THE ROLE OF THE SARVA DHARMA ASHRAM IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES IN THE WELBEDACHT COMMUNITY

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Master of Health Science: in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Durban University of Technology

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DECLARATION

I, Yashna Gurcharan, declare that the research reported in this dissertation is my original work, except where otherwise indicated. All sources used or cited have been explicitly acknowledged by means of complete references. This work has not been submitted previously to the Durban University of Technology or to any other institution for any purpose.

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ABSTRACT

Historically, faith-based organisations have been at the forefront of developing and empowering disadvantaged youth and their families. They have been known to provide not only spiritual support but also material relief to needy families and communities. Despite the fact that they play a salient role in spiritual and social development very little empirical research, exists which attests to their value in developing contexts. It is within this context that the current study was developed. It sought to understand the role of the Sarva Dharma Ashram in the development of youth, their families and the community in the Welbedacht area.

A qualitative research approach was used in the study. Specifically a case study design was used, with the Sarva Dharma Ashram being considered as the case for analysis. Three samples were recruited to shed light on the Ashram, as the case of analysis. The samples included the Board members of the Sarva Dharma Ashram, family members of youth, and community members of Welbedacht. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with the Board members and family members. Data was collected till saturation. Four Board members of the Ashram were interviewed and ten family members were interviewed. A focus group discussion was used to collect data from ten community members. An interview and focus group guide served as the data collection instruments in this study. In total twenty-four people participated in this study. Data collection with all three samples took place at the Sarva Dharma Ashram. The data was analysed using the process of thematic analysis. The transcripts were read several times for patterns and similar wording. Thereafter, the main themes and sub-themes were identified which highlighted how the Ashram contributed to families and the community.

There were five broad themes that emerged from the data. These reflected the experience of poverty and financial hardship endured by children, youth and their families in the community and the varied and multifaceted spiritual and material support extended to families and the community through diverse initiatives of the Sarva Dharma Ashram. The study found that the Ashram acted as a focal point within the disadvantaged community of Welbedacht and a huge immediate resource to youth, families and the community when any psycho-social or financial distress was

encountered. The feeding scheme was found to be one such initiative where schools in the vicinity were provided with meals regularly. Moreover spiritual activities at the Ashram such as the Satsangh programme (group devotional singing), were found to uplift families and individual members who faced distress and isolation. Empowerment programmes for unemployed women were aimed to uplift women and enable them to become more financially independent.

Faith is a core motivator for the work that faith-based organisations undertake and influences how the initiatives and activities of the Ashram are implemented. The transformational benefits of the activities being implemented at the Sarva Dharma Ashram provide tangible evidence of how crucial such organizations are within under-resourced communities. The study highlighted the problems experienced by children, youth, and their families in disadvantaged communities and how spiritual and social support can enable family and community well-being. Clarke and Jennings (2008:15) wrote "the faith element of the faith-based organisation is not an add-on to its development activity, operating alongside. It is an essential part of that activity, informing it completely." The Sarva Dharma Ashram was found to represent this through its services and programmes for the benefit of the Welbedacht community.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, for their constant love, encouragement and countless sacrifices which enabled me to complete this thesis. I love you both dearly.

A sincere thank you to my supervisor, Prof R Bhagwan for her guidance and motivation throughout this process. I am truly grateful to you.

The Creator, for blessing me, and giving me the strength and knowledge to complete this thesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Table of Contents

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A – Letter of permission from the Sarva Dharma Ashram

Appendix B – Letter of information

Appendix C – Consent letter

Appendix D – Interview guide for family members

Appendix E – Interview guide for board members

Appendix F – Interview guide for community members

Appendix G – Letter of permission

Appendix H – Ethical clearance letter

ACRONYMS

FBO	Faith-based organisation
CSO	Civil society organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
NPO	Non-profit organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
UN	United Nations

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

"Faith orients one to life and its purposes, and to creation, with its origins, its ordering, its enormity, its hospitality to life in its myriad forms and expressions, and its mystery" (Fowler 2004:412). Faith, religion and spirituality within the context of families, in disadvantaged communities is of immense salience. Collectively they act as sources of strength and empowerment, as families navigate the challenges and stresses of daily life (Roberto 2007: 6). Moreover the presence of faith-based organisations in disadvantaged communities has shown promise in terms of buffering stress and offering support to disadvantaged families.

It is within this context that faith-based organisations have expanded their cause to respond to growing poverty, inequality and social exclusion amongst humankind (Bompani 2011:2). Consequently faith-based organisations have been described as "among the most useful in the development process in Africa" (Olarinmoye 2012:1). In South Africa, the effects of poverty can be seen more extensively due to the history of apartheid, the depth of inequality and lack of opportunities in the country (National Development Agency 2016:13). As a result, faith-based organisations have become important actors in developing families and youth in communities, that are facing poor socio-economic conditions. They often play a pivotal role in binding the bridge that links the poor and non-poor (Clarke and Jennings 2008:1).

Due to their position within local communities faith-based organisations have greater access to local communities (Clarke and Ware 2015:38). Faith-based organisations are also known to provide social development services to the poor (Du Toit 2018:24). Ultimately, their social actions have helped them to become more active, visible and immersed in local communities (Carino 2016:7). Milofsky (2008: 203) indicated that organisations "can only be understood in relation to the communities in which they are embedded." The World Economic Forum (2013:9) noted the roles that civil society plays, which faith-based organisations are a part

of. These roles included holding institutions accountable for their actions, promoting fairness, raising awareness of societal issues and challenges, promoting change, delivering services to meet the needs of the society, bringing unique knowledge to shape policy and strategy, providing education, training and other capacity building, giving power to the voice of the marginalized or under-represented and promoting fundamental and universal values.

Policy frameworks and committees are continuously improving and collaborating with civil society, particularly faith-based organisations with regards to development (Olutola 2019:9-10). The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has partnered with faith-based organisations, in supporting communities in bringing about "change from within." They are involved in drawing positive cultural values and resources to promote and expand on human rights issues (UNFPA 2009:12-13). The Green Paper on Families in South Africa (2011:69) which promotes the strengthening and preservation of family life, noted that the Department of Social Development, has worked in partnership with various stakeholders such as the business sector and civil society organisations to develop the country and its people. The National Development Plan 2030, has in fact outlined the role of civil society in promoting community development and community cohesion. This is exercised by delivering social and employment programmes to poor communities, by community-based organisations (National Development Plan 2011:27). The National Religious Association for Social Development (NRASD: 2015) was established in 1997 and represents the concerns and interests of different faith welfare networks, which include Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islamic and Jewish traditions. They have become a national role-player in their aim to fulfil consultations with government departments and ministries; joint lobby processes for changes on programme level; and in the implementation of a new development partnership with the government.

Despite the challenges that faith-based organisations face, they are motivated by their religious faith and beliefs, to improve the well-being of the poor (Noor and Nawi 2016:16). Faith-based organisations wear their faith lightly and employ believers and non-believers alike (Clarke and Jennings 2008:4-5). Despite this, the lack of a clear definition of a faith-based organisation poses a

hindrance, for the improvement of social welfare in South Africa (Van der Merwe, Swart and Hendriks 2009:125). Unruh and Sider (2004:110) noted that this can lead to problems for studying, funding and making policies regarding social services and educational entities. Although in some instances, an organisations' founding religion provides an identity which reflects the religious views, this outlook usually remains with the organisation (Bielefeld and Cleveland 2013:452; Clarke and Ware 2015:38).

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Families in lower income urban areas particularly face an enormous amount of problems that influence their households. Around the world, millions of dollars have been channelled towards creating opportunities to engage and empower youth in community life, yet millions remain disengaged (Majee, Jooste, Aziato and Anakwe 2016:5). Rabe (2018:1) wrote that family dynamics, poverty, and unemployment are factors affecting youth and their families and as a result they endure hardships due to daily stressors that they encounter. Moreover, unemployed young people aged between 15-24 who were not registered in education institution or training (NEET) in South Africa was 33, 2% in the first quarter of 2019 (Statistics South Africa 2019: 9). Furthermore, families and youth are exposed to violence, crime, drugs and substances in communities, due to a lack of opportunities and economic instability (Mosavel, Ahmed, Ports and Simon 2015:7; Calhoun, Connor, Miller and Messina 2015:15; Gardner, Waller, Maughan, Cluver and Boyes 2015:801). Gardner *et al.* (2015: 800) indicated that children who are frequently exposed to violence, crime at home, school and communities are at risk of developing antisocial behaviour in South Africa. Young people suffer from a "multiplicity of deprivations," due to the challenges that they face (De Lannoy, Swartz, Lake and Smith 2015:3). Rabe (2018:1) noted that faith-based organisations based in major cities across South Africa bear the responsibility of safeguarding marginalised youth, especially when exhausted government departments neglect the needs of marginalized youth.

As a result of the above, faith-based organisations are reaching out to disadvantaged members of society and encouraging advocacy, mobilisation and empowerment. These organisations are characterised as non-secular, therefore faith plays an important role in achieving the functions of such organisations (Du Toit 2019:1). In South Africa, their current role focuses on addressing poverty, inequality and a range of socio-economic challenges that grapple the country. As well as serving disadvantaged families, young people, the ill and the most vulnerable members of society (Patel 2012:610, 616; Xaba 2016:5). They go beyond recognizing the most urgent welfare needs and to meet their spiritual needs (Crisp 2014:33). The faith-based organisation phenomenon, therefore, deserves attention, and poses several questions (Cloke and Beaumont 2012:266).

In many countries, the State relies on faith-based organisations to deliver a wide range of social services and has long provided funds to faith-based organisations to enable them to carry out this role (Schwartz, Warkentin and Wilkinson 2008: 141). Health and wellness programmes in form of HIV/AIDS awareness, treatment and counselling are implemented by faith-based organisations in communities (Arend 2008:260; Bopp and Fallon 2011:1107; Haakenstad, Johnson, Graves, Olivier, Duff and Dieleman 2015:2). Faith-based organisations have also been engaging in community work, especially in providing a range of services such as education, water, sanitation, health and food to the poor (Moyo and Ying-Ling 2014:345). This is relevant in the South African context. As noted above, the work of faith-based organisations has been largely successful however they are underrepresented in South Africa and are better reflected in international literature (Du Toit 2018: 26).

1.2.1 Faith-based organisations in the South African context

The faith-based sector is potentially one of the most powerful components of civil society in South Africa (Piper 2009:55). They are "recognised as a natural part of civil society" and a natural partner of the State since the end of apartheid (Swart and Van der Merwe 2010:83). Rabe (2018:6) noted that faith-based organisations are represented under the non-profit sector and is supported by the Non-Profit

Organisations Act (No. 71 of 1997) in South Africa. Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) (2019: v) reported that in 2019, the population size increased to an estimated 58, 78 million people living in South Africa. Although much earlier, Joubert and Grobler (2013:1) wrote that a wide diversity of South African population acknowledged and confirmed having some religious affiliation and faith practice in South Africa.

Many roles are undertaken by faith-based organisations to develop civil society and offer social development services to the poor (Du Toit 2018:24). Faith-based organisations also provide spaces and resources, especially to youth to facilitate their sense of belonging (McDonald 2018:1). Rabe (2018:7) stressed that faith-based organisations required more assistance from government, as resources are not reachable to all young people, due to the magnitude of need experienced by young people. Engaging in social services and other social actions have also helped faith-based organisations to become more active, visible and immersed in local communities (Carino 2016:7). De Beer (2018:7) explained that in some poor urban communities, it was found that faith-based organisations and churches were the only organisations that carried out holistic community development work. However many urban communities lacked sustainable development and the absence of faith-based organisations in these contexts were invisible (De Beer 2018:7).

South African faith-based organisations work tirelessly in their efforts towards combating socio-economic and community related issues. Sookrajh and Chetty (2010:407) indicated that Hindu organisations such as the Aryan Benevolent Home (ABH) based in Kwa-Zulu Natal, Durban has been responsible for building civic culture, mobilising participation, and addressing community problems. Hiralal (2014:63) noted that the diversity of the Indian population in South Africa, has led to the development and establishment of Hindu organisations nationally. South African churches and religious bodies in communities, have a deep-rooted presence, and are known for their on-going philanthropic work (Burchardt 2013:628; Hochfeld 2007:79). In Gauteng there are many Christian-based organisations providing much needed services to the poor and homeless. One of the main services offered are soup kitchens, counselling, support with school fees, skills development accommodation and HIV/AIDS support (Sanchez

2010:104). Pierce (2012:19) noted that Muslim faith-based organisations are also playing an important role in the socio-economic and medical care provision for HIV/AIDS patients in South Africa. McDonald (2018:1) wrote that the faith-based Deobandi Islamic movement, are shaping how young Muslims women connect with the South African society, as well as promoting women empowerment through literacy. Other popular Muslim faith-based organisations include Islam Relief SA and Gift of the Givers. Over the years, the Gift of the Givers has become a flagship humanitarian organisation. It is known to be the largest globally focused philanthropic movement in South Africa and has received several national and international awards in recognition for its sterling humanitarian work (Gabralla 2009:4).

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Poverty coupled with poor socio-economic conditions, are faced by many South Africans, particularly in disadvantaged communities (Gumede 2010:1; Sanchez 2010:103; Chikadzi and Pretorius 2011:255; Khumalo 2013:5643; Van der Westhuizen and Swart 2015:731). Faith-based organisations are responding to the lack of support provided by the government, to curb issues faced by youth and their families in communities such as poverty, homelessness, unemployment and lack of service delivery. In order to tackle these issues, faith-based organisations are situated in closer proximity to disadvantaged communities, and are implementing a range of project and programme initiatives, to address the needs of people. Moreover, Sibanda (2012:4) noted that as a result of a lack of service delivery experienced in disadvantaged communities, faith-based organisations are reaching out, and making efforts to assist communities in receiving basic and essential services (Ferguson, Dortzbach, Dyrness, Dabir and Spruijt-Metz 2008:159; Nishimuko 2008:374; Odumosu, Olaniyi and Alonge 2009:5). Due to the faith factor in faith-based organisations, communities are now realizing that religion and spirituality, can be important forms of support and guidance for them (Clarke 2007:77-78). Religion and spirituality may also have a

positive impact on a child's development. It reinforces protective influences and boosts resiliency in children.

Religion can enhance the beliefs, practices, social networks and resources, by giving children, a sense of hope and meaning, to difficult experiences such as death, separation or loss and by providing emotional, physical and spiritual support (UNICEF 2012:15). The benefits of faith-based programmes and activities such as religious services, prayer and scriptural reading with individuals, were seen as important components in supporting individuals to cope with life's adversaries, as well as addressing their psycho-social needs (Ahsan, Wahaab and Islam 2012:168; Kaur and Gupta 2013:28-29; Sayeed and Prakash 2013:S225; King and Boyatzis 2015:978). Spiritual heads of faith-based organisations and religious leaders also teach morals, values and life lessons to youth and families who attend religious service (Koenig 2012: 12; Dolittle, Courtney and Jasien 2015:258). Religious leaders have a moral influence which can help members of communities to communicate effectively. They can also transfer prosocial values, that promote responsible, and healthy behaviour, that respect the sacredness of all life. As a result, spiritual heads and religious leaders serve as a social agent for promoting change. They have more access to the families living in communities than most outside actors. They also guide individuals facing traumatic or negative life experiences by providing spiritual support (UNICEF 2012: 11-12). Secular programmes are offered to youth and are beneficial to them. Faith-based organisations also offer empowerment programmes that have helped individuals to start small businesses in the community (Nishimuko 2008:374). The impact of faith-based organisations, in uplifting and strengthening communities in South Africa are well received by community members, and are enabling them to rise above their hardships and progress as individuals. However, the South African literature related to the faith-based phenomenon and religious organisations is sparse (van der Merwe, Swart and Hendricks 2009:125; Bompani 2010:322). Faith-based organisations and their faith networks also motivate their membership which prompts others to re-evaluate the way they think and to act differently. "This is a valuable lesson for researchers, practitioners, and all of us alike" (Casale, Nixon, Flicker, Rubincam and Jenney 2010:143).

1.4 THE SARVA DHARMA ASHRAM

The Sarva Dharma Ashram has been operational in Welbedacht for over 25 years. The founder and spiritual head of the Sarva Dharma Ashram was Sri Swami Ramkripananda. The Ashram is associated to the Divine Life Society based in India. The Sarva Dharma Ashram is based on a participative development program. Members of the community are provided with support and resources to break the cycle of poverty, through the programmes offered at the Ashram. The focus of the programmes are based on the idea of "Lift Yourself by Yourself." The goals of the Ashram are as follows:

- "To alleviate poverty among the poor and needy;

- To provide opportunities to grow and become self-sustaining;

- To support the poor and needy in self-growth and progress;

- To provide the necessary facilities to support the delivery of their services; and

- To create a mind-set among the people of receiving and giving back to the community" (Sarva Dharma Ashram 2017).

Serving the community has been one of the most significant roles played by the Sarva Dharma Ashram. The Ashram is guided by the universal teachings of Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who alluded that serving all of mankind regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender is of utmost importance (Sarva Dharma Ashram 2017). Faith-based organisations are engaged in an array of activities which go beyond worship, and are able to provide poor families with essential services with immediate benefits (Vidaal 2001: 14). As part of serving the community, the Ashram engages with a range of stakeholders to provide services to the poor. Tyndale (in Lunn 2009: 945) indicated that "faith-based organisations empowers people in a way that brings personal dignity, self-worth and contentedness, which in turn bring hope and vision". This is particularly salient in the Welbedacht community where most families experience severe socio-economic conditions and need both material and spiritual support. Furthermore, the Sarva Dharma Ashram is seen as a "beacon of love and hope" in a

challenging environment, as the Ashram embarks on many initiatives to uplift the community (Sarva Dharma Ashram 2017). Hart (2012:65) indicated that South Africa is clear, with regards to the need to provide a better service for its communities, especially those that are marginalised and socially excluded. In keeping with this, the Ashram is continuously making efforts to address the problems faced in its surrounding community.

The Sarva Dharma Ashram also undertakes many projects in order to have a sustainable presence in the community. Recently, the Ashram initiated a fundraising drive, to procure steam pressure cookers, in order to reduce the amount of cooking done on open fires in the community. At present the Ashram is implementing another project entitled "Save More to Serve More," which is a cost saving programme. They plan on installing solar power at the Ashram, in order to save on electricity costs, with battery storage to help during load-shedding times (Chatsworth Rising Sun 2020). Over the years the Sarva Dharma Ashram and Swami Ramkripananda received numerous certificates of recognition and appreciation and community service awards for their humanitarian work and commitment to developing and supporting the community around them (Sarva Dharma Ashram 2017:243).

1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to explore the role of the Sarva Dharma Ashram in the development of youth and their families in the Welbedacht community.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are presented below:

- To explore what problems children, youth and their families experience in the Welbedacht community.

- To enquire about the services that the Sarva Dharma Ashram offers children, youth and their families.

- To explore what potential benefits have emerged for families and the community from the organisation.

- To explore how child and youth care workers may work collaboratively with faith based organisations to develop disadvantaged communities.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions of the study were as follows:

- What problems do children, youth and their families experience in the Welbedacht community?

- What services does the Sarva Dharma Ashram offer children, youth and their families?

- What potential benefits have emerged for families and the community from the organisation?

- How can child and youth care workers work collaboratively with faith based organisations to develop disadvantaged communities?

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The current study sought to understand the role of the Sarva Dharma Ashram in the Welbedacht community, by interviewing the Board members of the Sarva Dharma Ashram, community members and families residing in Welbedacht. The

research undertaken in this particular community, provides support for the roles of faith-based communities nationally and/or internationally and provides direction to replicate or implement service delivery in other contexts In addition, Crisp (2014:20-21) wrote that faith-based organisations and their services ranged in scope, and are dependent on the needs of a community. Therefore, faith-based organisations need to work in ways that takes into account the different needs, resources and priorities in diverse communities.

Interconnectedness is the new global norm. Many view faith as a central tenet to developmental solutions (Raney and Raveloharimisy 2016:3). Naturally, faith and development share "enormous areas of overlap, convergence, concern and knowledge, and a core common purpose" (Marshall 2005:11). Researchers have acknowledged the paucity of attention towards faith in development, and have started to focus their attention to its relevance in communities. Continuous research efforts need to be undertaken to understand the work of faith-based organisations (Raney and Raveloharimisy 2016:3). In addition, Bielefeld and Cleveland (2013:443) stated that "as society becomes more modern and complex, the institutions that provide basic societal functions such as social welfare becomes more specialized, autonomous, and differentiated."

1.9 DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

1.9.1 Faith based organisation

The following definitions of faith-based organisation have been adopted to guide this study:

1. Clark and Jennings (2008: 6) defined a faith-based organisation "as any organisation that derives inspiration and guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith."

2. Crisp (2014: 11) described faith based organisations as "social service agencies which explicitly identify with a religious tradition and/or is any religious

organisation or religious community or organisation. Programmes or services offered by a faith-based agency do not necessarily have any religious content."

3. Schultz (2015: 212) indicated that a faith based organisation is a group of people, of a particular religious belief or denomination that forms a body to address a specific problem with regards to a community or at a regional or national level.

1.9.2 Civil society organizations

The United Nations Development Programme (in Human Sciences Research Council Report 2014: 8) defined civil society organisations (CSOs) "as the multitude of associations around which society voluntarily organises itself and which can represent a wide range of interests and ties, from ethnicity and religion, through shared professional, developmental and leisure pursuits, to issues such as environmental protection or human rights." According to the World Bank (1990) civil society organisations include "non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trade unions, faith-based organisations, indigenous people's movements, foundations and other non-profit making organisations. Governments interact with a range of civil society organisations who critically monitor the governments work and engage in policy discussions."

1.9.3 Community

"A grouping of people who reside in a specific locality and exercise some degree of local autonomy in organising their social life in such a way that they can, from that locality, satisfy the full range of their daily needs" (Swanepoel and de Beer 2006:43). Banks, Butcher, Henderson and Robertson (2003:34) defined a community as "a group of people who come together and perceive common needs and problems, acquire a sense of identity, and have a common set of objectives."

1.9.4 Religion

"Religion is associated with the values, rules and social practices that stem from a belief in a spiritual and Supreme Being, usually codified in a sacred text such as the Bible, Quran or Bhagavad Gita. Key world religions include Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Daoism and Shinto. Of these, Judaism, Christianity and Islam share common roots in the Abrahamic tradition of monotheism and originated in the West or Occident. The other world religions are polytheistic and originated in South or East Asia" (Clarke and Jennings 2008:5).

Zinnbauer, Pargament, Cole, Rye, Butter, Belavich, Hipp, Scott and Kadar (1997:557) found religion and spirituality to be different, in the following ways:

Definitions of religion included "both personal beliefs, such as belief in God or a higher power, and institutional beliefs and practices such as church membership, church attendance, and commitment to the belief system of a church or organized religion. In contrast, spirituality was most often described as personal, such as belief in or having a relationship with God or a higher power or integrating one's values and beliefs with one's behavior in daily life" (Zinnbauer *et al.* 1997:557).

1.9.5 Spirituality

Spirituality is defined as a "relationship with God, or whatever is held to be the Ultimate that fosters a sense of meaning, purpose, and mission in life" (Hodge 2001: 204). "Spirituality can be seen as the individual's sense of connectedness, meaning, peace, consciousness, purpose, and service that develops across the lifespan" (Derezotes 2006: 3). Canda and Furman (2010: 75) wrote that spirituality focuses "on the search for a sense of meaning, purpose, morality, and well-being; in relationship with oneself, other people, other beings, the Universe, and ultimate reality however understood (e.g., in animistic, atheistic, nontheistic, polytheistic, theistic, or other ways); orienting around centrally significant

priorities; and engaging a sense of transcendence (experienced as deeply profound, sacred, or transpersonal)."

1.9.6 Faith

Fowler and Dell (2006:36) described faith as being "characterized as an integral, centering process, underlying the formation of the beliefs, values, and meanings that: 1. give coherence and direction to persons lives; 2. link them in shared trusts and loyalties with others; 3. ground their personal stances and communal loyalties in a sense of relatedness to a larger frame of reference; and 4. enable them to face and deal with the challenges of human life and death, relying on that which has the quality of ultimacy in their lives."

1.9.7 Community development

Community development may be viewed as "a means of mobilising communities to join state or institutional initiatives that aim to alleviate poverty, solve social problems, strengthen families, foster democracy and achieve modernisation and socio-economic development" (Sesoko 2015: 156).

1.9.8 Social work

The International Federation of Social Workers (2014: nd) defined social work as "a practice-based profession and as an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing."

1.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework refers to the theory that a researcher chooses to guide their research. Furthermore, Imenda (2014:189) indicated that a theoretical framework is the "application of a theory, or a set of concepts drawn from one and the same theory, to offer an explanation of an event, or shed some light on a particular phenomenon or research problem." The theoretical framework underpinning the current study is Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model. The Welbedacht community faces an array of socio-economic issues that may hinder the development of youth and their families. However the Sarva Dharma Ashram has been at the forefront of uplifting and serving the community and surrounding areas. They have provided opportunities for youth in the community, to develop through the many programmes offered at the Ashram. The Ashram is a universal place, where youth are encouraged to adopt healthy social habits, to partake in the services and programmes offered and to rise above the negative effects of their environment. In addition, developmental and ecological perspectives are necessary for understanding problems, and for developing improvements related to same (Shelton 2019:120).

Bronfenbrenner (1979:22) noted that the "ecological environment is conceived topologically as a nested arrangement of concentric structures, each contained within the next." There are four structures which are referred to as the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro systems. This theory analyses the effects that different structures have on a child. Ecological systems theory aims to find out how different activities, may foster healthy development of youth from diverse backgrounds (Ettekal and Mahoney 2017: 239). Shelton (2019: 120) wrote that the ecological framework directs our attention, to elements of the environment that may be most helpful, in explaining differences in the course of development experienced by, or manifested by different people. Each ecological system, essentially interacts with, and influences each other, in all aspects of children's lives. The four structures are discussed below.

1.10.1 Microsystem

Bronfenbrenner (1979:22) defined the microsystem as "a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics." The microsystem includes the individuals who share a close relationship to the child such as family members, school, neighbourhood and childcare environments (Hertler, Figuerdo, Penaherrera-Aguirre and Fernandes 2018: 336). This is where children have direct social interactions, with the social agents in their immediate surroundings. Relationships and interactions that are nurturing and caring towards the child, will improve a child's development.

In this instance, the Sarva Dharma Ashram falls part of the youths' microsystem. This is because many children and youth of the community visit the Ashram on a regular basis. Furthermore, the youth have direct interactions with the Spiritual Head of the Ashram. In addition, the Spiritual Head is regarded as social agent, as the children and youth perceive him as a positive role model in their life. These social agents have the ability to develop, and positively influence a person whom they encounter. At the Ashram, youth are engaged in out of school activities, such as yoga, song and dance classes, tuition programmes, chanting and singing of religious songs. Participation in activities enables youth to be socially, psychologically, physically and emotionally connected than those who do not participate in activities (Ettekal and Mahoney 2017: 240).

1.10.2 Mesosystem

A mesosystem comprises the "interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates such as, for a child, the relations among home, school, and neighbourhood peer group; for an adult, among family, work, and social life" (Bronfenbrenner 1979:22). Similarly, Hertler *et al.* (2018:326) indicated that the mesosystem included the connections between the microsystem structures between child's teacher and parents as well as between a child's church and neighbourhood.

The families, community, school and the Sarva Dharma Ashram are the central microsystems interacting with the youth's mesosystem. Some of the youth and their families experience poverty along with financial hardship, which has a negative impact on youth, and their performance at school. Parents also find it difficult to pay for their child's school fees, stationery and uniforms. The Sarva Dharma Ashram uplifts families in such positions, by providing resources to enable their children to continue going to school. The Ashram also provides these learners, with after school tuition programmes, to further sustain them. These relationships are important and allow for development to take place.

1.10.3 Exo-system

The exo-system consists of the individuals in the child's microsystem, who are not directly involved with the child (Ettekal and Mahoney 2017: 240). Hertler *et al.* (2018:326) noted that the exo-system, included the broader social system, which interacts with the microsystem. This may include the workplace schedules of a child's parent and community-based family resources. Shelton (2019:93) wrote that the exo-system is important in understanding development because often, one becomes influenced by events outside their own mesosystem.

In the exo-system, there are certain influences that may have an indirect impact on a child's development. The examples of this may include parents' work place, family friends, policies, and government departments (Chinara in National Development Agency 2016:2). In this instance, some of the family members of youth collect a monthly child support grant, from the Department of Social Development. Although the youth does not deal directly with the Department of Social Development, their involvement affects and influences the youth's development. The monthly grant, in providing the child's needs, influences the youth's development, because limitation or the absence of these will have an impact on him/her. It can also be noted that faith-based organisations, are often in a suitable position to help disadvantaged family members of the community in accessing these services.

1.10.4 Macro system

Hertler *et al.* (2018:326) wrote that the macro system included laws, cultural values and customs. These can be found on the outer level of the ecological system. It impacts development and interacts with the other systems. It may also serve as a lens through which an individual interprets future experiences (Ettekal and Mahoney 2017: 241).

There are many cultural factors that affect development. Youth and their families who live in Welbedacht share various different cultural backgrounds. However, all religious dominations are welcome at the Ashram as it is a universal centre for all. The Sarva Dharma Ashram, as a faith-based organisation transfers prosocial and cultural values to youth and their families, who join the Ashram in their daily activities. The spiritual and religious influence of the Ashram can have a positive impact on youth of the community. Families who come to the Ashram are taught values, ethics and morals to develop their moral reasoning and thinking, thus becoming better role models to their children.
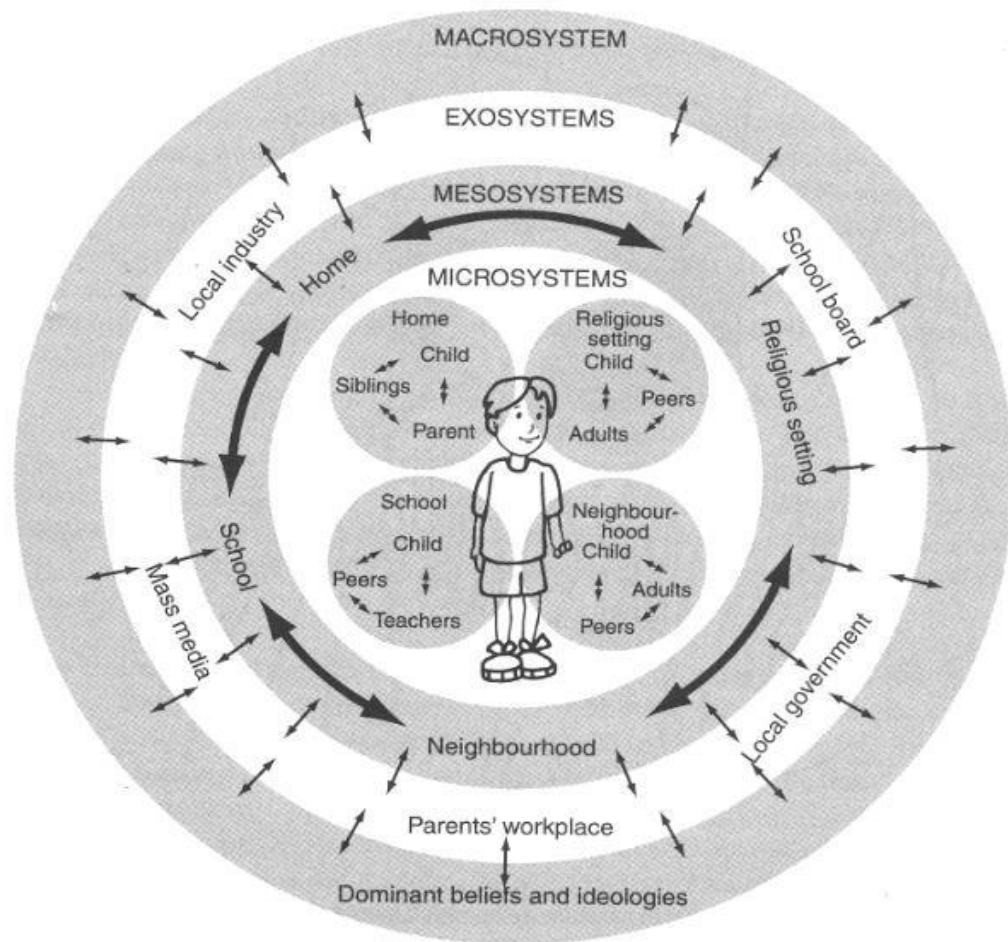
Figure 1: Ecological Systems model (Penn 2005:45)

1.11 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was guided by qualitative research methodology. The qualitative approach provided the means for flexibility and for sourcing in-depth and rich information from the participants. A case study research design was selected to guide the study. Case study design is more of a choice of what to study, than a methodological one (de Vos, Delport, Fouche and Strydom 2011: 320). The Sarva Dharma Ashram was chosen, as this faith-based organisation, has been playing a pivotal role in developing children, youth and their families in the Welbedacht community. Three sample were used namely, Board members of the Ashram, community members and family members. A focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from participants. Purposive sampling was used throughout the study. Purposive sampling is suited best when the researcher chooses who can provide the best information, to achieve the objectives of the study (Kumar 2014: 374). The data was analysed using the process of thematic analysis.

1.12 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 2 – Literature review

Chapter 3 – Research Methodology

Chapter 4 – Presentation and discussion of the findings

Chapter 5 – Recommendations and conclusion of the study.

1.13 CONCLUSION

The introductory chapter provided an overview of the study undertaken. The background of the study and problem statement was discussed. In addition the

aim, objectives, research questions and significance of the study were elucidated. The theoretical framework that was used to guide the study was also highlighted. Key definitions and an overview of the research methodology was presented. The following chapter will provide an extensive discussion of the literature that underpins the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

"A literature review is a review of the existing scholarship or available body of knowledge that helps researchers to understand how other scholars have investigated the research problem that they are interested in" (Moutin 2001:8). This chapter presents a review on the role of faith-based organisations in the community context. Kumar (2011: 48) wrote that "the literature review serves to enhance and consolidate the researcher's knowledge base and helps the researcher to integrate their findings within the existing body of knowledge." Similarly, De Vos *et al.* (2011: 302) stated that the literature review is conducted to familiarise the researcher with a detailed insight on a particular subject field and how other researchers have interpreted same. The literature review that follows, consists of present and prior knowledge of faith-based organisations, the history and definitions of faith-based organisations, typologies of faith-based organisations, the benefits and roles of faith-based organisations and faith leaders in communities, the role of religion and spirituality as a support system for families and communities as well as the collaboration of social work practice into faith-based organisations.

Du Toit (2018: 26) noted that there is a paucity of research reflecting the role of South African faith-based organisations. James (2009:5) added that faith-based organisations, have been known to reach out to people at a grassroots level, and establish their legitimacy within poor communities. Nishimuko (2008: 641) said that faith-based organisations have provided holistic support and guidance, which can transform communities. Similarly, Lipsky (2011:26) explained that faith-based organisations understand local contexts better and that they are more flexible. He added that they may serve as a representative for vulnerable communities, to advocate for quality service delivery, and to network with stakeholders on behalf of the community. Another particular strength of faith-

based organisations is their moral grounds, which guides all activities of faith-based organisations (Lipsky 2011:26).

The following data bases were used. EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, Google, DUT Library databases, SAGE journals, a variety of online journals, social work journals, Taylor and Francis, and ProQuest. A combination of the following key words were used during the searches: faith-based organisations; faith-based organisations in South Africa; faith-based organisations and community development; faith-based organisations in communities, faith-based organisations and social work, spirituality in communities, religion and spirituality, spiritual interventions, poverty in South Africa.

2.2 HISTORY OF FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS

The shift in the role the church, is evident in the literature. The church notably rediscovered its place in society (Clarke and Jennings 2008:112). The factor of church-state relations played heavily, into the creation of faith-based organisations (Warren 2001:7). In the United States, the administrations of former presidents Clinton and George W. Bush, led faith-based services, under the Charitable Choice and Faith-Based Initiative provision. This implied that faith-based organisations, could compete for public funding equally, with secular providers without giving up their distinctive religious ethos. It also falls under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (McGrew and Cnaan 2006:23). Schneider (2013:434) wrote that although congregations implemented programmes, historical literature found plentiful religious-based organisations established in the United States. As the country developed, faith-based organisations became an even larger provider of essential services such as health, social welfare, and education in the United States. Bieldfield and Cleveland (2013:453) added that in the early 19th and 20th century, the Catholics secured systems for education, social services and hospitals. Thus the establishment of one the greatest faith-based systems, in the United States (Bieldfeld and Cleveland 2013: 453).

In addition, churches in South Africa have played a notable role in developing various sectors, such as the social welfare and the health sector. Scholars acknowledged that the involvement of the church was present in the middle of the seventeenth century, when Dutch colonists arrived. Historically, the church responded to a range of worldly crises such as wars, epidemics, pandemics and economic inactivity (Van der Merwe, Swart and Hendricks 2009:132).

Patel (2005:66-84) indicated that during apartheid in South Africa, the social welfare sector did not fully cater for the non-white population, but rather focused on providing services to the White population. The social welfare sector then began to regulate the sector through legislative frameworks. Two pieces of legislation were formed, and were the National Welfare Act (Act 100 of 1978) and the Fund-raising Act (Act 107 of 1978). The National Welfare Act regulated registration of welfare organisations, its programmes, and composed councils (Republic of South Africa 1978a:2). The Fund-raising Act monitored public fundraising (Republic of South Africa 1978b:3). Both laws granted welfare organisations to be operational, following the registration requirements deemed necessary, as stated in the legislative framework (Republic of South Africa 1978a:5, 1978b:7). In addition, welfare organisations had to make policy decisions regarding the social programmes they offered. This led churches and welfare organisations, to register their respective services and fundraising bodies (Van der Merwe, Swart and Hendricks 2009:132-133). Due to the nature and organisation of the faith-based sector, the Non-profit Organisation Act (Act 71 of 1997) was unsuccessful. This was due to the Act defining organisations in terms of their legal entities, associations and trusts. Furthermore the faith-based sector has unique structures and organisational models (Patel 2005: 82). However the new democratic South Africa had recognised that faith-based organisations and the religious sector form a natural part of civil society, and was identified as such, in the White Paper on transforming public service delivery (White Paper 1997:22-23).

The evolution of faith-based services originated from the dominant religions of South Asia such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism. All of these religions have their own set of beliefs and practices, but they share a universal message of love, and humanity. Research has indicated that dominant

religions have made efforts to provide social services, to individuals (Bano and Nair 2007: 2-3). In Hinduism, the concept of charity was initially introduced in the Rig Veda (1500 B.C), which encouraged charity as a profound virtue. Jainism and Buddhism emerged from Hinduism and similarly, serving the poor emerged as the highest form of practice and service (Bano and Nair 2007:3).

In Islam, the holy Quran contains guidance on how believers can take care of unprivileged individuals (Kozlowski in Bano and Nair 2007:4). Islam has five pillars. One of the pillars, is called "zakat" which is an obligatory tax on all affluent Muslims, in which they are to deduct from their wealth, every year. Christian scriptures recognized poverty as an inherent part of the human condition (Cohen 2005: 348). Therefore, Catholic and Protestant traditions developed benevolent organisations, which aimed at helping disadvantaged and vulnerable communities (Cohen 2005: 354).

Historically, faith has been instrumental, in the development of contemporary Africa, and will continue to play a key role in the progression of the continent (Mati 2013: 1). Faith-based organisations have shown leadership in providing humanitarian relief for vulnerable states during conflict and post-conflict reformation. Faith-based organisations in African countries have provided relief and aid to regions particularly affected by war in the form of basic needs and services (Benthall and Bellion 2005 in Olutola 2019:6). Leurs (2012: 707) also noted that Nigerian faith-based organisations were functional during colonial times, and had serviced communities longer than non-governmental organisations.

2.3 DEFINING A FAITH-BASED ORGANISATION

Scholars around the world have defined the term faith-based organisation in various ways. This is as a result of the lack of consensus regarding the term faith-based organisations (McGrew and Cnaan 2006:21; Unruh and Sider 2004:110; Van der Merwe, Swart and Hendriks 2009:125; Du toit 2018: 26; Clarke 2006: 836). Clarke and Jennings (2008:6) offered a definition of a faith-

based organisation as "any organisation that derives inspiration and guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith." Berger (2003: 16) defined a faith-based organisation, "as a formal organisation whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived, from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and operates on a non-profit, independent or voluntary basis to promote and bring about collectively integrated ideas for the well-being of the public." The UNFPA's (2009:11) working definition of a faith-based organisation stated that "faith-based organisations are religious, faith-based, and/or faith-inspired groups, which operates as registered or unregistered non-profit institutions." McCathy and Castelli (in Stritt 2008: 731-732) categorised faith-based organisations as:

1. Congregations such as the community-based groups which are formed with regular religious worship;

2. National network faith-based organisations based on denominations and their social service arms, such as the Salvation Army, and networks of related organizations; and

3. Freestanding faith-based organisations which are organisations that arise from congregations but have a religious basis.

Similarly, the UNFPA (2009:11) also categorized faith-based organisations as:

1. Faith-based and/or faith-inspired development organisations (such as Islamic relief and Christian Aid);

2. Multi-faith-based organisations that work together for a common purpose;

3. Local congregations: were gatherings are held for worship and engage in charitable work (for example, donations of clothes, and assisting the elderly); and

4. Ministries of religious affairs (particularly, in countries where non-governmental organisations may find encounter difficulties to register or function).

2.4 TYPOLOGIES OF FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS

James (2009:12) wrote that typologies are valuable for understanding the flexibility, of faith-based organisation. Renowned scholars in the field, such as Sider and Unruh (2004:119-120) and Clarke (2008:25-32) have developed typologies categorising faith-based organisations, and their expression towards religion (Bielefeld and Cleveland 2013:461). James (2009:13) cautioned however that, the extent to which a faith-based organisation fits in typologies, is dependent on how it chooses to operationalize its faith.

2.4.1 Sider and Unruh's five categories of faith-based organisations

- Faith-permeated

  These are organisations where the connection is clear at each level, from the mission statement, staffing and to management. The religious component is necessary for program effectiveness.

- Faith-centred

  The central component of the organisation is religion. Programmes offered by the organisation have religious elements however participants can opt out at any given time.

- Faith-affiliated

  These organisations maintain influence of its religious founders but it is not necessary for staff follow the religious beliefs or practices. Religious activities are not explicitly part of programs but may affirm faith in a general way. Religious and spiritual resources are available if participants request it.

- Faith-background

Organisation's that have been historically linked to a faith tradition, but also has characteristics of a secular organisation. Programmes of the organisation do not specifically contain religious elements.

- Faith-secular partnerships
  Faith-based organisations and non-governmental organisations collaborate together to provide services. The management and employees are not required to share the same faith of the church. Programmes include religious and secular content.

2.4.2 Clarke's five types of faith-based organisations in development:

- Faith-based representative organisations or apex bodies
  Rule on doctrinal matters, govern the faithful and represent them through engagement with the State and other actors.

- Faith-based charitable or development organisations
  Engage and fund programmes that tackle poverty and social exclusion.

- Faith-based socio-political organisations
  These organisations organize and mobilize social groups on the basis of faith identities or may promote faith as a socio-cultural construct.

- Faith-based missionary organisations
  Spread key faith messages by promoting the faith and seeking converts to it.

- Faith-based radical, illegal or terrorist organisations

  Often engage in violent acts claiming that it is part of their faith.

2.4.3 Clarke's typology to analyse different faith-based organisations

- Passive

Humanitarian principles are primary whilst the teachings of faith are secondary. They often engage in collaborations with beneficiaries and partners.

- Active

Faith is the core inspiration. These organisations engage with stakeholders to improve development.

Persuasive

Faith provides inspiration for action and in mobilizing employees. Engaging with beneficiaries is an important role.

- Exclusive

Faith is the main form of motivation for action.

2.5 ADVANTAGES OF FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS

Historically, faith-based organisations have been working primarily in poor communities, providing crucial services to disadvantaged members of society (James 2011: 3). Faith-based organisations are an essential part in poverty alleviation initiatives, particularly in developing countries (Olarinmoye 2012:2) and have provided between 30-70% of health care services (Hafner 2009:1). They have provided financial and material support to the poor, as well as emergency aid during crises (Tadros 2010:3). Olarinmoye (2012: 6) asserted that development services offered in Nigeria, included basic need services, family support services, health services, advocacy, community organizing and development. Faith-based organisations may also be efficient at delivering social services to communities. They have the existing infrastructure, volunteers and resources that could enhance social service assistance (Graddy 2006:131).

Faith-based organisations are often embedded within communities and are more organic (Clarke and Ware 2015:38). It gives them the ability to reach the poorest at grassroots level. James (2011:112) added that faith-based organisations are found even in the most inaccessible areas, which government services do not reach. The UNFPA (2009:13) indicated that faith-based organisations are primarily connected to resources in local settings. They have

greater access to the poorest and most disadvantaged communities. They also bring positive change and transformation to communities. Similarly Berger (2003:37) wrote that religious non-governmental organisations are concerned with spiritual compasses of those they seek to serve. This is beneficial at grassroots level, as they can enable people to transform their own condition and that of those around them.

Hayman (2016: 675) noted that there is a need for diversification and flexibility in civil society organisations. Moreover new relationships need to be built, that would offer a sustainable presence. Additionally, faith-based organisations are increasingly involved in environmental sustainability initiatives (Moyer, Sinclair and Spaling 2011:1). They noted that in Kenya, faith-based organisations are making efforts to become more sustainable. Some of their sustainable work included education/capacity building, tree planting, water harvesting as well as tackling social and health issues (Moyer *et al.* 2011:21).

Noor and Nawi (2016:16) wrote that faith-based organisations are driven by their faith and beliefs and work tirelessly, to improve the well-being of the poor. Poor communities are largely faith-based communities and faith leaders often serve as the gate-keepers and opinion-leaders in such communities (James 2011:3). Moreover poorer communities tend to support and trust faith-based organisations. Due to their close proximity to the poor, faith-based organisations are responsive to the issues that they face (Leurs 2012:707). Moreover these organisations and their staff, speak their language and respect their sentiments and culture (Heist and Cnaan 2016:5).

Organisations with a faith basis, also play a prominent role within the development sector (Clarke and Ware 2015:37). Faith-based organisations operate from a faith basis. All world religious traditions, highlight faith as an essential mechanism for coping and resiliency (Heist and Cnaan 2016:3). Leurs (2012:707) indicated that faith-based organisations are able to engage with their religious supporters. Another advantage is that faith-based organisations draw on spiritual and moral values which gives them the ability to influence institutions that promote values, such as schools.

Volunteering is a core element of community participation (Akintola 2011:54). It plays an important role in shaping mobility and subjectivities across unequal global spaces (Smith, Laurie, Hopkins and Olsen 2012: 126). Akintola (2011:55) noted the functions of volunteering and wrote that people volunteer to satisfy their human obligation, to help others and show empathy, concern and worry about the community, by seeking career related benefits, to reduce negative feelings of oneself, to further understand how to help others, to contribute to one's skills, address personal issues and lastly to get the approval of significant others. In his study, he found that religion was central to some participants' motivation to volunteer to work in faith-based organisations that deal with HIV/AIDS patients (Akintola 2011:59). Participants indicated that volunteering was a religious obligation, and could be seen as a calling, to a higher duty. Moreover, James (2011:113) stated that "most religions have a high dependency of commitment. They motivate action through emphasis on compassion and service, unity and interconnectedness, justice and reconciliation."

Faith based organisations also act as a driving force, in fuelling spiritual development in people. James (2011:113-114) outlined three potential spiritual advantages of faith-based organisations, which are discussed below.

a) Spiritual teachings

Morals and values are a central tenet of many religious worldviews and their teachings. Justice, compassion, reconciliation, care and forgiveness are some of the instrumental faith-based morals and values that form the basis, of spiritual and religious teachings. These attributes are emphasised to foster development in people.

b) Hope, meaning and purpose

Having a sense of hope, meaning and purpose can conquer feelings of fear and powerlessness. To simply believe in oneself, can manifest and bring out spiritual transformation in people. Values and attitudes need to be adjusted for meaningful development to be achieved.

c) Transcendental power

Transcendental power is having faith that goes beyond human effort. Many faiths regard prayer as a powerful practice that can bring change and development.

The following sub-sections discusses the role of faith-based organisations particularly in the areas of HIV/AIDS related services, food provision, education, disaster and humanitarian efforts and psychosocial support and counselling.

2.6 ROLE OF FAITH BASED ORGANISATIONS IN COMMUNITIES

Globally, faith-based organisations are noted for providing vulnerable populations, with much needed services and support in communities. Research has clearly indicated the urgency of faith-based organisations to be placed in poor socio-economic areas, where service delivery is at its worst (James 2011:111; Terry, Smith, Warren, Miller, McQuilin, Wolfer and Weist 2015:212; Du Toit 2019:1). The following sub-sections, highlights some of the roles that faith-based organisations play, in relation to the programmes and support that they offer to youth and families in communities.

2.6.1 HIV/AIDS related services

A study on faith-based organisations and health and wellness of vulnerable communities found that HIV/AIDS was a common issue that was addressed (Arend 2008:259). Keikelame, Murphy, Ringheim and Woldehanna (2010:64) indicated that faith-based organisations are known to engage with communities and render direct and indirect HIV/AIDS services. Services such as prevention, care, support and counselling have been provided to many communities, although these efforts are not widely documented. Bopp and Falcon (2013:123) added that faith-based organisations are excellent settings for reaching large groups of people. They therefore can be used to promote support, for those who have HIV/AIDS and to encourage families on how to provide support to their

loved ones with HIV/AIDS (Sanchez 2010:104; Dimelu, Salua and Igbokwe 2013:151). In keeping with their caring approach, faith-based organisation distribute antiretroviral (ARV) treatment to people living with HIV/AIDS in rural and marginalised areas, as well as in overpopulated urban slums in Africa (Moyo and Keir 2014:347).

Carino (2016:5) wrote that people affected with HIV, suffered humiliation and stigma from the public, including from their own families. Staff and volunteers at faith-based organisations have made huge efforts to eradicate stigma and create awareness about HIV/AIDS. Non-governmental organisations have initiated and implemented several campaigns aimed to improve behavioural change. Faith-based organisations in some countries have started to educate and support local communities to reduce the transmission of HIV (Clarke, Charnley and Lumbers 2011:4). The impact of religious inspired interventions at faith-based organisations, are also a powerful tool in reducing discrimination and creating a supportive environment through information distribution (Blevins, Doan, Thurman, Walsh, Buckingham, Davison, Deluca, Kiser, Martin, Mugweru, Mombo and Okaalet in Moyo and Keir 2014:346). Some faith-based organisations are involved in stigma reduction activities, such as organized marches, awareness campaigns, counselling and support and workshops. As well as advocating for people living with HIV/AIDS through promotion of their human rights, providing awareness in the workplace and preparing religious leaders to implement HIV prevention activities within congregations (Derose, Bogart, Kanouse, Felton, Collins, Mata, Oden, Dominguez, Florez, Hawes-Dawson and Williams 2010:2).

The effectiveness of faith-based organisations, and their health related initiatives, have displayed an outstanding contribution for the delivery of primary health care in Africa (Moyo and Keir 2014:346). In line with this, many such organisations have introduced sustainable food production gardens for families with HIV infected persons. In Zimbabwe, World Vision International initiated urban community gardens in poor regions such as the Bulawayo townships (Moyo and Keir 2014:347).

Clarke, Charnley and Lumbers (2011:14-16) developed eight attributes that support the efficiency of implementing HIV/AIDS interventions at faith-based organisations.

a) Train religious leaders,

b) Start where the community is,

c) Recognise possible risk behaviour practised in the community,

d) Work with other faith-based organisations and secular organisations,

e) Accept that HIV/AIDS interventions are continuous and long-term.

f) Speak about all forms of transmission, even if the risk is not present within the community,

g) Collaborate HIV/AIDS prevention interventions with broader social programmes, for the community to receive as much education about the topic, and

h) Advocate for effective programmes and funding addressing HIV and AIDS.

2.6.2 Provision of food programmes in communities

Food is an important part of community construction (Klostermaier in Pandya 2017:6). The UNFPA (2015:41) stated that "health and nutrition are areas of development, with the longest and best-documented tradition of faith-based engagement." Religious places of worship and their congregations are often involved in various forms of development work such as giving food to the poor (Tomalin 2012: 693). Moreover, in poor areas the reality is that food is more of a privilege, than a necessity and making ends meet is becoming increasingly difficult. According to the General Household Survey (2017: 57) in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa, 4.8% of households, had severe inadequate access to food, while 18.6% had inadequate access to food. It is usually the marginalised communities, which make up the percentage of those without access to food. Faith-based organisations and practitioners have also introduced the implementation of community food work (Ligrani and Niewolny 2016:1). Faith-

based organisations play an important role in community food programs and providing the community with free and nutritious food (Haakenstad *et al.* 2015:7; Lindberg, Lawrence and Caraher 2017:37; Power, Small, Teasdale and Pickett 2017:460). Power *et al.* (2017:459) found faith to be an important motivation for provision of food. Food aid was a means of expressing Christian charity. A study by Sanchez (2010: 104-105) on 12 Christian-based organisations, and their services offered, found that soup kitchens and food parcels, were popular choices in poor communities situated in Gauteng, South Africa. These initiatives display a need for such organisations in communities.

Contemporary Guru (teacher) led and Hindu-inspired faith-based organisations in India are adopting strategies to expand, with social service or *seva* (to serve) being a crucial one (Pandya 2017:4). The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) is an organisation of such a nature, and has developed the ISKCON Food Relief Foundation (Pandya 2017:6). One of their earliest initiatives was the Food for Life programme, run by ISKCON in the England, where food was distributed to the homeless and hungry people (Krishna Dharma Das in Pandya 2017:6). This programme has also been operational in various countries around the world. The Krishna consciousness or Hare Krishna Movement of ISKCON, has its roots in the teachings of the Hindu Lord Chaitanya who was held to be an Avatar or incarnation of Krishna and Radha (Krishna's divine lover and consort) who collectively possessed a metaphysical form with human traits (Pandya 2017:4). Food became a way to serve, not just the Lord, but to also further the mission of the Guru Srila Prabhupada. Food is representative of the Food Relief Foundation, of "both the naturalistic and the spiritual, a vehicle which permits the survival of humanity as individuals and as a species" (Pandya 2017:17).

The Islamic Relief Kenya (IRK) is a faith-based organisation whose mission, vision, principles and core values are driven by the values of the Muslim faith (Rahman and Afrin 2017:1). It has been providing assistance to vulnerable communities and has changed the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged communities through their many programmes. One such programme is the Health and Nutrition programme which sought to promote the health and nutrition status of vulnerable people, especially women and children in Kenya

(Rahman and Afrin 2017:4). Food service is the highest form of social service and becomes a means to reach out to the wider community, and see faith in action (Pandya 2017:18). There are two food programmes which takes place during the Muslim holy months. The first is the Ramadan programme which takes place in the month of Ramadan, where food packs are distributed to the malnourished, orphaned and vulnerable children. The second programme is the Qurbani (meat) programme which takes place during the Muslim holy day of Eid-Ul-Adha, where the poor and disadvantaged receive food parcels (Rahman and Afrin 2017: 4). They remain guided by the timeless values and teachings provided by the revelation contained within the Qur'an and the prophetic examples, most specifically: sincerity- Ikhlas, excellence - Ihsan, compassion- Rahmah, social justice- Adl, and custodianship - Amanah (Rahman and Afrin 2017: 4).

According to Todd (2012: 229), faith-based organisations have played a role in development efforts by creating supportive community settings that may also help reduce social marginalization of historically underserved communities. The United Nations (2018:38) which reported on the World Food Programme (WFP) collaborated with various faith leaders, organisations and communities to end hunger. They have partnered with over one thousand community-based organisations worldwide, many of which have a faith-inspired mission. The World Food Programme maintained that faith communities are vital partners in combatting the threat of famine through global efforts (United Nations 2018:38).

2.6.3 Education/ upliftment

Sen (1999: 296) stated that education has "direct relevance to the well-being and freedom of people" as well as an "indirect role through influencing social change and economic production." Moreover, the United Nations said that every child has a human right to education. Children who engage with their studies are able to develop positive attitudes and make informative decisions as they develop into adulthood (UN 2012: 22). Most communities experience economic

challenges and require the assistance of faith-based organisations in the forms of support and resources for teachers and students (Green-Powell, Hilton, and Joseph 2011:66). Schools are now recognising that faith-based and community groups are an important resource in aiding student learning and teaching (Roehlkepartain 2007:4).

In Sierra Leone, faith-based organisations have assisted the government in developing the education sector (Nishimuko 2009:287). Sakai (2012:378) also indicated that faith-based organisations in Indonesia, have played an important role in service delivery to the poor. They often provide support to education institutions in the form of financial assistance. Nishimuko (2009:291) pointed out that the role of faith-based organisations in Sierra Leone, have contributed towards informal education namely (1) accessing vacant land for building schools; (2) rehabilitating neglected schools; (3) providing support resources such as transportation, equipment and teaching materials when needed; (4) scholarships opportunities for teachers to further their study; (5) scholarships for pupils; (6) monitoring schools for progress; (7) hiring of teachers; (8) training Arabic teachers and offering in-service training; (9) producing religious literature for schools and churches or mosques; (10) occasionally contributing to teachers' salaries when teachers have not been paid by the relevant government authorities;(11) sensitising parents at churches or mosques to send their children to schools; and (12) implementing a code of conduct to uphold morality in school and community.

Dominant faiths regard education as an important resource for children, especially providing religious schools that offer basic education for girls (Tietjen 2000 in UN 2012:22). Education helps people to rebuild their communities and pursue productive lives. To ensure the right of education to the Dadaab refugees in Kenya, Islam Relief Kenya involved religious leaders in most of their programme implementation, to foster sustainable and inclusive development. One of their education programmes integrated primary education into existing community-managed religious schools (Rahman and Afrin 2017:2). Another programme is the Child Welfare and Education Programme. Under this

programme, Islamic Relief Kenya operated the "Child Welfare Project", which caters for poor widows and orphans in Northern Kenya, by ensuring that they are economically empowered and that children are protected and educated (Rahman and Afrin 2017:3).

In Afghanistan, religious leaders collaborate with organisations, to promote the inclusion of girls' education. Imams (Muslim worship leaders) in the country often promote girls education at Friday worship. Mosques are turned into classrooms for children where school facilities are limited (UN 2012:24). Religious school programmes are particularly significant in Islamic communities across the world. Islamic Relief Kenya introduced religious school programmes alongside formal primary education into the existing community-managed religious schools called Duksi, to meet emergency educational needs by adapting existing practices, in an innovative way to ensure the access and retention of children in pre-primary education. In Duksi schools, children receive religious education, alongside acquiring key reading and writing, sciences and math skills to accelerate basic education and to catch up with formal primary education. They have also restructured the preschool curriculum to ensure cultural sensitivity in a child-friendly educational environment (Rahman and Afrin 2017: 6). Islamic non-governmental organisations have also established Quran based schools and compensate teachers' salaries. These Islamic non-governmental organisations, are also involved in teaching the word of Islam to Muslims and non-Muslims (Chowdhury, Wahab and Islam 2019: 10-11).

2.6.4 Disaster relief and humanitarian efforts

Faith-based organisations are actively involved in clean-up operations after disasters and responding to the needs of those affected. Individuals often turn to religion and seek relief from faith-based organisations when adverse events are experienced in their lives (Rivera and Nickels 2014:181). Religious faith is a major motivator for humanitarian work. When natural disasters strike, religious organisations offer comfort and encouragement to survivors, and provide critical support. Chida and Chabata (2016:38) added that they play a critical role in communities where they offer spiritual and moral support, as well as material

needs to disadvantaged members of the community. Ferris (2005:316) indicated that two characteristics set faith-based humanitarian organisations, apart from most secular humanitarian organisations. The first, of which faith-based humanitarian organisations are guided by their faith and the second, is that they work beyond providing humanitarian relief to individuals. Ager, Qasmiyeh and Ager (2014:2) posited that local faith communities hold potential to respond to emergencies within the early days. They provide various forms of relief such as shelter for the displaced and volunteers to assist concerned individuals. They have also become increasingly recognised to provide a sound base for bolstering community resilience in the immediate aftermath of crisis.

Belshaw (in Heist and Cnaan 2016:5) described five advantages of humanitarian work in Africa. He said they have long-term commitment to their membership as they serve communities for a long time; faith-based organisations and their representatives provide help in disadvantaged developing countries; collaborations with similar organisations may result in additional funding and expertise; treatment of others as one would treat themselves; spiritual experiences may provide affected individuals with hope and positivity.

Alawiyah, Bell, Pyles and Runnels (2011:295) indicated that faith-based organisations play an important role in the lives of African-American communities. During the 2005 Hurricane Katrina disaster, faith-based organisations generously evacuated and housed people in churches. This is a clear indication of why faith-based organisations are firmly rooted within local communities and local religious establishments, which provides a high level of trust and accountability in the community (Moyer, Sinclair and Spaling 2011:4). Chida and Chabata (2016:44) found that the Celebration Church International, which is a faith-based organisation in Zimbabwe, has assisted in crisis situations in Harare. Such situations include starvation, lack of sanitation and political violence. Action by Churches Together (ACT) which was established in 1995, played a vital role providing emergency assistance to individuals. ACT sought to improve on the amount of resources available at faith organisations in preparedness to respond to emergencies (Ferris 2005:320).

2.6.5 Psycho-social support and counselling

Patel and Mavungu (2016:34) wrote that non-governmental organisations and faith-based organisations deliver care and psychosocial support services to youth and families in communities. Hlalele (2012:63) defined psycho-social support "as a continuous process of meeting emotional, social, mental and spiritual needs, which are considered vital elements of meaningful and positive human development." Richter, Foster and Sherr (2006:14) explained that it is one's need to be happy, to belong in social groups and to have hope for the future, more so in children. When children are faced with deprivation or adversities that are constant, they have a need for support, affection and reassurance. Hlalele (2012:63) asserted that a child's emotional well-being is influenced by household economic security. Henry, Bryan and Zalaquett (2017:164) wrote that school–family–community partnerships are formed between school staff, families, and community members and faith-based organisations. In this way, the group supports youth to work towards their goals. This partnership has provided programmes, guidance and resources for learners with economic challenges. Moreover, youth and their families gain the support from their child's school and with the help of faith-based organisations too.

The government plays a role in assisting families to fulfil their responsibilities, towards their children. Therefore all social services of government, are directed towards the preservation and strengthening of families. The religious sector is well positioned in this regard. Through counselling and skills training, they can provide families with counselling services such as preparing couples who intend getting married, family planning and parenting. Moreover, the religious sector can establish and strengthen social networks between families (Swart *et al*. 2010:165). A study in Nigeria showed that faith-based organisations offered couples pre-marital and marital counselling services. The services are provided to help couples who plan to marry with communication and problem solving skills to strengthen their marriage (Egbo 2012:1-2).

Bent-Goodley and Fowler (2006:283) wrote that, "spirituality includes a focus on comprehensively responding to the troubles and social ills of individuals and

communities through their natural support networks and inner strength." Rural communities view churches in their locality as assets. These communities have very few support institutions for families and youth, therefore churches are ideally suited to render social service interventions (Harr and Yancey 2014:151). Hence they have the ability to provide psycho-social support and counselling services to youth and families in the community. Moreover, their presence in communities create a stable and trustworthy environment for families. In most rural areas, it is religion and religious organisations who play a central role (Harr and Yancey 2014:151).

Faith-based organisations also request that their faith leaders give preference to health interventions such as counselling within their churches (Fallon, Bopp and Webb 2013:137). Graddy (2006:144) found that faith-based organisations provide counselling and substance abuse programmes. Staff may have experience and expertise in these areas as they are trained to offer such services. Health and counselling programmes offered at these organisations are useful for individuals to make healthy lifestyle decisions (Fallon *et al.* 2013: 130). Health counselling can take place in the form of healthy eating habits, physical training and alcohol and tobacco usage. Additionally, faith-based organisations are beneficial partners for health interventions due to their (i) long-standing relationships with community members, (ii) ability to deliver culturally sensitive and relevant interventions, (iii) influence in local and state governmental policies, (iv) ability to reach into underserved and ethnically diverse communities and (v) consistent reinforcement of the link between spiritual and physical health (Bopp and Fallon 2008:173; Bopp and Webb 2012:679; Bopp and Fallon 2013:123).

The following sub-section includes literature on religion and spirituality as a support system for families and communities.

2.7 RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY AS A SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

The "literature is coloured by a myriad of definitions of religion and spirituality" (Bhagwan 2010:165). Historically, the words "religious" and "spiritual" have been used synonymously to describe various aspects of the concept of religion (Junghare 2016:13). However, over time, researchers have begun to describe religion and spirituality as different entities. In the literature religion and spirituality are often used synonymously and interchangeably. The Pew Research Centre Report of 2010, found that 74% of the South African population indicated that religion played an important role in their lives (Lugo, Cooperman, O'Connell and Stencel 2010:3). Furthermore, healing has been a focal point of most religions and some people look to religion as a means of understanding and coping with life experiences (Leavey and King 2007:97). Researchers have asserted that religion is innately a social phenomenon (Hayward and Krause 2014:2). Definitions of religion and spirituality have been presented in Chapter 1. Additional definitions will follow. Religion concentrates particularly on the "belief in a transcendental reality or spiritual being, the sacred; religiosity, signified by following a set of beliefs and practices; and affiliation with a religious organisation" (Rakodi 2012: 640). Spirituality in contrast is more personalised and can be seen "as the individuals' sense of connectedness, meaning, peace, consciousness, purpose and service that develops across the lifespan" (Derezotes 2006:3).

In communities, spirituality has been the driving force for families and youth to be actively involved in their development. Cheon and Canda (2010:122) indicated that spirituality provides a developmental thrust towards a sense of wholeness, integrity, meaningfulness, connectedness, and concern for others well-being. It has also been identified as an important coping mechanism, with stressors associated with poverty and homelessness (Banerjee and Canda 2009:256; Greef and Fillis 2009:283; Hill and Donaldson 2012:69). Mthembu, Wegner and Roman (2017:16) discussed spirituality as being an indicative element of a holistic approach, which advances health, quality of life and well-being especially in the context of South African communities. Merino (2014:595)

indicated that religion provides a context for social interaction and useful social identity to come together. Religious development, like other areas of development, is embedded within systems of social links in diverse settings across one's life cycle (King and Boyatzis 2015: 997).

2.7.1 Congregational context

Religious support has been functional in various ways such as religious engagement, church attendance and participation in church activities (Debnum, Holt, Clark, Roth and Southward 2012:3). An important benefit of being part of a congregation, is that it may promote a sense of belonging and support which may reduce distress in people (Bradshaw and Ellision 2010: 4). Lim and Putnam (2010:914) found that religious people are more satisfied with life outcomes because they attend religious services on a regular basis and build social networks within their congregations. The social support received from their religious groups can be likened to the secular support received from sources like neighbourhoods and families. Hayward and Krause (2014: 6) indicated that it is common for religious individuals to gather together as a group for mutual spiritual support, belonging and for worship. Pastoral or other types of religious leaders are also a feature of religious groups (Hayward and Krause 2014: 6). They have the ability to lead the congregation and provide an environment conducive for religious activities and programs.

2.7.2 Formation of a social identity

King and Boyatzis (2015:1003) indicated that religious and spiritual groups have mentors who provide spiritual modelling to younger members. For example, Hindus have Gurus and Christians have Pastors. As children develop, these ingrained sensibilities are shaped by family members and subsequently by the community at large (UN 2018:15). They often set the foundation by providing youth with beliefs, norms and expectations of particular religious groups which shape their social identity. Through regular religious involvement, youth form

positive relationships, engage in social interactions and make supportive friendships with congregation members within faith-based settings (Debnam *et al.* 2013:3). Moreover, the "influence of spirituality and religion on children's development has the ability to reinforce protective influences and promote resiliency. Beliefs, practices, social networks and resources provided by religion and religious organizations, can strengthen children by instilling hope, by giving meaning to difficult experiences and by providing emotional, physical and spiritual support to them" (UN 2018:15).

2.7.3 Religious beliefs and wellbeing

Religious groups may encourage their members to follow particular beliefs which, when internalized, may influence cognitive processes and thus in turn have an impact on mental health and well-being outcomes (Hayward and Krause 2014: 12-13). The church has been tasked with the responsibility, to educate the community on the salience of religion in effecting healing in individuals, as well as a community service provider with regards to their available resources (Moon and Shim 2010: 138). Nieminen, Prättälä, Martelin, Härkänen, Hyyppä, Alanen, and Koskinen (2013:3) noted that religiosity and social support positively impacts health outcomes. Hayward and Krause (2014:12-13) stated that religious beliefs may influence mental health and well-being and provides a means for coping with stressful life events. Merino (2014:599) indicated that religious discussions with others, could make individuals act in accordance with their religious and social identities and infuse relationships that are reciprocal. This can form social bonds and supportive behaviour within individuals. Social relationships built on religious faith tend to be more authentic when individuals share the same values and ideologies (Edlin, Rydgren and Bohman 2014:616). In some cases, individuals may place more trust in the church, as it is their only form of support (Debnam *et al.* 2013:8).

2.7.4 Religion as a support system for stressful life events

Hayward and Krause (2014:14) stated that various studies found that people use religion as a coping mechanism, when going through stressful life events. Bradshaw and Ellison (2010:5) argued that religious involvement in the form of social, psychological and cognitive resources may help families and youth deal with socio-economic deprivation. Furthermore, these families tend to have increased levels of distress due to instable relationships, financial constraints, physical limitations and unsafe neighbourhood conditions. This adds to the economic strain they face, and with a lack of support systems to help, leads to low levels of self-esteem and less constructive family styles and practices (Ellison and Bradshaw 2010: 1). Krause (2006) expressed that there are many benefits of families joining organizational religious support which may alleviate the damaging effects of financial hardship. Religious congregations may channel formal and informal social and material support to such families, as programmes and services are often offered to less fortunate members of the communities (Chaves 2004: 52). Congregation members may also provide aid in the form of goods and services as well as offer socio-emotional help and support (Krause 2002: 130). Religion and religious teachings may also foster prosocial behaviour, coping skills, a sense of purpose and identity development amongst youth (King and Boyatzis 2015:978).

Schneider (2013: 432-433) explained how religions may provide support systems for faith-based organisations and the influence on resource structure and behaviour:

- Institutionalised systems such as the Catholic and Jewish religious systems, focus on planning and fundraising to encourage collaboration amongst other faith-based organisations, to create awareness of under-resourced communities.
- Congregational systems rely on individual congregations or coalitions of congregations to support faith-based organisations in providing religious service.

- Network systems attract individuals with common religious beliefs to support organisations. Individuals participate together to support worthy causes.

James (2009: 16) highlighted four ways in which faith-based organisations can integrate faith practices and teachings in their programmes. He however cautioned, that not all organisations engage in this particular way. Some faith-based organisations:

- take on a secular approach to development;
- use religious structures to conduct development projects;
- integrate spiritual teachings to promote change; and
- provide spiritual support in the form of prayer without proselytizing.

The following sub-section contains literature on religious and spiritual activities that are used as a coping mechanism for individuals and families. There are various religious and spiritual activities described in the literature, however the most common activities include prayer, scriptural reading and yoga as related to those undertaken by faith based organisations. These are discussed below.

2.8 RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL ACTIVITIES

In the following sub-sections various religious or spiritual activities that faith-based organisations implement are reviewed, as they have significance for assisting individuals and families in distress. Leavey, Dura-Villa and King (2012: 349) noted that religious practices are thought to energise healthy coping styles in people.

2.8.1 Prayer

Prayer is understood "as an act of addressing God with reverence, offering praise, giving thanks, affirming and confirming one's total dependence on God, and asking for His grace, mercy, and help" (Ahsan, Khan and Siddiqui 2012:168). People pray towards abstract forces which they believe fulfil their

needs, desires and can protect them from all harm in future (Chakraborty 2015:118). Prayer can be done either as an individual practice or communally, and takes place in a public space or in private environment. It may involve the use of words or song (Anand 2014:6).

Prayer gives people a sense of comfort and guides people to address their problems. Many engage in communal worship and prayer in places that are safe. In addition, faith-based organisation offer communal prayer, and is regarded essential, to ones well-being and personal spirituality (Piraino, Krema, Williams and Ferrari 2014:1). Moyer, Sinclair and Spaling (2011:15) and Johnson (2014:415) indicated that faith-based organisations integrate faith practices such as prayer into their activities with families and the community. Furthermore, religious and spiritual values are highlighted by faith-based leaders to their congregations (McNamee 2011:431). Unruh (2004:123) noted that many faith-based organisations offer faith practices such as prayer and they guide the programme content delivery on whether they convey beliefs, rooted in a particular religious tradition or affirm 'faith' in a more general sense.

Prayer has many effects on the health and wellbeing of people. It is a meditative act and can be used as a relaxation technique to calm the mind and body (Ahsan *et al.* 2012:168; Sayeed and Prakash 2013:S225). Ahsan *et al.* (2012:168) noted that during the Muslim prayer and recitation of the Qur'an, physiological relaxation responses are evoked. Imamoglu and Dilek (2016:643) added that when prayer is performed there is mild to moderate psychological, physical and brain activity. As the activity intensifies when performed daily, it can have long-term health benefits. Ahsan et *al.* (2012:168) stated that research has indicated that a belief in God or Allah makes an important contribution to a person's physical health. They further added that when people call upon faith, they activate neurological pathways for self-healing. Many studies have also found prayer to be a source of comfort and a spiritual tool especially amongst the terminally ill and those with mental health difficulties (Koenig 2009:283; Boelens Reeves, Replogle and Koenig 2012:96; Ladd and Spilka 2014:43; Esperandio and Ladd 2015:670; Simao, Caldeira and Carvalho 2016:1).

2.8.2 Scriptural reading

Scriptures are religious or sacred texts (Jacobs 2010: 12). Most dominant religions are based on teachings found in sacred scripture or religious books. Christianity has the Bible, and Islam has the Qur'an. Hinduism has a vibrant collection of scriptures, which is the largest body of sacred texts known to man (Subramuniyaswami 2019: 41). It includes the "Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Bhagavad Gita which are sacred writings, that bind Hinduism and are significant spiritual resources for most Hindus" (Bhagwan 2012:235-236).

Faith teaching highlight development principles, such as fairness, empathy and harmony (James 2011:113). Nordtveld and Chapman (2011:TAHP6) noted that key teachings in religious books such as the Bible, hold a strong basis for wellness at faith-based organisations. They indicated that all religious teachings shared common values which are promoted in all faiths. Dlamini (2005: 69) indicated that faith-based institutions carried out Bible reading support groups with women and had impacted them positively.

There are also many other additional benefits to scripture reading. Pearce, Koenig, Robins, Nelson, Shaw, Cohen and King (2015:5) wrote that in religiously integrated cognitive behavioural therapy, sacred scriptures can be used with patients with depression. Patients are taught to use religious teachings and associate it with positive principles found in scriptures that promote mental wellbeing. Kaur and Gupta (2013:27) indicated that all scriptures regardless of whether it is the Bible, Bhagavad-Gita, Quran or Guru Granth Sahib have one commonality and that is to teach ethics, values and attitudes applicable to all human beings and aim for a just and harmonious society. The teachings embedded in the aforementioned sacred texts all display universality or common universal values (Kaur and Gupta 2013:28-29).

2.8.3 Yoga

Yoga which originated in India is "a combination of both physical and mental practices with the goal of achieving unitive states of consciousness and spiritual advancement" (Bussing, Michalsen, Khalsa, Telles and Sherman 2012:1). It has also been defined "as the application of yoga postures and practice to the treatment of various health conditions, which involves instruction in yogic practices and teachings to prevent, reduce or alleviate structural, physiological, emotional and spiritual pain, suffering or limitations" (Woodyard 2011:49).

In many faith-based organisations, yoga forms one of the main interventions offered to youth and their families due to its therapeutic benefits. The benefits of yoga include the ability reduce stress levels and enhance self-regulation, resilience, mood and well-being (Bussing *et al.* 2012:2). Yoga practices aim to improve the overall quality of life (Kaley-Isley, Peterson, Fischer and Peterson 2010:22). Woodyard (2011:50) indicated that one of the principles of yoga is to enable self-empowerment. Yoga actively engages the individual self then, in a journey towards health and autonomy. The quality and state of the individuals' mind plays an important part in the healing process. A positive state facilitates healing faster than one with a negative state of mind. Ramadoss and Bose (2010:79) found that yoga interventions produced positive transformation in vulnerable youth. Sookrajh and Chetty (2012:407) noted that faith-based organisations such as the Aryan Benevolent Home were amongst those that provided yoga for children.

The following sub-section explores the role of faith leaders in communities.

2.9 ROLE OF FAITH LEADERS IN COMMUNITIES

According to the United Nations (2012:11-12), faith leaders are highly respected in the communities they serve, for a number of reasons. They instil social values and promote responsible behaviour amongst people. Faith leaders are competent and influential, which enables them to reach out to their community. They play an important role in mobilization and transformation in communities.

Harr and Yancey (2014: 155) wrote that in rural communities, the church is often the centre for social interaction. The pastors of such communities are often looked upon as community leaders. This often enhances their role in the community, as role models to families and children, as they can have a direct influence on them.

Due to the faith factor, faith leaders may meet the psycho-social needs of individuals by providing spiritual support and stability. However, Harr and Yancey (2014:149) indicated that rural communities have limited resources to meet the needs of individuals. Faith leaders and faith-based groups can assist the community to understand their culture and provide guidance on ill practices. Their focus includes on building and fostering spiritual capacity, to mobilise faith traditions to work together to promote non-violent techniques to maintain peace in communities (Taliep, Lazarus, Seedat and Cochrane 2016:343).

Religious leaders have served as a representative in rural communities and have provided a voice on behalf of the oppressed (Taliep *et al.* 2016:340). This is due to the fact that community members trust faith leaders in knowing the needs of the community (Harr and Yancey 2014:151). They may also rely on the knowledge of faith leaders, as they spread information and awareness with the community about issues affecting the world (Kegler, Hall, and Kiser 2010: 670).

Religious leaders are also engaged in interventions regarding abuse within families. Travis, Learman, Brooks, Merrill and Spence (2012: 233) noted that faith-based organisations and faith leaders involvement with substance abuse programmes, such as the Alcoholics Anonymous programme has gained substantial attention. Kaplan, Ruddock, Golub, Davis, Foley, Devia, Rosen, Berry, Baretto, Carter and Irish-Spencer (2009: 10) wrote that faith-based recovery programmes may serve a vital function, in underserved areas. This type of engagement may bring relief to families seeking such support.

Harr and Yancey (2014:151) indicated that families sought assistance from their faith leaders as they provided primary support to them. Religious leaders offer pre-marital counselling services and support to couples prior to their entering into committed unions (Gillum and Nash 2010: 320). Moon and Shim (2010:

138) indicated that faith leaders are now building their programmes on the perception that "healthy families make a healthy church." Some of the programmes that religious leaders are engaging in, include intimate partner violence education to raise awareness and educate women to avoid unhealthy relationships (Gillum and Nash 2010: 320).

Faith-based organisations have increasingly been focusing on gender-based violence (Le Roux, Kramm, Scott, Sandilands, Loots, Olivier, Arango and O'Sullivan 2016: 23; Le Roux and Du Toit 2017: 28). The faith community has helped many survivors to take a stand on abuse and have supported them through their healing process (Gillum in Gillum and Nash 2010: 319). Moon and Shim (2010: 124) indicated that religious leaders tend to have a share a trustable relationship with families and have provided support when necessary. Gillum and Nash (2010: 319) suggested that religious leaders receive education and training on the issue of intimate partner violence. It forms a crucial part in facilitating an effective response and raising awareness.

Ames, Hancock and Behnke (2011: 161-162) indicated that Latino church leaders engaged with social workers and have received training on how to educate their communities about domestic violence. As such, a domestic violence programme was initiated and included a range of topics on how to respond to situations, and the resources that are available in the community. Peterson (2016:54) wrote that in South Africa, the South African Faith and Family Institute (SAFFI) which comprised of social work professionals, have worked in association with religious leaders and faith communities to offer services and interventions to abused women, perpetrators and their families. They offer a variety of services and counselling for religious leaders and families, educational talks, perpetrator intervention programmes and gender reconciliation workshops. The following sub-section further expands on the collaboration between faith-based organisations and social workers in the community.

2.10 FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIAL WORK

Many faith-based organisations are well versed in the "community and organizational dynamics that comprise the context for social work practice" (Thomas 2009: 57; Garland and Yancey 2012:313). Placido and Cecil (2014:82) indicated that faith-based organisations are unique in their culture and mission. The collaboration of social work and faith-based organisations presents the opportunity for both aspects to work together efficiently. The advantage of social workers in faith-based organisations enables individuals to receive counselling services. Social workers may also assist faith-based organisation with programme evaluation and administrative oversight (Edwards in Placido and Cecil 2014:82).

Harr and Yancey (2014:148) noted that social work practice in rural areas explored the religious beliefs of families. The social worker should be tasked with being receptive and sensitive to the needs of the community. This includes facilitating communication with faith communities, community members, and organisations; addressing issues in the community; and advocating for programmes and services for children and youth. Another critical role of social work is the preservation and strengthening of families. Social workers often undertake therapeutic work with families and children when stressful situations occur (Seden 2011:60; Spray and Jowett 2012: 49) and are expected to offer support through promoting change, conflict resolution, empower people and improve their well-being (Aldgate 2011:134; Glicken 2011:12; Monnickendam, Katz and Monnickendam 2010:918; Spray and Jowett 2012:21). These roles are also those that interface with faith leaders and are at the core of faith based organisational work.

2.10.1 Social work practice at faith-based organisations

In her book, *Social Work and Faith-based organizations*, Beth Crisp (2014:94-100) explored social work practice at faith-based organisations. Crisp's study was conducted in Victoria, Australia and in Scotland. Her Australian participants were experienced social workers whom were currently or were previously

employed at a faith-based organisation. The focus on the Australian participants explored a range of insights into welfare provision by faith-based organisations. Crisp's Scotland participants comprised of social workers who were newly qualified graduates, to middle-level managers and chief executives. The focus of participants included casework, counselling, community development, policy work and management.

The nature of social work practice, the scope for religious expression at the workplace, the physical environment and remuneration as follows:

a) The nature of social work practice

The most important aspect is having a client-centred approach, in a faith-based organisation. Crisp (2014: 94) noted that her research participants, who worked at faith-based organisations sought to provide services which clients needed, rather than delivering a standard method which is used on all clients. She wrote that it is "not necessarily the faith-basis that makes an agency attractive to some of its professional workforce but rather the ability to enable them to work with professional integrity and to provide the best possible services for disadvantaged and marginalised members of the community" (Crisp 2014: 95).

b) Religious expression

In faith-based organisations which do not require staff to have specific religious beliefs, may include guidelines to what religious observances occur in staff forums (Crisp 2014:96). This is agreed upon by all staff.

c) Physical environment

The physical environment of a social workers office differs when they are in non-profit organisations, as compared to those in government departments. Faith-based organisations are often housed in properties that were used as schools and churches and have been repurposed so that they can conduct their welfare programmes from these locations.

d) Remuneration

Crisp (2014:95) noted that none of her research participants indicated that their financial remuneration was attractive. Social workers are often paid less in religious organisations. Ultimately this puts faith-based organisations at risk, of attracting qualified and competent staff. However, other factors may compensate for the inadequate pay and that is in terms of religious vocation, being paid to carry out what they perceive as their calling.

2.10.2 The employability of social workers within faith based organisations

Crisp (2014:81-81) deduced three reasons why social workers may seek employment in faith-based organisations as follows:

a) Vocation

Social workers employed at faith-based organisations are more likely to believe in God (Ashford and Timms in Crisp 2014: 82). Some believe that it is their calling to work at faith-based organisations. However, Crisp (2014:85) cautioned that having a vocation does not necessarily mean that it can be realised. Faith-based welfare initiatives may be limited to specific fields of practice and professionals must meet the skills, expertise and other job requirements such as location.

b) Organisational characteristics

Social workers are often keen to work in organisations in which they sense a fit with their own values (Crisp 2014:85). For others, the sense of fit may be having a vision of being involved in work that aligns with professional values (Frisina 2006 in Crisp 2014:86).

c) Pragmatic values

Crisp (2014: 87) wrote that newly qualified social work graduates that were offered employment at faith-based organisations had a tendency to enjoy the work of faith-based organisations. Other social workers commenced employment, within such organizations, because they could not find other employment, later began to embrace the work of such organisations.

2.10.3 Collaboration between faith leaders and social workers in rural areas

There is often a need for social work services in scarce locations such as rural communities. In South Africa, the rural population accounts for 35% of the population and these services are not evenly distributed (Marais and van der Merwe 2016:145). Social workers are often needed to work directly with children living in rural areas due to their exposure to unhealthy family practices (Schenck 2004:164). Children in such families require specialised intervention, to improve well-being. However, service provision in rural areas is often hindered by a lack of resources (Schenck 2004:163,165; Stritt 2008:730; Strydom and Thlojane, 2008:34). Harr and Yancey (2014:150) indicated that partnerships formed between faith leaders and social services are likely to have a positive impact in rural areas. In this way, social workers may provide effective interventions as faith leaders share longstanding relationships with families and are aware of their family history (Harr and Yancey 2014: 152). Hence collaboration can yield more meaningful work being done.

Social workers may also need to take into consideration that congregations are unique. However, congregations are similar to those that are based in small urban communities. Scales, Streeter, and Cooper (2014:177-178) offered a discussion of the characteristics of rural congregations as below:

a) Organisation

The primary function of a rural church is providing worship services. Small rural congregations have limited resources. Therefore social workers can facilitate cooperation among congregations and with local agencies to help rural congregations make the most of their limited resources.

b) Leadership

Rural congregations are typically led by one full-time or part-time member, with part-time volunteers.

c) Relationships

Rural churches often have a congregation wherein everyone knows each other personally.

d) Methods of helping

Congregations react quickly to the needs and issues of people. There are no formal plans, however through spreading the word, congregations are able to provide food, clothing, shelter and furniture to those who need it.

According to Roberts-Lewis and Armstrong (2010: 121-122), social workers can:

(a) Serve as a peacemaker and intermediary between organisations and faith communities;

(b) Act as a consultant, facilitator, teacher; and trainer;

 (c) Advocate for social work in rural communities;

(d) Facilitate the role of a counsellor and provide counselling services to congregants; and

(e) Establish a pastoral or congregational care ministry for congregational members.

2.10.4 Integrating religion and spirituality into social work practice

Social work practitioners and educators should be given preference to explore the potential significance of religious and spiritual beliefs in their training, in their professional practice. Social workers are well equipped to respond to the needs of all service users, including those for whom religious and spiritual beliefs are crucial. In doing so, social workers need to be culturally competent and have an understanding of faith systems and beliefs (Gilligan and Furness 2006: 617). Social workers are inclined to work with individuals in an ethical manner that respects the individuals' religious and spiritual practices and its profound impact on their lives (Loue 2017:23). This is particularly salient for families and youth who use religion and spirituality as a coping mechanism in their lives.

2.11 CONCLUSION

The literature review explored how faith-based organisations may serve to develop and empower vulnerable families, youth and communities. The review provided an overview of the literature on the role of faith-based organisations in various contexts. Chapter three which follows, will outline the research methodology used to guide the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

"Qualitative research is as an approach to a research inquiry that stands on its own and best allows a researcher to attain a glimpse of the world" (Ospina 2004: 9). It is defined as "research about persons' lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions, and feelings as well as about organizational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena and interactions between nations" (Strauss and Cobin 1998:10-11). The use of a qualitative research approach enabled a rich and detailed account of the experiences, feelings and emotions of participants during data collection. Three samples were used in the study namely, the board members of the Sarva Dharma Ashram, community members of Welbedacht and family members of youth who visit the Sarva Dharma Ashram. This chapter contains a discussion of the research design used, the data collection process and the types of data collection tools used. Accordingly the sub-sections that follow contain a discussion of the research design, the data collection methods used namely, in-depth semi- structured interviews and a focus group interview, the sampling process, nature of the samples recruited and the procedures for data collection and data analysis.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Kumar (2014:122) "a research design is a road map that one follows during the research journey, to find answers to one's research questions as validly, objectively and accurately as possible." Kerlinger (1986: 279) explained that "a research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems". In keeping with the above definitions, it can be understood that the core function of a research design, is to have a working plan that takes into consideration the procedures and tasks required for completion of the study and to ensure that the

procedures carried out are valid and accurate to one's research questions (Kumar 2014: 123).

3.3 CASE STUDY AS A RESEARCH DESIGN

As a form of qualitative research, this study adopted the case study approach, as the research design. Punch (1998:150) described it as a "basic idea that one case or a small number of cases will be studied in detail, using a method that deems appropriate. While there may be a variety of specific purposes and research questions, the general objective is to develop as full an understanding of that case as possible." According to Merriam (2002:8) the case study is "an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an individual, group, institution or community". Similarly, Yin (2014:4) wrote that "a case study was a research method used in many situations, to contribute to knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena." Baxter and Jack (2008:544) stated that a case study is "an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context, using a variety of data sources which ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses and allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood." Kumar (2014:154) stated that it is a valuable design to use, especially when researching a topic where not much information is known, as well as to have a comprehensive understanding of a situation.

Case study research was suitable for the current research study, as the researcher aimed to explore the Sarva Dharma Ashram, as an institution that strives to develop youth and their families in the Welbedacht community, where socioeconomic issues are a huge challenge. Case study research is an excellent choice when understanding "a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength, to what is already known through previous research" (Soy in Alnaim 2015: 29). Hence, case study research was the most appropriate research design for this study, as it creates more knowledge and understanding

with regards to the work of such institutions, as well as deepens interest in similar research areas.

According to Silverman (2017:262) there are three analytic features of case study research. Each case has boundaries that must be recognised at the onset of the research. The researcher must also have interest in the case. Thirdly, due to the nature of case studies its wholeness and integrity must be preserved. For a focus to be achieved, a limited research problem must be established as this equips the distinct features of the case. The researcher took this into consideration when choosing the case study design and was interested in pursuing a case study of the Ashram, within the context of the research objectives.

Case study research attempts to provide in-depth information to understand a case (Kumar 2014:155). Another salient feature of case study research, is that it gives a voice to marginalised groups (Nieuwenhuis 2007:75). The community surrounding the Ashram is a marginalised one. In this case study, the community members and family of youth who attend the Sarva Dharma Ashram were able to reflect and share their experiences, thoughts and feelings about how the Sarva Dharma Ashram, as a faith-based organisation supported and uplifted them through its many poverty alleviation programmes. As a researcher this formed the inquiry, in terms of understanding the dynamics surrounding how the Ashram functions within this marginalised community, the issues the community faces and how the Sarva Dharma Ashram plays a role in addressing these issues.

3.3.1 Type of case study

A single- case study with embedded units was chosen. Yin (2014: 51) developed five rationales for single-case design, and are critical, unusual, common, revelatory, or longitudinal. The single-case study was critical in terms of representing considerable contribution to knowledge of the Sarva Dharma Ashram as a faith-based organisation that provides services to an impoverished community. It was an unusual case because it not an everyday occurrence where the work of faith-based organisations such as the Sarva Dharma Ashram are documented. Hence this case study provided the ideal opportunity to do so. This

case study was common in that the objective was to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday situation therefore providing insight on the problems that youth and their families experience in the Welbedacht community. The single-case study was also revelatory, due to the rich descriptive information produced from it.

The embedded case study design involved units of analysis at more than one level (Yin 2014:53). In this case, even though the study was about the Sarva Dharma Ashram as a faith-based organisation, the analysis also included the outcomes about the community members, families and board members as the embedded units. These embedded united were selected through purposive sampling.

3.4 ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

De Vos *et al.* (2011: 311) stated that a "researchers epistemological and ontological perspectives should be consistent in order to guide one when generating knowledge and explanations about components related to the social world." Constructivism worked well for this study. Constructivists have a view that the narrative and reality can only be known by those who have personal encounters or experiences of situations (de Vos *et al.* 2011:311). Therefore, constructivism assumes that the meaning of experiences and events are constructed by individuals, hence people construct the realities in which they participate (Charmaz 2006:187). Participants were interviewed in order for the researcher to understand their experiences. The ontology and epistemology of the researcher in using constructivism is that the participants of the study are the only ones who have personally experienced the Sarva Dharma Ashram in a way that no one else has. Each participant shared personal moments in which the Ashram supported them during dire situations and each experience was different. Qualitative research makes it possible for researchers to understand social phenomena from the perspective of participants. Their opinions, choice of words and descriptions of their situation makes their narrative unique and interesting to document. Essentially the experiences that participants described are an unfiltered version of their reality which the researcher sought to find.

3.5 RESEARCHER ROLE AND REFLEXIVITY

According to Berger (2015:220) reflexivity means "turning off the researcher lens back onto oneself and to recognize and take responsibility for one's own position within the research." For the researcher, the interest was not only research oriented, but it also aimed at gaining an understanding and awareness that would support the researcher's professional commitments. The researcher is a qualified child and youth care practitioner and one of the roles undertaken, as a practitioner in this field is with organisations such as the Sarva Dharma Ashram. The interest stemmed from their contribution to developing youth and their families. The researcher had to take cognisance of her personal beliefs, ideals and opinions and put it aside so as not be biased. The researcher also paid attention to her dress code, as the Ashram is a place where cultural and religious activities occur and hence an appropriate dress code was required, for the interview sessions with participants. The role of reflexivity involved fostering awareness of one's lived experiences and then expressing the same knowledge, as a contribution to the deepening the understanding of the field (Attia and Edge 2017:36). The researcher did not allow her personal judgement to interfere with any of the participants' views and opinions. Hence objectivity, neutrality and a non-judgmental attitude was crucial.

The researcher was granted permission from the Sarva Dharma Ashram (Appendix A) to conduct research at the organization. The Institutional Research Ethics Committee at DUT, approved of the research proposal, which allowed the researcher to commence with data collection. The ethics number for this study was IREC 191/18. Data collection took place through the form of focus group interviews and semi-structured interviews. The interview schedules were used by the researcher to elicit valuable information from the participants and was duly checked by the researcher's supervisor and pilot tested with similar participants, from another faith-based organisation. The researcher and her assistant used a field journal to capture the non-verbal and verbal cues of participants, whilst they were expressing their views. A reflection was also written by the researcher after every interview session.

3.6 STUDY SETTING

This study was conducted at the Sarva Dharma Ashram located in Welbedacht, Kwa-Zulu Natal. Silverman (2017:273) wrote that a study setting should demonstrate a phenomenon in which one is interested, is accessible and will provide the appropriate data. The Sarva Dharma Ashram, is nestled in between the government's allocated low cost housing project and is a key role player in the development of Welbedacht through its numerous projects and services offered to the community and surrounding areas. This faith-based organisation is particularly salient in addressing the needs of youth and their families who experience poor socio-economic conditions.

3.7 STUDY POPULATION

According to de Vos *et al.* (2011:222) "a population is a term that sets boundaries on the study units. It refers to individuals in the universe who possess specific characteristics." The study populations and its sizes are as follows:

Population 1: There are 6 board members at the Sarva Dharma Ashram.

Population 2: There are approximately 23 237 community members residing in Welbedacht (Frith.2011).

Population 3: There are approximately 7311 families in Welbedacht.

3.8 STUDY SAMPLE

According to Unrau, Gabor and Grinell (2007: 279) "a sample comprises of elements or a subset of the population considered for actual inclusion in a study, or it can be viewed as a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which one is interested in." Brink (2001:133) defined a sample as a "part or fraction of a whole, or a subset of a larger set, selected by the researcher to participate in a research project. A sample consists of a selected group of the elements or units from a defined population." Table 1 below represents the three

samples selected for the study namely, family members, Board members of the Sarva Dharma Ashram and community members. There are two main groups for sampling which are probability and non-probability sampling (de Vos *et al.* 2011:228). The quantitative approach utilises probability sampling techniques, whilst the qualitative approach utilises non-probability sampling techniques. The current study has adopted a qualitative approach, hence non-probability sampling techniques were selected. De Vos *et al.* 2011: 231-234) listed nine types of non-probability sampling, namely accidental, purposive, quota, dimensional, target, snowball, sequential, spatial and key informant sampling. For the purpose of this study, purposive sampling had been selected as the key sampling technique for all three samples. Purposive sampling was selected because participants shared a close relationship with the Sarva Dharma Ashram and were therefore able to provide rich and detailed information, related to the objectives of the study. Purposive sampling was also used to increase feasibility, cost effectiveness, accuracy and manageability of the study (de Vos *et al.* 2011:235).

Table 1 below reflects the relationship between the sample and sample size. In all instances data was collected till saturation and hence the sample size is as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Relationship between samples and sample size

Sample	Sample size
Sample 1: Family members	10 : Interviews Data was collected until saturation.
Sample 2: Board members	4 : Interviews Data was collected until saturation.

Sample 3: Community members	10 : Focus group discussion
	Data was collection until saturation.

Data was collected until saturation, for samples 1, 2 and 3. According to Fusch and Ness (2015:1408) data saturation is reached when substantial information is produced to replicate a study. After data collection was completed, there were no further gaps identified except for the Board members. Hence a further interview with one of the Board members, was held which led to the final sample size of four.

3.9 INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

An inclusion and exclusion criteria determines who can be included or excluded from the study sample. Garg (2016:643) wrote that the inclusion criteria includes factors that makes the recruited population eligible for the study. The exclusion criteria includes factors that makes the recruited population ineligible for the study. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are provided under Table 2 and Table 3 that follow.

3.9.1 Inclusion criteria

Table 2 below represents each sample and the inclusion criteria to select participants.

Table 2: Inclusion criteria for each sample.

Sample	Inclusion criteria

Sample 1: Family members : either a parent or grandparent	• Parents or grandparents living in Welbedacht who have been members of the Sarva Dharma Ashram for the past 5 years.
Sample 2: Board members of the Sarva Dharma Ashram	• Board members of the Sarva Dharma Ashram who have been Board members for more than 4 years.
Sample 3: Community members	• Community members of Welbedacht who share a close relationship with the Sarva Dharma Ashram.

3.9.2 Exclusion criteria

Table 3 represents each sample and the exclusion criteria to select participants.

Table 3: Exclusion criteria for each sample.

Sample	Exclusion criteria
Sample 1: Family members	• Family members who are who are not members of the Sarva Dharma Ashram
Sample 2: Board members of the Sarva Dharma Ashram	• Board members of the Sarva Dharma Ashram who have been Board members for less than 4 years.
Sample 3: Community members	• Community members of Welbedacht who are not involved with the Sarva Dharma Ashram.

3.10 RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Full ethical clearance was obtained from the Durban University of Technology's Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC). The ethics clearance number for this study was IREC 191/18 (see appendix H for IREC ethical clearance letter). A letter of permission (Appendix G) was given to the Spiritual Head of the Sarva Dharma Ashram requesting permission to conduct interviews at the organisation. Gatekeeper permission (see Appendix A for gatekeepers letter) from the Sarva Dharma Ashram was obtained by the researcher permitting, her to conduct research at the organisation. The process of recruiting the participants from the Sarva Dharma Ashram was as follows:

Step 1: The researcher emailed the Spiritual Head of the Ashram explaining the aim, objectives and, benefits of the study to him. The three samples that the researcher wanted to use were also identified. The researcher also made an appointment with the Spiritual Head of the organization to provide further information about the study and to further discuss the inclusion criteria in respect of the participants required. He then proceeded to recruit potential participants for all three samples.

Step 2:

Those who were recruited by the Spiritual Head of the Sarva Dharma Ashram, agreed to participate. A meeting was then arranged where the potential participants were briefed about the study. This was done separately for each sample. They were also made aware that a translator would be available so that those conversant in isiZulu, could still participate.

3.11 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Qualitative interviews aim to view the world through the eyes of the participant and is a useful source of information (Maree 2007:87). It is also a social relationship designed to exchange information between the participant and the researcher (de Vos *et al.* 2011:342). Therefore rich and descriptive data can emerge from the interviews if done correctly. For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion was used to collect data. These two methods will be explained in the sub-sections that follow.

3.11.1 Sample 1: Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with sample 1, namely the family members of youth who attend the Sarva Dharma Ashram. For the purpose of the study, a family member could be either a parent or grandparent. Semi-structured interviews are a method of interviewing that allows for flexibility between the researcher and participants (de Vos *et al.* 2011:351). The

researcher has to be attentive to the participants' responses so as to identify new emerging lines of inquiry that are related to the phenomenon being studied and to explore and probe further (Maree 2016: 87). This type of interviewing is particularly useful as participants narrated their experiences and stories which allowed for interesting issues to emerge. An interview guide was used to guide the participants and the researcher. All questions on the interview guide were open-ended. The interview guide used for the family members is attached in appendix D. A tape recorder was used to collect the data. Permission was obtained from participants to allow same.

3.11.2 Sample 2:   Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were also used to collect data with sample 2, namely the Board members of the Sarva Dharma Ashram. The participants were able to share many experiences of how the Sarva Dharma Ashram had originated and the efforts that were made to build the Ashram. An interview guide was used for sample 2 and is provided in appendix E. A tape recorder was used to audio-record data collected from sample 2. Permission was obtained from participants to allow same.

3.11.3 Sample 3: Focus group discussion

A focus group discussion took place with sample 3, namely the community members of Welbedacht. Focus group interviews are made up of participants who share a relevant common characteristic or feature of their lives (Thomas 2016:192). Kobus Maree (2007:95) indicated that the focus group interview widens responses through group interaction and activates forgotten details of experiences. Participants are able to add on to each other's ideas and provide detailed information (Maree 2007:96). As the group provided feedback to questions asked, participants added on to other group member's responses and therefore added to the richness of the information. Participants also cited issues that they faced personally faced and issues that the community at large have

experienced. An interview guide was also used to collect data for sample 3 and can be found in appendix F. A tape recorder was used to record data from sample 3. Participants agreed to be recorded.

Table 4 below represents a summary of the relationship between each sample, the data collection method used and the data collection instrument used.

Table 4 Relationship between sample, data collection method and instrument.

Sample	Data collection method	Data collection instrument
Sample 1: Family members : Parent or grandparent	Semi-structured interviews	Interview guide- Appendix D
Sample 2: Board members	Semi-structured interviews	Interview guide- Appendix E
Sample 3: Community members	Focus group discussion	Focus group guide- Appendix F

3.12 PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

A research visit to the Sarva Dharma Ashram was undertaken by the researcher. The researcher met with the Spiritual Head of the Ashram and further discussions took place regarding the decisions made to collect data for the study. The procedure for data collection for each sample will be discussed below.

3.12.1 Sample 1

Participants were selected prior to data collection by the Spiritual Head of the Sarva Dharma Ashram. Ten family members of the youth that frequented the Ashram were selected. These participants were selected as they shared a close relationship with the Ashram and were regular participants of the Ashrams activities. They were informed of the study by the Spiritual Head and the necessary arrangements were made so that participants were available to be interviewed. The semi-structured interviews were conducted at the Sarva Dharma Ashram. A letter of information (Appendix B) and consent letter (Appendix C) was given to each participant, prior to the commencement of each interview. A translator was present, as English was not the first language of most participants. The letter of information and consent letter was explained and permission was sought to tape record the interviews. An interview guide (Appendix D) was used to guide the interviews. Valuable data was collected from the interviews and data saturation was reached.

3.12.2 Sample 2

Participants were selected prior to data collection by the Spiritual Head of the Sarva Dharma Ashram. Three board members of the Sarva Dharma Ashram were selected. These participants were selected as they fitted the inclusion criteria and were involved in the management of the Ashram. The participants were informed by the Spiritual Head and arrangements were made so that participants were available to participate in the interviews. The interviews were also conducted at the Sarva Dharma Ashram. A letter of information (Appendix B) and a consent letter (Appendix C) was distributed to participants. This was explained to them, prior to the commencement of the interview. The interview was conducted in English as all participants were proficient in English. Permission was secured from participants to tape record the interview. An interview guide (Appendix E) was used to guide the interview. However data saturation did not occur and an additional board member was recruited. A further interview was done which led to data saturation. In total four board members were interviewed.

3.12.3 Sample 3

Participants were selected prior to data collection by the Spiritual Head of the Sarva Dharma Ashram. Ten members of the Welbedacht community were selected. These participants were selected due to their close association with the Sarva Dharma Ashram. They also regularly participate in the Ashrams activities. The participants were informed by the Spiritual Head of the Sarva Dharma Ashram and the necessary arrangements were made so that participants were available to participate in the focus group discussion. The focus group discussion was conducted at the Sarva Dharma Ashram. A letter of information (Appendix B) and consent letter (Appendix C) was distributed to participants prior to the commencement of the interview. A translator was required, as English was not the first language of most participants. The content of the letters were explained and permission was sought to tape record the interview. An interview guide (Appendix F) was used to guide the focus group discussion.

3.12.4 Data collection tools

Interview guides and a focus group guide was used to conduct the interviews and focus group discussion with the three samples (refer to appendix D, E and F).

Sample 1 and 2: Interview guides

An interview guide (Appendix D) was used to collect data from sample 1 (family members). Semi-structured interviews are commonly used in qualitative research. The researcher keeps a record of questions and key themes to be covered in the interview. As the interview progresses, questions may be changed if interesting avenues emerge (Kajornboon 2005:5). All questions on the interview guide were open ended. The first question read, "can you share your experiences of the Sarva Dharma Ashram?" Participants were able to reflect on the times that the Ashram provided support to them and the values and teachings that were imparted to them and to the youth of their family who attend the Sarva Dharma Ashram.

An interview guide was also used to collect data from sample 2 (Board members). It consisted of 11 questions. The interview guide is provided in appendix E. The first question on the interview guide read "can you share your vision of the Sarva Dharma Ashram?" Participants were able to express their views on the sustainability of the Ashram and the efforts made to ensure its smooth functioning.

Sample 3: Focus group guide

A focus group guide was used to collect data with community members. A focus group interview may encounter similar and different points of views from individuals (Rabiee 2004: 656). Although focus group interviews follow a structured guide, the group discussion dynamic tends to make the focus group experience more informal than formal (Kelly 2003:52). Vaughn, Schumm and Snagub (1996: 4) said that the goal of focus group interviews, are to create a candid, normal conversation that addresses the selected topic in-depth.

The focus group discussion with sample 3 (community members) was guided by 9 questions. The focus group guide is provided in appendix F. The first question of the interview guide read "can you share your experiences of the Sarva Dharma Ashram?" Participants shared their past and present experiences of the Ashram and the support that they have received.

3.12.5 Interview and focus groups setting

The researcher selected the Sarva Dharma Ashram as the venue for conducting the interviews and group discussion with all three samples. The Ashram was selected because it was a familiar environment for all participants. This enabled participants to express themselves freely allowing rich data to be sourced. The interviews took place in June and July 2019. The researcher liaised with the Spiritual Head to arrange and confirm the dates and times so that participants were available.

3.13 DATA CAPTURING AND DATA ANALYSIS

3.13.1 Data capturing

A tape recorder was used to capture the data from the interviews and focus group discussion. Permission was sought from participants to record these sessions. All participants granted permission for the interviews to be recorded. After each session, the recordings were labelled accordingly and stored in a password secured file. This was done to ensure confidentiality of participants and to ensure, that the researcher only had access to the recordings.

The data collected from sample 1 (family members) and sample 3 (community members) were primarily in isiZulu. Therefore a translator was available to ensure accuracy in conducting the interviews and transcribing the data from isiZulu to English. The translator and researcher went over the recordings several times to ensure that nothing was left out when transcribing to English. This process was time consuming however it was done rigorously to reflect the interview and focus group data. In addition, this process enabled the researcher to become familiar with the data.

The data collected from sample 2 (Board members) was conducted in English and was transcribed word-for-word by the researcher. The researcher ensured accuracy by going over the recording several times to ensure it was transcribed verbatim. The process of going over the transcripts enabled the researcher to become familiar with the data.

3.13.2 Data analysis

Qualitative researchers conduct data analysis in a logical and extensive manner through various techniques, to ensure credibility of the process (Attride-Stirling in Nowell, Norris, White and Moules 2017:1). For the purpose of the study, thematic analysis was adopted to analyse the data from the interviews and focus group discussion. The data from all three samples was analysed holistically.

Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. It is a flexible approach and produces rich and detailed data (Boyatzis in Braun and Clarke 2006:6). Thematic analysis comprises of 6 main phases, which are discussed below.

Phase 1

The first phase involves reading the data several times to be immersed and become familiar with it (Nowell, Norris, White and Moules 2017:5). When the researcher becomes familiar with the data, codes and themes are then identified (Braun and Clarke 2006:16). Notes were also made about ideas for coding of the data.

Phase 2

The second phase related to generating initial codes. A good code is one that encapsulates the richness of the phenomenon (Boyatzis 1998:1). Braun and Clarke (2006:19) suggested that the researcher may code sections of text, in as many different themes as they fit, being un-coded, coded once, or coded as many times as they see fit.

The researcher read over the transcripts several times and made notes on the margins of the transcripts. Key words in the data were highlighted. Similar extracts were colour coded so that they could be easily identified by the researcher. Similar extracts were also grouped together to create conformity.

Phase 3

Phase three is when the researcher searches for themes. This phase involved sorting and collating all the potentially relevant coded data extracts into themes (Braun and Clarke 2006:20). The use of mind maps, tables, charts and templates are used organize themes and codes.

Colour-coded data was further refined into themes and sub-themes to ensure organisation of the data. The researcher used a table to group the themes and sub-themes to create order and to show its relationship to one other.

Phase 4

Phase four focussed on reviewing the themes. Given that the themes were developed, they required refinement. Nowell *et al.* (2017:9) suggested that in this phase, researchers review the coded data extracts for each theme to examine whether a uniformed pattern is formed. New codes may also be created or some codes may overlap which can be deleted off. Some themes may have inadequate data to support them or are too broad (Braun and Clarke 2006: 20-21). Data becomes reduced to a manageable set of important themes, that come together meaningfully and clearly (Attride-Sterling 2001:393).

The researcher reviewed the transcripts again and changes were made as certain codes overlapped each other. Some themes did not fit and were thus deleted off. The researcher read the data associated with each theme and considered whether the data supported it well. The process of reviewing the themes enabled the researcher to evaluate and think critically with regards to whether the coded data for the identified themes formed a logical and consistent pattern.

Phase 5

Phase five involved defining and naming the themes. Themes should be read at least twice to be considered final (Braun and Clarke 2006:22).

The researcher undertook a final refinement of the themes by giving those names that were understandable and accurately reflected the data. This was examined closely a few times, until it became final. Member checking with the participants in the samples was also undertaken.

Phase 6

Lastly, phase six entailed producing the report. The report included a concise, logical and provided an interesting account of the data across all themes. Through the rigorous process of thematic analysis, themes and sub-themes were formulated from the data. The above phases of thematic analysis played a vital role, in reaching the last stage of the write up. Excerpts from participants were used extensively to narrate a story where the different themes played a role in highlighting the topic.

3.14 TRUSTWORTHINESS

"Trustworthiness is one way researchers can persuade themselves and readers that their research findings are worthy of attention" (Lincoln and Guba 1985:289). Therefore the value of one's inquiry is judged by trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1985:289) developed four criteria for fulfilling trustworthiness in a study namely credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

3.14.1 Credibility

Trochim and Donnelly (2007:149) indicated that "credibility involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participant in the research study." The greater the consensus of the participants with the research findings, the more credible the study becomes. Participants of the study were given a chance to read over the transcripts to ensure trustworthiness. None of the participants raised concerns or disagreed with regards to the content of the transcripts.

3.14.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the generalizability of the inquiry (Trochim and Donnelly 2007:149). Efforts were made to describe the processes used to conduct this study.

3.14.3 Dependability

To achieve dependability, researchers should ensure that the research process is logical and clearly documented. Kumar (2014:219) indicated that in qualitative research there is flexibility and freedom, therefore it may be challenging to replicate. However the researcher should keep a detailed record of the process they used in order for others to replicate the same results. Detailed records were maintained by the researcher and were kept safely in a password protected flash drive.

3.14.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is when the researcher provides explanations for the processes used in the study (Kumar 2014:219). Efforts were made throughout the study to give readers an explanation, with regards to methodological decision making undertaken in the study.

3.15 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The fundamental ethical rule of social research is the avoidance of harm to participants (Babbie 2007:27). Ethical principles are used to ensure that participants are not harmed (Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden 2001:93). De Vos *et al.* (2011:115-122) provided ethical principles that researchers should abide by. They are outlined below.

3.15.1 Voluntary participation

Participants were informed that participation in the study was voluntary. This was also provided in the letter of information (Appendix A) which was given and explained to each participant prior to the commencement of the interviews and focus group discussion.

3.15.2 Informed consent

Participants were given a consent letter (Appendix B) to sign, that contained a list of statements of agreement to participate in the research study. After the researcher explained the consent letter, participants agreed to partake in the study. However, it was emphasised that participation was voluntary. All pertinent information related to the study and their participation was detailed extensively in the study.

3.15.3 Deception

Deception refers to misleading participants, deliberately misrepresenting facts or withholding information from participants (Struwig and Stead 2001:69). All information pertaining to the study was made available to the participants in an honest and transparent manner. During the interview process, the researcher ensured that participants could ask freely for additional information about the study. They were also informed to contact the researcher or the researcher's supervisor if they needed any further clarification.

3.15.4 Violation of privacy/anonymity/confidentiality

Participants were informed that their names would not be used. Each participant was given a pseudonym e.g. P1, P2. This ensured that anonymity was maintained. The tape recordings as well as the transcripts were stored in a password protected file, which only the researcher could access.

3.16 LIMITATIONS

A small sample size was used due to the study adopting a qualitative research approach. However, the data collected contained information richness. Smaller sample sizes are the norm in qualitative studies as the attempt is to secure information rich data.

3.17 CONCLUSION

Qualitative research is an essential part of the discovery of new knowledge. In this chapter a detailed account of the research process was presented. The case study approach was adopted in this study. The researcher interviewed three samples namely family members, board members and community members using semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion. Thematic

analysis was used to analyse data aptly. The following chapter contains the analysis and presentation of the findings made.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the data collected from the family and community members of Welbedacht as well as the Board members of the Sarva Dharma Ashram. It also presents the findings of the study and a discussion thereafter. The main aim of the study was to explore the role of the Sarva Dharma Ashram in the development of youth and their families in the Welbedacht community. The Sarva Dharma Ashram is situated in Welbedacht, south of Durban. The objectives of the study explored the problems that children, youth and their families faced in the community. It also attempted to enquire about what services the Sarva Dharma Ashram offered children, youth and their families. The potential benefits that have emerged for families and the community from the organisation were investigated. Lastly, it focussed on how child and youth care workers may work collaboratively with faith-based organisations to develop disadvantaged communities. This chapter contains the following sub-sections:

4.1.1. Demographic data of participants,

4.1.2. Relationship between objectives and interview questions

4.1.3. The process of data analysis

4.1.4. Data analysis and findings

4.1.5. Conclusion

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF PARTICIPANTS

Table 4.2.1. Demographic data of participants.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Race
Participant 1 (P1)	Female	67	African
Participant 2 (P2)	Female	56	African
Participant 3 (P3)	Female	36	African
Participant 4 (P4)	Female	30	African
Participant 5 (P5)	Female	47	African
Participant 6 (P6)	Female	42	African
Participant 7 (P7)	Female	50	African
Participant 8 (P8)	Female	49	African
Participant 9 (P9)	Female	60	African
Participant 10 (P10)	Female	41	African
Participant 11 (P11)	Female	60	African
Participant 12 (P12)	Female	37	African
Participant 13 (P13)	Female	27	African
Participant 14 (P14)	Female	43	African
Participant 15 (P15)	Female	46	African
Participant 16 (P16)	Female	43	African
Participant 17 (P17)	Female	43	African

Participant (P18)	18	Female	52	African
Participant (P19)	19	Female	24	African
Participant (P20)	20	Female	50	African
Participant (P21)	21	Female	56	Indian
Participant (P22)	22	Male	60	Indian
Participant (P23)	23	Male	55	Indian
Participant (P24)	24	Male	48	Indian

4.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OBJECTIVES AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The interview questions were thoughtfully designed to extract rich information from the participants. This enabled the researcher to achieve the aim of the study by formulating a relationship between the objectives of the study and the interview questions. These are presented in Table 4.3.1 below.

Table 4.3.1 Objectives and interview questions

Objectives	Interview questions
1. To explore what problems children, youth and their families experience in the Welbedacht community.	What are some of the problems facing families in your community? Can you describe the role of the Sarva Dharma Ashram in the community?

2. To enquire about the services that the Sarva Dharma Ashram offers children, youth and their families.	Can you describe the events that take place at the Sarva Dharma Ashram? Can you tell me about the programmes offered at the Sarva Dharma Ashram? Can you share what services are offered at the Sarva Dharma Ashram for youth and their families?
3. To explore what potential benefits have emerged for families and the community from the organization.	Can you describe the type of support provided by the Ashram to families of the Welbedacht community? Please share how the Ashram alleviates some of the challenges that are faced by youth and families in your community? How does the Sarva Dharma Ashram help you and your family personally? In your opinion, do you think those who visit the Ashram has progressed as a person? Please tell me more. How does the Sarva Dharma Ashram support children, youth and their families in the community?
4. To explore how child and youth care workers may work collaboratively with	In terms of developing the community of Welbedacht, what more do you

faith-based organisations to develop disadvantaged communities.	think needs to be done in terms of progressing and advancing the community? Discuss family well-being in the community? What are your thoughts regarding collaboration between other professions such as social workers and child and youth care workers with the Sarva Dharma Ashram in terms of developing the community? What possible benefits do you think it will have?

Table 4.3.1 displayed the relationship between the objectives of the study and interview questions. The group and individual interviews that were conducted, were a resourceful way for the researcher to holistically understand the experiences of participants, which resulted in rich information that was collected. As such, the aim and objectives of the study were achieved.

4.4 THE PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS

All participants provided permission for the researcher to audio record the interview sessions. After each interview session, the researcher wrote down a reflection of her experience of interviewing the group. A translator was made available, as not all participants were fluent in English. The interviews were subsequently translated and transcribed from Zulu to English by the translator. The researcher and the translator had to go over the recordings various times to ensure the data was captured verbatim. The recording of the interviews with the Board members was conducted in English and was transcribed by the researcher.

Data was analysed using thematic analysis. The process of thematic analysis enabled the researcher to become familiar with the data, thus the development of relevant information. Thereafter, codes were formed and valuable information that pertained to the research question were given labels. During this process a pattern was formed and broad themes emerged. The researcher then categorised the themes and sub-themes accordingly. The last step was for the researcher to explore if the themes and sub-themes complemented each other. The excerpts and existing literature was used to provide a critical analysis of the data as follows. The findings are presented below.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The following section presents the findings of the study. The data has been grouped into 5 main themes and 21 sub-themes which were identified from the responses of the participants. These are presented in Table 4.5.1 below.

4.5.1 Table: Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Experiences of poverty and hardship by children, youth and their families	1.1. Poverty 1.2. Substance abuse 1.3.Safety and security issues 1.4. Lack of service delivery
2. Project and programme initiatives by the Sarva Dharma Ashram	2.1. Feeding initiatives 2.2. Health related services 2.3. School support programmes 2.4. Youth development programmes 2.5. Satsang programmes

	2.6. Empowerment programmes
3. The nature of support offered to families and the community by the Sarva Dharma Ashram.	3.1. Financial support 3.2. Physical support 3.3. Social support 3.4. Emotional support 3.5. Spiritual support
4. Roles of spiritual leaders within faith based organisations	4.1. Teacher 4.2. Values and principles 4.3. Spirituality
5. Collaboration between social services and faith-based organisations to develop disadvantaged communities	5.1. Counselling 5.2. Community engagement 5.3. Advocacy, mobilisation and empowerment

THEME 1: EXPERIENCES OF POVERTY AND HARDSHIP BY CHILDREN, YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES

The first theme extracted from the data was the experiences of poverty and hardship by children, youth and their families in the community. There are four sub-themes that emerged. The excerpts below reflect the responses of the participants in relation to the sub-themes derived from the main theme.

Sub-theme*:* Poverty

The first sub-theme derived from the data was poverty. Poverty was identified as the most common form of hardship experienced by participants, given that the community of Welbedacht is under developed. The responses below reflected this sub-theme:

"Welbedacht is a largely low level community where there's not a lot of attention placed on them from government." (P22)

"The biggest problem is the financial state in our homes…we are unemployed and our husbands are also not working… sometimes we had to sleep on an empty stomach as we cannot afford to buy food for ourselves and our children." (P7)

"A few times I had to beg for food from my neighbours because the money was finished and I have two children to care for… I am also illiterate I cannot find a job because I have no skills." (P2)

"The majority of people live in shack houses and others are homeless." (P11)

"Poverty is defined as the inability of individuals or households to attain sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living" (Ramphoma 2014: 59). The excerpts reflect the issues surrounding poverty namely financial insecurity, food insecurity, lack of education, inadequate housing and unemployment. Many researchers have highlighted poverty as being complex and multi-dimensional due to its effect on the well-being of people (Lukhele-Olorunju 2012:103; Adams *et al.* 2013:12; Jansen *et al.* 2015:151; Govender 2016:239; Ebenezer and Abbyssinia 2018:235; Knoetze 2019:151). In South Africa, the manifestations of poverty are ingrained within the history of disadvantaged non-whites during the apartheid regime (Khumalo 2013:5646). Although South Africa has undergone various transitions over the last two decades, systems introduced by apartheid continue to produce high levels of poverty, inequality and low levels of opportunities (Sekhampu 2012:146 and Rapatsa 2015:41). This is particularly evident within the Welbedacht community.

Poverty then is more evident in townships mainly due to the location of townships being in underdeveloped urban living areas (Sekhampu 2012:146) such as Welbedacht. According to StatsSA General Household Survey (2018:35) concerns were raised about the quality of government provided RDP houses experienced by households. The survey showed that 9.1% of households reported their dwelling to be structurally weak with KwaZulu- Natal being one of the provinces least satisfied with the quality of their dwellings.

Participants expressed their problems related to a lack of food. According to the Living Conditions Survey for 2014/15 (2015:24) food security has deteriorated since 2012. It was found that women are more likely to be poor and go hungry than men. This was consistent with participant's responses. The South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (2013: 145-146) also reported that in 2012 the largest amount of participants who have experienced hunger were from urban informal localities. This is consistent with the findings made in the current study in Welbedacht, which is an urban informal setting. The Mahabharata, which is a Sanskrit ancient epic, conveyed, that "the world, both animate and inanimate, is sustained by food. Life arises from food: this is observed all around; there can be no doubt about it... The giver of food is the giver of life, and indeed of everything else. Therefore, one who is desirous of well-being in this world and beyond should specially endeavour to give food" (Mahabharata in Bajaj and Srinivas 2015). As such, the Sarva Dharma Ashram prepares meals for the community of Welbedacht and surrounding areas on a daily basis. For many, the meals provided by the Ashram is the only source of food for the day.

Education plays an important role in equipping individuals, with the necessary skills, for them to become actively involved in their own, and the society's economic development (Cremin and Nakabugo 2012: 499). As indicated in the data, participants have explained the ill effects of having a lack of education. The Millennium Development Goals have also ratified universal education access to all (Rapatsa 2015: 45). Nooe and Patterson (2010:112) also noted that those who have inadequate skills or insufficient schooling face a lack of employment opportunities. Therefore there is a strong relationship between the educational attainment of household heads and the persistence of poverty. The

link between poverty, education and unemployment exists and is evident (Govender 2016:240). Nishimuko (2009:287) and Sakai (2012:378) indicated that faith-based organisations in Sierra Leone and Indonesia have played important roles in paving the way for the poor to receive an education in the form of financial means and resources. The Sarva Dharma Ashram has provided resources for children of the Welbedacht community to receive tuitions, and school support in the form of uniforms, stationery and school fees.

Sub-theme: Substance abuse

The second sub-theme derived from the data was substance abuse. Participants experiences of substance abuse were as follows:

"Teenagers are taking drugs while they are in primary school… by the time they are in high school they drop out because of their addiction to drugs." (P15)

"Teenage girls from a young age are introduced to alcohol and drugs and are dating married and older men just to get money to buy it. They get drunk and do not protect themselves and end up with HIV/AIDS and also abort the unborn baby… they have become prey to older men referred to as blessers." (P8)

"There is no job opportunities at all… this leads to the youth taking alcohol and drugs." (P6)

Together with poverty is the presence of substance abuse amongst youth in the community. The World Health Organization (2020) defined substance abuse as "the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs." The abuse of substances such as alcohol, cigarette, and drugs is a major public health concern with accompanying socio-economic problems (Birhanu, Bisetegn and Woldeyohannes 2014:2; Somani and Meghani 2016:2). Substance abuse has also been found to contribute to a range of negative factors such as increased school dropout, unemployment, and high level of crime, poverty (Rezahosseini, Roobakhsh, Tavakolian and Assar 2014:81; Griffin, Lowe, Acevedo and Botvin 2015:1) as well as poor health and negative social consequences amongst adolescents (Cooper, De Lannoy and Rule

2015:62; Thobejane and Raselekoane 2017:94). As presented in the excerpts above, youth abusing substances are a major concern for the community and are readily available to them. However there is a need to facilitate healthy socio-economic environments in which families are able to live dignified lives (Mudavanhu and Schenck 2014:386).

Participants have also voiced their concern about "blessers" in their community. The presence of "blessers" in the community has attracted young women to indulge in risky behaviour. According to Mampane (2018:1) blessers, are older rich men who entice young women with money and expensive gifts in exchange for sexual favours. These men are usually married. The misuse of substances can also be associated with risky sexual conduct, which increases the risk of developing sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS (Maluleke 2010:1; Cooper, Linton, Haley, Kelley, Dauria, Karnes, Ross, Jones, Renneker, del Rio and Adimora 2015:62) as evidenced in the data. Globally, 41% of HIV infections were found in young people in the 15-24 age bracket. Young women aged between 15-19 years old in South Africa, are at risk of contracting HIV and are eight times more likely to be HIV positive (Chandra-Mouli, Svanemyr, Amin, Fogstad, Say, Girard and Temmerman 2015:S2; Shisana, Rehle, Simbayi, Zuma, Jooste, Zungu, Labradarios and Onoya 2014:26). Participants expressed concern that the young girls in the community were engaging in such risky behaviour with blessers in order to receive money to satisfy their need for alcohol. An article in the *Sowetan Live* newspaper (2017) further iterated that poor socio-economic conditions and the rise of blessers contributed to the upsurge of drug and alcohol misuse in KwaZulu Natal's youth.

Sub-theme: Safety and security issues

The third sub-theme derived from the data reflects the safety and security issues experienced by families and the community. Participants' experiences of safety and security were as follows:

"*My child went to the soccer field for practice and the tsotsis took away his soccer boots and money and beat him so badly he was bleeding … they had knifes with them. My child had to suffer due to the crime in the community.*" (P5)

"People are desperate to do anything to get money…they rob and mug us when we walking on the street... cars are getting hijacked." (P4)

"There are gangs around here, it's not safe to walk alone… but there is also no police around to safeguard us." (P11)

"Crime is very high… one of our guards were killed here a few years ago." (P21)

Participants indicated the prevalence of crime in the community to be a serious issue. They expressed concern of the types of criminal activities that has taken place ranging from violent crimes to grievous bodily harm. Life in the low-income urban communities of South Africa are characterized by a high level of violence and crime (Hingsberger, Sommer, Kaminer, Holtzhausen, Weirstall, Seedat, Madikane and Elbert 2016:1). Cooper *et al.* (2015:62) explained that experiences of violence "are shaped by age, gender, socio-economic status and geographical location." This is valid in terms of the community of Welbedacht being situated in an urban township, where poverty and social ills are prevalent. Crime impacts different aspects of an individual's life from physical and mental health to life outcomes including education, employment and economic well-being (Gilad, Gutman and Chawaga 2019:2). De Wet, Somefun and Rambau (2018:2) stated increased exposure to crime and violence experienced in families and communities have lead youth to become victims and perpetrators. Youth, especially those who are exposed to crime and violence in the community may feel that it is the norm to do so and may also resort to it. In a study conducted by Leoshut (2009:28), more than 50% of the sample had witnessed people in communities intentionally hurting one another which highlights violence as a feature of many communities in South Africa. In the excerpts above, participants indicated that tsotsis in the community hang around the area to commit crime. Letsela and Ratele (2009:1) loosely translate the term tsotsi, in English as a thuggish male found in predominantly black South African townships.

Sub-theme: Lack of service delivery

The last sub-theme derived from the data under the theme experiences of poverty and hardship experienced by children, youth and their families, is the

lack of service delivery in Welbedacht. Participants experienced lack of service delivery as follows:

"*The hospitals are too far to reach… even the ambulance takes its own sweet time to arrive at an emergency here.*" (P5)

"*We live far from central Chatsworth but every time we need something from the police station we need to leave the village take a taxi to Chatsworth which is unaffordable.*" (P6)

"*We do not have social workers… we need their support for different problems that we face in our daily lives.*" (P19)

Participants stressed the need for community based services to be within reach for children, youth and families. A major responsibility of the government is to deliver services that a society requires to maintain and improve its welfare (Makanyeza, Kwandayi and Ikobe 2013:2). It also remains as an important feature in poverty reduction strategies. South Africa's response to provide health services to the poor, has resulted in the introduction of local health clinics, situated in communities (Grut, Braathen and Ingstad 2012:5-6). However communities such as Welbedacht do not have a clinic in close proximity to their neighbourhood. Participants also reported that ambulance services are almost non-existent when they call for help. A 2015 Report on Emergency Medical Services in the Eastern Cape (2015:23) found that there was difficulty in locating communities to respond on time, these delays can hinder access to treatment and sometimes it can become complicated. Gouge (2015:36) indicated that the cost burden on households seeking access to health care services placed households in a difficult financial situation. This clearly spells out the realities that participants have experienced in Welbedacht, due to the lack of health services. Another issue was the lack of visible policing and a lack of a nearby police station in the community. Participants also voiced their concern over a lack of police stations in Welbedacht. This also creates a financial burden for the community, to commute to a police station located in the central part of Chatsworth. Police play a vital role in the prevention of crime and creating a safer space for communities that are most affected. In this regard, the White

Paper on Policing (2016: 16) clearly stated, "the posture of a service-oriented South African Police Service is one that embraces a community-centred approach to policing, underpinned by integrity and accountability. Thus, the approach to policing must ensure effective service delivery. A central pillar in the community-centred approach is a police service that is responsive, and at a local level, the SAPS must be equipped to respond to the risks, vulnerabilities and policing needs of the disparate communities it serves." Whilst it can be noted that many communities are provided with regular police visibility, in townships such as Welbedacht these needs are not addressed to its full potential. Studies conducted in other townships around South Africa such as Khayelitsha in the Western Cape and Soweto in Gauteng serve as a reminder that more needs to be done to provide policing in such communities (Redpath and Nagia-Luddy 2015:15 and Ngqakamba 2019). In terms of social services provided to communities, Mudavanhu and Schenck (2014:386) have indicated the importance of social service professionals in assisting families and promoting healthy wellbeing in poor socio-economic environments.

THEME 2- PROJECT AND PROGRAMME INITIATIVES BY THE SARVA DHARMA ASHRAM

The second theme derived from the data focussed on the project and programme initiatives of the Sarva Dharma Ashram. There were six (6) sub-themes that emerged from the data.

Sub-theme: Feeding initiatives

The first sub-theme derived from the data related to the feeding initiatives as an initiative of the Sarva Dharma Ashram. The excerpts presented below reflect the responses of the participants:

"*During weekdays here at the Ashram decks of breyani are cooked and are sent with the truck. This food is taken to different schools and the community.*" (P2)

"Our poverty alleviation program which includes trying to feed people so they don't go hungry, and as long as they are not hungry, they are not concerned with their stomachs, then they can concentrate on their school work." (P23)

"When I leave my house its empty but when I come back home from Ashram, I come with bags full of food… now my family wont sleep on hungry stomachs." (P3)

"I actually cried to see how children are running. Small children, like about three years, four years running with the containers for food. They follow the long line and we start serving them food. We had our boys to help us. And they listen, and they get food. They have it and they go home with a container full of food." (P21)

"Once I went down with them to serve food...it was a chance for me to see that...I couldn't believe what I saw. Children were running with empty containers, pots, ice cream containers. They saw the van coming down. That excitement of food… and now everyday food is being cooked so they can have it." (P21)

As part of the poverty alleviation strategy in and around the Welbedacht community, the Sarva Dharma Ashram has played a pivotal role in addressing the basic need for food through its feeding schemes in and around the community and for schools in the area. According to the Sarva Dharma Ashrams website (Sarva Dharma Ashram 2017), 21 000 vegetarian meals are served every week, 5000 school sandwiches are prepared per week and half a ton of fruit are distributed per month. The 2017 Food Security in South Africa Report revealed that "6, 8 million people experienced hunger and 10, 4 million people have inadequate access to food in 2017" (Stats SA 2019:6). Globally, researchers have linked food insecurity in households to various factors such as age, educational attainment, race and family structure (Altman, Hart and Jacobs. 2009:350-351; Nord, Coleman-Jensen, Andrew and Carlson 2010:11; Bolistreri 2012:3; Escamilla and Vianna 2012:9; Wight *et al.* 2014:2 and Naiker, Mathee and Teare 2015:269). When participants were asked about the school feeding schemes, many parents were thankful for such initiatives as it was beneficial to

them and their children as it saved them cost and the children were getting nutritious food.

Poor nutrition has a negative effect on a young person's development and their progress at school (Dieltiens and Gilbert 2012:132; Cooper, De Lannoy and Rule 2015:60 and Joubert 2010:58–62). The government has initiated a National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) (2009:3) as part of the RDP programme post 1994 targeting disadvantaged schools. The programme aimed to provide learners with nutritious, energy producing food to carry out mental and physical activities that requires learners to be receptive and alert during lessons however there is not enough research undertaken around its impact (Devereux *et al.* 2018:33). Internationally research has indicated school feeding programs to be successful and beneficial to the development of children (Belot and James 2009:13; Afridi 2010:5; Aliyar, Gelli and Hamdani 2015:2; Yunusa, Gumel, Adegbusi and Adegbusi 2012:108; Atta and Manu 2015:405 and Jayaraman and Simroth 2015:18-19). The UNFPA (2015:41) also noted that "health and nutrition are areas of development with the longest and best-documented tradition of faith-based engagement." Faith-based organisations play an important role in community food programmes and providing the community with nutritious food (Lindbery *et al.* 2015:361; Haakenstad *et al.* 2015:7 and Power *et al.* 2017:460).

Sub-theme: Health-related services

The second sub-theme focussed on health-related services as part of the project and programme initiatives of the Sarva Dharma Ashram. This is captured in the excerpts below:

"*Swami organises doctors once a month to come to help those who are suffering. We receive new glasses for those who cannot see. Some who's teeth are rotten are taken out and some are given injections, tablets and creams for our skin.*" (P12)

"*The clinic service was offered for many years at the ashram but it had to be stopped because the expenses related to that clinic service, the provision of that*

service here was beyond the ashram's capability. The ability to access funding for even the basic item like water, the water bill was exorbitant. So as a result of that, it had to be stopped because the government won't fund it." (P23)

"The clinic that was at the ashram had a positive effect on the community. It should run 5 days a week but it closed down because it was becoming too costly to maintain, the water bill was high. It became too costly and no funds from government." (P24)

Participants expressed sadness when speaking about the closure of the Sarva Dharma Ashram's on-site clinic. The clinic was accessible to the community and allowed the community to escape the long queues at the local government hospital in Chatsworth. As discussed in the first theme, related to a lack of service delivery in the community, the Sarva Dharma Ashram fills this gap, through the provision of medical health camps on its premises.

According to Pandey, Paudel and Paudel (2011:86) medical health camps are driven by general practitioners as well as specialists with the help of health assistants such as nurses. Minor health procedures and health education is provided. Ultimately, it aims to respond to the community's evolving needs as well as connect individuals to healthcare (Schoenberg 2017:529; Yu, Hill, Ricks, Bennet and Oriel 2017:1-6). Mwala and Kimathi (2015:794) indicated that in Kenya, free medical camps are often organised by health personnel in partnership with collaborators and it has now become a positive feature in the country. Medical health camps are also an effective way to provide health education and awareness to the community, with regards to the importance of health as well as to spread sound advice and information about lifestyle choices (Pandey *et al.* 2011:87). The provision of medical health camps are particularly beneficial to communities like Welbedacht, as there is no clinic that is within close proximity for community members to go to. Participants have also reported that transport costs to take a taxi to the local hospital are unaffordable for them and that it is not guaranteed that one will see the doctor as the waiting queues are often long and once a set amount of patients are there, the rest are turned away. Faith-based organisations have a rich history of proving healthcare

particularly in areas where such services are inadequate (Lipsky 2011:26; Kagawa, Anglemyer and Montagu 2012:1). They are considered to play an important role in strengthening health systems and ensuring access to healthcare in developing countries (Kagawa *et al.* 2012:1). Bopp *et al.* (2012:52) noted that health promotion interventions undertaken at faith-based organisations are beneficial and have proven to be effective within communities. Another advantage to their health services is that they promote faith and social change (Lipsky 2011:28).

Sub-theme: School support

The third sub-theme derived from the data is related to school support as a further initiative of the Sarva Dharma Ashram. In the excerpts presented below participants address the Spiritual Head of the Sarva Dharma Ashram as Swami and Guru. The word Guru is a Sanskrit term and is often used to describe anyone who offers spiritual advice. The Guru is "someone who has realized the Self and is able to use his knowledge to assist others towards the goal of Self-realization" (Singh 2016:77). Participants call him Guru because he is seen as a role model. People respect him for all the good that he has done for the community. Singh (2016:78) noted that the Guru is the epitome of wisdom, knowledge, self-control, simplicity, compassion, purity, kindness, bliss, and love.

"*We've got all the children's ages and what grade they in so we know what grade they will be in next year, so we get a list of stationery requirements… and hand out to the children in January."* (P23)

"*Swami provides school uniforms, socks, bags, stationary and money for school."* (P5)

"*Swamiji encourages the youth to learn mathematics that is why he has provided free maths tuitions for children."* (P13)

"*Our Guru pays school fees for the underprivileged children."* (P3)

Education is one of the greatest contributors to breaking the cycle of poverty (Thesnaar 2014:4). Khumalo (2013:5651) advised that improving educational outcomes should be taken seriously, and that practicality is key, to ensure that all South Africans receive quality education. In this regard, school support provided by the Sarva Dharma Ashram has become the largest programme in terms of effort and financial resources. It is also the most successful program undertaken by the Ashram. A substantial amount of money is spent every year on stationery, uniforms, and other school apparel and school fees (Sarva Dharma Ashram 2017). Nishimuko (2009:284) wrote that community faith-based organisations bring positive changes such as awareness creation and sensitizing individuals about the impact of education. A major research project entitled, "Access to Education in South Africa," undertaken by Strassburg, Meny-Gilbert and Russell (2010b: 17-27), found that poverty-stricken households could not bear the financial burden of buying school related resources and transport costs. Another barrier was the transport costs associated with getting to school. Some of the major roles undertaken by faith-based organisations with regards to school support is through school construction, scholarships for teachers and students, provision of teaching and learning resources, and the recruitment of teachers (Nishimuko 2009: 291). Mathematics is a vital subject for both primary and secondary school. Learners often struggle to cope with mathematics. Participants expressed joy when they spoke about after school tuitions provided for their children at the Ashram, with mathematics being one of the subjects taught. Research has indicated that various forms of after school tutoring programs have seen improvements in learners performance (Baker et al. 2006:287; Graven 2015:1) and were also well received in tutor programs that faith-based organisations had provided for youth in disadvantaged communities (Unruh and Sider 2004:119; Anderson-Butcher *et al.* 2006:156; Vandel *et al.* 2006:6; Green-Powell *et al.* 2011:66).

Sub-theme: Youth development programs

The fourth sub-theme derived from the data related to the provision of youth development programmes as part of the programme initiatives offered by the Sarva Dharma Ashram. Participants said as follows:

"*The vision of the Sarva Dharma Ashram is to expand its services into this community and to further concentrate on youth development so that we can improve the livelihoods of people in the future."* (P23)

"They are taught to do Zulu and Indian dance, swimming lessons, arts and drama even speeches." (P24)

"Computer classes, yoga and meditation." (P21)

Youth programs are a unique and important part of the life of youth (Larson and Ngo 2016:3). Community organisations such as faith-based organisations can make a powerful, positive difference in youth's lives. They often act as a safe haven for homeless youth, and are engaged in social and educational activities to contribute to their learning (McLaughlin 2000:6). Youth who participate in faith-based activities reported higher rates of experiences related to identity, emotional regulation, and interpersonal development, positive relationships and connection to adults (Larson, Hansen and Moneta 2006:860). Therefore, meaningful opportunities enhances resiliency in youth and they are able to connect with others to build positive relationships (Roth and Brookes-Gunn 2017:189). Larson, Hansen and Moneta (2006:860) wrote that faith-based youth groups are an effective developmental setting that youth who are of the same age can address similar issues that they experience. These peer groups are also interconnected with adults often including the youth's parent around a shared worldview. Religion and spirituality also play an important aspect in youth development and is associated with thriving. It helps protect adolescents from problem behaviour, promote health-related outcomes and prosocial behaviour (Furrow, King and White 2004:24). Furrow, King and White (2004: 25) also indicated that religion is important in youth development. Youth who are involved

in faith-based and religious activities have displayed positive behaviour and values. Youth development programmes are an effective way for youth to focus on their strengths and develop qualities that enhance their wellbeing. Iwasaki (2016:277) indicated that background role players such as family and community members play an important role in supporting youth who participate in youth programmes.

Sub-theme: Satsangh programmes

The fifth sub-theme derived from the data are Satsangh programme as another initiative of the Sarva Dharma Ashram. Participants said as follows:

"*Some of them at the satsangh have the vibe and positive energy to sing and pray at such a young age... it's beautiful.*" (P22)

"*On Sundays when Swamiji is speaking at the satsangh. I go home and discuss it with my children so they know what is wrong and what is right.*" (P4)

"*We pray very peacefully, we rejoice and we are very happy.*" (P1)

"*They sing very beautiful... they do the hanuman chalisa very well.*" (P21)

Dressed in traditional attire, children and families engage in melodious and powerful vibrations sent across the hall as Swamiji conducts the satsangh programme accompanied by the children and youth who are actively involved in the service. Jacobs (2010: 44-45) indicated that a satsangh is a traditional Hindu practice which is prevalent in many contemporary Hindu Ashrams and has a congregational aspect. It begins in the company of the Guru and a group of devotees who gather together for devotional purposes (Jacobs 2014:881). Children and families alike are taught worship in the form of motivational talks, discipline, chants, singing, yoga and religious study (Subramuniyaswami 2019:49). This communal participatory activity takes place at the Sarva Dharma Ashram with participants of various backgrounds. Participants indicated that during the satsangh programme, they feel peaceful and happy to be present,

and that they learn various morals and values which they are able to inculcate in their children. Joseph and Peterson (2015:57) noted that music plays a significant role in religious and spiritual settings and forms an important aspect of worship, contributing to spiritual growth and wellbeing. Jackson, White, O'Brien, DiLorenzo, Cathcart, Wolf, Bruskas, Pecora, Nix-Early and Cabera (2010:10) found that youth in foster care, who have experienced trauma and hardship used spiritual practices as a form of support and healing. The youth reported that spirituality had given them a sense of joy and comfort during their life experiences.

Bhagwan (2012:241) wrote that there is increased support for spiritually oriented practices and Hindu scriptures, prayer, rituals, yoga and meditation are valuable activities that can effect healing in a spiritually sensitive and ethical way. Benson and Roehlkepartain (2008:16) also noted that there are specific contexts, practices, and experiences that cultivate spiritual development. These may include mindfulness, meditation, prayer practices and yoga, and other Eastern traditions; sacred music or religious scriptures; chanting, use of prayer beads or a mantra; or rituals such as lighting an incense (Walsh 2012: 360-361). Walsh (2012: 360-361) indicated that these contemplative practices generate feelings of tranquillity, hope and peace. Hindu prayer and offerings to various gods take place in the home, were small statues and shrines are used. Hodge (2004:28) indicated, "For most Hindus, human interdependence and interconnectedness is the foundation of wellbeing." As such, spiritual sources can be sought and found in a variety of places (Apostolides 2017:3), which includes faith-based organisations, home, or other places that people find comfort in. These types of practices invoke greater levels of spiritual well-being in people and helps them to cope with everyday stresses, by giving them hope and meaning in life (Witmer and Sweeney 1992:141).

Sub-theme: Empowerment programmes

The sixth sub-theme derived from the data related to the empowerment programmes as initiative of the Sarva Dharma Ashram. Participants expressed the following:

"There is a women's group that takes place here that they meet regularly so that they can share skills." (P22)

"At the Woman Empowerment Centre is where the sewing classes take place and whoever graduates receives a certificate and a brand new sewing machine to take home." (P23)

"Entrepreneurial skills programmes." (P21)

"Alcoholics anonymous (AA) programme." (P24)

There is a great need for community-based interventions such as empowerment programmes to be implemented in disadvantaged communities (Shefer, Crawford, Strebel, Simbayi, Dwadwa-Henda, Cloete and Kalichman 2008: 168; Hoss, Blokland and Weierstall 2019:3). Du Toit (2017:4) indicated that a dependency culture was a common practice in some poor communities. This was because people believed that they could not do much on their own strength. However, the Sarva Dharma Ashram is a participatory development programme. Khumalo (2013:5649) added that temporary relief measures cannot defeat the fight against poverty. However socio-economic empowerment can create an environment where the community can actively participate in their own development, hence the implementation of such empowerment programmes at the Sarva Dharma Ashram. Cornwall (2016:348) indicated that those at the front-line of programme or project implementation play a vital supportive role in women's empowerment. The Sarva Dharma Ashram plays a salient role in providing women with entrepreneurial skills programmes that will empower them to start their own small businesses. Hoss *et al.* (2019:16) discovered that interventions which aim to address women's well-being in a community, are hindered by a lack of resources which prevented them from creating an enabling environment. Furthermore this enables women to be economically empowered and provides a means to be financially stable. This is supported by Duflo (2012:1053) who indicated that there is a bi-directional relationship between economic development and women's empowerment which can be defined as

"improving the ability of women to access the constituents of development, particularly health, education, earning opportunities, rights, and political participation." Oghenekohwo and Tonunarigha (2019:197) stated that faith-based organisations empowerment programmes are often self-sustainable and can be replicated. They also provide candidates of the empowerment programme with economic development information and resources to enhance their growth process. The Sarva Dharma Ashram's sewing programme can be described as self-sustainable, as the community members who completed the course have received sewing machines and were provided with economic education to help them start their own businesses. They are benefiting from the programme as they are able to support their families from the income that they receive.

THEME 3: THE NATURE OF SUPPORT OFFERED TO FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY BY THE SARVA DHARMA ASHRAM

The third theme derived from the data captured the nature of support offered to families and the community by the Sarva Dharma Ashram. There were five sub-themes that emerged from theme 3. The excerpts presented below reflect the responses from participants.

Sub-theme: Financial support

The first sub-theme derived from the data related to the financial support offered to families and the community by the Sarva Dharma Ashram. Participants said as follows:

"*Some of the community members get employed here at the Ashram.*" (P17*)*

"*I do not have any money for transport so that I could go and see the doctor at the hospital. I used to walk from Welbedacht to Chatsworth... Swamiji gives me money for transport cost to get the hospital.*" (P11)

Many individuals experience financial difficulties at some point in their lives, but the poor and disadvantaged have frequent exposure to issues related to finance. (Gennetian and Shafir 2015:5). According to StatsSA (2019:4) "the food poverty line was R561 (in April 2019 prices) per person per month." This referred to sum of money needed by an individual to afford minimum required energy intake. Unfortunately, in poor communities, households cannot afford the bare minimum due to financial difficulties. Many participants who frequent the Ashram indicated that they received financial assistance, in terms of gaining employment at the Sarva Dharma Ashram. Internationally, Littlefield (2010: 1022) found that African-American faith-based organisations have helped the poor with regards to finance by creating employment opportunities, creating awareness on budget planning and providing financial assistance. Therefore, a key role of faith-based organisations such as the Sarva Dharma Ashram is to alleviate poverty through assisting the community to strive towards their economic development.

Sub-theme: Physical support

The second sub-theme derived from the data was the physical support offered to families and the community by the Sarva Dharma Ashram. Participants responded as follows:

"Swamiji helps you every situation… my house door was broken and he recognized that himself and bought me a new door." (P6)

"Swamiji saved the life of my son when he accidently swallowed a whistle in his throat. Swamiji immediately took him to the hospital where he was taken to theatre." (P11)

"I had a problem with my leg... I have diabetes and my leg had to be removed... Swamiji together with his doctors from India made me a special artificial leg that fits perfectly with no cost." (P1)

"Swami gives us new blankets during winter to protect ourselves from the cold weather..we receive clothes that were donated to the Ashram too." (P13)

Raniga and Mthembu (2017:277) indicated that lower economic families strive to secure other types of support, instead of succumbing to the hardships experienced. As such, families have looked to secure different physical, material, socio-political, cultural and psychological resources, which have helped them to cope with hardships and to live positive and productive lives. The excerpts above reflect the dynamic nature of the Sarva Dharma Ashram as a resource, in the community which provides tangible help to the community, so that they may overcome the personal hardships that they have encountered. Providing assistance to the poor and vulnerable is a central tenet of faith-based organisations (Bielefeld and Cleveland 2013:469; Olivier, Tsimpo, Gemignani, Shojo, Coulombe, Dimmock, Nguyen, Hines, Mills, Dieleman and Haakenstad 2015:1765). Faith-based organisations have been guided by a quest to provide humanity to meet the service and assistance gaps that governmental institutions have failed to provide (Ferris 2005:313).

Sub-theme: Social support

The third sub-theme derived from the data related to social support offered to families and the community by the Sarva Dharma Ashram. Participants said as follows:

"*There are two boys that should always gallivant on the road and always smoking and drinking but as soon as they started coming to the Ashram they have changed and became better people."* (P6)

"If a child does not have an ID or birth certificate Swami helps that child and covers the cost. He also helped the youth to get their passports to travel to India." (P7)

"We receive a lot of love filled with joy and compassion. Everyone you see here shows you love." (P15)

Participant's responses reflect the nature of social support received and how it has enhanced the quality of life for youth and their families. A study by Yancey and Atkinson (2004:254) regarding faith-based programs and their social service provision, to the urban poor found that participants felt cared for, treated as significant and valued as a person, which is consistent with the findings of the current study. Van der Merwe, Swart and Hendriks (2009:125) wrote the valuable presence of faith-based organisations, in various sectors such as social welfare and social development in South Africa. As such, "every faith community has its own view of how to be involved in society and the social needs of individuals and communities" (Van der Merwe, Swart and Hendriks 2009:126). Consistent with participants responses, studies have indicated that faith- based organisations provide social services to many people (Vodo 2016:8). This keeps in line with various policy documents that has enabled faith-based organisations to be involved in the social welfare and development sector. As such the Sarva Dharma Ashram complies with policy documents such as the White Paper on Families (2013:53-54) which stated that "civil society, including non-governmental organisations, community-and faith-based organisations are an important intermediary in the light of government public policy and an important avenue for articulating the vision of the White Paper by, among other things, promotion of, and advocating of, the general well-being of families; facilitation of referrals of families and/or their members to the relevant services, where necessary." The Sarva Dharma Ashram has played an important role with regards to enhancing well-being of the community and providing a nurturing environment. Ellison (2010:322) noted that people with social networks in the form of religious or faith-based organisations, are provided with social support. Vodo (2016:8) wrote that such organisations target social ills such as substance abuse and has impacted the lives of individuals which has led to abstinence.

Sub-theme: Emotional support

The fourth sub-theme derived from the data related to the emotional support offered to families and the community by the Sarva Dharma Ashram. Participants said as follows:

"The Ashram is our pillar of strength." (P19)

"Even when one of our family member is dead he (Swami) helps us here and there to plan for a dignified funeral." (P16)

Emotional support is "showing care and attention that is presented orally or non-verbally, including listening, empathy, and reassurance. It also provides the opportunity to express emotions that may reduce hardship, improve interpersonal relationship, and provide some of the goals or meanings of life's experiences" (Atourm and Al-Shoboul 2018:8). Tadros (2010:22) wrote that many faith-based organisations play a crucial role in uplifting women, in terms of the hardship they experience and provide emotional support to cope with difficult circumstances. An example provided in the excerpts related to how the Ashram provided support to a family who had experienced a death of a loved one and therefore helped make funeral arrangements for same. Krause (2006:S42) also found that emotional support provided by church networks helped adults deal with the effects of financial strain. This is an important aspect as financial instability affects psychological well-being (Montpetit, Kapp and Bergeman 2015:365).

Sub-theme: Religious/spiritual support

The fifth and last sub-theme derived from the data was the spiritual support offered to families and the community by the Sarva Dharma Ashram. Participants stated:

"When I am at the Ashram... I feel very full spiritually." (P9)

"You have freedom at the Ashram to rejoice that you even forget your problems that you left at home." (P3)

"When I am upset I come to the Ashram and pray... I feel much better thereafter." (P12)

"Religion has been defined as a societal phenomenon, involving social institutions with rules, rituals, covenants, and formal procedures" (Thoresen, Harris and Oman 2001:22). Whilst Canda and Furman (1999:309) said that "individual spirituality grows in the field of community, family and friends; religious institutions or non-sectarian spiritual social groups; neighbourhoods and cities; cultures and nations; ecosystems of plants, animals, stones, air, sunlight, moonlight, and clouds; the planet earth; the cosmos; and perhaps as many believe communities of spiritual beings". Yust, Johnson, Sasso and Roehlkepartain (2006:8) shared a similar sentiment regarding spirituality and stated that "it is experienced, formed, shaped and expressed through a wide range of religious narratives, beliefs and practices, and is shaped by many influences in family, community, society, culture and nature." Walsh (2012:348) wrote that "spirituality fosters a sense of meaning, wholeness, harmony, and connection with others ranging from bonds to extended kinship and community networks, and to a unity with all life, nature, and the universe." The use of the terms religion and spirituality are used interchangeably in this study as religion is seen to be embedded in spirituality.

The Sarva Dharma Ashram is a universal setting in the community, as it embraces the diversity of all religions. People from all cultural backgrounds are welcome to participate in the Ashram's activities. However, the Ashram itself is affiliated to the Hindu religion, as it is part of the Divine Life Society. As the excerpts above reflect, participants felt a sense of comfort at the Ashram. Therefore the role of the Sarva Dharma Ashram as a faith-based organisation is to also fill the gap by providing spiritual support to all (Chida and Chabata 2016:40). Whittington and Scher (2010:64) found that prayer can have positive effects on the psychological well-being of people. Spilka and Ladd (2013:11-12) expressed that prayer is communication. Through prayer, one relates to and identifies with the Divine. Images of hope, promise, reward and desired potential are part of what motivates prayer and religious activities. Furthermore, Bhagwan (2012:239) stated that "sacred sites such as temples and ashrams provide refuge for those in distress and are believed to heal those who make the journey to these divine places." This was very evident with this study. Spilka and Ladd

(2013:16) discussed the role of prayer as a coping mechanism for those experiencing stressful life circumstances. Another study further supported the notion that prayer was salient in facilitating communication and understanding in marital relationships (Hatch, Marks, Bitah, Lawrence, Lambert, Dollahite and Hardy 2016:27).

THEME 4: ROLE OF SPIRITUAL LEADERS WITHIN FAITH BASED ORGANISATIONS

The fourth theme derived from the data focussed on the role of spiritual leaders within faith-based organisations. The following three sub-themes emerged from this theme:

Sub-theme: Teacher

The first sub-theme derived from the data relates to the role of spiritual leaders as teachers within faith-based organisations. Participants said:

"*When Swamiji is speaking he teaches us what is wrong and what is right. He shares his knowledge with us. Swami is wise. He is universal with everyone. There is no discriminate here. Only love, support and care. He uplifts us when he speaks because he gives us motivation to be the best.*" (P14)

"*The most time I value is when Swamiji tells us stories and in a way that helps build my self-esteem.*" (P20)

"*Swamiji provides guidance to us and our children learn so much of good things. They are learning everything well, Swami wants the children to succeed in their lives… everything is done with a good intention here.*" (P9)

As reflected in the excerpts, participants commonly refer to the Spiritual Head of the Sarva Dharma Ashram as "*Swamiji*" and other participants call him "*Guru.*" These two words essentially have the same meaning in Hinduism and when

translated simply, refers to teacher. An article by Manna and Chatterjee (2018:37) provided an explanation in the words of renowned Swami Vivekananda as the role of the teacher. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, a "teacher's job is only to remove obstruction from the pupil's path. What we call learning is actually 'unfolding' or 'unveiling'. Each of us are naturally growing and developing according to our own nature. Our duty is to offer them opportunity and remove obstacles; that is, if we provide conducive environment the rest will happen by itself." Religion and spirituality also play an important role in instilling values. Walsh (2012:347) wrote that religion provide ethics and direction for one's personal virtues, relational conduct, and family life. Canda (2005:86) indicated that religion teaches one that genuine service involves recognizing the divine within everyone, especially the poor and oppressed. According to UNICEF (2012:4) religious leaders have a moral authority and are able to influence thinking, foster dialogue and set priorities for members of the community. They are often the first to respond within the community and this is why they have gained the trust of families and communities. As such, spiritual/religious leaders act as a role model towards families and youth as they are able to set positive examples for the community.

Sub-theme: Values and principles

The second sub-theme derived from the data reflects the role of spiritual leaders as providers of values and principles within faith based organisations. Participants expressed as follows:

"*The value system extending from this Ashram is quite basic, practical and should be easy to grasp. It's about trying to ensure they stay on a straight and narrow path.*" (P22)

"*I am an adult here and my children have changed because of Swamiji, in a positive way. He teaches them in a correct way and manner. He has taught them respect, love, dignity and discipline.*" (P8)

"*The Ashram is a universal place.*" (P17)

"Swamiji has taught our children the value of cleanliness. Swami teaches the children to come to the Ashram fresh and clean, to dress neat and be respectful of everyone." (P11)

As the above responses suggest, there are a range of factors that make the Sarva Dharma Ashram special for participants. This includes positivity, respect, love, dignity, discipline, universalness and cleanliness. Srivastava *et al.* (2013:S284) indicated that cultures that promote equality and morality are widely accepted and promotes a healthy upbringing. Children often learn morals and values from the people that they have direct contact with (Srivastava, Dhingra, Bhardwaj and Srivastava 2013:S283-S284). Chima (2015:S4) emphasised that faith-based organisations should not be used to induce intolerance and incitement against other religious points of view. As the excerpts reflect, the Sarva Dharma Ashram is a universal place. Participants have mentioned that everyone is treated the same. Some have pointed out that they are of Christian ethos but they come to the Ashram because everyone is accepted, loved and they learn righteousness. UNICEF (2012:11) noted that religious leaders follow a path of righteousness and are perceived to be a role model for children and youth.

Sub-theme: Spirituality

The third and last sub-theme derived from the data related to the role of spiritual leaders in incorporating spirituality within faith-based organisations. Participants said as follows:

"*We are concerned with faith, but at the same time we are concerned with life, and life is about living the right way."* (P22)

"Our children learn a lot from Swami. They get to learn how to chant and to read the holy books like Bhagavad Gita." (P13)

"They do the Hanuman Chalisa very well. It's unbelievable how they have learned so much." (P21)

"… likhita japa mantras… it is one of the practices of the Ashram." (P4)

Several definitions of spirituality have been presented in the discussion, under the third theme. To add, researchers in the field of spirituality have aptly defined it as "a more general feeling of closeness and connectedness to the sacred. What one views as sacred is often a socially influenced perception of either (a) a divine being or object or (b) sense of ultimate reality or truth" (Worthington 2011: 205). Globally, other writers have shared similar sentiments regarding the definition of spirituality (Ellison 1983:330; Friedman and MacDonald 2002:115; Griffith and Griffith 2002: 15-17; Finnegan 2008: 23; Canda and Furman 2010: 75; Cheon and Canda 2010:122; Hodge, Bonifas, and Wolosin, 2013: 284). Children often have first encounters with religious settings such as the mosque, church and temple. In these first points of contact, children are able to explore their religion and are also taught social behaviour such as morals and values. The Sarva Dharma Ashram plays an important role in spiritually uplifting not only the youth, but their families and the entire community as well. Youth engage in spiritually engaged activities namely, playing musical instruments such as the drums and singing different hymns. Sunday is the biggest day of the Ashram, as there is a special programme for all. During the Sunday programme, youth and their families pray together and listen attentively to the spiritual leader of the ashram who shares his wisdom and knowledge related to positive living and well-being.

Spiritual and meditative practices such as chanting, yoga, reading of Holy Scriptures and mantra writing provide many benefits to individuals. Bhagwan (2012:241) wrote that due to the increased interest towards spiritually oriented practice, "a myriad of opportunities exist to include Hindu scriptures, prayer, ceremonies and rituals, yoga, meditation, Ayurveda and collaboration with traditional healers to effect healing in a spiritually sensitive and ethical way." These practices were found to increase attention, memory and emotion regulation, reduction of stress, increased relaxation, productivity and increased feelings of affective processing (Buttle 2015:5; Fox, Gutierrez, Haas and Durnford

2016:380; Fox, Cashwell and Picciotto 2017:7; Surmitis, Fox and Gutierrez 2018:4). Srivastava (2013:4) indicated that the Bhagavad Gita has always been "one of the most revered religious texts of the Hindus." The aim of the teachings within sacred text, is to give individuals a sense of purpose, promote an ethical way of living and provide comfort to the distressed. One of the principles of the Bhagavad Gita's philosophy is karma yoga that means "path of union through action". It signifies the promotion of selfless actions and non-discrimination of people (Srivastava 2013:4). The Hanuman Chalisa was composed in the sixteenth century by Sri Gosavami Tulasidas and portrays the many qualities of Lord Hanuman (Sitaram 2003:49). Some of the benefits of reciting or chanting the Hanuman Chalisa include stress relief and helps to calm a restless mind. One can learn to remain focused when reciting the mantra. It keeps negativity away and attracts positivity and goodness (The Times of India 2020). These are some of the verses recited at the Ashram. Likhita japa is a common practice in the Ashram and is the repeated writing of a mantra. A mantra is a sacred word or phrase which is repeated by people during meditation (Chakroborty 2011:1119). Its benefits include concentration and control of the mind in order to produce good and pure thoughts (Sivananda 2014:147). Spirituality may also empower devotees to perform righteous actions towards others. Hennink, Kiiti, Pillinger and Jayakaran 2012:212) wrote that "spiritual empowerment may go further, to foster a transformation of values within individuals to change one's worldview towards a new set of faith-based values." Vonarx and Hyppolite (2013:69-70) indicated that spirituality and spiritual practices have positive effects on people with severe illnesses. It is often used as a coping mechanism and serves to empower people. They also found that spiritual resources contributed to the individual's empowerment process leading to a positive affective experience.

THEME 5: COLLABORATION BETWEEN SOCIAL SERVICES AND WITH FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS TO DEVELOP DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

The fifth and last theme derived from the data reflects on potential collaboration between social services and faith-based organisations to develop disadvantaged communities. Three sub-themes emerged from the data as follows:

Sub-theme: Counselling

The first sub-theme derived from the data focused on counselling. The excerpts presented below reflect participants responses:

"*The social workers and child welfare workers pay us a visit but they do not come regularly… we need them to come often and offer assistance to us.*" (P6)

"*Social workers are needed in this community. Our community is large and spreads out far across the river…sometimes only a few are coming and it is not enough for all of us to get to speak with her and share our problems.*" (P15)

"*Members of the community come to the Ashram and discuss their issues with Swami when they have issues such as marital problems… instability in their homes. Some of the youth come from broken homes and sometimes they stay at the Ashram when their family is experiencing problems.*" (P24)

Social work practice spans "a range of activities including various forms of therapy and counselling, group work, and community work; policy formulation and analysis; and advocacy and political interventions" (International Federation of Social Workers 2014 in Booysen and Staniforth 2017: 17). As such, there is a need for social work practitioners to be active in communities where there is inadequate provision of social services and to collaborate with faith based organisations to improve family and community well-being. Welbedacht is a large community characterised by much socio-economic distress amongst families that reside there. Despite the acute need for social services, participants expressed that social workers are absent within their community. McCartan, Morrison, Bunting, Davidson and McIlroy (2018:2) indicated that individuals living in low-income neighbourhoods often more likely to have inadequate access to formal services and lowered levels of social support. Sesane and Geyer (2017:11) wrote

that the notion of a social worker, is of someone who works with, provides guidance and counsels individuals has a wide knowledge base of social work throughout its history. Walsh (2012:361) noted that many faith-based organisations offer marriage and parenting skills workshops, youth mentoring and counselling. As such both can collaborate effectively to strengthen individual and family life and community well-being. Participants expressed that when they experience difficulties they speak to the Spiritual Head of the Sarva Dharma Ashram and who offers them counselling. If a partnership is developed between social service agencies and faith-based organisations, then leaders of faith organisations may refer such individuals and families for further support.

Sub-theme: Community engagement

The second sub-theme derived from the data related to community engagement. Participants said as follows:

"The social workers need to come and engage with the community as group or as individuals to find out about the problems that are we are having and together we all can come up with ideas on how to make Welbedacht a better place for us to live in… they need to see what is going on for themselves." (P2)

"Our community must stand together to protect each other and get rid of the bad things that happen." (P23)

"They can help our community be a better place for our youth." (P13)

The term community engagement in the context of this analysis refers to the need for social service practitioners to *"come and engage with the community."* As indicated in the excerpts, Lazarus, Baptiste and Seedat (2009:449-450) suggested that "community counselling approach constitutes a form of psychological and social support integral to community social responses, and includes a variety of roles and activities that engage with the different levels of the social system: individuals, families and groups, organizations and institutions,

specific communities, and society." This reflects the important role that social workers can play by collaborating with community partners and engaging them so that they may mutually work towards developing communities. Clarke (2013:342) maintained that community ownership and participation in joint problem solving are crucial to the interventions being planned by social workers. Faith-based organisations play an important role in bridging the gap between social workers and community members in the planning and provision of services.

Sub-theme: Advocacy, mobilisation and empowerment

The third and last sub-theme derived under this theme was advocacy, mobilisation and empowerment as strategies to develop disadvantaged communities. The excerpts that follow reflect same.

"*The only way you can grow a community, is from within the community, because they understand their own challenges."* (P22)

"*Welbedacht is too big… the Ashram cannot go to everyone… Swamiji is always encouraging and supporting the youth to make their futures a success... if there was no Ashram here then there is no one here to stand with our community."* (P7)

"*We need people to come to the community to teach us skills."* (P16)

Milofsky (2008: 203) wrote that organisations "can only be understood in relation to the communities in which they are embedded." As such, faith-based organisations are embedded within such communities at grassroots level, thereby enabling them to govern community affairs and provide socio-economic and cultural services to the disadvantaged (UN 2018:8). Placido and Cecil (2014:80) wrote that faith-based organisations are dynamic sources of providing services, resources, facilities and funding to communities. They are often trusted members of the community with established relationships. They therefore empower individuals and the community to solve their problems and through teaching skills. Moreover they can advocate on their behalf through collaboration with social

service professionals. Participants supported the notion that the community had grown through the physical presence of the Ashram within the community.

Chikadzi and Pretorius (2011:261) proposed that "macro intervention in social work, mirrors work with communities, organisations and government to bring about change and improve the welfare of the broader society." Hence collaborative work between social services, faith-based organisations and the community have the ability to make a transformational change to the lives of families and youth in disadvantaged communities. Twikirize, Asingwire, Omona, Lubanga and Kafuko (2013:57) found that mobilising people who are faced with the same problems, through the formation of groups, are useful in generating ideas and resources, which can help towards problem solving and development. Together, groups can support each other, as well as network with government and non-governmental programmes to end the cycle of poverty. The Sarva Dharma Ashram has played an important role in advocating, mobilising and empowering the community through its many project and programme initiatives, as reflected in the previous themes and sub-themes. However, more can be accomplished to uplift the families and youth if social services can create a stronger partnership with the Ashram.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the data and a critical analysis of findings made from the study. Five main themes and twenty-one sub-themes were presented. These linked to the hardships experienced by families and communities in the Welbedacht community. The data presented explored the nature of services being offered to families and the community by the Ashram, the roles of spiritual leaders within faith based organizations and finally how collaboration between faith based organisations and social service professionals can further the empowerment and development of the community. The following chapter presents the conclusions reached and recommendations for further research in respect of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of the current study was to explore the role of the Sarva Dharma Ashram in the development of youth and their families in the Welbedacht community. The objectives of the study were to (1) explore what problems youth and their families experience in the Welbedacht community, (2) enquire about the services that the Sarva Dharma Ashram offered youth and their families, (3) explore what potential benefits have emerged for families and the community from the organisation, and (4) explore how child and youth care workers (social service professionals), may work collaboratively with faith-based organisations to develop disadvantaged communities.

The data in chapter four reflected that there were five main themes and twenty one sub-themes that emerged through the study. Semi structured interviews and a focus group discussion were used to collect data from the participants. There were three samples that were used in the study, namely the Board members of the Sarva Dharma Ashram, community members and family members.

The study found that faith-based organisations can play a crucial role in empowering and supporting families and developing disadvantaged communities. The roles of faith-based organisations were highlighted in chapter two. It was found that the Sarva Dharma Ashram was a key role player in many initiatives that provided physical and emotional support to families in the community.

The Sarva Dharma Ashram was found to have been involved in collaborating with other governmental and non-governmental organisations. Some of these collaborations were formed to provide essential services to families and youth in the community. These services included health-related services, feeding initiatives and school support services. Many family and community members were found to be reliant on the services provided by the Sarva Dharma Ashram

as it alleviated their daily struggles with poverty, food crises and other psycho-social problems.

Moreover family members and youth at the Sarva Dharma Ashram regarded the Spiritual Head of the Ashram, as a role model to them. He was found to instil good morals and values, which had a positive impact on the youth. Parents of the youth who attend the Sarva Dharma Ashram regularly are grateful for the support that the Ashram has provided for the youth. Afterschool and weekend programmes such as tuition, yoga, dance and singing were key feature of the Sarva Dharma Ashram which collectively supported the development and well-being of youth and families in the community. The Ashram has therefore become a universal place for all members of the community where they can learn good values and morals that contribute to personal well-being and healthy family life.

The incorporation of Bronfenbrenners Ecological Systems Model supported the main themes found in the study. The data reflected that the ecological system model reflects what the data found as the Ashram as a system interacts continuously and dynamically with all the other systems to contribute to family and community well-being. The most significant findings in relation to the themes and sub-themes are presented next. The Chapter concludes with recommendations for further research, conclusions drawn and the limitations of the study.

5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS

The table below presents the five main themes extracted from the data. These were from the focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews, as follows:

Table 5: Major findings

Themes	Sub-themes
	1.1 Poverty 1.2 Substance abuse

1. The experiences of poverty and financial hardship by children, youth and their families in the community	1.3 Safety and security issues 1.4 Lack of service delivery
2. Project and programme initiatives by the Sarva Dharma Ashram	2.1 Feeding initiatives 2.2 Health related services 2.3 School support programmes 2.4 Youth development programmes 2.5 Satsang programmes 2.6 Empowerment programmes
3. The nature of support offered to families and the community by the Sarva Dharma Ashram.	3.1 Financial support 3.2 Physical support 3.3 Social support 3.4 Emotional support 3.5 Spiritual support
4. Roles of spiritual leaders within faith based organisations	4.1 Teacher 4.2 Values and principles 4.3 Spirituality
5. Collaboration between faith based organisations and social service professionals to develop disadvantaged communities	5.1 Community engagement 5.2 Counselling 5.3 Advocacy, mobilisation and empowerment

The discussion that follows presents the critical findings made in relation to the objectives of the study.

5.2.1 The problems experienced by children, youth and their families in the Welbedacht community

The first objective of the study was to explore what problems children, youth and their families experienced in the Welbedacht community. In line with the first objective the data revealed that poverty and economic difficulties were the most pervasive, and enduring challenge that families faced. Their difficulties associated with poverty in Welbedacht was characterised by a lack of access to food, education, unemployment, violence and substance abuse. These intermingling factors were highlighted by several scholars regarding the complexity of poverty and its effects on the well-being of people (da Fonseca 2012:31-32; Ladd 2012:204; Spaull 2012:447; Shildrick and MacDonald 2013:288; Thompson, Wall, Greenstein, Grant and Hasin 2013:S286; Haushofer and Fehr 2014:862).

Another finding made related to the lack of service delivery in an already disadvantaged community. Welbedacht is a large community situated at the outskirts of Chatsworth and is hugely underdeveloped. Basic services are either inaccessible to the community or inadequate which placed youth and their families in a vulnerable position. Aspects related to healthcare provision and services such as clinics and ambulance services are limited yet crucial resources. Scholars have lamented a lack of access to healthcare which prevails in most disadvantaged communities (Peters, Garg, Bloom, Walker, Brieger and Rahman 2008: 161; Blokland 2014: 180; Sherry 2014: 92; Mubanigizi 2018: 25; and Hodkinson, Pigoga and Wallis 2019:1), as is evident in the current study. In the absence of such basic services, those offered by the Ashram are crucial.

The data emphasised the enduring presence of the Sarva Dharma Ashram in helping the community and families to transcend the hardships experienced. These findings are consistent with reports from several faith and development scholars who have highlighted the importance of faith-based organisations in

empowering and strengthening disadvantaged communities who are faced with the ills of poverty (Clarke and Jennings 2008:19; Nishimuko 2009: 287; Jones and Peterson 2013: 35; Clarke and Ware 2015: 38; Du Toit 2018: 24).

5.2.2 Services offered by the Sarva Dharma Ashram to youth and their families

The second objective related to the services that the Sarva Dharma Ashram offered to youth and their families. The feeding initiative offered by the Sarva Dharma Ashram was found to be the most significant alleviator of poverty and hunger amongst families, as evidenced by the fact that 21 000 freshly prepared meals were served weekly. This included three meals a day in the Ashrams soup kitchen, a school feeding programme, community feeding and mobile feeding points. Several other scholars have also acknowledged the role of faith-based organisations in the provision of feeding programmes for the poor (Greenberg, Greenberg and Mazza 2010: 2021; Pandya 2017: 6; Prinsloo and van der Berg 2017: 13; Salonen and Silvasti 2019: 2670). Another crucial finding related to the school support programme. Youth had benefitted from after school tuition offered at the Ashram, bursaries and other much needed school resources. These contributed to them achieving academically, thus ensuring a better matriculation pass and the opportunity to further their studies at a tertiary institution. Other scholars also reported on the crucial role that faith-based organisations had played in ensuring scholarly success amongst students in impoverished communities (De Cordier 2010: 494; Connelly Jr. 2012: 114; Jodhka and Bora 2012: 19).

The Sarva Dharma Ashram also had an onsite clinic at the Ashram for the community. Its closure was due to financial constraints, resulting in the community being placed at a huge disadvantage. They had to incur transport costs to commute to the local hospital for medical attention. Their ongoing monthly medical camps which ran over 2 days where volunteer doctors, nurses, dentists and social workers offered their services to the community however was still found to be a critical resource for community members. Similar research

studies have documented that faith-based organisations served as a crucial point from which to provide health interventions to disadvantaged communities (Lipsky 2011:26; Bopp *et al.* 2012:52; Kagawa *et al.* 2012:1).

The empowerment programme which included a 3 month accredited sewing programme led to many members of the community gaining a sewing qualification. This further entrenched the importance of faith-based organisations in creating employment opportunities for disadvantaged communities. Oghemekohwo and Tonunarigha (2019:197) similarly reported on the salience of empowerment programmes offered by faith-based organisation, saying it had a positive impact on the livelihoods of families.

5.2.3 Potential benefits emerging for families and the community

As evidenced in the previous sub-section significant benefits accrued for families and the community through efforts of the faith-based organisation. Prinsloo and van der Berg (2017:6) wrote that faith-based organisations offered support based on basic needs, skills training and socio-emotional needs and are rendered from a strengths perspective. The findings made resonate with this, as the data revealed the benefits to youth, families and the community through the initiatives of the Ashram. Families were found to experience financial, physical, emotional and spiritual benefits through the interventions of the Sarva Dharma Ashram. Moreover the teachings, values and principles embodied by the Spiritual Head of the Sarva Dharma Ashram served to instil values amongst community members. Similarly UNICEF (2012:11) echoed the view that religious leaders are amongst the most valued in communities, as they promote a moral and ethical way of life.

The Satsangh programme which included devotional singing, prayer, motivational talks, and chanting with children, youth and families in the community was noted to have positive effects on them, suggesting the value of spiritually-based interventions for those living under disadvantaged conditions. The literature further supports the importance of various spiritually based activities in providing comfort, hope and support to those with enduring stressful circumstances (Dollahite *et al.* 2004:411; Fincham, Beach, Lambert, Stilman and Braithwaite

2008: 362; Bhagwan 2012:241; Fincham and Beach 2014: 587; Dermatis and Galanter 2015: 510; Hatch *et al.* 2015: 27; King and Boyatzis 2015: 987; Swart, Rabe and de Beer 2019: 7).

5.2.4 Collaboration between social service professionals and faith-based organisations

The forth objective explored the role of social service professionals like child and youth care workers and social workers The study found that social workers presence in the community was minimal. Despite this there are many activities and interventions that they may level within such distressed community spaces. More importantly the study highlighted the importance of them collaborating with faith-based organisations to engage with, and find solutions to community issues. In this vein Belcher and DeForge (2007:16) suggested that Schools of Social Work, incorporate information about faith-based organisations into their curriculums, as well as provide workshops to practitioners so that such collaborations can be seen as valuable.

Crisp (2014: 6) asserted that whilst social work may take on various forms, it is not limited to counselling, community development, children and families, mental health, relationship counselling and school social work. Partnering with faith-based organisations and implementing spiritually based interventions are other activities of salience within a social work context. Welbedacht as a disadvantaged community, similar to other disadvantaged communities will therefore benefit from partnerships that social service professions may forge with faith-based organisations that operate in their immediate milieu.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Faith remains a core motivator for the work that faith-based organisations undertake and influences the manner in which they implement it. The Sarva Dharma Ashram operationalises its activities and is guided by faith as evidenced

in this study. Its transformational effects on the lives of youth and their families, attests to the value they can bring to distressed families and communities. Of significance was the fact that this Ashram was located within the epicentre of this community thus making its visibility and initiatives and enduring comforting space that families could immediately turn to when faced with a problem.

Faith-based organisations have been recognised for their efforts in reaching the poorest at the grassroots level (Du Toit 2019:1). The Sarva Dharma Ashram can be regarded as one such organisation that appears to have tirelessly served the poor and needy in their midst regardless of their religious or cultural affiliations. This highlights the respect for humankind and diversity to its fullest. Clarke and Jennings (2008:15) wrote "…the faith element of the faith-based organisation is not an add-on to its development activity, operating alongside. It is an essential part of that activity, informing it completely." The Sarva Dharma Ashram exemplifies this notion of faith as the primary thread of its service to the poorest of humankind.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made:

Lack of research of faith-based organisations in South African communities

The role of faith-based organisations have been recognised globally. However, in the South African context, there has been limited research documenting the role of faith-based organisations in poor and disadvantaged communities. More research related to same, particularly case studies can add to scholarly work in this field.

Resource support and collaboration with government

Whilst it is noted that government does provide some faith-based organisations with support, it is hugely insufficient to assist and meet the needs of those they serve. The Sarva Dharma Ashram primarily entrusts the support from donors and

businesses in order for the smooth functioning of the Ashram. Government departments need to prioritise help for faith-based organisations that work at a grassroots level, to deliver services to communities that have inadequate facilities.

5.5 LIMITATIONS

Although this study made important findings, a few limitations can be noted as follows:

This study was concentrated on one faith-based organisation in accordance with it being a case study of the organisation. Greater research on other faith-based organisations will strengthen findings made in this study.

In conclusion "faith-based organisations, especially those which have strong links with their religious communities, may be able to reach and engage with segments of the community, particularly marginalized communities, with which state instrumentalities struggle to connect." (Beth Crisp 2007:150-151). Their value and contribution to vulnerable, marginalised and socially excluded communities hold a beacon of light for those living within such milieus.

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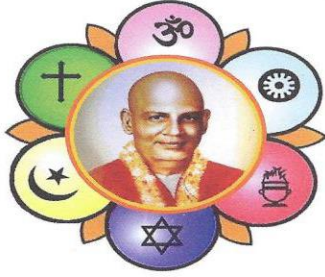
Sarva Dharma Ashram

THE HOME OF LOVE, COMPASSION AND SACRIFICE
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PBO 930/050/542-IT 9199/972/19/2

Yashna Gurcharan

To Whom This May Concern

Re: Reseach at the Sarva Dharma Ashram

Hari Om

We are pleased and happy to grant permission to Yashna Gurcharan to continue her research of the Sarva Dharma Ashram as she did previously.

YOURS IN THE SERVICE OF GOD AND COMMUNITY

FOUNDER & SPIRITUAL HEAD

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research Study: An exploration of the role of the Sarva Dharma Ashram in the development of youth and their families in the Welbedacht community.

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Yashna Gurcharan, BTech: Child and Youth Development

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Professor Raisuyah Bhagwan, PhD: Community and Development Disciplines

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study: Faith based organizations are currently emerging in South Africa. They are recognized based on their hard work in terms of developing underprivileged communities and helping youth and their families. An organization of such nature is the Sarva Dharma Ashram based in the community of Welbedacht. The aim of the study is to explore the role of the Sarva Dharma Ashram in terms of developing the youth and their families in the Welbedacht community. The objectives of the study are 1). To explore what problems children, youth and their families experience in the Webedacht community. 2). to enquire about the services that the Sarva Dharma Ashram offers children, youth and their families. 3). to explore what potential benefits have emerged for families and the community from the organisation and 4). to explore how child and youth care workers may work collaboratively with faith based organizations to develop disadvantaged communities.

Outline of the procedure: Group interviews and face-to face interviews will be conducted with you. Questions will be used to guide you on what information is expected. Participation in this study is voluntary. Participants who qualify for the study must share a close relationship with the Sarva Dharma Ashram. The

interviews will be taking place at the Sarva Dharma Ashram hall. The estimated time for the session is expected to be no longer than two hours. If necessary, a follow up session will be held. The sessions will be recorded using a tape recorder to gather all the information. These recordings will be handled privately and only the researcher will have access to it. The responsibility of the particiapnts who are taking part in the interview, is to arrive timeously and are expected to share as much information possible regarding the topic of discussion.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: This study and procedures used will not risk, nor will it be of any discomfort to you. You may withdraw at any point of the discussion if you need to.

Benefits: Your experiences, ideas and suggestions will create a rich and valuable contribution to the research. The researcher will be able to publish articles on the research that you have provided for this study.

Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study: Your participation is entirely voluntary. Should you feel that you want to withdraw at any point in this study, you may do so.

Remuneration: There will be no payment made to you if you participate in this study.

Costs of the Study: You will not be required to pay for any costs related to this study.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality will be maintained in this study as your name will not be used. All data will be kept in a locked cupboard which only I, the researcher has access to. Electronic data will be password protected. After 5 years hard copies will be shredded and electronic data as well as voice recordings will be securely deleted from an external hard drive.

Research-related Injury: There is no anticipatable injury of any kind that could take place.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries: Should you have any problem or query you may contact the following people. My supervisor, Raisuyah Bhagwan bhagwanr@dut.ac.za or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375 or lavishad@dut.ac.za. Complaints can be reported to the Director: Research and Postgraduate Support, Prof S Moyo on 031 373 2577 or moyos@dut.ac.za.

CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

☐ I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, (Yashna Gurcharan), about

the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number:_____IREC 191/18_,

☐ I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of

Information) regarding the study.

☐ I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.

☐ In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher.

☐ I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.

☐ I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.

☐ I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may

relate to my participation will be made available to me.

_____   _____   _____   _____

Full Name of Participant   Date   Time   Signature / Right Thumbprint

I, _____   (Name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully

Informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

_____   _____   _____
Full Name of Witness (If applicable)   Date   Signature

_____   _____
Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date   Signature

Sample 1: Family members

Interview guide

1. Can you share your experiences of the Sarva Dharma Ashram?

2. What are some of the problems facing families in your community?

3. Describe the type of support that you receive from the Sarva Dharma Ashram.

4. Please share how the Ashram alleviates some of the challenges that are faced by youth and families in your community.

5. How does the Sarva Dharma Ashram help you and your family personally?

6. Can you tell me about the programmes offered at the Ashram? Do you think it is an uplifting experience?

7. In your opinion, do you think those who visit the Ashram has progressed as a person? Describe.

8. Can you describe the events that take place at the Ashram?

9. In terms of developing the community of Welbedacht, what more do you think needs to be done in terms of progressing and advancing the community?

Sample 2: Board members of the Sarva Dharma Ashram
Interview guide

1. Can you share your vision of the Sarva Dharma Ashram?

2. Can you describe the role of the Sarva Dharma Ashram in the community?

3. Can you tell me more about what problems are faced in the community of Welbedacht?

4. How does the Sarva Dharma Ashram support the children, youth and their families in the community?

5. What are the major challenges faced by the Ashram?

6. Can you share what services are offered at the Ashram for youth and their families?

7. Can you tell me how the Ashram has progressed and developed over the years?

8. How does the Ashram accumulate funding for projects, events, etc.?

9. What are your views on policies regarding FBO's in South Africa? What recommendations can you make?

10. What are your views with regards to advancing the family wellbeing in the   community?

11.What are your views regarding collaboration between other professions such as social workers and child and youth care workers with the Ashram in terms of developing the community? And what possible benefits do you think it will have?

Sample 3: Community members

Interview guide

1. Can you share your experiences with the Sarva Dharma Ashram?

2. Can you describe the events that take place at the Ashram?

3. What are some of the problems facing families in your community?

4. Can you describe the type of support provided by the Ashram to families of the Welbedacht community?

5. Please share how the Ashram alleviates some of the challenges that are faced by youth and their families in your community.

6. How does the Sarva Dharma Ashram help you and your family personally?

7. Can you tell me about the programmes offered at the Ashram? Do you think this to be a positive experience?

8. In your opinion, do you think those who visit the Ashram has progressed as a person? Please tell me more.

9. In terms of developing the community of Welbedacht, what more do you think needs to be done in terms of progressing and advancing the community?

Sarva Dharma Ashram

46 Graceland Road Welbedacht East

Chatsworth

4030

Dear: Sir / Madam

RE: Permission to collect data at Sarva Dharma Ashram

Warm greetings to you. I am a prospective Masters student at Durban University of Technology I would like to request for permission to utilize participants from the Ashram. I intend to have in-depth interviews/focus groups with participants, with the aim of researching the role of the Sarva Dharma Ashram in terms of developing the Welbedacht community. The objectives of the study is 1) to explore what the major problems children, youth and their families experience in the community 2)To enquire about the services the organisation is offering children youth and their families 3) To explore how families and the community benefit from the organisation. The participants will be members of the Ashram and community members who visit the Ashram. In order for my research proposal to be approved, I will need gatekeeper permission for me to collect data from the participants. Kindly consider my request to collect data from participants.

Thank you.

Yashna Gurcharan (Researcher)

Contact details: 0724187408/ygurcharan@gmail.com

Prof. R. Bhagwan (Supervisor)

Contact details: 0313732197/ bhagwanr@dut.ac.za

Institutional Research Ethics Committee
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate
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Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus
Durban University of Technology

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www.dut.ac.za

23 January 2019

Ms Y Gurcharan
24 Marigold Avenue
Isipingo Hills
4133

Dear Ms Gurcharan

An exploration of the role of the Sarva Dharma Ashram in the development of youth and their families in the Welbedacht community.

I am pleased to inform you that Full Approval has been granted to your proposal.

The Proposal has been allocated the following Ethical Clearance number **IREC 191/18**. Please use this number in all communication with this office.

Approval has been granted for a period of **ONE YEAR**, before the expiry of which you are required to apply for safety monitoring and annual recertification. Please use the Safety Monitoring and Annual Recertification Report form which can be found in the Standard Operating Procedures [SOP's] of the IREC. This form must be submitted to the IREC at least 3 months before the ethics approval for the study expires.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the IREC according to the IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the IREC as outlined in the IREC SOP's.

Yours Sincerely

Professor J K Adam
Chairperson: IREC

DUT DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

2019 -01- 23

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
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