

# Analysis of Gender and Social Exclusion at Mberengwa Rural District Council, Zimbabwe

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**Abstract** – One of the major problems in organisations is social exclusion, which is mainly based on gender. This research analysed the gender and social exclusion at the Mberengwa Rural District Council in the Midlands province in Zimbabwe. The Government is trying to bridge the gap between male and female access to social amenities such as education. The differences between male and female literacy rates, unemployment rates, and distribution of seats in leadership positions at the Mberengwa rural district council support this. The main objectives were identifying the major indicators, causes, and effects of gender and social exclusion at the Mberengwa Rural District Council. It also attempted to look at the intervention measures that can be implemented if gender and social exclusion are to be eradicated. This research used primary and secondary qualitative and quantitative data. Primary data was collected using hand-delivered questionnaires, observations, and face-to-face interviews with the respondents. The respondents were the Mberengwa Rural District Council employees, who were well-versed in the gender and social exclusion problems facing the whole district. Secondary data was obtained from ZIMSTAT's (2012) report. The tables and graphs were used to show the variations in the responses given by the respondents. The research found that gender labour force imbalance was the major indicator of gender and social exclusion at the Mberengwa Rural District, indicating structural inequalities in Government institutions. Poverty came up as the major cause and effect of gender and social exclusion. To reduce gender and social exclusion, legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks should be put in place to ensure that they are being taken into consideration by Government institutions. These policies should be gender inclusive to promote equal access to opportunities and social amenities like education and health care facilities. The civil society should also provide goods and services to support the Government's efforts. The Government and civil society should work together to solve the problems of gender and social exclusion in the country.

**Keywords**– Social Exclusion, Gender Inequality, Gender-based exclusion, Poverty, Gender and social exclusion

**JEL Classification** – J, J1, J16

## I. INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe had a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.540, ranked number 154, according to the Gender Inequality Index of 2015 [1]. Only 35.10% of seats in the parliament were held by women, whereas men held 64.90% of seats. The sex ratio in Zimbabwe was 94.8 per 100 females. This being the case, men were given priority over women in the job market and even in leadership positions. This shows unequal distribution of opportunities and evidence of gender inequality. Zimbabwe's Gender Inequality Index was lower than the Sub-Saharan Average of 0.577 and the average for low Human Development Index countries, which was 0.578. This was due to low women's empowerment and gender and social exclusion, as supported by

the lower numbers of women who were sitting in parliament. Mberengwa Rural District is located in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. Mberengwa had a total population of 185 757 of which 86 764 were males and 98 993 were females (ZIMSTAT 2012), as shown in Figure 1.

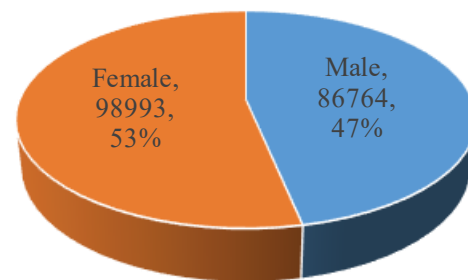


Figure 1: Mberengwa Gender Population Distribution

Mberengwa Rural District is divided into four parliamentary constituencies: Mberengwa North, South, East, and West. The district has several missionary-run schools that run up to A-Level, notably Chegato, Musume, Masase and Mnene. After 1980, the government constructed several rural day secondary schools, also known as "Upper Tops"; among them were Mabika, Maringambizi, Mbuya Nehanda, Bayayi, Murerezi, Chegute, Svita, Vutsanana, Zvomukonde, Chemimwe, Vutika, Rengwe, and Chomusenda, to mention a few. The schools improved the education standards and created educational opportunities for many rural children. There are also missionary-run hospitals and clinics. In the area, several schools and hospitals are run by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe. Most people are Christians, with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe being the dominant one. There is a group of Semitic Tradition people called the Lemba (VaRemba or VaMwenye). Cultural rites are practised in Mberengwa, especially by the people of the Zhou totem. Mberengwa Rural District is also known for its richness in minerals and fauna. Shona, especially Karanga, is the major language in Mberengwa, even though Ndebele and Pfumbi are spoken in other parts of the rural district.

Gender and social exclusions were problems in the Mberengwa rural district. Even though the government tries to bridge the gap between male and female access to social amenities, the gap exists. This is supported by the differences between male and female literacy rates for the population aged 15 and above in Mberengwa [2]. According to [2], the male literacy rate was 96%, whereas the female literacy rate was 93%.

The difference between the two gender literacy rates is insignificant. The unemployment rate in Mberengwa was 13.27%, of which the male unemployment rate constitutes 6.36%, and the female unemployment rate is 6.91%. This shows that more men were employed than women. This means that men were being given priority, and women were deprived of equal access to employment opportunities as men. The research found that of the 39 councillors in Mberengwa Rural District, only 4 were women, while 35 were men, hence the gender imbalance.

In this case, women were affected by social exclusion based on gender. Due to low literacy rates, women were unqualified and incompetent in the labour market, which led to unemployment and poor living standards. This led to poverty, including information poverty, since some people were not able to read or write. Other consequences of this type of social exclusion are violence (criminality), homelessness, and other anti-social behaviours that can lead to the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Due to homelessness, women became vulnerable to social evils like abuse. Poverty is, therefore, a cause as well as a negative effect which comes about as a result of gender and social exclusion. The research objectives were to identify the major indicators, establish the causes, examine the effects of gender and social exclusion, and suggest intervention measures to reduce gender and social exclusion at the Mberengwa Rural District Council.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study used the Capability Deprivation Approach to Social Exclusion and Poverty [3] and the Social Exclusion theoretical frameworks.

### *Capability Deprivation Approach to Social Exclusion*

The Capability theory [3] is motivated by dissatisfaction with Utilitarianism, Libertarianism, and Rawlsianism, which is rooted in the failure of standard theories to take adequate account of forms of deprivation and inequality [4]. [3] Rejecting Rawls's resource-based notion of justice, he contends that the distribution of capabilities should be the central focus of social justice. This includes process equity, which is the achievement of capabilities such as respect, participation in social life, access to education, housing, healthcare, and other public services, and opportunity equity, which is the freedom to do so [5]. From this perspective, [3,6,7] developed the capability theory to illustrate how social exclusion is caused by various deprivations that prevent people from living a minimally decent life [8]. The researcher employs two separate but not mutually exclusive criteria to unlock the connection between social exclusion and capability deprivation. The importance of the typology is that it allows one to recognise different needs and choices confronting different social groups by distinguishing between different types of exclusion.

Social exclusion can be constitutive a part of capability deprivation and instrumentally a cause of diverse capability failures [8]. Thus, two types of inherent social exclusion can be identified: Constitutive deprivation refers to social exclusion that is intrinsically part of deprivation. For instance, being excluded from social relations is in itself a capability

deprivation. Direct deprivation also includes being excluded from community life. Under these circumstances, social exclusion has a constitutive relevance to capability deprivation. The core of analysis on this kind of social exclusion lies in its intrinsic nature. Instrumental deprivation means that being excluded from some other things is not a capability deprivation on its own, but rather, this type of exclusion may further result in deprivation. [8] used the credit market as an example and pointed out that being excluded from the credit market is not necessarily part of deprivation itself; however, lack of access to the credit market may lead to other deprivations of opportunities or advantages connected with credit use. Therefore, social exclusion is instrumentally relevant to capability deprivation [3,6,7,8].

In terms of the intention of deprivation, it is possible to distinguish two further types of social exclusion, namely, Active and Passive deprivations. Active deprivation occurs when a group of people are deliberately excluded. It is usually a direct result of policies or regulations. Thus, active exclusion is usually caused by authorities. Social processes in which there is no conscious effort to exclude lead to passive deprivation [8]. In contrast to active deprivation, passive deprivation is brought about by a government agency or policy. Instead, it is more likely a consequence of a series of social circumstances [3,6,7,8].

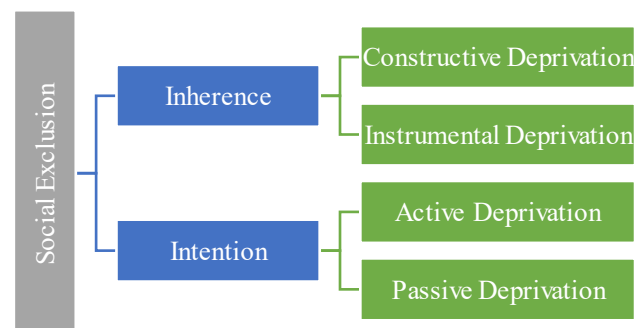


Figure 2: Capability Approach to Social Exclusion [3]

According to [9], social exclusion is a rupturing of the social bond. It's a gradual decrease in participation, access, and unity. It indicates a lack of social cohesion or integration at the community level. It alludes to an individual's inability to form meaningful social connections and engage in socially acceptable behaviors. This can be exclusion from participating in political issues. Exclusion is also multi-dimensional, combining economic and social deprivation. However, analysts differ on whether exclusion is always a cumulative process of multiple, interrelated disadvantages. Exclusion could be described as a catch-all term for what can occur when people or places experience a combination of connected issues [10]. Emphasising joined-up social problems, especially when spatially concentrated, resonates with the idea of an "underclass." This is even more the case when, as [11] claim, exclusion implies entrapment or intergenerational transmission.

### *Poverty and Social Exclusion*

The concept of poverty linked with social exclusion is an essential one in contemporary social policy theory and practice

throughout the world. The research focused on the extent of poverty among ethnic minority groups, especially among ethnic minority women, and how the situation has been tackled. In this respect, [12] argued that the identification of particular groups who are experiencing poverty may suggest that policies to combat the phenomenon should be focused on them in particular. The concept is central to the efforts of United Nations agencies like the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), the World Health Organization (WHO), the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS). Indeed, the International Institute of Labour Studies, attached to the International Labour Office, carried out a great deal of conceptual and empirical background work on the concept of developing countries in preparation for the World Social Summit that was held in Copenhagen in 1995.

Additionally, the idea presents a comprehensive framework for examining the experience of deprivation—including gender-related deprivation—as a kind of exclusion. [13] identified the drivers of social exclusion in income, employment, education, health, housing, neighbourhood and networks, and crime and the fear of crime. Despite definitions by researchers such as [14] and [15], it can be argued that there is no absolute definition of social exclusion and poverty that can be applied worldwide. Thus, social exclusion and poverty are understood differently in the developed, developing, and underdeveloped world.

[16] argued that it was impossible to engage with the underlying causes of poverty without taking account of how resources are distributed throughout the whole of society. Thus, the systemic issues, such as unequal access to education, healthcare, or economic opportunities, play a crucial role in perpetuating poverty. Poverty, therefore, should also be studied and tackled as a characteristic of society and not just of those people who are currently living in poverty. [17] identified the causes of poverty, which included inequality or social injustice, lack of education, and lack of access to jobs and livelihood, which are gender and social-exclusion-related issues. This view implicitly acknowledges some difficulties in drawing up a theoretical framework for research. The existing literature frequently considers poverty and exclusion to be closely connected, overlapping, or even indistinguishable. Therefore, the study examined the relationship between poverty and social exclusion in the current world and, at the time, highlighted the strengths and problems of various definitions and measurements of poverty and social exclusion [9].

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Research design:** The researchers prepared and distributed 35 questionnaires to Mberengwa Rural District Council employees. This research collected and analysed both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was obtained from [2]. It used a case study of the Mberengwa Rural District Council. The research collected data from Mberengwa Rural District Council employees using a hand-distributed questionnaire. The

employees from the Mberengwa rural district council responded to the questionnaires. The researcher used tables and bar graphs to show variations or differences in the collected data. The tables are organised by gender, the highest level of education and age. The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 2.

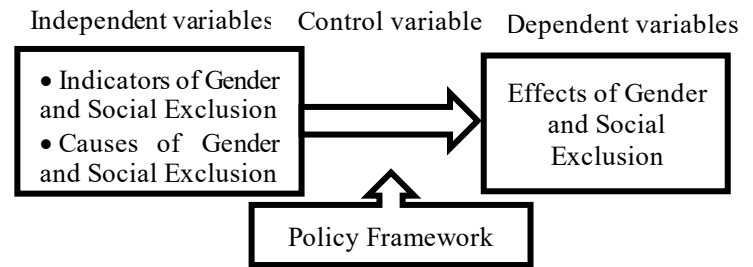


Figure 2: Conceptual framework

Figure 2 shows the conceptual framework of the independent, control, and dependent variables. The study's independent variables were the indicators and causes of gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa rural district council. An effective policy to reduce or prevent the occurrence of the dependent variable, which concerns the effects of gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa rural district, could control these independent variables.

**Type and Source of Data:** The research analysed both primary and secondary data. The secondary data was obtained from the [2] report. The primary data was collected through the use of hand-distributed questionnaires to Mberengwa Rural District Council employees and face-to-face interviews of randomly selected key informants.

**Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique:** The study population was 35 Mberengwa rural district council employees. The study used a large sample of 30 employees selected from the Mberengwa rural district council. The sample was selected based on availability and voluntariness [18] to participate. The selection was done using the Voluntary [18] and Convenience sampling designs. The Voluntary sampling design [18] was used to select employees who participated in the study. To minimize selection bias and control for the possibility that the results would be generalizable, convenience sampling was utilized. impact of known and unidentified confounders.

**Data collection tools and procedures:** The research used questionnaires and face-to-face interviews to collect the data. A questionnaire has four sections: the introduction, the demographic data section, the question section, gratitude, and the question instruction section [19]. A Data Recording Table (DRT) [19] was also used as a data collection tool in this research. The DRT consists of columns for age, gender, highest level of education, marital status, and occupation of the volunteered respondents. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with volunteer key informants. The advantages of a face-to-face interview are that an instant response is acquired, and reactions of the respondents can be observed, which shows the level of accuracy of the data provided. Face-to-face interviews are flexible, and there is room to probe further, which means the researcher can rephrase the question so that the respondent can understand better. Face-to-face interviews have

the drawbacks of being time-consuming and allowing the interviewer to sway the participants.

*Data Analysis instruments:* Data is presented in the form of tables, bar graphs and pie charts to show the variations in employment based on gender. The research used the chi-square in Equation 1 to test the hypothesis that  $H_0$ : There is no gender and social exclusion in Mberengwa Rural District Council versus  $H_1$ : There is gender and social exclusion in Mberengwa Rural District Council. The Chi-square test value was calculated with

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(O-E)^2}{E} \tag{1}$$

where  $O$  is the observed frequency and  $E$  is the expected frequency. Equation 1 was used to calculate the test statistic. The research applied the hypothesis to test whether there is gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council. The response rate was computed with

$$\text{Response rate} = \frac{R}{D} \times 100, \tag{2}$$

where  $R$  is the total number received and  $D$  is the total number distributed. Equation 2 was used to calculate the response rate for this research.

#### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

Of the 35 distributed questionnaires, 30 were fully completed and returned. This was because, as of 31 December 2017, the data collection period, there were only 35 employees at the Mberengwa Rural District Council. Thus, the response rate was 85.71%. The respondents' distribution by gender is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Participants' Distribution by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	6	20.00	20.00	20.00
Male	24	80.00	80.00	100.00
Total	30	100.00	100.00	

Table 1 shows that 20% and 80% of the Mberengwa Rural District Council employees were females and males, respectively. At a 5% level of significance, the test statistics are  $Z_{table} = \pm 1.96$ ,  $Z_{test} = -4.647$ , ( $\chi \leq -4.6476$ ) = 0.000001679, and the 95% confidence interval of the proportions' difference is (-0.8024, -0.3976). Consequently, it is determined that the two ratios differ significantly, and  $H_0$  is thus refuted. A significant effect size  $h$  of 1.29 was seen. This suggests that there is a significant difference in the proportions. As a result, at the 5% level of significance, the difference between the two proportions is statistically significant. This indicates the presence of gender-based social exclusion at the Mberengwa Rural District Council. Women applicants for different positions were not given equal opportunity to men applicants. Thus, the recruitment mechanism was biased towards men. With the definition of social exclusion in [20], women are deprived of the opportunity to participate meaningfully in the development of the Mberengwa Rural District Council. The respondents' distribution by position at Mberengwa RDC is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Respondents by position at Mberengwa Rural District Council

Position	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
clerk/receptionist	4	13.33	13.33	13.33
Supervisor	8	26.67	26.67	40.00
Manager	12	40.00	40.00	80.00
CEO	1	3.33	3.33	83.33
Other	5	16.67	16.67	100.00
Total	30	100.00	100.00	

Table 2 shows the respondents' distribution by positions at the Mberengwa Rural District Council. There were 33.33% receptionists, 26.67% supervisors, 40% managers, 3.33% Chief Executive Officer and 16.67% other employees. The Chi-square test statistics at 5% significance level are  $\chi^2_{table} = 9.488$ , and  $\chi^2_{test} = 10.667$ .  $H_0$  is rejected, and it is concluded that there was a significant difference between the numbers recruited in different positions. Among the staff in positions, there are no disabled or marginalised employees as discussed in [21]. In [22], a company has 11.30% of staff with a long-term health condition or disability. This indicates that recruitment at the Mberengwa Rural District Council was not inclusive. According to [22], the five key themes are recruitment processes which are free from bias; inclusive leadership and management; workforce reflecting our communities at all roles at all levels, safety and healthy working environments free from all racism, aggression, hate and discrimination; and networks that thrive and support the creation of an inclusive and safe place for work. The research examined the indicators of Gender and Social Exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council and presented the results in Figure 3.

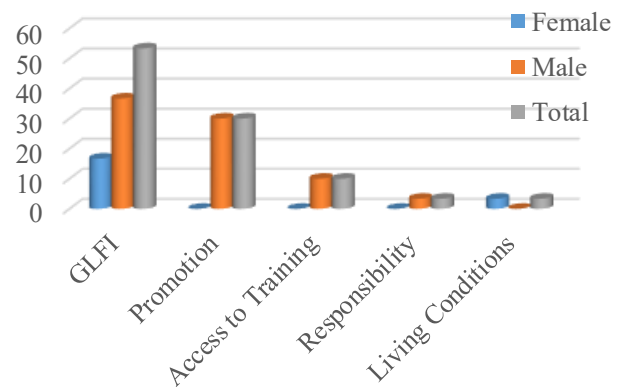


Figure 3: Indicators of Gender and Social Exclusion at Mberengwa Rural District Council

Figure 3 shows the major indicators of gender and social exclusion at the Mberengwa Rural District Council. The study found that Gender labour force imbalance (GLFI) (53.34%), promotion (30%), access to training (10%), responsibility (3.33%), and living conditions (3.33%) were the major indicators of gender and social exclusion at the Mberengwa Rural District Council. Figure 3 indicates that Gender labour force imbalance (53.34%) has the highest frequency, followed by promotion (30%), training (10%), responsibility (3.33%), and living conditions (3.33%) in that order. The results show that 80% were male employees while 20% were female employees at the Mberengwa Rural District Council. From the

variations in Figure 3, it can be noted that gender labour force imbalance (53.34%) is the major indicator of gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council. This is because it has the highest frequency compared to other indicators. This confirms [23] and [24], which state that Zimbabwe's labour force participation rate shows inequalities between male and female employees. In Zimbabwe, the male-to-female labour force is 57.85% to 42.15%, while the labour force participation rate is 60.60% to 36.80%, respectively [25]. The results support the finding by [22] that there were 77.14% male employees and 22.86% female employees. The results show gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council because of the ratio of male to female employees at the council. The ratio is 4:1 for male to female. That indicates that there is a gender imbalance, hence indicating gender and social exclusion. The results show that gender labour force imbalance was the major indicator of gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council. This is also supported by 4 female councillors out of the 39 councillors in the Mberengwa district, indicating gender based social exclusion. This is so because women are deprived of the right to hold leadership positions in the Mberengwa District. The research examined the causes of gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council and presented the results in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Causes of Gender and Social Exclusion at Mberengwa Rural District Council

Cause	Marital Status			
	Married	Single	Divorced	Total
Background	6.67	0.00	0.00	6.67
Culture	26.67	0.00	0.00	26.66
Poverty	40.00	20.00	6.67	66.67
Total	73.33	20.00	6.67	100.00

Table 4 shows the causes of gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council. The causes of gender and social exclusion were background (6.67%), culture (26.66%) and poverty (66.67%). Table 3 shows that poverty (66.67%) was the most common cause, followed by culture (26.67%), and then background (6.67%). The Chi-square test statistics at a 5% significance level for the causes of gender and social exclusion are  $\chi^2_{table} = 5.991$ , and  $\chi^2_{test} = 16.68$ . Since  $\chi^2_{table} = 5.991 < \chi^2_{test} = 16.68$ ,  $H_0$  is rejected; there is a significant difference in the effects of the causes of gender and social exclusion. According to the results, poverty (66.67%) is the major cause of Gender and Social Exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council. This aligns with [3] and [20] views that poverty is the main cause of gender and social exclusion. This is so because, due to poverty, some parents failed to send their children to school, such that only male children were allowed access to education. This resulted in the violation of the girl child's rights, leading to exclusion. This often leads to early girl child marriages, thus depriving women of the right to education. According to [26], social exclusion is a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully due to their poverty. Poverty leads to incompetence in the labour market, hence the failure to be socially included. The research also

indicated that gender and social exclusion come about as a result of culture. This supports [27], who asserted that social exclusion comes with cultural beliefs, age, race, gender and religious beliefs in certain societies. Gender inequalities vary according to factors such as cultural context, levels of development, and the policy environment. In this case, culture leads to gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District, because of different cultural beliefs; for example, the Lemba people believed that women's role was to get married and bear children. This is also perpetuated by patriarchal beliefs in the Mberengwa Rural District Council, where men are considered superior to women. The study assessed the forms of gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council and presented the results in Table 4.

TABLE 4: Forms of Gender and Social Exclusion in Mberengwa Rural District Council

Forms	Gender	Age				Total
		18-30	31-40	41-50	51+	
Political	Female	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Male	0.00	11.11	16.67	0.00	10.00
	Total	0.00	11.11	16.67	0.00	10.00
Economic	Female	0.00	11.11	0.00	0.00	3.33
	Male	50.00	33.33	41.67	33.33	40.00
	Total	50.00	44.44	41.67	33.33	43.33
Cultural	Female	0.00	0.00	16.67	0.00	6.67
	Male	0.00	11.11	0.00	33.33	6.67
	Total	0.00	11.11	16.67	33.33	13.33
Social	Female	0.00	0.00	16.67	33.33	10.00
	Male	50.00	33.33	8.33	0.00	23.33
	Total	50.00	33.33	25.00	33.33	33.33
Total	Female	0.00	11.11	33.33	33.33	20.00
	Male	100	88.89	66.67	66.67	80.00
	Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 4 shows the forms of gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council according to the research results. The forms of gender and social exclusion were Social (33.33%), Political (10%), Economic (43.33%), and Cultural (13.33%) (SPEC) exclusions. The Economic (43.33%) was ranked first, followed by Social (33.33%), Cultural (13.33%), and Political (10%) exclusions. The Chi-square test statistics at a 5% significance level of the forms of gender and social exclusion are  $\chi^2_{(3,0.05)table} = 7.815$ , and  $\chi^2_{test} = 9.20$ .  $H_0$  is rejected since  $\chi^2_{(3,0.05)table} < \chi^2_{test}$ . Therefore, there is a significant difference between the effects of the forms of gender and social exclusion. The results in Table 5 show that economic challenges caused gender-based exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council. According to [28], the exclusionary process can have various forms or dimensions. These are social (33.33%), political (10%), economic (43.33%), and cultural (13.33%) (SPEC) exclusions. The economic exclusion includes a lack of access to labour markets, credit and other forms of capital assets. The research investigated the effects of gender

and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council and presented the results in Figure 4.

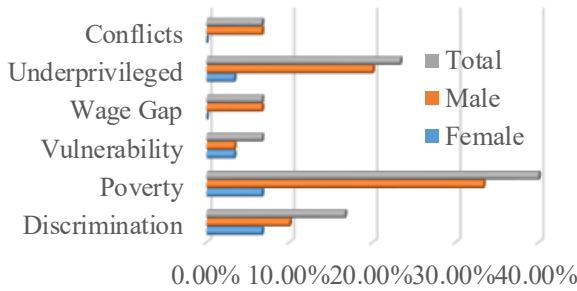


Figure 4: Effects of Gender and Social Exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council

Figure 4 shows the effects of Gender and Social Exclusion (GSE) at the Mberengwa Rural District Council. The effects were discrimination (16.67%), poverty (40%), vulnerability (6.67%), wage gap (6.67%), underprivileged (23.33%), and conflicts (6.67%). The participants believed that poverty (40%) had the most effect on gender and social exclusion at the Mberengwa Rural District Council. Thus, gender and social exclusion can lead to poverty. Poverty was experienced by the socially excluded groups or individuals in society. According to [29], poverty can be defined and measured directly (in consumption terms) or indirectly (in income terms). As a result, income is used in the indirect definition of poverty. Poor families are unable to send their children to school because of gender and social exclusion. It was gender and social exclusion that increased poverty, since those who could not access education were prone to low standards of living. Gender and social exclusion also resulted in discrimination (16.67%), vulnerability (6.67%), wage gap (6.67%), and underprivileged (16.67%) at the Mberengwa Rural District Council. According to the UN [30], discrimination is a universal and pervasive driver of exclusion. Discrimination refers to segregation, which can be based on gender, age, ethnicity and race [30,31]. Disparities in income distribution, in which the wealthiest groups of a nation's population earn the biggest proportion of its national income, can cause and be caused by social exclusion. Inequalities in the distribution of resources like land, credit, and education lead to income disparity. This is known as the wage gap. Men tend to be given higher-paying jobs as compared to women. This was evident in the Mberengwa Rural District Council. This was because of the general belief that women were inferior to men; therefore, they could not perform some jobs which men could perform. Due to this, the wage gap continues to widen. The research investigated the measures for reducing gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council and presented the results in Figure 5.

Figure 5 presents the measures that can be put in place to reduce gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council. The possible solutions include legal, regulatory and policy framework (LRPF) (56.67%), economic opportunities and access to services (EO) (6.67%), promoting participation and protecting people's rights (PP) (13.33%), influencing policy making (IPM) (3.33%), delivering services

where the state will not (DSW) (3.33%), Policy implementation and monitoring (PI) (6.67%), policy dialogue and conditionality (PDC) (3.33%), and human rights and domestic accountability (HRDA) (6.67%).

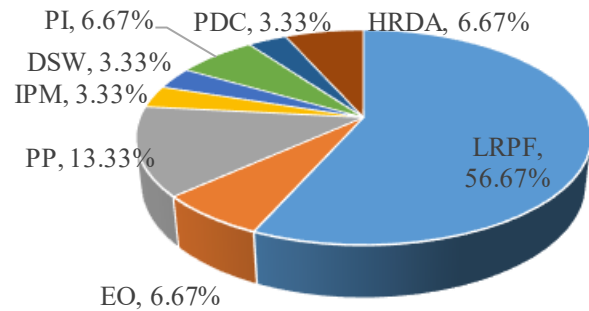


Figure 4: Measures to reduce gender and social exclusion

The other possible interventions suggested by the respondents during data gathering were piloting innovative approaches and direct service delivery to the excluded groups of the community. However, it can be noted from the variations that there is a need for a legal, regulatory and policy framework to be put in place if gender and social exclusion are to be reduced. There should be rules and laws closely monitored and adhered to by every individual in the Mberengwa Rural District Council. There was also a need to eradicate poverty to allow parents to be able to send their children, including the girl child, to school, hence ensuring equal access to special amenities between men and women. This shows that the government and the civil society have to work hand in hand if gender and social exclusion are to be reduced. The research tests the hypothesis,  $H_0$ : There is no gender and social exclusion in Mberengwa Rural District Council, versus  $H_1$ : There is gender and social exclusion in Mberengwa Rural District Council.

TABLE 5: Hypothesis testing

Gender and Social Exclusion Indicators	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Gender Labour Force Imbalance	16	6.0	10.0
Promotion	9	6.0	3.0
Training	3	6.0	-3.0
Responsibility	1	6.0	-5.0
Living Conditions	1	6.0	-5.0
Total	30		

TABLE 6: Test Statistics

	Gender and Social Exclusion Indicators
Chi-Square	28.000 <sup>a</sup>
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 6.0.

The p-value is 0.00001247, the test statistic  $\chi^2$  is 28, which is not in the 95% acceptance region:  $(-\infty; 9.488)$ , and the observed effect size phi is large, 0.97. This indicates that the magnitude of the difference between the observed and expected data is large. From the Chi-square table,  $\chi^2_{(0.05,4)table} = 9.488$ . Since  $\chi^2_{test} = 28 > \chi^2_{table} = 9.488$ , the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is

rejected. Thus, there was gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council.

#### V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The gender labour force imbalance was the major indicator of gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council. This is evidenced by the unequal distribution of jobs even in government institutions like the rural district council, which is there to provide non-rivalrous and non-excludable goods and services to the citizens on behalf of the government. Based on the results obtained, out of the 35 employees at Mberengwa Rural District Council, only 8 were female employees. Thus, 23% of all employees were females. Of the 39 councillors in the district, only 4 (11%) were female councillors. Promotion also turned out to be the second major indicator of gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council. The results show gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council, as indicated by gender labour force imbalance. Poverty is the major cause of gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council, given the results obtained. This was so because most families in the rural areas have no reliable sources of income. This results in some children, especially boys, being given priority to go to school, hence denying the girl child equal access to education. Without education, the girl child would be uncompetitive in the labour market. The results show that gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council were mostly due to economic challenges. However, there were also other causes, like culture, which could lead to early girl child marriages.

Gender and social exclusion caused discrimination, poverty, vulnerability, wage gap, underprivileged, conflicts and insecurity at the Mberengwa Rural District Council. Poverty was found to be a major effect of gender and social exclusion in the Mberengwa Rural District Council. Unequal access to goods, which people excluded find themselves in extreme poverty. As suggested by one key informant, because of poverty, excluded people became vulnerable to many social evils, like abuse, especially of women. In order to reduce gender and social exclusion, legal, regulatory and policy frameworks should be put in place to ensure that they are being taken into consideration by government institutions such as the Mberengwa Rural District Council. These policies should be gender inclusive to promote equal access to opportunities and social amenities like education and health care facilities. The civil society should also provide goods and services to support the government's efforts. It is the role of the government and civil society to work together towards solving the problem of gender and social exclusion. Women, especially in rural areas, need to be included in domestic and community-level decisions to reduce the gender gap. It could be argued that there are no specific targets for increasing women's participation in all forms of decision-making. The Government should undertake joint collaborative initiatives with international development agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to promote effective and inclusive development policies. Policymakers need to reinforce the capacity of indigenous women to overcome structural barriers, for example, in education, political participation, employment and

opportunities, which often limit women's participation in economic development activities.

#### *Areas for Further Studies*

This study analyses gender and social exclusion in Mberengwa Rural District. The same study can be undertaken in a different province for comparison purposes. The study could also be duplicated in a different country to assess the effectiveness of gender equality policies.

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