

Women development is everybody's business

OPINION PIECE

It is August, Women's Month in South Africa where the issues of women empowerment are put on top of the developmental agenda again. Women must take charge and control their destiny.

Women's Month is an important month in the country's calendar. The month celebrates and appreciates the strength, role, resilience and contribution of women in society and the country's democracy.

August 9 is Women's Day after the 1956 women's march to the Union Building in protest against the oppressive apartheid era pass laws thereby laying the building blocks for our freedom. This special day is dedicated to paying tribute to those struggle stal-

warts and to push for the development and emancipation of women in the country.

Every year during this time we celebrate Women's Month with wonderful themes, but do we reflect on how much has been done in empowering and improving the status of women in society.

This year's commemoration is held under the theme: *"The year of Charlotte Manya Maxeke: Realising Women's Rights"*. Ensuring and protecting rights for all has been a constant struggle for government and our social partners, as we battle the devastating COVID-19 pandemic. This must be a time of reflection and taking stock of what has been done to achieve the set targets and also to reflect on the challenges and come up with new innovative solutions

to push women development and emancipation forward.

Women are the pillars that hold households and communities together.

They are basically the glue that holds the moral fibre of society and must be supported at all costs as they perform multiple responsibilities and duties in society. Women must be provided with all the necessary resources and support to continue building a responsible society.

Women still bear the brunt of the hardships in society. Covid-19 has worsened the situation. The fight against Covid-19 requires readily available water to ensure that people regularly wash their hands to prevent the spread of the disease and it is the responsibility of women to ensure water availability in the

household, especially in rural areas. Government is trying its best to ensure reliable water supply to communities and the community must play its part to prevent the vandalism of water infrastructure and report elements of corruption in water supply to lessen the burden on women and afford women and the girl child equal opportunities.

Reliable water supply is key in realizing women's rights. Let's remember that water is life therefore women go all out to ensure that their families have access to water in their households.

Government must fast-track water service delivery and communities must always monitor water supply projects to prevent corruption and vandalism and ensure the projects deliver the water to communi-

ties and relieve women of the hardship of always looking for water for their families.

South Africa has got wonderful policies for the development and empowerment of women but women still face serious challenges such as poverty, inequality, gender based violence and many other social ills.

We all need to work together to ensure that our beautiful women realize their rights and socio-economic development. Government, business and individuals must come and work together to make the great policies a reality and give women the level footing in life. Most of all, women must take an interest and play a key role in their development.

Themba Khoza