
**THE FEASIBILITY AND PRACTICALITIES OF TAPPING INTO INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY RIGHTS AS A TOOL TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S COMPETITIVE
PARTICIPATION IN CRAFT BASED BUSINESSES IN ZIMBABWE. AN
INVESTIGATION OF THE BATSIRANAI GROUP OF WOMEN –
DZIVARASEKWA AND THE DOMBOSHA VA WOMEN IN BASKETRY**

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Abstract

The original intention of this research was to explore the extent to which the Intellectual Property (IP) framework could be invoked to improve the competitive business skills of women in the informal craft industry sector who manufacture and sell their own products. The field of research comprised two groups of people, one group of 15 women called the Batsiranai Group of Women involved in sewing and doll making in Dzivarasekwa in Harare, Zimbabwe's capital and the other group of several women who are known as the Domboshava basket weavers who are based just outside the city. Almost immediately upon entry into the field of study, however, the application of the various women-centred methodologies used by the researcher, including the human rights and capabilities, gender and development approaches and especially the grounded women's law approach, made it immediately apparent that the women's lived realities exposed far more pressing challenges which needed to be addressed first before considering what role, if any, IP protection could play in the protection and competitive marketing of their products. Based on collected research data including relevant law and literature, interviews with the women and key respondents, including representatives from both the public and private sector, a major finding was that several interlocking oppressions (such as women's limiting self perceptions and low self-esteem, various forms of gender oppression, male dominance and an authoritarian religious normative order) trap the women in a state of dependence and inability to become self-sufficient, let alone competitive. A state of donor dependence is also created and fuelled as a result of the repeated failure of government and donor-based interventions which occur because they are based on deficient methodological research which fails, as a result of its blindness, to identify and meet the needs of the women which flow from their suffering from these same interlocking oppressions. As a result, the need for sustainable development for the women is advocated and this may be achieved if development agencies nurture the women in craft businesses as development partners and consult with them in designing development initiatives to ensure that the women's real needs are met. While some discussion is given to IP as a possible surface intervention for one of the women's projects, it is far outweighed by the urgency to redress the far greater underlying social constraints which are faced by the women having been clearly identified by the incisive study.

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Dedication

To Tanyaradzwa Nyeverai Rain, for the good times ahead.

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Definition of concepts

Surface interventions - I have used this term in this paper to denote government and donor community development initiatives that are designed for women in craft businesses. These initiatives have been designed without first consulting their intended women beneficiaries in order to identify their real needs if their businesses are to grow and without taking into consideration the underlying socio-economic constraints limiting the women's capability to receive and implement them. I call them surface interventions for they lack the women beneficiaries' voice in their design and they aim to address, literally, the 'surface' problems the intended beneficiaries face. They are designed for the women to implement in total disregard of the real issues behind women's poor performance in business, like the underlying limiting self-perception on the part of the women in craft work I interviewed in Dzivarasekwa and the patriarchal control limiting women in basketry in Domboshava's competitive participation in business.

List of human rights instruments

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

General Recommendation 25 on Article 4(1) of CEDAW on Temporary Measures

Millennium Development Goals

Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

SADC Protocol on Gender and Development

List of local legislation

The Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013)

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Executive summary

Women and their participation in business enterprises are topical in this paper, which focuses on the experiences of women in craft businesses, in particular, those who are in the informal sector. It discusses factors which according to the findings made in this study, limit women in craft work's capability to participate competitively in business.

The first chapter sets the tone of the discussion by looking at the background, justification of the study, the assumptions and research questions which guided the research. A cursory look at the literature and law on the topical issues arising from the findings made in the field is done in chapter 2 and includes a discussion on the human rights issues of women development and participation in entrepreneurship, the capabilities approach to development as applied to women in business and interventions meant to improve their participation in business, as well as the dominant feminist discourses on women empowerment and participation in entrepreneurship.

Chapter three looks at the methodology and methods used in carrying out the research. At the centre of the research was the emphasis of women in the craft business's lived realities and, as such, methodological frameworks which put the lived realities of women at their centre, were used. These included the women's law approach, grounded theory, using a sex and gender analysis as well as the gender and development approach. Methods such as interviews with key informants, individual interviews and observations were used to collect the data.

Findings made using the methodologies and methods above are discussed in chapter four. Thus issues such as the gender dimension of women entrepreneurship, the impact of semi autonomous social fields on women's effective business participation, and prescriptive top-down surface interventions from government and donor community alike whose net effect has been the fostering of a dependency syndrome on the part of women in craft businesses, instead of transforming them into self-sustaining businesspeople is also discussed. Women's care burdens and limiting self perceptions and impact on women's business ventures are also discussed in the chapter.

Chapter five takes a look at the gaps in government/donor policies on women economic development, IP issues and women in the informal sector, whether IP as an intervention can benefit women entrepreneurs as well as the barriers for women in accessing IP. Conclusions and recommendations based on these findings are outlined in chapter 6.

CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction



The above photograph shows members of the Batsiranai Group of Women (*batsiranai* is a Shona word meaning ‘help each other’) discussing a sewing pattern at their club and captures a typical workday scene from any time between 9.00 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday at their offices in Dzivarasekwa 2, Harare, where the women, who ply and trade their craft, share the common identity of being mothers with disabled children. By being together they draw strength and solace from each other, sharing their experiences as mothers with disabled children. Their craft making enterprise appears formalized in that they have a house from which they operate in the group’s name and they even have a website on which their products are advertised. They owe their thanks for this organisation and its achievements to their

benefactors based in the United States. Yet, despite the veneer of progress and success that this group displays from afar, my interactions with the group reveal that it is far from being successful as a business enterprise. The women lament its lack of viability in that they are hardly able to make ends meet or provide for their children. Their burden of care as mothers of disabled children, their limiting self perception and their passive approach to business are serious concerns that have contributed in large measure to their current lack of success. The situation of these women, juxtaposed with that of their counterparts in the craft business in Domboshava, where the women basket makers labour under the yoke of patriarchy and an authoritarian religious normative order, seems less depressing and desperate. However what women in craft businesses interviewed in this study experience is just the tip of the iceberg of male oppression, religious control, limiting gendered self perceptions and prescriptive development interventions which are blind to these facts and all of which have contributed to the women's inability to participate effectively in business. Against this background, the feasibility and practicality of adopting an intellectual property rights framework as a surface intervention for the women is explored.

1.2 Background and justification of the study

It was my stint with the women in the crafts industry during our visit to Mbare craft market and the Women and Commerce class which piqued my interest in the subject of women and the craft industry. Women at the craft market were just craft vendors, buying and selling assorted craft ware from clay pots to intricately decorated baskets from their suppliers, most of whom were women living in areas as far away as Gokwe and Mutare.

Having talked to the vendors who in essence are the middle women, I was curious to explore how the women at the start of the supply chain (or bottom of the supply ladder), being the creators of the crafts being sold at Mbare and other markets, were faring.

Being a registered Patent and Trademark agent myself, I have with practice, witnessed the benefits intellectual property rights can have for business. The intellectual property rights lawyer in me then came to the conclusion that perhaps using the intellectual property rights framework could work to improve the competitive participation in business of the women craft makers as the owners of products with potential intellectual rights protection.

This was an intervention I had envisioned as I set out for Domboshava, my first port of call, in the quest to improve women in crafts' competitive participation in business. Trapped under patriarchal control and an authoritarian religious system, women basket weavers in Domboshava demonstrated that interventions needed for these women to grow meaningfully as entrepreneurs had to address these stifling social paradigms rather than adopt the Intellectual property rights framework.

The other group of women in Dzivarasekwa engaging primarily in weaving and sewing intricate dolls apart from other accessories, mainly for the international market, were more organised and seemed, on the face of it, to be the right candidates for the adoption and use of the intellectual property rights framework to enhance their business. Yet this second group was labouring under a serious lack of self perception, which in itself had to be addressed, if the women are to develop into serious business women.

What unfolded in this study put to test the efficacy not only of the intellectual property rights framework as a development initiative, but also of pre-conceived surface interventions in holistically transforming the fortunes of women craft weavers, and other similar women, in business.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The third Millennium Development Goal aims at promoting gender equality and empowering women by 2015. Women's economic development is essential if the goal of ensuring women empowerment by 2015, which is just around the corner, is to be achieved.

Thus the need for development initiatives aimed at improving women's economic status as business people is paramount if Zimbabwe is to comply with the Millennium Development Goal, and the international Human Rights obligation of creating the conditions which promote and support the occupations of women, in particular within the informal sector.¹

Women in craft businesses both in Domboshava and in Dzivarasekwa have been recipients of mainly donor-funded surface interventions, aimed at improving their welfare as business people with government playing second fiddle to the Non Governmental Organisations.

¹ Article 13(e) of the Maputo Protocol.

It is the impact of such surface interventions, which have largely been designed outside the realities of the intended women beneficiaries by the government, the donor community and other developmental players alike, on achieving the intended aims of ensuring improved women economic empowerment, which typify the problems that this study sought to unearth.

1.4 Research objective

In carrying out this study, my main objective was to explore the feasibility and practicality of development interventions in achieving the goal of enhancing women engaged in craft businesses' participation in meaningful, self-sustaining businesses. Initially when I started this research, my focus had been on exploring the challenges and opportunities on using the intellectual rights framework as an example of such surface intervention. What emerged in the field then necessitated the change in the thrust of this study from primarily focusing on the intellectual property rights framework, to focus mainly on the efficacy of surface interventions in achieving the goal of enhancing women in craft businesses' participation in competitive businesses.

To achieve this objective, I had to change the initial research assumptions and questions which had a primary bias towards the intellectual property rights regime to the following research assumptions and questions which then guided my study.

1.5 Research assumptions

1. That gender affects the ability and manner in which women in craft work engage in business ventures.
2. That semi-autonomous social fields shape the ability and manner in which women in craft work engage in businesses.
3. That surface interventions/development initiatives designed for women in craft work businesses have not improved their competitive participation in business.
4. That women's care burdens and self-perception have negatively affected their participation in competitive business ventures.
5. Ineffective government/donor policies prevent women in craft work businesses' competitive participation in business.

6. That there are barriers to utilising the intellectual property rights framework so as to improve women in craft work businesses' competitive participation in business.

1.6 Research questions

1. Does gender affect the ability and manner in which women in craft work engage in business?
2. Do semi autonomous social fields shape the ability and manner in which women in craft work engage in business?
3. Have surface interventions/development initiatives designed for women in craft work businesses not improved their competitive participation in business?
4. Have women's care burdens and self perception negatively affected their participation in competitive business ventures?
5. Do ineffective government/donor policies prevent women in craft work businesses' competitive participation in business?
6. Are there barriers in utilising the intellectual property rights framework so as to improve women in craft work businesses' competitive participation in business?

1.7 Location of the study

I carried out this study in Domboshava, a district in Mashonaland East Province, situated just outside the Harare Metropolitan Province. Domboshava was a good area of choice for this study because due to its proximity to Harare, where I live, meant that it was easily accessible to me and also because of the fact that it was the place from which some of the women at the Mbare craft market had indicated they obtained their basket supplies.

I also did part of my research in Dzivarasekwa 2, a high density suburb in Harare, where a group of women engaging in handcrafts mainly for the international market, the Batsiranai Group of Women, is based. I chose this group of women because they seemed to be more organised and more actively engaged in business compared to the Domboshava women. This group was important for comparative purposes and data triangulation.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 LAW AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This paper focuses on the feasibility and practicality of various surface interventions aimed at achieving women's economic empowerment. My review of literature was guided by the scope of this study.

2.2 The human rights, capabilities and feminist perspectives

Human rights are universally accepted norms and freedoms protecting the citizen against the arbitrary power that the state may exercise against the citizen in a bid to limit these freedoms. International human rights standards give the ratifying state party the obligation to respect, protect, promote and fulfil their obligations under the international human rights instruments.

Women's economic empowerment is a matter of human rights, whose attainment is necessary if the goal of development is to be met. However the right to development and right of women to empowerment are second and third generation rights, which tend to be overridden by first generation rights such as the right to life. Thus in the Zimbabwe Constitution (2013) the right to women empowerment² and the rights of women³ are not justiciable as they are not enshrined in the bill of rights, unlike the right to life.⁴

In his message, commenting on the theme for this year's International Women's Day celebrations, UN⁵ Secretary General Ban Kin Moon, said that the theme 'Equality for women is progress for all' emphasizes how gender equality, empowerment of women, women's full enjoyment of human rights and eradication of poverty are essential to economic and social development.⁶

² Section 14(2).

³ Section 80.

⁴ Section 48.

⁵ United Nations.

⁶ <http://www.unwomen.org>.

Zimbabwe has an obligation to create conditions to promote and support the occupations of women, in particular those in the informal sector.⁷ This can be achieved by advancing equal opportunity and removing structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, which will reduce inequality and spur inclusive economic growth.⁸ Underlying socio-economic constraints, such as gender stereotypes and patriarchal control, still need to be addressed in Zimbabwe if women are to meaningfully participate in business as these form obstacles to women's capability to fully participate in business ventures and other economic empowerment initiatives.

Proponents of the capabilities approach contend that the approach provides a tool and a framework within which to design and evaluate phenomena such as poverty, inequality or well being.⁹ Evaluation of policies should focus on what people are able to do and be, on the quality of their life and on removing obstacles in their lives so that they have more freedom to live the kind of life, that upon reflection, they have reason to value.¹⁰

Taken in the context of the women engaged in crafts interviewed in this study vis-a-vis the various development initiatives (from the government and donor community alike) intended for them, the capability approach can be instrumental in evaluating why such interventions had failed to achieve the intended goal of achieving women's economic empowerment. The top-down prescriptive development initiatives, like the envisioned use of the intellectual property rights framework to enhance their businesses, which had initially informed this study, were designed for women in craft businesses, without being cognizant of the women as the beneficiaries' capabilities. These development initiatives did not address the underlying obstacles limiting the women's ability to receive and utilise such initiatives for their development. The net effect of such prescriptive surface interventions, as this study revealed, was to foster the donor dependency syndrome on the part of women in craft businesses, instead of transforming them into self sustaining businesspeople.

This thus puts into focus the feminist argument that to benefit women, international economic and political discourses must be feminist attentive to and, amongst others, the approaches

⁷ Article 13(e) of the Maputo Protocol.

⁸ Message from Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director UNWOMEN.

⁹ Fukuda Parr (2003), as quoted by Robeyn I (2005).

¹⁰ Martha C Nussbaum (1998).

must be aware of the special problems women face because of sex and gender in more or less every nation in the world.¹¹

Radical feminists posit that the social disadvantage of women stems from the male dominated structuring of society (McKinnon, 1988). They also consider that desired changes which will ensure women empowerment will have to tackle this patriarchal structuring of society. This is particularly true in the light of the findings made in Domboshava, that unless and until the women are liberated from the yoke of patriarchal control, they will not be able to benefit from interventions aimed at enhancing their economic fortunes.

Liberal feminism views equal access for women to business opportunities as a matter of equal rights to be achieved by eradicating structural barriers causing women discrimination in business matters. Applied to development initiatives, liberal feminism would question whether programmes and approaches seeking to open up opportunities for women in business enhance or hinder the achievement of equal rights. In focus on this point are my findings made in Dzivarasekwa. Whatever interventions were being made, they did not address the social barrier of women's care burdens, at the end women would carry their children to their business premises, perpetuating the stereotype of women as care givers and in the process denying them equal rights to partake in business, without having to be strained by child caring obligations.

Feminists like Crenshaw (1989) underscore the multiple dimensionalities of marginalized women's lived realities especially black women. She contends that marginalized women are often multiply burdened by intersections of race, gender, class ethnicity, language, sexuality, nationality amongst others which operate to multiply oppress and marginalize them. According to Crenshaw (1989) any analysis that does not take into account intersectionality cannot sufficiently address black women's subordination. My findings in the field both in Dzivarasekwa and in Domboshava revealed that the intersections of gendered self perceptions, religion, the burden of care and patriarchal control operated to multiply oppress women and limited their ability to effectively participate in business. In mapping out development initiatives for the women in craft businesses in Dzivarasekwa and in Domboshava, these intersections, which operate to multiply oppress the women should be

¹¹ Martha C Nussbaum (1998).

taken into account and strategies devised to overcome them in order for the initiatives to achieve the desired goal of empowering them as business people.

Thus feminists advocate for the need to correct underlying barriers if women are to fully participate in business.

2.3 Law, policy issues on IP and women development

As part of its National Objectives in the 2013 Constitution, Zimbabwe has committed herself to endeavour to facilitate and take measures to empower, through appropriate fair and just affirmative action, all marginalized groups, which include women.¹² The need to create employment for women is also enshrined in the same section. Employment creation for women also entails promoting the economic activities of women, including those in the informal sector like women in craft businesses. The ZIMASSET economic blue print also includes as part of the national targets, the importance of ensuring gender equality and the empowerment of women, through ensuring women in business' access to markets. The right to equality and non-discrimination of women and men is also guaranteed in section 56 of the Constitution and the right of women to equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities is provided for in section 80.

The obligation of the state to take all practical measures to provide social security and social care to those who are in need, within the limits of available resources, is also guaranteed in the Constitution.¹³ This ensures that the state must assist disadvantaged people, such as children and persons with disabilities, to ensure that they enjoy their basic human rights. By doing so will lessen the burden of care that mothers of the disabled children in Dzivarasekwa have towards their disabled children.

The Zimbabwe Intellectual Property Rights Policy (2010) provides for the conducting of IP¹⁴ awareness campaigns to grassroots people engaged in crafts and traditional knowledge systems, especially women, so that they can utilise the IP framework to promote their businesses. I had set out to explore the feasibility and practicalities of using the IP framework as a surface intervention to enhance the businesses of women engaged in craft enterprises.

¹² Section 14, Zimbabwe Constitution (2013).

¹³ Section 30.

¹⁴ Intellectual Property Rights.

2.4 Gender stereotypes and semi autonomous social fields

Gender is the socially and culturally constructed differences between men and women.¹⁵ As a social stratifier, it helps in understanding social constructions of gender identities and unequal power structure which underlie relationships between the sexes. Internalised hegemonic notions about the role of women, as well as limiting self perceptions on the part of the women themselves was a factor which affected the manner in which women interviewed in this study engaged in their craft enterprises. Because of their gendered self perceptions, women saw their craft activities as an extension of their motherhood role of caring for their disabled children and thus affected their capacity to competitively participate in business.

Semi autonomous social fields, on the other hand, affected the ability of women interviewed in this study to receive various development initiatives designed for them. These are other normative orders which, although they are not the law, regulate the lives of the people under whose influence they fall and they do so with the same force as that of the law. Such normative orders include religion and cultural practices, amongst others. Religion influenced and controlled the manner in which some of the women interviewed in this study, approached their craft making ventures.

Thus it is against this brief background of the literature informing the issues to be discussed in this paper that the next chapter will discuss the methodologies and methods employed in carrying out the research.

¹⁵ CEDAW Committee on General Recommendation 25 on Article 4(1) of CEDAW on Temporary Measures.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND DATA COLLECTION METHODS

3.1 Methodologies

3.1.1 The women's law approach

Having designed my intended interventions in the lecture room at college, I now had to prove their efficacy by going into the field and directly to the intended beneficiaries, who are women basket weavers.

Against this background, the women's law approach became the methodology of choice, for it takes women as the primary focus of the research. This methodology enables the collection of data on the ground, based on women's lived realities, as a starting point in understanding the impact of laws and policies on the women themselves (Tove Stang Dahl, 1989).

This methodology was instrumental in testing the feasibility and the practicality of the intended surface interventions aimed at improving women in crafts' competitive participation in business based on the actual lived realities of women in craft businesses.

The lived realities of women in basketry in Domboshava demonstrated that the development initiative of embracing the intellectual property rights framework in order to improve women's businesses though a logical intervention proved to be impractical and out of touch with the lived realities of these women in basketry.

It is through the use of the women's law approach that the underlying social constraints which stood in the way of women in basketry in Domboshava to engage in any meaningful businesses were exposed. These emerged as the real issues to be addressed first, if any developmental interventions intended for these women are to have their desired effect. It became apparent, through the use of this methodology and its emphasis on women's lived realities, that what stood in the way of women in basketry in Domboshava's engagement in meaningful business as craft women were their being under a yoke of patriarchal control and an authoritarian religious normative order. This stifled the ability of these women to actively

engage in any surface interventions designed for them and made it difficult, if not impossible, for the particular developmental interventions to achieve the desired effect, that of improving women in craft businesses' competitive participation in business. Hence, unless and until women in Domboshava are liberated from the yoke of patriarchal and religious oppression, any talk of embracing the intellectual property rights framework or any other developmental initiative for that matter would be in vain.

The flexibility of the women's law methodology enabled me to modify my research assumptions and research questions, in response to women's lived realities as I moved from Domboshava to Dzivarasekwa in the course of the research.

During the research in Domboshava it had become apparent that a rigid emphasis on embracing the Intellectual Rights framework as a tool to improve women in crafts businesses' competitive participation in business was impractical and far-fetched given the underlying social realities of the women involved as they had a direct bearing on their ability to change their economic realities. Having forgotten the interactive process of the women's law methodology, in which data theory, lived realities about the perceptions and norms are constantly engaged with each other (Bentzon *et al.*, 1998), I emerged from the field in Domboshava, where I had seen all my assumptions crumbling, convinced that the research was a lost case and thus fortified myself against the all the possible worst case scenarios I could fathom. It was my supervisor who saved the day when she reminded me that the women's law approach is a flexible methodology and as such made it possible to change the research's assumptions as part of the process of engaging with the collected data and theory. Even as I write this piece now, having finally completed my field research, I can still hear myself asking, 'So Prof, what about my assumptions?'

I had asked my supervisor this question many a times during the course of our meetings on discussions on the way forward. It is the flexibility of the women's law methodology that made my research possible.

Because of the inherent flexibility of the methodology which makes it so versatile, I was able, through the assistance of my supervisor, and guided by the views of the women I had obtained through my interaction with them, to shift the thrust and focus of this study from focusing primarily on the embracing of the intellectual property rights regime, to focus more

on the feasibility and practicality of surface interventions and policies both from the government and the donor community alike, to have a material impact on women in craft businesses' engagement with sustainable businesses. Through this unique methodology, I was able to modify my research assumptions and questions in response to findings on women's realities in business made on the ground and use the modified assumptions in conducting the research on women in craft businesses in Dzivarasekwa.

Similarly in Dzivarasekwa and through the use of this methodology I was able to compare the effects of various developmental initiatives on women as business people, drawing from the realities of the women in Domboshava. It became clear through the use of this methodology that women suffer from multiple oppressions which affect the manner in which they approach business issues. Gender stereotypes about women and business, the burden of motherhood and care burdens as well as the women's own perception of themselves, combined and acted together to prevent women in Dzivarasekwa from being competitive business women, despite their apparently having the means with which to be so engaged in business. They were more organized, had a veneer of formality in the way they did business, an established name and marketing machinery created for them by well wishers in the donor community. All of this they could utilise to meaningfully participate in business, but still could not do so, owing to a number of underlying intersectionalities.

Thus, through the use of the women's law methodology, theories that explained the manner in which women engaged in the craft business as well as the impact of development initiatives and policies on women's economic development conceived outside the realm of women's lived realities, emerged from the research process. One of the emerging issues was that of the ineffectiveness of government policies on women economic development, especially as enunciated in the ZIMASSET¹⁶ economic blueprint (2013) as well as the ineffectiveness of development initiatives championed by the donor community. Interventions are largely conceived outside the lived realities of the intended women beneficiaries and are simply brought to the women to implement, with the undesirable consequence of creating donor dependency in the women in question instead of achieving real economic transformation to self sustenance on the part of the women involved.

¹⁶ Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social and Economic Transformation.

3.1.2 The human rights approach

To assess the efficacy of various surface interventions aimed at transforming the women in craft business' economic fortunes I had to employ the human rights approach to development. This is because the issues of women empowerment and economic development are matters of human rights. One of my subsequent assumptions necessitated that I test the effectiveness or otherwise of government/donor policies in achieving women in craft's competitive participation in business. To make a holistic assessment of government policies, I had to use the human rights approach to development. This approach uses the international human rights obligations of the government of Zimbabwe, as a state party to various international human rights instrument, as a benchmark in assessing the compliance or otherwise of the government in analyzing the given problem situations. The rights -based approach places the individual holder of rights at the centre of the developmental process instead of taking them as passive recipients of development (WHO, 2003).¹⁷

Using this human rights approach to the need for women's economic empowerment, issues such as the efficacy, effectiveness or otherwise of various economic policies on women empowerment by the Zimbabwe government, in particular as enunciated under the ZIMASSET economic blue print (2013), came into focus. It became clear, by using a human rights benchmark to assess this government policy in as far as it relate to women economic development, that it was inadequate and ineffective.

This is because the government does not consider women economic empowerment and development as matters of economics and business, deserving the importance and investment accorded to other like business ventures like Mining and Agriculture. Putting issues of women economic empowerment and development under the Cluster Key Result Area of Social Services Delivery, displays a lack of political will and awareness, on the part of government to prioritise women economic development and empowerment. This falls short of the need to adopt policies and enact laws which ensure equal access, benefits and opportunities for men and women in trade and entrepreneurship, taking into account the contributions of women in the informal sector.¹⁸ This is not line with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. Millennium Development Goal 3, on the need to promote gender

¹⁷ World Health Organisation.

¹⁸ Art 17(1) SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

equality and empower women amongst other instruments, guided me. I saw the need to explore the dynamics in detail.

The human rights approach dissuades taking women as passive recipients of development. Against this background, I was able to assess the effectiveness or otherwise of development initiatives and policies from the donor community, especially in Dzivarasekwa, which come pre-packaged and ready for implementation for the women in craft business. Such an approach makes women passive recipients and not active implementers of development, thus fostering donor dependency with minimal if no change in the economic fortunes of the women as the intended beneficiaries. This may be the reason why women in Dzivarasekwa, despite having been given the means with which to do business, that is the sewing machines, fabric material and had a trade name and a website created for them, were still trapped in business uncertainty. They were still lamenting about not making enough from the business to sustain themselves. This however has to be considered in the light that government is the primary bearer of the responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of women to economic empowerment and development, with other players like the donor community playing second fiddle. Government still retains the obligation to ensure that such developmental partners, operating within their jurisdiction, devise surface interventions which comply with human rights standards.

By thus using the human rights approach I was able to assess the government policy on women's economic empowerment as well as the development initiatives of that of the donor community against the dictates of human rights instruments, so as to determine the real issues in need of addressing in order for the women in craft business to be competitive in business.

3.1.3 The capabilities approach

Propounded by Amartya Sen and popularized by Martha Nussbaum, the capabilities approach is cognizant of the circumstances in which individual recipients of development initiatives live in as having impact on achieving the goal of development and that unequal social and political circumstances between men and women give women unequal human capabilities - what they are able to do and to be (Fukuda Parr, 2003, as quoted by Ingrid Robeyn, 2005).

Using this approach, it became apparent that various social constraints suffered by women in craft businesses, explained why it had been difficult for the different surface interventions

designed to improve their businesses to yield any meaningful results. Patriarchal control coupled with a stifling religious normative order limited the capability of women in basketry in Domboshava to engage with development initiatives. In the same way that gender stereotypes and a limited self perception held by the women in crafts in Dzivarasekwa impacted on the way they received the developmental interventions, designed for them by Lynn Poole, their benefactor, in the United States of America. Lynn Poole had gone all out to ensure that they had the raw materials for their work, the machinery through which they could market their products via a webpage and a trade name, yet, because of the underlying social constraints, they remained stuck in their unyielding situation.

Thus the capabilities approach was also instrumental in assessing the feasibility or otherwise of the intended development initiatives on improving the women in craft's competitive participation in business, by measuring them against what the women themselves can do and can be. It was through the use of this approach that I was able to recognise that the women, because of their social constraints, particularly those in Domboshava, were not able to and could not utilise meaningfully the intellectual property rights framework, as a consequence of which I modified the focus of my research.

3.1.4 Sex and gender analysis

Using this approach which prioritizes the concept of gender and considers women in the complexity of social relations of gender, I was able to explore how the social stereotypes on the role of women shaped their approach in doing business. According to Stewart (2007: 298), physiological differences (sex) should not matter in the quest of equality. Gender however affects women in their quest for equality and participation in business. For this reason I did a sex and gender analysis in order to establish how societal stereotypes affected the manner in which women did business as well as to establish which sex, female or male, was affected most by such stereotypes when engaging in business.

Women in both Domboshava and in Dzivarasekwa laboured under the gender stereotype of women as mothers and child carers. The women in Dzivarasekwa told me that they had embarked in their respective ventures in order to be able to raise and care for their children. Those in Dzivarasekwa particularly saw the activities at their club as an extension of their motherhood and care-giving roles, as mothers of disabled children and not as women engaged in business.

This approach also enabled me to explore how gender affected the opportunities that were availed to the girl child vis-a-vis the boy children of women in craft businesses, especially in Domboshava. It emerged that owing to the social relations of gender, boy as opposed to girl children were accorded better educational opportunities which left the boy children better placed to economically advance and empower themselves. Gender stereotypes of girls' role in life as potential mothers and child bearers might be the reason why the girl children of these women were pulled out of school, even before completing primary school, while the boys were afforded an opportunity to proceed all the way to Ordinary Level. Although both boys and girls were largely affected by their church doctrine, which discouraged schooling, girls were more adversely affected especially as regards receiving tertiary education.

3.1.5 Gender and development approach

The gender and development approach was also instrumental in my assessment of the development initiatives which women in craft businesses had been availed to, in determining whether or not such initiatives involved women as active rather than passive recipients of development initiatives. The approach advocates that to achieve women's emancipation, top-down state interventions must involve the women themselves as the agents for that change.

Using the gender and development approach, theories began to emerge on how various development initiatives which had targeted women in craft businesses over years had failed to achieve the desired goal of materially changing their business fortunes. For women in Domboshava, the disappearance of their benefactor from the scene, who had for years helped women market their crafts, saw the demise of their viable basket-making project leaving women stranded as to how to proceed.

3.1.6 Grounded theory

Grounded theory, which entails a continuous dialogue and interaction between initial theory and data collected, helped me to identify emerging issues in the field and to subsequently follow up on them, hence building on my research to a conclusive end.

Using grounded theory, I was able to build on my research initially from Domboshava, to Dzivarasekwa, following up on emerging issues, which had demonstrated the impracticality of embracing the Intellectual rights framework, given the realities of the intended

beneficiaries on the ground. I was then able to follow up on the emerging issue of ineffective measures from Domboshava to Dzivarasekwa and then used my findings from the two different areas for data triangulation.

3.2 Research design

3.2.1 Overview of the research sites

I carried out this research in Domboshava; a district located about 40 kilometres outside Harare, in Mashonaland East Province and in Dzivarasekwa 2, a high density suburb in Harare. In both areas, there were women engaged in craft businesses, with women in Domboshava engaged in basket weaving whilst those in Dzivarasekwa 2 were a group of women, mothers of disabled children, engaged in weaving and sewing mainly dolls, though also producing other products like earrings, hand bags and other accessories, which were tailor-made for the international market. They were chosen particularly because they were making craft products and initially because I had postulated that their products had intellectual rights protection potential.

3.2.2 The sample

The respondents I first interviewed in Domboshava were a group six of women, linked to each other by the fact that they attended the same church (the Johane Masowe WeChishanu church) and also that there were other three were co-wives, married to the same man in a polygynous union.

I had done a targeted sampling of women engaged in basketry to locate the women. My interviews targeted these individual women as basket weavers and thus engaging in craft businesses. This sample consisted of women as the craft weavers and only three males, who were the sons of these women, who assisted them in their trade. The boys presented a chance of getting different opinions, though they were not very helpful, given their positions as children directly under their parents' influence.

The group in Dzivarasekwa consisted of fifteen women members of the same club, the Batsiranai Group of Women, all of whom share the common identity of being mothers of disabled children and had various skills needed in their sewing and weaving trade. Of the fifteen, about 60 % of them were the sole or main bread winners in their families. These were

made up of three widows, two divorcees and two married women whose husbands were not in any gainful economic occupation.

Three of the women interviewed were senior club representatives. Again these were targeted samples, because of their being in the craft business. No men were interviewed in Dzivarasekwa.

3.3 Data collection methods

3.3.1 *In-depth interviews with key respondents*

My key respondents were as follows:

Interviewees	Females	Males	Total
Government officials	0	3	3
Club leaders	3	0	3
Municipal officials	1	0	1
Managers in the business community	1	0	1
Officials in regional bodies	1	1	2
Total	6	4	10

Table 1: Showing key respondents

I selected the key respondents based on their knowledge of the issues in focus affecting women in craft businesses by virtue of their positions in key structures under whose portfolios the issues to do with women in craft business in focus in the study fell. These structures were the Ministry of Justice and Parliamentary Affairs under which the Intellectual Property office fell, the Ministry of Women Affairs, officials in the Intellectual Property Office which is tasked with Intellectual Property matters, Officials at ARIPO¹⁹ and the Marketing Manager at the National Handcraft Centre.

My focus was on the impact of different interventions for women in craft business, policies aimed at achieving women in craft's economic emancipation as well as the intellectual property issues vis-a-vis women in crafts in the informal sector. I managed to obtain useful insights from the interviews with key respondents, especially on the role and impact of policies on the development of women in crafts businesses in Zimbabwe.

¹⁹ African Regional Intellectual Property Office.

3.3.2 *Individual interviews*

These were done with women basket weavers and some of those in sewing and weaving in Dzivarasekwa.

The respondents were as follows:

Interviewees	Female	Male	Total
Domboshava	6	2	8
Dzivarasekwa	15	0	15
Total	21	2	23

Table 2: Showing respondents who were interviewed

The women I spoke to were mainly middle-aged women, only two were old women, aged sixty and sixty-five years old, respectively. The men I spoke to were young teenage boys, who helped their mothers weave and sell their baskets. I targeted interviews for the women as basket weavers and random interviews for the males. The interviews were conducted both at the homes of the women and at their club where they do the weaving and sewing.

The initial step in carrying out the interviews was to introduce myself and give a briefing on the objectives of the research. I developed an interview guide concerning the following issues:

- Factors influencing the craft businesses the women were in – so as to determine whether their participation in the craft business was a matter of choice, to gauge the gender dynamics, to determine the influence of semi autonomous social fields, etc.
- Where they had acquired the skills of craft making
- Information on costing issues, marketing and general business organisation
- Any aid/help they had received in running their business and from whom: to determine the actors and structures in women economic development.
- Views on how they were faring in business, the impact on the business of the aid/help they had received
- Challenges, if any so far, in business

- Views on IP issues and whether it can help improve their business
- Personal details (age, sex, marital status, number of children, duration in craft business)

At the end of the interviews I would inquire as to what the women felt had to be done if they were to improve themselves in the craft business. This enabled me to gauge holistic interventions which women in craft businesses wanted if they were to improve themselves in business. Interviews proved effective and resulted in useful insights on the highs and lows of women's experiences in craft business.

3.3.3 Observations

Having been at the club, in Dzivarasekwa, the venue of their craft business endeavours, I was able to get first hand experiences of what a woman's day in the craft business was like, through observations. Watching them go about their tasks gave me insights into the time spent making one craft item, the type of products they made, the skill and effort needed amongst others, and allowed me to draw my own conclusions, which information was quite helpful in data triangulation.

Being at the homes of women in Domboshava gave me a firsthand evidence of the social background of the women. This proved useful as I stumbled upon the girl child of one of the women basket weavers who had been pulled out of school, in Grade Five, as she said, for lack of school fees yet her elder brother who was being sent to school and was now doing Form Two. It seemed after having followed up the issue of her not being in school from her mother, that there were possibly other reasons, apart from lack of school fees, why she was not in school. I had not initially obtained this information from their mother when I interviewed her at the market. It was useful for data triangulation especially on how sustainable craft businesses were for these women, if they still could not afford to put their children in school.

3.4 Assessment of methodology

Data collection methods I used proved to be effective, as I got information I needed on experiences of women in craft businesses. However, in Domboshava, being an outsider and having arrived there by motor vehicle, the women thought that I was able to link them up

with markets; as a result, I felt that they were exaggerating the quality and quantity of the baskets they could make whose descriptions were different from those they had ready for sale.

In Dzivarasekwa I also got the same impression that women thought I was from the donors. Therefore they failed to answer my questions and instead emphasised that they had problems and were in dire need of help. Besides, as I conducted interviews in their work room, I got the impression that this might have influenced the answers the women gave, as their responses were almost the same.

However despite the foregoing limitations data triangulation cured the possible biases in the information I obtained, making it largely credible.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 MAIN FINDINGS

4.1 The gender dimension of women entrepreneurship

'Literature shows that women are as capable as men in entrepreneurial pursuits, if problems encountered can be overcome.'

(Marta B Calas et al., 2009).

This study's focus on women in entrepreneurship, particularly in such businesses as the craft industry was deliberate. This was informed by the fact that women make up 53% of those engaged in the informal sector in Zimbabwe.²⁰ Women's engagement in economic activities, particularly in business is in itself a gender issue. Gender, which is the socially and culturally constructed difference between women and men,²¹ is one of the major problems to be encountered if women are to meaningfully engage in business ventures.

Internalised hegemonic notions of what a woman ought to be have shaped the manner in which women in craft businesses, both in Domboshava and Dzivarasekwa, approach their various business undertakings. Women, both in Domboshava and Dzivarasekwa, view their being in crafts as way of conforming to their internalised hegemonic notions of the role of women as mothers and childcares, who are using their given skills as an extension of that role. One woman, interviewed in Domboshava, captured this when she had this to say on the point:

'Chemudzimai kurera vana vake mwanangu, zvekuruka izvi ndinozviiitira kurera vana vangu.'

(Meaning, 'It is for the woman to raise her children, my child. This weaving, I do, so as to raise my children.')

Her sentiments were a pointer to the fact that, as a woman, she had been socialized to think of herself as a mother. All that she thought she ought to be in fulfilment of that role was a mother who raises and cares for her children. As such, even the women were generating an income through their making and selling crafts and running craft businesses, they themselves, owing to internalised gender stereotypes of women as mothers, did not consider themselves

²⁰ Zimbabwe Labour Survey, 2011.

²¹ CEDAW Committee General Recommendation 25 on Article 4 (1) of CEDAW on Temporary Measures.

to be in business. Rather they saw their making and selling craft as a subsistence venture, through which they could provide for their children's up-keep. This fact on women in craft, especially those interviewed in Domboshava, demonstrates the relational feminist argument that when it comes to the making life choices women do not see themselves as autonomous individuals, but consider rather the impact their decisions would have on the relations they have with others in society.

This gender stereotyping on the part of women craft makers themselves, especially those in Domboshava, explain why, despite years of producing and selling crafts, they have remained largely poor, struggling basket vendors. They are in basketry, not to make a profit as, what being in business would entail, but are in it to be able to raise their children.

Since women in crafts view their being in the crafts industry as an extension of their motherhood role, owing to internalised gender stereotypes, gender stereotypes have an indirect impact on the way they cost their products. Their ultimate target being to raise their children influenced the way they cost their products. The selling prices were pegged depending on the immediate pressing needs at home. Factors like labour, time, cost of raw materials and cost of productions amongst others, which are ordinarily considered in costing issues in business are not taken into consideration. Yet when I inquired as to the price of a flower vase she was selling on my first visit, when I met her at the market, a woman whom I interviewed in Domboshava had this to say:

'Ingondipa zvako \$2 mwanangu, ndiwane mari yekundogaisa , upfu hwapera kumba.'

(Meaning, 'Just give me \$2, so that I can have money to pay at the grinding mill. There is no longer any mealie-meal at home.')

Thus on that given day, the need to source funds for the grinding meal, so that she could have mealie-meal to feed her family, determined the price of the flower vases she was selling.

The need to conform to hegemonic notions of what a woman ought to be and do in life and to a large extent patriarchal control, was also the driving force behind the views of some of the women interviewed in Domboshava as to why they took up craft making in the first place. When I inquired on how she had come to be a basket weaver, I was told that she had learnt weaving upon getting married into a family whose women were basket weavers. As the third

wife, she had to join her co-wives and their mother-in-law in the basket making trade, since making baskets what was expected of her as the new wife. For her, the choice as to which trade to pursue had not been hers to make, it had been the 'natural' consequence of being a wife and daughter-in-law of the family into which she had married. It seemed as if there was an 'unwritten law' in her new family which stipulated that all women marrying into had to be basket weavers, if not at the time of marriage, then the new wife had to learn the trade in order to conform.

On four different occasions I was in the field in Domboshava, I was told that the husband of these women in Domboshava had gone to the market to sell his wares. I learnt that he was in the trade of making aluminum pots, which he sold locally and mainly in Hatcliffe. I was told that he would not help in the basket making venture, which he entirely left to his wives. This struck me as showing that that gender and largely patriarchal considerations informed this man's choice of enterprise. According to his third wife, he plied the metal pot making enterprise, together with his younger brother and their neighbour, both of whom were his fellow church members. Thus it would seem that this men's choice of enterprise also had religious roots.

What was also an interesting finding during the study was the fact that both the boy and girl children of the women interviewed in Domboshava had learnt their mothers' trade of basket weaving and also helped their mothers weave and sell baskets. It seems from this finding that when it came to economic choices that children make, parental influence and the need to conform to parental expectations and not gender stereotypes was at play. When I asked the two teenage boys who were helping their mothers weave baskets what they wanted to do for a living later in life, they indicated that they wanted to continue weaving baskets, but to do so in South Africa, where their elder brothers were plying the weaving trade.

Thus from findings it was shown that to some extent, gender determined the choice of business venture, the women interviewed in this study pursued. It also influenced the manner in which they conducted their businesses. The women largely saw their basket making activities, not as a business, but as a subsistence activity, done to sustain their families, in the course of performing their role as wives and mothers.

This revelation, led me to my next finding in the field, which was:

Semi autonomous social fields and their impact on women business initiatives

The women in Domboshava laboured under an authoritarian religious influence of the Johane Masowe WeChishanu church, whose doctrines were formulated by its leader and founder. Although these church doctrines might have been useful and practical then, the relevance of such church doctrines formulated in the 1930s to the realities of today's socio-economic landscape and contribution of such to their success as business people and general socio-economic development of the women basket weavers' families is doubtful.

I observed that these the business choices made by these women basket weavers, who could not afford to keep their children in school, were influenced by these church doctrines which were proving not only to be out-dated but impractical but also out of touch with the complexities and realities of modern life. Yet the church members unshakably adhered to them. Their church doctrine discouraged the schooling of the children of the members and encouraged members to engage in self sustaining ventures, instead of seeking to be employed.

It emerged that this was the reason why this particular family and other women members of the same church I talked to had chosen the path of being self employed, vendors and craft makers. For these women, being basket weavers and vendors was a trade they had engaged in having been informed by church doctrine. One of the women I talked to had this to say on the point:

'Vakati itai zvemaoko kuti muraramise mhuri. Tisada zvechitupa nekuti chinopera, mabasa aya varungu vachaenda mukatambudzika.'

(Meaning, 'He (their church leader) said we should use our hands to survive. We should not seek to have certificates (academic) because they expire. The white people will leave this country and those with certificates would suffer.')

Thus the form of business undertaking for these women had been dictated to them by their church leader. From the way the women talked about their church and their church leader, I could tell that they were ardent believers of their leader and his message, which they religiously upheld.

The first wife, when I asked her, why they were engaged in weaving baskets, had this to say, a sentiment which largely echoed what I had been told by a fellow church member, who also weaves and sell baskets:

‘Zvinonzi mukuru wechechi yedu akabva nadzo kunze kwenyika, mhiri kwemakungwa, kareko akati kuchechei, ndaona chiratidzo, mwari anditi vanhu vangu muchararamiswa netsanga iyi.’

(Loosely translated, ‘It is said our church leader brought the reeds from his trip overseas back then and told his members that he had a vision in which the Lord told him that his own people will live through this reed plant.’)

Not only had the choice to weave baskets been informed by church teachings, for these women, even the type of material they had to use in making their baskets had been prescribed by the church. From the discussions I had with them, some of the women indicated that they always made it a point to plant the said reeds in their garden, even when they moved from Mvurwi, where they initially stayed in the 1990; they took the reeds with them to Domboshava, where they relocated and are currently living. But that type of reed is becoming scarce. Some of the women told me that if they received big orders for baskets today, they could have difficulties meeting the order, because the reeds were becoming hard to come by. Since they use that particular reed because it is prescribed by their leaders, they cannot be flexible and experiment with other materials, patterns and designs, to overcome the challenge.

Basketry for these women as a business venture was a matter of religious belief. It is however unfortunate that the same church doctrine which prescribed to them what business to do is silent on how women should go about issues of business administration. The women had no clue how to market their products in order to sustain their business. As a result the women were left stranded and their middlemen, who used to find markets for them disappeared from the scene. They are left helpless because, according to the women, they can only weave baskets, as this is what the church encourages.

This is regardless of the fact that the markets for those baskets are no longer there to sustain a meaningful business. Their situation is worsened by their not prioritising schooling for their children, especially the girl children, who are pulled out of school, even before they have completed primary school, to be married off as mothers and weavers like their mothers. Hence it creates a situation in which these women and their children are trapped in a vicious

circle of poverty and hopelessness, oiled by the authoritarian and chauvinistic religious machinery.

The above finding brings into focus the argument by Ayedza (2009)²² that received religious, in particular, Christian teachings have largely contributed to the oppression of women and wide spread poverty in Africa. She contends that it is women, rather than men who constitute the majority of church members. Outside the church, women are the ones saddled with the burden of looking after their children and have the family more at heart. Yet women remain the poorest and the most disadvantaged in the church and society owing to received church doctrines which glorify poverty and exhort the virtues of submissive women. Church leadership, which is mostly male, does not seem to care very much about the degrading situation of their women followers.²³

When I talked to the third and younger wife of the polygynous union, whose young girl child had been pulled out of school in Grade Five, she indicated that she had three girls in all. The eldest, who was seventeen at the time, had been married and was also weaving baskets from her new home, since her in-laws, were their fellow church members.

The situation of women in Domboshava brings into focus the need to take into cognizance the underlying social constraints which stand in the way of people's capability to receive and utilise developmental initiatives and address them first in order to achieve the goal of development. This is the essence of the capabilities approach to development (Nussbaum, 2000). Thus for women in Domboshava, unless and until the underlying religious and patriarchal control is dealt with, it is highly unlikely that they could participate in the craft industry as business people.

On what the women in basketry's aspirations in business were, one of them replied by quoting one of Jesus' sermons from the Bible when he said that the love of money is the root of all evil. She emphasized that what guided them in their craft activities was not the love of money, but rather the need to be able to sustain themselves and their families. In her view aiming to make money is ungodly and contrary to their church teachings. The influence of such Christian doctrines as to what the women should subscribe and which exhorts believers

²² Poverty among African people and the ambiguous role of Christian thought.
²³ Shorter, A. (1999).

to shun wealth and ascribe high spiritual value to poverty have made it difficult to implement empowerment programmes in an effort to eradicate poverty in Africa.²⁴

From the experiences of this group of women, it became apparent that their being in the craft business in the first place and the manner in which they did business was dictated by their being members of and the need to conform to their religious normative order. This religious normative order, as a system deeply engrained in its members' psyche, had evolved its own forms of policing to ensure compliance. In the case of women in basketry, the fear of sinning against God, and of disobeying their revered leader's teachings acted as a policing mechanism to ensure members comply. Not only do they regulate their social lives, but as was demonstrated by women in Domboshava, it shapes their economic lives as well. This echoes the fact that semi autonomous social fields, often act to regulate the way people, under whose influence they fall, perceive the given laws, and respond to development initiatives as well.

Patriarchy, typifying the nature of the family into which the women of polygynous unions had married, presented another set of rules to which these women had to abide if they were to remain married to that particular family. There was in place a system of male dominance, where the women indicated that they had no say in the choice of trade to pursue. Some of the women had no control over the proceeds of their craft businesses which they surrendered to their husband at the end of each day. This presented another set of unofficial normative orders to which they had to conform. On this point, the youngest wife had this to say:

'Ndakangaroorwawo zvakadaro, baba ndivo vanoronga semuridzi wemusha, saka isu mari yatinoshava,tinovapa, voronga kuti vangatiitirei semhuri yavo.'
(Literally translated, 'It was like that when I got married. Our husband as the head of the family is the one who decides. We give him the money we would have made and he decides what to do with it for the good of the family.')

Against the background of these socio-religious constraints acting as barriers to the women's meaningful participation in business, women in Domboshava have at one time been recipients of various interventions , aimed at fostering their competitive participation in their particular business endeavours. According to the women, well wishers from the donor community had been active in helping them, as compared to the government. In the next

²⁴ Bailey, B. (2009).

section, I will examine how effective these surface interventions had been in improving the economic welfare of women in craft businesses.

4.2 Surface interventions/development initiatives and their impact on women's competitive participation in business

Women in Dzivarasekwa told me that, as the Batsiranai Group of Women, they were deeply indebted to their benefactor, Lynn Poole, now resident in the United States of America. She had been instrumental in organising the women into a club, the Batsiranai Group of women; purchased a house for them in Dzivarasekwa 2 from which they operate from and gave them equipment to use in their craft business. She had donated to them material, which included sewing machines, cloth and knitting material and suggested a name for the group, Batsiranai, for easy identification.

She also taught them basic business operation techniques like book keeping and electronic data entry, using a computer, which she supplied for them. She capped her intervention endeavour by creating a webpage for them, which she administers on behalf of the women from her American base. The women said that their benefactor also sources markets for them and manages the placement of international orders for the women's products. From her American base, she links women with markets and organizes marketing fairs for them through her Zimbabwean connections. She also e-mails women to advise on any forthcoming fairs in which they should participate and attends to any orders to be prepared amongst other business tasks. The women in Dzivarasekwa expressed their gratitude for their lady benefactor for having set up their group in the following words of the Chairwoman of the Sales Committee:

‘Lynn Poole made us what we are today. She has done a lot for us and although she is now in America, we feel like we have her here every day. She constantly e-mails us to give us orders, inform us of marketing fairs, which we must attend and consult on our general welfare. Without her we won't know how we will become.’

When I perused their website²⁵ I found out that their benefactor Lynn Poole is listed as the Advisor and Website Manager of Batsiranai. The group is also described as a Fair Trade organisation and lists among its customers the Oxfam Shop (UK, Australia) and The Ten

²⁵ <http://www.batsiranai.com>.

Thousand Villages (USA). Their benefactor was awarded his Holiness the Dalai Lama's 'Unsung Heroes Award' in 2009 for her contribution and commitment to the women of Batsiranai. This echoes the sentiments of the women themselves that they owed their existence as a group in business to their benefactor, Lynn Poole.

The former Harare Mayoress, at one time, in 2011, also chipped in to replace the sewing machines, originally bought for the women by their benefactor in 1999, which had now become old, unreliable and expensive to maintain. Together with the donation of sewing machines, the former mayoress also donated a consignment of sewing and knitting material and organised the women's participation at the Harare International Festival of Arts in the same year at which they exhibited their wares.

On the one hand, women in Dzivarasekwa lamented that they had not so far received any meaningful government interventions. The Ministry of Women Affairs had in 2012 organised their participation at the Harare Agricultural Show free of charge and at the show they had exhibited their wares. Women felt that their being at the Agricultural Show had not been particularly useful for their ventures, as they said, during their exhibitions at the Agricultural show very few visitors had come to their stand. All women were in agreement that people who frequent the Agricultural shows had no interest in the dolls they made and opted instead to visit stands where agricultural products and service providers were exhibiting. The same ministry had also promised them loans from the Women's Development Fund which never materialized. This was, as the women said, partly because they themselves had never followed up with the Ministry of Women Affairs on the loan in the first place, as they felt that the ministry had not been sincere in its promise, for the officials had never returned to assess the women as had been promised.

Having been literally set up by their benefactors and provided with the machinery through which to could spring-board into a more formalized business venture, complete with an advertising and marketing platform through the medium of a webpage, one would expect women in Dzivarasekwa to be successful craft entrepreneurs.

Yet the reality on the ground is different. The women told me that they were finding it difficult to make ends meet and that of late they had received no orders. Buyers trickle in here and there, mainly white people from the Northern more affluent suburbs, most of whom are

referrals from their benefactor, since she is the one who runs and manages their website. Occasionally, they receive bulk orders through their benefactor and it is usually in such cases that they receive a meaningful income.

They said they have no local market, as people in their locality do not like their products, opting instead to buy cheaper plastic Chinese dolls, handbags and jewellery from town. Ordinarily, they must get paid fortnight, each according to what they would have sold, but that owing to difficult times and low business, they have shifted to being paid once a month. They take home an average of US\$100 each on a good month, which is barely sufficient to cover monthly bills, food, rent and other obligations. As it is their agreed rule that they must report to the club every Monday to Friday, from nine in the morning to four in the afternoon, they are now spending most of their time, sewing and knitting stock supplies, if and when they have the material. When there is no material, they engage in counselling activities, housekeeping issues amongst others. Apart from knowing that they have a page which was created for them on the internet, they do not know how to access that webpage, let alone how to use it for the benefit of their business, instead of having to sit and wait for markets to come to them.

What is apparent is that, women in Dzivarasekwa are used to having their benefactor provide for them in terms of finding markets, organizing fairs, exhibitions and providing sewing equipment. They were lamenting that one of the over- locking machines donated in 2011 had broken down and they wanted to have it replaced but this would only be possible if the donors were prepared to do so. They also want materials sourced for them. They are so donor-aid dependant that all they can do is sit and wait at their club for donors to come with more aid.

The net effect of the above interventions they received, especially from their benefactors in America, was to breed even greater donor dependency on the part of women craft entrepreneurs, instead of transforming them into self-sustaining entrepreneurs, which should have been the ultimate goal of such development initiatives.

On the need to reform the top-down prescriptive development interventions such as the one described here, Stewart (1999) emphasizes that any initiatives for the women should come from the women themselves - that way it creates a sense of ownership and control of the

initiative on the part of the women, a factor which is more likely to result in women themselves going the extra mile so that the dream can flourish. Often such interventions are informed by the interveners' conceptualization of women issues and needs, taking little or no account of the women's daily needs, activities and aspirations.²⁶ The net consequence of such initiatives, as Mashingaidze (1999) contends, is that women end up even more marginalized and alienated by the doomed-to-fail projects which do not foster a sense of ownership of the projects among the women. It seems this sense of ownership of the development initiative is what is lacking for women in Dzivarasekwa, and explains why they had not used their own initiative to experiment with the website to try to find markets for their products. All they do is sit and wait in hope of getting more aid.

Thus for development initiatives to be effective in achieving the goal of creating self-sustaining craft business women, an approach different from that used in the current scenario (where women are sold dreams of economic viability conceived from outside the women themselves) is called for. Stewart (1999) goes further to argue that there is a need instead to concentrate on using local capacity to generate interest in locally appropriate projects for the women. This is better than remotely devising projects and then marketing them to the local people who have no commitment to the success of such projects and no real grasp of their purpose. This is the problem that occurred to the women in Dzivarasekwa: they were given a project and business idea, whose purpose they did not really grasp, for, instead of seeing themselves making and selling craft as a business, they see the activity as an extension of their role of caring for their children who are disabled.

A similar scenario occurred in Domboshava where women had become so reliant on their benefactor finding markets for their baskets at the cultural village which he ran. When their benefactor closed down his cultural village the women were left stranded with no clue on how to find new markets on their own. The women said that the closure of that market is the reason why they had stopped weaving smaller baskets of better quality which they used to weave. They had instead switched to their current big, rudimentary baskets, which are only suitable for carrying fruits and vegetables. They were left in their current situation because the surface intervention provided for them had not been effective in transforming their

²⁶ Stewart (2011).

fortunes as craft weavers and businesspeople, but had made them even more vulnerable and dependant on aid.

My findings in Dzivarasekwa show that there is a need for development agents to consider women as their partners in development. This is achieved by making the women central to the development process through consultations with the women from the planning and designing stage of development interventions right through to the implementation stage so as to create a framework for involvement and self sufficiency on the part of the women.²⁷ By doing so would conform to the obligation to ensure the participation of women at all levels in the conceptualization, decision making, implementation and evaluation of development policies and programmes.²⁸

It seems for the women in Domboshava the ultimate failure of the surface intervention to make any meaningful impact on the women craft business was because they had not addressed the underlying socio-religious constraints which stood in the way of these women's ability to receive and utilise the 'given' initiatives. To be effective, any development initiative for women in crafts in Domboshava should come with a package aimed at overcoming these patriarchal and authoritarian religious barriers. This is in line with the feminist argument in the development and social justice discourse that any such initiatives should be attentive to the special problems women face because of their sex and gender, without an understanding of which, general issues of poverty and development cannot be confronted (Nussbaum, 2000).

Surface interventions, designed from afar, without the input of the intended beneficiaries and blind to the underlying socio-economic-religious constraints affecting the intended women beneficiaries' capabilities to receive them are largely ineffective in achieving the goal of empowering women to develop into self-sustaining craft entrepreneurs. I now examine further how women's care burdens and self perceptions, as some of the underlying factors, act to constrain the ability of women to engage in meaningful enterprises.

²⁷ Stewart (2011).

²⁸ Article 19(b) of the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa.

4.3 Women's care burdens and self perceptions

What has dominated feminist discourse on women development and equality issues is the argument that women are often burdened with a 'double-day', so to speak, of taxing employment/economic ventures and the full responsibility of child care.²⁹ This burden of care for women stems from gender stereotypes of the role of women as wives, mothers, child carers and contributes to the differential positioning of women and men in public life and business in particular.

The women I talked to in Dzivarasekwa told me that they were in the club, Batsiranai, engaging in crafts, mainly because they were mothers with children who were disabled. Their having formed the club in the first place was guided by this fact that they were mothers, with children, who needed special care and attention. As mothers with the burden of caring for their disabled children, they thought that they needed to be together to provide support for each other in order to make their duty of raising and providing for their children easier. The group secretary, whom I spoke to, had this to say on the point:

'Takauya pano, kwete kuzotsvaga mari aiwa. Chinanagwa chedu ndechekuti semadzimai ane vana vakaremara , tibatsirane , kurera vana vedu, kunyaradzana mupfungwa uchiona kuti , aiwa handisirini chete ndine mawana akaremara,vakawanda vakadaro, vamwe vedu mhuri dzakatoputskia pamusana pevana ivava vakaremara.Ndosaka takafunga zvekubata pamwe, kubatsirana sezvinotaura zita redu.'

(Loosely translated, 'We were here not to look for money, no. Our aim was that as mothers of disabled children, we should help each other care for and raise our children, give each other mental support and draw strength from the realization that one won't be the only one with a disabled child. Some of us were divorced because of having disabled children. That is why we thought about coming together and help out each other as our name suggest.')

Thus the responsibility of caring they had towards their disabled children as mothers was the primary reason, according to the women, why the Club Batsiranai Group of Women existed in the first place. According to the women, this care objective was reflected in their name 'Batsiranai', a Shona word meaning 'help each other'. They did not see themselves as being at the club to do business.

²⁹ Marta B Calais *et al.* (2009).

To be able to care for their children, the women had a day care centre at the club, where the women, with disabled children, would bring them along to the club. They took turns to ‘man’ the day care centre and look after the children while their colleagues worked. It was interesting to note that four of the women, who brought their disabled children along with them to the club, had left their husbands at home, unoccupied, as they were not in gainful employment. The men were relying on part time jobs for survival as and when they became available. In essence this care pattern reinforced the stereotype of mothers as child carers. When I inquired as to why they had not considered leaving the children behind at home with their fathers, so that they would be more able to focus on their work, one of them said:

‘Mwana akadai anotoda amai vake , ndivo chete vangatomugona. Varume havana mwoyo wekurera.’

(Meaning, ‘A child in this condition requires her mother. She is the only one who can understand her needs. Men do not have the caring heart.’)

This was a pointer to the multiple roles of women who have to perform their role as wives for their husbands. It explained why their starting time at the club was nine o’clock, when the normal time would have been eight o’clock in the morning. Their nine o’clock starting time was flexible enough to allow the women to do their normal household chores and cook for their husbands, in the case of those who were married, before coming to the club. They took along their children in order to be able to care for them while they went about their craft business at the club.

The situation of the women at Batsiranai, who were saddled with the burden of caring for their children reflect what has been dominant in the ‘care economy’ discourse that caring activities often take place within the families and have been the responsibility of women in particular. As this care work occurs outside the market, it is unpaid and is of no economic value.³⁰

As shown by the findings in Dzivarasekwa, women continue to take disproportionate responsibility for care leading to what is described as the ‘triple burden’ of paid work, care work in the family and wider caring in the communities owing to reductions in state social welfare provisions.³¹ The women said there were no state run day care centres for children

³⁰ Stewart (2011).

³¹ Stewart (2011).

with disabilities in their locality; hence they had to shoulder the burden of caring for their children while they worked at the same time. This burden of care thus negatively impacted on the women's competitive participation in their craft businesses. The women had to apportion their time to cater for caring for their families at home in the morning, before reporting to the craft centre, where again they had to split their time at the craft centre between caring for their disabled children and their craft making activities.

Thus for the women in Dzivarasekwa the intersections of internalised gendered notions of the role of motherhood, women's limited self perception of themselves and their capabilities, as well as the burden of care operated to multiply oppress the women. The resultant effect of these multiple oppressions was to prevent the women in Dzivarasekwa from competitively participating in their craft making businesses. Crenshaw (1989) championed this intersectionality theory, arguing that black women's experiences can be best explained by taking into account the intersectional experiences of race, class, gender and ethnicity, amongst other factors, which operate to multiply oppress them. As my findings reveal, intersectionalities best explain the situation of the women both in Domboshava and Dzivarasekwa. The women suffer multiple oppressions of gender, religion, patriarchal control, internalised hegemonic notions as to the role of motherhood, limited self perceptions and the burden of care, all of which prevent their competitive participation in their respective craft business.

The women in Dzivarasekwa said that they used the money they generated at the club from their craft making ventures to provide for the family's needs at home, which included paying school fees, for those whose disabled children were in school. Still most of them could not afford the fees for their disabled children some of whom had been pulled out of school.

According to the women in Dzivarasekwa, this burden of care the women have towards their children especially, is the reason two of the women, who had been divorced because of their having given birth to a disabled child, had taken their children with them. One had secured the matrimonial home at divorce and had secure accommodation to live with her three children but the other said that, following the divorce, she had decided to move on and look for alternative accommodation together with her children, as they had been lodgers. The two women had both taken their children along with them having decided not to leave them with

their divorced husbands. Both of them said they felt that only the mothers of children were best suited to care for and raise them.

Since the women in Dzivarasekwa considered the fact that their being mothers of disabled children had been the reason why they came to be at the club, and why they continued to be at the club, affected the manner in which they approached their craft business, which is what the women primarily did, every week day from nine o'clock in the morning to four o'clock in the afternoon.

The women in Dzivarasekwa saw their craft making activities, from which they got the money they were paid at the end of the month, as an extension of their caring role towards their children as mothers of disabled children. They did not view themselves, through their doll making activities, as being in business. This self perception on the part of women themselves, greatly impinged on their ability to actively engage in the craft business, despite the fact that they had been provided with all the resources, which on the face of it, were necessary for them to carry out successful craft business ventures.

As they said themselves:

'Takauya pano kwete kuzotsvaga mari.'
(Meaning, 'We did not come here to look for money.')

Since they did not consider themselves to be in business, this may explain why women in Dzivarasekwa, despite having participated in numerous marketing fairs organised for them by their benefactor, still did not know how to organise one for themselves in order to open new markets. Instead they sit still, waiting for their benefactor, who is in America, to organise and inform them of their next fair, if any. Active marketing is what those who are in business do, so that they can generate money. According to the women in Domboshava, although they themselves had been to marketing fairs and had exhibited at the Harare International Festival of Arts, amongst others, they still perceived themselves as not being in business. This explains why their participation in such events had not succeeded in materially changing their fortunes as craft business people.

Self perceptions limit the women in Dzivarasekwa's ability not only to actively participate as business people, but they also limit their capability to receive and utilise the different development interventions which have been designed for them so far. Noble as their benefactor's interventions were, and whose importance the women themselves acknowledged, the interventions had not achieved the desired goal of improving women's welfare as craft businesses, largely owing to the manner in which women perceived themselves.

It was because of this feature of limiting self image that some of the women with whom I spoke in Dzivarasekwa who were not on the sales committee expressed ignorance about such issues as the price of which the dolls they made were being sold for. Any business person knows by heart the price for which their goods or services are being sold. These limiting self perceptions on the part of the women can be traced back to the way in which women had been socialized, to think of themselves only as mothers, wives and carers and not business women.

Thus my findings revealed that multiple intersections limit the women's capabilities to receive development interventions and to competitively participate in their craft enterprises. What had informed my study was that the government has the overall obligation to empower women and create employment for them.³² One of the emerging issues in this study was that there were gaps in the government's policies for the empowerment of women, especially as enunciated in the ZIMASSET (2013) economic blue print. The next chapter deals with this emerging issue in detail.

³² Section 14 of the Zimbabwe Constitution (2013).

CHAPTER 5

5.0 WHAT NEXT FOR WOMEN IN BUSINESS?

5.1 Gaps in policy: Ineffective government/donor measures

My finding that there existed gaps in the government/ donor policies on women's economic empowerment and participation in business came out as an emerging issue in the field. In the human rights discourse, government is the primary duty bearer in ensuring compliance with human rights obligations and must ensure that anyone operating within its jurisdiction must comply.³³ Thus the obligation to ensure that the women's right to sustainable development and empowerment, especially in business, lies with the government of Zimbabwe, as a state party to the various international human rights instruments stipulating the need to empower women. Although this is so, my findings in the field, both in Dzivarasekwa and in Domboshava revealed that it was mainly donor agencies that were active in devising surface interventions for the women, aimed at ensuring that the women realise their right to economic empowerment and sustainable development. The government was doing virtually nothing towards the realization of this right. This finding necessitated my developing a wider view and assessing both the government and donor measures in ensuring women's economic empowerment, in particular their competitive participation in business.

During my interview with an official in the Ministry of Justice, I was told that women's empowerment lay at the heart of the Zimbabwe government, in line with the country's international human rights obligations. I was also told that the Ministry of Justice, as the overall overseer of the process of drafting and formulation of the countries' laws and policies, made sure that each and every law/policy drafted was gender mainstreamed.

I was told that through the formulation and adoption of the ZIMASSET economic blue print, the government had ensured that women's needs are incorporated in the process of achieving economic transformation of the country as a whole; in particular, that gender and development issues had been included under the Cluster Key Result Area of Social Services Delivery in the economic blue print. In line with ZIMASSET, the goal of improving gender

³³ WHO (2003).

equality and women's empowerment was to be achieved via linking women's groups to markets, through exhibitions, fairs and expos.

In the context of findings made in this study in relation to the impact of development initiatives for women developed from outside, on achieving the goal of development, there exists a gap in the government's ZIMASSET policy and its ability to achieve women's empowerment. The main shortcoming lies in the prescriptive nature of the ZIMASSET blueprint. It sells pre-designed ideas of economic prosperity to women in business, which ideas are blind to the socio-economic realities of the women on the ground, who are the intended beneficiaries of such ideas. Neither are the actual needs of the various categories of women in business taken into consideration. This study has demonstrated that top-down prescriptive development initiatives, although they were mainly from the donor community, are often not effective in achieving the goal of women's empowerment and that these must be reformed in favour of self-sustaining development programmes in order to curb the perpetuation of the dependency cycle (Stewart, 1999).

The same applies to surface interventions from the donor community, as demonstrated in Dzivarasekwa. The women's benefactor had instead designed and ran the development initiative on behalf of women craft businesses making the women passive implementers of the development initiative. The net result of it was that the women remained clueless as they were before as to how to sustain the particular initiative which, as a business, was fast crumbling. The women had to sit and wait for their benefactor to come to their rescue with more aid. Despite the women having been literally set up in their craft business, the women were lamenting that they could not without help service their broken down over-locking machine or procure material to enable them to service the orders they were receiving. They were hoping they would get a donor to help them. The club chairlady had this to say on the point:

'Kudai tikangwana anotibatsira nemuchina mutsva unooverlockaWatinawo wakafa uye micheka yekusonesa. Tinombowana maorder asi tinotadza kuabata nekuti tinenge tisina micheka.'

(Literally translated, 'If only we could get someone to help us with a new over-locking sewing machine. The one we had broke down. We also get orders but sometimes we fail to meet them because of lack of material.')

Thus the situation of the women in Dzivarasekwa shows that there is a need for more comprehensive surface interventions if women are to be transformed into self-sustaining businesswomen. To be effective in achieving the transformation of the women, development initiatives need to make women in craft businesses active participants in both the design and implementation of the development initiatives. If this done, the development agency will foster a sense of ownership of the development initiative on the part of the women beneficiaries.

The other gap, on the part of the government, is the lack of political will to holistically tackle the issue of women business empowerment. This is demonstrated by the fact that women economic empowerment issues are considered to fall under the mandate of social services delivery and therefore they are not given as much attention as other business and economic development issues such as mining, agriculture and tourism. This may also explain why the women both in Domboshava and in Dzivarasekwa had not benefited from any government-initiated development initiatives.

As the findings made in this study reveal, especially those in Dzivarasekwa, what remained a gap in the donor measures targeted for women in development is the fact that the package did not address such issues affecting women businesses. When I talked to the women, they displayed ignorance as to sustainable commodity pricing issues, lack of marketing strategy and distribution plans. No wonder the women were stuck waiting for markets to come their way. This was despite the fact that they been provided with the medium of a website within which they could have implemented a marketing strategy if they had one. They had not been equipped with the know-how to devise or manage such a task in order to open up markets for their products. So as a result they simply sat and waited for their donor to source markets for them.

Women also displayed a lack of information on sustainable costing and pricing issues. It seems that pricing issues for women in Dzivarasekwa, were guided by the women's need to meet their family's basic subsistence needs like providing for their children. Thus the women at Batsiranai sold their products as cheaply as they could, to ensure they raised the monies needed for their families' sustenance. The women said prices for their dolls ranged from US\$3 up to US\$6 for the most expensive ones, yet an internet search for the prices of the same dolls in countries like the United Kingdom and United States, in the Fair trade shops,

showed that they could fetch as much as US\$38.00 for a single doll. The variation in price between the local and internet price is great and may be a result of the fact that the women in Dzivarasekwa do not know how to cost their own products.

According to Stewart (2011), costing issues are an important aspect in the commodity chain, if the women as the suppliers in the global commodity chains are to derive any benefit from their productions. In determining the costing issues of commodities in the chain of production, there is a need to trace back the set of inputs that culminated in the product item, the prior transformations, the raw materials, transport, the labour input into each of the material processes and the food inputs into the labour and take them all into account.³⁴ Stewart (2011) conceptualises global marketing chains as sets of inter-firm networks connecting manufacturer's suppliers and contractors in global industries to each other and to international markets.

Thus to be effective, development interventions from the donor community such as these must come up with a package to equip women with basic business skills on costing and marketing issues to enable them to derive benefits from the commodity chains. In this way the women in craft businesses are more likely to attain self sustainability as business people.

Against this background, my next section will look at what must be done if women are to effectively participate in business, from the perspectives of women in craft businesses themselves.

5.2 Towards a holistic approach to women business development: What women need

The previous chapters demonstrated that surface interventions, remotely designed for the women in craft businesses to implement, are doomed to fail. This is because from the perspective of the women in craft businesses, such surface interventions are blind to the real needs of the women. Thus in my discussions with the women in craft businesses both in Domboshava and in Dzivarasekwa they told me what they needed to have addressed by development partners if they were to be empowered to competitively participate in business.

³⁴ Stewart (2011: 25).

According to the women in Dzivarasekwa, what they needed most was to be able to find markets, so that they could sell more products and be able to look after their children. They indicated that of late they had spent weeks without making a sale, making it difficult to make ends meet. As a result of dwindling markets, they indicated that in 'hard times', they could take home as little as US\$50 per person per month which is hardly enough for their family's maintenance needs.

In Dzivarasekwa, the women would sit and wait for their benefactor, who is in the United States of America, to refer customers to them or to place orders. In between these orders, if they had material, they would sew and knit to stock up, in anticipation of the orders their benefactors would place for them. They said they would also wait for their benefactor to inform them as to which marketing fairs she had organised for them to participate in. Scarce markets they told me were the greatest challenge to their competitive participation in their craft business.

The women I talked to in this study, both in Dzivarasekwa and in Domboshava, displayed an overreliance on their middlemen in order to access markets for their products. In Domboshava the women had stopped weaving on a large scale following the closure of the Tengenenge Village where their middlemen who used to link them to markets was located. They bemoaned the lack of markets for their products and would now only weave occasionally, as and when they found markets.

However, from my discussions with the Marketing Manager at the National Handcraft Centre in town, he indicated that the products women at Batsiranai, Dzivarasekwa, make are very competitive. The National Handcrafts Centre occasionally place orders for the dolls, necklaces, other jewellery and handbags from Batsiranai. He indicated that the handbags and necklaces were a quick sale as they were a favourite of their customers. He said that the problem they were encountering from the group was that sometimes if they place orders the women do not deliver on time. As a result they had lately taken to sourcing the same kind of necklaces and bags from another source in Tafara.

The dolls however, he said, did not sell well with their clientele. The same dolls are sold on the sympathy market internationally and they fetch higher prices. On the Batsiranai website they are sold using the 'My twin is in Zimbabwe' concept where they are sold as sets of

twins, with the buyer retaining one doll and the twin doll being given to a needy child in Zimbabwe.

It would seem from these findings that what the women of Batsiranai, in Dzivarasekwa, make very competitive crafts, which are in high demand, even internationally. Yet they are in their current difficult predicament because they themselves do not have a clue how to market their dolls and rely solely on their benefactor, Lynn Poole, to devise marketing strategies for them.

What the women of Batsiranai need is to be able to know how to reach their markets directly and also how to maintain their presence in them once they find them. Not only must they wean themselves off an overreliance on their middlemen, they must learn how to keep their customers once they secure them. This they could do by meeting given orders in time and by delivering a quality product so that they do not lose their market to competitors as was the case with the women in Dzivarasekwa.

If development interventions are to benefit women meaningfully and over the long term they must also aim to equip them with basic business skills, like bookkeeping, costing and pricing issues, and marketing strategies. To participate competitively in business, the women in craft businesses must be equipped with basic business skills such as these.

The women in Dzivarasekwa also indicated that they needed injections of capital, so that they are able to buy material in bulk obviously in order to meet bulk orders. They said that sometimes they failed to meet such orders in time because they found it difficult to procure sufficient materials to do so. Women said this was so because of their business model, which ran on a cash-on-delivery basis. Hence they would only get paid by their customers after delivering the finished product.

An important finding I made in the field was that interventions, such as the need to use the Intellectual Rights framework to enhance their businesses, did not lie at the heart of the women's needs, especially for the women in Dzivarasekwa. The women's craft making enterprise displayed a veneer of formality and therefore seemed to be a viable candidate for using the Intellectual Property Rights framework. The women in Dzivarasekwa already had a name, which they used to identify themselves in the market, which name could qualify for registration as a trade mark. However as I talked to the women, I discovered that finding

markets came first on their list of needs. Based on the findings made, an assessment of the women's businesses also revealed that there was a need to develop an effective pricing structure and to wean themselves off the donor dependency syndrome. These issues needed immediate attention before dealing with any other issues (including any IPR³⁵ issues) if the women in craft businesses were to develop into self sustaining businesswomen.

For the women in Domboshava, it was found that the products they made proved to be big, ordinary and crudely fashioned baskets, with little aesthetic value, and which were not worthy of IP protection. The women bemoaned a lack of markets and they need such markets if they are to survive in business. Observations I made of their situation called for interventions involving much more than just finding markets for them. The women need to be liberated from the yoke of patriarchal domination and religious control. Empowerment was needed first before the women could seriously think of competitively participating in business. Development interventions targeted for the women in Domboshava must aim to address the issues of patriarchy and religious control as they directly affect the women's active engagement in their craft making enterprises.

5.3 Can IP enhance women's opportunities?

By my choice of the research topic, I had become a surface intervener myself. It seemed logical to me that the IP framework could be used to improve women in craft's competitive participation in business. As such I set out into the field to examine the feasibility and the practicality of adopting the IP framework as an intervention to improve women's craft businesses. My focus was in particular on the use of IP, such as collective marks, trademarks, copyrights and how these could be used to enhance the opportunities of women in craft business opportunities.

To get the official voice on the finer details of the IP issues in Zimbabwe, I had discussions with the officials at the Zimbabwe Intellectual Property Office. The Chief Examiner (Patents and Trademarks) told me that there was a deliberate policy on the part of government to ensure that grassroots people engaging in craft and other traditional knowledge systems benefit from the intellectual property rights regime.

³⁵ Intellectual property rights.

He said there lay great benefit in the registration of collective marks in terms of the Trade Marks Regulations (2005). In particular he had this to say:

‘The provision enables craft makers to come together, pool resources and register collective marks. This is important especially in regional and international trade. Registration of the collective mark will entail that, as craft makers, they will trade under single banner of their community/collective mark and share proceeds on a pro rata basis. This presents great marketing opportunities for craft people in IP Rights Framework.’

Thus according to the Chief Examiner, the benefit of IP , in particular, the collective mark for craft businesswomen is that it presents an opportunity for women engaged in craft businesses to pool their resources together and increase their bargaining power in the market place through their collective efforts. This is particularly important given that craft businesses are run as small scale, often vending, enterprises in the informal sector with little financial resources. In the field, the women I interviewed both in Domboshava and in Dzivarasekwa indicated that they were facing financial challenges. Their earnings from the craft making activities were hardly sufficient to meet family subsistence demands, let alone able to fund IP registration.

He also said, if women opted for a trademark, they could then use the registered name and mark as collateral in banks and financial institutions, which would enable them to access loans. According to him, the great benefit in using the IP framework is that it would be the starting point for women to formalize their businesses. Most important, the Chief Examiner told me that the mere fact of having a recognised mark and name will open up markets for their products, owing to the easy identification of the products with the women as the makers of the products, through the use of either the trade mark or the collective mark. Thus women in craft businesses could use the IP framework as a marketing strategy to open up markets for their businesses.

The Chief Examiner, like the women engaged in crafts I had interviewed in the field, did not have much optimism as to the benefits women, especially informal sector craft women, could derive from the IP framework. He said the IP laws and policies are best suited to established businesses with the means with which to mobilise the IP framework, enforce the ensuing rights and commercialise them. They are gender neutral and give no specific preference to women in business. He had this to say:

‘IP laws work on the basis that the intended beneficiaries, being those creators and innovators out there must on their own accord, mobilise the IP Rights framework. The IP Office does not go out looking for innovators to register for purposes of IP Protection. Neither does the Office enforce and commercialise the IP rights on behalf of the women. There has never been an IP Rights application from women engaged in crafts in Zimbabwe.’

Observations I made from my engagement with the women in craft businesses revealed that the women had developed a donor dependency syndrome and they were used to being passive recipients of development initiatives. The IP framework needs the women, as the beneficiaries, to actively engage with the IP framework and devise their own enforcement and marketing strategies if they are to derive any benefit from the framework. This would entail that the women in craft businesses having to be active implementers of the IP initiative if they are to use the IP framework as an intervention to improve their competitive participation in business.

An official at the African Regional Intellectual Property Office told me that the women engaged in crafts could benefit from IP if they sought copyright protection for their crafts instead. She indicated that, unlike other IP-like trademarks, the ultimate benefit of copyright was in the fact that it need not be registered for protection to ensue. The mere fact that one is identified as the maker of the products entitles them to IP protection in terms of the Zimbabwe Copyrights Act. She said that the problem was with African states’ approach to IP issues which excluded indigenous creators, like the women engaged in craft activities, who often do not have money to register IP like patents. She had this to say:

‘In Africa we have failed to develop IP Rights that benefit us as Africans more like copyright, the protection of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions. Instead we have, to our detriment, placed focus on the protection of Industrial Intellectual property rights like patents, industrial designs, utility models, trademarks amongst others. Yet our own people as African are not active in that area. The IP system as it currently stands, benefit developed countries more as they are owners of the most protected IP Rights. This has fostered the perception amongst many Africans engaged in IP related businesses like crafts and traditional medicine, which are mostly informal sector ventures that IP Rights are for the elite and the big businesses.’

It would seem from the findings I made at the ARIPO that for the women engaged in craft businesses to derive any benefit from the IP framework, there must be a deliberate change in

the IP policy of the country, towards encouraging the use of IP like copyright which is easy to acquire as it needs no registration. A reading of the Copyright Act shows that by virtue of their being creators of craft products, the women engaged in craft automatically have copyright protection. They can then use their copyright to further enhance their craft businesses.

For the women in Dzivarasekwa, copyright protection would benefit their businesses and protect their products from counterfeits, given that the dolls they make are highly sought after internationally. To participate competitively on the international market, where most of their products are sold, the women in Dzivarasekwa seem best suited to adopting the IP framework especially copyright and a collective mark, since they already have a well established trading name which is known even by the international market.

However, the findings made, especially in Domboshava, show that when applied to women in craft businesses, IP may not increase opportunities for the women, owing to their inability to acquire the rights and to enforce them. Unless women crafts businesses are developed into more formalized ventures, their informal and often subsistence based ventures are unlikely to derive any benefit from the use of IP. Findings also revealed that the IP system as it currently stands only focuses on the registration and protection of IP rights. It leaves it to the owner of the right to either enforce and to commercialise it. In other words, it is one thing to own a collective mark and it is quite another having to market it so that the owner may derive any benefit from it. Given that women in crafts, like any other trader in the informal sector, have difficulties finding markets, this finding makes it unlikely for them to derive any meaningful benefit from IP.

Costing issues around IP will be my next focus and I address it below.

5.4 Barriers and difficulties in women accessing IP

The Chief Examiner told me that to date they have not received any application for IP protection from women engaged in craft enterprises. Given this sad fact, I then sought to explore what prevented the women engaged in craft enterprises from engaging with the IP Rights system.

I was told at ZIPO that the cost of registering IP rights is one of the major barriers to accessing IP. This is especially on the part of women in craft businesses, as they are often subsistence craft vendors, who do not make any meaningful money from their businesses. As shown both in Dzivarasekwa and in Domboshava, the women engaged in craft work struggle to meet their subsistence needs, let alone find the extra dollar to pay for the registration of IP. According to the Chief Examiner:

‘Prohibitive fees are a major challenge. The two hundred US dollars needed for registration is unaffordable to many, given that most of those engaging in crafts and traditional medicine are in the informal sector. They often do not make much money out of their IP ventures and the fees remain unaffordable to them.’

It costs US\$200 to register trademarks, including collective marks at ZIPO, which is the initial cost of the application. The figure can increase, depending on how accurate one is in filling in the application forms. Any single subsequent correction will require the filling in of a separate form, each at a cost of US\$40. Given the technicalities of the process, and the need to comply with the given product classifications, the possibility of making errors is very high. According to the Chief Examiner, it is not unusual for the total cost of corrections alone, on a single application to reach up to US\$500, especially if the application is made by someone without experience.

To women craft vendors like the those in Domboshava and even those at the club in Dzivarasekwa, US\$200 is a small fortune. They cannot afford it, given that they often struggle even to raise the US\$2 required at the grinding mill for them to have mealie meal.

Apart from the cost, the Chief Examiner said that many struggle to comprehend the technical language of the IP application forms, which they often complete incorrectly. For the women in craft, especially in Domboshava, who are illiterate, they will particularly find it impossible to complete the registration process without the help of a registered IP agent, most of whom are legal practitioners and whose services are expensive. This will make the cost even more unaffordable and prohibitive for the women in craft businesses.

From my discussions with women craft vendors, it was apparent that all of them, in both Domboshava and in Dzivarasekwa, had no clue as to what IP entailed, what the rights were,

their implication for them as crafts women, where to register them and how to do so. This is not only peculiar to the women in craft work alone, but many also in business consider IP a highly technical area and have no clue how to engage with it. This lack of knowledge about IP issues was a barrier to women's utilization of the IP system as a whole. The women did not know they had rights which could be IP protected not what the general protection procedure entailed. This may be the reason why none of the women I engaged with had ever thought of IP for their undertakings. As a result I had to first engage in some legal literacy so that the women could acquire some appreciation of IP before we could proceed to discuss its possible implications for their businesses.

Thus, the lack of knowledge of the existence of the IP system, how to benefit from it/register rights under it, the prohibitive cost of registration and the legal technicalities of the registration process which make it difficult for lay people to register on their own without the assistance of legal practitioners at great further cost, typify the barriers against women's engagement with the IP system for their benefit.

Apart from these barriers which have to do with the nature of IP and the registration process itself, findings I made in the field revealed that the women engaged in craft businesses suffered from underlying socio-economic-religious constraints which greatly limited their capabilities to embrace the IP framework to improve their businesses. Thus for the women in Dzivarasekwa, who are the most likely candidates for the IP framework, their limiting self perceptions and burdens of care constrained their competitive participation in business ahead of their capability (or lack thereof) to embrace the IP framework to improve their businesses. As a consequence I made the argument in this study that more needed to be done to address the underlying social constraints before issues such as the adoption of the IP framework can even be considered.

CHAPTER 6

6.0 DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

I had started this research with the main objective on IP, which I had designed from a distance, in the comfort of the lecture room. IP for women engaged in craft seemed a logical intervention to improve their businesses. I had been more of a surface intervener myself.

This paper has shown that findings I made in the field put to the test whether there was any possible value in trying to invoke IP in the current scenario. What obtained in the field was that, for the women engaged in craft businesses both in Dzivarasekwa and in Domboshava, a great many intersections limited the women's capabilities to competitively participate in their craft businesses. The women in Domboshava suffered from multiple oppressions of gender, male dominance and an authoritarian religious normative order which treats women as mere instruments for the ends of others, in particular, their husbands and church leaders. These intersections operated to subordinate the women. Being under the patriarchal control of their husbands, the women in polygynous unions in Domboshava would weave and trade their baskets only to surrender all their daily earnings to their husbands. The women had no control over their craft making enterprises and this limited their ability to develop themselves as craft businesswomen.

The situation of the women engaged in crafts in Domboshava is such that they are taken as reproducers, care givers, sexual outlets and agents of family's general economic survival with disastrous consequences as they are trapped in poverty. Patriarchy, as perpetuated in the religious normative order, controls women's economic ventures and imposes socio-economic options for women in basketry in Domboshava, a factor which has limited their ability to receive developmental interventions targeted for them. Their situation as business women is desperate and if any meaningful change to their business fortunes is to be made, then findings revealed that such interventions must first address the underlying social constraints.

Accordingly for the women in Domboshava, adopting the IP framework as an intervention, to improve their craft businesses, in their current situation, would be farfetched. There is a need first to address the underlying socio religious constraints, as these have been shown to limit

their ability to implement any development initiatives targeted to improve their business fortunes. The big, rudimentary and crudely fashioned baskets the women in Domboshava make are of little aesthetic value and are not worth IP protection. For the women in Domboshava, tapping into the IP framework as a surface intervention is not feasible and practical unless the women improve the quality of their craft products and unless they are freed from the yoke of patriarchy and religious control under which they are reeling and which is hindering them from competitively participate in business.

The women in Dzivarasekwa suffer from intersections of the burden of care as mothers with children who are disabled and a limiting self perception, informed by internalised hegemonic notions of the role of women as mothers and care givers, on the part on the women themselves. These multiple oppressions stand in the way of women in Dzivarasekwa effective participation in the craft business. Findings showed that the women in Dzivarasekwa, despite their having the means by which they could improve their fortunes as businesspersons, still struggle to make ends meet. This was largely because of their limiting self perception, which make them see their craft activities at the club as an extension of their child care obligations and, as such, on their own they do not go the extra mile required if they are to become competitive business persons.

The effectiveness of surface interventions from the donor community, remotely designed for the women to implement, in achieving the goal of women empowerment, also came into focus in this study. Findings demonstrated that such surface interventions have largely succeeded in fostering the donor dependency syndrome on the part of the women in craft enterprises instead of transforming them into self sustaining businesswomen. This was particularly true with the women in Dzivarasekwa, who despite having been literally set up in business by their benefactor, remained struggling craftswomen, who would sit and wait for their benefactor to give them more aid, from the sourcing of markets, repairing broken down machinery to procuring material for them. As a result the need for sustainable development for the women is advocated for in this paper. This is achieved if development agencies take the women in craft businesses as development partners, whom they consult in designing development initiatives to ensure that the women's real needs are met. Proceeding in this way will foster a sense of ownership on the part of the women of the development initiative, which is needed if the women are to go the extra mile needed on their own, to sustain the

development projects (Stewart, 2011). Thus prescriptive top-down interventions have not succeeded in achieving the goal of women economic empowerment.

The lived realities of women in craft businesses explored in this study demonstrate that there is a gap in government policies on women economic empowerment as enunciated in the ZIMASSET (2013) economic blueprint. There is a lack of political will on the part of the government to address women empowerment issues as they are considered to be matters which fall under the banner of social services delivery and thus are not accorded the priority and seriousness given to other economic and business issues like agriculture. This explains why the women interviewed in this study indicated that they had never received any interventions from the government.

Lived realities of the women in craft businesses proved that IP issues were not at the heart of women entrepreneurs' needs, owing to a variety of factors such as prohibitive costs, ignorance about IP rights, registration, protection and benefits amongst others which constituted barriers against access by women. It was shown that even in the event of attaining such protection, IP was unlikely to change their fortunes, as it requires financial muscle in order to enforce them, which finances the women do not have. Instead, the need to find markets, amongst others, dominated the core of women's needs if they are to transform themselves into self sustaining craft businesses.

However in relation to the doll project of the women in Dzivarasekwa, IP is worth considering as a possible initiative to improve the women's craft business. This is owing to the fact that their business seems formalized, has an already established trade name and their products already sell competitively, even on the international market. Copyright protection and registration of a collective mark have potential benefits to the women in the Dzivarasekwa doll enterprise. It has to be said however that the IP framework may not necessarily make a huge impact on the women's business as there is need to address the underlying limiting self perceptions which limit the women's capability to implement the intervention.

Thus although IP as a surface intervention for the women in craft businesses may help improve the women's craft businesses, there is a need to redress the underlying social constraints first before the women in craft businesses are to benefit from the interventions.

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