives of poor people, but in a more sustained and permanent way than poverty relief programmes. It includes the state's social grant programmes which alleviate the impact of poverty for many people. Poverty alleviation programmes tend to have longer term goals and are in general more developmental than poverty relief programmes. In other words, short term relief is called poverty relief and long term relief is called poverty alleviation. The following are examples of poverty alleviation in the Springs area by churches:

- The Selcourt Methodist church is donating food parcels to about 80 people every Monday morning as a relief. Although it has been running for more than two years, it is described as an alleviation because is on a long term basis.
- The bakery which is sponsored by the Methodist Kwa-Thema parish to help the needy with bread and rolls at a 40% discount.

4.2.3 Poverty reduction

Poverty reduction refers to strategies and policies that reduce the number or percentage of people living in poverty or the severity of the impact of poverty on the lives of poor people (Kraai et al).

An example of poverty reduction is the grant offered by the state. Although the mobile food donations by a couple churches seem to be long term, there are no guarantees that they will be there in the near future. But they make such a big difference in the lives of the poor.

4.2.4 Poverty eradication

Merriam Webster dictionary defines eradication as “to remove something completely or to eliminate or destroy”. Kraai (2007:3) et al., defines eradication as a process of ending the existence of poverty. Poverty eradication is a process which is supported by the:

- Strategies and policies of poverty reduction
- An effective system of education and skills development (Friedmann: 1992)

The research will use poverty alleviation as a method of helping the poor in the area because of its long term view and its developmental focus.

4.3 A Model of empowerment: the model of John Friedmann

John Friedmann (1992:66) argues that development policies guided by mainstream economic doctrine hold small promise of a better life for the excluded majority. Friedmann developed a model called empowerment of poverty which is a political variant of the basic needs which is centred on politics rather than planning as the principal process by which needs are identified and the means for their satisfaction pursued. He also provides a theoretical foundation for an alternative approach to development.

Social power is the power associated with civil society: it is limited by contrasting forms of state, economic, and political power (Friedmann 1992:66) et al., The following eight bases of social power will be used to measure the effective participation of churches when dealing with issues of poverty alleviation (see figure 4.1 below)

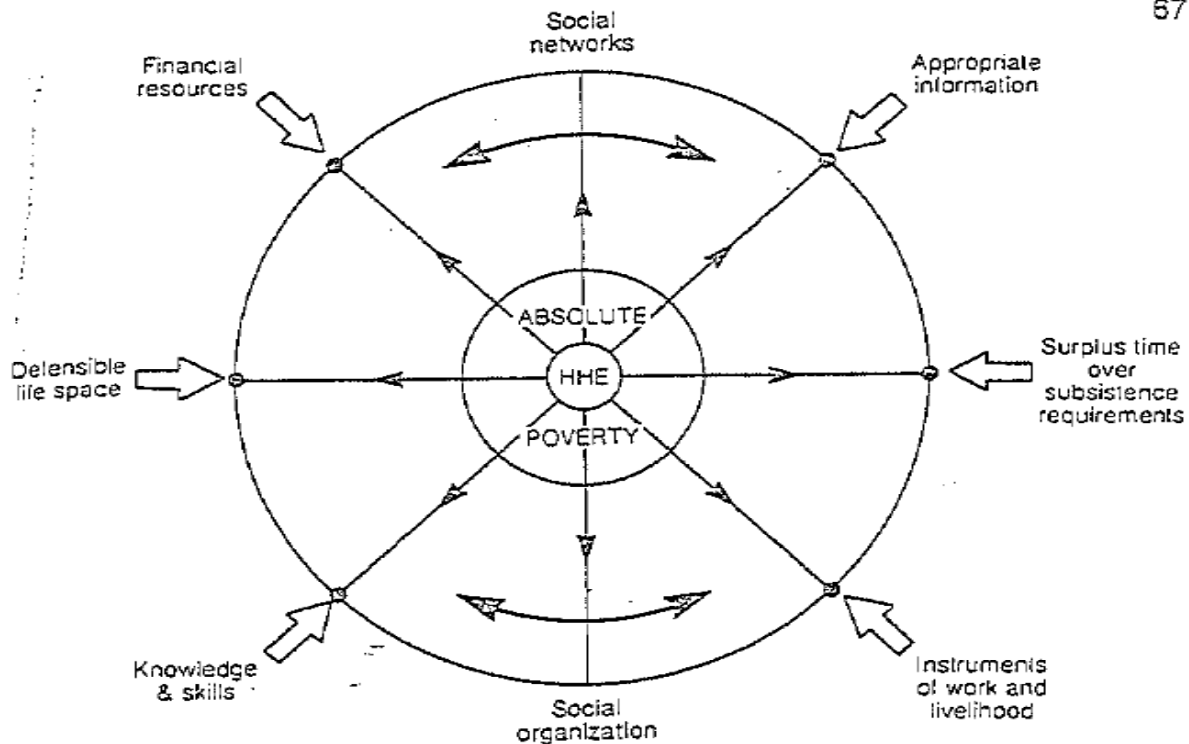


Figure 4.1 Poverty as lack of access to basic social power

The following are the poverty empowerment items as described by John Friemann

4. 3.1. Defensible life space

It is the physical space in which house hold members use for their personal possessions. Securing a permanent foothold is the most vital social power because it enables one to stay in one's own property and also if the property is substantially bigger, it can be used for social advancement. This social power can be used to measure:

- whether churches are unable to do fundraising for helping the poor due to lack of property.
- does building become an obstacle for people to network between the township and suburb

4.3. 2. Surplus Time

The surplus time is the second most prized social power of empowerment. This is the time available to the household economy over and above the time necessary for gaining a subsistence livelihood. This social power relates to questions such as:

- Do we have enough time to help the poor over and above our own time?
- Is our own work preventing us from helping needy people?
- Does the power have time to help themselves

It is a fact that active Christians spend lot of their time doing church work, be it attending meetings or being involved with other projects which make it difficult for people to have extra time to do poverty related projects.

This social power was used to test whether members do not participate in projects which are aimed at improving the lives of the poor because they do not have spare time.

4. 3 3. Knowledge and Skill

Poverty and low levels of education in South Africa is a massive challenge. Nationally there is a very strong correlation between the level of education and the standard of living in South Africa. According to Woolard (2002), in 1998, 58% of adults with no education were poor; 53% of adults with less than seven years of education were poor, 34% of adults with incomplete secondary schooling were poor; 15% of adults who had completed secondary school were poor; and only 5% of adults with tertiary education were poor.

According to human capital theorists 73, investment in education creates skills and credentials, which facilitate higher productivity that, in turn, increases the probability of obtaining higher future earnings amongst those who possess them, in comparison with those who do not. In fact, there is a strong and empirically verifiable positive relationship across most societies between the wages and salaries that people receive at work and the level of education which they have attained.

This is the knowledge of educational level for the household. This social power stresses the importance of investing in human resources. Testing the knowledge of informal settlements was used to check if people know the magnitude of the informal settlement. Educational level was also used to measure whether an investment in human resources does contribute to poverty eradication in the long run. In other words do people believe that a human resource investment will lead to poverty eradication?

4.3.4. Social Networking

It is the ability of the household to have extensive horizontal networks to be able to maneuver their chances to access other forms of power. Social networking empowers people in organisations to share information which can also help the poor.

4.3.5. Financial resources

Financial resources include monetary resources that one uses for household or for social organisation. It enables individuals to help financially, organisations to donate and give any other support to the NGO. And also churches who are benefiting if organisations are financially viable.

Financial resource, it measures whether a church sees it as a barrier in helping the poor and how they can change the challenges into success.

4.3.6 Appropriate information

Relevant information is vital to supplement knowledge and skill because with relevant information, poor people are able to learn how to improve their lives not sitting and doing nothing where they will end up being bored and make babies (Maclaren:2007)

4.3.7 Instruments of work and livelihood

This empowerment is about the tools that one need to improve lives in the household. Poor people also need the tools to access water, land and others.

4.3.8. Church responsibility to help the poor

This was not Friedmann's practice but it was used together with Friedmann's practice because I believe that it goes hand in hand with Friedmann's empowerment. The churches were asked whether they see it as their responsibility to help the poor. This was included as an awakening for churches to take responsibility for the poor.

4.3.9 The church as a support for relief and alleviation

The churches have responded positively to the challenges of poverty relief and alleviation. The churches current contributions are by:

- Donating food parcels on a monthly basis by Selcourt Methodist.
- Donating food and soup to elderly and physically challenged people [Mobile kitchen by the Agape church].
- Donating soup during winter by the Lutheran church
- Donating food parcels to orphanage.
- Operating a feeding scheme for orphanage school children in Kwa- Thema by Selcourt Kwa- Thema church.
- Operating a bakery to sell bread to needy people at a discounted price.

The churches acknowledge that they are responsible to help the people in the area and that they are the nucleus of peace amongst the rich and the poor. They also acknowledge that they should do more hence there are plans for the future help of the poor.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Recommendations to church responses to poverty

5.1.1. Defensible life space

The churches should not see life space as a challenge to initiate and accelerate fundraising to help the poor. The church in CBD can still help poor people in the Township.

5.1.2. Surplus Time

The church should encourage poor people to make time to initiate programmes to help themselves.

5.1.3. Knowledge

The churches should facilitate educational programmes in the informal settlement. Education will have a positive long term effect in poverty alleviation.

5.1.4 Skill

The church should encourage and facilitate skill development programmes which will help a lot of poor people in future.

5.1.5. Social Networking

The churches should be the link between the needy and sponsors. It should help by identifying companies which can donate to the poor.

5.1.6 Church responsibility to help the poor

- The church should act as a facilitator to empower the poor by using John Friedmann's model
- The church should facilitate fundraising projects to donate to the poor
- The church should take care of the poor, vulnerable and the elderly
- The church should focus on the people living in the informal settlements.

5.2. Town Council Interventions

Poverty reduction and eradication is a long-term exercise. The political demands compel the government to come up with strategies and policies to combat poverty. That is why the grant programmes were introduced for children whose parents are not working and those who lost their parents either through HIV/AIDS related sickness or those children who qualify by meeting the criteria.

I visited the Springs Town Council in July this year to have a discussion with the responsible person who is dealing with issues of poverty and also to gather statistics for the greater Springs area. For statistics, I was referred to Stats SA and for poverty issues; I was referred to the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Council which is operating on a regional basis not a town basis. The Town council should address poverty issues at the town level in order to ensure that issues related to people living in the informal settlements such as budgets for improving the standards of their lives are improved.

5.3. Hospitals and Prison visitation

The church should facilitate learning and teaching at the prison so that when prisoners are released, they will be able to help themselves and reduce the state of poverty in the area.

5.4. Churches visibility at Informal Settlement

The churches should visit the informal settlement to:

- Preach the word of God
- Empowerment using Johnn Friemann's model
- Encourage the idea of doings things for themselves.

5.5 Corruption

Corruption should be eliminated because it affects opportunities that could be used for poverty eradication (Chetwynd et al, 2003:8). Many migrants, particularly those who migrate through irregular channels, find themselves in vulnerable positions which force them to bribe the officials. Bribing leads to crime and poverty because the illegal migrants cannot work in the area.

5.6 Migrating through irregular channels

The government should tighten the controls for migrant's influx because irregular entrance into the country affects the area and is resulting in increasing the state of poverty in the Springs area.

5.2 Conclusion

The purpose of this mini-thesis was an attempt to understand and answer this question:

What is the role of the churches in the greater Springs area as a respected body doing in helping poor people? The answers gathered shows that the churches in the area are concerned about the poor in the area but the extent of their reaction to the question is questionable.

The presence of poverty is so obvious that there is no reason to undergo complicated processes to measure and quantify poverty. Instead we should be concentrating on doing something to eradicate the causes of poverty and to alleviate its effects.

There are more current and short term sponsors coming from the churches than long term which are meant for eradication as per the definition of poverty eradication which is aimed at ending the existence of poverty. The church is responding positively but more can be done.

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Picture1. Cable theft in Springs on the 5th June 2014