AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF PERENNIAL WATER PROBLEMS ON TIME AND ECONOMIC AFFORDABILITY FOR WOMEN WORKING OUTSIDE THE HOME IN CHITUNGWIZA, ZIMBABWE

BY

Catherine Yewedzo MANJENGWA

Supervisor: Ms Rosalie Katsande

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Masters Degree in Women’s Law, Southern and Eastern African Regional Centre for Women’s Law, University of Zimbabwe

2014
Abstract

Every Zimbabwean has the right to safe and potable water and for women the right to water is intrinsically linked with their lives and the realisation of this right ensures for them the right to a secure livelihood. They expect the government of Zimbabwe to work towards the attainment of this right. However, of late in Zimbabwe due to poor management of the water systems and the economic decline that the country went through in recent years provision of water has become an elusive right. For many urban homes water taps have become decorations and the women have had to grapple with balancing their right to earn a living and the right to access safe and potable water for their homes. This paper critically examines the role of women in society and the sacrifices that they make in order to ensure that water is available in their homes. It also looks at the country’s compliance with its international obligations to provide the right to water for its citizens in the dormitory town of Chitungwiza which has been hard hit by these water shortages and the country at large.

The research was carried out in the high density town of Chitungwiza which has several high density locations within the town. Using qualitative research methods, the study revealed that water shortages are on the increase and that because of culture, religion and traditions, water searching and collecting roles fall on women and that these women are spending a lot of time away from other economic endeavours in trying to find water for their household needs. Non-provision of water is high in the town because the town has no independent water source and has to rely on the nearby city of Harare for all its water needs. The city of Harare is itself battling to provide water for its own residents and ultimately Chitungwiza residents are victims in all this and more so the women who work outside the home who are confronted with their roles at the work place and in the home in light of this water shortages.

Women are the most affected by the water shortages and the country as a signatory to a number of international human rights instruments is failing to meet its obligations to promote, protect and fulfil its citizen’s right to access safe and potable water.
# Table of contents

Table of contents ........................................................................................................... iii
Declaration ....................................................................................................................... vi
Dedication ....................................................................................................................... vii
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................... viii
Acronyms and abbreviations .......................................................................................... ix
List of international legislation ...................................................................................... x
List of local legislation .................................................................................................... x
List of figures ................................................................................................................... xi
List of tables .................................................................................................................... xii
Executive summary ......................................................................................................... xii

## CHAPTER 1 ..................................................................................................................... 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY ................................ 1

1.1 Introduction .............................................................................................................. 1
1.2 Statement of the problem ...................................................................................... 1
1.3 Justification for the study ..................................................................................... 2
1.4 Location of the study ............................................................................................. 3
1.5 Research objectives ............................................................................................... 3
1.6 Research assumptions ........................................................................................... 4
1.7 Research questions ............................................................................................... 4
1.8 Definition of key concepts ..................................................................................... 5
1.9 Conclusion .............................................................................................................. 5

## CHAPTER 2 ..................................................................................................................... 6

2.0 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .............................................................................. 6

2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................ 6
2.2 Local legislation ..................................................................................................... 6
2.3 The international right to water ........................................................................... 8
2.4 Accessibility .......................................................................................................... 9
2.5 Affordability ......................................................................................................... 11

2.5.1 When is water said to be affordable and economically accessible? ........... 12

2.6 The right to earn a living through work .............................................................. 12

2.6.1 The Constitutional right ................................................................................ 12
2.6.2 The international right ................................................................................... 13
| 2.7 | The nexus between the right to water and the right to earn a living through work | 14 |
| 2.8 | Gender stereotyping | 16 |
| 2.9 | Women’s work | 17 |
| 2.10 | Conclusion | 18 |

**CHAPTER 3** ........................................................................................................... 19

**3.0 THE METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY** .......................................................... 19

| 3.1 | Introduction | 19 |
| 3.2 | Women as a starting point | 19 |
| 3.3 | The actors and structures | 20 |
| 3.4 | Gender analysis | 21 |
| 3.5 | Human rights approach | 22 |

- **3.5.1 International obligations** .................................................................. 22

| 3.6 | Data collection methods | 23 |

- **3.6.1 Random sampling** .......................................................................... 24
- **3.6.2 Interviews** .................................................................................. 24
- **3.6.3 Focus group discussion** ............................................................... 26
- **3.6.4 Observations** ............................................................................... 26
- **3.6.5 Desk research** ............................................................................... 27

| 3.7 | Conclusion | 27 |

**CHAPTER 4** ........................................................................................................... 28

**4.0 MAIN FINDINGS AND ANALYSES** ............................................................. 28

| 4.1 | Introduction | 28 |
| 4.2 | A case of women working in the informal sector | 28 |

- **4.2.1 Water affordability for women in the informal sector** .......... 31

| 4.3 | Balancing work and home | 33 |
| 4.4 | A case of women in the formal sector | 34 |

- **4.4.1 The different classes of women in the formal sector** .......... 35

- **4.4.1.1 Lower class formally employed women** ........................................ 35
- **4.4.1.2 Middle class formally employed women** .................................... 36

| 4.4 | Different women, different realities | 37 |
| 4.5 | Lack of an independent water reticulation facilities | 38 |
| 4.6 | Irregular and erratic water supply schedules | 39 |
| 4.7 | Whose water is it anyway? | 41 |
Declaration

I, Catherine Yewedzo Manjengwa, certify that this dissertation is my original work. It is an honest and true effort of my personal research. I certify that the work has not been presented anywhere else before for any other thesis.

Signed……………………………………

Date……………………………………

This dissertation was submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor,

Signed……………………………………

Date……………………………………

Ms. Rosalie K. Katsande,
Lecturer at the Southern and Eastern African Regional Centre for Women’s Law, University of Zimbabwe

Date……………………………………
Dedication

For my handsome sons, Blessing Kuda and Kunashe Bradley: You give me a reason to wake up each morning

And

My parents, Mr. and Mrs. Manjengwa, for instilling discipline and love for education in me.
Acknowledgements

To Jehovah the Lord My God, thank you for this gift of life.

Many thanks to NORAD for their financial support; this journey could not have begun without you.

I am mostly indebted to my supervisor, Ms. Rosalie Kumbirai Katsande, thank you for your guidance throughout this research.

Many thanks to Professor Julie Stewart for her dedication and her insights into research and research methodologies.

To Justice Dr. Amy Tsanga, thank you so much for re-awakening the feminist in me. I am forever indebted to you for your guidance in feminist theories and perspectives.

To the entire SEARCWL staff Sesedzai, Cecelie, Blessing, Rudo, Primrose and Johnson, Shingi and Joseline for all those technologically challenging book searches. Many thanks to you all for your patience and your dedication, I could not have coped without your help.

To all my respondents throughout this research, you opened my eyes and let me into your lives. Thank you all.

To my loving husband, Godfrey Kudakwashe, for believing in me and understanding me, especially when I was stressed.

To Tendai Thelma Muzavazi, thank you being a second mother to my children when I was an absentee mum.

To Miriam Chiba for always being there to take me to Avondale even late at night.

To the ‘Pachedu 5’, you ladies are amazing, thank you all so much.
Acronyms and abbreviations

African Charter  African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights
CDF                  Constitutional Development Fund
CEDAW                Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CESCR                Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CHIRA                Chitungwiza Residents Association
ICCPR                International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESC                International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO                  International Labour Organisation
MDGs                 The Millennium Development Goals
NGOs                 Non-Governmental Organisation
SADC Gender Protocol  The Southern African Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development
UDHR                 Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN                   United Nations
UNICEF               United Nations Children’s Fund
WHO                  World Health Organisation
Women’s Protocol      Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa
Zimstats             Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency
**List of international legislation**

African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights  
General Comment No 15  
Millennium Development Goals  
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights  
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights  
The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development  
Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

**List of local legislation**

Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013  
Public Health Act Chapter (15:09)  
Urban Councils Act Chapter (29:15)  
Water Act Chapter (20:24)
List of figures

Figure 1: Photograph of an example of an alternative improved water source in Chitungwiza .......................................................... 10

Figure 2: Photograph of buckets that women in the informal sector use for both their home and business needs............................................................................. 33

List of tables

Table 1: Interviews carried out during the research period ............................................. 24
Table 2: Showing the size and cost of various water containers used in the home .............. 32
Executive summary

The urge to study this topic was as a result of my own experiences; at one point in our home we went for more than two weeks without receiving any piped water. On one of the days, I was unable to go to work because of the water situation when I had no water for the home at all. This sparked my interest to find out how other women out there were coping with this problem and if it affected their right to earn a living through work.

This research was carried out in Chitungwiza one of the largest high density areas in Zimbabwe and one of the hardest hit areas in the country in respect to water shortages. Reports in the media had stated that residents in the town had gone for several months without receiving any piped water.

Research objectives

The research objectives of the study are:

- To find out if household chores for women working outside the home are increased by water shortages.
- To find out if it is costly for women working outside the home to ensure the availability of water in their homes.
- To find out if the schedules for the provision of water from water sources clash with the timetable and needs of women who work outside the home.
- To find out if the locations of available water sources are insensitive to the water needs and uses of women who work outside the home.
- To find out if the water policy framework adequately and effectively addresses the needs of multiple water users including women who work outside the home.

Literature review

The Constitution of Zimbabwe guarantees for every citizen the right to access safe and potable water and as such the right to water is thus a Constitutional and a justiciable right. Every citizen in Zimbabwe is thus expected to access water and the Government is also expected to work towards the attainment of this right. The right to water is also outlined in several international human rights treaties either expressly or as an implied right as read
together with other human rights in the UDHR, the ICPR and also the ICESCR, amongst others. It is extensively dealt with in General Comment 15 by the CESCR where it is stated that ‘water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights.’ Realising that the right to water was a right that many people were failing to enjoy, the UN sought to have countries commit to the attainment of this right by developing MDGs which were set as targets for the governments to meet in order to meet the attainment of these human rights. Chief among the MDGs was the target to reduce by half the number of people without access to safe and potable water by 2015. The UN went further and declared that the years 2005 to 2015 were the International Decade for Action ‘Water for Life’ in order to help governments achieve the internationally agreed water-related goals contained in the MDGs. Zimbabwe is a signatory to all these human rights treaties and has recently gone further to add this right to water to its new Constitution. Thus the right has become a Constitutional right and the country is expected to fulfil its obligations to provide safe and potable water for all its citizens.

Despite signing all these instruments and even making the right available in its Constitution, women of Zimbabwe still fail to access safe and potable water for household use. Whilst this was the case for rural Zimbabweans, in the recent past, urban areas have also become no-go zones for water. The right to water remains elusive and as time passes is becoming a dream even for many urban dwellers. The Government is not prioritising the provision of water in its cities and residents are left to seek alternative and often unsafe water sources. The country is not financing adequately the construction of dams and the rehabilitation of existing water sources and reticulation systems hence taps are constantly drying up in urban areas.

In the last 5 years the country has been hit by several cholera outbreaks in its urban centres and the trend appears set to continue due to the lack of improvement in ensuring public access to safe water. Citizens are expected to find ways and means to ensure that they have enough water for their household needs and this violates their international right to water as espoused by the CESCR in its General Comment 15. The women of the country are the hardest hit by this situation because of the gendered nature of the Zimbabwean society as they are culturally expected to play the role of searching for water and this impacts negatively on their time which they could otherwise use, especially for productive economic work. Whilst several donor and international agencies have chipped in and drilled several boreholes for pockets of Zimbabwe’s citizens, these have failed to satisfy demand and they are not a
sustainable source of water for towns. The Government of Zimbabwe needs to act soon in order for it to make progress towards the attainment of the human right to water and the meeting of its MDGs targets.

**Research methodology**
This study was conducted using grounded research methodology essential to which women’s experiences were made the starting point in identifying their day-to-day battles in search for water for household use. In order to do so, qualitative research methods were employed to capture the women’s experiences and their lived realities. This included the use of random sampling in which 57 women who work outside the home were interviewed in the various townships of Chitungwiza. It also included interviews with seven men also from the various townships in the town to get the male perspective on the phenomenon of water shortages and how they affected their lives as men. Thus the grounded theory also included a sex and gender analysis.

Various interviews were also carried out with various stakeholders also known as actors and structures in the water sector and to get an understanding of official position of the local authority and the Government. Also key to the research were focus group discussions which were carried out with women councillors and CHIRA. These helped to unearth various findings which made the research more comprehensive.

The research was also guided by various research approaches and theories. The women’s law approach was useful in finding the gap between the law and lived realities of women and in finding the position of women in law and in society. The human rights approach was also used to find the state’s compliance with international human rights instruments and in using this, feminist approaches were also very important in unearthing various phenomena in the accessing of water for households use by women.

The main data collection methods used were interviews, with about 40 interviews being carried out. Three focus group discussions were also carried out in addition to the interviews. Other data was collected via desk research and observations made whilst in the field.

**Findings**
The research established that women were the most affected by water shortages in the town because of the gender roles that they play in the home. They are expected by society to ensure that they manage the domestic sphere very well. Women who worked outside the home often had to go out of their way to ensure that water was available in their homes. This included missing out on their work, employing someone else to fetch water for them out of their own pockets. Women in the informal sector’s ability to earn a living through work was curtailed by the water shortages that they experienced and often they sacrificed their work outside their homes to do their household chores.

It also came out that Chitungwiza was hard hit by water shortages mainly because the town has no independent water source but mostly relied on city of Harare for its water needs. Due to this fact, water provision was erratic and Chitungwiza was usually cut off by Harare for non-payment of water and in so doing there was always no water in the town. On the return of water services, they often times clashed with the schedules for women who work outside the home because water was available at the time when they were away from home. This resulted in women struggling to juggle work and home needs and this ultimately negatively impacted on their right to earn a living through work to secure their livelihoods.

**Conclusions and recommendations**

The study established that women who work outside the home had more problems in accessing water for household purposes because of the duality of the roles that they play and their work suffered when they was no water in their homes. This exposed them to unsafe water and also to extra expenses in order for them to access water for their household needs.

It was also clear that in accessing water for household use, gender roles were manifest and women’s experiences with water held back in their attempts to attain equality with men.

The right to water is interlinked with many rights and the government of Zimbabwe ought to work hard to ensure that it rehabilitates and construct facilities to ensure that the right to water is realised by all. In so doing the burdens that women suffer in trying to access water will be lessened and they can work towards securing their livelihoods through earning a living by working.
CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study explores the effects of water problems that have bedevilled Zimbabwean cities in recent years and how women who work outside the home have been affected by this phenomenon. Of late, Harare and surrounding towns have gone for weeks and months without receiving piped water. This has affected the rights of citizens to water and other related rights. At the core of this water problem are women as they are the most affected by these shortages. This is because in Zimbabwean societies, women are the chief home managers and collecting water is one of the duties that they perform. Women working outside the home also experience this problem but their work also comes into play either to worsen or lessen the burden of the water problem. This study seeks to explore the lived realities of women who work outside the home and how they have coped with this problem. Water is essential for life and it is also important for a variety of things among which securing livelihoods is key. When water is available, livelihoods can be secured as women may earn a living through work. The problem arises when there is no water and the right to earn a living through work is interfered with and this may result in precarious and unsecured livelihoods especially for women.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In terms of the Zimbabwe’s Constitution, everyone has a right to access safe and potable water. In our African homes water is said to be closely related to women’s work. This is because women bear the burden of looking for water and use it in their day to day running of the home (according to the UN, 2000). However, this searching for and fetching of water was a job mainly for rural women. For years urban women have had this burden lifted because of the fact that they were supplied with water in their homes and unlike their rural counterparts, they did not have to walk for many kilometres to ensure that their homes had water. In recent years however, this has changed, and urban women have found themselves having to look for alternative water sources outside their homes. For many women who are employed formally or who are self-employed, this has brought a new dimension into their lives as they have to constantly balance their work and their roles in the home. One can only imagine a woman arriving home at the end of the day, tired and hungry only to be confronted by dry taps.
Without resting, she has to pick up a 20 litre container, walk for several kilometres sometimes in the dark to look for the precious liquid so as to be able to put supper on the table, ensure that there will be enough water for the next day to ensure that everyone in the family has breakfast and will be able to bath and carry out their day to day duties. This indeed is a heavy burden that has confronted women who work outside their homes in Chitungwiza. Not only is the issue about the water being available, other issues also come into play such as the issue of the time that women have to spend in order to access the water when they work outside the home: they may not have the adequate time needed to ensure that they access water. It is also about affordability for all and particular regard should be given to women as they are a group that is often marginalised.

1.3 Justification for the study

This study is significant in that it seeks to analyse the extent to which the human right to water significantly impacts on the human right to earn a living through work for women who work outside the home. This is largely because as WaterAid would say ‘water and sanitation are women’s issues’. Water is core to women’s lives and when there are water shortages women have to walk for several kilometres to water sources to ensure that they find water for their homes. In so doing they lose several hours and in essence are deprived of their time to engage in other economically empowering enterprises. Women’s roles in the home as care givers often interferes with their work outside the home and in so doing women are poorer for it.

In deciding to focus on women who work outside the home, I recognised that often when women work outside the home, they still have to undertake household tasks. This has been described by some feminist scholars as the ‘dual burden’. Women who work outside the home, carry out the majority of household tasks and care for children engage in what is called the ‘triple-shift’ (Delphy and Leonard, 1992). Faced with recent rampant water shortages urban women are forced to find a balance between their work in and outside the home and the search for water. Usually it is their work outside the home that ends up being sacrificed yet it is that very work that provides women with a way to economic empowerment. The majority of women in Zimbabwe have little prospects of being formally employed because they often lack requisite educational qualifications. This is the case because in the past parents preferred to educate their sons rather than their daughters. In addition, little formal employment is
available because of the country’s current poor economic performance. As such most women have to survive on the informal sector mostly as sole traders especially in the vending business. The same woman has roles to play in the home and in most homes work is gendered and collecting of water is a woman’s job. The gendered nature of work in the home thus negatively impacts on the right to earn a living through work.

It is against this background that this research is premised on the need to ensure that the right to water is realised as it is fundamental to women who work outside the home in the attainment of their empowerment as a group because water is essential to their ability to earn a living through work.

1.4 Location of the study

This study was conducted in the town of Chitungwiza. Chitungwiza is the largest high density suburb in Zimbabwe and is located about 30 kilometres from the country’s capital city of Harare. The town of Chitungwiza’s population as at the 2012 National Census was pegged at 356,840 people (Zimstats, 2012). The town gained full municipality status in 1996 as it was previously managed under the city of Harare. However, despite the fact that the town has independent municipal status, it does not own an independent water source and relies on the city of Harare for all its water. The Municipality of Chitungwiza buys treated water from the City of Harare and then sells it to its residents through a metred system.

1.5 Research objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

- To find out if the household chores of women working outside the home are increased by water shortages.
- To find out if it is costly for women working outside the home to ensure availability of water in their homes.
- To find out if the schedules for the provision of water from water sources clash with the time and needs of women who work outside the home.
- To find out if the locations of available water sources are insensitive to the water needs and uses of women who work outside the home.
To find out if the water policy framework adequately and effectively addresses the needs of multiple water users including women who work outside the home.

1.6 Research assumptions
Going into this research I had formulated the following assumptions which formed the crux of the research:

1. The household chores of women who work outside their homes are increased by water shortages.
2. It is costly for women who work outside the home to ensure availability of water in their homes.
3. Schedules for provision of water from water sources clash with the times and needs of women who work outside their homes.
4. The locations of available water sources are insensitive to the water needs and uses of women who work outside the home.
5. The water policy framework does not adequately or effectively address the needs of the different multiple water users including working women.

1.7 Research questions
To ensure that whilst I was in the field I would thoroughly explore and make enquiries that were relevant to my research I had to formulate research questions and to ensure coherence in the research, these came from the assumptions above. The research questions were formulated as follows:

1. Are the household chores of women who work outside the home increased by water shortages? (With this question I also had to explore which exact chores.)
2. Is it costly for women who work outside the home to ensure the availability of water in their homes?
3. Do the schedules for the provision of water from water sources clash with the times and needs of women who work outside their homes?
4. Are the locations of available water sources insensitive to the water needs and uses of women who work outside the home?
5. Does the water policy framework adequately and effectively address the needs of the different multiple water users including women who work outside the home?

1.8 Definition of key concepts

‘Women who work outside the home’ is used to describe women who make a living formally or informally away from their places of residence.

‘Economic affordability’ refers to a tariff that is paid by the domestic user and also includes hidden costs that are incurred in getting water. This also includes the price at the point of purchase in addition to recurrent costs. It is also about economic access to water.

‘Time’ refers to the hours and minutes needed to make a round trip to the water source and home.

‘Accessibility’ is defined by the WHO as the availability of at least 20 litres per person per day within a kilometre of a user’s dwelling. Hence, it is all about the physical or geographic access to water.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the theorising of the problem and the delimitation of the study. It was mainly about how the research was to be carried out prior to going into the field and how it was to be guided by both the assumptions and the research questions.
CHAPTER 2

2.0 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction
This study applies a human rights and case study model to the issue of women who work outside the home accessing water in an urban set-up. A case study model in research, according to Soy (1997), emphasizes a detailed ‘contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships’. Another scholar R. K. Yin defines the case study research method as an ‘empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used’ (Yin, 1984: 23). According to human rights law everyone has a universal right to access clean and potable water, yet in reality access is not always guaranteed. Similarly human rights are all about the equality of all human beings regardless of their sex or gender. However, in examining the lived realities of women particularly those whose work takes them away from the home for several hours every day, it is clear that human rights are one thing whilst reality is another.

Water collection is a woman’s job in the home and this has been said to be the case because of their gendered roles as care givers and primary carers (UN Women, 2004). Water is essential to make a home run and without it a home is not liveable. The study seeks to explore the gender dynamics at play in the home and the community with regards to the realisation of the right to water. It also explores the right to water from the perspective of the state and other actors who are the duty bearers of the right to work and how they are faring in meeting their international obligations to fulfil this right. It also explores the nexus between the right to water and the right to earn a living through work and the interrelatedness of these two rights for women who work outside the home and faced with the struggles of searching and collecting water.

2.2 Local legislation
The state of Zimbabwe is a duty bearer in terms of the right to water and it holds the primary responsibility in ensuring that this right is realized. In terms if the Zimbabwean Constitution, the right to safe and potable water is clearly spelt out in Section 77 and in this respect it is a
justiciable right. Thus citizens of Zimbabwe may demand this right from the State and it will be called upon to act towards the realisation of the said right. Women of Chitungwiza should thus call upon the Government of the nation to fulfil its obligation in terms of both international law and the Constitution of Zimbabwe to ensure the realisation of this right.

Several pieces of legislation in Zimbabwe work towards the realisation of the right to water. The Water Act (Chapter 20:24) states that everyone in this country is entitled to water for primary use and to clarify what is meant by water for primary use, the same Act states that this is water for domestic human needs. As such the Water Act and the Constitution complement each other in terms of providing for the right to water.

Section 64(1) of the Public Health Act (Chapter 15:09) states that the local authority has a responsibility to provide sufficient water for drinking and domestic purposes to residents within its locality. It further mandates the local authority to maintain existing water supplies in good order for the effective distribution of a supply of pure water for drinking and domestic use. The Urban Councils Act (Chapter s183) imposes a duty on local authorities to maintain a supply of water within and outside the council area. It also states that the council should take necessary steps to ensure the provision of water services.

Thus these two Acts have in essence placed a duty on the local authority to provide water to their residents. However, the fact that the duty has clearly been placed on the local authority does not absolve the Government from acting to fulfil its mandate to ensure the realisation of the right to water. In reality, the Government remains the primary duty bearer and the local authority acts on its behalf. In line with this duty, the Harare City Council is mandated to maintain a supply of water within and outside the council area and this effectively includes the residents of Chitungwiza.

The local legislation is enough to ensure that water supply continues to flow to residents’ homes yet in actual fact there is no compliance with this legislation. For the first time since Independence, Zimbabwe has included economic, social and cultural rights in its Constitution and this has created an enabling environment for the achievement of these rights. The same Constitution also recognizes the right to work although it is a limited right subject to resources available to the State. Section 24 of it states:
‘The state and all its institutions and agencies of government at every level must adopt reasonable policies and measures, within the limits of the resources available to them, to provide everyone with an opportunity to work in a freely chosen activity, in order to secure a decent living for themselves and their families.’

As such the state of Zimbabwe recognises the importance of both the human right to water and the right to work. On the face of it, this is a very progressive Constitution and it makes these rights justiciable. What remains is the full operation of the state machinery to fully realize these two constitutional rights as they are interlinked for the majority of women in Chitungwiza. With such a progressive Constitution, there is the realisation that economic, social and cultural rights are important in this society and the Government has to work towards ensuring that these rights are fully enjoyed.

2.3 The international right to water

Water is essential to the survival of all life on earth it is one of the rights that a human being is entitled to simply because they are human. The right to water according to UN Factsheet 35 obliges the state to ensure that every one of their citizens has access to a sufficient amount of safe drinking water for personal and domestic uses, in other words, water for drinking, personal sanitation, washing of clothes, food preparation, and personal and household hygiene.

The right to water is incorporated in many human rights treaties and declaration both as an implied or express right from the UDHR; it is implied from the Article which states that everyone has a right to a standard of living adequate to for their health a good living. Water is one of those conditions necessary for the attainment of the above right. Similarly this right can also be inferred from the right to life recognised by the ICCPR. The right to water can also be implied from the ICESCR which provides the right to an adequate standard of living amongst its many rights. As such all the major human rights instruments have in one way or another expressed for all people the right to water. General Comment 15 by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) extensively deals with this right to water and expressly states in Article 6 of the legal bases to the right to water that:

‘Water is required for a range of different purposes, besides personal and domestic uses, to realize many of the Covenant rights. For instance, water is necessary to produce food (right to adequate food) and ensure environmental
hygiene (right to health). Water is essential for securing livelihoods (right to gain a living by work) and enjoying certain cultural practices (right to take part in cultural life). Nevertheless, priority in the allocation of water must be given to the right to water for personal and domestic uses. Priority should also be given to the water resources required to prevent starvation and disease, as well as water required to meet the core obligations of each of the Covenant rights (General Comment 15).’

It is with legal basis in mind that I set out to explore the human right to water for women who work outside Chitungwiza to find whether or not the water woes in the town had impacted on these rights for them, with particular interest to their right to earn a living through work. Key to the discovering of these issues was the principles laid down by the CESCR on the issues of availability, affordability, accessibility and quality. I also interrogated this in light of the fact that the UN has called the years 2005-2015 the International Decade for Action ‘Water for Life’, the aim being to check how committed governments have been to their MDG commitments to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and to stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources.

Key to establishing whether or not women can realise their right to water and to the understanding of how much they do in the home is to analyse the principles of water as stated by the General Comment No 15 (General Comment 15 by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [CESCR]).

2.4 Accessibility

In the light of General Comment 15, accessibility has four overlapping dimensions which are physical, economic, non-discrimination, and information accessibility. Physical accessibility was fundamental to this research in that most households in urban Zimbabwean areas have water available in their homes through water pipes; however, in the recent past these have become dry and no longer provide water. In essence the question arose as to what was physical accessibility. In terms of the Housing Standards Control Act (Chapter 29:08) it is stated that in every dwelling there shall be:

‘(a) an adequate supply of potable water; and
(b) not less than one water point for every unit of twelve occupants or part thereof, situated as to be accessible with reasonable convenience to all the occupants of the dwelling.’
Whilst most homes in the suburb meet this criterion, the problem is not the unavailability of water points; rather it is the unavailability of water from those points due to the non-provision of water by the local authority. Faced with homes with dry taps, accessibility to safe water becomes all about alternative water sources and where they are located. In their joint monitoring program, WHO and UNICEF defined ‘reasonable accessibility to improved water sources’ as being the ‘availability of 20 litres per person per day within one kilometre of the users’ dwelling’. This was for areas where there is no water available in the home. It was noted by the both WHO and UNICEF that water is best made available in the home. Further, the CESCR defined availability as the water supply for each person, which should be sufficient and continuous for personal and domestic uses. These uses ordinarily include drinking, personal sanitation, washing of clothes, food preparation, personal and household hygiene. In order to understand this phenomenon, one had to find out where the water source such as boreholes, protected dug wells were located in the town as these were amongst the list of ‘improved’ water sources in Zimbabwe.

Figure 1: Photograph of an example of an alternative improved water source in Chitungwiza
While physical accessibility is one thing, access also involves the continuity of water supplies. Interruptions to drinking water supply hamper the realisation of the right to water and discontinuous water supplies give rise to many problems including health problems. It also affects individual households in that they may lose out on household income in purchasing water from different sources or in loss of productive time in that a family member especially a woman will have to give up their work and look for ways to secure water for household uses. As such in order for access to water to be achieved, there should be continuous water supplies. For women who work outside the home, accessible water is essential for both their work and their homes. Where water is easily accessible, they can perform their work outside the home free from interruptions when they have to leave their work and go in search of water. Accessible water enables them to manage their time in sync with their needs so that they can fully meet their work goals without having to constantly go in search for water. In so doing their right to earn a living through work is realised.

2.5 Affordability

This can also be said to refer to economic accessibility of water for water users. This is very significant in understanding the human right to water. General Comment 15 states that water, water facilities and services must be affordable for all. The direct and indirect costs and charges associated with securing water must be affordable, and must not compromise or threaten the realization of other Covenant rights. According to Zimbabwe’s Ministry of Local Government water for domestic use is subsidised by the State. However, in the new housing schemes that are being built, the local authorities no longer provide water pipes and this is left to individuals. According to WHO and UNICEF when assessing affordability it is necessary not just to consider the tariff but also costs other than the recurrent ones, for example, the initial acquisition of a connection. Currently in Chitungwiza the cost of a water connection is about US$150. Including these costs in the cost of realising the human right to water helps us to understand the reasons why so many people consider the cost of water to be so unaffordable. It is not the water tariff per se that has to be considered but the costs involved in the original acquisition of water (e.g., the cost of the initial water connection). When water is unaffordable, people may rely on other water sources which may also involve costs to them.
2.5.1 When is water said to be affordable and economically accessible?

Since the Dublin Conference on Water and the Environment (ICWE, 1992) at which water was acknowledged as being an economic good, arguments have arisen as to how water should be priced. Some have argued that water should be priced at its economic value. Others have argued that it is not about cost per se but about recognizing the interests of different water users and about the sustainability of water uses for future generations as well as recognizing and involving women in all levels of water management (Van der Zaag and Savenije). While there is the recognition that water is an essential good needed for the survival of the human race, it is also acknowledged to be an economic good which has a certain value placed on it. With regard to the fact that water undergoes a lot of processes in order to be safe and potable, it has been suggested that there should be a fee levied against water users. However, in terms of General Comment 15, water should be economically accessible and this means that water, and water facilities and services, must be affordable for all. The direct and indirect costs and charges associated with securing water must be affordable, and must not compromise or threaten the realization of other Covenant rights. When poor people are able to get water for a fee that is not too exorbitant and when they are able to pay costs that are associated with using water without compromising other rights, then and only then can water be said to be economically affordable.

2.6 The right to earn a living through work

2.6.1 The Constitutional right

The Constitution of Zimbabwe provides that in Section 24:

‘(1) The State and all institutions and agencies of government at every level must adopt reasonable policies and measures, within the limits of the resources available to them, to provide everyone with an opportunity to work in a freely chosen activity, in order to secure a decent living for themselves and their families.

(2) The State and all institutions and agencies of government at every level must endeavour to secure -

(a) full employment;
(b) the removal of restrictions that unnecessarily inhibit or prevent people from working and otherwise engaging in gainful economic activities;
(c) vocational guidance and the development of vocational and training programmes, including those for persons with disabilities; and
(d) the implementation of measures such as family care that enable women to enjoy a real opportunity to work.

For the first time since Independence, the State has incorporated the right to work in the Constitution as part of a clear and concerted inclusion of economic, social and cultural rights which were not previously part of our law. The inclusion of the right to work is a clear indication that the country is moving in tandem with the rest of the world in recognising that economic, social and cultural rights play an important role in the attainment of other rights whether civil or political. The inclusion of this right in Zimbabwe’s Constitution means that the right can now be adjudicated upon by the Constitutional Court in the event of an infringement.

The inclusion of this right shows that work is important and that the Government is committed to promote, protect and fulfil this important right for its citizenry. It is the culmination of the realisation that work is important for the individual and the country at large because through the exercise of this right, citizens of a nation are able earn a living and by doing so meet their basic human needs. The underlying issue of this right is that while the Government is under a duty to meet its core obligation of realising the right to work, it need not do so immediately but rather progressively. What is important is that the Constitution notes the importance of work for women and calls for the implementation of measures to enable women to enjoy a real opportunity to work.

2.6.2 The international right
Earning a living through work is a human right to engage in productive employment as enshrined in the UDHR which states that ‘everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment and to just and favourable conditions of work and to the protection against unemployment.’ Similarly the ICESCR also recognised this right and stated that the right is all about economic, social and cultural development. It was also stated that work enables people and women in particular the opportunity to be economically emancipated hence there is a need to ensure the protection of this right by providing favourable conditions that enable people to work without interference.
Women are a vulnerable group in society and work for them opens up many opportunities that enhance their development. It also takes from them some of the roles that make them vulnerable to dangers such as violence and discrimination. As such women who work are afforded a way of life that could free them from economic dependency and negative implications of gender. Thus there is a need to protect their right to earn a living so that their livelihoods are secured. According to Beal and Kanji (1999):

‘Livelihoods are understood not only in terms of income earning but a much wider range of activities. These include gaining and retaining access to resources and opportunities, dealing with risk, negotiating social relationships and managing social networks and institutions within households, communities and the city.’

As such livelihoods are essential and need to be secured as they cushion women and avail them with opportunities to sustain their lives.

2.7 The nexus between the right to water and the right to earn a living through work

The Constitution of Zimbabwe recognises both the right to water and the right to work. It does not however, connect the two rights but these are fundamental Constitutional rights. There is recognition that the right to water is a very important human right hence it is part of the ‘fundamental human rights’ in the Constitution. The right to work however was not made part of the fundamental human rights but have been included within the National Objectives which have been defined as national goals towards which a nation policy is addressed (thefreedictionary.com). It is puzzling that the Constitution makes this distinction between the two rights when all human rights are interdependent and indivisible. It is not clear whether the intention of the drafters was to make the right to work a lesser right than the so-called ‘fundamental human rights’.

Since the CESCR stated that water is essential for securing livelihoods (right to gain a living by work) there is a connection between the right to water and the right to earn a living through work. Water is a basic need and every person requires water to survive. Livelihood refers to a person’s means of securing basic necessities and where one cannot access basics such as water they cannot have a secure livelihood. Securing livelihoods is also about dealing with poverty and other vulnerabilities. CARE International defines household livelihood
security as adequate and sustainable access to income and resources to meet basic needs (including adequate access to food, potable water, health facilities, educational opportunities, housing, time for community participation and social integration).

Water is so important to women’s lives and their livelihood that Article 14(2) of CEDAW stipulates that States parties shall ensure women the right to ‘enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to […] water supply.’ It is also important for the state to ensure that there is provision of adequate water because in terms of Article 13(2)(e) of the Women’s Protocol states are required to create conditions to promote and support the occupations and economic activities of women, especially those within the informal sector. The non-provision of water affects women especially those who work in the informal sector and they often lose valuable work hours looking for water.

The right of women to work is also affected by the multiple roles that they play in their lives and in their homes. As such there is also a need to ensure that the burdens that women face in their lives are eased so as to enable them to work toward securing their livelihoods. Article 16 of the SADC Gender Protocol states that states shall conduct time use studies by 2015 and adopt policy measure to ease the burden of multiple roles played by women. Among the many roles women play, it is estimated that in just one day, more than 152 million hours of women’s and girls’ time is consumed performing the most basic task for satisfying the most basic human need — collecting water for domestic use (WHO/UNICEF, 2010). Also according to Gary White, the co-founder of Water.org, the lost productivity of people collecting water is greater than the combined number of hours worked in a week by employees at Wal-Mart, United Parcel Service, McDonald’s, IBM, Target, and Kroger (water.org) showing that where there is non-provision of water, working hours are lost and so are the means for securing livelihoods.

Water.org simply states it at follows:

‘Millions of women are prohibited from accomplishing little more than survival. Not because of a lack of ambition, or ability, but because of a lack of safe water and adequate sanitation. Millions of women and children in the developing world spend untold hours daily, collecting water from distant, often polluted sources, then return to their villages carrying their filled 40 pound jerry cans on their backs.’
2.8 Gender stereotyping

The duty of women to collect water is deeply rooted within the rigid gender-stereotyping thinking and practices and gendered roles of African society where patriarchy is rife. Gender stereotypes have been defined as attitudes, conditions, or behaviours that promote the stereotyping of social roles based on gender and in terms of the African society women are in charge of the domestic sphere. Searching for water is women’s work and this has the effect of discriminating against women. Article 5 of CEDAW urges the elimination of all such stereotypic practices which are most apparent in family life. Due to these gendered roles, women are disadvantaged and often times fail to participate in other spheres of life. As a result, women end up being discriminated against not so much because laws discriminate against them but rather because of their roles in care giving.

In stereotypes, women are generally stereotyped as warm, sociable, interdependent, and relationship-oriented, while men are not (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Langford & MacKinnon, 2000; Williams & Best, 1982). Thus in the performance of their roles, women then tend to perform roles that put their relationships first. In so doing, women who work outside the home have tended to sacrifice their individual needs (such as their work outside their home) in order to satisfy their family needs first. This type of ‘role justification’ contributes to the perceived legitimacy of the status quo by characterising cultural divisions of labour as not only fair but perhaps even natural and inevitable (Jost & Hamilton, 2005). This stereotypical approach has ultimately justified women’s roles and at the end of the day combines with other semi-autonomous social fields, such as religion and culture, to justify women’s roles in society.

When there is no water in the home, women end up losing valuable productive time and in essence their livelihoods are interfered with because there have to abandon everything else and go in search of water. These attitudes have a negative impact on the lives of women and the CEDAW Committee recognised that these ‘traditional attitudes have the effect of subordinating women. Others have also noted that gender stereotypes bolster the system by portraying men and women as “complementary but equal” ’ [Bem and Bem (1970) as quoted in Jost and Kay, 2005].
2.9 Women’s work

Zimbabwe’s economy has been in the doldrums for many years and as such a vast majority of Zimbabweans are not formally employed. Most of the unemployed have tended to work in the informal sector in order to secure their livelihoods. Since women tend to be less educated than men they are placed at a disadvantage when employment opportunities arise. In the colonial era, families preferred to educate boys rather than girls for the reason that the girls would get married and leave their family anyway. As such women in the formal sector are in a minority. In addition the formal sector has recently collapsed leading to high unemployment rates. While there are conflicting statistics about unemployment rates in Zimbabwe, all the figures are very high according to any standard. The government pegs unemployment at 11% (according to Zimstats as quoted in The Herald of December 2013) while some economists who have pegged it at 70%. Women make up the majority of people in the informal sector due to the nature of the economy and according to Kumbirai Katsande, President of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI), Zimbabwe has become a ‘nation of traders’ (IRIN 2012). Women make up the majority of the traders in the low income informal sector mainly because they lack capital to enter the large informal trade and also because they are self-reliant in their trades.

According to Manyanhaire et al. (2007), with the economic and employment crisis deepening in Zimbabwe, most urban dwellers find that vending and other informal activities their sole source of livelihood. Also according to the ILO (2002):

‘Over two-thirds of urban women in Africa take part in the informal sector mainly as vendors because the activity is in most cases the only option open to them to earn an income, while assuming the tasks related to their reproductive roles. This is because the informal sector blends very well with women’s domestic reproductive roles due to its flexibility, low cost of entry and has low skill requirements’ (Cheng, 2005; Dang, 2002; Cohen et al., 2000).

Women have few work opportunities and are ultimately forced to make a livelihood through activities such as vending. The flexibility this type of work affords them, however, suffers greatly under the impact of water shortages and in essence it erodes even further the few opportunities that they have of making a livelihood out of vending and other informal activities. For many women and their families, the informal sector is key to their livelihoods. The importance of the informal sector has been noted by International Labour Organization
(2005) as quoted by The Zimbabwean (2005), which has reported that 3 to 4 million Zimbabweans (the majority of whom are women) earn their living through the informal sector employment and they support another 5 million people.

Since it is clear that women’s work is fundamental to the livelihoods of many families in Zimbabwe, it is important to ensure that their right to work does not suffer adversely due to water shortages in the country.

2.10 Conclusion

The right to water encompasses many other rights including the right to earn a living through work. As a marginalised group, women have fewer opportunities than men to earn a living in Zimbabwe’s formal sector and their main chances of survival mean joining the informal sector. Where the right to water is interfered with, women who earn their living through work are greatly affected and their livelihoods may be destroyed.
CHAPTER 3

3.0 THE METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction
This chapter deals with the framework of the research. It is focused on explaining the various methodologies and research methods that were employed in the course of the research, their usefulness and their limitations.

3.2 Women as a starting point
In order to examine thoroughly the phenomena of water shortages and how they impact the lives of women who work outside the home, I began with the women as my starting point. I went to the town of Chitungwiza and as soon as I arrived I began to see women with containers on their heads and sometimes little babies on their backs. What struck me most was that they were moving in all directions with both full and empty containers. It highlighted just how serious the water problem is in the town. It also showed simply from a cursory glance that these women were using various water sources. This was a Monday morning and the streets of the city were busy with women and children from all walks of life with containers of all shapes and sizes. This sight made me wonder that if this is what happens every day then how does a woman who has to be at work cope. It brought back memories of my own experiences in 2008 when our home in Glen View (in Harare) went for a month without water. At one point the whole suburb and its surrounding residential areas were dry and I could not get water to bath and go to work. I ended up missing work for two days searching for water. What I saw that morning made me want to speak to the women in the town about how water shortages were affecting them and how they were coping. I had to understand their lived realities so that I would be able to analyse their position in law and society as stated by Bentzon et al. (1998). I had to interview the women, the men and the children in this community. I also just had to observe them as they grappled with water shortages and as they struggled to balance their work responsibilities and those at home.

Using the women’s law approach in which women are the starting point was a methodology that enabled me to interact with women and to analyse their experiences through the law. It also allowed me to engage with feminist theories on the experiences of women. Through this
methodology I was able to establish that certain areas in the town had public water sources that they relied on for water in the event of non-provision of piped water while others did not have any public water sources at all. Having established this I then wanted to analyse the situation in both areas to find out how women were coping with their situation. This led me to identify Zengeza and Unit F as communities that had public boreholes nearby and Unit K and St Mary’s which were not serviced by public water sources.

Through this methodology, I was able to find out issues that I had not considered as key in the provision of water such as corruption and political interventions that were at play. I was able to get deeper insights into women’s everyday lives and their struggles to ensure that homes have water and that their work does not suffer. I gathered empirical data that enabled me to assess what the state was or was not doing to fulfil its obligations to provide water and it also gave me insights into the work of the Municipality of Chitungwiza and its role as the authority mandated with the provision of water for residents of Chitungwiza. I was also able to engage with how issues of culture and religion impact on women’s work, including the fetching of water. It was also through this process that issues of class stratification were brought out and how different classes of women engaged with water shortages differently.

As these core theoretical concepts began to emerge through the methodology, I began to understand that my assumptions were not conclusive and that all these issues that were emerging needed to be interrogated through key informants who are central to those issues such as the politicians and the local government.

3.3 The actors and structures
I sought to interact further with the information that I had gathered from my interviews with the women and men of Chitungwiza and this was possible through interaction with key informants. This was essential to corroborate and to give the research a broader dimension from the people who implemented policies in the town. I sought the interventions that the local council was making to improve water provision in the town. These included finding out its short and long term plans. It also called upon me to find out what had caused these shortages and how they could have been avoided. The other major reason I sought to speak with the local authority official was because my fifth assumption was that the water policy framework does not adequately or effectively address the needs of the different multiple
water users, including working women. As the local authority is the office that deals with water issues I felt it could give me greater insights into this. The reasoning behind my assumption was that I felt the water policy was divorced from the realities on the ground particularly those of women. I also assumed that the other reason why the water policy was ineffective was because of the political divide in councils which are made up of two political parties who do not always see eye to eye. I reasoned that the implementation of policy may be hampered by possible political polarisation. The key actors and structures were the best sources to find out about such issues.

3.4 Gender analysis

Gender analysis entails looking at how a phenomenon affects men and women differently (Bonthuys and Albertyn, 2007). Water shortages are a reality that affects both men and women and both sexes are often engaged in work that takes them from home for most of the day. In order to find out how both sexes’ work was affected by these water shortages I constantly had to engage with both men and women. One area that I found very easy to carry out this analysis was at boreholes where both men and women fetched water and I would often interview them to find out to what use they intended to put the water they were fetching. It also led me to deal with the issue of the intra-household cost of water provision and also the issue of the division of labour in the home.

Gender has been described as a socially constructed set of roles and behaviours that have been are used to define who is a woman and who is a man (Bonthuys and Albertyn, 2007). The collection of water for the home has essentially been women’s work but this has been the case mainly in rural areas. In doing a gender analysis of water collection roles in the urban areas, I sought to see how the urban centres had grappled with this situation and whether there were any gendered roles in the urban areas. If the situation was the same as that in the rural areas what were the gender dynamics? And if it was not, what had caused the change in the gendered nature of the roles played?

It called on me to talk to my respondents about their interventions at the household level and how each person contributed to the availability of water in the home. I was also required to find out whether this work was considered important and the reasons why certain people did the work. I had to engage with men as members of the household and how they saw this
important work of water provision. What I observed was that women (both those who worked outside and inside the home) and children were the ones who were fetching water at the boreholes as compared with males and that for the women the water was mainly for household uses. They usually collected water in small containers, mainly 20-25 litre buckets and 5litre water bottles, and they carried these on their heads. Men, however, came to fetch water with some mode of transport for carrying the water and it was mainly for commercial purposes. Women who worked outside the home usually fetched water in the early hours of the day sometimes before 6 a.m. and late in the evenings because these were the times when they were able to do because of their work schedules.

This revealed to me the gendered uses of water in the community and the multiple uses of water by both sexes. It made me seek to probe why this was so. This methodology helped me to interact with issues of division of labour in the home and intra-household costs involved in the process of bringing water into the home when there is no provision of piped water.

### 3.5 Human rights approach

The human rights approach to research entails the integration of human rights standards and principles into an issue of development. Through the use of the human rights approach, I sought to find out the Zimbabwean state’s compliance with the human right to water with particular regard to women who work outside the home and how their right to earn a living through work is compromised by the denial of the right to water in the town of Chitungwiza.

#### 3.5.1 International obligations

The UN CESCR adopted General Comment 15 on the right to water in 2003 which laid out the obligations of the state with regard to the realisation of the right. It clearly states that there must be sufficient and continuous water supply for personal and domestic use if the right to water is to be met. It further states that at the very least, the state ensure that there is a minimum amount of water provided to its people. Throughout the research period, I sought to interrogate the situation on the ground and how the state was meeting its obligation to this right to water and if it was complying with its international obligations particularly to women who work outside the home. In looking at the right to water, General Comment 15 mentions women as a special group that the government has to look out for and ensure that their right
to access water is realised. The state also has a duty to ensure that women do not disproportionately shoulder the burden of accessing potable water.

To gain information on the compliance or non-compliance of the state with its international obligations I had to speak to the women and men on the town to find out what the situation on the ground was. It was only after obtaining that information that I could assess whether or not the state was in compliance with its obligations to the right to water as provided by various international human rights instruments that it has ratified. These included CEDAW, the Women’s Protocol and the SADC Protocol all of which deal with women’s rights to water and its related rights.

It also entailed that I also talk with and interview the local council official on their responsibilities to the right as the water service provider working on the ground on behalf of the state. I had an interview with the mayor of the town and a focus group discussion with some female councillors in the town to see how the right to water was being compromised and what was needed for it to be fully realised.

General Comment 15 also expressly states that the right to water is essential for securing livelihoods through the right to gain a living by work. For many women in this country, owning a business or being employed is a dream that they have held for most of their lives and in an economy such as Zimbabwe’s, it is a success story for a woman to be earning a living. It was one of my assumptions that water shortages impacted negatively on women’s right to earn a living. I sought to find this link between the right to water and the right to work in the field by enquiring from various women in what way/s their work was affected by the lack of water in the town. I had assumed that women lost the precious time that they could have invested in their work by spending a lot of their time in queues for water and in searching from water from various sources. I was particularly looking out for sole proprietors in order to understand how the two rights intersect and how women are affected by all this.

3.6 Data collection methods

In order to conduct the research properly, I had to employ different data collection methods in order to fully explore the issues that arose in this research and in order to conduct a coherent
piece of research. Different respondents required different data collection methods in order to find the information researched and also to make the conversations more fruitful.

### 3.6.1 Random sampling

The respondents in this research were randomly picked for various reasons amongst which diversity was important. I randomly picked my respondents from various places during the research from people I met on the commuter omnibus to people I met on the streets. Some of the respondents were women who worked outside their homes and others worked in their homes. This enabled me to assess the differences in their water needs and their differing coping mechanisms to water shortages in the town. I specifically targeted areas such as shopping centres to find women who trade in the informal sector. It was a method that I found very effective because various people led me to various places from our conversations. In the field this method worked very well because all the people I spoke to had had to deal with water shortages and had experienced disruptions in their lives due to water shortages. The method was also cheap to utilise as it did not require a pre-arranged sample that could have become expensive. It also enabled me to speak to people whom I felt cold accommodate me as I chose people I felt had time to speak to me from residential areas, shops and even at boreholes as they fetched water.

### 3.6.2 Interviews

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Female working outside the home</th>
<th>Female working from home</th>
<th>Male</th>
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</thead>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit K</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit F</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1: Interviews carried out during the research period**

After randomly selecting my respondents, I conducted interviews with them during which I would ask key questions from my research questions and we would discuss the issues and the solutions that the respondents saw fit to fix the water problems once and for all. It was an
interactive process during which I let the respondent speak with minimum interruption so as to ensure that they said everything that they felt was important. Through the use of interviews respondents were able to give me their personal experiences and their lived reality and what they felt about the situation and who they felt was responsible for the water situation in the town. During the interviews we spoke about their work both inside and outside the home and how it was faring considering the water shortages in the town. We also spoke about their roles in the home and to what extent those roles had been affected by the water shortages.

In conducting the interviews I first had to establish a good rapport with the interviewees and this was mainly done through asking them what the current water situation was like. Because water is an issue that has caused a lot of suffering in the town it was very easy to speak to the people. After just general water talk I asked them about their personal information, such as age, marital status and whether or not they were employed. I would then ask them about their household chores and whose responsibility it was to get water, buy water storage containers and where they usually fetched water. This was to done to find out how individual households operated and what gender roles were at play in their households.

The other key issues that I would ask about were household chores that required the use of water and how these were conducted in light of the water shortages. We would also speak about the amount of water that was needed per day to ensure that the household ran smoothly. Then we would talk about the schedules for water provision and how these were affecting the women in the event that they were and what they thought about these schedules. We also spoke about other water sources that they would use, how far these were from their homes and whether or not that water was available for free. When they indicated that they had to pay for water, we then spoke about whose responsibility it was to pay for such water.

It was also apparent from these interviews that there was a need to store water and we spoke about the various storage containers that I saw the respondents using both in their homes and at public water points, how much they cost and who in the home had financed their purchase. We also spoke of the quantities that were needed to ensure smooth running of their homes. At the end of the interviews, I would ask the respondents if they had anything to add to the issues that we had been discussing.
3.6.3 Focus group discussion
Depending on the group that I was meeting focus group discussions were held at the homes of respondents that I had met in different places. Two were held at the home of the chairperson of the CHIRA and one at the Chitungwiza Municipal offices. Since most of the women I intended to speak with were women who had time constraints due to their work schedules we met on Saturday and Sunday afternoons; those in the formal sector were not at work on these days so it was a convenient time to meet with them. The structure of the focus group discussions was very similar to that of the interviews and it was a good method to use because they had both men and women and diverse views always came up. Some of the views expressed by members of the group were debated by others and this gave the research a sharper edge. What I found very interesting from the discussions was that men were very sympathetic to the plight of women and agreed that time spent fetching water was too much valuable time lost during which other income-generating projects could be carried out. They also noted that they hardly ever went to fetch water at the public boreholes but they concluded that it was a hard job that women faced. Digging deeper into their reluctance, it emerged that this was an aspect of culture that men cannot do women’s work.

3.6.4 Observations
Often whilst moving around the town I would observe a number of things such as the number of people at different boreholes at different times and at what times they were most and least visited. I noted that there was very high activity at boreholes in the mornings from around 6.30 to 8.00 a.m. and in the evenings from around 5 to 8 p.m. There was very little activity at the boreholes in the afternoons but the weather could have had something to do with this since the afternoons were extremely hot. I also observed how when water provision resumed people in the town would stop all activities to ensure that they filled up all their containers. Such observations made my interviews richer because I would ask them about an issue I had observed. I also observed how the youths responded to water shortages and how they would be milling around public boreholes without necessarily fetching water. I also noticed how water was recycled to ensure that no water is wasted. After doing laundry, water was not thrown away but kept so the toilets could be flushed and what remained of gardens watered.

This method was critical in helping me to understand the difficulties faced by people in the town and how they had crafted their lives to fit around the water situation. It allowed me to
make conclusions about life in the town and not to simply rely on what I read in newspapers or saw on television.

3.6.5 Desk research
This was a method that I used to get general knowledge on the issue of water shortages in the country at large and in Chitungwiza in particular. This gave me background knowledge of the issues that people in the town were facing and informed my research design. This data represented the tip of the iceberg of issues I was to explore and was not relied on as much as the actual data that was collected in the field.

3.7 Conclusion
This chapter was all about the journey in the field and how methods of data collection and methodologies worked together to enable me to assemble the evidence for the research. This was a qualitative methodology that focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of how women who work outside the home struggle to balance their domestic and work demands within the context of water shortages.
CHAPTER 4

4.0 MAIN FINDINGS AND ANALYSES

4.1 Introduction
This chapter discusses the main findings of the research and in doing so I will look at the findings in the light of the laws of Zimbabwe, the human rights instruments applicable and the feminist theories that critique the findings. It is an in-depth analysis of how women whose work takes them away from home have had to juggle their work in the home as well as balance it with their work outside amid the water shortages that have bedevilled Chitungwiza. In this same chapter, a discussion of the emerging issues will also be considered.

4.2 A case of women working in the informal sector
The informal sector employs a vast majority of women in Zimbabwe and these appeared to be the hardest hit by the water shortages. Nyarai, a home industry cook I met at Chirunga Shopping Centre, noted that her line of business requires the use of water for cleaning and cooking and for patrons for drinking. The problem is that in Unit K there are no functioning boreholes and she constantly relies on the generosity of the people who live nearby who have wells. She lamented that when there is no water in the neighbourhood she loses the time that she needs to invest in her business to go and look for water. She also stated that when the neighbourhood receives no water, she, as the female in her home, has to get up early to fetch water for household use before she leaves for her work place. In her own words she described this as follows:

‘I get up as early as 4:30 a.m. and look for water for domestic use for my family. My father has to bath and eat before he goes to work and my two little brothers also have to eat and bath before they go to school. I have to ensure that all this is taken care of before I leave for the market to get fresh supplies for the business otherwise I will get expensive vegetables if I delay.’

She noted that several times she has lost early business because she has not cooked anything by the time patrons visit her cooking stand and she has ended up losing out on business opportunities.
She also indicated that at certain times when water is restored she has to leave her stand to go and do laundry at home which has piled up over several days because she fears that if she does not do so the water might be switched off again by the time she gets home.

Nyarai noted that her business is her source of livelihood and her family also depends on her income but she is also the only female in her home having lost her mother. She indicated that her family relies on her to do all the household chores for them and that because of the water shortages she finds it tough to balance her work inside the home with her work outside the home. She added that she has had to use some of her proceeds from her business venture to buy several containers to store water both at home and at her business stand:

‘For my business to thrive I have to have water always, for washing up the dishes, cooking and for my patrons to drink. This means I constantly have to go to the nearest water source but in Unit K there is no public borehole. I may end up spending more than an hour at the well I source water, and this is valuable time that I need to put up in my business.’

This situation, she said, has resulted in the loss of customers who seek food elsewhere when they do not find any at her stand. She further indicated that the well she uses for her water collection is closed at 7 p.m. and if she still has customers at the stand, she has to utilise water sources which she has to pay for. Nyarai noted that she has low profits from her business and she cannot afford to be paying for water from elsewhere.

According to Chitungwiza Council’s water provision schedules, Unit K only receives water on Fridays and Saturdays. For the rest of the week residents have to rely on water that they have collected from elsewhere or harvested from the two days when water is supplied. This requires good storage facilities and huge storage containers. Nyarai stated that she cannot afford to buy these containers as they are too expensive for her. She needs at least US$50 and she indicated that whilst they would go a long way in alleviating the impact of the water shortages on her business, her profit margins are too low to enable her to purchase the containers.

Similar to Nyarai’s story is that of a vendor from Zengeza who indicated that she only gets water weekly on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. In order to get through the rest of the week she said she has to use a nearby borehole for her water supply. However, during the time of the
research, the borehole had broken down and the nearest borehole to her was almost 2 kilometres away.

According to the vendor, her business has suffered a lot due to the water situation prevailing in the town. She indicated that she sells vegetables to look after her family of four and due to the current economic hardships, business is low. It has, however, taken a turn for the worst for her because she constantly has to leave her vending stall to go and look or water for household use and also for use at the stall:

‘I have very young children of school going age; their uniforms have to be washed everyday if they are to be presentable. I have to get water for everyday laundry and carry out cleaning duties amongst them cleaning the toilet.’

This she noted requires a lot water to ensure that the toilet is very clean. She indicated that cleaning duties are done every week and whenever she is on duty, she sacrifices her business time in order to do this duty. She stated that when water is available it takes less than 30 minutes to clean the yard and the toilet thoroughly but in the event of the non-availability of water it takes up to as much as two hours:

‘I have to be at the Jambanja Market very early to get the best bargains at the same time I have to take care of my home responsibility. This situation is not good for my business at all. By the time I get to the market, the farmers will be gone and I will be forced to get farm produce from more expensive third parties.’

Thus, women in the informal sector indicated that water was critical to their businesses and also to their livelihoods, that the water shortages had impacted on their businesses and that their livelihoods were in jeopardy. Due to the water shortages, the women in the informal sector constantly lost valuable working time searching for water for both their homes and their work needs. This impacted on their right to earn a living as losses in their business have adverse effects on their lives.

A lady vendor also indicated that because the nearest borehole to her had broken down, she sometimes had to leave her stall to search for water for her home during the day. She noted that this was not good for her business, because she lost customers who would have wanted to make purchases at those times. She also indicated that vending was a very personal
business and she had customers to whom she extended credit facilities but if they found that she was not available, they went elsewhere. Water shortages in this regard were negatively impacting on her right to earn her living from her work:

‘Kana kusina mvura ndinotosiya musika ndombeya neChitungwiza kuti ndiiwane. Apa macustomer anenge achinditsvaga achida madomasi. Saka kuraskirwa kwega kwega.’
(Translation: ‘When there is no water supply, I leave my vending stall and move around Chitungwiza neighbourhood so I can find it. My customers will be looking for me wanting to purchase tomatoes. This results in losses on my part.’)

In the discussion with the women in the informal sector, the majority of them noted that it would be ideal if there were more public water sources such as boreholes in their areas. They thought that if these were increased, they would spend less time walking long distances in search of water and also the ratio of users to boreholes would decrease.

4.2.1 Water affordability for women in the informal sector
Women in the informal sector noted that they could pay the water tariff as prescribed by the local authority. They noted that water bills were not very high as most were tenants who shared the cost of water bills. What is not affordable for these women are the storage facilities since water shortages required them to harvest water for use when it was not available. Large storage containers were very expensive and cost between US$45 and US$65. The majority of the women that I spoke to said that their monthly profit was below US$100 and this had to cover their household needs and sustain their businesses. Therefore, they could hardly afford to pay US$60 for a 220 litre container. They were left with no option but to buy small inexpensive containers that they could use to store water. One lady had this to say:

‘With the little money I earn, I can hardly meet my monthly needs including the water tariff and I could never afford a huge container regardless of how it would improve my water situation.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>COST (US$)</th>
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<tr>
<td>20 litre (without lid)</td>
<td>$2</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 litre (with lid)</td>
<td>$3</td>
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<tr>
<td>220 litre (unclean)</td>
<td>$45</td>
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<tr>
<td>220 litre (clean)</td>
<td>$60</td>
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Table 2: Showing the size and cost of various water containers used in the home

Women in the informal sector noted that they do indeed have a more flexible working schedule than their counterparts in the formal sector. They said, however, that while they try to attend to their businesses whenever it is at its busiest (which for vendors occurs in the evenings) this is often the very time they are forced to leave their businesses to search for water for household uses such as cooking and for use the next day. One vendor at St. Mary’s stated that:

‘I have a shorter working day now because of the water situation. I have to leave my market before sunset so that I can go to the borehole before too many people get there. There is only one borehole in St. Mary’s and when we go for many days without water it can become chaotic.’

She also stated that she has to do it on her own because she cannot pay anyone else to fetch water for her because she cannot afford it as she is making too little money from her business and she can hardly afford to put aside extra money from the little that she earns. So she has to sacrifice her time for her business for her household duties. There are people, mainly unemployed youths, who uses carts to fetch water at a cost of ZAR5 per 20 litre bucket. She stated that she needs at least eight 20 litre buckets for domestic use including cooking and bathing each day and this amounts to US$4 per day.

A lot of other costs are incurred particularly by women in their quest to ensure that their homes have sufficient water. It is only when a thorough gendered understanding of what water shortages really mean to these women can we begin to understand the extremely heavy burden of these costs.
Figure 2: Photograph of buckets that women in the informal sector use for both their home and business needs

4.3 Balancing work and home

Agarwal (1994), as quoted in Derman et al. (2007), argues that the household represents an arena of both conflict and co-operation where access to resources is continually negotiated. In this arena, bargaining power is based on the extent to which a person’s claims are seen as socially and legally legitimate. Women who work outside the home are also faced with home needs and have to strike a balance between their household needs and those of their work. They are constantly negotiating to strike a balance between these two competing needs. This is proving rather difficult for women in a patriarchal society, a society in which men are the head of their households and households which are also facing water shortages. This is because, in the first place, water uses in the home are gendered and women, whether they work in or outside the home, are faced with their roles as wives and mothers and have to play these roles for society to recognize them as good women. There is a general perception in society that women’s work is not important. Therefore, while women are expected to and will sacrifice their work time, men will not. This is because society regards women as ‘the other’ while men are considered ‘the essential’, as stated by de Beauvoir. For women in the informal sector, balancing the work they do in their homes and work places will never be balanced as long as society continues to assign gender roles. Women will sacrifice their business endeavours for the sake of looking for water for their families because, according to
Gilligan as quoted in Scott (1986), they make moral choices that are contingent on contexts and relationships, hence, they put others’ needs before their own.

4.4 A case of women in the formal sector

Locating women in the formal sector was much harder than those in the informal sector because most of them worked in Harare but with the help of CHIRA I was able to meet a number of women in the formal sector.

They also stated that water shortages in urban areas have played into the hands of the power dynamics in the home and they have had to take up water responsibilities and this, too, has impacted on their time. Working women have become burdened with chores that previously did not exist in urban areas. Working women have not been spared. One lady that I spoke to called Linda, a security guard, spoke of her struggle to get water particularly because of her working hours. She has to report for work in Harare at 6.00 a.m. every morning and she only leaves work at 6.00 p.m in the evening. She has little time in the mornings to get water so all her water needs have to be taken care of in the evenings. She indicates that by the time she arrives at home in the evening the borehole which is nearest to her home in a school yard at Chinembiri Primary School is already closed and so she has to travel further to the library to fetch water for her family. This water supply schedule clashes with the times when she is free to collect water. Whenever she is free to collect water from the borehole nearest her home it is closed.

She further indicated that she earns US$200 per month and this is not enough to contract anyone else to fetch water for her. She said:

‘The money is not enough for my family needs and even when it costs US$5 per week it is money I cannot afford.’

For this reason she indicated that she would spend the night doing laundry and cleaning her home so that she does not spend any money that she could save. She said the situation impacted on her work because she is too tired to perform her work properly. She felt that there was an urgent need to address the water woes in Chitungwiza and she feared losing her job if she gets caught sleeping on the job because of being tired from the work she does at home.
Shamiso, a receptionist in Harare, stated that in her home she was the one who was responsible for all the containers that were used in the kitchen. She also stated that these containers are not very strong and constantly break and have to be replaced. Hence, the cost was a recurring one for her. She also said that they were never enough of these containers in the home and she constantly found herself buying more and more. Water storage costs are not a one-off expense, women constantly have to buy containers and women who worked outside the home said that their husbands expected them to meet these expenses since, after all, they work and earn a living.

4.4.1 The different classes of women in the formal sector

During the research of women in the formal sector it was discovered that they came from different classes and had different needs; in other words, women in formal employment are not a homogenous group. Although they all expressed that water woes adversely affected them, unlike the women in the informal sector, they coped differently with the phenomena and their work was affected differently.

4.4.1.1 Lower class formally employed women

This group was composed of women who had a monthly income of up to US$250 per month. They were engaged in various occupations from hairdressers to security guards, and they noted that the water situation was tough on them because they have rigid work schedules that they have to follow and they earn very low incomes, which means that they cannot afford to employ people to fetch water for them. As such, they were in a situation similar to that of women in the informal sector. They also felt that, unlike their counterparts in the informal sector, they could not leave their work to go and fetch water. They have to cope by searching for water at night and also by doing chores, such as laundry, at night. They stated that it was a difficult situation and they sometimes found themselves sleeping at work.

They noted that boreholes were far away from their homes and feared for their security at night but they have no option since they are the ones tasked with looking for water in their households. They said they had no option at all but to walk at night to search of water for their homes. They sacrificed their time to rest for the sake of their homes and families.
4.4.1.2 Middle class formally employed women

Middle class women were mainly teachers and nurses and they stated that they have found themselves spending more and more money to ensure that they have water in their homes. Due to time constraints they said they cannot make it to the borehole every time and as such have to rely on other water players such as the mushrooming water entrepreneurs in the town. They are usually unemployed youths whom they pay to fetch water for their homes for a fee. Usually they charge ZAR5 per 20 litre bucket depending on where they fetch water. They also rely on these entrepreneurs because of the water schedules. One teacher indicated that sometimes water is restored at midnight and at their home it is the unwritten law of the landlord and tenant relationship that the landlord fetches water before anybody else. She said that given this situation, she would not bother waking up after midnight; she would rather get someone to fetch water for her at a price. She said she normally pays the young unemployed youths in her area 50cents per 20 litres. She indicated that the cost of paying these youths for water was more bearable than being up at night herself exposed to all sorts of night-time evils. She said that youths in the area were taking advantage of this water crisis and cashing in on people who could not fetch their own water for various reasons, including women who had to work most of the day away from home. The youths usually move around collecting containers from the people in the community and source water at public boreholes or from industrial areas with carts. Women in the formal sector who also work outside the home also noted that it was difficult to hire domestic helpers in the town because they are afraid of the water situation. Mrs. Kamoto whom I spoke to in one of the focus group discussions stated:

‘Maids now first enquire whether you have a well at your home. If you do not have a well, they will expect to be paid more because of the harsh working conditions which require them to constantly go to the borehole. So we are paying out more for maids because of this situation.’

Further, women who worked outside the home also stated that at the household level, costs that were to do with the water situation were met by them and not their husbands. This was because men knew that they (the women) made some money and were not willing to finance projects that were in the women’s domain.

Younger women with small children also noted that the situation was expensive for them because they had to fork out money for diapers instead of conventional nappies that are
washed each day, because of the water shortages. They sometimes buy them in bulk for up to US$20 per month or as needed at US$1 for 2 or 3, depending on their quality.

4.4 Different women, different realities

In analysing the cases of women in the formal and informal sectors, it was apparent that water shortages have also magnified the class based inequalities between women in the town of Chitungwiza. While many people consider that women who are formally or informally employed or just making a living somehow outside their homes are a privileged lot, the reality on the ground was that their lot is not so rosy. The fact is that the water experiences of women who work outside the home could not be essentialized. They have far if not parallel lived realities.

Class stratification determined how a woman accessed water: while many women were forced to spend many hours walking to get water, a significant number were spared this experience. Wealthier working women did not have to collect water on their own. They relied mostly on their maids in their homes or paid people to fetch water for them. They did not necessarily have to ask to collect water from other sources but relied mostly on their own income to cover such costs. In this class, those who had motor vehicles used them to transport the water from various places such as their workplaces, their friends from other suburbs who had running water. They also involved their spouses in the collection of water, as men with vehicles appeared not to mind performing water collection duties for their homes. Of this group, those who owned their own homes had actually drilled wells and managed to grow flourishing gardens with flowers whilst the rest of the community was not so lucky. They also had various large containers in their homes and they could use these for the day-to-day running of their homes.

Their poorer counterparts were not so fortunate and they had to rely on their own strength to carry large buckets of water on top of their heads and walk for several kilometres to the nearest water source.

What I found very striking was the men’s involvement in the collection of water. Men from seemingly wealthier households who had some form of transport to get water from the collection source to their homes had no problem doing so, whilst men who had no form of
transport did not do any form of water collection for their own homes. Men seemed to be embarrassed to be seen carrying water on their person for household use and feared societal disapproval, yet those same men did not mind fetching water for other people’s households for a fee. There seemed to be no explanation for this discord in the men’s behaviour but it could be explained by the gendered roles men and women play in the home. Water for a commercial value was seen as being commensurate with men’s position in society, but water for their own household was not, unless they had a vehicle and could hide their sharing of a new and traditionally female household role.

4.5 Lack of an independent water reticulation facilities

Speaking to various people in the town of Chitungwiza, they lament the fact that the town has no independent water source and that it is their reliance on another local authority that worsens their situation. They are of the view that City of Harare does not consider their plight and it does not consider Chitungwiza its responsibility, that is why water provision is very erratic and its scheduling very poor and inconsiderate to women, particularly those that work outside their homes. They stated that the water situation can only improve if there is an independent water source solely for Chitungwiza.

They blame the colonial legacy that considered Chitungwiza a dormitory town and that Harare would meet all the needs of its workers. They state that there was a lack of foresight because whilst Harare was expanding, so too was Chitungwiza, yet town planners could not see that in light of these developments there was a need to ensure that Chitungwiza would eventually become independent of Harare. They also stated that Chitungwiza is actually charging them more than Harare charges its residents. They stated the best way for Chitungwiza to deal with issues of water shortages once and for all was for the town to construct a dam and a water reticulation system for its water needs. They could then buy water elsewhere if this was not enough.

These sentiments were echoed by the Town Engineer as well as the Mayor who stated that plans are underway for the town to construct a dam and they had found a good spot on the Harava River for the construction of a dam. What was hampering progress was that the town was financially unsound and it was owed a lot of money by its residents. They also stated that the move by the central Government to write off debts owed the Council by its residents had
worsened the situation for them as they were left without any revenues, yet they owed other service providers, including the Harare City Council, a lot of money. They said they were approaching a number of organisations, including NGOs, for funding for the construction of the dam.

4.6 Irregular and erratic water supply schedules

Chitungwiza town is very unique in that, according to the Town’s Mayor, it is the only local authority in the country without its own water source. It relies on the city of Harare for its entire water supply. Lately, however, Harare has also been battling with its own water shortages and as such cannot provide the water that Chitungwiza needs for its residents. According to its Engineer, the town requires 40 mega litres per day, yet the city of Harare only manages to supply half of that. The arrangement between Harare and Chitungwiza is that Chitungwiza pays the City of Harare before water is supplied and this has proved rather difficult for the town as its authorities allege that it is financially constrained as its own residents are failing to pay. They also claim that it lost a lot of money when central Government requested it to cancel all debts that it was owed by its residents. As a result it is failing to pay for water from Harare. This results in interrupted water schedules in the town. When the town fails to pay, Harare simply disconnects its water supply resulting in the prolonged non-provision of water to the residents of Chitungwiza and this can go on for months on end.

Consequently, the residents of the town have to rely on other water sources. Women who spend their time working outside the home have to find ways to ensure that they get water to their homes. It was stated that a certain times water is only available from midnight until around 4 a.m. and women are often up in the middle of the night to check whether the water is available to do their laundry and to fetch water for the rest of the time when it is no longer available. By doing so women lose out hours of rest to water demands. Women are impoverished when it comes to time because they work for very long hours because they have no choice. They have little time for anything else and for those who run their own business, they often suffer because the woman invests less time in the business and more time in the home.
In trying to find out why water is erratic, the local authority also stated that it is losing almost half of the treated water that it purchases to burst and old water pipes hence there is always less water provided than what is demanded. The local authority has no money to refurbish its water pipes and they are very old and rusty and constantly burst. This results in certain areas failing to get water at all. However, the local authority has devised a method of ensuring that each area gets water as fairly as possible by, for example, diverting water from one area to other area through the closing and opening of valves or water rationing. During the research period it was clear that the Council officials were adhering to this routine of ensuring that each area receives water for at least two days per week. However, high-lying areas often failed to get water because its system has little pressure and water often fails to reach these areas. Women in these high-lying areas could be seen at the boreholes even when their areas had water. I remember seeing a certain lady wearing her work uniform at the borehole in the evening and she stated that she had just come home only to find that her house and a few others in the area were not receiving water when everyone else had water. She said that she had no option but to visit the borehole that evening to ensure that she would leave for work in the early hours of the day knowing that her home had water. Such uneven distribution of water meant that some women depended solely on public boreholes which meant that often they could not get water during hours convenient to them.

Some public boreholes are not always available to the public at certain hours because of their location. One such borehole is the Chinembiri School borehole. The borehole is available to the public but it is located in the school yard. It can only be accessed during the day and when the school premises are closed no one can access it. The hours that people can access it are not convenient for those women who are at work during the day and wish to access water at night. They will have to find alternative water sources which are often very far from their homes and night time is not safe to be very far from home. This is not the only borehole that is not available around the clock. Some of the privately owned water sources are also closed during the early and late hours of the day which are the only times when some women will be able to access them. One lady stated that in her area water is usually available during the day. This, however, is the very time she is at work and her children are too young to fetch the water for her. Therefore, because of this she often loses the opportunity to get water because the time when it is available clashes with her work schedule.
Various women who work outside the home that I spoke to stated that the issue of water scheduling was poorly managed and they felt that the people responsible did not fully understand the ripple effects that their scheduling had on their lives, particularly for their type of work and for the time they needed to rest. One lady stated that it was men who handled these things and therefore they do not necessarily see the implications of women waking up in the middle of the night to do laundry. She said night was meant for sleeping and rest and not for fetching water. She even observed, rather astutely:

‘Mvura yacho inogouya sei pakati peusiku, yagove muroyi here?’
(Translation: ‘Why is the water available in the middle of the night, as if it’s a witch?’)

4.7 Whose water is it anyway?
According to the local authority, Chitungwiza has 44 boreholes in various areas. Most of these boreholes are situated in Seke North which has a total population of 133,000 people, meaning that each borehole supplies water to almost 500 people. This is followed by Seke South which has 18 boreholes and 105,000 people or 600 people to each borehole. Zengeza has 9 boreholes and 106,000 people (or one borehole to 12,000 people) while St. Mary’s population of 85,000 must make do with only one borehole. The reason advanced for St Mary’s having only the one borehole is that they almost always have piped water. Based on the above statistics, it is quite clear that the available public water sources are far from adequate. As to why these boreholes came to be in certain areas and why some areas have more boreholes than others, various respondents had various theories and it was clear from the outset that there was a lack of consultation in this area.

According to the local authorities when boreholes are sited, they consider various issues one of which is the ‘yield capacity’ of the borehole, an engineering term that refers to how much water can be extracted safely from the particular borehole. They also consider the period in which that borehole can be operated without drying up. They also look at the soil properties of the borehole, one of which is the quality of the soil as well as the rate of contamination of the soil in the area so as to ensure that the borehole produces clean and safe water. The Engineer also stated that they consider the proximity of the borehole to its users as well as the availability of piped water in the area. Hence, places such as St. Mary’s have only one borehole, while others have many boreholes.
According to the residents, boreholes were drilled in the country by UNICEF at the height of the cholera outbreak in areas that were deemed vulnerable to the outbreak. Other boreholes were drilled by MPs with CDF money but many residents felt that they did so more for political gain than anything else. The chairperson of CHIRA stated that it was because of this that some areas have more boreholes than others and it was also the reason why some boreholes do not have water. They were not properly sunk in good areas.

I then asked where were the women in all this. All the women stated that, despite the fact that they were a major stakeholder in this water issue, they were never consulted about the drilling of boreholes and that they only woke up to find that there were boreholes in certain areas after they had already been done and some of them were drilled far from their homes. Women who worked outside their home complained about the inaccessibility of public boreholes as well as the numbers of people accessing each borehole, particularly those in business. When accessing water at public boreholes, women faced stiff competition from men who were accessing them for commercial purposes. Apart from being physically stronger than women, these men also had more and larger containers and were more worried about making money, whereas the women were fetching water primarily for household use. This stiff competition was the reason why women tended to spend hours on end at boreholes and also the reason why women who worked outside their home and could afford to do so relied on third parties to fetch water. The women singled out carwash operators as well as water entrepreneurs as the other major stakeholders. They also noted that boreholes have also given rise to another kind of entrepreneur: unemployed youths who are keen to earn a quick buck at boreholes and have become borehole marshals who charge people who want to jump the queue. As a result, the borehole has become a site of consternation for women where they are often victimised by men.

4.7.1 Is there any room for a gender analysis?

The World Bank’s Gender Analysis (2000) is an essential tool of socio-economic analysis in that it enables those in development to understand the relations between men and women and the social roles that they play. Conducting a gender analysis in order to understand the needs of the multiple water users in Chitungwiza would have been prudent prior to drilling its boreholes because it would have enabled the borehole drilling stakeholders to understand the needs of both men and women in their use of water. It would have also opened their eyes to
the needs of women as chief household water managers and their needs in this role that they play. Perhaps then boreholes would have been better sited and more user friendly for women, particularly those who do not spend much time in the home.

The women who worked outside the home were of the view that they could have been consulted prior to the drilling of the boreholes by the Government and its development partners and that their input could have made a difference in the manner in which boreholes were sited. They felt that their participation would have made a big difference to the water shortages’ situation in the town.

4.8 National Water Policy framework and the reality on the ground

In 2013 the Government came up with a National Water Policy, a document which governs the development of water resources in Zimbabwe. The Water Policy states that Urban Local Authorities such as the Chitungwiza Municipality have a duty to ensure:

‘Efficient, affordable and sustainable access to water services for all their current and potential consumers … ensure availability of water to all citizens for primary purposes.’

Water for primary use is water that is used for personal and domestic uses and this should be prioritised in accordance with General Comment Number 15. The National Water Policy seeks to ensure that these water rights are properly looked after by the state parties. It also notes that in Zimbabwean urban areas, access to urban water supply decreased from 97% in 1990 to 60% in 2008. As such, the country is regressing and failing in its obligation to ensure that everyone has a right to safe and potable water. The trend appears to be increasing, particularly in the town of Chitungwiza where people continue to be allocated land for building homes without being connected to water supplies and as a consequence the percentages of those without water could be even higher. The National Water Policy also noted that the hourly availability of water dropped from 24-hours’ supply to between 6 and 12 hours per day, thereby curtailing the time that people can access water and in the process interfering with their right to secure their livelihoods by making a living out of work.

While on paper the Water Policy seeks to address key issues on water that were relevant to this research, the fact is that on the ground the policy is unknown. And while people
appreciate that the Government is trying to do something to intervene in this water crisis, the fact remains that the document appears to be for only a few policy makers which has the effect of divorcing it and the people within the Government from the realities of the people of Chitungwiza. There is a general consensus that there is no political will to deal with this crisis and the Government appears to be blind to their living conditions. On the ground there is nothing apart from the few boreholes that are also vulnerable to drying up due to the over-extraction of the groundwater. One respondent stated that the boreholes are becoming hard and heavier and the water seems to be running out signifying that the groundwater resource is stressed and is in danger of drying up. The drilling of boreholes is not sustainable in terms of the National Policy and as such there is need for a holistic approach to resolve the Chitungwiza water problems, especially taking into account what its women have had to endure over the past 5 years.

4.9 The media’s take on the urban water crisis
The media has been very vocal about the water crisis in Chitungwiza and particularly the gender dimensions and the plight of women which have been exposed every now and again. The media as the fourth arm of government has done a lot to inform people of the developments that have taken place in the town of Chitungwiza. Almost every newspaper in the country has covered stories about how the crisis seems to worsen and how this has been a disadvantage to women. The Weekend Post of 25 October 2013 quoted Bulawayo’s Progressive Residents Association member Busi Bhebhe saying:

‘Women are the most affected as their chores centre around the availability of water. It is imperative that government addresses the water crisis because women are the ones at the receiving end. Women are primary care givers; they are the ones who ensure that each child’s needs and routines are met, taking a key role in feeding, bathing, sleeping and changing nappies. As such, it is an added burden and extra labour for a woman because she can’t cook without water.’

The same paper also quoted another member of another residents trust agreeing that women were the most affected by water shortages because they:

‘…juggle a lot of responsibilities like fending for their families, vending, motherhood, and also play wifely roles. Every household needs water for hygienic purposes and for consumption.’
It is therefore the consensus that women are at the receiving end of poor water provision systems. An online paper, The Zimeye of 4 October 2013, noted that women complained that the water situation affected them more than anyone else because of the patriarchal nature of Zimbabwean society which compels women to ‘to perform routine kitchen chores that include fetching water, washing laundry and dishes, as well as providing water for all the household needs’. The newspaper speaks of the burdens of various women who have lost business opportunities due to the fact that when there is no water in their home they first have to find water for their homes before looking after their business interests. It also noted that women who had to work outside the home had the hardest task because ‘after a horrendous day at the office or market get to a dry house, where laundry and dishes waits for their attention.’

Clearly water shortages have brought out issues of gender stereotyping in the home where certain chores are specifically set aside for women. These practices hamper the progression of women and cut back on the progress the country has made towards gender equality. Due to water shortages, women’s focus on other developmental issues becomes limited as they constantly have to focus on providing water in their own homes and as a result they will gradually fail to participate fully in issues of national interest. The patriarchal society has ensured that women are again restricted to the domestic sphere. According to Section 80 of our Constitution, such practices of gender stereotyping infringe the rights of women. The issue of gender roles and stereotyping is also dealt with under Article 5 of CEDAW and the State is called upon to address these social and cultural patterns which lead to discrimination and stereotyped roles for women and men.

In conducting the research, it became clear that water shortages reinforced gender inequalities between men and women in the home. The gendered role that women play in being solely responsible for collecting water for their homes has its roots in patriarchy, religion, culture and even in the colonial legacy of Africa under which women were greatly prejudiced. These factors intersect to reinforce the gender inequalities in the home and women, particularly those who have to work in other productive roles outside the home. They have not been spared these interlocking forms of harm which have caused a number of them to spend less time in productive roles and which in essence have denied them the right to earn a living through work. This is what Cantos (2013) called the ‘gender water nexus’ and its consequences have been to cause women daily distress where they constantly have to search
for water. This has also prevented them from becoming fully engaged in other developmental issues and for those women who had taken steps towards economic emancipation by working outside their homes it has been a case of one step forward, two steps back.

4.10 Emerging issues
These are issues that came to my attention whilst in the field. Respondents kept talking about these issues and whilst they were not part of my assumptions, I could only fully engage with my research by further exploring these issues.

4.10.1 Water is a politicised commodity
Both men and women respondents agreed that water was a politicised commodity in Chitungwiza and politicians often hijacked water projects for their own political ends. Speaking with members of CHIRA, it was highlighted that politicians had taken up the issue of water shortages in the town to enhance their political careers and they did so sometimes to the detriment of the general populace of the town. They highlighted the fact that the politicians in the town misused the CDF in an effort to get people to support them by sinking boreholes in certain areas that they considered their strongholds even when such areas already had boreholes and others did not. This was the reason why they stated that certain areas in the town had more boreholes than others. The members also stated that this fruitless scoring of political points by politicians has caused the loss of funds which could have been better used to develop the town. They quoted instances where some boreholes had been sunk in poorly chosen areas and did not yield any water.

When interrogating this further with the Council officials, they noted that there were indeed boreholes that had to be abandoned because they did not yield good quality water and had been condemned by them as an authority. They also indicated that whilst some boreholes were sunk by different people for different agendas, the local council was in charge of the maintenance of those boreholes and when they felt that the borehole was unsafe they would decommission it.

4.10.2 Corruption, the cancer of society
‘Corruption ndiyo yauraya nyika hanzvadzi, vanhu varimumabasa umu vakungozvifunga vega isu tichitambura ne nyaya dzemvura mudzimba. Kune
vanhu varikushandisa mvura but havasi kubhadhara kucouncil asi kune maindividuals imo mukanzuru.’
(Translation: ‘Corruption has brought this country to its knees my sister, people in the offices only worry about themselves whilst we languish with this water issue in our homes. They are people who are accessing water but do not pay for that water to our local authority, rather they pay individuals in this council.’) Mr. Chihoro from Unit F.

There were constant allegations of corruption being mentioned by residents of Chitungwiza, particularly in the distribution of water. According to the local authority it had devised various water demand management methods like diverting water from one area to another through the closing and opening of valves or water rationing. This meant that for certain days of the week a particular area receives water whilst others do not. It is this diversion of water from one area to another that residents said was not being done properly and alleged that Council officials often diverted water to their own places of residents and in the end some areas almost always had water whilst others did not. They stated that there were underhand dealings being done which prejudiced them of the precious liquid. In seeking to verify this, I was informed that it may have happened but what normally happened was that water was pumped by gradient and as such low lying areas get water because it is naturally pumped to those areas. The Council was trying as much as possible to follow its laid down schedule and it was only viable when Harare constantly pumped water to them.

4.11 The new Constitution – The dawn of a new era

In 2013 the country voted in a referendum for a new Constitution which for the first time in its history included economic, social and cultural rights. The Constitution is the supreme law of the country and this inclusion is a step toward the realisation that economic, social and cultural rights are as important as civil and political rights. Thus for women who work outside the home, the fact that the right to water is recognised as a fundamental right is a step in the right direction for their case against the State and its failure to ensure that this right is realised. However, what is significant about the Constitution is the fact that the right to work is not part and parcel of the fundamental rights section of the Constitution but is relegated to that section of the Constitution called National Objectives. This is an anomaly on the part of our legislative drafters because it appears to give some rights greater precedence than others, yet the principles of human rights state that all rights are interdependent and indivisible. In other words, the Constitution gives greater priority to the right to water than to the right to work.
Therefore, it would seem that if women who work outside the home have a complaint against the State in their realisation of their right to work they would have to link their claim to the more important right of the right to water by claiming, e.g., that the state’s failure to provide water has breached their right to work by breaching their right to earn a livelihood. In other words, it would seem that they cannot enforce their right to work on its own and unconnected with other rights which the Constitution considers more fundamental.

The state has to honour its duty towards the provision of water through the building of dams and water reticulation facilities in Chitungwiza as provided for by our Constitution. Furthermore, the state has to realise that its failure to provide water ultimately impacts on the right to work as provided for by the same Constitution. The realisation of these rights is dependent upon how willing our judiciary is to widen the scope of these rights and this calls for a pro-active judiciary willing to enforce the economic, social and cultural rights of its country’s citizens.

4.12 Conclusion

Based on the findings and analysis covered by this chapter, it is clear that water shortages impact heavily on the lives of women, particularly those work outside their homes and have to spend hours fetching water. The impact of these water shortages has had a negative impact on both their social and economic lives. The water shortages have also reinforced gender stereotyping and caused the emergence of gendered roles which would not have occurred had households continued to receive water around the clock as they did in previous years.
CHAPTER 5

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The research was able to prove that the perennial water shortages that plague the urban town of Chitungwiza adversely affect its women, particularly those who work outside the home. They are affected in their businesses and their quest for equality with men. They are constantly faced with gender stereotypes and gendered roles in the home and this has directly affected their right to earn a living. Their right to access clean and potable water on the basis of equality with men is hindered especially within our highly patriarchal society. The Government of Zimbabwe needs to do more than just enact legislation and come up with policies; it has to take action to ensure that women access water and ultimately earn their own livelihoods.

The current study shows that the country is far from reaching its water MDG by 2015, especially in the urban sphere. The country’s standards have regressed and this is not a good sign when the country’s obligations are considered. There appears to be no political will to address the water problems in Zimbabwe’s urban areas, including Chitungwiza, and in all this women tend to suffer the most. When a state fails to meet its own Constitutional obligations, let alone its international obligations to its citizens, it has failed internationally in all its obligations. The Government should not wait for another catastrophe to occur, as happened in 2008 when a cholera outbreak caused international organisations such as UNICEF to intervene and drill boreholes for the citizens of Zimbabwe. Under international law the country can seek aid now to ensure that water is restored to all Zimbabwe’s households.

Because so many women’s rights and opportunities flow from the right to access clean and potable water, when this right is breached they suffer great harm. For example, women become removed from issues of national development and remain confined to the domestic sphere where they in essence become second-class citizens. Women need to be empowered to start enterprises so that they can earn a living and if this takes place the country, which has such a high rate of unemployment, will benefit immensely.
The current attitude of the State which seems content with status quo, i.e., doing very little or nothing about the water shortages in Chitungwiza, has male dominance written all over it. Through its structures the Government is subordinating women and men, who are the people in power, seem not to take any action because the situation hardly affects them as they are not involved in the collection of water. This reinforces the dominance of the male in the home in which women are burdened with a triple day, i.e., they are at the centre of both the productive and reproductive sphere and the voices of their struggle to access water does not go beyond its four walls. Men simply return home each day to find that the women have already fetched the water and they have no idea of the repeated daily struggles women go through to perform this task. In other words, men enjoy what is called the patriarchal dividend (Connell 1997), i.e., the advantage they have over women simply because of their masculinity. Connell describes masculinity as ‘the pattern or configuration of social practices linked to the position of men in the gender order, and socially distinguished from practices linked to the position of women’ (Connell, 2002:44).

Enacting laws is one thing but implementation is another. Zimbabwe needs to take action soon to redress the water situation in its urban areas and as it does so it will also begin to redress the difficult situation urban women find themselves in.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Laws and policies

In making the right to water a Constitutional right, Zimbabwe has taken a step forward in ensuring that the right can be protected. It is now a justiciable right enabling the citizens of Zimbabwe, including women who work outside the home, to demand that the country afford them the right to water. The state is a duty bearer and it holds the responsibility to ensure that this right is realised for the women of Chitungwiza.

The local authority and in particular the Harare City Council has a responsibility towards the people of Chitungwiza in terms of the Urban Councils Act as read with the Public Health Act and the Water Act to ensure that every citizen of Chitungwiza is provided with water for primary purposes and that this right to water is not arbitrarily interfered with by the local authority. Thus, the Harare City Council should maintain the water supply to Chitungwiza.
even though it is outside its Council area because Chitungwiza has no independent water source and relies solely on Harare for its piped water.

The announcement of the Nation’s Water Policy is a step in the right direction. What is needed now more than ever is the implementation of the policy by all the stakeholders in the water industry. Women as a major stakeholder in this water issue should be afforded an equal opportunity in this implementation in terms of both the Constitution which calls for gender equality and the Women’s Protocol which the country has ratified and which calls for the participation of women on an equal basis with men.

5.2.1.1 Opportunity for a test case
In light of the above laws and the Constitution that has made the right to water a Constitutional right, there is now an opportunity for the women of Chitungwiza to come together as a group and to try and enforce this right, particularly with regard to the conduct of the Harare City Council and test how far the judiciary sees the scope of this right in the light of the continuous water disconnections that they face. Women who work outside their home can take the opportunity to state that Chitungwiza’s endemic water shortages violate their Constitutional rights to water and to work and these breaches in turn breach their other fundamental rights, such as the right to health and development. These continuous violations against women are not simply national in nature, they have implications beyond our borders in view of the relevant human rights treaties which Zimbabwe has agreed to observe or comply with. In other words, since the Zimbabwe Government has expressed its desire to protect, promote and fulfil these rights for women in multiple legal fora (i.e., nationally, regionally and internationally) it should be even more anxious to take steps to remedy this problem as soon as possible. In terms of General Recommendation 15, arbitrary water disconnections should be stopped and full disconnections that endanger the lives of Chitungwiza need to be dealt with by the judiciary. This could be a step in the right direction for the protection of water rights for Chitungwiza’s residents, especially its women who have suffered for so long.

5.2.2 Short term interventions
Chitungwiza does not have a water source of its own and the city of Harare supplies the town with water. In the past few months Harare City Council has been continuously disconnecting Chitungwiza for the non-payment of water. The town of Chitungwiza does not have sufficient
funds to ensure continuous payment to the City of Harare for its water. The relationship between these two councils needs to be looked at in a new light. The City of Harare’s repeated and prolonged disconnections of its water supply to Chitungwiza interfere with the enjoyment of the right of its residents to water and endangers the lives and well-being of close to half a million Zimbabwean citizens, many of whom, ironically, work in Harare. It also adversely affects the lives of Chitungwiza’s women, particularly those who work outside their home. Therefore, there needs to be a new understanding approach between the Harare and Chitungwiza Councils to ensure that Chitungwiza is not always disconnected. Between them they can devise some other mode of payment (even one that is not monetary) to prevent further dangerous water disconnections.

There is also a need to drill more boreholes and create emergency water tanks in the interim because the current boreholes are inadequate for Chitungwiza’s residents. The drilling of more boreholes will ensure that women who work outside their home can easily access water any time of the day and in so doing their household chores as well as their lives in general are made easier.

Since Chitungwiza’s current people to borehole ratio is very large, the drilling of more boreholes will lessen the amount of time women who work outside their home have to spend in search of water. This will enable them to fully maximise their work needs and cut down on the costs that they are currently burdened with in ensuring that they provide water to their homes. The Municipality of Chitungwiza has to be assisted by the Government in the sinking of more boreholes. This requires money and the State may approach other stakeholders, such as NGOs, and international organisations, such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank, for funding.

In the event that the whole of Chitungwiza has no water, the NGOs and other key stakeholders should be appealed to so that they assist the town with water bowsers. This will also reduce the amount of time women have to spend at boreholes and generally lighten the burden that women endure in collecting water. Certain areas in the town went without water for several months and with no intervention from either the Government or the NGO community, many lives were endangered and women, the town’s most vulnerable residents, fell victim to violence at the few available water collection points in the town.
5.2.3 Long term interventions

The construction and rehabilitation of water works

The water problems that bedevil Chitungwiza are exacerbated by the fact the town does not have its own independent water source. Without a water source, the local authority has had to rely on the goodwill of Harare Municipality. To improve the water situation in Chitungwiza, it has to have its own independent water source. The council has identified Muda Dam as a real possibility that could be harnessed to provide water for Chitungwiza. What it lacks are the monetary resources to construct the dam and water reticulation system. The State needs to prioritise the construction of this dam. It is clear that dependency on Harare has failed to protect the women and residents of Chitungwiza’s right to water as provided for by the Constitution. The Government of Zimbabwe should provide funds as a matter of urgency so that the construction of the dam may take place immediately.

The construction of the dam is also important as currently the groundwater resources that the residents of Chitungwiza are relying upon are stressed and the problem of environmental degradation is becoming a stark reality. It is not sustainable for a town to rely solely on boreholes for water. In the long run, the boreholes will dry up and there will be even worse consequences for the residents and their environment. The construction of a dam for Chitungwiza residents will improve the water schedules and women who work outside their home will be able to access water easily without sacrificing their work for the purposes of accessing water.

Chitungwiza has a plant for recycling waste water for reuse and this has also become dysfunctional due to obsolete machinery. The rehabilitation of this plant will ease the water shortages in the town and will in the meantime augment the water supply from Harare. It is capable of producing 8 mega litres a day. This will be a good starting point for the town of Chitungwiza. The more water that they access and make available to their residents, the better women’s lives will become. The Government must prioritise funding for this project as well.

The residents of Chitungwiza also lamented the fact that a large amount of water that their Council has paid for from Harare is lost in transit often due to old rotting water pipes which leak or burst. Therefore, between them central and local Government should expedite the removal of old pipes and put in new ones. This will also improve the provision of piped water to the town.
Making more water sources accessible to women who work outside their home will not only help to satisfy their domestic water demands but also those of commercial water users. This will help to reduce the tension between the two groups and allow the national water policy to operate in an enabling environment.
Bibliography


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Appendix: Photographs from the field