# CHAPTER 2

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 2.1 Introduction

The research approach applicable to this study is aimed at providing inputs into the current Land Reform Policy and its programmes for women's benefits. A further addition to this research would be to improve circumstances around the Land Reform Policy processes for women's sustainable development as beneficiaries of the Land Reform Programmes. The two research approaches applicable to scientific enquiry are the quantitative and the qualitative research approaches, each with its emphasis on attributes, such as numbers or social understanding, respectively.

The manner in which a problem is presented guides the type of research approach to be used. The stated problem in Chapter One provides guidance in terms of issues that need investigation; and the research methodology serves as the parameter which can be used to arrive at possible solutions.

The study necessitates an evaluation of the processes towards establishing, implementing and assessing the Land Reform Programmes in terms of women's equity, empowerment and sustainable development. This chapter describes the relevance of Public Administration research in improving Land Reform Policy processes. Applicable research instruments include the case study method, qualitative interviewing and the use of a literature review. These issues will all be discussed. A description of the case study will be briefly explained, and the chapter will discuss the acceptable ethical aspects of conducting research in Public Administration.

Ethical considerations of all the participants in the study will be discussed with the emphasis on protecting the research participants through their informed consent.

## 2.2 Public administration research

Clough and Nutbrown (2002: 5) provide clarity on the two concepts of research and methodology. Research may be defined as the investigation of an idea, subject or topic for a particular purpose; an area of interest is investigated from a particular context. On the other hand, methodology is the justification of specific methods that are used in a given study (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002: 26).

The qualitative research method will be used in the study to provide an investigative process and the results thereof. Qualitative research uses descriptive measures, in contrast to quantitative research, which uses figures and numbers to assess the performance of the phenomenon under study, as will be defined in this chapter.

Kuye *et al.* (2002:5) describe Public Administration as the study of the selective practice of the tasks associated with the behaviour, conduct and protocol of the affairs of the State. Activities involved in realising that a problem exists and taking action to resolve that problem implies that a process has been initiated towards a possible solution. Public policy is formulated as a result of processes or a set or series of stages that government engages in to arrive at a solution (LeMay, 2006: 10).

The processes involved in ensuring that the implementation of a specific public policy is successful are lengthy, intensive and sensitive issues.

Public administration plays an important role in the formulation of public policy, and is thus part of the political process, because the electorate becomes the public that has needs which must be addressed through a policy. Even though it is different in significant ways from private administration; it is, nevertheless, closely associated with private groups and individuals (Rosenbloom *et al.* 2009: 4). Public administration involves a vast number of activities; however, knowing what public administration can accomplish does not necessarily involve solving the challenge faced by its definition (Rosenbloom *et al.*, 2009: 3).

As defined earlier in Chapter One, public administration consists of actions involved in effecting the intent and wishes of government, as part of its business (Rosenbloom *et al.* 2009: 4). South Africa is not unique in ensuring that public administrators are concerned with the provision of public goods and semi-public goods. These goods and semi-public goods comprise services, such as roads, political voice, recreational and cultural facilities, safety, economic security, health and education to the public (Rosenbloom *et al.*, 2009: 429).

The above services provided by public administrators involve costs and budgetary functions. These are some of the key roles of public administrators. These services are some of the activities in public administration.

The day-to-day practice of public administration can be done with or without financial allocations, because it is made up of co-operative efforts of human action with a high level of prudence (Waldo, 1955 in Rosenbloom *et al.,* 1994: 12). Public Administration as a discipline must have financial injections as there are cost-related activities that have to be undertaken to achieve a set goal, such as policy-making; organising; financing; work procedures; exercising control and personnel provision and utilisation.

As may be seen in any organisation, the realisation of these functions requires budgetary allocations; hence, the Land Reform Policy is allocated a budget by the DRDLR. The challenge then is whether such an allocation is enough to empower women's land needs and improve their sustainable development. Land reallocation and sustainable use of such land, as a matter of national interest, is supported by more than one government department. The land acquisition budget is located within the DRDLR; and support funding for land use is situated within the national and provincial Departments of Agriculture.

Budget allocation is done by National Treasury, based on funding motivational submissions made by the different departments. It is possible, therefore, to find that funding allocation in various departments varies drastically.

This difference in allocation can lead to the skewed release of funds towards the support of beneficiaries. Land can be acquired because there is sufficient funding for this – only to discover that there is not enough funding for support towards the sustainable use of such land.

According to Wagner and Gill (2005: 6), Public Administration relies on other related fields for its methodological tools, despite the specific research challenges that the field presents. Three real dilemmas are described in an effort to try and address the boundaries and weaknesses of Public Administration research: the theory dilemma; the methods dilemma; and the focus dilemma (McCurdy & Cleary, 1984, in Streib & Roch, 2005: 37).

Theory, in the field of Public Administration, is not well developed; and hence, it reduces the value of Public Administration research. Furthermore, the increased focus on theory is foundational because the field is not developing the verifiable knowledge base necessary for the advancement of Public Administration as an applied science (McCurdy and Cleary, 1984, in Streib & Roch, 2005:41).

The methods' dilemma details the lack of agreed-upon methods and generally accepted research criteria. At the basic level, the focus dilemma concerns the value of Public Administration research for practitioners (McCurdy and Cleary, 1984, in Streib & Roch, 2005: 45). Assessments of the field, which are negative – as depicted by McCurdy and Cleary, 1984, in Streib and Roch, 2005: 45), stirred up the concerns that critics seek to increase the academic rigour of the field at the expense of the practical issues.

A general lack of sophistication in Public Administration methods has been acknowledged. The overall reason for the lack of growth in the field is attributed to a general lack of funding support for research in Public Administration (McCurdy and Cleary, 1984, in Streib & Roch, 2005: 45). The question that remains is: How, therefore, can scholars of Public Administration bring the necessary growth and interest to the discipline which could benefit the practice of public administration?

Investment in other sciences, such as the Natural and Physical Sciences is prioritised, as these are regarded as disciplines that make life possible. On the contrary, Public Administration is regarded as both as a science and as an art (Waldo, 1955, in Rosenbloom et al., 1994: 4).

It is regarded as a science in relation to its eclectic manner, as it borrows substance from other disciplines, and as an art because of its creative quality in actual administration, with intangibles such as leadership, judgment, decision-making and control.

Robbins and Borders (2005: 1) also emphasise the lack of proper methods in Public Administration research. These writers confirm that Public Administration research tends to be forward looking, offering implications as a result of policy change; this approach is different from research in other fields, such as Political Science or Sociology, which tries to explain behaviour. It is, therefore, clearly evident that Public Administration is not an easy field, either as an art or as a science.

As defined earlier, Public Administration and its applicability to the Land Reform Policy processes – as highlighted in the *WPSALP* (1997), in particular towards improving women's sustainable development -- is a complex process moving in the direction of development. Research in Public Administration for sustainable development needs clear targets and a proper choice of the research design, as will be discussed in the section that follows.

The distinction that occurs between basic research, as in gathering knowledge to enrich existing information, and applied research which aims to discover, interpret and develop methods to deal with practical problems, is not immediately evident for Public Administration; both basic and applied research are appropriate. However, the clear distinction between the two should not be oversimplified (Kuye *et al.,* 2002: 4).

Mathebula (2003: 40), quoting Johnson (2000: 10), confirms that the scientific reality of Public Administration research uses systematic observation and experimentation to test ideas, and to seek to understand why the world works as it does. Unlike other natural sciences, the laboratory of Public Administration is represented by an environment in which the researcher is both amongst and within the phenomenon to be observed, as opposed to observing some incubated phenomenon (Mathebula, 2003:40). A criticism has been raised that research in Public Administration is at times too theoretical and abstract; it is communicated in complex and incomprehensive jargon, and tends to be morbidly pessimistic about what is possible (Kuye *et al.*, 2002: 4).

Public Administration research relates to aspects of real life, and the inclusion of the researcher within the environment of the phenomenon being researched makes it more realistic. It should, consequently, be easy to understand and forecast the results of Public Administration research.

## 2.3 Qualitative research and its applicability to the study

Silverman (2005:10) describes qualitative research as emphasising the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Qualitative research is not based on prescribed methods and detailed hypotheses that would rigidly guide the researcher throughout the study (Willis, 2007: 197).

Qualitative research further involves some kind of direct encounter with the world; whether it takes the form of ongoing daily life, or of the interactions with a selected individual or group (May, 2002:199). This type of research describes, either explicitly or implicitly, the purpose of the qualitative research, the role of the researcher(s), the stages of the research, and the method of data analysis.

It becomes clear, that with more exposure and involvement in the qualitative research methods, one should even be able to pick up related themes and concepts in areas of study which might need further research in such a discipline.

Common themes or concepts in the process of gathering information can be grouped together and made to constitute a new phenomenon for further studies. Such new discoveries might have to be dealt with at a different level and for different purposes.

According to Rubin and Rubin (2005:211), concepts and themes that are identified during interviews can in turn suggest new related concepts and themes. The qualitative research methodology studies individuals in their natural setting, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, with design characteristics that are flexible, evolving and emergent (Merriam, 2009: 18).

The number of women who have received support as a result of the Land Reform Policy is not a critical aspect in this study as the nature of the study is not about numbers of women, but it is of importance because it provides a base sample for qualitative analysis, since herein lies the impact of the Land Reform Policy on women's sustainable development and empowerment. Impact (as in impact of the Land Reform Policy on women's sustainable development) is regarded as a concept and not as a variable. Kumar (2005:56) states that concepts are mental images or perceptions, and their meanings vary markedly from individual to individual, whereas variables are measurable, but with varying degrees of accuracy.

Concepts, themes and events – as identified during the interviews – guide what is to be included in the coding categories (Rubin & Rubin, 2005: 210). Ideas for concepts and themes can also be developed by focusing on what and how the different interview participants have responded to a similar question (Rubin & Rubin, 2005: 211).

Table 2.1 below describes some of the concepts and variables in relation to this study. The impact of land reform on women's sustainable development -- impact being the concept in this case, and women's sustainable development being the variable.

**Table 2.1: The difference between concepts and variables**

| Concept | Variable |
|---|---|
| Impact | Productivity (hectares used; number of jobs created; number of tons/kg produced; level of poverty reduced) |
| Effectiveness of the Land Reform Policy | Women beneficiaries (rural or urban women; educated or not educated) |
| Success of the Land Reform Policy | Income (Income per annum, per month, per semester) |

Source: Adapted from Kumar, R. 2005. *Research Methodology: Second Edition: A step-by-step guide for beginners*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. p57.

Variables are measurable and determine whether the idea or concept imagined or expected is realised and can be visible. Access to land for women is assumed in the form of concepts to improve the lives of women but that is further justified by providing measurable units to the expected outcomes which are reduced poverty and a better life. The use of land, the type of enterprises and level of production which would be variables in this case, are all expected to result in the outcomes above.

Denzin and Lincoln (2008:3) confirm that qualitative research is a complex, interconnected family of terms, such as concepts and assumptions. According to Flick (2002:226 – 227), as quoted by Denzin and Lincoln (2008:7), qualitative research is inherently multi-method in its focus, and it involves the use of multiple methods or triangulation. It reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Qualitative researchers use semiotics, narrative as in storytelling, content, dialogue and archival documents – to arrive at a conclusive result (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:9). There is separate and detailed literature on the many methods and types that fall under the category of qualitative research, such as case studies, politics and ethics, participatory

inquiry, interviewing and participant observation, as confirmed by Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 3); Lunenburg and Irby 2008: 90-92  and Flick (2007: 78).

The use of research types, such as the case study, participatory inquiry and participant observation provide reality in research – as opposed to imagination or even estimations. Some of these qualitative research types will be discussed in the next section of the chapter.

## 2.4 Qualitative research types

Qualitative research is oriented towards assessing and analysing specific cases in their locality – starting with people's expressions and activities in their natural setting (Flick, 2009: 21). The use of qualitative methods, as opposed to quantitative methods, compels the research to reach consequences that are at the level of socio-political topics and relations (Flick, 2009:25). Qualitative research is appropriate in this enquiry because of its relevance to the topic. Prioritising the Land Reform Policy in South Africa has been on the agenda for both the politicians and society.

This study seeks to describe and interpret the findings on sustainable development for women as a result of the Land Reform Policy. The focus in this enquiry will be on a number of cases, since their experience and understanding with regard to land reform and their interactions with the programme for their sustainable development are the important issues in this study (Silverman, 2005: 9).

Quantitative research data lead to results in the actual sense of the word, whereas qualitative research is an illustrative approach (Flick, 2009: 25). Qualitative implies that the emphasis should be placed on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that cannot be experimentally measured in terms of quantities, amounts, intensity or even frequencies. The answers that are needed in qualitative enquiry relate to how social experience is structured and given meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008: 14).

This chapter will be used to provide the choice of the qualitative methods for the study, as the study is of a socio-political nature.

According to Creswell (2007), quoted in Lunenburg and Irby (2008: 89), a qualitative study may be defined as an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. In other words, the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of the informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (Creswell (2007) in Lunenburg and Irby (2008:89)).

Merriam (2009: 19) defines qualitative research as the type of research that encompasses a number of philosophical orientations and approaches.

The goal of investigation with qualitative research is understanding, discovery and meaning, as opposed to quantitative research which is more focused on prediction, control and confirmation (Merriam, 2009: 18). The researcher works on seeking to understand why specific behavioral patterns occur as they do, and the meanings attached to their understanding.

Qualitative research, therefore, emphasises understanding – by closely examining people's words, actions and records and attached meanings. On the other hand, quantitative research investigates such words, actions and records at a mathematically significant level, thus, quantifying the results of observation (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008: 89). Qualitative research uses texts as empirical material, as opposed to using numbers. The everyday perspectives of the participants are looked at, in conjunction with their daily practices and any knowledge that relates to the subject under study (Flick, 2007: 2).

This research will use the interpretive, natural approach to the situations of women as beneficiaries of the Land Reform Policy.

A table of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches is used to demonstrate differences in these research approaches.

**Table 2.2: Distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research methods**

| Qualitative | Result / consequences | Quantitative | Result / consequences |
|---|---|---|---|
| Uses words | Can be easily misinterpreted, hence yielding wrong results | Uses numbers | Easy to use and be generalised |
| Focuses on meanings | Different words can mean different things to different people | Concerned with behavioural patterns | Information can be extrapolated |
| Relies on inductive logic of inquiry | States facts first and conclusions are based on facts | Utilises the hypothetic deductive method | Moves from known to the unknown |
| Lacks the quantitative research power to generalize | Confined to observed facts | Can generalize | Can move from a representative sample towards a population |

Table adapted from: Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J.F. and Silverman, D. 2002. *Qualitative Research Practice.* London: SAGE Publications. p312.

Table 2.2 above depicts why the two research methods are different and unique; hence, their application for this research inquiry. The importance of housing and land as the two lead programmes considered important in addressing poverty has been confirmed by the Presidency in the 2003 publication termed: Towards a Ten-Year Review (Presidency, 2003: 25). The challenge is to ensure that legislation developed since 1994 is fully implemented (Presidency, 2003: 11).

Land is an important resource and asset for women. As an asset that can be used for shelter / housing, production, collective production or *letsema* (this is a method of group production where all women gather at a particular farm and work on that farm for the day).

They bring refreshments and ensure that the work that had to be done on that day is finished before they start work at a different farm. Land can be used as collateral for accessing loans, and even as a way of enhancing women's self esteem. The above is an indication of the social relationship that is inherent in women's access to sustainable development. This highlights the importance of the qualitative approach to the study.

In the execution of this research, the interpretive approach will be applied, as this approach is related to qualitative research. Qualitative research has been adopted because the thrust of this study is an inquiry on *how* the land reform has empowered women in their drive towards sustainable development, as well as *what* has been the process of ensuring that women have equal access to land. Qualitative research is concerned with process rather than outcome; and the Land Reform Policy formulation is a process with, for the purpose of this study, a target focused on women's empowerment and sustainable development.

It therefore becomes important to conduct an inquiry on how the Land Reform Policy has improved women's access and ability to facilitate their sustainable development. Flick (2009:14) indicates that the essential features of qualitative research are correct choices of methods and theories; various participant perspectives with their uniqueness in diversity; the reflections of researchers on the research done, as part of the knowledge-production process and a variety of methods.

The perspectives and feelings of women, as unique and diverse individuals, are expressed tacitly by researchers in the qualitative inquiry.

The process of inquiry using the qualitative research approach requires that the researcher should understand the strategic classes of the methodology. McNabb (2002:269) confirms that qualitative research methods can be grouped into three broad categories, namely: explanatory research studies; interpretive research studies; and critical research studies.

Interpretive research, as described by McNabb (2002: 271), looks at research elements that explain people's actions in social circumstances and situations.

Interpretive research goes beyond explaining the social phenomenon being studied to interpreting what the phenomenon means, providing an interpretation of its meaning and application (McNabb, 2002: 271). The meaning of land reform, as defined in Chapter One, is placed within the context of women's attitudes, opinions and behaviour, and whether women understand its developmental nature. Conducting the study within this category reveals realities that benefit both the researcher and the target group.

Interpretive research investigates the manner in which humans make sense out of the events in their lives, either planned or unplanned (McNabb, 2002: 271). The history of land reform, as the key event, needs to be understood thoroughly for the study to be successful. This will be possible based on the available literature on land reform in South Africa. The research process occurs in the context of the women's projects, and the discussions are interpreted in terms of the meanings that are understood by all parties involved.

An examination on patterns of meaning that emerge from data gathered occurs in qualitative research; these patterns are then presented in the participant's own words (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008: 89).

Klein and Myers (1999) in McNabb (2002:272) further provide a set of seven principles which they developed. These can be used to assist in contextualising interpretive research studies. These seven principles are briefly described. The first of the seven principles is the *hermeneutic circles,* which were devised to illustrate learning or understanding of a phenomenon. This is a discipline of interpretation inclusive of interpretative processes.

People understand concepts by focusing on the parts that constitute a particular concept, such as words, phrases and how these were brought together.

Accessibility of land reform documents for this research is critical for the successful interpretation of the concepts, intentions and goals of the Land Reform Policy and its programmes. The second principle is the *contextual nature* of the phenomenon under investigation, and in the case of this study, the context within which women were dispossessed of their land – and as a result of social and even historical patterns, this then becomes an important feature of the research.

The third principle is the *interaction between the researcher and the participants,* which focuses on gathering further information towards understanding the phenomenon being studied. While describing the meanings of words, better opportunities can be created between a researcher and the participants towards understanding the phenomenon. Land reform information is currently only available in written format, and mostly in English. There are some documents which have already been translated into the other 11 official languages by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR).

The fourth principle is *abstraction and generalisation,* which brings disunited parts of a concept together and categorises them into generalisations and concepts with a wider application. The three Land Reform Programmes are known and accepted in South Africa, but their implementation and results are unique. All Land Reform Programmes are aimed at ensuring access to land, but the focus area for each Land Reform Programme is unique and the implementation differs from one programme to the next.

The uniqueness of each Land Reform Programme makes it a disunited part, but because there is a common goal, that of access to land, generalisations can be made. The fifth principle is *dialogical reasoning* – in the sense that through dialogues between the researcher and the participants, improvements can be achieved in the final research product. The initial concepts might have been too vague for the research to proceed, but through ongoing engagements these vague concepts find better meaning and applicability.

Continuous dialogue on a matter being discussed brings better understanding and clarity to both the participants and the researcher on such a matter.

The sixth principle being that of *multiple interpretations,* requires that the researcher should compare historical and contextual interpretations of a phenomenon against all other available interpretations, as well as the reasons offered for them. The researcher's preconceptions and biases are subjected to those competing interpretations, including those of the participants. Conclusive and convincing interpretations are expected from the researcher as an expert in the field. The seventh principle is *suspicion,* which cautions the researcher not to accept any interpretation at face value, that is, without further questioning of such interpretations.

All phenomenological interpretations should be done with absolute scrutiny (McNabb, 2002: 272 -273).

The principles above are of an educational nature for researchers and research participants. For land reform to be beneficial to women, such women need to be fully engaged as key participants in any discussions that affect their livelihoods. The basis for a genuine and truthful engagement with the researcher is provided by means of the above principles.

Some of the qualitative research types are discussed in the section that follows. The purpose again is to clarify why the use of qualitative research is preferred over quantitative research. A combination of case studies, a literature review and interviews will be the focus in the next section.

### 2.4.1  A case study

A case study is a research type used to engage in social research when the inquirer wants to answer questions on the *how* and *why* in a scenario. Case studies are specific explorations and the inquiries of individuals which can be on groups, cultures, communities or even programmes (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008:96).

Case studies embrace several approaches and purposes, as they can be used as illustrations, examples and anecdotes, in which they do not necessarily prove anything, but facilitate the understanding of a concept by making it more concrete (Thorpe & Holt, 2008: 388). They can be used to describe how an organisation performs and also in the case of classroom cases for training purposes, in terms of how the class is performing (Thorpe & Holt, 2008: 38).

The case study is the study of particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances (Simons, 2009: 19). Case study research is effective in approaching phenomena that are less understood, ambiguous, fuzzy, and even chaotic sometimes; and it includes relationships which are complex and often difficult to predict (Thorpe & Holt, 2008: 38). To get an in-depth understanding of such phenomena, quantitative instruments should prove to be inadequate.

Merriam (2009: 40-41) defines a case study as an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system. If the phenomenon under study is not intrinsically bounded, it is not a case. Case studies make it possible to understand mechanisms, such as what is done, and how is it done, rather than counts of what has been done and how often (Thorpe & Holt, 2008: 39). The above is further confirmed by Cresswell (2007: 73), who defines a case study research as one involving the study of an issue explored through one or more in a closed system.

The research question, as stated in Chapter One of this study, poses the question of how the Land Reform Policy contributes to women's sustainable development in South Africa. In order to provide an answer to this question, the use of multiple sources of information should be considered. Land reform is guided by multiple pieces of legislation, aimed at ensuring access to land for the sustainable development of women. Thus, the use of a qualitative approach is appropriate, in which an in-depth inquiry into the phenomena being studied is made.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 129), the beginning of a scenario starts with phenomena, and cases provide opportunities to study such phenomena. A case study is an intensive inquiry of a specific individual or groups in a specific context under investigation.

Lunenburg and Irby (2008: 96) further provide clarity on multiple-case study design, as it is related to this thesis, because this inquiry targets multiple individuals in projects of land reform, but the phenomenon remains the same: land reform for the sustainable development of women.

Mafunisa and Maserumule *(*2004: 4) in their discussion of the case-study method of instruction define a case study as a description of a specific administrative situation or challenge needing a decision that has to be made to solve it.

Case studies are also known to assist in instances where a referral to best practice methods is necessary in order to arrive at a conclusive level for solving a problem. One uses cases as referral points, such as referring back on how success stories of men that have accessed land through the Land Reform Policy compare with those of women. Another visible aspect would be why men are more successful in accessing land than women, even before aspects of sustainable use for such land have been dealt with.

Simon (1980, as quoted by Mafunisa & Maserumule, 2004: 4) provides further clarity on the advantages of using case study methods in research. Even though these advantages are categorised as leaning more towards using case studies which are attractive to teachers, these advantages are applicable even in other investigative situations, because:

(i)    case studies are said to be down-to-earth and attention-grabbing, and in agreement with the reader's own experience; thereby providing a natural basis for generalisation;

(ii)    case studies allow generalisations about, or from a particular instance to a bigger group;

(iii)    case studies are used as reference points, and may form an archive of descriptive material that provides for different interpretations and uses by the end users; and

(iv)    case studies can be used to serve multiple audiences, thereby allowing the end-user to judge the implications of the case for themselves.

It is clear from the above that case studies have the ability to fulfill different intentions, and can be adopted as reference points or even best-practice scenarios. Qualitative case studies can further be characterised as being particularistic, descriptive and heuristic (Merriam, 2009: 43). The writer describes these characteristics as follows:

(i) particularistic means that case studies' foci are looking into particular events, situations or phenomena, and what the case reveals about a particular phenomenon and what that phenomenon might represent;

(ii) descriptive qualitative cases mean that the end-product of a case is rich and thick in terms of its description of the phenomenon under study; and

(iii) the heuristic qualitative case study means that the reader's understanding of a phenomenon is enlightened, and they can bring the discovery of new meanings and even confirm what is new.

The different qualitative case study features above enable the researcher to discover, obtain insight and interpretation rather than merely focusing on hypothesis testing (Merriam, 2009: 42). The case studies that will be used for this research are a sample of projects that have benefited from land reform. The use of redistribution-related projects such as the LRAD, PLAS and SLAG projects is chosen. The selection and use of these projects as case studies is based on their focus towards the productivity of land, which is further related to development.

The criteria used to select projects within these programmes are their goal of using land accessed for agricultural production; sustaining their livelihoods through agricultural produce and ensuring that land as a resource is not utilised exhaustively, and not merely to sustain future generations.

The use of land acquired through the Redistribution Programme is solely for agricultural purposes, as confirmed by Lahiff (2007: 6). Lahiff (2007:6) states the following issues in relation to the land redistributed for agricultural purposes:

(i)     Agriculture is the most common type of land-use amongst the beneficiaries of land; it is more a requirement than a person's choice. Experience and knowledge of agricultural practices are requirements to qualify for land access under these programmes.

(ii)    The emphasis on agriculture is appropriate, given the nature of land acquired and its previous use (which is more rural and was previously used for agricultural purposes).

(iii)   The characteristics of land reform beneficiary groups are dominated by rural people with limited education and skills.

(iv)    The pressing needs to acquire food for households and generate cash from excess produce are some of the reasons for land reform.


The restitution-related land acquisitions, as explained in Chapter One, are excluded from the cases chosen for this study, since the use of land is not necessarily aimed at agriculture. Land Restitution beneficiaries can become partners on land use activities, so the access to land is for addressing the rights of historically displaced individuals (Lahiff, 2007: 3). Restitution covers cases of forced removals, which took place after 1913 (*WPSALP*, 1997: 7). Initial case studies of settled restitution claims in 2005 – 2006 found that the vast majority of these projects had failed to deliver significant benefits to their members through agriculture (Lahiff, 2007: 6).


Some of the reasons for this failure were that business plans drawn up for these projects were of poor quality, with poor co-ordination of support services (including delays in the release of grants) by the Regional Land Claims Commission, inadequate capital for investment and production, and the lack of any organisation amongst claimant communities (Lahiff, 2007:6).

According to the Department of Land Affair's Strategic Plan (2005:5), restitution should provide for the equitable redress to persons or communities dispossessed of land as a result of the past racially discriminatory laws or practices.

It is against this background that the cases selected are based on land access and the use of such land for production, and the subsequent development, such as that of the LRAD, SLAG and PLAS, as indicated earlier. The geographic boundaries of the study area and the amount of resources available have a direct influence on the population size that the study will engage.

It is critical to demarcate the boundaries of the study area as these will also inform the amount of resources required to complete the study (Czaja & Blair, 2005: 132).

The success and existence of the then Departments of Land Affairs and Agriculture relied on the successful execution of the Land Reform Policy by the two departments. Roux *et al.* (1997: 147) confirm that in discussions around policy-making, the interests of legislators, interest groups or more prominent participants often take precedence over the interests of the individual citizens. It is therefore, of great interest to interrogate this statement further – with the intention of categorising these individual citizens, so as to focus on women, as the one category of the individual citizens intended to benefit from policy-formulation processes.

The assumption based on the discussion in section 1.5 of Chapter One is that women's needs are not well attended to. It is not clear whether the failure to meet women's needs is due to the lack of women representatives at the elite or prominent level, or whether it is due to their dependency on their male partners. The purpose of selecting the cases discussed below is to verify the status of women in terms of their prominence in policy knowledge.

Land reform projects in which women as beneficiaries have benefited are identified and a set of questions are administered through an interview.

The inquiry looks at the impact of the Land Reform Policy on women's sustainable development. The sample is selected from a group of land reform projects that benefited in the Gauteng Province. The overall or larger sample comprises all projects that have benefited from the Land Reform Programmes; followed by a further selection of fewer projects that are within the larger sample and have benefited women. A total of five projects (herein referred to as cases) with a majority of women or with women only will be used as the final target population to be finally selected. The minimum number of women is one in each case category.

### 2.4.2  Unstructured interviewing

An interview schedule is used as a tool that guides the interview. The interview schedule is defined as the conduit through which information flows from the world of everyday behaviour and opinion into the world of research and analysis (Czaja & Blair, 2005: 59). Questions with regard to farm size and the capacity of the farm to produce; farming experience and family relations and profit margins are amongst those included in the inquiry. The unstructured interview questions are attached as Annexure A. The five selected cases are one SLAG, two LRAD and two PLAS projects for the administration of the qualitative interview schedule.

Four of the cases, two PLAS and two LRAD, are located in the Metsweding District Municipality within the Bronkhorstspruit area; and one case, SLAG, is situated in the Ekurhuleni District Municipality in the Eastern Region of Pretoria close to Germiston. Interviews were conducted with beneficiaries of these projects and details of the cases will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Unstructured interviewing involves direct interaction and discussion between the researcher and a respondent or group. It differs from traditional structured interviewing in several important ways. The researcher may have some initial guiding questions or core concepts to ask about, although there is no formal structured instrument or protocol. This method has the advantage of not confining the interviewee, sometimes channeling answers and creating restricted or hostile environments for the interviewees.

In unstructured interviews questions are asked but respondents are not provided with choices to use as answers, because follow-up questions are developed as the interview progresses; and these are based on the participant's responses (Luneneburg & Irby, 2008: 192). In the interviews conducted with the women that are land reform beneficiaries, some questions were developed in advance, but specific follow-up questions evolved as the interview progressed. Basic questions asked included the following:

(i)     land acquisition details in terms of which programme was used to acquire land;
(ii)    the level of education of women participants;
(iii)   the age of women involved and their farming enterprises;
(iv)    the amount of time spent on the farm. This also affects the participant's level of management and decision-making, which were termed the economic inputs for sustainable development; and
(v)     any other aspects in the form of social, cultural and environmental inputs from women who had benefited from sustainable development.

The interview schedule was prepared in advance, as a standard tool that would be used to engage all participants. Rehearsals on the interview schedule proved that the interviewer is able to move the conversation in any direction of interest that may come about during the interview process. Consequently, unstructured interviewing is particularly useful for exploring a topic in the broad sense. However, there is a price for this lack of structure, because each interview tends to be unique, with no predetermined set of answers provided by respondents.

The various answers from which the interviewer has to select are usually more tedious to analyse, especially when synthesising across respondents used in the study.

To unravel the complexities of large-scale social change, it is necessary to examine the intricacies of individual lives (May, 2002: 201).

In the interview schedules, questions are based on personal experiences and the meaning-making of personal or more general issues – by addressing the *what* and the *how* of a social problem or historical event (Flick, 2007: 79). May (2002: 201) further explains that interviews provide the opportunity to examine how large-scale social transformations are experienced, should be interpreted and are ultimately shaped by the responses of strategic social actors. The applicability of the unstructured interview is relevant to the study on Land Reform Policy and its Programmes because these Land Reform Programmes are different, as was described in Chapter One, and to get an acceptable result that is representative of all these Programmes, a more unstructured method of interviewing is necessary.

Through qualitative interviews, the experiences and the historical occurrence of events can be understood – even if the researcher is not part of the participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2005: 3). The close interactions with the participants create an air of reality on discussions and emotions from participants; and these afford the interviewer an opportunity to understand the participant's true feelings, as expressed through the process.

### 2.4.3  Documents as sources of data

Documents on land reform have been used; and because land redistribution in South Africa is a matter of national interest, documents on this topic are readily available. Information on women and land acquisition is available, but of interest particularly is the contribution of land use to women's sustainable development. There is always a need to refer back, before one goes forward, because lessons can be learned from past experiences.

In this study the use of documents has also been very important in contributing to the solution which is ideally conclusive and most-needed. Permission has been obtained from the DRDLR to use documents in the form of annual reports; strategic plan documents; journals and books towards the fulfillment of this study.

Books, journals, publications and papers on land reform and women's empowerment have been used to inform the content of the research. Griffin, *et al.* (2002:13) confirms that land reform can make a major contribution to reducing both rural and urban poverty. Gandhi (1972: 1) stated that removal of poverty is a prerequisite for the protection of the environment.

European settlements, in the form of the colonial invasion, led to the displacement of African populations to less fertile land (Griffin, *et al.*, 2002: 14). Jacobs (2002: 887) questions whether land reform policies are still worthwhile instruments of struggle for women, based on the historical experience and current changes. Jacobs (2002: 888) confirms that land reform which includes women would be of great benefit, as it would improve food security for all, it would allow women the independence of their own income and would improve their status.

According to the American Journal of Economics and Sociology (2006:115), land reform is one of the alternative methods used in bringing about development. According to Mokgope (2000: 23), it has been proven that people are more likely to use land intensively and positively if their rights to land are secure. Ngqaleni and Makhura (1996: 338) in Mokgope (2000: 23) attest to the fact that a lack of secure tenure rights can also mean that such land could be taken away at any time, especially when opportunities for deriving income and other benefits become available.

The scenario described herein is that of the two PLAS cases in which land tenure is of use rather than outright ownership. As DRDLR is the owner of such land, it becomes difficult for these women farmers to make any significant investment in terms of farm infrastructure. Turner (2002: 30) states that the quality of land and the manner in which it is being used will determine the number of people it can support sustainably. The current use of land that does not cater for future generations will not contribute to sustainable development, which is the main theme of this study.

Tilley (2007: 9) separates poverty from land ownership on the basis that not all people on the land are farmers. Land can, however, provide people with a base from which to launch other livelihood ventures, such as houses for rental, tourism and hospitality. The nature of written texts is that there is a need for further interpretation of the concepts used within the text to allow common understanding between the researcher and participants.

An additional challenge is that the participants (in this case women) are not as educated as they are assumed to be, which puts a further challenge to the researcher in terms of the interpretation of the results, and makes it more time-consuming. The use of the South African archives was also helpful for finding some of the old laws related to land access and allocation in South Africa.

Documents on land acquired for women and its use will, consequently, be dealt with to check the level of sustainable development that is attained through land acquisition and use.

## 2.5 Ethical considerations in Public Administration research

Public policies are central to the fulfillment of public needs in terms of their implementation, especially because they bring in resources for the realisation of such needs. It is common to find public administrators yielding to the powers that are regulatory at that point in time and compromising any consultative processes. Even though in a democratic scenario public administrators must be subordinate to the legislature and political executive (Rosenbloom *et al.*, 1994: 497), they are obliged to confirm the developmental needs with the beneficiaries of such needs.

Consultation may be costly and time-consuming, but it is an indication of the respect which forms part of ethical behaviour. Ethics are often conceptualised in the form of an inner check on behaviour; someone's conscience tells them if they are contemplating a wrong act; and it is the inner person that tells that the bad act must end. McKinney and Howard (1998:4) define ethics as the study of and philosophy concerned with morality in

human conduct, with the emphasis on determining right and wrong values in any specific situation.

Ethics may be defined as the set of standards by which human actions are determined to be right or wrong (Vasu, *et al.,* 1998: 381). Depending on the person's conscience and the desired results in pursuing the act, there is a continuation or discontinuation of such actions.

Laws are put in place to guide and monitor citizens' behaviour. Ethical behaviour would generally preclude violating the law, even in minor ways, for the sake of one's self-interest, family or even friends.

Section 195 (1) (a) of the *Constitution*, 1996 states that a high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained. Beyond a person's consciousness of knowing the difference between right and wrong, the law of the country states that doing what is right is a requirement and rule. The researcher or scientist has the right to search for truth, but not at the expense of the rights of other individuals (Mouton, 2001: 239). The concern in research, as far as ethics are concerned, is how to ensure that the interests of those willing to participate in the research are protected – to encourage their continued voluntary participation.

Section 14 of the Constitution, 1996, states that everyone has a right to privacy, and this includes – according to sub-section (d), the right to having the privacy of their communications infringed. The enquirer-enquired relationship is important in terms of the trust and confidentiality required for future research endeavours. According to Mathebula (2003: 69), morality is related to issues of trust, confidentiality, harm, consent and deception. In Public Administration research, ethics are looked at in terms of re-using information and concluding policies without involving the initiators of such policies.

In this study, consultation with the relevant department responsible for land reform has been acquired, as part of ensuring that the process is transparent and ethically clear.

Mafunisa (2003: 197 in Mathebula, 2003:70) describes ethics as the branch of philosophy that deals with values that prescribe human conduct in terms of what is wrong and right for specific actions and to the good or bad of the motives and results of such actions. Ethics in public administration are related to principles, discipline, morality and truthfulness. It is important that these aspects be respected and adhered to in any published study, because the publisher's reputation runs the risk of losing respect, dignity and self-worth.

Immorality and ill-discipline result in disrespectful behaviour; hence, in scientific papers, such as this one, referral to used documents, web sites and referral material used should be, and has been, properly acknowledged.

Ethical considerations during the research process define the moral integrity of the researcher and ensure that the findings are factual and trustworthy.

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006: 86) confirm that every research should engage with the ethical dimensions and guiding issues that must be interrogated. Amongst others are:

(i)     Moral principles that guide research: this looks at matters of respect, courtesy and the approach used in the process of conducting the research.

(ii)    Which ethical issues formed part of the research problem and need to be carried throughout the research. An example in this case would be that the empowerment of women should not be used as a way of exposing their lack of skills and ability, but it must be used to their advantage.

(iii)   Ethical issues that must be considered in the selection of the sample and in the design of the study. The selection of a sample should not be to disadvantage other possible participants who are not part of the chosen group. Caution should be taken in explaining why a selection of a specific category of people is chosen above any others. This will ensure that even those that are not selected do not necessarily feel excluded.

(iv)   The researcher has responsibility to indicate to the participants, referred to as subjects by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006: 86). The referral to research participants as subjects is a matter of concern, because people are human

beings, regardless of whether they are research participants or not, and respect for them as such is important. The use of incorrect or belittling language is equally unethical. The beneficiaries of the research results should be identified on time to allow for no exclusion of relevant and critical role players.

(v)     The protection of participants has been ensured by changing some of their names; farms that are used as cases are defined in relative terms, and not given their actual project names – in order to protect the identities of the participants. The descriptions of the cases are for academic purposes only, in contrast to exposing any of the challenges faced by the participants in the successful farming of the land.

In the case of the land-reform beneficiaries in this study, the fact that non-female beneficiaries have not been involved does not make them any less important, but the current focus is on women as land-reform beneficiaries.

The threat of farm repossessions has also added more pressure to the research study inquiry. This fear adds pressure to the sampling of participants, because less knowledgeable or uneducated participants tend to have a fear of the unknown and make last-minute refusals to participate, and thereby delay the process. Results that will be published will be shared with the participants and policy-makers of land reform. It is hoped that the research results will benefit both the participants and the non-participants.

In this study, consent was first received from the departments involved, and later this approval was negotiated with the prospective participants.

The use of some women as participants in the study had to be approved telephonically by their husbands. Consent, consequently, has been strengthened from all avenues that might be affected by the study. Letters of consent have been received from the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. They are the custodians of the Land Reform Policy.

The Provincial Department of Agriculture in the Gauteng Province was contacted as well, because it is the office that is responsible for the projects that are used as case studies.

Further consent has been received from the participants who agreed to sign the interview schedule's letter of consent – as, an indication of their agreement and support for the research.

## 2.6 Conclusion

The study moves from the premise that information exists on this topic, and the research wants to interrogate whether the developed legislation has succeeded in bringing sustainable development to women, as well as benefits that women can enjoy in terms of accessing land. The use of the above-mentioned qualitative research approach will be critical for the conclusive recommendations made.

The selection of a research methodology plays an important role in the expected outcome and the findings. The lack of appropriate research methods and the lack of methodological rigour in the Public Administration research have been highlighted as reasons for concern. The public administration approach is different from research in other fields, such as political science or sociology, which merely try to explain behaviour.

The choice has been to use the qualitative research method, and the rationale for this type of research is because the focus of the study is on the *how* and *what* with regard to the subject under investigation. The research question, as phrased in Chapter One, is: "How has the Land Reform Policy and its related Programmes contributed to the promotion of women's sustainable development in South Africa?"

It is obvious from the aforementioned question that the enquiry is on *how* the Land Reform Policy has – or even *what* role this Policy has – played, in promoting

sustainable development for women in South Africa. The chapter has paved a way for further interrogation of the literature on what other writers portray, and the manner in which research methodologies are applicable and relevant to Public Administration.

The chapter that follows will describe the function of policy-making and analysis in relation to the study of Public Administration. Chapter Three will also engage in a discussion about the origin and development of Public Administration. The chapter will discuss the policy implementation that facilitates sustainable development. The focus is on the applicability and efficiency of the Land Reform Policy and its relation to public administration in seeking the empowerment of women.