

**An Investigation on Gender Roles Expectations within the Modern Institution of Marriage:  
A case of Mbombela Municipality, Mpumalanga, South Africa**

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates gender role expectations within the modern institution of marriage. Gender roles are socially and culturally constructed. However, they disadvantage women more than men. The researcher is of the opinion that, in addition to the household chores and the upbringing of children, women continue to provide care that directly impact on men's well-being. The study explores issues of motherhood and the reliance of men on gender roles that are more in their favour than women. The concept of marriage within the South African context is also probed. This study further illustrates how men in Mbombela Municipality rely on gender roles, in order to validate the oppression of women through male dominance and suggests that the patriarchal power structure seems to take a powerful and effective impact on the South African marriage institution, especially in the black communities. The findings from the interviews are that work that is done by a woman in a household is regarded as petty and of no importance and as unpaid work. When women are employed outside the home or are self-employed, the work is called paid work. In traditional division of labour; being the homemaker is regarded as her primary role regardless of her employment. The data that has been provided proves that this does not bode well in our modern society. For patriarchal practices, to be ameliorated it will take both men and women to be schooled in as far as gender role expectations are concerned. The findings further show that women continue to play a subservient role to men, and that their place is still in the kitchen regardless of the strides they have made at workplace and in the world.