

The gender dimensions of the utilisation of agricultural  
inputs for food and income security: A case study of  
subsistence farming households in Goromonzi District,  
Zimbabwe

Submitted by

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy  
degree to

The University of KwaZulu-Natal

School of Social Work and Community Development

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December 2017

## DECLARATION

I confirm that this thesis constitutes my original work and it has not been submitted to any other University or institution.

Signed: Mildred T. Mushunje

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mushunje', written over a horizontal line.

The thesis is submitted with the permission of my supervisor, Professor Vishanthie Sewpaul:

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Vishanthie Sewpaul', written over a horizontal line.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a number of people that made the completion of this PhD thesis possible. There were times when I felt unable to continue but their support and encouragement urged me on and kept me focused. Particularly I would like to appreciate my supervisor, Professor Vishanthie Sewpaul whose die hard positive attitude gave me strength during times of frustration, and when I felt I was hitting against a brick wall. I appreciate the prompt feedback that she always provided, and her quest for excellence always. I had constructive feedback and engagement all the time that we interacted.

My family members were also very supportive. I appreciate the persistence with which my husband Arnold, urged me on and reminded me of the goal at the end, which I sometimes lost sight of, when I thought the going was too tough. My mom and dad, who both passed on during my studies, deserve special mention. Their belief in me strengthened me and reminded me that I am, indeed, capable. I thank my children, Ronald, Joan, Amos, Monica, Mufaro, whose patience with me during my studies remains unmatched.

I am grateful to the administrative staff in the Higher Degrees Office, School of Applied Human Sciences at the University of KwaZulu Natal who supported me in a very professional manner. The team was really helpful and hands on with timely responses to queries.

I am grateful to the participants to this study, without whose cooperation I would not have been able to carry out the study. Their enthusiasm and keenness to be part of the study is really cherished.

I also thank my living God who remains my source of strength.

Thank you all.

## ABSTRACT

Based on the assumptions that women's access to and utilisation of agricultural inputs leads to an improvement in household food and income security; that women and men make rational decisions in the utilisation of agriculture inputs; and that food insecurity is a result of structural inequalities, this study sought to understand the gender dynamics of the utilisation of agricultural inputs amongst women and men farmers. Informed by critical theory, the study was undertaken in Goromonzi district which is in a province in Mashonaland East, Zimbabwe. Through convenience sampling, a total of 30 participants - 15 women and 15 men - were selected from a list of 150 farmers.

Data were collected through a triangulation process of qualitative research involving semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, case studies, review of secondary data and observation. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Data were analysed using critical discourse analysis. Emerging themes through data centred on household decision making processes in female headed and male headed households, how inputs were accessed, the influence of cultural norms and gendered stereotypes on the interactions within households and in the community and the fear of "going against the tide" in the quest for social justice. The main conclusions from the study were that gender stereotypes and social norms were key players in decision making, empowerment was a process and not a state of being, and that both women and men held responsible attitudes towards their household and felt compelled to provide for food security. Knowledge did not necessarily lead to action as all the participants had an understanding of gender issues but were not prepared to question or challenge prevailing injustices, for instance, their unwillingness to deal with the triple role of women and men's supremacy within households and in community leadership structures.

Based on the literature and the findings of this study, policy, practice and research recommendations are made, including the importance of social work engaging with sectors such as Ministries of Agriculture in order to address emerging issues on gender and agriculture. This was of particular importance in light of on-going discussion around climate change, which has been seen to affect women more profoundly than men, the role of social protection strategies related to food and nutrition security, and the potential contribution of critical and emancipatory approaches in challenging and undoing the normalisation of gender injustice.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACDI/VOCA	Agricultural Cooperative Development International/ Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ART	Anti -Retro Therapy
AU	African Union
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CA	Conservation Agriculture
CADS	Cluster Agricultural Development Services
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CFU	Commercial Farmers Union
COMESA	Common Market for East and Southern Africa
CT	Cash Transfers
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
FHH	Female Headed Households

FCDA	Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis
FNSP	Food and Nutrition Security Policy
FPE	Feminist Political Economy
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNU	Government of National Unity
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GSMA	Groupe Spécial Mobile Association
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IASSW	International Association of Schools of Social Work
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
ICRW	International Centre for Research on Women
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
IGPs	Income Generating Projects
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISALs	Income Savings and Lending Schemes
LFCLS	Labour Force and Child Labour Survey
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MERP	Millennium Economic Recovery Programme
MFIs	Micro Finance Institutions
MHH	Male Headed Households

NAC	National AIDS Council
NEDPP	National Economic Development Priority Programme
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NERP	National Economic Revival Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PASS	Poverty Assessment Study Survey
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
R&D	Research and Development
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
ROSCA	Rotating Savings and Credit Association
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SOFA	State of Food and Agriculture
SP	Social Protection
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
STERP	Short Term Economic Recovery Programme
TPCL	Total Poverty Consumption Line
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UKZN	University of KwaZulu Natal
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WFC	World Food Conference
WLZ	Women and Land in Zimbabwe
WFP	World Food Programme
WFS	World Food Summit
ZDHS	Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey
ZFU	Zimbabwe Farmers Union
Zim Asset	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation
ZIMPREST	Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation
ZIMSTATS	The Zimbabwe Statistical Agency
ZIMVAC	Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee
ZWRCN	Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network



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## CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

### 1.1 Introduction

Agriculture is a key driver of most economies in Africa and women's participation in it has, in the past, received little attention. The launch of the FAO 2011 -2012 report on the State of Food and Agriculture, focusing on women brought to light evidence which showed women's critical role in agriculture. The report highlights that though women are key in household food security, they are discriminated against in the extent to which they can access productive resources such as land, fertiliser and extension services to facilitate their overall contribution to food security.

As in other parts of Sub Saharan Africa, Zimbabwe is predominantly an agriculture based economy with about 79% of its population residing in rural areas, and earning a living largely from subsistence agriculture (Ruzivo Trust, 2012). Maize is the staple food in Zimbabwe and because of this, hunger is commonly associated with its shortage. Agricultural statistics tend to vary but there is general consensus that women are the bulk of the unpaid labour force primarily because of their household food security role. About 70% of the population depends on agriculture for food, income and employment. Of the total productive population, agriculture accounts for 66%, of which the majority are women (Ruzivo Trust, 2012).

A Zimbabwe Statistics Agency survey revealed that 30% of the employed women in agriculture work excessive hours (ZIMSTATS 2012). The report also recorded that in rural areas, 35% of women and 45% of men were formally employed in agriculture, with 60% of women being seasonal labourers and often underpaid or paid less for the same work performed by men. Fifty five percent of women engaged in agricultural work and 77% of women engaged in non-agricultural work are paid in cash, which ultimately has the effect of discriminating against their entry into the banking system. The report also noted that about 13% of women working in agriculture, and 3% of women in non-agricultural occupations were not paid for their work, though they were engaged as employees. About 74% of women engaged in agricultural work were self-employed.

Zimbabwe's statistics on women's participation in agriculture are a mirror image of the global context. Evidence from FAO (2011) showed that women constitute 42.2% of the agriculture labour force in the world; they work 16-18 hours/day as unpaid family workers; spend at least 49% of their time on agricultural activities, and about 25% on domestic activities (FAO, 2011). According to the same report, for Sub Saharan Africa, women contribute 47.1%, Latin America -16%; in low income countries - 46.3%; and in Asia they contribute 42% of the total agriculture labour force. There are glaring disparities and injustices from these statistics. Addressing such inequalities must be grounded on understanding gender relations. Gender inequality involves the inequalities in the sexual division of labour, the separation of public and private spheres, the overvaluation of production and undervaluation of social reproduction, and consequent devaluation of women's paid and unpaid caring work (Baines, Evans and Neysmith, 1991; Mies, 2007; O'Connor, 1996).

Understanding the way gender relations are constructed across different structures is key to addressing such gender inequalities. Addressing gender inequality is a basic human rights issue and social work has a key concern with addressing human rights. Sweetman (2012) argued that gender justice, that is, "the realisation of women's rights as human rights – and ending hunger, are closely entwined, interdependent goals. Solving hunger now and in the future, involves challenging the current global development model which permits and is driven by inequality" (p.1). Given the multi-faceted nature of social work and the concern with human rights, it is evident that social workers have a key role to play in addressing issues of food security, gender inequalities in agriculture and women's access to productive resources.

## **1.2 Research problem**

Women's participation in agriculture is largely unrecognised, frequently underestimated and often overlooked in agricultural development strategies yet women contribute extensively to household subsistence farming (IFAD; UN News Center, 2010). With the body of evidence, popularised by agencies and scholars such as FAO, USAID, IFAD (2003); IFPRI (2007), World Bank (2007) and Boserup (1970), which is building up in respect of women's contribution in agriculture, it is important to understand the gender dynamics around which households access agricultural inputs, and how these are then utilised in relation to household food security.

Considering the recent literature on agriculture and women by the World Bank (2014), the role of women seems evident. However, what is missing in the overall analyses appears to be the gender dynamics that influence utilization of these inputs and resultant benefits from these. It is this gap that this research aimed to fill. The World Bank and collaborating partners (2009), also warn that the “failure to recognise the roles, differences and inequities between men and women poses a serious threat to the effectiveness of the agricultural development agenda” (p. 9). It is important that gender is addressed in the agricultural discourse especially in Africa because of the participation in and reliance on agriculture of the bulk of the population.

### **1.3 Research objectives and questions**

The main aim of this study was to analyse the gender dynamics around the utilisation of agricultural inputs within the context of Zimbabwe. As far as I am aware, no such study has been undertaken in Zimbabwe. This study adds value to the social work profession in showing the diversity of interventions social work practitioners can be involved in to bring about social change in various sectors including agriculture. In depth interviews were held to achieve the research objectives and to answer the research questions. I interviewed a total of 30 participants of which 15 were married males, 10 married women and 5 widowed women from Goromonzi. Goromonzi is a district in Mashonaland East of Zimbabwe with a total of 25 wards in which the smallest has 258 people and the largest having 30 123 people. The participants were pre-identified through an existing data base and randomly sampled. In addition to the prolonged interviews that were conducted through home visits, I conducted focus group discussions with the women and the men comprised of a mixed group of women and men and separate ones for women and men alone.

The study objectives were to:

1. Analyse the factors determining access to, distribution and utilisation of agricultural inputs among male and female agricultural input beneficiaries; Compare the factors influencing the utilisation of agricultural inputs between women and men;
2. Understand the household decision making processes of agriculture input beneficiaries with regards to household maintenance;
3. Compare the use of income and proceeds from agricultural input between female and male beneficiaries; and

4. Determine the extent to which agricultural inputs contribute to the empowerment of women and men.

The research was guided by the following key questions:

1. What factors influence access to and utilisation of agricultural inputs at the level of the household?
2. What do women and men agriculture beneficiaries prioritise in the use of agricultural inputs?
3. How are decisions that impact on the household generally made by women and men with regards to the utilisation of agricultural inputs?
4. How have the agricultural inputs received been utilised by women and men?
5. To what extent are participants empowered through the Agriculture inputs support programme?

The underlying assumptions of this research were:

1. Women's access to and utilisation of agricultural inputs leads to an improvement in the food and income security of households in the short term.
2. Women and men make rational decisions in the utilisation of agriculture inputs, but inherent gender dynamics lead to different outputs.
3. Households receiving the agricultural inputs fail to generate enough food and income to become self-sufficient in future years. Self-sufficiency is measured by the generation of food that is enough for the household to last for a period of one year (or until the harvest of the next season) and enough to sell off excess to enable households to generate income for other basic needs beyond food.
4. Food insecurity is a result of structural inequalities and needs to be addressed at the structural levels before households that are food insecure can become self-sufficient. The fundamental causes of inequality are housed in institutions such as patriarchy that perpetuate gender disparities. These need to be dealt with at that structural level in order for interventions aimed at addressing food insecurity to make meaningful and long-lasting impacts at the household and individual level.

#### **1.4 Conceptual/Theoretical Framework**

The critical theory provided the theoretical framework for this study. Alway (1995) notes that the term critical theory does not designate a unified theoretical perspective. It is a term that

embraces a variety of different theoretical positions. Critical theorists stress the importance of people's agency, that is, their capacities to be actively involved in the process of social change (Alway, 1995). Most critical theorists are concerned with emancipatory education that enables people to see the links between their experiences and the material conditions and dominant ideologies in society (Sewpaul, 2013; Sewpaul and Larsen, 2014). In this regard, Fay (1987) emphasised the capacity of critical theories to explain the sources of oppression in society in such a way as to encourage those affected by oppression to take action to transform it. In the words of Alvesson and Willmott (1996) "the intent of critical theory is to challenge the legitimacy and counter the development of oppressive institutions and practice" (p.13). Critical theory places a significant emphasis on reflecting upon how dominant ideologies or ways of thinking, as well as societal institutions, impact people's lives. It also questions the place of existing institutions, such as the family, educational establishments and governments, with a view to constructing a more just society.

In the application of the critical theory in this study, I took cognisance of the criticisms raised against it. Some have argued that critical theory in general, fails in its attempt to link individual and social consciousness with institutional analysis and political economy (Held, 1980). Others suggest that critical theory exaggerates the importance of consciousness in the processes of radical social change (Alvesson & Willmott 1996, p. 86). Feminist writers also note that critical theory has not adequately engaged with feminist theory and subsequently has been unable to appreciate the significance of gender analysis (Alvesson & Willmott, 1996). However, given the focus of the critical theory on increasing people's agency through challenging oppressive institutions and practices, I found it very appropriate in the overall analysis of the gender dynamics associated with the utilisation of agricultural inputs.

## **1.5 Definition of terms**

For purposes of this study the following key terms were used and defined as follows:

### ***1.5.1 Food security***

This is when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to food, which is safe and consumed in sufficient quantity and quality to meet their dietary needs and food preferences, and is supported by an environment of adequate water and sanitation, health services and care, allowing for healthy and active life (Committee on Food Security, 2012).

### ***1.5.1 Women's empowerment***

This is when women have access to the means of production. Kabeer (2002) defined empowerment as “expansion of people’s ability to make strategic life choices, particularly in contexts where this ability has been denied them (p.4). Empowerment relates to increased agency and the ability to exercise this agency. Sewpaul et al. (2014) have argued that “empowerment through consciousness-raising contributes to liberation, heightened feelings of self-esteem, efficacy and control, and supports the view that people have the capacity to reflect and to act.” (p.56).

### ***1.5.2 Gender***

This refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes (FAO 2012).

### ***1.5.3 Gender justice***

The realisation of women’s rights as human rights (Sweetman (2012).

### ***1.5.4 Gender equality***

This refers to when women and men have equal conditions for realising their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from economic, social, cultural and political development. It is the equal valuing by society of the similarities and differences of men and women, and the roles they play. Gender equality starts with equal valuing of girls and boys and upholding their basic human rights (World Bank, 2001).

### ***1.5.5 Gender inequality***

This refers to the unequal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys in all sectors, political, social, legal and economic (DFID Gender and Social Exclusion Policy, 2012).

### ***1.5.6 Reproductive roles (familial)***

These are those roles which include attending to family matters, taking care of its members, safeguarding their health, giving birth (Moser, 1986).

### ***1.5.7 Productive roles***

This refers to work related to producing goods, services, and trade (agriculture, employment, free enterprise) (Moser, 1986).

### ***1.5.8 Community (social) roles***

These are those roles performed by women and men at the local level in urban and rural areas (Moser, 1986).

## **1.6 Outline of Chapters**

There are 10 chapters consisting of five sections: an introduction, literature review, methodology, analysis and discussion of findings, and finally the conclusion and recommendations section. A brief description of each chapter follows.

### ***1.6.1 Section 1***

This consists of 3 chapters namely the literature review chapters. Chapter 2 presents an overview of gender and agriculture in the global context. Chapter 3 discusses concepts related to food security. Chapter 4 presents the status of gender and agriculture in Zimbabwe.

To lay the foundation for the overall study, I discussed in Chapter 2 various statistics of women and men's participation in agriculture. The overall conclusion from this literature was that women were marginalised in the extent to which they participated in agriculture because of the multiple roles they play within the home. They were also marginalised in the extent to which they could access resources such as finance, extension services and markets. This had confined them to being the unpaid agricultural labour force. On the other hand, men engaged in agriculture were paid for their services. Productive resources were also more readily available to men than women. For instance, men were more likely to access a bank loan because of the availability of collateral as household assets are usually registered in their names.

Chapter 3 discussed the basic food security concepts. Food security is a basic human right with several dimensions, namely, availability, access, utilisation and stability. For one to be deemed food secure, they must fulfil all the dimensions. For example, one could have access to nutritious food, but if they have no understanding of the actual utilisation of the food, they could still be malnourished through eating unhealthily.

Chapter 4 focuses on the specific context of Zimbabwe. As elsewhere, women in Zimbabwe were also marginalised on the extent to which they benefit from agriculture. This is in spite of the fact that women are 52% of the population and approximately 35% of rural households are headed by women who are also subsistence farmers and constitute the largest proportion of the poor (Zim Stats, 2013). Women's key occupation in rural areas is household food security. They work 16 to 18 hours a day, spending at least 49% of their time on agricultural activities and about 25% on domestic activities (ZIMSTATS, 2012; FAO, 2011). Women and men's access to agricultural services is a key contributor to their productivity. The situation in Zimbabwe showed that women lagged behind men in accessing resources such as land, fertilisers and agricultural extension.

### *1.6.2 Section 2*

This is made up of Chapter 5 which discussed the research methodology. This chapter covered the research design, research questions, key underlying assumptions of the study, study objectives, the sampling method, a description of the study area and the participants, data collection and ethical considerations. The conceptual framework used in this study which is the Critical Theory was also discussed. The interrogation of the findings were anchored on the Critical Discourse Analysis which is designed to question the status quo, by detecting, analysing, and also resisting and counteracting enactments of power abuse as transmitted in private and public discourses. It is anchored on the analysis of inequalities, unequal access to power, privileges, and material and symbolic resources (Fairclough 2009).

According to Van Dijk, (1988) CDA is concerned with studying and analysing written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced, and transformed within specific social, economic, political, and historical contexts. Fairclough (2000) explained there were three central tenets of CDA, namely social structure (class, status, age, ethnic identity, and gender); culture, for example, socialisation and membership profile, and discourse, that is, use of words and language which help to determine who we are by way of our identities, relationships, and systems of knowledge and beliefs. As part of the analysis, I noted there were some expressions which were very common amongst the women and men. For example, all the women perpetually referred to themselves as "vatorwa" which literally means the foreigner where as men all referred to themselves as "vebgo" which literally means the indigenous people. The internalisation of these words meant that even as they conducted themselves,



women would behave in a manner that was associated with a foreigner. They never really belonged. It is only as they grew older, and this was evident with the older women that the dynamics changed and they took on greater control and ownership of citizenship in the community. Without the application of CDA, such language would go unquestioned. But as Luke (1997) argues, CDA focuses on how social relations, identity, knowledge, and power are constructed through written and spoken texts in communities. My overall conclusions took note that as Fairclough (2002) has argued, discourse can be interpreted differently by people because they have different backgrounds, knowledge, and power positions—therefore, the “right” interpretation does not exist whereas a more or less plausible or adequate interpretation is likely. Even as I carried out my analysis, I was well aware that Sheyholislami, (2001) notes that the way we write, and what we say, is not arbitrary but is purposeful whether our choices are conscious or unconscious. In this regard, I was careful to continuously engage in self-reflection.

Key issues dealt with in this chapter also touched on my experiences as researcher. In this chapter I discussed how I had to engage in continuous reflection to avoid my beliefs filtering through and possibly influencing the participants’ responses. There were instances where I felt strongly about the way women and men accepted their circumstances as normal. Women had normalised their triple roles, whilst men were content with women’s over burden. My instinct was to engage in discussions on the injustices of these assumedly normal cultural practises. The application of CDA was therefore useful as I was reminded throughout the research to be self-critical and to be reflective. Given that CDA acknowledges that interpretations of texts/conversations are influenced by history and experiences (Fairclough, 2002), my interpretation of the conversations that I had with the respondents were also subject to interrogation. The protracted engagement, home visits and focused group discussions that I undertook were key in addressing some of my biases. I also engaged in what Price (2002) called engagement without estrangement. This meant that I did not remove myself from the research process but was careful not to be judgemental.

### ***1.6.3 Section 3***

This section is made up of Chapter 6 which presents the bio-data of the respondents. It described the ages and educational background of the participants to the study. The average age for the participants was 47years old. For the women alone, it was 50 years old and for the men alone, it was 45 years as well. Levels of education ranged from Grade 7 to form 4 with a few having acquired tertiary education. Men had higher levels of education and this was attributed to factors

like preferential treatment of boys over girls. It was a common understanding that girls were to be married and would not be of any benefit to their parents hence the focus on boys who would later become the bread winners even for their parents. The average income for the participants was USD134.

#### ***1.6.4 Section 4***

This is made up of Chapters 7, 8 and 9. Chapter 7 is the first part of the analysis and presents the gendered aspects of access to and utilisation of inputs. Chapter 8 discusses the interaction of respondents with productive resources such as land, fertiliser and extension services. Chapter 9 analyses the notion of empowerment from the women participants' perspective. Empowerment was discussed in relation to criteria identified and explained in Chapter 2 which is: access to and ownership of means of production, resources, income, leadership and time. Chapter 8 presents an analysis of the gendered aspects of access to and utilisation of resources. In this chapter I discuss a number issues related to the utilisation of inputs and some of the challenges related to accessing inputs.

With regards to empowerment there was understanding by women that cultural structures and systems played a role in the extent to which they could exercise agency. Access to resources was clearly the privilege of men. Men also acknowledged the unfairness of the culture which disempowered women but, as with the women, they felt it was functional and maintained the community in harmony. All the women were generally unopposed to empowerment or increased agency but they felt they had "too much to lose" by swimming against the tide of their set culture and practises. They were all aware of the injustices related to, for example, unequal distribution of labour, but this was not enough to spur them to act to challenge the status quo.

The language used by younger women tended to be "guarded". For instance, one expression that was persistent amongst the younger women was "our turn will come to give direction in our homes". This was in reaction to older women who expressed that they had more control over household decision making than the younger women because of the experience and knowledge they had gathered over the years of how to relate to their husbands and in-laws. Taken at face value one would assume the older women were more empowered than the younger ones but an application of CDA which interrogated the meaning of "control" revealed that the older women had decided to accept that they were subordinate to men and their

“control” was in their ability to maintain harmony which was in the end beneficial to the whole household.

The findings presented in these chapters are derived from the responses of the participants in this study. These findings are cross referenced with already existing literature which is discussed in Chapter 2.

### ***1.6.5 Section 5***

This is the conclusions and discussion section and it consists of one chapter. It summarises the main themes that emerged in this study. It discussed the need for interventions that are appropriate for the local context and that do not compromise the well- being of women. The role of the social worker was explored in the quest for women’s empowerment in the context of agriculture and how agricultural inputs in a household could also be a vehicle for food security. Suggestions were made for how the social work profession could add value to the discussion around food security, gender injustice and women’s empowerment through the effective utilisation of agricultural inputs within households.

The major conclusions I drew from the study were that normalising the status quo resulted in the acceptance of unjust practises. There was a fear on the part of women to act to bring change. The consequences were considered to be detrimental to family and community well- being and in the end, it was agreed that what mattered was the maintenance of harmony. The men were also caught up in a situation in which none wanted to be the pioneers of change. There almost seemed to be a contradiction in their reasoning. On the one hand, they acknowledged the importance of maintaining culture. On the other, they acknowledged the injustices (e.g. unequal division of labour) of this culture. However, they feared to be the agents of change lest they were ridiculed within the community. Normalising the abnormal seemed to be pervasive for both women and men regardless of the resultant injustice. This can also be explained in the way Sewpaul, Mdamba and Seepamore (forthcoming) describe how lobola, even though a huge burden to African families, is very much a normalised practice in parts of Africa. They argue “the social convention of ilobolo has become so naturalised and normalised that even those who acknowledge its negative consequences argue for its continuity” (Sewpaul et al. forthcoming). In the same way women in this study argued against questioning the status quo because doing so would have negative repercussions. Furthermore, they were of the view that the values they would supposedly argue for, had they decided to question the status quo, would be values

imposed on the communities by NGOs and the external world. Questioning prevailing practices seemed to be selective. For instance, women were clear about sending their children to school whereas in the past it was a reserved privilege of boys. Writing on ilobolo/roora, Sewpaul et al. (forthcoming), explain this as “as a reactionary measure”, where there is a tendency to protect certain practices that are “in our culture against western influence”.

The important factor that I gathered from carrying out this study was that there needs to be a balance between conscientisation and the desire to act and change. Heightened critical consciousness is a key driver of change but on its own, does not translate to desired engagement in action. Change must be initiated by those who are marginalised. Change agents such as social workers can act as the conduits for information, negotiation skills building, lobbyists among others. Social workers can engage with communities by engaging in what Sewpaul and Larsen (2014) call emancipatory social work. This is designed to develop “counter-consciousness”. Ultimately the change must be driven from within. This is because change has the potential to bring about conflict, and this must be addressed in a manner that is protective of the intended beneficiaries of change. Those marginalised might not be ready for the change. In this regard, the role of social work is key in working with marginalised groups of people. As Lombard and Twirizike (2014) note, the commitment of social work to social justice and human rights is evident in the promotion of social and economic equality amongst the marginalised. Social workers could engage with the marginalised and work with them until they are empowered enough to demand and act for change.

In the next chapter, I discuss the literature pertaining to gender and agriculture. I also discuss women’s empowerment and show how this relates to agriculture.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW: GENDER AND AGRICULTURE

### 2.0 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the concept of gender and how it relates to agriculture and food security. I also explain the way women and men differentially access productive resources or agricultural inputs, which in turn determine their agricultural productivity levels, thus influencing food and nutrition security levels. The concept of women's empowerment is discussed, and I conclude by elucidating the impact of women and men's access to or lack thereof of these inputs on overall household food security.

### 2.1 Background

Since the 1990s, policymakers and development practitioners have highlighted the critical importance of gender in the implementation, evaluation, and effectiveness of programs across a range of social and economic sectors including agriculture (IFRPI, 2010). Gender in this instance is defined as a set of qualities and behaviours expected from women and men within society and is socially determined (FAO, 2012). As Acker (1989) remarks, "Society, including class structure, the state and the political economies cannot be understood without a consideration of gender" (p. 238). Gender refers to the social roles and identities associated with what it means to be a man or a woman. Yuval-Davis (2006) contends that, "gender should be understood not as a 'real' social difference between men and women, but as a mode of discourse that relates to groups of subjects whose social roles are defined by their sexual/biological difference" (p. 201). Gender roles are shaped by ideological, religious, ethnic, economic and cultural factors and are a key determinant of the distribution of responsibilities and resources between men and women (Moser, 1989). As Sewpaul (2013) noted, being socially determined, this distribution can be changed through a critical analysis of the gendered use of language and dominant societal discourses and practices, radical forms of praxis with the self as the main site of politicisation and conscious social action, including public policy.

Gender is implicated in the fundamental constitution of all social life. It involves the inequalities in the sexual division of labour, the separation of public and private spheres, the overvaluation of production and undervaluation of social reproduction, and consequent devaluation of

women's paid and unpaid caring work (Baines, Evans and Neysmith, 1991; Mies, 2007; O'Connor, 1996). Notably, gender relations are known to be complex and context specific (Quisumbing and Pandolfelli, 2010; Sewpaul, 2013). What is normal in one society/culture may be unacceptable in another. This confirms the fact that gender is a social construct. The structural construct of gender has, in general, consistently worked to place women at the periphery of development and marginalising them.

Confusion has often existed between gender and sex. These concepts are often wrongly used interchangeably when in fact they are two separate entities. Sex refers to the biological aspects of being male or female (Moser, 1989; Quisumbing, 1996; FAO, 2012). Sewpaul (2013), using the metaphor of "inscribed in our blood" argued that, "on the basis of biological manifestations, people have attached to them social descriptors and cultural extensions that have come to be widely accepted and naturalized" (p. 117).

Two flagship reports—the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO's) State of Food and Agriculture 2010–2011 (SOFA) and the World Bank's World Development Report (2012) noted the importance of addressing gender issues for increased productivity, improved household food and nutrition security. The SOFA report concluded that if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20–30 percent. This could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by between 2.5 to 4 percent, which could in turn reduce the number of hungry people in the world by between 12 to 17 percent. Other studies also found that lower levels of productivity and income among female headed households could be partially attributed to lower access to improved inputs (see Djurfeldt and Lodin 2013.) There is therefore general agreement that gender inequalities and lack of attention to gender in agricultural development contribute to lower productivity, lost income, and higher levels of poverty as well as under-nutrition and food insecurity (IFAD 2003; IFPRI, 2007; World Bank, 2007; von Grebmer, Nestorova, Quisumbing, Fertziger, Fritschel and Pandya-Lorch, 2009; FAO, 2015).

Addressing gender inequality is a basic human rights issue. Under neoliberal globalization, women's poverty and the deepening of women's oppression and exploitation has been exacerbated (Healy, 2005; Sewpaul, 2011). Some remarkable processes related to this deterioration of women's life conditions are: first, the neoliberal restructuring of social policy

that has transferred previous state responsibilities on social reproduction to women's unpaid work. Second, the emerging role of women as head and breadwinner, and third, the intensification of discriminatory practices based on class, gender, race or ability in the labour market (Healy, 2005). Gender equality also entails ensuring gender justice exists in society. Sweetman (2012) argued that gender justice, which is “realisation of women’s rights as human rights – and ending hunger, are closely entwined, interdependent goals. Solving hunger now and in the future, involves challenging the current global development model which permits and is driven by inequality” (p.1).

Women's identity and sense of self is often based on their ability to feed their families and to be care givers in the home. They are associated with the ability to provide household food and nutrition security which is very much related to subsistence farming. Women's special relationship with food is culturally constructed and not a natural division of labour. Neoliberal globalisation has increased the burden for women. The traditional roles of for example, fetching water, cooking and subsistence farming for food security that women undertook in the pre-modern phase have continued. In addition they have taken on more roles which have been necessitated by the changes in lifestyles as a result of migration, the effects of HIV and AIDS, global economic integration, and economic hardships among other factors. For instance, women now outsource their labour on commercial farms, they are engaged more prominently in unpaid care work and in many ways subsidise government. Thus, the interpretation of food as a human right requires that food issues be analyzed from a gender perspective bearing also in mind the changing nature of families and households. It is worth noting, for instance, that in Shaffer’s (1980) study from West Africa, both women and men recognised the existence of gender inequalities in terms of women’s heavier workloads and men’s dominance in decision-making, but neither considered these inequalities unjust.

Gender equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realising their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from economic, social, cultural and political development. It is the equal valuing by society of the similarities and differences of men and women, and the roles they play. Gender equality starts with equal valuing of girls and boys and upholding their basic human rights. The World Bank (2001) defines gender equality in terms of *rights, resources and voices* - equality under the law, equality of opportunities (including access to human capital and other productive resources) and equality of rewards for work and equality of voice. Therefore gender equality needs to be understood based on three main

domains: 1) the *capabilities domain* — referring to basic human abilities as measured by skills, talent, education, health, and nutrition; 2) the *access to resources and opportunities domain* — which refers primarily to equality in the opportunity to use or apply basic capabilities through access to economic assets (such as land, property, or infrastructure) and resources (such as income and employment) as well as political opportunities (such as representation in parliaments and other political bodies), and 3) the *security domain* - which is defined as reduced vulnerability to violence and conflict, as violence, particularly targeted at women and girls limits them from reaching their potential (p.18). An aspect and a tool which has often been used to promote gender equality is women’s empowerment (FAO, 2012). This takes cognisance of the different levels at which women and men can access resources and seeks to devise ways in which women can be supported to participate in mainstream development.

## **2.2 Women’s empowerment**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which spanned from 2000 to 2015 noted the importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment as prerequisites for achieving development of which agriculture is a key contributor. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a successor to the MDGs, also note the same (United Nations, 2015). Closing the gender gap is a key component that contributes to women’s empowerment, increased agricultural productivity and food security. Empowerment is contextual and a multi-dimensional concept. Kabeer (2002) defined empowerment as “expansion of people’s ability to make strategic life choices, particularly in contexts where this ability has been denied them” (p.4). There are various models of empowerment. This discussion drew from Longwe (1999) and USAID/IFRPI (2012). Longwe (1999) identified five levels at which women are empowered. These levels consist of the following:

### **2.2.1 Control**

This is the highest form of empowerment. It refers to a balance between women and men and ensures that neither dominates nor enjoys an advantage over the other. Kabeer (2001) noted that this is usually operationalised in terms of having a say in relation to the resources in question.

### **2.2.2 Participation**

This refers to equal participation in decision making at all levels by women and men.



### **2.2.3 Conscientisation**

This is having awareness of and understanding of the social basis of gender roles and the sexual division of labour and the fact that these are cultural and can be changed.

### **2.2.4 Access**

This comprises ensuring that women have equal access to the means of production such as land, labour, credit, education, training, marketing and all public services and benefits.

### **2.2.5 Welfare**

This is the basic level of empowerment which seeks to meet women's material basic needs relative to those of men. This is concerned with women's access to health, food, income and shelter and social protection (p.15).

The USAID/IFRP model is particularly concerned about women and their empowerment in agriculture. In this model, five domains in agriculture are identified as follows: agricultural production, resources, income, leadership, and time.

The domain indicators are built on the following definitions (IFPRI et al., 2012):

- *Production*: Sole or joint decision making over food and cash-crop farming, livestock, and fisheries as well as autonomy in agricultural production
- *Resources*: Ownership, access to, and decision-making power over productive resources such as land, livestock, agricultural equipment, consumer durables, and credit
- *Income*: Sole or joint control over income and expenditures
- *Leadership*: Membership in economic or social groups and comfort in speaking in public
- *Time*: Allocation of time to productive and domestic tasks and satisfaction with the available time for leisure activities

(p. 71).

A woman or a man is defined as empowered if she/he has adequate achievements in four of the five domains or is empowered in some combination of the weighted indicators that reflect 80 percent total adequacy. A key innovation of the Index is that it is able to show in how many domains women are empowered and, at the same time, reveal the connections among areas of disempowerment. A woman who is empowered can make effective household decisions and her household is better off socially and economically. It can also influence the type of assets

she acquires. Access to and control over assets is a key determinant of individual empowerment. Within a household there are assets that are held by women or men, or jointly and how these are distributed also determines and influences household decision making. The World Bank domains, Longwe's and USAID's model all speak of the same - that gender equality and women's empowerment are requisites for holistic development and agricultural productivity, which ultimately leads to food and nutrition security. In all of this, I take note that there are different forms of empowerment. Examples are provided by Luttrell, Quiroz and Bird (2009) and these include "economic empowerment - seeks to ensure that people have the appropriate skills, capabilities and resources and access to secure and sustainable incomes and livelihoods. Related to this, some organisations focus heavily on the importance of access to assets and resources, human and social empowerment - a process that fosters power (that is, the capacity to implement) in people, for use in their own lives, their communities and their society, political - capacity to analyse, organise and mobilise. This results in the collective action that is needed for collective change. It is often related to a rights-based approach to empowerment and the empowering of citizens to claim their rights and entitlements and cultural empowerment - The redefining of rules and norms and the recreating of cultural and symbolic practises" (p 9).

### **2.3 Benefits of gender equality and women's empowerment**

Further analysis of gender equality shows that by investing in women, the gains accrue to the entire household as women tend to be concerned about translating benefits to their entire households (World Bank, 2012; SOFA, 2011). The positive ways in which women make use of resources has been variously documented where social transfer programmes have been implemented (SOFA, 2011).

Where social transfer programmes have targeted women, the benefits have translated to the entire household (FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2012; Quisimbing, 2003; Pitt and Khandker 1998, 2003; Khandker, 2005; Strauss and Beegle, 1996; Hoddinott and Haddad, 1994). Social transfers can immediately improve income and reduce overall inequality including gender inequality, and contribute to household food security. There is persuasive evidence that social transfers have positive spin-offs for agriculture, even if farmers are not the transfer recipients. In all African countries where social pensions have been introduced (e.g. South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland), a consistent finding is that some pension income is spent on purchasing inputs (fertiliser, seeds) and hiring agricultural labour (Devereux, 2009).

Thus, even small grants can have an impact on inequality and reduce food insecurity. Social transfers also contribute to improved food security, dietary diversity and can improve children's nutritional status as demonstrated in Zambia's Kalomo Pilot project (Quisimbing, 2003). In this project, which sought to improve household nutrition, households were targeted with cash transfers that were primarily targeted at women. The number of household members living on one meal a day decreased from 19 percent at the baseline to 13 percent at evaluation when the cash was targeted at women (Draft UNICEF Social Protection Strategy, 2007). Evidence suggests that in households where the woman has control over resources, receiving cash transfers increases investments in their children's education and the household's social indicators (health, education, sanitation) improve. In Zambia's Kolomo Pilot project, overall absenteeism from school declined by 16 percent over the first nine months of the pilot scheme and enrolment rates rose by 3 percentage points to 79 percent. Cash transfers can also increase investments in productive assets. These are important for agriculture and will be discussed later in this chapter. In the Zambian pilot, 28 percent of the transfers were spent on investments. Households were able to refrain from the practice of selling assets for food, which also reduced cyclical poverty and food insecurity. Gender dynamics are therefore an important factor for consideration in the outcome of any social transfer programme, especially where transfers are linked to food and agriculture. It can therefore be concluded that increasing women's assets such as land, physical and financial assets has positive effects on household nutrition, school attendance and education, and health status (Quisimbing, 2003).

Investing in women therefore has gains. Yet, assets are still generally unequally distributed between women and men in households (Quisimbing, 2010). Distribution of these assets is important to household well-being when measured by outcomes such as food security, nutrition and education (Deere, 2006; Doss 2006; Quisimbing 2003). For example, the greater a woman's asset holdings at marriage, the larger the share the household spends on children's education. Increasing women's education reduces the rate of malnutrition by 43% (Smith and Haddad, 2000; Dwyer and Bruce, 1988; Buvinic and Avlenuela, 1996; Quisimbing and Maluccio, 2003) rather than increasing food availability, which contributes 26% to the reduction proxied by the ratio of female to male expectancy. Assets give individuals the capability to be and to act (Bebbington, 1999). They increase their agency. They also give meaning to people's lives. Assets can also be used as a means towards the acquisition of agricultural inputs necessary for production. Even though the majority of people working in agriculture are women, their access

to and ownership of productive resources and assets remains low (Tsikata, 2010; Quisimbing, 2003).

## **2.4 Ownership and control of assets**

Ownership and control of agricultural assets is an important factor in addressing food and nutrition security in that, among other contributions, these can be used as collateral in accessing loans. Asset ownership is considered important in decision making and managing household power dynamics. A study of Indonesian women's power, relative to that of their husbands found that addressing power relationships within households—which can be most easily influenced by strengthening women's ability to own assets—can have effects that go beyond the purely economic sphere (Quisimbing, 2003). Women's ownership of at least 25% of household assets was found to provide benefits in terms of decision making power within the household. Women's ownership and share of household assets was found to be a significant factor in their capacity to make autonomous reproductive health decisions, limit the number of children, and use prenatal and delivery care (Beegle, Frankenberg, and Thomas 2001). Additionally, women's ownership of land or other assets has been found to significantly reduce the level of domestic violence inflicted upon them (Agarwal and Panda 2007). This is in part because women who have property can flee marital violence because they have alternative means of livelihoods (Friedemann-Sánchez 2006; International Center for Research on Women 2006[ICRW]).

## **2.5 Relationship between gender and agriculture**

Gender and agriculture came to the fore of development through the writings of Boserup (1970) who drew attention to the gendered division of labour in traditional and non-traditional agricultural systems. She amplified the complexity of women's work, noting that gender differences in the labour market were due to socially constructed differences. Further studies have been carried out to show that women and men have different production priorities, which are influenced by social constructions and socialisation (Dey, 1985). Building on the work by Boserup, research has also gone ahead to try to understand the dynamics around women, men and agriculture and the social constructs that influence these dynamics. One dynamic is based on the concept of household head. Studies have sought to understand the notion of "household head" in as far as it influences agricultural outputs (Quisimbing, 2003).

The sex of the household head has often been used as a gender indicator in studies on gender and agriculture (Doss, 2013). Comparisons are often between men and women when in fact the sex of the household head is often misleading. For instance, “male” households are usually composed of both female and male, where “female headed” is when a male is not present at all (Fafchamps and Quisimbing, 2005). Household heads may also be determined by income contribution and customs, and these vary across contexts (Budlender, 2003). Furthermore, not all male headed or female headed households are the same. The welfare implication of the head is therefore different, depending on how the woman is head, for example, never married, divorced, widowed or abandoned, economic migration of husband. Using headship as a proxy for gender differences may also lead to underestimation of gender differences in agricultural productivity (Peterman et al., 2011). Household members do not always think alike (Strauss and Thomas, 1995; Haddad et al, 1997). For instance, women and men spend money differently, with women tending to focus on overall household betterment. Women are more likely to spend on food, health care, education and services that benefit the whole household (Haddad et al, 1997). Evidence from Malawi and Uganda shows that men will spend their income on assets that do not always satisfy the whole household (Njuki, et al 2011). On average, women spend 23% on food and 14% on assets, whilst men spend only 8% on food and 25 % on assets that benefit them and not necessarily the entire household (Njuki et al, 2011). Use of household assets is also not always a joint decision within household members as assets can be held and governed individually (Haddad et al, 1997). Under this model, if there is disagreement, the final decision is usually made based on bargaining power of the individual and this may be based on ownership and the nexus of control over assets. In general, women have less assets than men. However, this is also very contextual, for example, in a few areas women are more educated than men, though the general consensus is that men enjoy more advantages over women. Women’s bargaining power is therefore often limited.

Another issue to consider in discussing gender and agriculture is the life cycle at which women and men are. Many of these factors revolve around the biological. A woman might be constrained by biological needs and the need for child-care obligations which limit the extent to which she can participate effectively in agriculture, especially if she is required to work outside the home (Quisimbing, 2013). Other differences may also arise from women’s and men’s positions in society, depending on their life cycle phases. Some women may be in the

child bearing phase and therefore spend more time in the care and reproductive roles within the home whilst the men work outside the home. Even with these considerations, when both market and household work are considered, time allocation studies show that women still work significantly more hours than men and spend more time in subsistence agriculture as they are primarily concerned with household food security (Juster and Stafford 1991; World Bank, 2001).

By default, women live in male headed households but rarely do men live in female headed households, which conflate measures of household structure and composition of sex with the sex of the head. Measuring household heads through the sex of household renders women invisible when in fact they are also involved in other roles. With the impact of HIV and AIDS, women also spend time caring for the infirm (Raniga and Moutlong, 2013). The time they spend on this role is not accounted for in national statistics or in the GDP. These roles which are often unaccounted for have resulted in the over extension of women's labour in the household and the neoliberal era has been a conduit for perpetuating this (Quisimbing, 2009). These roles are shaped by socialisation and the social constructions of gender.

The dynamics in female headed households (FHH) are also quite different from those in a male headed household. For instance, FHH are disproportionately represented among the poorest households, have lower purchasing power due to fewer economic opportunities, and have more income insecurities (Quisimbing, 2009). In general, women are over-represented in sectors with lower incomes such as the informal sector (Boserup, 1970; ILO, 2015). With the increasing impacts of climate change, some of which include male migration, women and girls' time poverty is likely to increase as they absorb additional roles such as cattle management, which would have previously been undertaken by men. They are also bound to their homes because of the roles they have to play within the household (Fletcher, 2008). On the other hand, for those in female headed households, they have a dilemma of having to go to work outside the home to fend for the household in addition to the domestic roles.

## **2.6 Women's triple role and agriculture**

There is consensus that women have a number of roles that they play. These have been identified as reproductive, productive and community, what Moser (1996) calls women's triple role. Reproductive (familial) roles are those which include attending to family matters, taking care of its members, safeguarding their health, giving birth (although giving birth is the basis of humanity, it is not considered as real work), caring for the children, preparing food and managing the house. In developing societies, familial work requires tremendous effort and time, and it is usually the responsibility of girls and women. Since women perform a productive activity and a familial activity at the same time, this is considered "a double day" for women; "a double role or double burden" (Moser 1996, p.3).

Productive roles refer to work related to producing goods, services, and trade (agriculture, employment, free enterprise). When people are asked about what they do, they usually answer with a productive activity that generates income. Both men and women can contribute to productive work, but their tasks and responsibilities are determined by prevailing gender roles within each community. In most cases, women's productive work remains unseen and less appreciated than men's work. Women's work in the home is not usually measured or costed. This is also closely linked to the feminisation of poverty (Raniga and Ngcobo, 2014). Poverty is closely linked to women's triple roles and they usually end up wearing the face of poverty.

Community (social) roles include activities performed by the women at the local level in urban and rural areas. Examples include offering services to the local community, managing resources such as water, fuel, land, and the activities she performs with others to serve the local community. These activities vary according to the family situation and its social and economic status. Community work also includes organizing activities and social services such as festivities, fund raising and participating in different organizations, but these are rarely regarded as work in the economic sense although they require time and are vital for the educational, social and mental growth of communities. Such work has generally been relegated to women as it is seen to be reproductive and of little value or benefit outside the household.

The combined time burden of household chores and farm work is particularly severe for women in Africa (Ilahi, 2000). Because of the gender-specific assignment of tasks, any change affecting the family or the environment may have different implications for men and women. HIV/AIDS, for example, has caused a significant increase in the time needed to care for sick family members or orphaned children of relatives, taking away productive time from women (Addati and Cassirer, 2008). Deforestation leads women to travel increasingly long distances from the homestead to collect firewood (Kumar and Hotchkiss, 1988; Nankhuni and Findeis, 2004). Poor infrastructure and limited provision of public services require Tanzanian women in rural areas to spend long hours on water and fuel collection for domestic use, food preparation and other domestic and child-care activities (Ilahi, 2000).

Given these roles, women living in male headed households may be prejudiced in the way in which their contributions to overall household agriculture production are quantified, yet they are heavily involved in agriculture production in addition to the above roles. Within the household and external farming enterprises, as part of the contribution towards the role women play in agriculture, FAO (2011) noted the following:

- Women make essential contributions in developing countries, but their roles differ significantly by region and are changing rapidly in some areas.
- Women are farmers, workers and entrepreneurs, but almost everywhere they face more severe constraints than men in accessing productive resources, markets and services. This “gender gap” hinders their productivity and reduces their contributions to the agriculture sector and to the achievement of broader economic and social development goals. Closing the gender gap in agriculture would produce significant gains for society by increasing agricultural productivity, reducing poverty and hunger and promoting economic growth.
- Women comprise, on average, 43 percent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, ranging from 20 percent in Latin America to 50 percent in Eastern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Their contribution to agricultural work varies even more widely depending on the specific crop and activity.
- Women in agriculture and rural areas have one thing in common across regions: they have less access than men to productive resources and opportunities. The gender gap is found for many assets, inputs and services – land, livestock, labour, education, extension



and financial services, and technology – and it imposes costs on the agriculture sector, the broader economy and society as well as on women themselves.

- Policy interventions can help close the gender gap in agriculture and rural labour markets (p. 15).

Women's role in agriculture is therefore unquestionable, yet it remains misunderstood and undervalued. What is clear, however, is that gender roles influence the livelihood strategies that are adopted (Fletschener, 2008; World Bank, 2009). Men are responsible for activities like clearing the fields in preparation for planting. In aqua culture, men do the fishing and women mend the nets. Women are also known to manage more complex households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members and maintaining their homes.

## **2.7 Women's contribution to agricultural productivity**

Understanding gender relations in agriculture requires bringing together different sources of information and methods of analyses that address household gender dynamics, especially in so far as headship influences on household decision making is concerned. Gender analysis examines how the social roles of women and men are determined and how these affect the outcomes being studied. It is not possible to study women's or men's behaviour without looking at how they relate to the broader environment. Information that has traditionally been collected has not been disaggregated by sex and the information has largely been quantitative without going further to understand the underlying qualitative aspects (Quisimbing, 2012). For instance, Gupta (2009); Momsen (1991); Mehra and Rojas (2008); UNECA (1972); and World Bank, FAO and IFAD (2009) consistently highlight that women produce 60-80% of the food in most developing countries and are responsible for half of the world's food production. However, Doss (2013) argued the empirical evidence around these assertions is not clear. These assertions are based on different events. For instance, the claim about women growing locally grown food suggests that women are the primary producers of food that is grown and consumed within the home in developing countries.

The evidence from time-use surveys and agricultural labour-force statistics does not support this general statement, although women do comprise over 60 percent of the agricultural labour

force in some countries and work far longer hours than men. Looked at in isolation, the assertion suggests men are not involved in anything else that contributes to agricultural production, when in fact they are also involved in other work. However, the truth is that women do not produce food separately from men or the entire household. Quantifying the amount of food produced by women requires making arbitrary assumptions about gender roles in the production process. Since most food is produced with labour contributed by both women and men, to assign the output separately would be very complex. From this discussion, it is evident that women perhaps are not wholly responsible for 80% agricultural production as previously and extensively believed. To conclude so would be to ignore the evidence that women live in households where roles and responsibilities may be shared, albeit unequally. The distribution of these roles may differ depending on whether the woman is the household head, or she lives in a male headed household.

There is therefore insufficient empirical data to measure the amount of food produced by women. Having said so, there is a range of data available on labour inputs and on agricultural output that can help to shed light on women's contributions to food and agricultural production. The most comprehensive and updated data are from FAO (2011), which show that women constitute 42.2% of the agriculture labour force for the world; they work 16-18 hours/day as unpaid family workers; spend at least 49% of their time on agricultural activities, and about 25% on domestic activities (FAO, 2011). This is for women that are "economically active" which means they contribute to the household activities but also make an impact at the national levels. For Sub Saharan Africa, women contribute 47.1%, Latin America -16%; in low income countries - 46.3%; and in Asia they contribute 42% of the total agriculture labour force.

However, it should be noted that in assessments and studies, rural women in Latin America indicate that their home is their primary responsibility even if they are heavily engaged in agriculture. Hence, they are missed in such statistics. Other difficulties arise because data tends to emphasize income generating activities, under-estimating subsistence production so that activities such as small livestock rearing, which is largely the domain of women in Africa, are undercounted.

Though there is under-estimation of women's work in agriculture, evidence still does not prove that women produce the bulk of agriculture products. If men who are identified as part of the economically active agriculture population, provide fewer hours of agriculture labour than

women in the same sector, this would under-estimate the importance of women. Some literature suggests that men in Africa work fewer hours than women across all activities (Blackden and Wodon, 2006). Time use studies heavily support the fact that women are heavily involved in agriculture in addition to processing food, fetching water, collection of firewood (Sweeney, 1979). Time use studies would even suggest that if food production includes processing and preparation, then women would contribute probably 60-80% of the total labour force. Earlier assertions are therefore true but the variables examined were not refined to the levels of analysis of today.

The care economy in particular aggravates women's time poverty because care responsibilities require additional time, apart from work in productive activities and these impact on their agricultural productivity. The fact that women spend time in the care economy enables men in the household to undertake work outside the home. Women typically work more hours than men, but much of their work is in the informal sector, including in family or household production activities. This work is typically unremunerated, and generally undervalued and unrecognized. The dearth of opportunities for women is often reinforced by discrimination in the labour market, with all these forces acting in concert to discourage women from participating fully in the formal market. This results in a cycle of poverty and discrimination. The cycle of gender discrimination starts with discrimination in access to economic activity as a result of disempowerment. This leads to weak bargaining power within the household. From the care economy perspective, women are then disproportionately burdened with the care of children, older household members and the infirm. This results in time poverty and leads to women being unable to access opportunities such as education and employment outside the home. As a result, they are excluded from viable economic opportunities and the cycle continues.

## **2.8 Women as unpaid agricultural workers**

Women work in agriculture as farmers on their own account, as unpaid workers on family farms and as paid or unpaid labourers on other farms and agricultural enterprises (Bread for the World Institute, 1995). Modest as it is, this recognition of women's unpaid work matters. It acknowledges the importance of care to the economy in general. This unpaid work is also vital to maintenance of the agricultural workforce, and is key to food security (FAO, IFAD and ILO, 2010, p. 35). Women are involved in both crop and livestock production at subsistence and

commercial levels (Boserup, 1970). They produce food and cash crops and manage mixed agricultural operations often involving crops, livestock and fish farming. Unfortunately, they are not paid as much as their male counterparts. When they are paid, what they are paid tends to represent the value of their contributions, but this does not include the work that women would have done outside the agriculture labour force, which is regarded as unpaid family labour. It also assumes that the labour markets are competitive when in fact these are segmented with women found in lower paid jobs and seasonal work (FAO, 2011). There are sufficient claims of gender discrimination in agriculture labour markets to indicate that this would undercount women's contribution.

Recognition of women's unpaid work in the care economy breaks down the common dichotomy that, while men (or women who join the labour market) produce, women at home consume. The difference is not between production and consumption; it is between work that is recognized and compensated, and work that is not. Unpaid and largely unrecognized care work also functions as a safety net of last resort, as women work harder to make up for inadequate government support, or for the reduction of such support in times of crisis because of public budget constraints (OXFAM, 2011).

Women in sub-Saharan Africa have relatively high overall labour-force participation rates and the highest average agricultural labour-force participation rates in the world. Cultural norms in the region have encouraged women to be economically self-reliant and traditionally give women substantial responsibility for agricultural production as they are primarily responsible for household food security. Boserup's (1970) work on African farming systems shows that women tend to grow crops for subsistence. This is closely linked to the argument of colonisation which took men to work on farms. The relegation of women to subsistence, linked to the reproductive role and provider of the household agriculture, presents distortions in agricultural systems. Consequently, colonisers perceived female agricultural labour as inefficient and recruited men into cash cropping schemes providing them with extension and technology (Sen, 1989). This led to marginalisation of women as producers and neglect of "women's crops" which are generally crops that are consumed in the household (Sen, 1989, p.9).

Women's contribution to agriculture is greater in Africa than anywhere else in the world (Whitehead and Tsikata, 2003). Men, on the other hand, spend time on the productive aspects. They seek the activities that generally generate income and will spend very little time on

household chores if there are no perceived economic gains. In male headed households, the men may opt to migrate to find paid work, which increases the burden of work on women.

Agriculture and gender roles have also been affected by migration. This is significant in addressing gender and agriculture. Migration creates changes in family structures, sources of income, and the contribution of women and men to agriculture. The impacts of migration depend on the reasons for migration, that is, (work, marriage, the destination i.e. internal, regional or international, and duration - temporary or permanent (Donato et al, 2006). Very little is known about the intersection of gender, migration, and agriculture as data has tended to focus on international migration with limited data on internal migration. However, evidence shows that women may end up as the face of agriculture in rural areas as men migrate (Deshnikar, 2009). There has been considerable discussion about consequent changing roles in relation to whether male migration and non-farm occupations were causing a “feminisation of agriculture” (Meizen-Dick et al, 1997, p.2). Women are now taking on extra roles and responsibilities and take on extra burdens caused by outward migration. As a result of this migration, many rural households have diversified their livelihoods to include non-agriculture income sources, especially where the women are unable to cover up for men’s absence. Remittances in this regard play a significant part towards food security.

## **2.9 Gender and access to agricultural inputs and resources**

Agricultural productivity is also affected by the extent to which one has access to inputs. Access to timely inputs is a key determinant for productivity and effective farming systems. Such inputs are accessed differentially. These may be purchased or may be provided as transfers by government or NGOs to farmers. Evidence shows that women and men face different constraints in accessing inputs. Women’s food insecurity and poverty lies in the structural inequalities that exist in the access and control of agricultural resources such as land, inputs such as fertilizers and the proceeds from their labour (IFAD, 1999; Bhatasana, 2011). Jerven (2013) argues that a major and fundamental gap remains in our understanding of the current input landscape at the country and continent level, despite myriad studies of some specific facet of modern input use throughout or in some specific place within Sub-Saharan Africa.

Women's perceived poor performance in agriculture is not a result of their lack of capacity to produce, but is more related to the extent to which they have access to inputs. Quisumbing (1996) noted that female farmers were equally efficient as male farmers once individual characteristics and input levels were controlled for. The special constraints faced by women, especially with denied or very limited access to farm credit, land and production inputs, have not been addressed by policy makers (FAO, 2011). In some instances, women account for no less than 50 per cent of the food produced on farms, but are only allocated one percent of the resources (Tsikata, 2010). Consequently, their full potential in accelerating agricultural production and food security has not been realised. The introduction of new agricultural technologies has not always been gender-neutral as some new innovations have unwittingly brought economic losses for women in agriculture. As far back as the 1980s, there was consensus that there is considerable evidence that shows that the general status of women in African societies involves pervasive inequalities.

Despite the importance of inputs to agriculture, there is a lack of consensus on the actual magnitude and effects of gender differences in access to agricultural inputs. Inputs in this instance refer to seeds, technology, land, education, and extension training. Studies carried out in the past show empirical evidence on gender differences in access to inputs (Quisumbing, 1994, Kevane, 2004). Studies have been limited to access to land with limited explanation of the impact of these differences. Where information is available, it is generally focused on access to land or based on dated and region-specific research. For instance, in a study in Zimbabwe that compared women and men's agriculture productivity, Horrell and Krishnan (2007) found no significant difference in maize yields achieved or fertilizer usage by female household heads, but they found that disadvantages persisted for women in the access to and utilization of markets for the sale of produce.

Inequality in the distribution of inputs between men and women is linked to production inefficiency, yet interventions targeting smallholder farmers often fail to redress women's lack of access to, and control of important agricultural resources. They change in response to shifting economic, political, and cultural forces, which can create new opportunities for women to strengthen their control of resources or serve to perpetuate the unequal distribution of resources between women and men. Evidence also suggests that when productivity levels are

compared between women and men, men tend to produce better than women. Peterman et al (2010) propose a decomposition of the gender differences in productivity to determine whether the differences in levels of output are due to differences in resource endowments or men being able to use a given resource more efficiently. Of those women in the least developed countries who are economically active, 79% report agriculture as their primary economic activity. This means if they don't have access to productive resources, their levels of agricultural productivity may be compromised. The situation is more apparent for female household heads that may not be able to use the presence of a male figure to their advantage.

Evidence also shows that female farmers are largely excluded from modern contract-farming arrangements because they lack secure control over land, family labour and other resources required to guarantee delivery of a reliable flow of produce. For example, women comprise fewer than 10 percent of the farmers involved in smallholder contract-farming schemes in the Kenyan fresh fruit and vegetable export sector (Dolan, 2001), and only 1 of a sample of 59 farmers contracted in Senegal to produce French beans for the export sector was a woman (Maertens and Swinnen, 2009).

The next section discusses the differences in women's and men's access to productive resources.

## **2.10 Land**

Land is the most important asset for households that depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. The July 2009 Declaration of the African Union (AU) on *Land Issues and Challenges in Africa* reaffirms "the crucial importance of land in socio-economic growth and sustainable development, and in securing the social, economic, cultural and livelihood means of populations" (p.13). Access to land is a basic requirement for farming and control over land is synonymous with wealth, status and power in many areas. Given the disparities in access to land by women and men, and noting the contribution of women to agricultural productivity, strengthening women's access to, and control over, land is an important means of raising their status and influence within households and communities. This stems from the fact that in traditional African societies, women had recognised rights to use land on which they farmed. With the advent of modern land adjudication, the title generally goes to men as heads of families and women are now sometimes left with nothing more than a worker's claim to the land they

farm (Tzikata, 2010). This reduces women's economic security and increases dependence on husbands and children. It inhibits women's access to credit and cooperatives, thus diminishing agricultural productivity.

Improving women's access to land and security of tenure has direct impact on farm productivity, and can also have positive, far-reaching implications for improving household welfare. Strengthening land ownership by women in Nepal, for example, is linked to better health outcomes for children (Allendorf, 2007). Landesa (2012) reports that where women lack rights or opportunities to own land, there is an average of 60 per cent more malnourished children. They also report that when women have direct control over assets such as land and income, this increases their decision-making power and status, resulting in positive nutritional impacts for them and their families.

However, women typically have weaker rights to land within the same household than their husbands or male counterparts because community allocation generally go to men and land transfers within families occur among men (Udry, 1996; Quisimbing and Maluccio, 2003; Deere et al, 2011). Changes in household structure, for example divorce and death, affect women more adversely.

Reforms that aim to strengthen women's individual land property rights are often questioned. O'Laughlin (2005) indicated that these may be an element in more general neoliberal agricultural and land policies, based on individual land titling. Along the same lines, writing about South Africa, O'Laughlin (2005) observed that a narrow emphasis on legalising women's individual right to land embeds a standard neoliberal proposition - the centrality of privatisation and the commodification of land within the liberal language of human rights. It focuses our attention on gender inequality in inheritance of property, of which the rural poor have very little (Tzikata, 2010). Land distribution or ownership should therefore not be regarded as panacea for addressing food security as studies in Southern Africa have shown that land redistribution and restitution did little to alleviate poverty or food insecurity (Bradstock, 2005). Access to land should therefore be correctly contextualised so that women are not further marginalised by a focus on individual titling.



## **2.11 Education**

Education is a key resource for increasing agricultural productivity, yet women face constraints in accessing this. Research has shown that having 4 years of primary education rather than none is associated with an increase of about 80 per cent in annual farm output (FAO, 2011). For women, the level of school education also contributes to agricultural productivity. In higher institutions of learning, the percentage of women students in the faculties of agriculture is minimal. The important role that education plays in agriculture productivity is a well-known fact. Women who have completed primary education are able to attend extension lessons and read instructions on labels. Their children also tend to be better nourished (Quisimbing, 2012).

## **2.12 Technology**

Technology is another important resource for effective agricultural productivity. African women work 15 to 16 hours a day using traditional tools and implements. Mechanization, especially in agriculture, has concentrated on tasks done by men. Very often the work of women has increased as a result of this mechanization. For example, when tractors are used to plough extended areas, this makes women have more acreage to weed and thin, which is a chore traditionally carried out by women.

## **2.13 Access to finance**

Access to finance is key for successful rural development strategies. Without adequate access to loans or insurance, farmers who face shocks such as droughts may lose the few assets they may have (Zeller et al., 1997). Programmes are largely crafted for rural finance with men as the heads of households, ignoring the fact that women are active and productive. Fletschner (2009) and Diagne et al. (2000) noted that women were likely to be credit constrained compared to men. Women were less likely to own livestock which could be used as collateral. As a result, women encountered many constraints in getting access to credit. Formal credit institutions normally insist on security or collateral to provide credit. This is especially in the form of land or property. In Africa, very few women own land. As a result, women are excluded from credit due to lack of collateral. Bank procedures are also very cumbersome. There is rampant discrimination against women borrowers in banks and before they negotiate they may be asked to have the husband co-sign. Lending institutions are also biased against women. Women tend

to have limited control over resources accepted as collateral as studies in Malawi, Bangladesh and Paraguay have shown (Fletschener et al., 2010). Banks sometimes refuse to give loans to women on the grounds that women's requests are small and therefore costly in administrative costs. According to bankers, they are therefore unprofitable.

Such attitudes have given rise to the growth of microfinance institutions. The industry of Microfinance institutions (MFIs) is growing rapidly because of the promise of reaching the poor and marginalised and ultimately improving their lives. Pioneered in Bangladesh by Mohammed Yunus in 1976 who opened the Grameen Bank to lend very small sums of money to poor people, the MFI approach has now grown and been widely embraced globally by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and donor agencies among others (Roodman and Morduch, 2009; Yunus, 2007). Countless otherwise financially excluded people have benefitted from the services of MFIs. In 1974, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) started its own microcredit program with group formation (of rural poor) and a target group approach (i.e., targeting the poor); it later became the largest NGO in the country. Because cash resources may be limited for smallholder farmers and/or cash inflows do not arrive when inputs need to be purchased, access to credit can be an important catalyst to input use and subsequent agricultural productivity gains. For example, Matsumoto and Yamano (2011) found that having access to fertilizer credit increased teff yields by 37 percent in Ethiopia. Because of poorly developed financial markets and the high risks associated with providing credit to smallholder farmers, credit is widely thought to be used only minimally throughout SSA and, therefore, acts as a major constraint to input use (Croppenstedt, Demeke and Meschi, 2003; Zerfu and Larson, 2010). Balland and Gugerty (2002) hypothesised that one of the reasons women were active in rotating credit and savings associations (ROSCAs) was that this was a socially accepted strategy to save. ROSCAs allowed women to protect their savings from husbands and to create credit and finance for themselves.

Whether because of innate psychological characteristics or attitudes influenced by social conditions, men and women tend to exhibit systematic differences in their behaviours with regards to loans. Men take risks and borrow bigger sums of money, yet repayment rates are lower, whereas women borrow smaller sums of money, but their repayment rates are higher (Fletschener et al, 2010; Croson and Gneezy, 2008; Browne, 2006). How money is spent in a

household is dependent on the bargaining power that women have. Women's access to credit improves girls' nutrition whilst for men it does not (Harazika and Guha-Khasnobis, 2008), and children are better fed (Khandker, 1998), more likely to be in school and be literate (Holvoet, 2004; Pitt and Khandker, 1998). Brown (2009) argued that the social definition of gender affects entitlements. Knowing what one owns helps to understand a man's or woman's worth, for example, Kanembou women in Chad cannot take out loans with future crops as collateral, since even when they grow crops they do so on behalf of men who are the proprietors of the crop.

## **2.14 Labour**

According to Donna, Kerner, and Reyna (1991), socialisation into a particular culture presupposes the gradual grasp of these "natural differences" between women and men and thus provides the basis for sometimes complementary and at times conflictual worldviews. Women and men therefore enter the labour force from different perspectives based on socialisation, class, age and geographic location. Whitehead (1990) argued that interest in the gendered division of labour in African agricultural systems presupposes that food crises have arisen because of the economic changes which have pushed rural women to food production in under-resourced subsistence sector of small scale agriculture. This, however, ignores the fact that food crops can be sold as cash crops, food crops and cash crops are grown by a variety of methods, women are heavily involved in wage labour on cash crop plantations, and that there are numerous cases of women managing farms for cash crops.

It is important to understand and appreciate the way women and men farmers are incorporated into the wage system. Quisimbing and Yohannes (2004) noted that women spend more time caring for under 5-year-old children, which is why they did not apply for public works programmes, and their participation in the labour force was limited depending on the stage of their life cycle. Based on a study in Zimbabwe, Horrell and Krishnan (2007) found that male headed households have more labour at their disposal than female headed households. Fletcher (2008) also found that households with more labour exhibit higher technical efficiency, whereas additional female labour has no impact on technical efficiency. There is also division of labour, for example, in SSA men will do the clearing of a field and women are responsible for example,

processing grain in preparation for the hammer mill and the eventual cooking of the grain. Labour is an important factor in farming as it can affect the level at which households farm.

### **2.15 Extension services**

Extension services refer to the range of services provided by government, NGOs and private companies (FAO, 2011). It includes training, information, demonstration plots, field visits and advice. Based on research by World Bank and IFPRI (2010) in Ghana and Ethiopia, it was found there were gender inequalities in accessing extension services. Evidence from Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya show that women have less access to Farmer Field Schools (FFS), but evidence also shows that women who participate in FFS are more likely to adopt new technologies including improved seed varieties (Davis et al., 2010).

In some areas women cannot interact with men, yet the bulk of extension services are provided by men. For instance, in a study by FAO (2012) it was found that only 10% of the extension staff were women. In Ethiopia research has noted that females are not allowed to interact with male extension workers. The World Bank /IFRI (2010) study found that extension agents in Ghana were mostly male (Ghana -14% females, 10% of veterinary assistants were females). Senegal female extension workers had a positive effect on information dissemination (ibid). ICT is also another means of accessing information yet in a study of the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, only 23%, 23% and 37% respectively of the women had access to mobile phones. Women were less likely than males to have mobile phones (GSMA Development Fund, 2010).

Where women are prevented from interacting with males other than relatives, it limits their access to information especially information regarding finance, which reinforces the gender gap. They have lower levels of literacy and cannot access financial information (UNDP, 2007; Nginwa et al., 1997). Contrary to empirical evidence, extension workers and researchers continue to address the problem of African food production as if farmers were male.

## 2.16 Conclusion

Gender thus deserves marked attention. Women face various forms of discrimination as economic actors, whether self-employed or waged workers, whether working on-farm or off-farm. Such discrimination diminishes their economic autonomy and contributes to their weak bargaining position within the household. In part because of this, their assumption of household responsibilities and care duties continues to be taken for granted (Ramachandran 2006: 1). The work of women farmers is essential for food security. In Zimbabwe, as in much of southern Africa, rural household food security rests upon the labour of women.

Gender norms do not change overnight, and attempts to directly challenge such norms may unintentionally result in an erosion of women's claims to resources. Interventions that seek to put agricultural resources in the hands of women to address the unequal distribution and access to resources, need to consider the trade-offs inherent in challenging and respecting gender norms. Women are often constrained in access to and control of land, water, and other natural resources; complementary inputs such as seeds and fertiliser; new varieties and technologies; agricultural extension; labour; credit; markets; and social capital. Oftentimes, interventions are designed to relieve one constraint, not realising that gender norms—or constraints in other resources—are more binding and may affect the outcome of the intervention. Without specific attention to gender issues, programs and projects are likely to reinforce inequalities between women and men and may even increase resource imbalances. The most common factors in coping with a food deficit are the possession of some economically productive skills, and the right to use and dispose of a large variety of resources which an individual can depend on for existence.

Emphasizing women's contributions to agriculture in developing countries, FAO (2011) highlighted the need to close the gender gap in access to agricultural resources, education, extension, financial services, and labour markets; to invest in labour-saving and productivity-enhancing technologies and infrastructure to free women's time for more productive activities; and to facilitate women's participation in flexible, efficient, and fair rural labour markets. This is based on evidence which has shown that women are indeed disadvantaged in the way agricultural reproductive resources are accessed. IFAD (2003) states that women are frequently overlooked and underestimated in development strategies, which leads to lower productivity on their part (IFPRI, 2007; World Bank, 2007).

Addressing gender issues in agriculture means having a gender-just food and nutrition security system. This is “a world without hunger, where women, men, girls and boys have equal access to nutritious, healthy food, and access to the means to produce, sell and purchase food. It is a world where the right to food for all is realised. Importantly it is a world free of gender-based violence, where the roles, responsibilities, opportunities and choices available to women and men – including unpaid caregiving and food provision – are not predetermined at birth but can, where possible, be developed in line with individual capacities and aspirations. Finally, it is a world where countries are equipped to produce enough food for their own populations through environmentally sound processes, while also being able to participate in (gender) equitable global and regional food trading systems” (BRIDGE, 2014: 6).

In the next chapter, I discuss food security concepts and explain how these are interlinked with human rights, both of which are central to the social work profession.

## CHAPTER 3: FOOD SECURITY CONCEPTS

### 3.1 Introduction

The global agenda of food security has been under discussion for several years, with each discussion bringing different ideas and agendas (Sen, 1989). The discussion has been further amplified in the aftermath of the global food price crisis which exploded in 2007–2008, placing food security in sharp focus and leading to a succession of international summits. According to von Braun (2008), from November 2007 to June 2008, prices of the main commodities went through significant increases on global markets. The food price index rose by nearly 40%, compared to 9% in 2006. Price increases were significant for wheat, maize, and rice (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] 2008; Mitchell, 2008). This was of concern to countries such as Zimbabwe whose staple diet is composed of maize. According to some measures, these increases meant that real prices of food commodities reached a 30-year high in June 2008. The OECD (2008) noted that international price increases affected most severely food-deficit countries, which were more dependent on imports to feed their populations. Within those countries, the poorest net food buyers were the worst affected because they dedicate the largest proportion of their household budget to the purchase of food. Developing countries are affected by such food prices in that they cannot afford high levels of food subsidies and have limited and in some cases no social safety nets in place.

Consumers affected by high prices include many of the poorest rural households. Female-headed households typically present a high dependency ratio, and are typically the object of discrimination. Even if they farm, these households often are net food buyers, not producing enough food to be self-sufficient (World Bank 2007 p.109). The net effect of the global food crisis was an increase in poverty levels, especially in countries where there are no social safety nets (Maros and Will, 2008). Since this global food crisis, the question of food security has “not left the top of the international agenda” (Zohir, Mallik, Zabeen and Ahsan, 2010: 65). Various coping mechanisms are engaged at individual and national levels and may include the provision of social transfers in the form of agricultural inputs and food aid as a means of social protection. The utilisation of these inputs is therefore related to several subsequent results, one of which is the creation of household food security. However, despite the varied forms of agriculture based social transfers, households have continued to be hungry and food insecure.

Without major changes in development practises, the International Food Policy Research Institute (2006) predicted that by 2015:

- 600 million people would suffer from hunger
- 900 million people would live in absolute poverty
- 128 million pre-school children would be malnourished. When children suffer from malnutrition, the impacts are usually irreversible, and they tend to become less developed physiologically and intellectually.

The reality on the ground was somewhat different from what was predicted. The number of chronically hungry people gradually declined from almost 1 billion three decades ago to 842 million in 2013, according to estimates by FAO (2015). About one in eight people in the world suffers from hunger today. The problem is especially urgent in South Asia and Africa south of the Sahara, which together are home to almost two-thirds of the world's hungry people. At the same time, more than 2 billion people are affected by hidden hunger, that is, deficiencies in essential micronutrients, such as iron, vitamin A, and zinc (IFPRI, 2014). According to FAO (2015), hunger and under-nutrition can be eliminated by 2025. But, to achieve this goal, governments and donors must devote sufficient resources and implement appropriate policies and investments. This aspirational target is an immense, but not insurmountable, challenge. Evidence from countries such as Brazil, China, Thailand, and Vietnam, which have substantially reduced hunger and under-nutrition, suggests that it is realistic to strive for this goal (FAO, 2015). The problem of food insecurity is thus a broader problem, beyond food shortages. It lies in the mal-distribution rather than food insufficiency, skewed development between the Global North and the Global South, and the influence of neoliberalism that places profit above people's welfare and well-being. Sewpaul (2015) argued,

*Neoliberalism does not get reproduced in a vacuum. We are all complicit. It is a discourse and practice, which rarefies individual interests where transnational corporations (TNCs) and a few, rich powerful elites dominate the market primarily interested in profit making. Following this individualistic logic, the state uses neoliberal socioeconomic policies to allow it to abdicate its responsibilities in relation to the welfare of its people (p.464).*



### 3.2 Food security defined

Food security is regarded as a social concept which embodies different facets. The concept embodies nutritional science and concerns about malnutrition. It is also connected with politics in the household, the community or region, and access to enough correct food. It is about the struggles for livelihood and the economics of food availability; the real constraints of deprivation, vulnerability, marginality, disempowerment and the loss of economic strategies necessary to make food available, what Devereux and Maxwell (2001) refer to as loss of entitlements. Therefore, any concern with poverty and food security has to recognise not only that they are *complex* and *multidimensional*, but that most of the analysis is location specific. There is a strong consensus that local conditions vary and that local perceptions matter in the discussion of food security (Maxwell, 1999: 101). Furthermore, global policies and practices have a profound impact on local levels.

Food security, as a concept, has fluctuated in relevance since the 1970s when it was first coined. A higher proportion of research publications appeared in the 1980s and early 1990s. However, by the mid-1990s the concept of food security became less topical and gave way to debates and policies concerning ‘poverty alleviation’ (Maxwell, 1999). Food security is defined by the Committee on Food Security (2012) as,

*When all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to food, which is safe and consumed in sufficient quantity and quality to meet their dietary needs and food preferences, and is supported by an environment of adequate water and sanitation, health services and care, allowing for healthy and active life (p.5).*

Kennedy (2006) also noted that food security was achieved when households could obtain adequate quality food and to have a healthy active life. Food quality refers to whether the food available meets people’s micronutrient requirements such as iodine, vitamin A, protein and iron (Benson, 2004). For a nation, community or family to be food secure, food should be available at all times and acceptable within the given culture. Kennedy (2006) added that food security means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes, at a minimum, the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods and an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (i.e. without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other negative coping strategies). This conceptualisation of food security has evolved over the years. The latest, according to the Food

and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO, 2002), food security is a function of four multi-dimensional factors namely:

### **3.1.1 Food availability**

This means sufficient quantities of appropriate, necessary types of food from domestic production, commercial imports or donors. On the other hand, food insecurity is limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or limited or uncertain ability to acquire foods in socially acceptable ways.

### **3.1.2 Food access**

This is when individuals have adequate incomes or other resources to purchase or barter to obtain levels of appropriate foods needed to maintain consumption of an adequate diet/nutrition level. Food access also is a function of the physical environment, social environment and policy environment which determine how effectively households are able to utilize their resources to meet their food security objectives. Drastic changes in these conditions, such as during periods of drought may seriously disrupt production strategies and threaten the food access of affected households. To the extent that these shocks often lead to the loss of productive assets such as livestock, they also have severe implications for the future productive potential of households and, therefore, their long-term food security.

### **3.1.3 Food utilisation/consumption**

This refers to the proper use of food; proper food processing and storage techniques are employed; adequate knowledge of nutrition and child-care techniques exist and are applied; and adequate health and sanitation services exist. This is closely related to the satisfaction of the nutritional needs of a household. In other words, it is one thing to have food available, it is another matter to know how this food should be utilised for the nutritional benefit of a household. In the absence of an understanding of proper utilisation of the available food, households can be malnourished.

### **3.1.4 Food stability**

This refers to access to adequate food at *all* times. There should be no risk of losing access to food as a consequence of sudden shocks (e.g. an economic or climatic crisis) or cyclical events (e.g. seasonal food insecurity). The concept of stability can therefore refer to both the availability and access dimensions of food security.

Further elaboration is given by Devereux (2009), who argued that food security is centred around three main areas which are:

1. *Entitlements*: The mere presence of food does not mean one necessarily has access to it. However, a person can establish command of food over some alternative means or bundles based on politics, legal and economic arrangements. The set of alternatives which one can establish are the person's entitlements. A farmer can grow food and will be entitled to what s/he grows excluding any obligations s/he may have. She/he can sell if she/he wants to buy something else in an endowment exchange (Devereux, 2009).
2. *Endowment* is given by the initial owner e.g. a labourer's labour or a landlord's withholding of land. These endowments can be used to establish entitlements. A peasant farmer may exchange the use of her/his land and labour for a crop. There are some extended entitlements that are not justiciable in a court of law but have established and legitimised themselves through informal social systems. This includes the favourable treatment of men/boys over women/girls in the distribution of family food.
3. *Social relations* determine entitlements. There may co-exist conflict and congruence of interests e.g. the gender division of labour. This may be suppressed so there is perceived harmony when in fact one group of people may be feeling disadvantaged, but because they have existed in that community and its social systems they tend to learn to live with the injustices. Usually, women are the disadvantaged, but society has socialised them to accept discrimination as a normal way of life. Social relations therefore tend to hide injustices and discrimination.

In all of these multi-dimensions of food security, the overall availability and subsequent consumption of nutritious food is determined along gender lines, which if not clearly addressed may be a source of discrimination against, usually women and girls.

### ***3.2 An overview of food security***

There is a general realisation that food is a basic right and should be readily available to everyone. As a result, food has become one of the most consistently mentioned rights in international human rights. In spite of this, interest in food security has waxed and waned over time, particularly in relation to changes in the extent and nature of food problems worldwide. The 1975 UN definition of food security reflected the thinking of the day, which focused on adequate production at the global and national level. This was also a conventional view of food

as a primary need. Food insecurity is, however, a matter of both limited food availability and restricted access to food. Amartya Sen, a Nobel laureate in economics, is credited with initiating the paradigm shift in the early 1980s that brought focus to the issue of access and entitlement to food. Food insecurity was no longer seen simply as a failure of agriculture to produce sufficient food at the national level, but instead as a failure to guarantee access to sufficient food at the household level. Dreze and Sen (1989) argued that persistent hunger was not mere lack of affluence but of substantial and extreme inequalities. These inequalities were usually a manifestation of underlying factors such as changes in markets (pricing of food, agricultural inputs), government policies e.g. land reform policies, unemployment and household illness. Social protection e.g. cash transfers, agricultural inputs, free food hand-outs, and work-for-food programmes are means to prevent deprivation and vulnerability.

The high contribution of the agricultural sector to GDP also underlines the limited diversification of most African economies. On average, agriculture contributes 15% of total GDP, however it ranges from below 3% in Botswana and South Africa to more than 50% in Chad, implying a diverse range of economic structures (Beintema and Stads, 2014). Agriculture employs more than half of the total labour force (IMF, 2012) and within the rural population, provides a livelihood for multitudes of small-scale producers. Smallholder farms constitute approximately 80% of all farms in SSA and employ about 175 million people directly (Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, 2014). In many countries, women comprise at least half of the labour force (FAO, 2015).

The agricultural sector has a pivotal role in employment in SSA, employing more than half of the total workforce. While its importance to the rural population is well documented, recent surveys suggest that agriculture is also the primary source of livelihood for 10% to 25% of urban households (FAO, 2015). National census data indicates that the number of people employed primarily in agriculture has increased over time (Yeboah and Jayne, 2015). To improve upon past efforts to achieve food security in Africa, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) developed the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), which the African Union Assembly endorsed in 2003. The important role of the agricultural sector in contributing to food security is reflected in its prioritisation in the development agenda. CAADP was prioritised within the 2003 Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in which there were commitments to allocate at least 10% of national budgetary expenditure towards its implementation, and aimed to achieve a 6% annual

growth of the agricultural sector. Less than 20% of countries have achieved their commitment to agricultural spending. More recently, these commitments were reaffirmed in the Malabo declaration on accelerated agricultural growth, which pledged to end hunger in Africa by 2025. Despite the prioritisation of the agricultural sector, FAO's Monitoring and Analysing Food and Agricultural Policies (MAFAP) programme noted an overall decreasing trend in the share of public resources channeled to agriculture in the ten countries reviewed in 2013 (FAO, 2014).

The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) is an integral part of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The programme is based on four pillars which are:

- Extending the area under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems such as irrigation
- Increasing market access through improved rural infrastructure and other trade related interventions
- Increasing food supply and reducing hunger across the region by increasing smallholder farm productivity and improving responses to food emergency crises
- Improving agricultural research, improving systems to disseminate appropriate new technologies and increasing support for farmers to adopt these.

The question, however, is always the extent to which these political commitments are translated into tangible results. To achieve the above, African governments, at the 2003 African Union meeting in Maputo, committed at least ten percent (10%) of their national budgets to agriculture within five years. Since its inauguration, CAADP has successfully guided country and regional actions designed to stimulate economic growth and reduce hunger and poverty through increased investment in agriculture. Africa as a whole, however, has not met the CAADP targets of raising annual agricultural growth by at least 6 percent and committing at least 10 percent of national budgets to agricultural development. A key driver to achieve these goals has been concluded to be an investment in agricultural research and development (R&D). This can be an especially effective tool to develop and adapt new technologies that enhance the quantity and quality of agricultural outputs, leading to greater food security (IFPRI, 2013). The NEPAD also announced that it had identified agriculture as a priority for sub-regional and regional approaches to development, and as an engine of growth in the improvement of people's livelihoods in the rural areas. The NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development

Programme (CAADP), which sought to invest \$240 billion by 2015 focuses on three priority areas where increased investments would help improve Africa's agriculture, food security and trade balance. These are:

- extending the area under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems;
- improving rural infrastructure and trade-related capacities for market access;
- increasing food supply and reducing hunger.

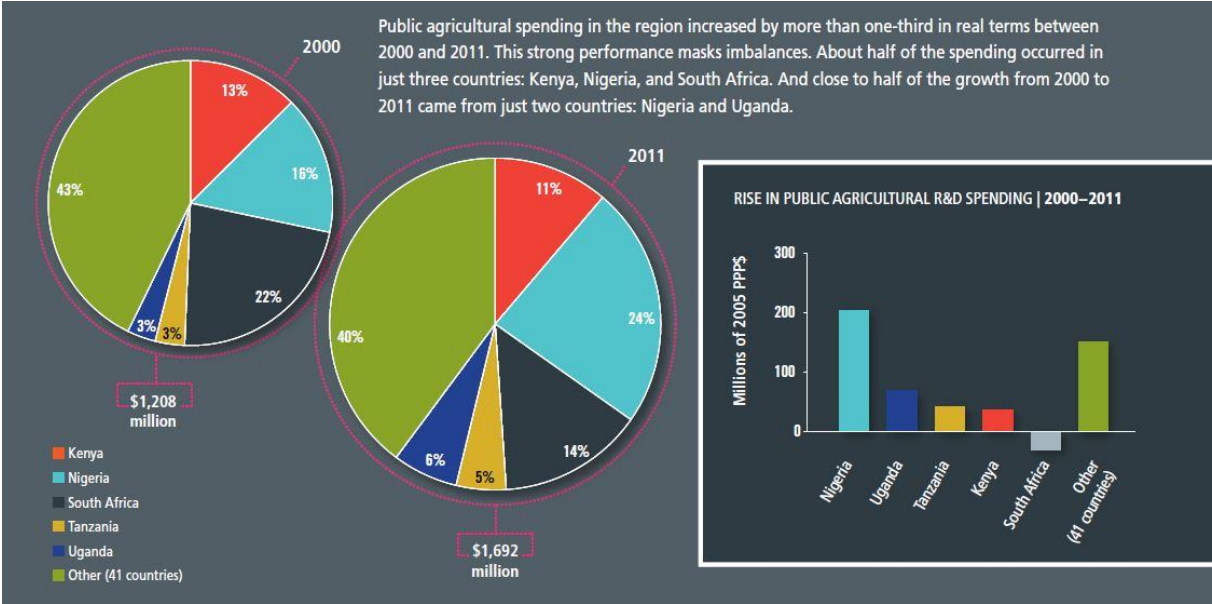
Despite the expression of political will and commitment to attaining food security status for their citizens by African governments, to date, overall investment levels in most countries are still well below the levels required to sustain agricultural needs. In 2011, SSA as a whole invested \$0.51 for every \$100 of agricultural output on average, which is well below NEPAD's 1 percent national investment target (IFPRI, 2014). The 2011 intensity was comparable to the value recorded in 2000 but considerably lower than values recorded in more recent years, which indicate that growth in agricultural spending, though substantial, has not kept pace over the past few years with growth in agricultural output. In 2011, just 10 of the 39 countries for which agricultural R&D intensity ratios were available met the 1 percent target. In contrast, 18 countries recorded intensity ratios lower than 0.5. IFPRI (2014) noted that despite these low figures, investment in Africa in agriculture as a whole was rising. A few countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda) have relatively high levels of investment in agriculture compared to other African countries.

Beintema and Stads (2014) noted that the slow progress towards food security was attributed to low productivity of agricultural resources, high population growth rates, political instability and civil strife. However, vast regional differences remain, and the success achieved in countries with stable political conditions, economic growth and expanding agricultural sectors suggests that appropriate governance systems, institutional capacities, and macroeconomic, structural and sectorial policies can work together to improve food security on a long-lasting and sustainable basis.

Public agricultural spending in the region increased by more than one-third in real terms between 2000 and 2011. About half of the spending occurred in just three countries: Kenya,

Nigeria, and South Africa. And close to half of the growth from 2000 to 2011 came from just two countries: Nigeria and Uganda.

Figure: 3.1: Public agricultural spending in Africa, south of the Sahara, 2000 and 2011



Adapted from IFPRI, 2014

The above figure shows the amount of expenditure on agriculture by different governments. It also shows that governments have largely not as yet met the 10% expenditure on agriculture under the CAADP commitments.

### 3.3 Food security as a basic human right

Alston (1984), in his writings on global apartheid noted that;

*It is paradoxical but hardly surprising that the right to food has been endorsed more often and with greater unanimity and urgency than most other human rights whilst at the same time being violated more comprehensively and systematically than any other right (p.9).*

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) Article 25 (1) states that “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food ..”. The 1996 World Food Summit (WFS) Rome Declaration agreed that hunger is both a violation of human dignity and an obstacle to social, political and economic progress. International law recognizes that everyone has the fundamental right to be free from hunger. National governments must therefore do everything possible to ensure that people have the

physical and economic access to enough safe, nutritious food to lead healthy and active lives. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights also gave national governments the primary responsibility for promoting food security. The promotion and operationalisation of these rights were recognized as operating at three levels namely:

***Obligations to respect:*** The State must not interfere with individuals' livelihoods. If national legislation is found to have such an effect, then immediate action must be taken to correct it.

***Obligations to protect:*** This requires regulations against poor conduct by non-State actors that would hinder people from acquiring adequate, safe food. These regulations cover food hygiene, quality and labelling standards, labour conditions and land tenure. Regulations must also protect against unfair market practices, such as withholding price information or creating monopolies.

***Obligations to fulfill:*** This requires action by the State to identify vulnerable groups and to design policies that improve their access to food-producing resources or income. As a last resort, direct assistance may be needed to ensure that, at a minimum, people do not experience hunger and poverty.

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) creates another impetus for the propagation of the right to food and gender equality. Article 14 requires States to take into account the "particular problems faced by rural women and ensure they participate in and benefit from agriculture and rural development". Specifically, under this article States Parties shall ensure that rural women have the right to, among others: benefit from social security programmes, obtain access to credit, markets, technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform and land resettlement schemes. Article 13(b), requires States Parties to ensure that women have the same rights to financial credit as men, and directly supports Article 14's provision (g) on rural women's access to agricultural credit and loans. These are critical to addressing the challenge of access to resources that farming women encounter. Articles 15 (paragraph 2) and 16(h) require States Parties to ensure that women have the same property rights as men. For rural women dependent on agriculture, land is the most important productive asset (World Bank, 2008). Fulfilment of these commitments matter to women and girls and should be seen as an objective in its own right, essential to full attainment by women and girls of their right to food.

Accordingly, and in response, the 1996 WFS set a target of a reduction in the number of hungry people by at least 20 million every year between 2000 and 2015. While some regions made



impressive progress over the two decades preceding 2000, demonstrating that hunger is not an intractable problem, the number of undernourished people worldwide reveals that since the 1996 WFS, the average annual decrease has been only 2.5 million, far below the level required to reach the WFS goal of halving the number of undernourished people by 2015.

The World Food Conference (WFC) (1996) was also entrusted with developing ways and means of mobilizing the international community to take specific action to resolve the world food problem within the broader context of development and international economic co-operation. The WFC accepted the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition as a basis for its plans, part of which recognised that:

*The grave food crisis that is afflicting the peoples of the developing countries where most of the world's hungry and ill-nourished live and where more than two thirds of the world's population produce about one third of the world's food - an imbalance which threatens to increase in the next 10 years - is not only fraught with grave economic and social implications, but also acutely jeopardizes the most fundamental principles and values associated with the right to life and human dignity as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (p.5).*

The World Food Conference also declared that:

1. Every man, woman and child has the inalienable right to be free from hunger and malnutrition in order to develop fully and maintain their physical and mental faculties. Society today already possesses sufficient resources, organizational ability and technology, and hence the competence to achieve this objective. Accordingly, the eradication of hunger is a common objective of all the countries of the international community, especially of the developed countries and others in a position to help;

2. It is a fundamental responsibility of Governments to work together for higher food production and a more equitable and efficient distribution of food between countries and within countries. Governments should initiate immediately a greater concerted attack on chronic malnutrition and deficiency diseases among the vulnerable and lower income groups. In order to ensure adequate nutrition for all, Governments should formulate appropriate food and nutrition policies integrated in overall socio-economic and agricultural development plans based on adequate knowledge of available as well as potential food resources.

Furthermore, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) also recognized the importance of addressing hunger and poverty and Goal 1 sought to: *Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger*,

*Halve between 1990 and 2015, reduce by two thirds, between 2002 and 2015, the proportion of under-five children who are undernourished.*

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a successor to the MDGs also note the importance of ensuring nations have food security. International level commitment towards food security is therefore very apparent and clearly focused towards the elimination of hunger in all nations. Addressing food insecurity or hunger must not be just a political commitment; it must be translated to practical actions. Of note also is that hunger is very much a part of African pre- and post-colonial history. The continent has experienced almost cyclical patterns of hunger with the most significant being that experienced in Ethiopia between 1984 and 1985. The crisis attracted international support which culminated in US\$200 million being raised from the US government to feed the nation (Sen, 1989). The African Union Agenda 2063<sup>1</sup> which is a “strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years which builds on, and seeks to accelerate the implementation of past and existing continental initiatives for growth and sustainable development,” also recognises the importance of human rights. It has seven aspirations, one of which is “an Africa of good governance, democracy, and respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law”. All of these cannot be fulfilled in the absence of food security and gender equity. Food insecurity is clearly a product of a myriad of factors. The most prominent are discussed below.

### **3.4 Selected causes of food insecurity**

Despite the overall gains in food production on a global level, many countries have failed to make progress towards sustained food security. To date, Africa produces less food than it did three decades ago (FAO, 2011). OXFAM (2002) argued that food insecurity and hunger were closely related to poverty and an inability to purchase food. Tackling hunger could not be solved by simply producing more food. Famines have occurred even with plenty of food. Though an increase in food production generates more food, it does not always lead to access to food by everyone. Issues of food affordability (especially for non-producers) can affect the food security status of families. Most people buy food rather than produce it; in fact, very few people, including small farmers, are entirely self-sufficient in food production. Vulnerable communities

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<sup>1</sup> <https://au.int/agenda2063/about>

such as women and child-headed households are exposed to various limitations such as insufficient land, inadequate capital to purchase required inputs and the labour required for the production of adequate food for their upkeep.

Analysts generally believe that Africa's current food emergencies are the result of a combination of problems that range from drought and adverse weather patterns and civil conflict, to political-economic crises, HIV/AIDS and poor policy decisions. No single factor is uniquely responsible. The UN Security Council acknowledged its concern that Africa's food crisis is a threat to peace and security. Africa, which reversed from being a key exporter of agricultural commodities into being a net importer has the highest percentage of undernourished people and has shown the least progress on reducing the prevalence of under-nourishment in the last 30 years (Madeley, 2002). Chronic food insecurity now affects some 28% of the population—that is, nearly 200 million people who are suffering from malnutrition (FAO, 2011).

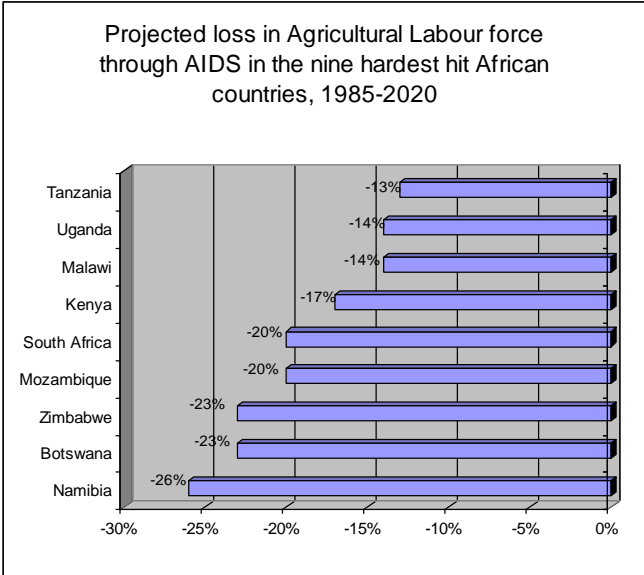
The next section discusses some of the specific factors that contribute to food insecurity.

### ***3.4.1 HIV and AIDS***

The current food crisis in Africa is inextricably linked to several factors including the widespread HIV pandemic that has deepened and compounded the crisis. As a result, food security at the household and community level is seriously threatened. Since 1985, AIDS has claimed the lives of 7million agricultural workers in the 25 hardest hit African nations and by the year 2020, over one-fifth of the agricultural labour force in most Southern African nations will have died of AIDS. Furthermore, households living with HIV/AIDS have been shown to reduce their assets by 40 -60% to meet the cost of caring for sick family members (WFP, 2004). This creates a cycle of poverty and food insecurity. Furthermore, as agricultural workers and families are affected by HIV/AIDS, they tend to plant fewer hectares and produce less because of the depleted labour force. In the absence of resources to outsource farm labour, households suffer food deprivation and subsequently, malnutrition.

All dimensions of food security, that is, availability, stability, access and use of food are affected where the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is high. In Southern Africa, up to 60 -70% of farms have suffered labour loss due to HIV/AIDS (WFP, 2004). Farming skills are being lost, agricultural development efforts are failing, rural livelihoods are disintegrating, productive capacity to work the land is declining and household earnings are shrinking. The UN estimated that 9.6% of Zimbabwe’s agricultural labour force was lost in 2000, with Malawi losing 5.8% (Oxfam, 2002). The impacts of these losses are still being felt today, where communities suffer from limited extension support and agriculture labour force.

Figure: 3.2 Projected loss in agricultural labour force through AIDS in Southern Africa

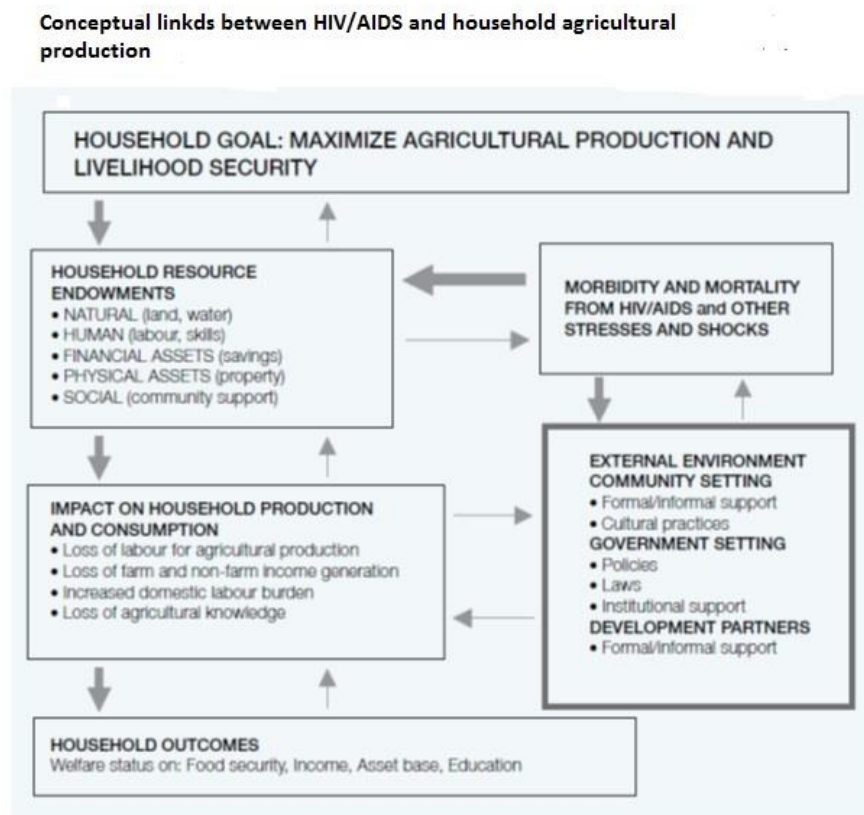


Source: World Food Programme, Facts and Figures, July 2004

The above table shows that in Southern Africa food shortages are now exacerbating the downward spiral of health due to HIV/AIDS and children suffering malnourishment.

Below is a visual presentation of the link between HIV, agriculture and food security

Figure 3.3



Source: UNECA, 2005

Because productivity in the agricultural sector is especially hard hit by the HIV/ AIDS pandemic, food shortages and chronic poverty are likely to persist as HIV/AIDS and food shortages go hand in hand in Southern Africa. The scourge of AIDS has made countries in Africa and individual communities in general more vulnerable to food insecurity than they would have been had it not been for AIDS. There is a clear and critical two-way relationship between HIV/AIDS and food insecurity in Southern Africa with women being amongst the worst affected. The pandemic is being driven by the very factors that cause malnutrition: poverty and inequality, and these are both phenomena that affect women more than men. The hunger currently experienced by millions across the region increases the likelihood of HIV infection, as people are driven to adopt risky coping strategies to survive (Raniga and Simpson, 2010). Poverty is often recognised as one of the contributors towards food insecurity (Sen, 1981; Raniga and Moutlong, 2013). There is recognition that poverty is a structural issue which must be addressed at that level for the general populace to enjoy food security.

### ***3.4.2 Marginal and inadequate land***

In areas where the land is marginal, inhabitants cannot produce adequate food supply to last a whole year. Usually, these are villagers who use traditional labour intensive technology. This is a threat to food supply and predisposes the households to low food supply for six to eight months after harvest. In Zimbabwe, poorer lands are what the poor peasant farmers have had access to, and this is hardly enough for effective agricultural production (Ruzivo Trust, 2012).

In relation to AIDS, during the terminal stages of the illness, many households sell off land to raise money for hospital bills and medication. A report by OXFAM (2002) revealed how in Kenya some hospitals and clinics were said to be engaged in a bizarre system whereby terminally ill patients were encouraged to surrender land title deeds as security for medical bills. This happened with the full knowledge of the medical personnel that the patients would not recover fully to claim back the documents. This made certain households lose a lot of land to such medical institutions. By the time the sick person was dead, which was usually the breadwinner and land title holder, families were left with limited land and property. Security of land tenure is not only a determinant of food production—land is an essential resource for many people if they are to escape poverty. The distribution of land in eastern and southern Africa is so unequal that land reform and land redistribution is essential if there is to be a major reduction in poverty. Land reform programmes have enormous potential to increase agricultural production. But it is essential that they are accompanied by comprehensive programmes of agrarian reform, including access to credit, savings and markets in rural areas to fundamentally redress inequality. Uncertainty of tenure, as governments generally own land, make it difficult for farmers to access credit at the banks (OXFAM, 2004).

### ***3.4.3 Lack of purchasing power***

HIV/AIDS is one of the most expensive illnesses ever recorded in the history of health in many countries. The pandemic has made many rich families experience extreme poverty and lack of resources to purchase the basics of life. Although there may be an adequate stock of staple foods for sale in rural areas, many families do not grow enough food for their subsistence, and cannot afford to buy them because they have no income. Prolonged droughts and poor harvests have heightened levels of poverty amongst communities. This has weakened the fabric that

bonded relatives and the extended families to provide for each other in times of need. Extended family members have been known to support each other through hard times with cash, food, housing, and care for the sick or dependent relatives, and the provision of material relief, labour, and emotional support to destitute or bereaved families (World Bank, 2009). With increasing levels of poverty, this has become less and less the norm (Mushunje, 2014).

The interplay between governance and economic development performance has undermined efforts to address issues. According to OXFAM (2002) famine is not just an ‘economic disaster’. While the lack of purchasing power at the individual and household level can be attributed to poverty, it is frequently the result of political disasters - not just conflicts, but failure in the political accountability of governments, and even political interference, as has been the case in Zimbabwe. With the various land resettlement programmes, especially the heavily disputed fast track land reform programme which saw the unorganised land invasions, farms have not been as productive as they should be (OXFAM, 2002).

The global food price crisis which exploded in 2007–2008, saw prices of the main commodities going through significant increases on global markets as already explained. International price increases affect most severely food-deficit countries, which are more dependent on imports to feed their populations. Within those countries, the poorest net food buyers are the worst affected because they dedicate the largest proportion of their household budget to the purchase of food. Consumers affected by high prices include many of the poorest rural households. Women, as the primary responsible people for household food security, tend to suffer the most in such instances. Even if they farm, these households often are net food buyers, not producing enough food to be self-sufficient (World Bank, 2007). Because female-headed households are disproportionately represented among the poorest households and among households with a high dependency ratio, they also tend to have comparatively lower purchasing power due to fewer economic opportunities related to their lower educational levels, wage disparities, and overall income insecurities.

#### ***3.4.4 Natural hazard famines and disasters***

Regular droughts are a fundamental part of the climate in Southern Africa where there is normally an exceptionally high variability in rainfall and temperatures. One of the main variables influencing the current crisis in Africa is not just the fall in production because of

variable weather patterns, primarily droughts but also floods, and the magnitude and frequency of extreme events is increasing. An FAO (2011) study has predicted that climate change would cause severe drought in Africa and that by 2050 an additional 30 million Africans could be affected by famine if relevant actions are not undertaken to mitigate against climate change.

Environmental factors impact heavily on agriculture, and agriculture in turn has a substantial impact on the environment and ultimately food security. There are increasing reports of land degradation, deforestation, water logging and salinisation contributing to the declining ability of Africa to feed itself (Lipton, 2001). Lesotho is a case in point. Agriculture in this small country faces a catastrophic future, with average farm yields having declined by more than two-thirds since the 1970s. Soil erosion is spreading fast, and soil fertility is deteriorating even further. Lesotho has experienced unseasonal weather in the form of frost, cyclones and hail (Lipton, 2001).

Appreciation of the severity of the global ecological crisis has also become apparent. Planetary boundaries are being tested by dispersion of toxic chemicals and contamination of the food chain, ocean acidification and loss of fish stocks, disruption of the hydrological cycles and water scarcity, land system change and land degradation, loss of biodiversity and plant genetic diversity, and climate change (FAO, 2015). The acceleration of climate change is the most prominent of these trends, and highlights the magnitude of the ecological crisis. In South Asia, climate change will have considerable impact on agricultural yields. By 2050, it is anticipated that the region's rice production will drop by 14%, wheat production by 49%, and maize production by 9%—as compared to a scenario without climate change (Nelson et al. 2009).

While the effects of climate change will vary across crops and regions, it now appears beyond doubt that sharp price increases for all major crops may be expected accompanied by, shifting diets, and rising demand for non-food crops. This will also be exacerbated by population growth. Some observers estimate that by 2050, child malnutrition could increase by 20% as a result of climate change and associated developments (Nelson et al. 2009). The impacts will be especially severe on women and girls, because of the increased proportion of women among small-scale food producers, and because of their unequal bargaining power within households (Dominelli, 2012). Women's and girls' time poverty may increase as a result of the impacts of climate change on resources (e.g. water and fuel wood availability).



Time poverty may increase with climate change, as it could well be more difficult for women to secure water, food, and fuel for cooking and heating (Parikh and Denton 2002; UN Women Watch, 2009). Climate change will reduce food security, not only because of the reduced availability of productive resources and its effect on food supplies, but also because of expected reductions in time for caring practices (Masika, 2002). The anticipated increase in burdens on women and girls implies a diminishing of their capacity to exploit opportunities for income-generating activities or education (2011; Masika, 2002). Climate change will also disproportionately affect women and girls because of their greater vulnerability to extreme weather-related events—such as droughts and floods—due to gendered norms in society (Dominelli, 2012; Climate Change Cell, 2009, del Ninno et al, 2001). Furthermore, key decisions concerning preparedness and adaptation strategies are often left to men, with women excluded from decision making processes (Cronin et al. 2004). As noted in the 2010 State of Food Insecurity in the World, men and women are often affected very differently in crisis situations. Men may migrate in search of alternative employment, while women take on a higher proportion of work previously handled by men. These differences influence what resources women and men can draw upon in crisis situations, and thus their ability to respond (FAO and WFP 2010 pp. 21–22).

Evidence suggests that many countries and regions that are vulnerable to natural hazards lack the capacity or are poorly prepared to respond. The capacity to organise, at country level, a set of people who can identify the problem, analyse the information that is coming from the ground and design solutions to prevent famine, is either not there or is not being utilised. The policies, institutions and capacities have to be in place to respond and mitigate. There are, nevertheless, many cases of successful famine prevention, including Kenya and Botswana in the mid-1980s and Zimbabwe and South Africa in the early 1990s (OXFAM, 2002). However, what is clear is that recovery and rehabilitation efforts that address the root causes of chronic food insecurity and vulnerability to drought have been extremely limited.

### ***3.4.5 Conflicts***

Drought and conflict often interact so closely that they are inextricable as causal mechanisms. There are a growing number of new and worsening conflicts that are increasingly violent and long lasting. Virtually every country that has suffered famine in the past 20 years has suffered a war at the same time—this is particularly true of famines in the 1990s. While Africa has

experienced many droughts, they were generally managed with reasonable efficiency. It has been the combination of war and drought that has caused large-scale suffering and death. Of the 25 countries in Africa affected by food emergencies in 2003, ten were experiencing civil strife, and four were emerging from conflicts (Lipton, 2001). War and geopolitical conflict has been considered to be a key contributor to poverty and food insecurity. Wars based on tribalism e.g. Sudan and Eritrea, the Rwandan genocide, and displacement of people have been known to cause food insecurity. In Eritrea, for example, parts remain inaccessible due to landmines, and since the war with Ethiopia ended, the government has become increasingly repressive. Despite the ending of the civil war in Angola there are several areas in which people cannot be accessed because of landmines and collapsed infrastructure (Lipton, 2001).

At best, agricultural production is interrupted, but in areas of protracted conflicts, production is devastated. Other direct economic outcomes include price changes for basic commodities, closure of markets, destitution and displacement, disruption of trade and aid flows. Conflicts are also more likely to deflect scarce resources into military budgets (to feed armies and purchase weapons) and away from critical development needs resulting in collapsed infrastructure. In terms of the proportion of undernourished people, the conflict-ridden Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the worst performers, with the number of undernourished people having tripled (OXFAM, 2002).

Famine may not only be a by-product of war; it may also be an instrument of war. There are many cases in Africa of political interference—certain groups may be more vulnerable because of deliberate indifference or even victimisation by the government, coupled with the lack of political power of these groups. Evidence abounds in both Angola and Sudan of wide-scale starvation because of lack of access by aid organisations to those in need of food, and of deliberate victimisation on the part of the government. In Angola, civilian populations, which were the target of both parties to the conflict, were under constant patterns of attack and reprisal for the three years prior to the ending of the war. They were displaced by force or threat of force, and their villages and homes often burned down as well as systematically plundered, preventing them from growing or harvesting crops and depriving people of basic resources (Oxfam, 2002).

### ***3.4.6 Economic crisis and politics***

The economic crisis and politics of developing countries must be seen in the context of the structural distortions and imbalances in the region's economy (Sewpaul, 2014a; Sewpaul, 2014b). This vulnerability to sudden economic downturns in countries that already lack the capacity and infrastructure to cope with them can heighten the level of the disaster. A number of key countries in the region are plagued by poor macro-economic performance. Coupled with global economic integration it has meant that the downward trend has had ripple effects throughout the region.

Politics holds centre stage in both current regional dramas in sub-Saharan Africa. In Zimbabwe, failure of governance, both through lack of accountability and an opposition to democratisation, and in particular, the way in which the land reform programme has been instrumentalised and implemented, has resulted in a severe undermining of the previously robust agricultural economy (Ruzivo Trust, 2012). Even though the Zimbabwe land reform programme offered both promise (in the longer term) and threat, there is currently concern over the under-utilisation of newly settled land and the possibility of lower crop yields. The 2006 Millennium Development Goals report noted that it was too soon to assess the impact of the land reform. However, the Zimbabwe 2010 MDG report did not have a promising outlook. On conclusion of the MDGs, Zimbabwe had not fully met the goals (ZDHS, 2015).

At the end of 2002, an estimated 90% of the 300,000 Zimbabweans who were given land by the government under the land reform programme still lacked farm inputs, and some 94% did not have seeds for the then upcoming season. The situation was further aggravated by the uncertainty of tenure as it appeared that the government still owned the land, making it difficult for farmers to access credit at the banks. More recently, farmers were offered a 99-year lease for land which the government of Zimbabwe has indicated can be used as collateral. By the end of 2002, Zimbabwe's average farming output was down by about 75% from the previous year. Financial mismanagement in the sale of the country's strategic grain reserve has also played a crucial role in contributing to the country's food crisis (OXFAM, 2002).

Zimbabwe has experienced sustained levels of hunger and poverty, which is worse amongst women. An analysis of the poverty trends shows that women have been and are disproportionately affected by poverty compared to men. Female headed households (FHH) experience higher levels of poverty than male headed households, with 68% FHH living below the Total Poverty Consumption Line (TPCL) in 2003 (GoZ, MDG Status Report, 2010). The ZW MDG (2013) report also stated that although Zimbabwe had experienced improved economic growth rates in the past three years, rising from a GDP of 5.7% between 2001–2006 to 9.3% in 2011, this had not translated to growth in productive employment and poverty reduction. This is likely due to weak connections between the growth sectors (agriculture, mining, tourism) and other sectors of the economy. The decline in formal employment, with many workers engaged in poorly remunerated informal jobs, has a direct bearing on both poverty and hunger. Ninety-four per cent of paid employees in 2011 received an income equal to or below the total consumption poverty line (TCPL) of US\$500 for an average family of five, while three out of every four employed persons in Zimbabwe were classified as in ‘vulnerable employment’. In the agricultural sector, the total number of both formal and informal employees declined by 5% from 2010 to 2011. The decline also impacted on poverty and hunger reduction because most Zimbabweans depend on agriculture to meet their household and food security requirements (ZIMSTATS, 2012).

#### ***3.4.7 Poor terms of trade***

Post-colonial trade has relied on export revenues to generate surplus needed for development. Poor terms of trade are seen as the result of rising prices of imports and falling prices for exports. Demand for certain crops has been affected by surplus thus reducing prices (Frank, 1969; Watts, 1983; Amin, 1981). African countries were exploited to provide raw materials but with little done to build infrastructure.

### **3.5 Coping against food insecurity**

Southern Africa is no stranger to droughts and food shortages and the Africans have developed coping mechanisms (Campbell and Trechter, 1982; Colson, 1979; Flewett, 1986; Watts, 1983). These coping mechanisms have included making strategic decisions about how to meet their needs such as the use of informal safety nets in which people draw on their social networks, food storage, crop diversity, migration, dietary adjustments to eating less and cheaper meals

and even scrounging for fruit and seeds, or more desperate measures shifting in intensity from the selling off of assets to migrating off the land. Migration and employment has also been another mechanism. Usually males will migrate to work in nearby towns or countries and send remittances (Lombard, 1985; p.38-40; Dupre and Guill, 1984). With modernisation, wage labour is the preferred option hence the migration. Because of this migration, in some places such as in East Africa the elderly, women and children have become the farm labourers which has also resulted in a change to the face of how food security is ensured (Cohen and Odihambo, 1989). Other mechanisms have included crop varieties biofortification, biotechnology to accelerate the development of drought tolerant and disease resistant crops (Brady 1985); and large scale high input commercial agriculture (La-Anyane, 1985; p. 28,).

Social protection programmes have also been put in place by some governments. These include public works programmes. Public works programmes, sometimes referred to as cash-for work or food-for-work, are best used as a livelihood protection mechanism and are best implemented with an employment guarantee (Berhane, Hoddinott, Kumar and Taffesse, 2011). For example, India's National Employment Guarantee Scheme is a guarantee of employment when needed, effectively provides insurance and enables households to undertake more risk in their normal livelihood strategy than they would do in the absence of the programme. Households can then plant higher-risk and higher-yield crops, moving to higher income generation. Results from an evaluation of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia between 2006 and 2010 showed that participation in the PSNP and the Household Asset Building Programme raised the likelihood of using fertilizer by 19.5 percentage. Public works programmes also have the potential to create indirect benefits. Construction of infrastructure such as roads, bridges and irrigation systems can lead to significant second-round employment benefits and multiplier effects on local economies and agricultural productivity (Berhane, Hoddinott, Kumar and Taffesse, 2011).

Devereux et al. (2008) identify a number of actual and potential synergies and conflicts between smallholder agricultural policies and social protection policies in Africa. They note that in terms of macro-level synergies, effective investments in agriculture should promote growth in agricultural production and rural incomes. This would result in economic growth which ideally should avail public resources for investment in social protection and promote

pro-poor growth in incomes which would reduce social protection needs. They argue that in terms of macro-level conflicts, agricultural and social protection policies typically compete for limited financial resources and political influence, since they tend to be regarded by governments and donors as distinct rather than complementary policy sectors, and their implementation is often uncoordinated and internally contradictory. In spite of this, Lund (2008) argued that social protection should be seen as an investment in the human potential of poorer workers in the informal economy, and especially for poorer women. In some instances, coping mechanisms have focused on the protection of entitlements which entails targeting all vulnerable households with support in the form of social transfers such as free food handouts, provision of employment and agriculture inputs. Experiences from Malawi show that the Social Cash Transfer Schemes reduced women and children's risk-coping activities. Such activities included engaging in transactional sex or in hazardous child labour (Hall, Moore, Harper and Lynch, 2009).

Since women are considered to be more concerned about the general welfare of the household, in order to increase women's control over transfers, it may make sense in some circumstances to distribute transfers in the form of food, because in many societies food is seen as the domain of women. Women are therefore more likely to have control over the use of transfers of food, and of cash-like instruments tied to food (Ligon and Sadoulet, 2007). Making transfers conditional on activities in women's domain, such as taking children to health clinics, can also ensure that a cash transfer is given to women as opposed to the household head (who is generally male). However, it is important that programmes take into consideration the time demands placed on women, because evidence shows that time constraints can affect nutritional outcomes (Dawson and Tiffin, 2002). Intra-household redistribution has also been adopted in which there is preferential treatment of children, men and lastly women (Fernandes and Menon, 1987: 109).

Coping strategies adopted by families in the face of higher food prices and loss of income commonly impose a disproportionate burden on women. Zohir et al. (2010) asked people in urban slums in Bangladesh about their coping strategies after the 2008 food crisis. The most common strategies revealed from responses, and a review of other studies included spending out of savings, borrowing from friends and relatives, and the sale of assets. Households also reduce expenditures by replacing market-bought goods with home-produced substitutes—such

as prepared food or fuel wood. They also substituted family-provided services for services previously sourced from outside—such as child-care or elementary health care. Whenever possible, work time tends to increase, with household members who usually do not work—women, children, and the elderly—being asked to work within the home and outside (Björkman, 2006). It is not always clear if such work is decent or not. ILO (2012) summed up decent work as opportunities for work that are productive and deliver a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and fair treatment of all women and men. Agriculture based workers may not always enjoy such conditions, especially if the work is not regulated. Decent work has become a universal objective and has been included in major human rights declarations, UN Resolutions and outcome documents from major conferences including Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the World Summit for Social Development (1995), World Summit Outcome Document (2005), the high level segment of ECOSOC (2006), the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017), Conference on Sustainable Development (2011) and in the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015).

### **3.6 Social work, food security and human rights**

The IFSW Manual on Human Rights and Social Work (1992) explains that social work originates variously from humanitarian and democratic ideals. Social work practice has, since its beginning, been focused on meeting human needs and on developing human potential and resources. The issue of food security therefore makes it the business of social work as this is a human rights issue. The IASSW & IFSW (2014) provide a definition of social work:

*“Social work is a practice-based profession and 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 knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing”.*

The same bodies recognize that the “interconnected historical, socio-economic, cultural, spatial, political and personal factors serve as opportunities and/or barriers to human wellbeing

and development” (IASSW & IFSW, 2014). The lack of food by one group of people could be explained by the structural barriers, such as international unfair trade deals and neoliberalism which contribute to the perpetuation of inequalities, exploitation and oppression. Critical theory in social work thus seeks to interrogate such inequalities and raise a level of consciousness that questions such unjust situations. The social change mandate is driven by the need to challenge and change those structural conditions that contribute to marginalisation, social exclusion and oppression. Social change initiatives recognize the place of human agency in advancing human rights and economic, environmental, and social justice (Sewpaul and Larsen, 2014).

The profession of social work is based on the principles of “respect for the inherent worth and dignity of human beings, doing no harm, respect for diversity and upholding human rights and social justice” (IASSW & IFSW, 2014). Since its inception, social work has been a human rights profession (Lombard and Twirikize, 2014). From this perspective, the right to food security is a key component of the concerns of social work. Ife (2012) explained that the right to food is a second generation human right. There are 3 generations of human rights. The first has to do with the right to be treated with dignity, right to public safety and to be free from discrimination. The second has to do with the right to adequate income, housing and food among others. The third is concerned with the right to economic development. The generation of rights are indivisible and interdependent (Ife, 2012). Lombard and Twirikize (2014) have argued that the three-generation perspective is useful in “recognising social workers’ role in human rights from a broader justice and sustainable development perspective, because it provides a platform for social work to integrate social, economic and environmental development” (p.316).

Human dignity is not complete without fulfilling the right to food, or other basic rights at that. Advocating and upholding human rights and social justice is the motivation and justification for social work. Of note is that this right co-exists alongside collective responsibility. What this implies is that in as much as individuals and households can claim their right to food, this should also be accompanied by the collective responsibility to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to fulfil this right. Such measures could include the protection of the environment, not wasting food by throwing away surplus both at individual and global levels. To accomplish



a common purpose and understanding of social work and human rights, the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training (Sewpaul and Jones, 2004) behoves all social workers to be trained in a basic human rights approach. The application of social work in addressing issues of food security as a basic human right stems from its inter-disciplinarity and the use of a wide array of scientific theories and research (IASSW and IFSW, 2014). In addition to the wide spectrum of knowledge from which social work draws, the profession's legitimacy in addressing food security and human rights issues lie in its intervention at the points where people interact with their environment. The environment includes the various social systems that people are embedded in and the natural, geographic environment, which has a profound influence on the lives of people (Sewpaul and Larsen, 2014).

Consistent with the social development paradigm, social workers utilise a range of skills, techniques, strategies, principles and activities at various system levels, directed at system maintenance and/or system change efforts. The IFSW international policy on human rights (1996) states that every human being has a unique value, which justifies moral consideration for that person. In summary it also states that everyone has the right to self-fulfillment to the extent that it does not encroach upon the same right of others. Society is also obliged to provide the maximum benefits for all its members. By their very nature, the (UNFPA, 2005) notes that human rights are

*Inherent*- one is simply born with them and they belong to individuals as a result of common humanity. Human rights are not owned by select people or given as a gift

*Inalienable*- Individuals cannot give them up and they cannot be taken away — even if governments do not recognize or protect them

*Universal*- They are held by all people, everywhere – regardless of age, sex, race, religion, nationality, income level or any other status or condition in life. Human rights belong to every human being equally. States are obliged to take positive actions to realise rights e.g. the creation of appropriate policies and legislation (p. 25).

### **3.7 Conclusion**

Recent global comparisons show a strong correlation between hunger and gender inequalities. Countries ranking highest on the index of global hunger are also those where such inequalities are more severe (von Grebmer et al., 2009). Women and girls are overrepresented among those who are food-insecure. Worldwide, an estimated 60% of undernourished people are women or girls (United Nations Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC] 2007, para. 14; WFP, 2009, p. 6). This is clearly unacceptable, and calls for concerted efforts against gender discrimination in access to food must be given global priority. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in a 2001 report estimated that for each one per cent rise in agricultural productivity, poverty would be reduced by 0.6%. As a result, the FAO (2011) has called for additional public investment by developed and developing countries into on-farm improvements such as irrigation, better seeds, conservation of the natural-resource base for food production, improvement in research and extension, upgrading of rural infrastructure, improved market access and special provision for people in particular need. In this call, a range of vulnerable groups, especially female headed households need to be dealt with in a manner that is affirmative, bearing in mind the fact that such households are usually the least to access development innovations and other related social services.

In the next Chapter, I discuss the situation of food security in Zimbabwe and the gender dimensions related to food security.

## CHAPTER 4: ZIMBABWE AND THE STATE OF FOOD SECURITY

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss food security in Zimbabwe. I discuss the historical background dating back to the period just after independence in 1980. I also discuss the various development plans that the government has put into place to facilitate economic and social development and how these have impacted on households.

### 4.2 Background to Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe, which gained independence in 1980, has a fluctuating population with 10.4 million people in 1992, 11.8 million in 1997 and 11.6 million in 2002. The latest census undertaken in 2012 recorded a population of 13 061 239. There were 6 280 539 males and 6 780 700 females. The Mashonaland East province, which is the province under study, has a total population of 1,344, 955 distributed as follows: males -651 781; females -693 174 (ZIMSTATS, 2013).

Figure 4.1: Map of Zimbabwe, year 2017



Map developed by Kudzai Kariri using  
vector data from Department of Surveyor  
General and Central Statistics office

#### ***4.2.1 Post-Independence***

In 1980 Zimbabwe inherited a dual economy characterised by a relatively well developed modern sector, and a largely rural poor sector that employed about 80% of the agricultural labour force. Government's commitment to addressing some of the inequalities within the economy, and the country in general was evidenced by a number of key development strategies. These include the "Growth with Equity" strategy of 1981, the Zimbabwe Transitional National Development Plan which ran from 1982 – 1985 and the first Five Year National Development Plan. In these plans, emphasis was placed on poverty reduction and increased social expenditure. Social expenditure was evident in the way government introduced immunisation programmes under the Primary Health Care banner and free universal primary education. By 1995, the nation registered a net enrolment rate of 86%, close to universal primary education and one of the highest literacy rates in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA). Social indicators for Zimbabwe at this stage were very positive.

As the tide turned, the decade of 1990s witnessed a downward turn as economic decline set in, and poverty and inequalities increasingly became evident. Explanations for this melt down have been attributed to several factors including recurrent droughts, non-realisation of the objectives of the economic structural adjustment programme, popularly known as ESAP. The advent of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) in the early 1980s in Africa, which were presented as the panacea for all economic ills, have contributed to a marked increase in rural poverty, and an increase in vulnerability to external shocks and Zimbabwe was no exception. Key social indicators such as food security, health and education began deteriorating due to the neoliberal orthodox economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP) which was imposed by the International Monetary Fund. As elsewhere SAPs have been implemented, the programme was characterised by:

- 1. Rule of the market i.e.** liberating "free" enterprise or private enterprise from any bonds imposed by the state no matter how much social damage this causes. Removal of price controls. The removal of price controls on basic foods like maize meal and cooking oil among others meant that consumers no longer had the protection of government unwarranted price hikes.
- 2. Cutting public expenditure for social services** like education and health care and reducing social safety nets for the poor.

3. **Deregulation-** Reduce government regulation of everything that could diminish profits, including protecting the environment and safety on the job.
4. **Privatisation-** Sell state-owned enterprises, goods and services to private investors. This includes banks, key industries, railroads, toll highways, electricity, schools, hospitals and even fresh water. Although usually done in the name of greater efficiency, which is often needed, privatization has mainly had the effect of concentrating wealth in a few hands and making the public pay more for its needs.
5. **Eliminating the concept of "the public good" or "community"** and replacing it with "individual responsibility." Pressuring the poorest people in a society to find solutions to their lack of health care, education and social security all by themselves then blaming them, if they fail, as "lazy."

Source: CorpWatch (201, p. 3)

As with many other countries when the neoliberal policies were imposed, the expectation was the benefits would “trickle down” (Sewpaul, 2015, p.461) but this never was, with “inequality being recast as virtuous: a reward for utility and a generator of wealth, which trickles down to enrich everyone. Efforts to create a more equal society are both counterproductive and morally corrosive. The market ensures that everyone gets what they deserve” (The Guardian, 2016, p. 2).

Market reforms put forward by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the ideologically correct development path rejected notions of government intervention. As a result, the country was compelled to reduce its interventions in the economy, a move that included ceasing the subsidisation of agricultural inputs such as fertiliser and privatising the commodity boards that fixed producer prices and collected farmers’ produce. Ironically, these handicaps have been further compounded by policies in the North. At the same time that African farmers were told they could no longer have free seeds or fertilisers, the EU and the US maintained and actually sharply increased subsidies and support for agriculture. According to OXFAM (2002, p.26) US farmers were receiving an average \$20,000 a year in subsidies, European Union farmers received \$16,000 (Oxfam, 2002 p.26). A downstream effect was that of subsidised surpluses which undercut the prices of African foods in their own markets. During the 1991 – 1995 period, real GDP growth averaged about 1.5% per year. As extreme poverty

set in, an estimated 35% of households lived below the poverty line in 1995 compared to 26% in 1990 and more households began to experience food insecurity.

Between 1996 and 2000, there was a marked acceleration of the deteriorating socio- economic environment in Zimbabwe. ESAP was replaced by a home-grown reform package ‘Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation’ (ZIMPREST, 2001). The reform programme was unfortunately undermined by lack of funds for effective implementation. ZIMPREST was then superseded by the Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP) and this was launched in August 2001. This was to be a short-term recovery programme spanning over a period of 18 months. Its main objective was to restore economic vibrancy and address underlying macro-economic fundamentals. The programme faced challenges and became almost impossible to implement as the international donor community withdrew support from the country. In February 2003 another attempt was made towards economic recovery in the form of a 12-month programme called the ‘National Economic Revival Programme’ (NERP). These ‘flopped’ because there was lack of commitment, inconsistent policy implementation, with failure to address economic fundamentals (Chronicle commentary, 22 April 2006). Exacerbating the economic challenges that Zimbabwe currently faces are factors like HIV/AIDS, hyperinflation, which was pegged at over 1200% in December 2006, before the dollarisation of the economy, economic meltdown, cultural and social changes, low foreign exchange reserves and a decline in investment (Mupedziswa and Ushamba, 2006).

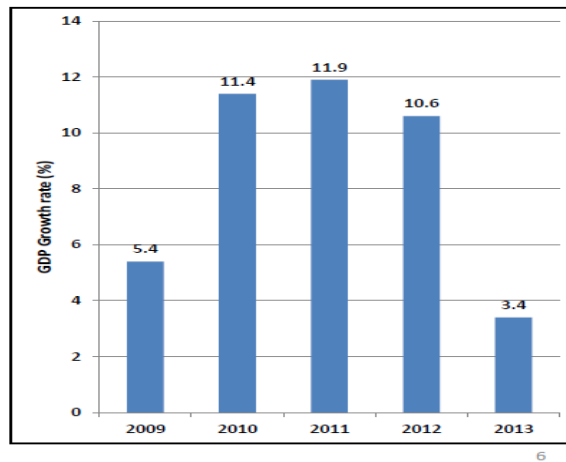
In 2006 the government unveiled yet another recovery plan, dubbed National Economic Development Priority Programme (NEDPP) which aimed to put Zimbabwe on a sound economic footing within 9 months. The cornerstone of the programme was to harness US \$2, 5 billion in cash and investments within 3 months from April 2006. This was a major challenge given that in the previous years, the nation had not been able to achieve similar set targets. One of the main thrusts of NEDPP was agriculture coordination, inputs supply and food security (GoZ, 2006). As the country continued to experience a decline in social and economic indicators, a Government of National Unity (GNU) was constituted on the 15th of September 2008, comprising the three political parties represented in the Zimbabwean Parliament. Under the GNU, the government introduced the multi-currency system in which the Zimbabwe dollar

was taken out of circulation to be replaced by the US dollar, South African Rand, Euro, British pound among others. Pursuant to this, the new Inclusive Government took office in the context of an economy that had many challenges. To show its commitment to economic and social recovery the GNU instituted the Short Term Economic Recovery Programme (STERP). STERP was an emergency short term stabilisation programme, whose key goals are to stabilise the macro and micro-economy, recover the levels of savings, investment and growth, and lay the basis of a more transformative mid to long term economic programme that will turn Zimbabwe into a progressive developmental state (GoZ, 2008).

The key priority areas of STERP focused on political and governance issues, social protection and stabilisation. The food security situation improved slightly in 2011. The population of food insecure households in urban areas decreased from 26% in 2009/2010 to 10% in 2011. In rural areas, the proportion of food insecure population declined from 18% in 2009/2010 to 12% in 2011. In 2012, the food insecure population was 1.4 million people with approximately 30% living in urban areas (FEWSNET, 2012).

Economic growth has remained elusive for Zimbabwe. Real GDP growth for 2016 initially forecast at 2,7% was revised to 1.4% due to the impacts of El Nino induced drought, low international mineral prices, appreciation of the US dollar, which is one of the currencies used under the multi-currency regime. These factors combine to trigger further risks to the economy which include the need to import food and avert hunger. Furthermore, the government of Zimbabwe declared a state of disaster due to drought on 3 February 2016, and subsequently launched the 2016-2017 Drought Disaster Domestic and International Appeal for Assistance.

Figure 4.2 GDP growth rate over a five year period



Source: ZIMSTATS, 2015

In 2013, the GNU was disbanded. Elections were held which brought into power the current ZANU PF led government. The new government launched yet another innovative programme which was set to place Zimbabwe on a recovery course. In pursuit of a new trajectory of accelerated economic growth and wealth creation rebuilding, maintaining macroeconomic stability and restoring the economy's productive capacity, the Government of Zimbabwe has crafted a new macro-economic blueprint, the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZimAsset) (GoZ, 2013).

The Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim-Asset) was set to run for the period October 2013- December 2018. It is said to be a results- based agenda that is built around four strategic clusters that will enable Zimbabwe to achieve economic growth and reposition the country as one of the strongest economies in the sub region and in Africa. The four strategic clusters identified are: Food Security and Nutrition; Social Services and Poverty Eradication; Infrastructure and Utilities; and Value Addition and Beneficiation. Zim-Asset was crafted to achieve sustainable development and social equity anchored on indigenisation, empowerment and employment creation, which will be largely propelled by the judicious exploitation of the country's abundant human and natural resources.



Under the Agricultural sector, ZIMASSET recognised that it was the backbone of the economy under-pinning economic growth, food security and poverty eradication. The programme also aimed to create a self-sufficient and food surplus economy and to see Zimbabwe re-emerging as the “Bread Basket of Southern Africa”. The agriculture cluster is closely linked to the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), Draft Comprehensive Agriculture Policy Framework (2012-2032), the Zimbabwe Agriculture Investment Plan (2013-2017), SADC and COMESA Food and Nutrition Frameworks, to which Zimbabwe is signatory.

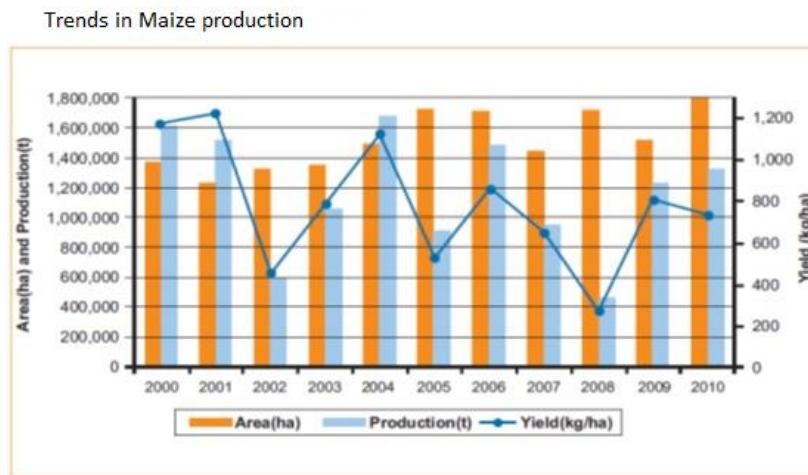
In response to addressing food insecurity Zimbabwe has also put in place National Food and Nutrition Security Policy. The policy promotes a multi-sectorial approach at all administrative levels to address food and nutrition insecurity, especially for the most vulnerable. The policy is based on the implementation of the seven commitments, one of which is food and agriculture.

Although Zimbabwe has experienced improved economic growth rates in the past few years, rising from a negative GDP of 5.7% between 2001–2006 to 5.4% in 2009 and 9.3% in 2011, this has not translated to growth in productive employment or poverty reduction. In 2011, 72.3% of Zimbabweans were considered poor. Poverty is more prevalent in rural areas compared to urban areas, with about 76% of the rural households considered poor compared to 38.2% of urban households. Individual poverty prevalence is 84.3% in rural areas compared to 46.5% in urban areas, while extreme poverty is 30.3% in rural areas compared to only 5.6% in urban areas. The decline in formal employment, with many workers engaged in poorly remunerated informal jobs, has a direct bearing on both poverty and hunger. Ninety-four per cent of paid employees in 2011 received an income equal to or below the total consumption poverty line (TCPL) for an average family of five, while three out of every four employed persons in Zimbabwe are classified as being in ‘vulnerable employment’. The percentage of food-insecure rural households at peak (January to March) declined steadily from 15% in 2010–2011 to 12% in 2011–2012. The prevalence of underweight children under five years of age fell from 11.8% in 2009 to 10% in 2011 (FAO, 2002). It is against this background that Zimbabwe is faced with widespread abject poverty and hunger.

### **4.3 Food Security in Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe is predominantly an agricultural based economy with about 79% of its population residing in rural areas, and earning a living largely from subsistence agriculture (Ruzivo Trust, 2012). Maize is the staple food in Zimbabwe and because of this, hunger is commonly associated with its shortage. About 70% of the population depends on agriculture for food, income and employment. The 2010-11 Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey noted that Zimbabwe had about 8.6 million hectares of potentially arable land and more than 5 million hectares of forests, national parks and wildlife estates. The agricultural sector contributes about 19 percent to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Of the total productive agricultural population, agriculture accounts for 66% of the productive population, of which the majority are women. The ZIMSTATS (2012) survey also revealed that 30% of the employed women in agriculture work excessive hours. The report also recorded that in rural areas, 35% of women and 45% men are formally employed in agriculture, with 60% of women being seasonal labourers. When it comes to remuneration, for women, 55% of women engaged in agricultural work and 77% of women engaged in non-agricultural work are paid in cash only, which ultimately has the effect of discriminating against their entry into the banking system. The report also noted that about 13% of women working in agriculture, and 3% of women in non-agricultural occupations were not paid for their work, though they were engaged as employees. About 74% of women engaged in agricultural work were self-employed. Related to the importance of food in households, the 2015 ZIMVAC report recorded that food items constitute the greatest share of most rural households expenditure at 58% slightly higher than 2014 which was at 56.

Figure 4.3 Trends in maize production



Source: Central Statistic office

Source, CSO, 2015

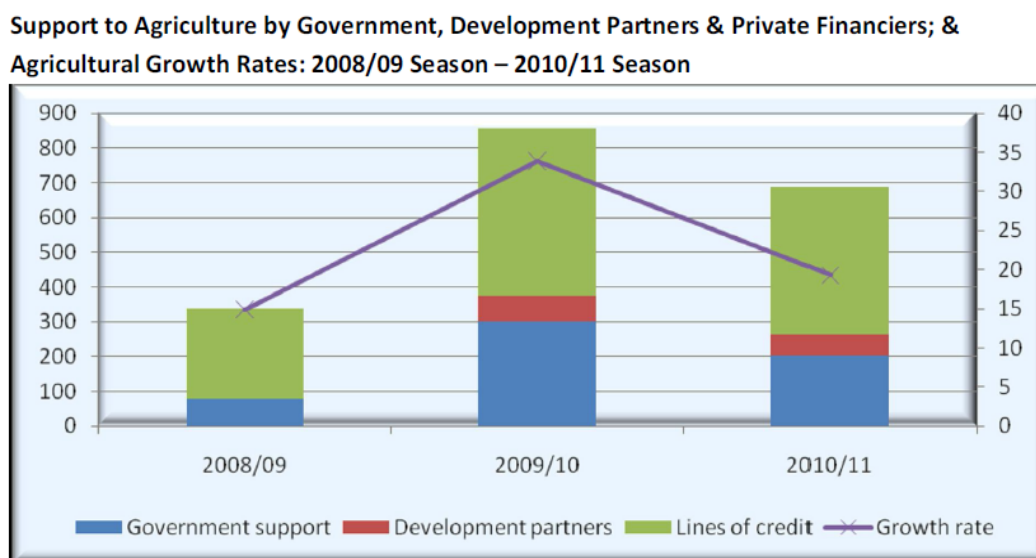
The diagram above shows the trends in maize production since 2000, reflecting an erratic distribution. Maize is of importance to Zimbabwe as food security is associated with the availability of maize. Since 1990, it is generally accepted that maize production has been erratic due to, among other factors, drought and the initial impact of the land reform programme. Production of maize has steadily declined over the years. In 1990 maize production was 1.994 metric tonnes per hectare, dropping to 0.840 in 2000. For the country to be food secure, the target is to increase maize productivity to 3000 metric tonne/hectare (MDG Report, 2005).

The emerging food insecurity in the country is also due to diminishing purchasing power. High unemployment, **poor governance, political instability, corruption** and the high cost of living have exacerbated poverty. FAO (2011) noted that traditional social solidarity networks in most areas could still support the currently food-insecure households through hired labour, gifts and, to a lesser extent, saving schemes and plots cultivated by the community for the benefit of those who cannot engage in farming, even though the viability of the coping might be severely affected by general economic decline and the impact of HIV/AIDS.

In 2005, Zimbabwe did not produce enough cereal to meet consumption needs, nor, given economic difficulties, could the country import sufficient food to fill the gap (WFP, 2006). Of

the eleven million people, 3.1 million, including child headed households received food relief in 2006. A survey by UNICEF (2002) of 50 000 families in 30 districts of Zimbabwe revealed high levels of malnutrition among children, most of whom were in child headed households, with more than 60 000 requiring supplementary feeding. Of the food aid handed out in the Sub Saharan African countries in 2003, more than 50% was directed to Zimbabwe. The absence of the donor community is evident as depicted below.

Figure 4.4 Support to agriculture by government



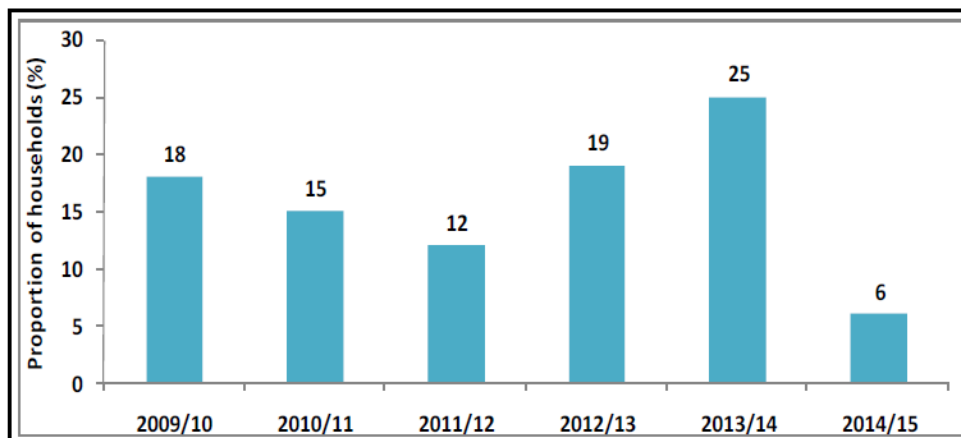
Source: Unicef, 2010

The MDG progress report (2006) showed that for Zimbabwe to achieve the goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, the nation had to address these challenges:

1. creating an enabling environment for pro-economic growth
2. employment creation
3. support for the land reform
4. reduce dependency on rain fed agriculture and increase agricultural productivity
5. addressing malnutrition with limited resources under the HIV /AIDS epidemic
6. establish a comprehensive food and nutrition surveillance system
7. expand social protection and security systems

Government has made attempts to address these through the implementation of various programmes such as the Presidential Input Support programme. The Presidential input targets all farmers in communal areas, as well as small scale farmers and provides farmers with 10kgs of seed maize and two by 50kgs of fertiliser, while cotton and soya bean farmers received 20kgs of fertiliser and 25kgs of seed.

Figure 4.5 Food security trends 2009 -2014



Source: Unicef, 2010

The food security trends show an erratic trend with 2014/15 season showing the least proportion of households being food insecure. The economic situation in the country has not shown any marked improvement since the end of the Government of National Unity. The country continues to face closure of industries and this has resulted in an increase in the unemployment rate and poverty. According to the ZIMSTAT 4th Quarter report of 2015, average employment decreased by about 1.6% in September 2015 compared to June 2015. This subsequently reduced average earnings by over 2% in the same period. The poverty datum line per person increased from USD30.65 in December 2015 to USD 30.71 in January 2016, which meant that the Food Poverty Datum Line for a family of five increased from USD153.27 to USD153.56 in the same period. The increase in maize prices experienced in mid-December 2015 meant that the vulnerable households in rural areas were made worse off and had to depend largely on food assistance. According to ZIMSTATS (2015) the prevalence of poverty in Zimbabwe was estimated at 63% with 16% in extreme poverty, and poverty being more spread in the rural than urban areas.

#### **4.4 Gender and food security**

The imperative for women's participation in agriculture towards the elimination of hunger and poverty is evident. Without a doubt, women and men play different roles in assuring household food security. Women are particularly involved in a wide range of activities relating to accessing inputs, production of various products, post-harvest handling and storage, processing, marketing and distribution. In Zimbabwe as in much of southern Africa, rural household food security rests upon the labour of women. Much of the household food in Zimbabwe is generated by women, with 80% of women living in the communal areas where they provide 70% of labour (Mushunje, 2002; Bhatasana, 2011).

In Zimbabwe, it is estimated that women contribute about 70% of agricultural labour and the bulk of them are found in the subsistence sector (Bhatasara, 2001). Approximately 35% of rural households are headed by women who are also subsistence farmers; these households constitute the largest proportion of the poor (Zim Stats, 2012). Women contribute immensely towards household food security by providing labour for planting, weeding, harvesting and processing in addition to reproductive activities and community work. They also produce vegetables for both household consumption and the market. Income obtained from produce sold is mainly used for meeting food, health and education needs. There has been an increase in the female share of the agricultural labour force in recent decades due to several reasons, including conflict, HIV/AIDS and migration, climate change and deforestation among others.

However, despite the large numbers of women participating in agriculture there has been a substantial increase in the feminisation of poverty in rural households (Moghadam, 2005). Women's food insecurity and poverty lies in the structural inequalities that exist in access to and control of agricultural resources such as land, inputs such as fertilizers and the proceeds from their labour (IFAD, 1999; Bhatasana, 2011). Women in Zimbabwe have been marginalized from mainstream economic activities even though they are 52% of the population (Joint Donor Steering Committee 2007, The National Gender Policy of Zimbabwe 2004). This may be because 70% of women are domiciled in rural areas, with structural problems that prevent women from contributing to decision-making processes.

A 2003 government-led Poverty Assessment Study Survey (PASS II) found out that poverty levels among female-headed households, which were recorded at 48% in 1995 (compared to 39% for male-headed households), increased to 68% by 2003 (compared to 60% for male-headed households). The same study recorded structural unemployment at 63% in 2003, with unemployment rates being higher amongst females (70%) than amongst males (56%). In 2003 the Human Development Index for females was lower than that of males (0.373 compared to 0.429), which indicates the ‘feminisation of poverty.’ Female headed households (FHH) experience higher levels of poverty than male headed households, with 68% FHH living below the Total Poverty Consumption Line (TPCL) in 2003 (GoZ, MDG Status Report, 2010). The Gender Development Index for Zimbabwe stood at 0.505—the lowest ranking globally. Female-headed households make up 34% of households but own only 29% of national income; whereas male-headed households constitute 66% of households and own 71% of national income (PASS Report, 2003). Since the 2003 PASS report, there has not been much improvement in poverty levels. In 2011, 72.3 % of Zimbabweans were considered poor, with the majority being among the female headed households. Poverty has remained more prevalent in rural areas and among females compared to urban areas with about 76% of the rural households considered poor compared to 38.2% of urban households. Individual poverty prevalence is 84.3% in rural areas compared to 46.5% in urban areas, while extreme poverty is 30.3% in rural areas compared to only 5.6% in urban areas for the same year (MDG report, 2013).

Analysis of the current context shows that the political and socio-economic challenges confronting Zimbabwe affect women and men differently (Kachingwe, 1986; Women and Land in Zimbabwe, 2006, ZIMSTATS, 2012; ACDI/VOCA, 2012; FAO, 2011). In relation to food security, women across Zimbabwe are disadvantaged in terms of the control of the resources and means of production (Malaba, 2006). Women are generally faced with various challenges including poor access to means of production (land, capital, labour, mechanization, irrigation infrastructure, etc.) to actively participate in highly capitalised agricultural enterprises. The food they eat, the incomes they get, their access to health (reproductive rights), education are controlled by men directly, or indirectly by institutions controlled by men. In Zimbabwe, women have always been heavily engaged in food production. It has been estimated that 60 per cent of Zimbabwe’s agricultural produce is grown by women (Mutopo, 2011).

Approximately 80% of women live in communal areas where they constitute 61% of the farmers and provide 70% of the labour. Thus, the work of women farmers is essential for food security. Rural women work 16 to 18 hours a day, spending at least 49% of their time on agricultural activities and about 25% on domestic activities (ZIMSTATS, 2012, FAO, 2012)).

According to the Ministry of agriculture, 10% of the extension staff are women (Ruzivo Trust, 2012). Women comprise at least 75% of the members of the powerful small-scale farmers' organization, the Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU), but constitute only 4.5 % of the office bearers. In the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) women comprise only 8.6% of the members, reflecting the low percentage of women owning large farms. The proportion of women office bearers is 10% (Ruzivo, 2012). These statistics paint a gloomy picture for women farmers in Zimbabwe. Whilst they provide labour, they lack control over the resources accrued. An agriculture sector analysis of the sector showed women are affected by among other factors:

- poor access to and control of adequate means of production such as land, capital, labour, mechanization and irrigation infrastructure
- limited research on value chains dominated by women
- lack of skill and adequate information on agricultural policies and regulations on markets, market opportunities and market trends
- lack of opportunities to actively participate in highly capitalized agricultural enterprises, and access to high value markets
- Poor implementation of policies targeted at improving women's well being
- Limited household decision making opportunities
- Women are poorly represented in key agriculture and food security related institutions and extension reaches more men than women farmers, who tend to grow low value product crops in smaller and distant fields
- Limited investment in economic services targeted at women including financial institutions not willing to invest in agricultural activities for women farmers.

Limited collateral (Source: UN Women Agriculture sector analysis report, 2013: 13)

For as long as women have limited access to productive resources, they will continue to be prejudiced in the extent to which they can participate through agriculture in the mainstream economy. Allocation of land shows the imbalance in how women have benefitted from land



reform. Further analysis shows that women have also been hugely discriminated against in the land reform programme. Below is a depiction of the land allocation outcome.

**Table 4.1: Land allocation patterns by gender and province**

	MODEL A1				MODEL A2			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
Province	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Midlands	14, 800	82	3,198	18	338	95	17	5
Masvingo	19, 026	84	3,644	16	709	92	64	8
Mashonaland Central	12, 986	88	1,770	12	1,469	87	215	13
Mashonaland West	21, 782	81	5,270	19	1,777	89	226	11
Mashonaland East	12,967	76	3,992	24	-	-	-	-
Matebeleland South	7, 754	87	1,169	13	215	79	56	21
Matebeleland North	7, 919	84	1,490	16	574	83	121	17
Manicaland	9, 572	82	2,190	18	961	91	97	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>106, 686</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>22,723</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6,043</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>12</b>

Source (Ruzivo Trust, 2012)

#### **4.5 Zimbabwe's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment**

Zimbabwe continues to show its commitment to gender equality across all fronts. It is party to several instruments intended to improve the promotion and protection of the rights of women and ensure the attainment of gender equality thereby propelling overall development and food security. These include the African Union (AU) Constitutive Act and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa through which the Union and its Member States commit themselves to the promotion of gender equality. It also ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in 2008. Zimbabwe is also a signatory to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development of 1997, which commits Member States to undertake measures to incorporate gender issues in their programmes. In 2008 it signed the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. It is also party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The right to food is also regarded as a key constitutional issue.

Section 17 states that:

The State must promote full gender balance in Zimbabwean society, and in particular--

- a.** the State must promote the full participation of women in all spheres of Zimbabwean society on the basis of equality with men;
- b.** the State must take all measures, including legislative measures, needed to ensure that--
  - i.** both genders are equally represented in all institutions and agencies of government at every level; and
  - ii.** The State must take positive measures to rectify gender discrimination and imbalances resulting from past practices and policies.

**Section 15 says that the state must:**

- a.** encourage people to grow and store adequate food;
- b.** secure the establishment of adequate food reserves; and
- c.** encourage and promote adequate and proper nutrition through mass education and other appropriate means.

**Section 77 says:**

Every person has the right to--

“**a.** safe, clean and potable water; and **b.** sufficient food”.

Despite these progressive commitments, actual delivery in terms of achieving gender equity has been largely disappointing, as concluded by Matondi (2012). For instance, women still lag behind in ownership of land. The land revolution was not revolutionary enough for women. The table below shows the extent to which women have benefitted under the land reform programme.

**Table 4.2: Land ownership patterns by 2010**

<b>Farming Sectors<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Area (Ha)</b>	<b>Number of plots/beneficiaries</b>	<b>Women allocations</b>
A1	5,759,153.8890	145,775	18-20%
A2	2,978,334.0800	16,386	12%
Communal areas	16,000,000.0000	1,200,000	66%
Old Resettlement (Phase 1 and 2)	3,667,708.0000	75,569	5%
LSCF (unacquired) <sup>1</sup>	648,041.2718	1,154	5%
SSCF	1,400,000.0000	8,000	
Conservancies	792,009.0000	NI	State land
Institutional farms <sup>2</sup>	145,693.4151	113	Private and owned by organisations
Unsettled Gazetted land <sup>3</sup>	757,577.5114	517	State land
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,148,517.1700</b>	<b>1,447,523.00</b>	

*Source: Computed from various GoZ sources (2009) and FAO/WFP (2010)*

<sup>1</sup>Unacquired is land that was not legally gazetted for acquisition and therefore remains in the hands of “original” owners holding their title deeds;

<sup>2</sup>Parastatals, Churches, Schools, Colleges, Universities and Mines;

<sup>3</sup>Excluding Conservancies; A common held view is that 300 white farmers remain on the land, and it is difficult to verify.

## **4.6 Conclusion**

Baker (1987) notes that Africa is a continent trapped by its own history, yet in dealing with current food problems, it is treated as though it has no history (p.149). Bycesso (1981) noted the recurring social, political, economic and climatic disruption accompanied by food stress. Records for SSA show similar patterns (Cooke, 1979). Yet, Africa is a continent endowed with wealth in the form of mineral resources, vast tracts of land and highly skilled personnel. OXFAM (2002) posed some very pertinent questions in relation to Africa’s plight. If the continent’s resources far exceed its needs, how can it be that there is so much hunger? Why is it that countries that have millions of hungry people are exporting food to countries where people are already well fed? Why is it that countries that are poor, with so many hungry people,

seem to be able to grow food quite abundantly? What will promise greater food security? In the 1970s and 1980s solutions proposed were purely technological, stressing production rather than equitable distribution of food. These failed because the food crisis of SSA is not technical. Population pressures have been seen as a cause of world hunger and Africa is not excluded. They may be an aggravating factor, but they are not a cause. Weather and climate have also been a convenient scapegoat, yet an abundance of food can and does exist alongside famine even in natural hazards. It can therefore be noted that constraints to food availability include: inappropriate agricultural knowledge, technologies, and practices; inappropriate economic policies, including pricing, marketing, tax and tariff policies; lack of foreign exchange; inadequate agricultural inputs; non-existent or ineffective private sector; population growth rates that offset increased production or imports; marketing and transportation systems which inhibit the cost-effective movement of food from source to need; inability to predict, assess and cope with emergency situations which interrupt food supplies; natural resource, climatic, and disease constraints; donor disinterest or fatigue; and political choice on the part of the government, and these have a heavier bearing on women than men (OXFAM, 2002 , p. 28). In addition, and based on literature presented in Chapter 2, gender inequality is a key factor in food insecurity.

Addressing food insecurity requires a network of decision making to diverse policy, such as generation of incomes, provision of health care, stabilisation of food prices, safe water and rehabilitation of rural economy, and above all, women's active participation at all levels from actual farming to decision making and policy influence.

In the next chapter, I discuss the research methodology. In this chapter, I explain the research design, selection of participants, data collection and analysis methods used.

## CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 5. 1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology that was used in the study. The chapter describes the research design, study area and population, research instruments, data collection strategies, data analysis, the theoretical framework, research ethics and the challenges presented by the study.

According to Tuhiwani-Smith (1991), the term “research” is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism and is regarded as one of the “dirtiest” words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary. She argues that “knowledge about indigenous people was collected, classified and then represented back to the West” (p. 1), which is why knowledge has to be generated by Africans for Africans in order to shape the African development and gender discourse. In this vein, this research sought to generate information locally, but with the realisation of the global influences within which people live.

Research need not necessarily be “dirty” as Tuhiwani-Smith (1991) suggests, but it can be so structured that it is constructive and contributes to the body of knowledge that can enrich and shape development discourses in Africa. Rather than only focusing on the negative “European imperialism”, African based research should learn from this negative perception and develop locally appropriate knowledge that can influence the perpetuation of the African legacy. This knowledge can be generated if we engage in research that is critical of society and questions set ideologies. Ideology critique wants to remind that everything that exists in society is created by humans in social relationships and that social relationships can be changed. It seeks to bring “problems into the self-conscious human form” (Marx, 1997, p. 214). This also implies that unequal gender relations are constructed and in the same vein they can be deconstructed. For instance, women’s triple roles, and the acceptance by society of these roles, is something that can be reversed. This study uses critical theory, a theory connected to struggles for a just and fair society. The theoretical framework is discussed in the next section.

### ***5.1.1 Theoretical framework: Critical Theory (CT)***

According to Fuchs (2015, p.1) “critical theory is an approach that studies society in a dialectical way by analyzing political economy, domination, exploitation, and ideologies. It is a normative approach that is based on the judgment that domination is a problem, that a domination-free society is needed. It wants to inform political struggles that want to establish such a society”. I am of the view that the application of critical theory, which Tyson (2015) noted could be applied across different themes would address the research concerns raised by Tuhiwani-Smith and be of relevance to my area of study. Included in my study is the interrogation of issues of domination and the subjugation of women.

Kincheloe and McLaren (2002) argue that critical theory is often misunderstood. Critical theory analyses competing power interests between groups and individuals within a society and identifies who gains and who loses in specific situations. It also analyses competing power interests between individuals and within and between societies. More often than not, privileged groups will desire to maintain the status quo. Fuchs (2015) has argued that critical theory has several aspects to it namely epistemology, ontology and praxeology. Epistemology which is a theory of knowledge and deals with how the very concepts that constitute a theory are constituted and organised. The next is its ontology which is a theory of being. It deals with the question how reality is organised and develops. The other facet of CT is praxeology, which is the study of human action, especially political action and ethics. Marx (1997, p.214) argued that concepts that describe the existence of capitalism e.g. profit, surplus value, worker, capital, commodity were dialectical because they go beyond the reality of class societies and point toward a transcendental reality beyond class. He postulated that the existence of classes in society were actually an indication of the possibility of a society without class. His argument was that changes in society were possible. Marx’s concepts of “contradiction (negation) and negation of the negation are crucial for critical theory”. This means that when there are struggles in a society, the same struggles can be the basis of the action that is required to bring about the change that is required. Without an oppressive situation, there would be no need for any action against oppression. In similar style, the subjugation of women through culture can be seen as beckoning for a society that promotes gender equity. As Marx noted, the “subjective

dialectical force of political struggle is the only way for overcoming these contradictions” (p.214). The next facet is ontology which is a critique of the political economy of communication. It is concerned with the study of how power relations shape and are shaped by the production, diffusion, and consequences of mediated and unmediated communication. Critical theory in this regard is concerned with a critique of domination and exploitation of oppressed groups. It questions all thought and practices that justify or uphold domination and exploitation. According to Fuchs (2015), the goal of critical theory is to transform society and create world of peace where one could enjoy wealth, liberty and enjoy self- fulfilment (p.4). Ontology is also concerned with the critique of ideology. In dominative societies, domination tends to be masked by ideologies that present reality not as it is, but in “mythologized, inverted, and distorted ways” (Fuchs, 2015, p.5). This may create a fear within those that are dominated to the extent that they are paralysed against acting to change their situations. Critical theory seeks to interrogate this domination. It seeks to “increase and maximize human happiness” Fuchs (2015, p.4). Marx formulated the categorical imperative of critical theory as “to overthrow all conditions in which man is a degraded, enslaved, neglected, contemptible being” (Marx, 1997, p.257). It is concerned with principles of self-determination, participation, active citizen participation and just democracy. Critical theory seeks to make the world conscious of its own possibilities (Fuchs, 2015).

Critical theory contends that social realities are historically created, and social issues are not ‘naturally’ occurring, but socially constructed and influenced by power asymmetries. (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009). The theory is essentially about power, and examines “the processes of gaining, maintaining and circulating existing power relationships” (Henning, 2004, p. 23). It embraces a variety of different theoretical positions, including post modernism, post colonialism and post structuralism. At a broader level, critical theory has involved a variety of analyses which have endeavoured to link the concern with subjectivity, with the structural focus on the social and political context of people’s lives (Thompson, 2000). Critical theorists stress the importance of people’s agency—that is, their capacities to be actively involved in the process of social change (Always, 1995). Most critical theorists are concerned with emancipatory education that enables people to see the links between their experiences and the material conditions and dominant ideologies in society (Sewpaul and Larsen, 2014). Drawing on Freirian analysis, Fay (1987) emphasised the capacity of critical theories to explain the sources of oppression in society in such a way as to encourage those affected by oppression to take action to transform it. In the words of Alvesson and Willmott (1996, p.13) “the intent

of critical theory is to challenge the legitimacy and counter the development of oppressive institutions and practice.”

Critical theory thus places a significant emphasis on reflecting upon how dominant ideologies or ways of thinking, as well as societal institutions, impact on people’s lives. It also questions the place of existing institutions, such as the family, educational establishments and governance, with a view to constructing a more just society. It resonates with human rights perspectives and orientations. Human rights are inalienable standards that recognize and protect the dignity of all human beings (Lombard and Twirizike, 2014). They govern how individual human beings live in society and with each other, as well as their relationship with governments and the obligations that governments have towards them. By the same token that individuals have rights; they also have the responsibility to respect the rights of others. According to Ife (2001), social workers have consistently been charged with the duty to uphold the human rights of vulnerable groups. A human rights orientation is concerned with facilitating the expression of citizens who have been denied their daily lives. In applying the human rights dimension to critical theory, Dominelli (2004) argued that affirming the rights of socially excluded people renders the social work profession a politicized one which may place practitioners on a collision course with employers, policy makers and the general public.

In the application of the critical theory in this study, I take cognisance of the criticisms raised against it. Some have argued that critical theory in general has failed in its attempt to link individual and social consciousness with institutional analysis and political economy (Held, 1980). Others suggest that critical theory exaggerates the importance of consciousness in the processes of radical social change (Alvesson and Willmott 1996, p. 86). Feminist writers also note that critical theory has not adequately engaged with feminist theory and subsequently has been unable to appreciate the significance of gender analysis (Cheek et al, 1996; Alvesson & Willmott, 1996). Further, Alway (1995) argued that, “rather than imposing a particular claim or interpretation, emancipatory politics should be ‘expanding the opportunity for groups to determine and live according to their own claims and interpretation” (p.73).



### ***5.1.2 Research method and design***

According to Bryman (2016), the research design provides a framework for the collection of data and its analysis. This section discusses the research method and the research design, which includes the problem statement, the qualitative method adopted in this study, the study population and sampling, the research questions and objectives, the underlying assumptions of the study, and the method of analysis of the data, which was underscored by critical discourse analysis.

### ***5.1.3 Problem statement***

I sought to understand the extent to which gender plays a role in addressing household food security for recipients of agricultural inputs. Gender is regarded as one of the underlying factors that can make the difference for a household that effectively makes use of the received agricultural inputs. Against this background, this study sought to better understand the household gender dynamics that were at play in accessing and utilising agricultural inputs. This study is based on work done by Cluster Agricultural Development Services (CADS), which is a local NGO that seeks to improve household nutrition through improved agricultural practices and nutrition education. CADS played an instrumental role in my access to the village as the organisation has an established presence within the community. My interaction with the participants was unbiased as I had not directly interacted with them before. My knowledge of the participants was through CADS which facilitated the introductions. Cluster Agricultural Development Services (CADS) is a registered NGO whose work dates back to over 20 years. CADS works with disadvantaged rural smallholder farmer organisations and its focus is to facilitate sustainable institutional strengthening, technology development, good agronomic practices, food processing, and input and output marketing. Integrated crop and livestock production, agroforestry and value addition are some of the major programmes in CADS' sustainable livelihoods development portfolio. In its development work CADS mainstreams gender, nutrition, HIV and AIDS, and income generation in order to help mitigate not only the impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, but also the cycle of poverty affecting rural households. To achieve maximum impact CADS networks with relevant stakeholders for the provision of technical and extension support services required by farmer syndicates. While the services have been provided, CADS has not undertaken research to understand the gender dynamics at the household level that might influence the utilisation of agricultural inputs. This research sought

to fill that gap and to contribute to the body of literature on gender and agriculture on the African continent.

#### ***5.1.4 Qualitative research methodology***

A qualitative approach to research is used in this study. I considered the qualitative data most suited for the following reasons:

1. It tells the story behind the numbers and brings out the meanings depicted by the numbers which may be left untold when using quantitative methodology.
2. It allows for in-depth and detailed understanding of the presented issues through probing.

According to Patton (2005), qualitative research analyses data direct from the field work observations, in-depth open-ended interviews, case studies, context analysis and written documents. It is often regarded as “soft science”, unscientific and rather more exploratory and subjective (Denzin, 1997). Qualitative research is not only useful as the first stage of quantitative research, but can also play a key role in ‘validating’ it or in providing a different viewpoint on the same social phenomena (Pope and Mays, 2008). Though positivists argue that qualitative research is fictional, a soft science and subjective (Hammersley, 2005) and there is no way of verifying the truth as it is based on lived experiences, it remains the most suited for research that seeks to explore issues of power relations and these have a bearing on gender. The merits of qualitative research in understanding household gender dynamics outweigh the shortfalls. Qualitative research is a field in its own right and cuts across disciplines and subject matter. It locates the observer in the world, and consists of a set of interpretive naturalistic approach to the world (Flick, 2002). It builds on life stories, introspection, experiences and interactional discussions that are engaging. It also uses interpretive practises to get a better understanding of the subject at hand. The method uses triangulation which Flick, (2002) describes “not as a tool or a strategy of validation but an alternate to validation” (p.227).

Qualitative research allows participants to express their own opinions freely thus enabling researchers to better understand the way women and men reason differently. Qualitative

research is often conflated with participatory research, but the defining aspect of participatory research is that participants are active and involved all the way (Chambers, 2004). The analysis in qualitative research takes different forms which are deemed relevant for exploring complexities. This can be by theme or issues. In this study I chose to present the findings by themes which emerged during the discussion (i.e. access to resources-land, finance, extension; household decision making). I was also guided by the emic perspective which Merriam (2009, p.10) describes as a perspective “that typically represents the internal language and meanings of a defined culture.” In this instance, culture is regarded broadly. Regardless of how a culture's scope is defined, "an emic perspective attempts to capture participants' indigenous meanings of real-world events" (Yin, 2010, p.11) and "looks at things through the eyes of members of the culture being studied" (Willis, 2007, p.100). The thematic focus and protracted engagement enabled me to interrogate specific issues related to the cultural background influencing the language and responses provided by the participants.

The defining aspect of qualitative data is that it is subjective (Sarakatos, 2009). It is concerned with the perspective of the researcher and brings the researcher close to the subjects, it is flexible and can be adapted according to the context, mutually constructed between researcher and subject. It sets the researcher close to reality, studies reality from the inside, employs open-ended questions and flexible research designs, captures the world in action, employs naturalistic methods, and analyses data during and after collection. Qualitative research is characterised by an interpretative paradigm, which emphasizes subjective experiences and the meanings of these for individuals (Sarakatos, 2009).

Quantitative research, on the other hand, grounded in the positivist approach, emphasises the importance of widespread generalisability of data; it provides information that can be more readily compared across regions, socio-economic categories or over time. It claims objectivity and attempts to remove the researcher's views, and values from the subject, it emphasises cause and effect linkages and is based on a model of the physical sciences and on strict, inflexible rules, and distances itself from subjects. It uses closed questions and more closed research designs, captures still pictures of the world, employs scientific statistical methods, analyses data only after collection is completed, and chooses pre-determined methods before the study commences.

Oakley (2009) argues that quantitative research tends to deliver statistics cheaply and quickly though she argues, it has been important in “the very charting of women’s oppression” which she argues required quantification” (p.19). She argues statistics are important for understanding for example, women’s participation in education against that of men, women’s unpaid work and participation in labour markets. That can only be obtained through quantitative research. The goal with quantitative research, she argues is for ‘democratisation of ways of knowing and also synthesis of these so that the focus is on choosing the right method for the research question”. In this regard the quantitative studies achieved a specific purpose and were able to be used to agitate for women’s inclusion in development. Quantitative research assumes that social reality is external to the researcher. Its gold standard is the experiment which entails controlling the environment so that intervening variables do not contaminate the research. This is criticised by constructivists who, according to Humphries (2008), argue that research based on the physical sciences are not appropriate for the study of human beings and the meanings and interpretations that people attach to events. Methods to capture this must be naturalistic e.g. observation. A constructivist paradigm recognises the existence of multiple perceptions and plurality of world views. Constructivists believe that people being researched know their situations and the task of the researcher is to find ways of making that knowledge available.

Going beyond the quantitative data gathering, qualitative research then becomes relevant for understanding the realities that women and men farmers face. From this perspective, there does not have to be a competition as to what is empirically acceptable but rather a recognition that quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method research are separate research methodologies suited for different contexts. In this context, the most suitable study methodology for the study was the qualitative one.

Quantitative and qualitative should not be considered a substitute for the other but should augment each other (Humphries, 2008). Gendron (2001) even suggests the possibility of complementary methods with a note that approaches that may be fundamentally different and even antagonistic may interact to contribute to innovative research and these should be supported. According to Sagadin (2004) qualitative and quantitative results should complement each other to create a meaningful whole according to the object and purpose of the

investigation. Despite the emerging views of the complementarity of quantitative and qualitative research, in addressing issues of gender, the more suited and preferred research method remains the qualitative, constructivist model which is hinged on critical research theory.

### ***5.1.5 Research questions***

The research was guided by the following key questions:

1. What factors influence access to, and utilisation of agricultural inputs at the household level?
2. What do women and men agriculture beneficiaries prioritise in the use of agricultural inputs?
3. How are decisions that impact on the household generally made by women and men with regards to the utilisation of agricultural inputs?
4. How have the agricultural inputs received been utilised by women and men?
5. To what extent are participants empowered through the agriculture input programme?

### ***5.1.6 Study Objectives***

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Analyse the factors determining access to, distribution and utilisation of agricultural inputs by male and female beneficiaries
2. Compare the factors influencing the utilisation of agricultural inputs between women and men.
3. Understand the household decision making processes of agriculture input beneficiaries with regards to household maintenance.
4. Compare the use of income and proceeds from agricultural input between female and male beneficiaries.
5. Analyse the extent to which agricultural inputs contribute to the empowerment of women and men.

### ***5.1.7 Underlying assumptions***

The underlying assumptions of this research were:

1. Women's access to, and utilisation of agricultural inputs leads to an improvement in the food and income security of these households in the short term.
2. Women and men make rational decisions in the utilisation of agriculture inputs, but inherent gender dynamics lead to different outputs.
3. Households receiving the agricultural inputs fail to generate enough food and income to become self-sufficient in future years. Self-sufficiency is measured by the generation of food that is enough for the household to last for a period of one year (or until the harvest of the next season) and enough to sell off excess to enable households to generate income for other basic needs beyond food.
4. Food insecurity is a result of structural inequalities and needs to be addressed at the structural levels before households that are food insecure can become self-sufficient. The fundamental causes of inequality are housed in institutions such as patriarchy that perpetuate gender disparities. These need to be dealt with at that structural level in order for interventions aimed at addressing food insecurity to make meaningful and long lasting impacts at the household and individual level.

### **5.2 Study area: Goromonzi**

The research was undertaken in Goromonzi district in Mashonaland East province of Zimbabwe. This is an area that I have worked in with Cluster Agriculture Development Services in a project that supported farmers with agricultural inputs and extension services. I chose a site that CADS had worked in as I had also the advantage of having worked with CADS in the same area and with the same study participants. This made the study area accessible. My interaction with the participants prior to the project was limited as I had no direct interface with them during the time of the implementation of the project. CADS was responsible for the direct communication and interface with the participants during project implementation. The question of power relations was therefore limited if there was any at all. Participants fully understood that my research would not have any bearing on their relationship with CADS. Furthermore, CADS did not have any ongoing projects in the community at the time that I conducted my research.

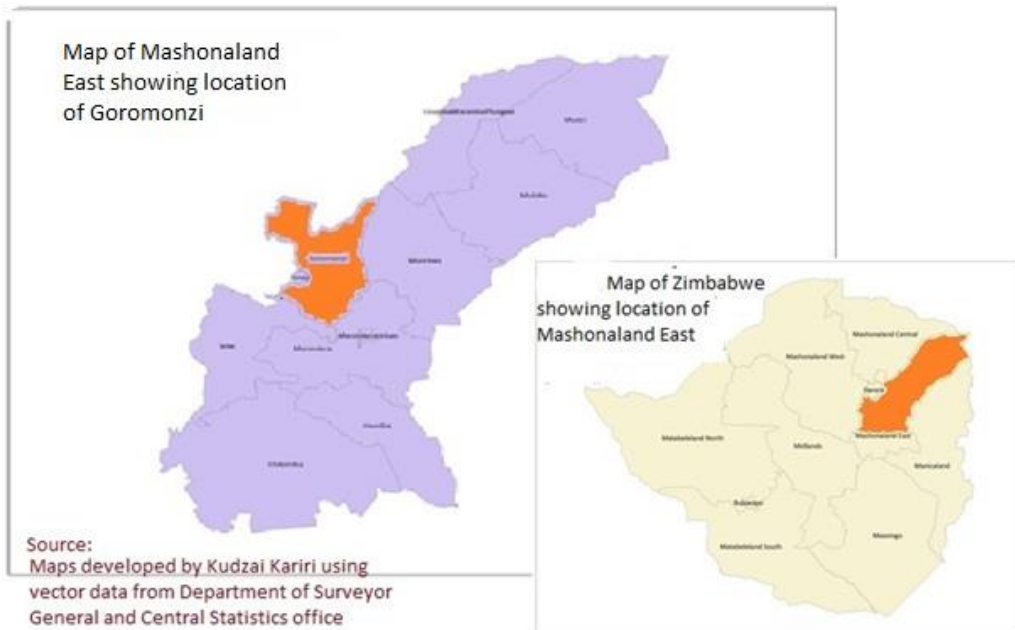
Goromonzi has 79 primary schools of which 75 schools are registered and 31 secondary schools. There is better access to schools and health services in the communal areas when compared to commercial farming and resettlement areas in the district. The district has 2 vocational and technical training centres. The number of donor funded activities and NGO participation has gone down though HIV/AIDS programmes are on the increase. The district is served by three Government Hospitals/Clinics. The district's HIV/AIDS prevalence is 13, 7 % of the district's population (2012, ZIMSTATS). According to ZIMSTATS (2012), the district's orphaned and vulnerable children prevalence rate is 27% of the district's population. The majority of the economically active population from the communal lands in the district is employed in Harare. The remainder is largely engaged in farming activities. In the farming areas employment is largely on farms while a small proportion is engaged in mining and other activities (ZIMSTATS, 2012). Commercial farms in the district continue to rely on casuals and aliens, with a small proportion of the locals, as a source of labour. There is high unemployment among school leavers and farms continue to be less attractive as a source of employment.

Goromonzi, one of the 9 districts in Mashonaland East, was chosen for this research because it was readily accessible, and familiar to me as I have had experience in working in the area. I conducted initial introductions through the CADS, which is an organisation that has provided agricultural support to farmers in the district. The local leadership expressed no reservations in my carrying out the study and it was supportive of my professional and educational advancement through this study. Farmers that had received support from CADS were also willing to participate in the study. The selected wards were in communal areas and these are noted to have indeed been subjected to numerous studies (Gaidzanwa, 1995; Moyo, 1995). However, none of the studies that I am aware of have been concerned with the gendered dynamics of household utilisation of agricultural inputs. It was therefore of interest to understand household dynamics with regards to how decisions are made regarding securing food and income security and to understand how the farmers address issues of food insecurity. As Malterud (2001) noted, "a researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions"(p. 483-4). My background in Social Work and Gender Studies influenced my selection of the study topic and specific issues to investigate.

The district has a total population of 223 879 which is divided as follows: 113 506 females and 110 373 males and 56 248 households (Zimbabwe Census, 2012). Goromonzi is considered as one of the high performing agriculture regions. For convenience Ward 11 was identified and from this a total of 5 villages were targeted namely Marimo, Ururu, Majuru, Chigigi and Gore. The smallest village has approximately 258 people and the largest has 30 123 people. The average size of households is four people.

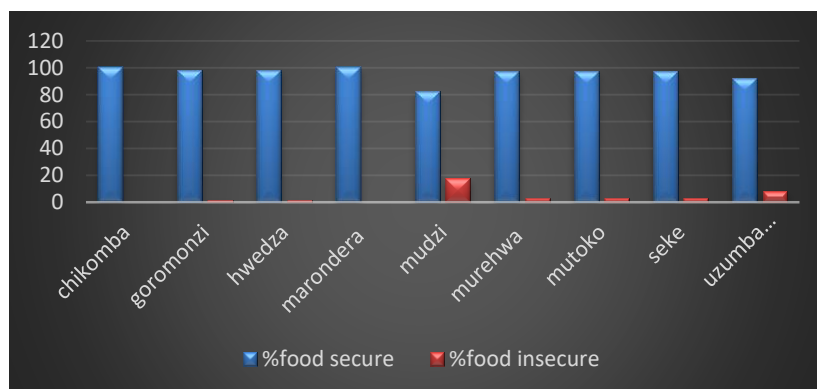


Figure: 5.1 Location of Mashonaland East province in relation to its location in Zimbabwe, year 2017



As a province, food insecurity is not a major problem but there are few areas that are food insecure at any given time as shown below.

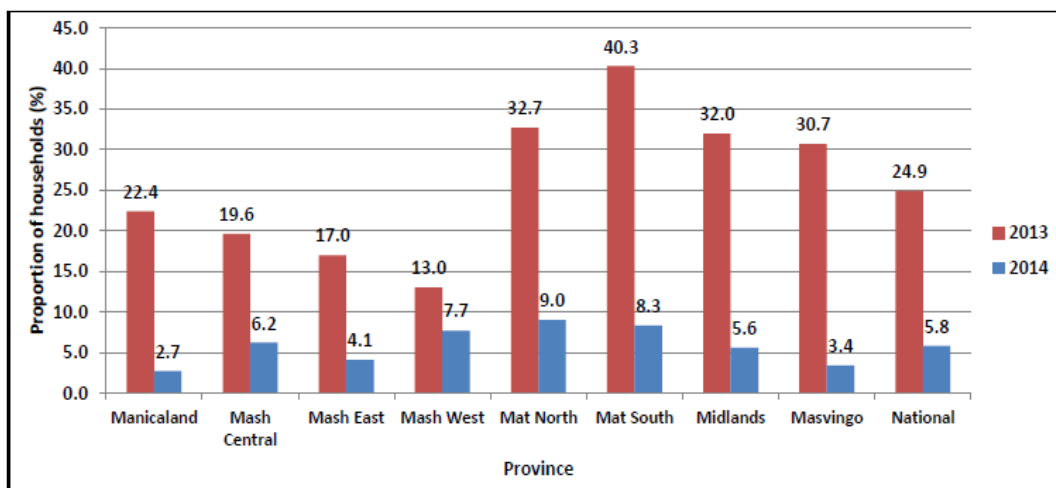
Figure 5.2: Food insecurity levels by district



Source: Zimbabwe Census, 2012

The above graph shows that Goromonzi is a food secure province when compared to other provinces in terms of food security. Mashonsland East, had in 2013, 17% of its households being food insecure, 4.1% in 2014 whilst the poorest provinces (Matebeleland South) had 8 and 40% food insecure households in 2013 and 2014 respectively. Compared to all the other provinces, Mashonaland East's level of food insecurity would be amongst the better off provinces as shown in the figure below.

Figure 5.3 Food insecurity by pvince



Source: Zimbabwe Census, 2012

### 5.3 Sampling

I used convenience sampling to identify study participants. Lavrakas (2008) notes that this is when participants to a research project are sampled simply because they are "convenient" sources of data for researchers. Being a food secure province, I also wanted to show how gender dynamics played themselves out in an area where food security was not a challenge. This was helpful in that it clearly isolated other dynamics of sourcing for food and it allowed me to interrogate the utilisation of agricultural inputs. As Lavrakas notes, with convenience sampling, there is no expert judgment to determine the selection of participants. The participants for this study were thus selected because of the convenience of their availability. Berinstein (2003p. 17) defined a sample as a representative "taste" of a group. The sample

should be “representative in the sense that each sampled unit will represent the characteristics of a known number of units in the population” (Lohr, 1999 p.3). Polkinghorne (2005) cautions on the error of assuming the selected participants are representative of the study area but rather the participants “can provide substantial contributions to filling out the structure and character of the experience under investigation” (p 139). To draw out the comparative aspect of the gender dynamics, a total of 30 participants were targeted i.e. 15 females and 15 males. The participants were identified from a register of the CADS project participants. The inclusion criterion to the study for the women and men farmers was that they should have been past beneficiaries of an agriculture input programme implemented by CADS. A pre-selection of the farmers was made through the assistance of CADS. Participants were identified from an already existing register which was developed during the life span of the project. The project by CADS supported a total of 47 000 households. In total there were 150 possible participants from the wards that I had selected. I then randomly picked 15 females and 15 males from the 150. I made provision that if, for any reason, any of the identified farmers were unavailable, the one closest to the identified households would be targeted. Initial meetings showed that there were sufficient participants from this ward and when I went into the field, this remained the case. The criteria for selection of the participants was that they had to have been past beneficiaries of the CADS supported programme.

The traditional leadership was also advised, and granted permission for my entry into the pre-selected wards. The voluntary consent of individuals was essential in this research. This meant the identified farmer had to have the “legal capacity to give consent, be able to exercise free power of choice without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit and should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the elements of the subject matter involved as to enable her/him to make an understanding and enlightened decision” (Reynolds, 1982, p.143). For this reason, all participants were required to complete consent forms after an explanation of the purpose of the study (a sample copy of the consent form is attached as appendix 1).

My research was conducted after the project had been concluded and closed out. Because of this, I anticipated that the participants would have limited or no bias. I also explained that their participation would not pose any threats to their access to future projects.

## 5.4 Data collection

Three in-depth interviews with each participants. Interviews were conducted over a year's period, from June 2015 to June 2016 using the ethnographic approach. At the first interview session, I administered the interview guide to completion. In the follow up interviews, I focused more on issues that I wanted to clarify which I had identified as unclear during transcription. Ethnography involves researchers using direct observation to study participants in their "real life" environment, sometimes over extended periods (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). *Ethno* refers to forms of social action and not social structure. The methodology seeks to describe how one arrives at what they consider the truth. My use of the strategies of inquiry (Creswell, 2013) of participant observation, case studies and interviews, sought to derive understanding of the issues at hand from the view of the subjects. Informed by the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA-discussed in detail later), the research emphasised the use of language by the subjects and how they described their realities (Coates, 2012). As a researcher of qualitative research, I also reflected continuously and introspected throughout the research process. This is described by Hughes and Tracy (2015) as reflexivity which is an attitude of attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction.

When being reflexive, Sutton and Austin (2015) note that researchers should not try to simply ignore or avoid their own biases (as this would likely be impossible); instead, reflexivity requires researchers to reflect upon and clearly articulate their position and subjectivities (world view, perspectives, biases), so that readers can better understand the filters through which questions were asked, data were gathered and analysed, and findings were reported. From this perspective, bias and subjectivity are not inherently negative but they are unavoidable; as a result, it is best that they be articulated up-front in a manner that is clear and coherent for readers (Sutton and Austin, 2015, p.226).

Garfinkel (1984) argues that if indexicality and reflexivity are brought together, what is created is a circular process which is the documentary method. The iterative nature of the research therefore allowed for the circular process described by Garfinkel (1984) to bring out information which might not have been readily captured using any other research method. Fuchs (2015) argued that critical theory rejects the argument that academia and science should and can be value-free. It rather argues that all thought and theories are shaped by political

worldviews. The reasons why a person is interested in a certain topic, aligns himself/herself with a certain school of thought, develops a particular theory and not another one, refers to certain authors and not others, are deeply political because modern society is shaped by conflicts of interests and therefore, for surviving and asserting themselves, scholars have to make choices, enter strategic alliances, and defend their positions against others. Critical theory holds not only that theory is always political, but also that it should develop analyses of society and concepts that assist struggle against interests and ideas that justify domination and exploitation.

Ethnomethodology also emphasises how subjects' realities are linked to their particular contexts. Button (1991:1), noted that it represents "a foundational respecification of the human sciences" (p.1). Ethnomethodology seeks to find the methods used by 'members' in everyday interaction which achieve the sense of order often called 'society' (hence 'ethno' methods). Ethnomethodology's focus upon the achievement of a sense of order through the actions of participants in that interaction requires an empirical focus upon the micro-processes of everyday life. People are generally not wholly conscious of what norms they use and so ethnomethodology is designed to uncover these norms and behaviours (Humphries, 2008). Good ethnography recognises the transformative nature of fieldwork. As one example, when I started off the study I had personal perceptions of what I considered to be empowerment. However, as I engaged in field work and interacted with participants, I realised there were different world views to life and these were usually based on life experiences. My field experience was transformative at a personal in that I introspected and realised I could not impose my standards on other people especially given we each had different personal experiences which contributed to defining who we were. As we search for answers to questions about people, we may find ourselves in the stories of others. Ethnography should be acknowledged as a mutual product born of the intertwining of the lives of the ethnographer and his or her subjects (Hoey, 2008).

Qualitative research does not provide a picture of how widespread emerging patterns may be. According to Adams, Dominelli, and Payne (2009) qualitative data collection allows for producing evidence about the context in which problems arise as well as views of those who are most affected by them. This is generally viewed as being too subjective and has been accused of ignoring the wider socio-economic and cultural issues that have relevance for behaviour.

#### ***5.4.1 Trustworthiness of the study***

What is important in applying any form of research methodology is to understand the reason why the research is being conducted and the use of the data and information gathered. Whilst the trustworthiness of qualitative research has come under scrutiny, mostly by positivists, the qualitative research method remains credible, especially for studying issues of gender. Trustworthiness refers to “researcher’s presence, the nature of the interaction between researcher and participants, the triangulation of data, the interpretation of perceptions and rich, thick description...” (Merriam, 1988 p.120). Andrews and Halcomb (2009, p. xvii) define trustworthiness as, “the degree of confidence that the researcher has that their qualitative data and findings are credible, transferable and dependable”. Guba (1981), later reinforced by Shenton (2003) argued that there are four considerations to be made in qualitative research in order to make it trustworthy.

These are:

- *Credibility*- this is highlighted by thick descriptions and the use of recognised research methods such as triangulation of the data gathered, and prolonged engagement in the field (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Erlandson et al, 1993). My data was triangulated through the application of in depth interviews, focus group discussions and case studies. I conducted 3 interviews with each of the participants up to point I felt I had reached saturation.
- *Transferability*-after the research is complete, this involves making sure that the findings can be justifiably applied to another setting. Although this is contentious in qualitative research since the research is specific to a particular group of people or settings, sufficient “thick” description of the farmers were made. Although the research was carried out in a single geographical area, the data collected may be transferrable to other areas in Zimbabwe because of the rigour that I sought to achieve during data collection. Andrews and Halcomb (2009, p. xvi) define rigour as “the thoroughness, accuracy, confirmability and ethical soundness of all aspects of a study’s design”
- *Dependability*- ensuring the provision of in-depth methodological description, this enables the study to be repeated. The processes I engaged in are described in detail so that should any other researcher wish to undertake a similar study, the research can be replicated.

- *Confirmability*-I took the necessary steps to demonstrate that findings that emerged from the data were not biased. Miles and Huberman (1994) consider the removal of bias a key criterion for confirmability. In order to fulfil this criterion, I provided detailed descriptions of the steps undertaken in the development of the study. The actual interviews were documented. An “audit trail” which details every step and process was developed. This is also in line with what Shenton (2003) has proposed as a means of confirmability. This included detailed personal journals, detailed recordings of interviews and transcripts of the same. Qualitative research emphasises the importance of awareness of bias – one’s conscious partiality/reflexivity to phenomena being studied – rather than the pursuit of elimination of bias in the positivist sense. Qualitative research acknowledges the subject location and the involvement of the researcher, and does not presume that the researcher stands outside of the world of the researched, as an objective outsider.

Tracy (2010 p. 837) also developed eight key markers of quality in qualitative research including namely (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigour, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence. This eight-point conceptualisation offers a useful pedagogical model and provides a common language of qualitative best practices that can be recognized as integral by a variety of audiences. Another characteristic of qualitative research is its idiographic approach (Vogrinc, 2008), which emphasizes an individual’s perspective on the investigative situation, process, relations (p. 19). All of these characteristics of qualitative research add credibility to its application to my research. My approach to the study applied vigour through the in-depth interviews, credibility was also assured through triangulation. Ethics were adhered to as described later on.

Bryman, Becker and Sempik (2008) in a study on the use of quality criteria across quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research in social policy research in the UK, noted that there is an absence of consensual agreement between qualitative researchers as to what criteria can be used to assess qualitative research. They stated, “...the rise of qualitative research over the last 25-30 years represents one of the reasons for the growing interest in research quality criteria because it is widely assumed that whereas quality criteria for quantitative research are well known and widely agreed, that is not the case for qualitative research” (2008, p.262). Neuman (2006) goes to great lengths to describe and distinguish between how quantitative and qualitative research addresses validity and reliability. “Qualitative and quantitative researchers

want reliable and valid measurement, but beyond an agreement on the basic ideas at a general level, each style sees reliability and validity in the research process differently” (Neuman 2006, p.189).

#### **5.4.2 Research Instruments**

The research instruments used were in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and case study. These are discussed below.

##### *5.4.2.1 In depth semi- structured interview guide*

Various types of interviews have been developed and employed by researchers in different disciplines. However, the basic building block of all forms of interviewing in general is the question-answer sequence (Roulston, 2010). Taking this into consideration and based on literature that I had reviewed, I developed and pre-tested a semi-structured open ended guide (attached as an annex 2) which I administered to the participants. This decision was also informed by Dörnyei (2007) who recommended that open-ended questions be piloted in advance. After the pre-test, I adjusted the interview guide to include the cooperative aspects of household chores. This was because men were of the view that their roles within the households needed to be amplified to show the cooperative nature of the distribution of chores. An in-depth semi structured interview was used to guide the discussions with the women and men farmers. I was of the view that the use of a structured form would, as Bryman (2008) argued, hinder the depth and richness of the responses. I conducted three in-depth interviews with each participant. For the participants that I identified for case studies, I added two additional interview meetings each. As Francis, Johnston and Robertson (2010) have observed, in interview studies, sample size is often justified by interviewing participants until reaching 'data saturation'. Through the interviews, I was satisfied I had managed to reach a level of data saturation when the interviews no longer yielded new information. This was in recognition of the principles proposed by Francis et al (2010) in which each interview no longer yielded new ideas and information.

I sought to ensure the interviews flowed naturally, were rich in detail (Dörnyei (200, p.140) by adhering to his advice of keeping interruptions to the minimum and giving the participants as much time as necessary to elaborate and explain any particular issue. Robson (2011, p.282) also advised on the importance of “putting questions in a straightforward, clear and non-



threatening way” which is crucial for the interviewee’s accurate answers. I took time to apply this and listened to the responses without interrupting the flow of the participants’ responses to my questions. I was also careful not to provide any cues which would lead participants to respond in a particular way and this is a caution from Robson (2011. p.282).

Basing on Wildschut (2011) who implores interviewers to be critical, knowledgeable, sensitive, and open, I was also very cognisant of the circumstances of the participants. For instance, on a number of occasions, I had to sit and wait for them to finish off household chores as I did not want to disrupt their routines. I also watched for non-verbal cues. These are of merit as according to Robson (2011) they may help the interviewer to understand the message being given. This was common when I was talking to a woman and the husband entered the interview room (round kitchen). This usually signified he wanted something from his wife and in such instances, I would suggest we took a break. In summary, the interview is “...a narrative device which allows persons who are so inclined to tell stories about themselves” (Denzin, 2001, p.25). Moreover, it is a tool that brings contextual meaningful information to the real world (Denzin, 2001). The interview provided me with the time and opportunity to engage with the participants in order to, as Rubin and Rubin (2005, p.134) say, “unravel the complexity of other people’s worlds”. Bryman (2008) states that interviews are more flexible than any other qualitative method. This merit makes interviews striking to be employed. Interviews are an excellent way to obtain insight into social issues by exploring the individuals’ experience regarding these issues (Seidman, 2012).

I obtained written permission to record the interviews after which these were transcribed verbatim to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. Interviews were conducted in ChiShona and then transcribed and translated into English. Quality of the translation was assured by the iterative engagement where I confirmed with the participants that I had effectively translated. They were all literate and understood English but preferred that the interviews be conducted in their mother tongue. Nikander (2008) noted that transcribing discussions from various interactional contexts such as interviews into a written form is an integral part of qualitative research practice. Transcripts are produced for particular analytic purposes and therefore range in detail. Chambers (2004) noted that the validity and importance of audio-recording allows for re-play of the discussion in cases where there are doubts as to what was said. The

experiences of participants were the central entry point for the data analysis. As Alsaawi (2014) implored, I was ready and prepared by having my recorder at hand. In addition to the recording, I also took detailed field notes. There was no manipulation of their environment; rather they were able to tell their story from a safe space of their homes with which they were familiar.

Some criticism of interviews has been radical, objecting to any reliance on people's accounts in interviews "as a window on to the social worlds in which they live and/or as a window into their minds" (Allen and Unwin, 1969, p. 53). According to Hofisi, and Mago (2014), weaknesses of in-depth interviews are that their "flexibility may imply that they are not reliable and they also need highly skilled interviewers apart from the fact that they consume both time and financial resources. Their subjectivity may mean that participants may "say" what the interviewer wants to hear, therefore, the validity and reliability of the interview data may be questionable" (p.62).

Interviews are also influenced by personal understandings and knowledge. Here, there is rejection of the idea that what people say somehow represents, or derives from, what goes on inside their heads. Interviews have also been questioned based on whether information generated represents 'external' reality or 'internal' subjective reality. Here, even accounts of what happened in some publicly observable situations are treated not as true or false, but rather as constitutive - as producing one of many possible versions of reality. Ethnographic interviews are aimed to examine descriptions and meanings that participants ascribe to events in their cultural world (Roulston, 2010). Phenomenological interviews explore participants' experience, in particular, their meaning-making process of the lived experience (Seidman, 2013). These arguments do not generally lead to rejection of the use of interview data in standard ways, but amount simply to warnings about the limits to what could be inferred from such data. The usual implication is that interviews must be combined with other methods. Because of these reservations, in addition to interviews, other data gathering techniques, discussed below were used.

#### *5.4.2.2. Focus group discussion (FGD) Guide*

Focus group discussion involves a brainstorming focus group of usually six to twelve participants (Dörnyei, 2007). It can generate "high quality data" which is useful for the interviewer. Participants can challenge, argue and debate with each other, and this technique

usually leads to the emergence of in-depth and rich data (p.144). Carey (1994) stated that focus groups are the best approach for sensitive topics. It is an enjoyable experience for the participants, and applicable for illiterate people (Robson, 2011). As suggested by Dörnyei (2007), I set up the FGC in advance. A guide, separate from the in-depth interview guide was developed and used for the focus group discussions. I identified a female and male lead farmer with whom I communicated on the times and meeting points for the discussions. The number of questions tends to be fewer than those in the other types of interviews. Also, confidentiality is an issue with this approach (Robson, 2011). Focus group discussion were structured so there were two for women only farmers, two for men only farmers and 1 for mixed group of women and men farmers. Women tend to be reserved in groups that are combined with men which is why a separate group for them was specifically created. FGDs provided the participants with an opportunity to validate each other's responses. Robson (2011) argued some may not open up for fear of being victimised and there may be a tendency for conformity. I was cognisant of this and made efforts to ensure that in all the discussions, all the members had an opportunity to participate. I also took into consideration non-verbal cues during interviews and group discussions. Participants in the FGD were those that had already been identified for the in-depth interviews.

#### *5.4.2.3 Observation*

I also used of the observation method, as all interviews were conducted via home visits and the farming plots. Observation was used to consider food availability through the presence of farm produce, food in storage and general household status. This was possible because I had gained entry, and established rapport with the participants. The intention was to verify responses given around issues to do with the food they had available in the household, any inputs available and assets they had. Based on the rapport established, I anticipated the participants would also have other off farm activities which they might wish to share. All observations were based on the principles of "no harm and risk", honesty, trust, privacy and confidentiality. Dewalt and Dewalt (2002) noted that observation adds validity to a study as it allows for deeper understanding of unspoken messages.

#### *5.4.2.4 Literature review*

Literature review of existing literature on gender and agriculture was conducted. This was drawn mainly from the KwaZulu Natal University library, the internet and field experience. This provided me with rich information that also assisted in the refinement of the research questions and objectives.

#### 5.4.2.5 *Case study*

To document case studies, I identified a lead farmer household and a widowed woman. In the initial plan for data gathering, I had not included a case study. However, as I interacted with the participants, I decided it would be interesting to get an in-depth story of two farmers. I identified these farmers after a number of home visits with them and found they had deep interesting stories to share.

Case study involves a series of semi-structured interviews and in some instances, having household discussions with family members. I decided to do a case study to allow for a more in depth analysis and understanding of two households. The case study approach has particular salience for social work. As Fook (2002) asserted, awareness of the social context and its importance in understanding individual experience and informing practice is one of the earliest principles which holds critical potential for social work. As Stake (2005) underlines: “Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied” (p. 443), distinguished from other forms of qualitative research by its analytic focus on one or a small number of bounded cases, each of which is studied within its distinct context. Moreover, the data one collects to learn about each case often take varying forms including observations, interviews, and documents. Mesec (1998) offers a definition of a case study within the field of social work. A case study “is a description and analysis of an individual matter or case with the purpose to identify variables, structures, forms and orders of interaction between the participants in the situation (theoretical purpose), or, in order to assess the performance of work or progress in development (practical purpose)” pg. 383).

The case study methodology was chosen in order to triangulate my findings. According to Johansson (2003), triangulation provides an important way of ensuring the validity of case study research. I chose to undertake a case study approach as it provided for rich, critical and unique information. The findings from the case study were not intended for generalisation of the findings but to enrich the triangulation process in the data analysis. Selection of the case studies was based on the desire for an understanding of participants who had different backgrounds. I chose Rufaro for the relationships she had with her in-law; Lucas for his role within the community as a leader and Gift for how he managed his role as an absentee husband.

## 5.5 Data analysis

Bryman (2016) has explained that data analysis is about data reduction i.e. reducing the large body of information into simple meaningful information. This is usually done by the researcher who collects the data (Zimdars et al, 2009). I was responsible for the collection and analysis of my data. Analysis was undertaken through the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), where the main focus was on the relationship between structure and agency, the power of language and how language is both constitutive and reflective of social structures. CDA is concerned with the mutually constitutive relations between language and other social structures and how language is embedded in a broader social order (Fairclough, 2009; Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

There are a number of definitions that have been put forward for CDA and each reflects the particular conviction of the scholar e.g. Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard, 1996; Fairclough, 1992; 2010; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Fairclough, Mulderrig & Wodak, 2011. Some focus on research e.g. Van Leeuwen (2006). Wodak (2012) sees it as a “meta-approach to solving problems in a quite intuitive and unsystematic, solely hermeneutic way” (p. 525). Van Dijk (2012:588) offered the following definition:

*Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context...critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately challenge social inequality.*

Though CDA was the preferred method for analysis, I did take note of the criticisms that have been labelled against it. For example, Martin (1992), argues that CDA fails to put into practice its social-based ambitions, so that in the end it observes social phenomena we mostly dislike, producing very persuasive materials on why they are offensive, but failing to suggest practical action. My approach was to engage with the participants so they are aware of their circumstances and can make choices from an informed stand point. He argued for the use of Positive Discourse Analysis (Martin 2000) and advanced the agenda that scholars should analyse not only texts they find objectionable but also texts they find admirable and motivating. Cameron (1998, p.969-70) argues that CDA has been criticised by feminists as founded by “all straight white men” who according to Wilkinson and Kitzinger (1995) have failed to give credit

to feminists by not citing their work. This however is a very subjective view which has been refuted by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) who argued that it has been discussed by a diversity of feminist women in a wide range of geographical locations, not all of whom are white and heterosexual and of which some include black feminists such as Hooks (2000).

Blommaert (2005) also argued that much of the work on CDA to date pays attention to texts of relevance in the West since, as a rule, CDA is not applied to societies other than the First World. With regards to this, I take note of work that has been done by authors like Dominelli (2003) on decolonising social work and Dominelli (1999) on feminist social work which I believe have been key in addressing some of these early concerns, and the research of Osthus and Sewpaul (2014) and Gilbert and Sewpaul (2015) in South Africa, whose data analyses were informed by CDA. Having presented the criticism, I concur with the conclusion by Widdowson (2004:8) who argued that CDA is critical in the sense that it has “moral appeal, socio-political justification and liberal ideological positioning”. I also took note of the contribution that feminism has made to the gender discourse especially with regards to CDA. Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis aims to analyse the relationship between gender and language, which mostly means examining enactments of power by men and women in the public domain (Lazar 2005). Coates (2012) argued that many studies in CDA with a gender focus adopt a critical feminist view of gender relations. They are motivated by the need to change substantively the existing conditions of these relations. I draw on the arguments propounded by feminist theory which I found useful in the discussion of the study findings. Coates (2012) further argued that it is important to be guided by feminist principles in theorising about the oppressive nature of gender. Lazar (2005) argued the ambition that CDA can help raise awareness about the unequal social conditions of minorities makes it a worthy enterprise.

Data analysis is probably the aspect of qualitative research that most clearly distinguishes it from experimental and survey research and the one that is least familiar. It is concerned with questions of how and why, which implies that explanations are sought in order to effectively make deductions from questions or interviews (Humphries, 2008). Though I had semi-structured interviews and sought to discuss specific themes, there were instances when I allowed the participants to bring in their themes of interest. I was however careful as well not to be side-lined or to have the discussions derailed and losing focus.

In this research qualitative data was analysed thematically using the open code method. This is a standard analytic technique characterised by a process of iteratively coding and categorising data to uncover thematic categories. Codes broadly correspond to questions as grouped in the scope of enquiry (Humphries, 2008). Once broad coding had been established, thematic categories were refined, with sub-categories being formed and relationships between these elucidated. These themes formed basis for the written analysis. Because the theoretical framework underpinning this research was the critical theory, the qualitative research was also influenced and augmented by the critical research methodology. This allowed participants to construct their realities based on their lived experience. According to Humphries (2008p. 117) critical research recognises that:

1. Social structures are oppressive and maintained through political and economic power
2. These legitimacies should be made more visible for examination and to identify the oppressive and exploitative practises
3. Taken for granted understandings are examined for their relationship to wider social and historical structures
4. Seeks to combat oppressive structures
5. Critical researcher is reflexive and flexible to engage with power dynamics.

Critical research acknowledges the problems of interpreting meaning in social life. At the same time it does not deny the existence of objective facts and insists on examining the institutional structures that constrain and control relatively powerless people (Humphries, 2008). Giddens, (1982p.-13) notes that we create society at the same time as we are created by it. Critical research analysis also identifies with people who are oppressed. My interaction with the participants sought to interrogate the family and community structures in as far as they contributed to the gender dynamics around the utilisation of agricultural inputs. Part of this also included questioning the cultural beliefs that perpetuated gender inequality and male supremacy.

In the analysis of the data, empowerment was analysed and determined in relation to criteria such as access to and ownership of means of production, resources, income, leadership and time use linked to indices developed by USAID (2012) and Longwe (1999). I was cognisant

of identified shortcomings of the empowerment models, and I sought to factor these identified shortcomings in the overall analysis. The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index measures the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agriculture sector to identify ways to overcome obstacles and constraints that hinder women's engagement and equality. The Index is a significant innovation in its field, and aims to increase understanding of the connections between women's empowerment, food security, and agricultural growth. It measures the roles and extent of women's engagement in the agriculture sector in five domains: (1) decisions about agricultural production, (2) access to and decision-making power over productive resources, (3) control over use of income, (4) leadership in the community, (5) time use.

Longwe's (1999) model presents empowerment in various levels. March et al. (2005) note that Longwe's model is considered to be useful in that it may assist organisations in developing more explicit programmatic strategies that aim to fundamentally shift the bases of gender inequality. They note that the gendered assumptions of equality are made explicit which provides an excellent opportunity highlighting the political dimensions of gender inequality. On the other hand, the weaknesses are that it is not designed to explain how or why a program works. The model does not explore the contributing or causal factors that led to the progression from one level of impact to the next. The focus is only placed on three levels of equality, e.g., positive, neutral, or negative impact, which limits important qualitative assessments of "success" that provide valuable information critical for program improvement. The assumption is that there is a hierarchy of gender equality levels suggesting a somewhat more linear change trajectory than is often found in practice. From this caution, much emphasis was based on qualitative discussions with the participants in order to mitigate against the shortfalls in explaining participants' responses.

## **5.6 Ethical considerations**

In carrying out the research, I made effort to ensure that the various facets of ethics were covered and that the subjects to the research were adequately protected. The Academy of Social Science's Council (2015) adopted some guiding ethical principles for social science research and recommended them to the community of social science researchers. These are related to



the inclusive nature of social science research (i.e. inclusive of different interests, values), respect of privacy and dignity society, maintenance of the integrity of research. I was conscious of these throughout the research, adhered to these and maintained respect for participants.

The voluntary consent of individuals is essential in research. The University of North Carolina (2017) describes informed consent as “the knowing consent of an individual without undue inducement or any element of force, fraud, duress or any other form of constraint or coercion. Sufficient information must be presented (in understandable language) so that the potential subject can make an informed judgment about participation (p. 2). This means the person involved should have the legal capacity to give consent, be able to exercise free power of choice without the intervention of any element of force, fraud or deceit.

Prior to each interview, I spent time just explaining to the beneficiaries the purpose of the study and that the research would not in any way influence their suitability to benefit from future programmes. I also explained that the findings would be purely for academic purposes.

The participants were also provided with an opportunity to give refuse or consent to participate in the study. The essence of the principle of informed consent is that human subjects of research should be allowed to participate in the light of comprehensive information concerning the nature and purpose of the research. Prilleltensky and Walsh–Bowers (2000) argue that ethics is best protected when researchers perceive as their professional duty the responsibility to create dialogue in relations of mutual respect. They argue that researchers’ ongoing engagement with their organisations and the way in which this relationship shape their version of ethical practice is forged within power relations that “condition what is perceived as ethics and how ethical dilemmas can be resolved” (Prilleltensky and Walsh–Bowers, 2000, p. 95).

In carrying out this study, the following ethical considerations suggested by Butler (2002) were adhered to:

1. Research should not cause disruption to people's lives during or after the research is concluded. It should not be intrusive or cause mental harm (Butler, (2002). I regarded this as the "do no harm principle" (Butler, 2002, p. 245).
2. Participants should be informed of consent to the purpose of the study with a choice to accept to participate, withdrawn and even decline the invitation to participate
3. Privacy should be respected. Butler (2002) warns against methods that invade privacy such as covert observation or asking inappropriate questions. I ensured that participants' dignity was protected and all issues were clarified and participants were allowed to ask questions for clarity.
4. Deception – participants should not be deceived or misled in any way.
5. Access to confidential information without prior consent of participants –should information be sought which is not necessarily provided by the participants, they should be made aware that this will be done and for what purpose.

The autonomy of participants was protected through the use of an informed consent forms. All participation by the participants was purely voluntary and they were given the option to withdraw should they have felt uncomfortable for any reason at any point of the research. All the responses were treated in a confidential manner. In the analysis of data, where I quote names, these have all been given pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants and maintained anonymity.

Ethical considerations were also in line with the University of KwaZulu Natal's standards for ethics. Ethical clearance was granted from UKZN's Humanities, Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (see attached – Appendix 3).

The following limitations were experienced:

#### ***5.6.1 Fear by participants to disclose food security status***

Participants were initially hesitant to talk about their food security status. They thought this would prejudice their access to future assistance if they showed that their households were food secure. I mitigated against this by explaining to the participants that the research was for study purposes, and emphasised that their participation would in no way influence their access to any future programmes.

### ***5.6.2 Participant bias***

Participants initially seemed to be keen to respond to some of my questions in an almost uniform manner. I noted that after about three interviews, I was getting more or less the same answers. Initially I assumed the responses were as such. However, the rigour of the research methodology, where I engaged in several home visits and protracted discussions in various forms and prolonged engagement broke the participant bias. The rapport that I established allowed for me to be very informal with the participants which resulted in them dropping their guard, leading to a glimpse into their otherwise protected lives. Since participants were part of an input support programme, I could not rule out the fact that they might have associated my research with the possibility of another similar programme. They might have therefore tried to provide responses, which they considered appropriate and that would facilitate them being considered for future programmes. I explained at each occasion we interacted that I was conducting research which was not linked in any way to any prospective programme.

I was also sensitive to the fact that participants might be protective of their households and communities. There is a popular Shona saying, “haufukuri hapwa pavanhu” which literally translated means you “don’t expose your armpits in public” meaning the protection of family or household secrets. In such a case, men and women might portray themselves and their circumstances positively, and there might have been more constraints in men and women speaking openly in each other’s presence. I managed this by having separate individual interviews for women and men; women only groups; men only groups and mixed groups. This triangulation served to cross reference responses.

### ***5.6.3 Fear of victimisation***

Initial meetings were reserved, as most of the participants wanted assurance that they would not be considered to be taking part in political meetings, which had not been sanctioned by the local leadership. The same was the case for home visits. The first question was always, “does the councillor know you are here?” In the first focus group meeting I had to invite the local councillor to explain that I had gone through the necessary protocol and had permission to be in the wards. I appreciated the sentiments of the participants, respected and addressed their concerns. I too did not want to place them in a difficult position of having to explain themselves after I had left. On one occasion, when I had scheduled a focus group discussion, a political

meeting was organised at the same time and I was not informed in advance. On arrival, I had to wait for three hours whilst the meeting took place. Clearly, political matters took precedence. I sensed unspoken fears such that even if one did not really want to attend a political meeting, there was an unspoken coercive force.

#### ***5.6.4 Fear of being left out of future programmes***

The participants openly expressed the fear of the possibility of not being future beneficiaries in other programmes if they had shown the programme had not been as effective as had been anticipated. I again provided the assurance that my research was not related in any way to any future programmes.

#### ***5.6.5 Sample size and generalisation of findings***

Though the research was carried out in a single geographical area with a small sample size, the value of qualitative research is analysis of data in context and transferability of data with similar samples. Although critics of qualitative research consider it to be a soft science, which yields no scientific information and is subjective (Hammersley, 2005), it is rich in the way in which it provides for introspection (Flick, 2002). I also adhered to the four considerations of qualitative research which according to Guba (1981) (discussed above) are: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

#### ***5.6.6 Researcher bias***

As a researcher, I did have some personal convictions about certain subjects especially related to issues of human rights and women's empowerment. I strongly believe in agitating for change where I feel one group of society is oppressed. I was careful not to allow these strong feelings to influence my study by engaging in reflexivity. The application of CDA in my analysis required me to self-reflect and be self-critical. This point has been raised by (Wodak, 1989) and (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999: 9) who argue that CDA is not about criticising others but also about self-reflection. In this regard, I needed to be reflective of myself in the way I interacted with the participants to ensure that I did not impose my views, my beliefs and persuasions during the research process and in the analysis of what was presented. I was also careful not to be trapped by Widdowson's (2004:110) argument that critical discourse analysts unfairly 'privilege' their own interpretations. The self-introspection was useful in this. Another strong point for CDA is its concern with contributing to social change (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 32). My hope was that as I engaged with the participants, it would become clear to them

that there were some inequalities that existed in society and it was up to them as members of the community to be the change agents by questioning what they considered to be normal.

### ***5.6.7 Translation of interviews***

My interviews were conducted and recorded in Shona and then translated into English as I transcribed them. There was the possibility that some meaning might be lost in translation. What was important was that as I transcribed and if there was a query on a particular meaning of a statement, the next time I engaged with the participants, I would pose the same question again until I reached a level of saturation which was a point when the participants were providing the same answers to questions that I had posed in different ways. If the response was different (though this was minimal), I would refer back to the earlier response and remind them what they had said without taking away the right to change one's mind, especially if they had reflected on the questions and their responses after I had left. I used the follow up interviews to verify the meaning of concepts, and also used independent moderators conversant in the Shona language to conduct member checks.

This chapter presented the research methodology of the study. In the next chapter, I present the biographical data of the participants.

## CHAPTER 6: BACKGROUND AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS

### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the bio-data of the participants. This covers their ages, educational backgrounds and livelihood activities. In order to protect the identity of the participants I used pseudonyms which were chosen by the participants. The selection of the pseudonyms was participatory. Each of the participants were asked to choose a name that they would have wanted to be called had they had a choice to choose their names at birth. Knowledge and understanding of the location of the participants with regards to their socio-economic status and general background was important as their voices would also be evident in the following analysis chapters.

#### **Pseudonym: Tinotenda**

Age: 4 April 1961-56yrs old

Marital status: Widowed

Sex: Female

Village: Marimo

Number of children: 3

#### Background Information

She was a widowed woman with 3 grandchildren. Her husband died in year 2003. Two of her children (boy and girl) were late and she had been looking after 3 of her grandchildren aged 8, 12, and 15. She suspected that her children died of HIV/AIDS some years back but she could not be sure as they had never openly broached the subject. Her sources of livelihood were farming and remittances from her other children who worked in Harare.

Her education level grade 7. She attended the accelerated adult school programme which was introduced by government at independence in 1980 for those who had been denied an opportunity to get formal education during the colonial era. She lived on her matrimonial plot

which was also within the bigger family plot where two of her brothers in law also lived with their families. She lived in an asbestos roofed house and had the typical kitchen where she used wood fuel for cooking. One of her children lived with his wife nearby. Before her husband died, he had apportioned a piece of the plot to the son. The household owned seven cattle, some goats and indigenous chickens. Her grandchildren also provided farm labour. She shared her cattle with her in-laws. She had never had any challenges with this arrangement and she attributed this to the way she had embraced all her extended family members. On average, she made approximately USD 60-100 per month from horticulture and the remittances she received.

**Pseudonym: Grace**

Age: born 16 January 1983 aged 35

Marital status: Married

Sex: Female

Village: Marimo

Number of children: 3 (2 boys and a girl- aged 12; 10 and 7)

**Background information**

She was married and lived with her children on her father in-law's homestead. Her husband worked as a general labourer in Harare and came home on weekends. She and her husband had been allocated a piece of land from the family plot, and they jointly managed this. She was responsible for the farming though her husband had overall decision making even from a distance. Their children lived with her. She had five cows and one of them was milking. On average, she made approximately USD 100-150 per month from the sales of milk and what she received from her husband. She had completed her "O" Levels but not done well but she was adamant that at some point in her life she would go back to school.

**Pseudonym: Lizzy**

Age: 29 April 1972-45yrs

Marital status: Married

Sex: Female

Village: Marimo

Number of children: 4 children (2 girls and 2 boys aged 13, 15, 18 and 22 respectively)

Background information

She was married and was a joint farmer with her husband. Her husband was also involved in buying and selling of wares that her husband bought from Harare and sold within the village. This included second hand clothes and kitchen items such as plates. He also bought vegetables from the nearby farm for resale. She attended school up to Form 4 and did not pass her O' Levels. She had been trying to re-write as she realised the importance of an education and hoped that in the near future she would be able to undertake a tertiary level course. She had attended sewing classes and made simple clothes for sale within the community. Her oldest daughter was married. She was an active member of the local church and was a committee member in the women's wing. Her husband had three cows. On average, she made about USD 100-150 per month from horticulture and what she received from her husband as family upkeep.

**Pseudonym: Tatenda- (lead farmer)**

Age: 46 years old, born 5 December, 1971

Marital status: widowed

Sex: Female

Village: Ururu

Number of children: children aged 25 (M); 18(F) and 15 (M)

Background information

She lived with her 15 year old son. The other two children were off the plot and lived with their spouses in Harare. She was the local entrepreneur and was also a lead farmer. She lived on the family homestead along with three brothers in law and their wives. Her late husband was the



typical successful farmer and she learnt a lot of what she was now engaged in from him. She attended school up to Form 2 after which her parents could not afford to send her further. The household had five cows registered in her late husband's name and she used this as draught power. She took seriously the extension services provided and participated in all those she could access. She believed by so doing, she could end up being a community trainer, which she had seen happening with other community members. Her home was asbestos roofed. On average, the household made about USD 100-150 from hiring out the cattle to other households and also from horticultural activities.

**Pseudonym: Rutendo (lead farmer)**

Age: 6 January 1963-54yrs

Marital status: Married

Sex: Female

Village: Ururu

Number of children: 6 children (4 girls and 2 boys), all adults, ages ranged between 25 -35 and 5 grand children

**Background information**

She lived with three of her grandchildren who helped her and her husband with the household chores. She and her husband were both retired teachers who taught in the local school. As a couple they owned ten cows, two of which were hers from the marriage of her two daughters. Their main source of livelihood was horticulture which they practised on their plot. During her time as a teacher, she and her husband had invested in drip irrigation equipment and a water tank and a manual well. This enterprise enabled them to raise enough money for their upkeep and they supplemented this with remittances from their children. She lived with her grandchildren because her children who worked in Harare did not own houses. As lodgers they often moved houses and this had been disruptive to her grandchildren. On average, the household made about USD 150-200 from the horticultural activities.

**Pseudonym: Nyashadzashe**

Age: 66 years old- she did not have a record of birth but she knew her birth year

Marital status: widowed

Sex: Female

Village: Majuru

Number of children: 6 children (4 boys and 2 girls-all adults above 30 years old) and 7 grandchildren

**Background information**

Her husband passed away about ten years ago and she had continued to live on the plot that her husband left her. She was now regarded as the matriarch within the household. Two of her daughters in law lived on the same compound which was the family homestead but they ran their homes separately. She owned four cows and when she needed support in any way she called on her daughters in law. She shared the cows with her daughters in law. Her grandchildren, being so close were also often at her disposal and tended to meander between the households. Her main source of livelihood was selling vegetables which she acknowledged was really more of a hobby to keep her occupied because she did not make too much money out of it and often relied on her children for support. The household made about USD100-150 including remittances.

She also lived with her 2 grandchildren aged 13 and 15 years. The grandchildren were from her daughter, Chido who was divorced. Chido left her children with Nyashadzashe to enable her to look for work in Harare.

**Pseudonym: Rudo**

Age: 11 May 1965-52yrs

Marital status: Married

Sex: Female

Village: Majuru

Number of children: 4 children (1 girl and 3 boys- all adults)

Background information

She was married to a local farmer and they were engaged in horticulture production. She grew vegetables and reared chickens which were sold in the local market. She lived with her grandchildren from her daughter who was late. The son in law (who had since remarried) did contribute towards the upkeep of the child and this helped to cover some of their food needs. She was a member of the women's committee in the church. By her own explanation, most of the younger women looked up to her for advice with regards to home making. She was also a strong member of the ruling party and was often at the forefront in mobilising for meetings. She had primary level education. Her outgoing personality made her a natural leader amongst the women. This was quite evident during focused group discussions where she tended to want to dominate the discussions and provide answers on behalf of the group. She had no cattle of her own but as a household, they had four cows. She explained that the cows were her husband's and she could have access as and when she needed. The household made about USD 80-100 from their horticulture business.

**Pseudonym: Gloria**

Age: 14 May 1959-57yrs

Marital status: Married

Sex: Female

Village: Marimo

Number of children: 4 children (2 girls and 2 boys aged 32, 27, 25 and 23, 25)

Background information

She lived with her husband and one grandchild who was seven years old. The grandchild helped them with basic household chores after school. The other grandchildren lived with their parents in Harare. She had attended school up to primary level. She was an active member of the community and was at the forefront of promoting initiatives such as the nutrition schools that

had been introduced by CADs. Two of her female children were married and she had had the benefit of being given her two cows in fulfilment of the tradition that when one's daughter gets married, the mother is given a cow as a sign of appreciation for raising children who were worthy of marriage. On average, the household made about USD 50-100.

**Pseudonym: Farai**

Age: 12 July 1960 -57yrs- she did not have a record of birth but she knew her birth year

Marital status: Married

Sex: Female

Village: Chigigi

Number of children: 5 children all boys aged from 20 years up to 35

**Background information**

All her children were grown up and they lived in their homes in Harare. Her husband occupied leadership positions in the community. The family often visited her and they spent most public holidays together. Her grandchildren also visited her during school holidays. She had primary level education. She was proud that all of her children completed their education and had various decent jobs in Harare. Her children supported her and her husband with groceries and money whenever they thought there was a need. She worked on the family plot with her husband who was also a lead farmer. On average, the household made about USD100-150 per month from the sale of horticultural produced which they bought from the neighbouring farm and sold and also from remittances from their children.

**Pseudonym: Ruvimbo**

Age: 1956-61yrs- she did not have a record of birth but she knew her birth year

Marital status: Married

Sex: Female

Village: Chigigi

Number of children: 6 children aged from 25 -35 and 4 grandchildren

Background information

All her children were grown up. She lived with her husband and their main source of livelihood was petty trading in the community and remittances from the children who lived in the city. Two of her adult children worked in South Africa. She noted that the remittances were not as much and often unpredictable as they used to be and she suspected it was because her children were also probably having a hard time making ends meet in South Africa. She also noted that the drop in the value of the rand had also affected her household as it meant the goods she could buy were now reduced. On average, the household made about USD 100. She attended school up to grade seven.

**Pseudonym: Rufaro**

Age: 3 September 1976 -41yrs

Marital status: Widowed

Sex: Female

Village: Ururu

Number of children: 3 children (aged 20 -female; 16-female; 8-male)

Background information

She lost her husband three years ago. She was an avid advocate of HIV prevention and had announced her HIV sero-positive status to the community. She was regarded as an ambassador on issues related to HIV and AIDS and had benefitted from the nutrition programme supported by CADS. She had three children and they had tested negative for HIV which she acknowledged was a great relief. Her husband succumbed to opportunistic infection and died before he could access the ART programme. She had been fortunate that she was placed on treatment before her condition had deteriorated and had responded well. She was now healthy and could work to support her family. She lived on her in-laws' homestead on the piece of plot that was allocated to her and her husband before he died. She had resolved to care for her

children and ensure that they got an education that she had been unable to complete because she became pregnant at age 19 and had to get married. Her 20 year old daughter was training to be a teacher of which she was really proud and thankful. She was a subsistence farmer, as was common with all the other households. She occasionally bought and sold goods which were in demand at any given time. At the death of her husband, she endured alienation from the community because he had become visibly ill, which led the community to talk about her family. She felt there was more sympathy for her now. Her in-laws were initially very critical and judgemental of her and had even suggested that she should move back to her maiden home. She refused this arrangement as it meant she would be starting all over again at her parents'. She also did not want to burden her parents as they lived with two daughters in law. She attended school up to secondary level before she became pregnant and could not continue. On average she made about USD80-100. She was conscious of how she raised her children and tried to break the gender stereotypes.

**Pseudonym: Vimbai**

Age: 21 February 1953-64yrs

Marital status: Married

Sex: Female

Village: Ururu

Number of children: 6 children aged from 30 to 40 years and 7 grandchildren

**Background information**

She lived with her husband and two grand-children. She was a subsistence farmer together with her husband. She talked fondly of having lived a full life and said she was ready “even for the Lord to take her”. She went to school up to primary level and she was proud of the way her life had been, given her low level of education. Though she was not educated beyond primary she was smart enough to know the importance of education and sent all her children to school. Two of her children were engineers. They had 13 cows as a household. She owned one of her own which she got at the marriage of her daughter. She had slaughtered the cow and had invited her relatives to have a party and celebrate her life. She had not wanted to keep the

cow as she feared it could lead to problems should she die. The grandchildren she lived with were from her youngest son whom she said had been unfortunate in marriage in that he had been in two separate relationships which had ended badly. The children from these unions now lived with her. She made approximately USD 80-100 per month.

**Pseudonym: Sarudzai**

Age: 21 April 1975-42

Marital status: widowed

Sex: Female

Village: Ururu

Number of children: 4 children (aged 7, 10, 14 & 18years)

**Background information**

She was a widowed woman who lived with her widowed mother in law. The community fondly referred to the household as the “widow’s household”. When her husband passed on, she decided to stay on the homestead. She said that it would have been difficult for her to re-establish herself at her maiden home with three children to look after. She provided labour to neighbouring homesteads from which she sent her children to school. She was also a tailor and provided services within the community. She had good relations with her mother in law and other extended family members who lived on the homestead including a sister and brother in law. These had all been very supportive of her ever since she lost her husband three years ago. She made approximately US \$ 110 per month. She had managed to reach “O” Level but had not been able to acquire the 5 “O” Levels required for her to proceed to tertiary education such as teaching which is what she was interested in.

**Pseudonym: Kudzai**

Age: 2 January 1979- 38years

Marital status:

Sex: Female

Village: Ururu

Number of children: 3 children aged 16; 13; 8

#### Background information

She lived with her husband and was a member of the larger extended family of two wives to one husband. She was comfortable with this as it was part of the household's religious belief. She and her husband grew up in the religion and it was always an expectation that they would both find spouses from within the church. She had her own kitchen which was her main area of control. In the traditional setting, when a woman got married, a kitchen was important because it defined who she was. It was in the kitchen that she determined what happened and this was more important for her given that there was another woman with whom she shared her husband. She only went up to grade 7 as her religion did not value education. On average the household makes approximately USD 80-100.

#### **Pseudonym: Nyarai**

Age: 30 years, born 2 September 1987

Marital status: Married

Sex: Female

Village: Ururu

Number of children: 3 children aged 3- girl, 7 –girl and 10 -boy

#### Background information

She was married into a family that practised polygamy. Her husband had one wife but she understood that should he desire to marry another wife, he could do so and she was even expecting it. She also grew up in the same religion. The husband explained that he had given his wife the opportunity to find another wife for him as it was unacceptable in the church to have one wife. He would be regarded as being a weak man. He was not very concerned about this but felt it was important for his image. He acknowledged that looking after two wives was a huge challenge in the face of the economic hardships. Nyarai was however keen to fulfil the expected image and was keen for her husband to take a second wife. This would also give her authority within the household and church as she would be regarded as the senior wife. The



husband made pots and pans, an activity which had been viewed as the domain of this religion. From this, they make between USD 150-200.

She only attended school up to primary level up to which she then dropped out to prepare for marriage.

**Pseudonym: Tapiwa**

Age: 36 years- he was born on 2 March 1981

Marital status: Married

Sex: Male

Village: Gore

Number of children: 2 children aged 6 and 10

**Background information**

He was married and lived with his wife. He made a living out of buying and selling and also reared broiler chickens. He completed his secondary education and could not attend tertiary education as his parents were both late and his uncle who looked after him could not afford to send him to school. He lived on the plot that his parents lived on. His parents died when he was 17, and he continued to live with his siblings on the farm. His uncle, who lived close by, made sure that they were provided for with food and the basics, such as school fees. After his secondary education he was advised to leave school and work to provide for his three siblings. He was the oldest of the four siblings. Two of his siblings were married and he still lived with the youngest. On average, the household made about USD 150-200.

**Pseudonym: Ronald**

Age: 40 years- he was born 2 February 1977

Marital status: Married

Sex: Male

Village: Gore

Number of children: 2 children aged 15 and 12

#### Background information

He was married and lived with his wife on a plot allocated to him by his father. He made his livelihood from farming and also did petty trading of any goods that were required in the community. He had secondary level education. He often went to Harare to look for piece jobs from which income he also then bought goods for resale in the local community. On average the household made about USD 100-120.

#### **Pseudonym: Ngoni**

Age: 34 years- he was born 30 November 1983

Marital status:

Sex: Male

Village: Gore

Number of children: 3 children aged 1, 6 and 10

#### Background information

He lived with his children and wife on a plot assigned to his household by his father. He was educated up to tertiary level where he undertook a course in welding. He spent his time between Harare and his rural home where his family resided. Because of the economic hardships and failure to secure consistent work, he opted to have his family to live in the village so he would not have to find lodgings for his entire family. When he was in Harare, he lived with relatives and understood the pressure that they also faced so he tried to limit his stays. On average he made about USD 120 -200 per month.

#### **Pseudonym: Fungai**

Age: 52 years- he was born 18 August 1965

Marital status: Married

Sex: Male

Village: Ururu

Number of children: 4 children aged between 20 and 30 years with 2 grandchildren

#### Background information

He lived on his plot which he inherited from his parents. All his family members except the two older sons lived with him including his two grandchildren from his two daughters. The two daughters were not married and they never were. He talked of his daughters with some bitterness, complaining that he knew the very boys who had impregnated his daughters and now he had to be responsible for caring for his daughters and the grandchildren. He had five cows which he hired out as draught power. He also bought and sold vegetables from the nearby commercial farmer. He acknowledged that there were already too many people in his ward who sold the same products since they were buying from the same commercial farmer. His level of education was up to primary school. His wife was also engaged in buying and selling. When she was not doing this, she also sold her labour to the local villagers for planting and weeding. On average, the household made about USD 80-100 a month.

#### **Pseudonym: Thomas**

Age: 4 November 1973-44yrs

Marital status: Married

Sex: Male

Village: Gore

Number of children: 3 children (2 girls aged 10 and 12 and 1 boy aged 15)

#### Background information

He lived on the family homestead which was inherited from his parents who were both late. His household shared the plot with a sister who was widowed and lived with her two children. His livelihood was from farming. He had tried to work in Harare doing different types of

unskilled work but found this unsustainable and he decided to return to his village and engage in full time farming. He owned three cows and one was milking. He sold excess milk once he had supplied the needs of his household. He attended school up to O' Levels but did not attain enough passes to proceed to a tertiary level. He explained that some continue to live in Harare to keep up images and appearances when in actual fact they could really not afford to do so and would have been better off in the village. He made an average of USD 70-100 per month.

He lived with his wife and three children on the family homestead. He had established himself as an artisan in the community and provided services as a builder and carpenter. After completing his tertiary education, he worked in Harare for a furniture company for some years before he decided to start his own business. He was now employed in the informal sector during the week and at weekends he supplemented the income with piece jobs in the community. His wife was a subsistence farmer and they relied on the assistance of the in-laws for draught power. They had two cows of their own which they kept in the in-laws' kraal. He made an average of USD 80-120 per month.

**Pseudonym: Tariro**

Age: born 15 November 1978, aged 39

Marital status: Married

Sex: Male

Village: Ururu

Number of children: 3 children (3 boys aged 10, 12 and 14)

**Background information**

He lived with his wife and three children on the family homestead. He had established himself as an artisan in the community and provided services as a builder and carpenter. After completing his tertiary education, he worked in Harare for a furniture company for some years before he decided to start his own business. He was now self-employed in the informal where he made furniture in Harare. At weekends he supplemented the income with piece jobs in the

community. His wife was a subsistence farmer and they relied on the assistance of the in-laws for draught power. They had two cows of their own which they kept in the in-laws' kraal. He made an average of USD 80-120 per month

**Pseudonym: Mugove**

Age: 47 years –he was born on 2 June 1970

Marital status: Married

Sex: Male

Village: Ururu

Number of children: 3 children - boys and 1 girl aged 13, 15 and 20

**Background information**

He lived on his homestead apportioned to him by his father. He relied on farming for his food needs and also bought and sold different items from Harare for resale in the community. He completed tertiary level education after which he did not consider it worthwhile to engage in formal employment. He commuted between Harare and the village depending on where there was business. At times he took horticultural produce to Harare for sale then brought back clothing and household items for sale in the village. His wife also helped with the selling of goods in addition to being actively involved in the household farming. On average, he made approximately USD 100-120.

**Pseudonym: Pfungwa (Lead farmer)**

Age: 53 years -He was born on 28 July 1964

Marital status: Married

Sex: Male

Village: Chigigi

Number of children: 4 children (all girls; 3 were married and aged 27, 25, 22 and 16) and 3 grand children

#### Background information

He was a lead farmer who had proven to the community that with hard work, farming could be a source of livelihood. His wife was also an active member in the community and was a member of the local church board. He had managed to erect a water tank and had a drip irrigation system on 0.5 hectares. He grew butternuts, tomatoes and other horticultural crops which were in season. He had a small truck which he used to ferry his produce to Harare. In some instances, some buyers actually came from Harare to buy his produce off farm. He had completed his O' Levels and had undertaken a diploma course in bookkeeping. He was a retired clerk who had worked for a bakery in Harare. He explained that during the time that he worked, he slowly put together his retirement plan of the horticulture business. He said the community used to mock him that he only had girls for children but the same girls, three of whom were married were the ones that consistently supported him financially when his business was not doing so well. On average, he made about USD 150-200 per month.

#### **Pseudonym: Clement**

Age: 39 years- he was born on 27 May 1978

Marital status: Married

Sex: Male

Village: Chigigi

Number of children: 3 children (3 girls aged 12, 10 and 5)

#### Background information

He was a subsistence farmer and worked with his wife on the plot that was allocated to him by his father. He had been formally employed in Harare as a gardener but gave this up in 2009 when the country was experiencing economic challenges. Some of the impacts were manifested in employers failing to pay salaries and his company was also affected. He had then decided it was best to engage in full time farming. He had a small horticultural plot on which he grew vegetables for sale. His wife also provided casual labour to neighbouring farms. He admitted

this was often regarded as the most demeaning way of raising money but of late, more and more people were engaged in the same activity. As a result, the community members, both women and men would often question the notion that one had no means of food when there were so many people requiring casual labour and willing to pay whether in cash or in kind. Both him and his wife completed their secondary education but did not advance beyond that. On average, he made about USD 80-100 per month.

**Pseudonym: Kuziwa**

Age: 46 years- he was born on 3 April 1971

Marital status: Married

Sex: Male

Village: Chigigi

Number of children: 5 children (3 girls and 2 boys)

**Background information**

He was married with 5 children and they had a small plot of land which was allocated to his household almost 10years ago by his father. He was a subsistence farmer who relied on his own produce for household food security. He was engaged in petty trading and sold within the community whatever was in demand. The proximity to Harare made it possible for him to collect specific orders of what people wanted then he brought these back and sold at a profit. He attained a secondary level education and then went on to study welding at the Harare Polytechnic. On average, he made about USD 100 per month.

**Pseudonym: Garikayi**

Age: 46 years- he was born on 3 July 1971

Marital status: Married

Sex: Male

Village: Gore

Number of children: 4 children (2 boys and 2 girls)

#### Background information

He lived on his father's homestead with his wife. He was engaged in petty trading and had a stall in the local market where he sold goods such as clothes and vegetables. He bought in bulk vegetables in season from the neighbouring commercial farmer and sold this at retail price within the community. He completed his secondary education up to O' Levels and undertook a tertiary level education in teaching but left the profession in 2008 when the economy experienced hyperinflation. He had not found it worthwhile to go back to formal work as he believed that his current endeavours paid him better. He had five cows, some goats and chickens. He also had some turkeys and ducks on. On average, he made about USD 120-150.

#### **Pseudonym: Gift**

Age: 38 years- he was born on 15 August 1979

Marital status: Married

Sex: Male

Village: Gore

Number of children: 3 children (1 boy and 2 girls aged 1, 7 and 10)

#### Background information

He worked in Harare as a security guard and came home on weekends. He had not moved his family to Harare because he felt that the economic situation was too unpredictable and he had made a decision that it was best for his wife to remain in the village and maintain the homestead since they did not own a house in Harare. Their children were all in school and they lived with their mother in the village. They owned four cows and lived on the homestead that belonged to the extended family. His land was apportioned to him by his father and he also used the land that was apportioned to his two brothers who were in South Africa on the understanding that when they returned the land would be available to them. The use of the land was also a protective measure against the "new comers" who were always on the prowl for land which was not utilised. He completed his secondary education and undertook a practical course in carpentry but had not been able to secure work related to his profession. He sold his services



to the community members which also supplemented the family income though he did note that the charges for his services were very minimal because the community members could not afford high costs. On average, he made about USD 150-200 per month.

**Pseudonym: Prosper**

Age: 58 years- he was born on 11 January 1959

Marital status: Married

Sex: Male

Village: Ururu;

Number of children: 4 children (1 girl and 3 boys- all adults)

**Background information**

He lost his first wife and then remarried. His current wife had one child with him in addition to the three he already had. The couple had raised the children together. This is quite common in Zimbabwe, where if a man remarries, the new wife took the responsibility of the husband's children. He worked within the community as a retired brick layer and provided his skills to the locals. He had also been a member of the school committee especially with the brick laying skills that he had and used these to the school's benefit. He was engaged in farming and raised broiler chickens for sale within the community. On average he made about USD80-100. He had attended school up to form 4 after which he took a course and learnt building. He also used his building skills to augment the broiler project.

**Pseudonym: Mafaro**

Age: 45 years- born on 19 May 1972

Marital status: Married

Sex: Male

Village: Ururu;

Number of children: 3 children (3 boys aged 20, 17 and 12)

#### Background information

He was a member of the dip tank committee, a role which he took seriously and with passion. His main source of income was the buying and selling of vegetables from the adjacent commercial farmer. His wife was also involved in the sale of second hand clothing which she bought in Harare and sold within the local village. He completed his secondary education and undertook a tertiary course in motor mechanics. He had in the past tried to find some employment in Harare and had worked on “piece jobs” but on his own admission he found this to be too difficult as the jobs were not consistent and in some instances he could not pay for his rent. He had then decided to move to the village completely and join forces with his wife. He owned four cows which he used as draught power. The wife ran a chicken project and they were both involved in the area of farming. On average, they made about USD 150-250 per month.

#### **Pseudonym: Lucas (Lead farmer)**

Age: 68 years –born on 11 September 1949

Marital status: Married

Sex: Male

Village: Majuru

Number of children: 5 children (3 girls and 2 boys-all adults) and 7 grand children

#### Background information

He was one of the more senior members within the community. He also acted as advisor to the local committees. He completed his primary and secondary education and trained as a teacher. He was a head teacher for about 10 years before retiring. He was engaged in farming with his wife and often relied on hired labour when they could not cope with the required work. He received regular support from his children who worked in Harare. One of his children worked in Namibia as an engineer. His homestead was very neat, and well organised. He had 13 herd of cattle, some goats and his wife managed a broiler project where she raised a total of 50 broilers at any given time. The local market was where his wife sold the chickens. The

household was well- respected within the community. This was also to do with their social status as a “well to do” family within the community. On average, he made about USD 150 - 250 per month.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

The average age for the participants was 47 years old. According to sex, the average was 45 and 50 years for males and females, respectively. Levels of education ranged from Grade 7 to Form 4 with a few having acquired tertiary education. Ten women had completed up to primary school, five up to secondary school. The women noted that the opportunities for them to attend school were limited during their time and they still felt to some extent this was the case though the situation had slightly improved as households were now aware of the importance of education. For men, 11 had attained secondary level education, three tertiary and only one had completed up to primary education. Of the men who had attained up to tertiary, they were mostly below 45 years of age. The average monthly income for the participants was USD 134.

The rural home seemed to be a consistent form of safety net. The younger participants aged up to 40 years had maintained ties with the rural village. Given the economic hardships the country was facing, the rural home was considered as a permanent source of social security where families could find a home whenever the city life did not work out. The most common source of livelihood was farming which was supplemented by buying and selling. All the participants were second and third generation inhabitants. Lead farmers in this community all seemed to have certain attributes in common- they were well to do, their homes were well organised, with the basic clean pit toilets and iron sheet or asbestos roofing.

The next chapter presents the findings of the study and focuses on the gendered aspects of access to, and utilisation of agricultural inputs.

## CHAPTER 7: THE GENDERED ASPECTS OF ACCESS TO AND UTILISATION OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS

This chapter is the first of 3 chapters that present and discuss the finding. The findings are triangulated against all the data that was collected through in-depth individual interviews, the focus group discussions and the case study. The case studies were used to strengthen the discussions that were brought out in the FGD and in the individual discussions.

In this chapter I discuss themes that emerged from the study, starting with the choice of crops grown and some of the challenges related to accessing inputs. These themes are based on the responses from the individual interviews and focus group discussions carried out.

### 7.1 Choice of crops grown

All the participants responded that in the last three agricultural seasons, they had grown maize which they considered critical for household food security. Participants continued to grow this, regardless of the encouragement to diversify. They had noted the need for diversification and had small gardens with leafy vegetables. Though they had been introduced to small grains which were drought resistant, they felt this was too labour intensive compared to the benefits. Women in particular were critical of the small grains on account of the inherent labour demands. Gloria, from Marimo village, lived with her husband and one grandchild who was seven years old. The grandchild helped them with basic household chores after school. The other grandchildren lived with their parents in Harare. She said,

*These donors have very good ideas and we can see that there is concern about food security. It would be good if they could, however, do a complete job in their programmes. These small grains have too much labour and we end up having to engage in the painful labour of thrashing. If we had a thrashing machine, I don't think we would be hesitant about such crops. (Gloria, female participant, in-depth interview, 02 July, 2015).*

Small grains production is encouraged as a means of countering the effects of drought, as the grains are largely drought resistant. However, women expressed concern over the continued promotion of small grains by NGOs, without accompanying appropriate labour saving technologies. For example, the promotion of conservation agriculture is also one of the means in which effects of drought are addressed. Conservation agriculture involves an integrated package of farming practises which include minimum soil disturbance, crop rotation and permanent soil cover (FAO, 2013). One pledge, which is still relevant post 2015 MDG goals,

in the 2010 MDG summit outcome document, recognizes the need to invest in “infrastructure and labour-saving technologies, especially in rural areas, benefiting women and girls by reducing their burden of domestic activities, affording the opportunity for girls to attend school and women to engage in self-employment or participate in the labour market” (United Nations General Assembly, 2010).

Below is a table which shows the concentration of maize production and small grains with Mashonaland East being among the higher cereal producing provinces.

**Table 7.1: Maize production by province**

Province	Maize (kg)	Small grains (kg)	Staple cereals (kg)
Manicaland	396.3	16.6	412.9
Mashonaland Central	468.5	13.1	481.6
Mashonaland East	444.3	4.6	448.9
Mashonaland West	771.9	2.2	774.1
Matabeleland North	370.3	93	463.3
Matabeleland South	375.1	81.5	456.6
Midlands	654	18.6	672.6
Masvingo	399.7	126	525.7
National	485	44.5	529.5

Source: ZIMSTATS (2012)

Small grain production across all the provinces remains very limited and is not the preferred option. The limited diversity in the food grown, indicates an inherent belief that maize is the crop to be grown as a basic food source and this limits the possibility of exploring other options of food sources. This is quite evident amongst even the older and more educated communal farmers who insist on growing maize even when other crops would do better. Kaseke (1993) confirmed this, noting that maize tends to be a consumption crop for subsistence farmers. This can also be related to the limited desire for engaging in commercial farming. The lack of a

diversity of food sources is a cause for concern as it also impacts on the nutritional aspects of the households' diet. With limited money, it may be difficult to buy supplementary foods to augment the normative diet. The choice of crops grown could also be influenced by the fear associated with the intensity of the labour associated with small grains. FAO (2014) also noted the same in Nkayi where farmers, both women and men were reluctant to plant small grain as they considered these to be labour intensive.

## **7.2 Access to finance**

Finance is another factor that was considered as a key input that influenced household decision making. Article 13(b) of CEDAW to which Zimbabwe is party, requires State Parties to ensure that women have the same rights to financial credit as men, and directly supports Article 14's provision (g) on rural women's access to agricultural credit and loans. These are critical to addressing the challenge of access to resources that farming women encounter.

Of interest is that average rural incomes for 2014 were USD1111, for 2013 was USD 95. Mashonaland East, which encompasses Goromonzi, had the second highest income per household in year 2014 (ZIMVAC, 2014). The proximity of Goromonzi to Harare made it easily accessible for external people interested in trading with the community, which could perhaps be the factor that contributed to increased levels of income. The participants were adequately aware of the importance of money, especially since the dollarisation of the economy in 2008. This is a time in the history of Zimbabwe where the government made a decision to use a multi-currency system since the Zimbabwe dollar was no longer tradable due to the loss of value. Marongwe (2007) argued that the poor performance by farmers had mainly been related to lack of financial and technical support systems rather than inability on the part of farmers. The participants in this study indicated they had different means of accessing finance and their views with regards to this are discussed below.

### ***7.2.1 Financing through Income Savings and Lending schemes (ISALs)***

For women, both married and widowed, the most common method of raising money was through the Income Savings and Lending schemes (ISALs). Savings and loan activities were not simply an end in themselves, rather they were a means to strengthen community processes so that people can work together to achieve their multiple and diverse needs. Savings and loan

activities could play a critical role in bringing communities together, helping them to address their needs in a very practical way. Experiences in many countries, including Thailand, have shown that savings and loan groups tend to come together to pool their resources into larger and more flexible funds, and receive support from others engaging in similar activities, which adds greatly to these activities. These networks open up community processes to checking and cross-referencing and also draw together groups facing similar problems, such as a lack of land tenure, or those working in the same trade (Boonyabanha, 2001).

ISALs, as a means of income generation, were very popular means of generating finance. According to a ZIMSTATS report, a total of 53% households were members of agricultural extension groups, whilst 28% were ISAL and SACCO members and 17% were in commodities associations. The group method was seen to be important as it meant pooling resources together. Lizzy had this to say,

*We prefer to work amongst ourselves as women. When we are in groups, we generate and share a lot of ideas and we encourage each other. We put our money together and lend out to each other and charge each other interest. At least we trust each other.* (Lizzy, female participant, date of interview 21 May 2015).

For ISALs, the women explained that they organised themselves into groups of between 15 and 20 members. They each contributed different amounts depending on financial ability. Some groups were contributing \$1 each per week. They loaned out the money amongst themselves and paid back with an agreed interest of usually between 10 and 20%. At year end, they bought groceries, which they shared amongst themselves. The \$1 contribution, on the women's admission, was really negligible and the groceries they bought at the end of the 12 month cycle did not last for even half the year. Some of the participants belonged to another group, which had 42 members. This particular group had managed to save and distribute to each member US\$ 150 in the previous year after having been contributing \$5 per month. Rutendo explained,

*I belong to two groups because the groups serve different purposes. One has members that contribute more money so this allows me to access more money as well. The other one, the women have less money but are keen to grow. I belong to both because I know the women look up to me so I have to identify with all the different groups of women.* (Rutendo, female participant, 21 May 2015)

Funds raised were spent on kitchen utensils. None of the funds were spent on inputs. All the married women felt this was “their” money and that they should buy items associated with their space. This also correlated with the findings of the ZDHS (2015) which reported that about one-third (32%) of currently married women who receive cash earnings decided for themselves in terms of how their earnings are used, while 62% indicate that the decision is made jointly with their husband. From the same report, only 5 percent of women reported that mainly their husband decided how their earnings were used.

However, the widowed women had a different view. Sarudzai, aged 41 years, was considered a young widow. She explained that,

*As a member of an ISAL, I have been able to save money towards purchasing kitchen utensils and on one occasion I was able to save enough to pay for my children’s school fees. This was after saving over 6 months. Just because I am a widow it does not mean that life stops. I have to find ways of sustaining my family. I cannot rely on people because they have their own problems, even if they are family members. (Sarudzai, female participant, date of interview, 28 May 2015).*

ISALS tended to be very limited in that the groups hardly raised enough to purchase maize seed and fertiliser for a hectare. Men, on the other hand, did not participate in ISALs as they considered these to be too time consuming, compared to the gains derived therefrom. The women found the ISALs to be advantageous to them as they could regulate the money they generated. There was also an element of networking, sharing ideas and general cohesion building. According to Kariuki and Place (2005), men tend to participate in production oriented groups while women tend to join for household asset building and social capital. A 2010 survey by the World Bank and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and by an earlier study of 304 rural households in the Philippines found that women generally join women’s self-help groups, whereas men tend to socialise in cooperatives or other producers’ organizations. This explains the affinity the women had for ISALs in which they felt secure, whilst men tended to be more inclined towards higher volumes of money. Lucas explained,

*We have to allow women to have some activities for themselves such as these ISALS. We don’t want to interfere with women because these ISALS are for them. Besides, if we want to do these, we would contribute much more than women. We are more concerned about the big projects that make us real men. (Lucas, a male participant, date of interview, 13 June, 2016).*



This suggests that the ISALs are a social activity rather than a business venture. Men, on the other hand, do not participate because they prefer enterprises that generate money that they can “spin” and grow. Men preferred to sell cabbages, potatoes and other crops in season that they could buy in bulk and sell. Tinotenda, a widowed woman noted the following,

*I enjoy spending time with other women in the ISALs, it's a time to relax, laugh and to forget about family problems. It is good for us as women especially for some of us who are widowed. (Tinotenda, female participant date of interview 6 June, 2016).*

### **7.2.3 Income from rotating schemes**

Another means of generating income was the rotating schemes, popularly known as “maRound”. In this model, the members contribute \$2 per week and they advance one member of the group the money. At the end of the week, the members contribute again and give the funds to another group member until all the members have benefitted. Kurmalineva (2003) notes that Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs) are popular, particularly in rural areas because they impose few transaction costs on members, they build mutual trust thereby fostering reciprocity that can be called upon in times of difficulties and emergencies (Kurmalineva, 2003). Again, this was dominated by women as the men considered this to be a waste of time. The men however, encouraged the participation of women. They jokingly said women appeared happier after attending such meetings, and their happiness benefitted the whole family as the family also took on a happy ambience. Lucas said, “*honestly, how can we be seen sitting and counting such small amounts of money. If we want to do this, we would be talking of big money*” (Lucas, male participant, date of interview, 13 June, 2016), I asked why then they did not do the “big money” and he said,

*I explained to you before that we need to respect the way we do things here. We know that “maRound” were introduced to our communities so that women could better themselves. Now you want us to get into those as well. Surely the women will think we are invading their space and it is not fair. We will stick to what we know and let the women do what they know. (Lucas, male participant, date of interview, 13 June, 2016)*

### **7.2.4 Income from sales**

On average, both male and female headed households, indicated that they could raise an average of US\$134 per month. A consumer council report of 2015 showed that for a family of five (comprised of two adults and three children) to live comfortably, they would need at least US\$ 500 for the basic household food basket. Any household with daily expenditures below

this were considered very poor. The income raised from sales from gardens was often negligible and at times non-existent. Participants regarded this buying and selling of various vegetable products from neighbouring farms as income generation. In terms of time consumption, the women were mostly involved in the procurement of the vegetables. They went early in the morning to purchase from the neighbouring horticultural farms after working on their fields. Those with grandchildren or children sent them to purchase the vegetables. Whilst the men indicated that they also sold vegetables, they did acknowledge that it was the women who went to buy these. Sarudzai said that for her it was not always easy, as she was a widow. In her words,

*I have to try and juggle my household chores with those of trying to raise an income. My in-laws are very supportive but I don't want to appear to exploit their good will. I try to raise money from buying and selling vegetables. Here and there I will have customers who want garments made for them and I get a little income from there. I have tried to talk to the local primary and secondary school heads so I can have a contract to make the school uniforms but they seem to prefer the tailors from Harare.*(Sarudzai, female participant, date of interview, 28 May 2017).

### **7.2.5 Finance from loans**

There have been no ready loans issued to the community as banks had also faced liquidity challenges. However, micro finance institutions (MFIs) had courted households. As indicated earlier on farmers, especially women, were wary of MFIs. In any case, women were less keen to borrow from any external source such as micro-finance institutions. They preferred to pool their money together in rotating schemes that attracted no interest or the ISALs that they had control over. The widowed women were more emphatic over this issue, explaining that they were more vulnerable and had less protection in terms of a male presence. Experiences from the past were such that they had seen neighbours being dispossessed of assets as a result of failure to pay back loans. This was very true especially in 2008 when Zimbabwe went through an economic crisis and households could not raise funds to meet even the basic needs. A ZIMVAC report (2014) recorded that of the 121,927 short-term loans advanced to farmers in 2010, only about 8% went to communal areas and the proportion of male farmers who accessed them was 12% compared to 4% for women. In 2007, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe established an Agriculture Support Fund to fund agricultural activities throughout the country. According to the "Gender in Sector Budgets" study, conducted by the Zimbabwean Women's Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN), women received only 27% of the fund (ZWRCN, 2008). Women were risk averse even though they were generally regarded as being more

reliable in loan repayment compared to men. Barnes (2001) found that participation in Zambuko Trust in Zimbabwe had a positive impact on the frequency with which food was consumed in extremely poor households as well as on the quality of food. Specifically, participation had led to a positive impact on the consumption of high protein foods (meat, fish, chicken and milk). McNelly and Dunford (1999) also found that children whose mothers participated in ISALs were more likely to be healthier and miss less of school than those that did not. Tinotenda explained that,

*We women fear loans, especially us as widows. If I fail to pay back the loan, who will assist me, those with husbands can at least assist each other. (Sarudzai, female participant, date of interview, 28 May, 2017)*

The men in this study seemed to be progressive even though still had cultural and religious norms that they felt bound by. Exposure to NGO programmes and sensitisation on subjects like human rights seemed to inculcate some level of responsibility amongst the men. The positive changes seemed to have been influenced by men's participation in the NGO programme. Typically, Reports indicated that one in every three girls in Zimbabwe experiences sexual violence before they turn 18 years of age and 78 percent of women report that their husband or intimate partner is the perpetrator (All Africa News, 2017).

#### **7.2.6 Finance from friends and relatives**

All the participants were of the view that finance from relatives and friends were no longer a source on which they could rely, even if it was a loan which would be repaid. They acknowledged the economic hardships and felt it was too much to expect someone to lend them money when they could not reciprocate. This avenue was therefore closed. For those participants that received money from relatives, it was mostly from their children and this was not expected to be paid back. Tatenda indicated,

*As a widow, the situation is even worse for me, my children assist here and there but they have their own responsibilities to deal with so I can't even ask them for financial support all the time. The times are now different. It is not the same as in the past when relatives would help each other, now it is just too hard for everyone. (Tatenda, female participant, date of interview, 27 June 2016).*

### **7.2.7 Other sources of income**

Other sources of income were casual labour, which according to ZIMSTATS (2014) is quite common. The same report notes that for rural households, income was raised from different sources including casual labour (21%), followed by food production sales (16%) and remittances (11.4%) and a negligible 5% from cash crop production. Lucas, also explained that,

*When I need extra labour for my fields, I prefer to take from the community. I also prioritise the widows whom I consider more in need of cash or food. I think this is better than direct hand-outs as it also makes the labourers feel they are earning rather than being seen as beggars in the community. (Lucas, a male participant, date of interview, 13 June, 2016).*

Female headed households were forced to work on other farms at the expense of their own. The older women, especially those living with grandchildren, could afford to send their grandchildren to work on the farms for some money. Vimbai, who was 63 years old, lived with her husband and two grandchildren. She was a subsistence farmer together with her husband. She said,

*My husband and I are both quite old and when we need to make some extra money, we will send our grandchildren to work on the neighbouring commercial farm. Our children do support us financially but I think it is also important for these children to know that they should work for money so in addition to our plot, I also send them to work. This is good for them. It teaches them responsibility. (Vimbai, female participant, date of interviews, 4 July, 2015).*

Households were also engaged in projects such as livestock production. All the participants reported that they had engaged in some projects like chicken production and dairy where they raised about \$70 -150 per month from combining their efforts as members of ISAL groups. They had also received cattle on loan from an organisation called Land “O” Lakes. Ten of the male participants and seven of the female participants had benefitted from this project which was intended to boost the local livestock heads. The benefit from this was that they got milk from the cattle, which they sold to generate some income. The cows were owned on a rotational basis. On producing a calf, the incumbent was expected to own that calf and pass on the cow to the next beneficiary household. This was popularly known as the pass-on-scheme.

The decision making process on how finance was accessed was dependent on the status of the man or woman. For widowed women, it was a question of garnering support from the extended

family networks. It therefore worked well for these women to consult regularly with in-laws. Tatenda had the liberty to decide on how she spent money in her household, but she still preferred to ensure that her in-laws were involved even if it was just for them to endorse her decisions. She explained that,

*As a widow, I need to ensure that the extended family members know when I intend to purchase capital assets such as goats. This is because this is usually under the management of men within the household and they have overall responsibility for overseeing decisions related to the same. Because of this, I need to ensure that I have someone that I can refer to as a male figure in the household. (Tatenda, female participant, date of interview, 27 June 2016).*

The traditional custom was that when one loses a spouse, they are assigned a representative of the same clan. When Tatenda lost her husband, a brother-in-law was assigned to her. The idea was that where she needed assistance in her household, she could go to him as he represented the late husband. According to Littlefield et al. (2007), an important factor offered to account for their poverty is that female-headed households have smaller social networks since they lack ties with ex-partners' relatives as they tend to isolate themselves. Similarly, Rufaro was careful that she maintained active ties with her in-laws, especially her brother-in-law who had been assigned to her. She was well aware of the consequences of being left on her own and she was careful not to alienate herself. Littlefield et al. (2007) observed that female-headed households constitute a disproportionate number of the poor and that they experience greater extremes of poverty than male headed units. The factors responsible for the 'feminisation of poverty', particularly in female-headed units, have been linked to gender disparities in rights, entitlements and capabilities, the gender differentiated impacts of neo-liberal restructuring and the erosion of kin-based support networks. Married women, on the other hand, felt they were better off than their widowed counterparts. They could leverage on their husband's ability to engage in a variety of activities, including migration to the urban areas to seek employment and income generating activities. Ruvimbo explained,

*I feel for the widowed women, especially the ones that are widowed at young ages. They have to work harder than us. For us, we can ask our husbands for support with different activities in the home and even for money. WE also have the advantage that our husbands have direct access to their relatives so we have more peopled to call on for any help. (Ruvimbo, female participant, date of interview, 14 May, 2017).*

The men tended to believe they were very democratic and conferred with their wives on all household decisions. When I isolated the married women in an FGD, they had a different view.

They were of the view that men tended to dominate in decisions related to the acquisition of assets and they had control over decisions related to the kitchen.

Access to finance was considered a major challenge in the community. This was regardless of the household head's sex. However, the magnitude varied. Their positions as rural farmers often meant they had limited access to facilities and were therefore marginalised.

### 7.3 Asset ownership

All the cattle registration books were in the male members' name except for one which was in the name of Tatenda who was regarded as a young widow. She explained by saying:

*My brother in-law assisted me to change the cattle registration book into my name. He said as a family that they wanted for me to feel I could continue with my life, and that I could call on the extended family when necessary. I also think he has too many responsibilities so he needs to free his time and not take up responsibilities unless he really has to. (Tatenda, female participant, date of interview, 27 June 2016).*

This worked to Tatenda's advantage in that she was not unnecessarily constrained in "family bureaucracy and protocol". She called on her brother-in-law as and when he was required as dictated by the custom and tradition. Other widows had retained the names of the late husbands on the cattle books. Only in a few instances, the names had been transferred to the surviving sons, some of who were not even resident as they worked in nearby cities or in the *diaspora*. The asset ownership patterns are confirmed by a ZIMSTATS report of 2012 which recorded that women only owned 10.5% of trucks or vans for transporting goods of less than one tonne carrying capacity and 7.1% of self-propelled combine harvesters in a sample survey. Cattle were considered as family assets. Ideally everyone had usufruct rights to the cattle because of their multi-use e.g. draught power, food, and transportation but they remained in the ownership of males. Vimbai explained,

*I have been married for a long time in this village, I am yet to see any woman who claims she has any cattle. We know that is our men's responsibilities. We need to respect that. (Vimbai, female participant, date of interview, 4 July, 2015).*

Some women were eager to point out that they had their own cattle, which was associated with a daughter being married. This is called "mombe youmai" and is given to the woman as a token

of appreciation for having given birth to a daughter and raising her to be worthy of marriage. Both male and female participants agreed this practice was very sacred and could not be tampered with. Rutendo said,

*My cow is very important to me. That is what made me complete when my daughter got married. Other “lobola” payments can be deferred but my cow is sacred and the whole community respects this.* (Rutendo, female participant date of interview, 21 May, 2015).

The men in fact preferred that the ‘Mombe youmai’ cow be transferred to the woman’s original home upon her daughter’s marriage. Lizzy, whose daughter had recently been married, had actually transferred her cow to the custody of her brothers who were in the neighbouring village in Goromonzi. Two women, Rutendo and Rudo who had each received a cow for their daughters’ marriages were also being pressured by their in-laws to remove the cow from the family herds. There were concerns that if anything happened to the cow when it was in the custody of her in-laws, the consequences would be dire. These included replacing the cow and being fined by the woman’s relatives. The most feared consequence was that of repercussions associated with the ancestors, especially if the owner of the cow died. They were therefore afraid of the mystical, and spiritual nature with which they associated the cow. They thought they could be haunted by the spirits of the woman. Sewpaul, Mdamba and Seepamore (forthcoming) describe how *lobola*, even though a huge burden to African families is very much a normalised practice in parts of Africa. None of the participants had bothered to interrogate the practice and the challenges it seemed to present. Those women whose relatives lived far off from their original maiden homes had to bear the burden of hiring transport to ferry the cows which often cost money. The participants seemed to be caught up in cultures regardless of how these same cultures seemed to require a lot of effort to maintain.

#### **7.4 Women’s perceptions of control and decision making in relation to assets**

All the female participants felt that they had some control over the household decision making related to assets and general household management. This was however associated with decision making related to the preparation of food. Lizzy said,

*We all know that we make decisions on what is cooked and eaten. When the meal to be prepared is not what my husband particularly likes, I have to make alternate arrangements for his meal. We are quite happy to eat vegetables as relish on two or three consecutive days, but my husband will not agree to this so I have to always make*

*a plan for this. I generally keep some money aside and use this to buy a piece of meat or eggs for him. (Lizzy, female participant, date of interview 21 May 2015).*

It was noted that the older women (above 50 years) in male headed households felt they were more in charge of how decisions were made in the household. That the women did not have assets in their names, did not translate to their inability to make household decisions. Rutendo had this to say,

*My husband thinks he is responsible for household decision making which I find amusing because I have my own way of getting what I want. The good thing is that we discuss our household issues. When we are not in agreement, we take a break from the discussion and reconvene. Usually then he comes back and says ...ok ... what do you think we should do? From there, I then give the direction of what needs to be done. My decisions have usually been very sound and because of this, he values my contribution to the household decision making process. (Rutendo, female participant, 21 May 2015).*

Women felt that they were in command though the men, according to the women, were under the “illusion” that they were in control of household decision making. A study by FAO (2014) on livestock and gender in Lupane, an area which is in Matabeleland North, a province in Zimbabwe, also found the same but noted that decision making dynamics changed when the level of income in the household increased. The study concluded that as long as levels of income were negligible, the male heads of households left the decision making on the use of funds to the women. However, the moment the income levels increased, the decision making role was transferred to the men. Power dynamics are therefore context specific and may be related to assets in question and the kinds of decisions to be made. The lesser the perceived value of the asset, the more likely the women have more control over decisions over these.

Education and sensitisation by different civil society organisations were noted to have helped to make them more aware of human rights, and households, generally, tended to aim for consensus building in decision making. Women, on their admission, did note that they felt they were in control as long as the male member had in principle agreed to a particular decision. For instance, in the allocation of finances, the men would be involved in deciding how to apportion money according to purchases i.e. food, inputs and clothing but the actual tracking of the expenditure would be done by the women. This is where the women felt they were in control.



## 7.5 Sale of assets: Absent yet present

The households had various assets but the most obvious, which could be disposed of were cattle and small livestock such as goats and chickens. Cattle were registered in the man's name though both women and men agreed these were family assets. On how decisions were made with regards to selling off cattle, it was agreed this was a man's decision. I questioned the women on what this meant as it sounded contradictory. In one instance both women and men said there was joint ownership and decision making with regards to cattle, and at the same time they both acknowledged the decision was with the male household head. It was explained that discussions were held, but the ultimate decision where there was no agreement rested with the men.

Grace, whose husband worked away from home explained that she often had to make phone calls to her husband for decision making. She said,

*I am responsible for watching over the household when my husband is away. However, I know there are some decisions that I cannot make in his absence so I have to call him and seek his authority. I remember one time one of our cows was sick and the local vet advised that we should slaughter. I called him in Harare and he completely refused for us to slaughter though he could not see the state of the cow. In the end, it died and we ended up losing out as people generally don't want to buy meat from a cow that dies on its own. (Grace, female participant, date of interview, 27 June, 2016).*

I again probed as the women had earlier on indicated they were in "control". They then agreed that the dynamics changed around capital assets. All the women could sell off small livestock such as chickens, with less autonomy for goats and none for cattle except the "mombe youmai". The men on the other hand could sell off cattle though they often consulted around such decisions. It was therefore clear that there were some assets that were under the management of the women and some under men. Larger stock was typically managed by men, and decision making around disposal of these was limited to the men whilst women managed the smaller livestock. The women felt in no way disadvantaged by this. If anything, they felt the men were taking their rightful positions as household heads.

All the widowed women were inclined towards consultations with their in-laws and always sought their support in the disposal of assets. For those with sons, again it was in their interest

to get the consent of both their in-laws and sons, especially for the maintenance of peace. This was seen by Sarudzai as a means of maintaining a grip on her household. She said,

*The fact that when my husband died and I was assigned a brother-in-law to act as a father/husband figure in my household also tells me that I have to consult. I have no objection to this as it is the cultural practice so for that reason I accept it. It is not really a bad thing, it is good to know that there is a man that you can always call on when you need assistance. My brother-in-law does this quite well. After all, there are some things that need to be done by men.* (Sarudzai, female participant, date of interview, 28 May 2015).

## **7.6 Access to extension**

Levels of literacy are important for extension as some material is in print. Extension includes services that are provided to farmers to improve their farming practices and increase yield be it in crops or livestock or whatever farming enterprise they are engaged. All the participants were able to read and write basic English and Shona. Prior to the study, the participants were each requested to sign consent forms. None of them had requested assistance in comprehending the form. Most had engaged in adult literacy classes, which were very popular within the community and were driven by the independence government. As Jamison, Lau, and Lockheed (1982) noted, taking as a proxy of rural development in the agricultural sector, completing the first four years of formal schooling results in a 7.4% increase of agricultural productivity. The International Labour Organization (1977) notes that “education is itself a basic need and equality of access to educational services, particularly in rural areas, is therefore an important ingredient of a basic needs strategy” (p.28). It is not an end in itself; it is a means to fulfil other basic needs such as being healthy and being nourished. Tilak (2002) outlined that a relation does exist between the two viewpoints, since being educated has an impact on these other basic needs, it will have an indirect positive impact on income-generating capacities which allow for the households to have disposable incomes, including incomes to buy agricultural inputs and food. Kudzai noted the following,

*I am glad that I have a good level of literacy. In this way, I am able to read all the extension literature that we receive. I can also make use of the recipe books. It is difficult for some of the villagers. I see it when they ask me for help, At least for those with children who can read and write, they help their parents but it is not the same as reading on your own.* (Kudzai, female participant, date of interview, 14 August, 2017).

Literacy is important as it enables one to read extension material, and operate gadgets such as cell phones through which some extension messages are now being transmitted. The manner in which extension is delivered is also important for its acceptability. In some cultures, e.g. in Ethiopia, women are not allowed to receive extension from men and vice versa. Female extension agents may also experience such constraining norms and rules affecting their ability to work in the field. Male agents, on the other hand, may have less understanding of the specific constraints faced by women, such as time poverty, limits on mobility, and the gendered division of tasks in agricultural work. There are also unrealistic and misleading assumptions that that knowledge transmitted to men automatically trickles down to women and benefits the latter equally (World Bank, 2004). Extension workers often assume that men are the only producers in the household and the sole decision-makers regarding household farming activities. Thus women do not receive some of the knowledge required to enhance their agricultural productivity, and their participation in key production decisions, e.g., what to plant, whether to sell, to whom to sell and at what price, and whether to invest (World Bank, 2004). According to Peterman et al. (2010), extension may take the form of individual field visits to farmer field schools, model farms and demonstration plots. As Okafar et al. (2012) noted, under male dominated social structures and political systems, women are denied equal access to land and extension services.

The participants advised that extension was mostly delivered through the group model. This is where farmers congregate and receive extension support. This allows for farmer to farmer, peer to peer motivation and enables the extension staff to cover more farmers with limited resources. Participants expressed the view that the government extension staff were no longer very visible, nor active and NGOs seemed to have taken over the extension role. Thomas had this to say,

*For some of us who live here full time and fully rely on the knowledge of extension staff, we prefer that the government staff be more involved. We know these NGOs do good work, but they are not here for long whereas government will always be around.* (Thomas, male participant, date of interview, 12 August, 2015).

They still however preferred the government extension as they felt this was more sustained. NGOs such as CADS had more presence and the participants were all satisfied with the level of support they received from CADS, but they were always aware that these NGO projects would come to an end, whereas government presence was always assured. Seven of the women (one widowed) felt that the extension received was appropriate for their needs. They indicated that they had advised extension agencies about the mode of extension they preferred, which

was the group model as it allowed for them to socialise. They also acknowledged that it was not always easy for them to participate in all extension activities. At times they had to attend trainings over days and this made it untenable especially for the widowed women. Quisimbing (2012) noted that women face a unique reproductive and life-cycle challenge during their prime years of labour force participation including marriage expectations, pregnancy, child birth, and childcare. This reinforces pre-existing imbalances in participation in activities outside the home.

It was also noted that though the males were predominantly the ones registered as beneficiaries of the project implemented by CADS, the women were mostly the ones that attended extension sessions. One of the participants said, *“It is easier for women to participate as they are readily available. Registration is based on the head of the household and we all know that is the man in the home”* (Lucas, a male participant, date of interview, 13 June, 2016). This confirms the triple role that women play in the community where they are expected to be carers, productive and also attend to community social roles. The women noted that if extension was over a week and away from home, they found it difficult to attend. This is similar to cases in Papua New Guinea. Training in Papua New Guinea by the United States Agency for International Development could not be attended by most women because of the required travel and three days away from family responsibilities (Cahn, 2008).

On why the women participated and attended extension meetings rather than the men, Lizzy, one of the married participants explained that men “worked” and therefore could not attend all meetings. Work was defined as that which brought income into the household. On probing why farming was not considered work, especially as women also sold some vegetables from their gardens, they said it was work which everyone undertook. Another reason was that men were more productive as they worked outside the home. Lucas, one of the male participants also explained “there were no economic gains immediately associated with attending extension meetings” (Lucas, a male participant, date of interview, 13 June, 2016). The women acted more as place holders for the husbands, whilst widowed women had to maintain a presence for fear of alienation by the community and extended family. In the nuclear or extended family model in Zimbabwe, women are constantly under surveillance and control of the husband or his relations (Chinyemba et al. 2006). The women who attended extension sessions learnt other skills such as cooking, making different recipes such as mango juice, pumpkin, ice, and banana

sausage. The women believed their children performed better in school because they were well nourished. As a result of impacts related to climate change, they were also taught good agronomical practises. Of the 15 men, seven attended extension meetings on a consistent basis. One of the participants said,

*It is important for me to learn as much as I can, you never know what doors the knowledge will open up for you. Besides, for me, farming is my livelihood so I need to be abreast of new developments.* (Tapiwa, male participant, date of interview, 12 August, 2016).

All the widowed women elucidated that they participated in extension meetings as they needed to keep a foot in all that happened within the community, and therefore sacrificed the time to spend in meetings and extension sessions. The males who participated were the lead farmers. An incentive was that they were given inputs for demonstrations. The widowed women felt discriminated in that they had not been chosen to be lead farmers. Tangible benefits associated with this position would therefore accrue to the households with males. Admittedly, they gained knowledge, but the saying in the community, loosely translated was “*you don't eat knowledge*”. Razavi (2007) and Budlender (2010) note that in developing countries, particularly in rural communities, women are underserved by public services. Those men whose households were targeted as lead farmers noted they had more labour and therefore had the advantage to be identified as better candidates for lead farmers. Although they empathised with the women in female-headed households, the married women were of the view there was very little they could do. Rudo said,

*It is not easy being a single woman and we fully understand the challenges they face, we do try to be supportive but we also have our own families to look out for.* (Rudo, female participant, date of interviewed 12 August, 2015).

Focus group discussions with women revealed that they were of the view that they had, on the whole, access to extension services although they felt more could be done. The males also received extension but acquiesced that it was women who attended more. On whether they were comfortable with receiving extension from males, the women did not have any issues with male extension workers, only complaining that the government extension had become limited. Even though CADS had had a presence during its project implementation, this had died down, as the private extension staff could no longer be remunerated.

As a result of the extension, all the farmers had been able to grow a variety of leafy vegetables and had vibrant horticultural gardens, which remained a “women’s” domain. Gardens are traditionally viewed as a female enterprise in line with her role as provider for household food security. Gardens provided fresh vegetables and they could sell off surplus. In terms of planning on the purchase of inputs, participants all said they planned together the types of inputs to be purchased. However, it was agreed that there were crops that were the sole responsibility of women, especially those grown in the gardens.

In concluding the discussion on extension, FAO (1996; 2012) argues that extension services can be reformed to better serve women. A 1988–1989 survey covering 97 countries found that only 5% of extension services were addressed to rural women, and only 15% of extension advisors were female (FAO 1993; FAO 1996). More recently, 16 researchers from the World Bank and IFPRI identified large gender inequalities in access to extension services in surveys made in Ghana, Ethiopia, and the Indian state of Karnataka (World Bank and IFPRI, 2010). In Ghana only 10 of 70 extension staff were female, in Ethiopia, they were only males. In Karnataka, 27% of male-headed rural households reported having received visits from an agricultural advisor during the previous year. Only 20% of female-headed households reported such visits. The failure of extension services to benefit women farmers as much as men can be attributed to under representation of women among extension services agents. World Bank and IFPRI (2010) noted that in Karnataka, none of the 41 agriculture extension workers were female, only one of 41 junior engineers was female, and only four of 40 veterinary assistants were female. According to the Ministry of Agriculture in Zimbabwe only 10% of the extension staff is women. This matters because, in some contexts, religious, social, or cultural rules may prohibit contact between a woman farmer and a male agricultural extension worker. Women comprise at least 75% of the members of the powerful small-scale farmers' organization, the Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU), but constitute only 4.5 % of the office bearers. In a 1990 baseline survey, agricultural extension reached only 44% of the women farmers (Hakutangwi, 1998). As a result, in 1993 government sought to address the constraints faced by women in agriculture and developed a package intended to provide extension in a more appropriate manner, including the recruitment of females to agricultural colleges. In 2001, there were a

total of 311 women extension workers out of the 2,895 in Zimbabwe (Ruzivo Trust, 2012). Farai, one of the more senior women explained,

*I have been in this community for a while. I have seen extension workers come and go and they have mostly been men. So of late, I have seen more women as extension staff. I think its also hard for them. One time, one was pregnant and I could see she was having a hard time, but for us we are happy about it. We are still to get used to it though.* (Farai, female participant, date of interview 28 August 2015).

## **7.7 Labour availability**

According to Peterman et al. (2010), agricultural labour refers to the ability to produce outputs i.e. own labour, but also to the labour that they can access when they need additional labour. This can include hiring of the same where labour is limited. In the ZIMVAC of 2014, it was found that a total of 63% of households reported having inadequate labour. According to ZIMSTATS (2012) the average household size ranged from 4.9 in Mashonaland East to six people in Matabeleland. Most of the participants indicated they had labour deficit but often made arrangements to meet this deficit through hiring or use of the extended family in the case of widows. Tatenda, who was widowed also confirmed the same and said,

*As a widow, I often rely on my in-laws to support me with labour and they are usually very forthcoming. I have to plan well in advance when I need to have draught power so that my request do not clash with my in-laws'. (Tatenda, female participant, date of interview, 27 June 2016).*

The above also tallies with a ZIMVAC (2014) report in which on average, 3 people in a household were said to be providing labour for agricultural activities. A total of 63% households reported having adequate labour from household members for normal agricultural activities. These households would, however, not reach their agricultural potential if they did not get resources such as finance and technological input to supplement available labour. Tinotenda said,

*Ever since my husband died, I no longer plant an area as large as I used to. To start with, I don't have sufficient labour and I also don't have enough money to purchase inputs for a big piece of land so I only work on the area that I can afford.* (Tinotenda, female participant date of interview 6 June, 2016),

According to FAO (1997, 2009), if a household becomes unable to either supply labour internally or hire temporary workers, the composition of crops may be gradually altered, shifting, for those who normally engage in cash crop production, to subsistence crops. The key constraint will be during periods of peak labour demand, usually in planting and harvesting seasons. Part of the qualification criteria for households to participate in the CADS programme was to have labour within the household. Even with this criterion, it was clear households had labour constraints. That being the case, responses to labour shortage in households was evidenced by the reduction in area cultivated as most households were not able to work on large pieces of land in an effective manner as Tinotenda explained.

They also did not have sufficient inputs to increase areas under cultivation. Widows also had to send their children and grandchildren to spend time working on neighbours' and other extended family members' fields in exchange for items like old clothing, portions of food and at times maize seed. They had qualified for participation in the programme through registering all family members as potential sources of labour, including grandchildren and absentee family members. Sarudzai noted,

*As a widow, I need to find ways of ensuring we are food secure. I encourage my children to look for work within the community. Though my tailoring business allows me to hire labour but my children also work in other villagers' villages. The children understand our circumstances and are very cooperative. The young one often makes me want to cry when he says .dont worry mom, when I grow up I will look after you and you will not have to work so hard. (Sarudzai, female participant, date of interview, 28 May 2015).*

In addition to participation in agricultural activities, all the children - regardless of the type of household head - also had additional chores assigned to them. The children and grandchildren had plots allocated to them to enable them to learn basic farming skills as part of the indigenous knowledge and skills transfer. It is believed that the children, who when grown up, would become more enlightened household heads who understand the farming patterns of the community. There has been much debate on when children's participation in household chores can be construed as child labour. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child acknowledges that children should be provided with chores that are age appropriate. The International Labour Organisation also acknowledged the importance of training children by



allowing them to participate in home activities. However, these should not result in the child's deprivation of rights, such as the right to an education and the right to play. Lizzy explained,

*The children only work when they are done with their school work. We know about these rights but at times these rights can get to the children. We are thankful ours within the community still listen to us. We hear in some areas children can even refuse to do any chores in the name of rights. (Lizzy, female participant, date of interview 21 May 2015).*

It was noted that those households that had adult children working in the urban areas, often sent money to parents to hire labour. Related to this, some of the grandparents supported the children in the urban areas in a mutually beneficial relationship, where one provided inputs and the other grew the food. For instance, when they had harvested grain they kept some for their children who visited periodically. The understanding was that those who had children in the urban areas were supported by them through the provision of inputs, and financial remittances which were then used to buy supplies like soap, clothes, sugar and groceries which are not grown by the households. This was therefore seen as an investment for harvesting. Saturino et al. (2015) crudely summarised the profile of peasant farmers which as constituting of too little land to cultivate. Even when they had the land, they did not have the financial resources to purchase the inputs. Farmers ended up being caught up in a cycle of poverty.

There were ways of coping with labour constraints which included drawing from all members of the family, including children. In cases where the household was constrained but could afford to hire additional labour, this was quite common. For those households with no access to funds, some hired labour in exchange for old clothes.

## **7.8 Utilisation of agricultural inputs**

From the discussion presented, women and men were equally interested in the productive utilisation of agricultural inputs for the benefit of their households. The main difference was in the way women and men chose to spend the money they secured. Women were more interested in ensuring that school going children were adequately provided for by way of payment of school fees, provision of healthy food and that the household had nutritious food. Men on the other hand were concerned about ensuring that the household had capital assets that it could

draw on for ploughing. These responsibilities were therefore demarcated along gender lines. This also resonates with literature presented in Chapter 1 which showed that women were more concerned about the welfare of the household especially in relation to household nutrition. The major difference is found in the manner in which they utilise the inputs. In female headed households, all the women indicated they always retained seed from the previous season to guard against cases where they would be unable to purchase seed or they could not access the seed in other ways. Sarudzai had this to say,

*For all the time that I was married and widowed, I have always retained seed because I never want to find myself, come rainy season where I don't have seed to plant. I try to retain seed from only one season because I do understand that after some time the seed loses its strength therefore I cannot keep recycling. When I do get new seed, I replace the old one and use the new seed so that I have a better harvest. I also start to set aside the fertiliser a bit at a time. When I get money, I buy a bag and set it aside early in the year. Our soils are very tired now so I have to treat the soil with fertiliser. (Sarudzai, female participant, date of interview, 28 May 2015).*

The women in married households also retained seed as this was seen to be a common community practise, which they could not give up even when their husbands provided fresh seed. The women wanted some seed which they had control over. Lizzy said, *"In as much as my husband provides fresh seed, I also need to ensure that I retain seed which I can be assured of"* (Lizzy, female participant, date of interview 21 May 2015). It can be concluded that both married and widowed women wanted some control over seed. They wanted tangible seed which they could see rather than wait on their husbands. The existence of the ISAL groups also gave women some money over which they had control. This was then used to buy their kitchen assets, but they would also make sure that they bought at least one 50kg bag of seed. The married women explained that it was not that they did not trust their husbands, but they just felt they needed to have some control over their lives than to wait on their husbands for everything. In this day and age, it was agreed by all the women that men should not be given the opportunity to think that women were solely dependent on them. Even the widowed women wanted to show some independence from their in-laws and wanted to seek their assistance in the most desperate of situations.

Four of the men seemed to be quite relaxed in that they felt they could get the seed and fertiliser nearer planting time. Lucas said,

*“I have been farming all my life and have good experience. I know my wife really gets worried all the time, she thinks we should always have our stock of seed early in the year, but I prefer to use the money for other family requirements because if I stock the seed and fertiliser its dead money. (Lucas, a male participant, date of interview, 13 June, 2016).*

On the other hand, other participants were more inclined to store seed and fertiliser and be ready when the rains came. He said,

*I prefer to stock up my seed and fertiliser early in the year so that I know that come rains, I am not running around trying to make ends meet. When I have the money, I prefer to purchase and stock the seed and fertiliser. That way, if for any reason there is a crisis that requires money, I don't have to divert the money which I might have saved. It has happened in the past that my wife and I agree to save money and we have had to spend it on funerals so we have learnt its best to buy our inputs and have them stored. (Tapiwa, male participant, date of interview 12 August, 2016).*

This was a common position with the younger men (below 40 years). They felt their responsibilities were more than those of the older men. If anything, the older men looked up to the younger men, which made the younger men's financial obligations greater than those of the older men. This was a common cultural practice wherein older men relegated off responsibilities to younger ones.

## **7.9. Use of fertilisers and chemicals**

The participants would have liked to use fertilisers but this was and often influenced by the availability of finances to purchase. The Presidential scheme that had been introduced provided relief with regards to input availability, to some extent, but this was limited to a very small portion of the field. The participants said they were learning to use cow dung as manure, which they considered more accessible. This was a practice that was also encouraged by CADS.

The participants understood the importance of fertiliser and advised that when they had no access to finance to purchase this input, they simply reduced the area they planted crops. Reduction in area planted was very common amongst all the participants but it was more pronounced amongst the widowed women. Nyashadzashe, a widow aged 66 explained,

*We appreciate the importance of fertiliser but it is also very expensive. Most of us here rely on our children who work in the urban areas to send us money to purchase the*

*fertiliser. The soils are also getting tired so at times the fertiliser may do more harm than good. We have to balance the two.* (Nyashadzashe, female participant, date of interview 12 July 2016).

### **7.10.1. Sources of inputs**

The participants were also asked on their sources of inputs. Inputs included seed, fertiliser and farm implements. These were noted to be self-supply, support by Non-Governmental Organisations and the Presidential scheme.

### **7.10.2. NGO supported inputs**

There were several schemes through which NGOs had supported farmers in Goromonzi. Those provided by NGOs had to meet a selection criterion which included availability of labour, ability to make a part contribution towards the value of the inputs. One of the criteria was that they needed to have someone with an identity card. By default, men ended up being the ones registered as they readily had these cards. The participants also advised that such programmes were not for lazy people as there were results expected of the cropping season. In this regard the community was also instrumental in working with the local leadership to identify participants who would not bring shame to the community when they failed to produce desired results of successful crops. The male leaders in the community were also the ones who seemed to be the most commonly selected. Fungai who was a lead farmer in Ururu village explained that,

*“you don’t count people and forget to count yourself, which is foolishness. We are all desirous of these benefits and it is only fair that as members of the community that work hard, we should also enjoy what is provided to the community. After all, being in these committees and being lead farmers is a lot of hard work and we need to ensure that we are rewarded somehow. These NGOs don’t pay us anything for advancing their work. I believe even the chief also agrees with me on this”.* (Fungai, male participant, date of interview, 15 August, 2015).

The participants also noted that some community members had been sluggish in coming on board schemes where they had to contribute as they had become sceptical. This was because some had lost money in different financial scams. Some had borrowed money from micro-finance institutions and failed to repay. They were therefore very wary as households had lost property in lieu of the loans. Some had failed to quality because they thought it was a welfare

programme. When the selection for the beneficiaries was therefore done, they had lied and said they had no assets or labour, which rendered them unsuitable as the programme targeted viable farmers who could produce and contribute to their households. This was also a means of reducing dependency.

### ***7.10.3 Presidential scheme***

Under the Presidential scheme, government acquired inputs worth US\$200 million to benefit 1, 6 million households in 2014. Most of the farmers had been able to register through the influence of the local committees which had been set up to administer such programmes. The coverage was meant to be universal. However, not all the households had benefitted. They noted the cumbersome process through which they had to go in order to register for the allocation. This included registering with the local chief/community leader then being vetted for consideration. It seemed to be easier for those who knew the committee members to have better access to such programmes. Some were also discouraged because not all who qualified had been provided with inputs.

### ***7.10.4 Self-supply***

Participants noted that they provided for their own seed through the retention of seed from the previous season. This was a common practice across all the participants. They did however indicate that the quality of the seed was compromised at each season. Their aim was to retain seed for not more than two seasons. All the participants advised that they retained seed from the previous season except for Lucas. He noted that, *“I try to buy fresh seed each year because I know it may seem to be expensive but I can at least get a good harvest”*. (Lucas, a male participant, date of interview, 13 June, 2016). For those households with children working in the urban areas, it was easier for them to have these send them money to purchase inputs. This applied to all the participants.

Farm implements such as hoes were not bought per agricultural season. These were accumulated over a period of time and maintained as and when necessary. There was no farmer who had a tractor. Draught cattle were common among the participants but it was emphasised that this belonged to the male household members and women had access to use.

## **7.11 Decision making processes and intra-household gender dynamics**

In order to understand the intra-household decisions, the participants were asked to discuss how they made decisions with regards to input procurement, utilisation and the benefits from the inputs.

Where there was a married couple, it was articulated that the male household member was regarded as the household head and therefore decisions were deferred to him through a consultative process. When the planting season came, married couples planned on the level of inputs they would need to plant. Factors determining decision making included labour, funds and rainfall predictions. The female heads also consulted with their in-laws. Those with older sons living off farms also requested guidance from their sons.

### ***7.11.1 Women in male headed households***

Women in these households were of the view that the men tended to make the decisions more than the women. Roles in these households were defined and delineated along gender lines with women making decisions related to those related to the maintenance of the home.

### ***7.11.2 Women household heads***

These made decisions in consultation with in-laws and sons. However, it was noted this was more for the maintenance of relations than for women's lack of capacity.

### ***7.11.3 Role distribution within the household***

Associated with decision making also came the question of how roles were distributed in the household. These were also determined by whether the household was male or female headed. Women took responsibility for roles associated with housekeeping, whilst the men were responsible for roles associated with overall household maintenance such as purchase of productive assets and hiring of labour.

#### ***7.11.3.1 Men's roles in male headed households***

Men were involved in house thatching and cattle herding. In homes where the men were not available, either because of death or economic induced migration, the women ended up

performing duties traditionally undertaken by men. The changing roles were also confirmed by the differences in cultures across Zimbabwe. In Matabeleland, it is the women who do house thatching (FAO, 2014). This suggests that roles can evolve to suit the circumstances. This was clearly accepted by the community members who went as far as saying women are also becoming men. Nyashadzashe said,

*You see the women are also now wearing trousers, so what is the difference. In the past we never saw women wearing trousers. What this means is they also want to be men now. What can we do but to look and pray we don't upset our ancestors with all these new Western cultures? (Nyashadzashe, female participant, date of interview, 12 July 2016).*

### 7.11.3.2 Women's roles

Women took care of the traditional roles of cooking, home maker (food preparation, ensuring children went to school in time), chicken farming, gardening. Family members were all involved in herding livestock –goats, cattle, milk, herding when the male members were not available. Women however tended to be overwhelmed with their multiple responsibilities. Other roles still rested upon them and they bore the brunt of the work load - they prepared the children for school, and did cleaning, ironing and all the other household chores in addition to the farming. Nyarai said,

*“Even in the church, women are the ones who are in the forefront, if a child is sick, it's the woman who has to make the necessary arrangements to get to the clinic. If a visitor comes, it is the women/wife who has to ensure the visitor is attended to. (Nyarai, female participant, date of interview 7 July, 2016).*

The contribution of women's labour could be considered via time use where I considered the amount of time they had to themselves. Men's time was easy enough as they worked in the morning then went to relax later. The women were comfortable with the fact that men spent less time helping with household chores as this was considered within culture. Culture was used by men to justify such practises as the work burden being more on women. The men were quite happy to say that they were more concerned about being the creators or visionaries within the household, and this took its toll emotionally on them. Some did not take kindly to women being labelled as being overworked and called it “un-cultural” to say a woman is overworked. The men also cited the cliché that “a woman's work is never done”. Tapiwa who considered himself a progressive male said,

*You know certain practises are God given, why would we want to change the order God has set for us. We each have different functions within the home and we all respect that. The reason we live in harmony is because we each respect each other's roles. Its people from outside who want to bring in new ideas. Our wives are not complaining so why should someone tell us we are not happy. (Tapiwa, male participant, date of interview 19 July 2016).*

Goebel (1994) and Cheneaux-Repond (1994) argue that men use religion and culture as a basis for entrenching male domination. Unpaid and largely unrecognized care work functions as a safety net, as women work harder to make up for inadequate government support, or for the reduction of such support in times of crisis because of public budget constraints (Dominelli, 2012).

#### *7.11.3.4 Roles common to women and men*

The roles that they undertook together included weeding, fetching water and planting. Even though the roles were considered common to women and men, when for an example, the men went to fetch the water, they used the scotch cart, whereas the women used 20 litre containers which they carried on their heads and at times wheel barrows. Vimbai explained,

*I did not get to this age in marriage by arguing over things which existed before I was born. Why would I want to upset the way our society works? My husband respects me and I also respect him. We know what each is expected to do and we do so. I can't imagine what people would say if they saw him doing the family's laundry. We would be ridiculed by the whole village, let alone made to pay a fine by the Chief for undermining tradition. (Vimbai, female participant, date of interview 12 August, 2016).*

The women went to great lengths to ensure harmony in the home, including working longer hours than their male counterparts.

#### *7.11.3.5 Female headed households*

For female household heads, the roles tended to be slightly different. They had to negotiate with their in-laws to support them with labour and farm implements such as draught power. Tatenda whose daughter was to be married could not initiate any action without the authorisation of her in-laws. This was noted to be normal and was accepted by the community as the practice. It is also a practice that is considered to keep harmony and unity within the community and in households. It also keeps the traditions, cultural practises and customs in place. She did not find this disempowering but felt it maintained social order. She was in fact



proud that she could gather the clan for her daughter who was to be married. This was of significance as it was traditionally believed children, especially girls of widowed women lacked discipline. The women felt they were independent to some extent. It was also strategic on the part of the women to continue with the linkages with the extended family members. This was important for the children as linkages with their patriarchal relatives were considered important should they need to deal with ancestral spiritual issues in the future. Tatenda explained as follows,

*A widow is not really respected in the village. People expect the worst from us and our children and I don't know why this is so. I am particularly pleased that my daughter has shown the village that widowhood is not associated with failure. We are also capable of doing well and raising well behaved children. I feel proud to have set the example. My daughter is my pride. (Tatenda, female participant, date of interview, 27 June 2016).*

## **7.12 Understanding time use patterns**

Closely related to the various roles that women and men play, is the importance of understanding time use patterns in their households. I sought to understand these roles and asked women and men to tabulate their activities in a typical day. This was done in the focus group discussions where women set out their daily activity whilst the men also did the same. The results from this exercise are detailed below.

Figure 7.1: Typical day for women and men

**A woman's work is never done**

In order to understand time use, women and men from all the wards under discussion were asked to come up with a typical day in the life of a woman and man in Goromonzi. The day was collated and showed the following for women:

Wakes up at 4 am if there is the moon (that is the clock), does the sweeping, cleaning and washing of dishes from the previous night.

6:00 am – she will prepare for the children/grandchildren to go to school, and for the husband in married male headed households.

For men, at this time, if there are dairy cattle, they would prepare cattle for milking and bring the milk home for use for the preparation of breakfast.

At about 6:30 the women then join the men in the field where they will work till about 10:00 where they will break. During the planting season– they are both active in the field, one plants and the other drops the fertiliser and covers the seed hole.

At about 10:00am the men take a break and rest. During breakfast, because the husbands are served first as the order of protocol based on hierarchy.

After breakfast, the men take the time to visit the local shopping centre where they socialise with other men. The women may relax for a few minutes after breakfast (to allow the food to settle as they call it).

At about 11.00 they tend to the home garden, open up the free range chickens, and attend to any laundry and other household chores. She may also instruct her children/grandchildren to open up the kraals for the cattle to graze.

The women start to prepare for lunch at about 13:00hrs. Lunch is usually a simple meal. Depending on the season, it can be cobs of maize with a local home brew “mahewu” or *sadza* (thick porridge) with the vegetable in season.

Depending on how much work needs to be done, the women might go back to the field after lunch and the men will continue to socialise in the beer halls or at one of the villagers' homestead.

Both women and men agree that the way the men behave is influenced by the way they were raised. The women believe they were made to be resilient and to be able to work more than men.

At about 4p.m, if the husband is not around especially for those whose husbands have migrated, and the children or grandchildren have not returned from school, the women will then go and collect the cattle and put these in the cattle pen. If he is there, or a son, they would do the cattle round up.

Then the woman will prepare to bath and start the evening meal. As they eat the evening meal, they would start to plan for the following day and would also ensure they had

“mahewu”<sup>2</sup>. If there is a community activity going on e.g. training, the women will wake up earlier and sleep later to make up for the time they would have spent attending the meeting.

### **Typical day of the man in the community**

They wake up in the morning and go to the field at the same time as the women. If there is a dairy cow, they are also responsible for milking and they usually do so immediately they come back from the field. They work together with the women in the field. During periods of rest, they drink “mahewu” which would have been brewed a day or two in advance. Mahewu is handy when there is not enough firewood to be cooking meals in the day. The women then heat the water for the man to bath. The water is heated for the man and he takes a bath and then he rests. The men might collect some firewood, using the scotch carts. This however is dependent on the nature and dynamics within the household. Some men work and assist the women. Where the husband does not assist, the woman ends up taking on extra roles to compensate for the husband’s laxity. or when it is a female headed household. The men have their water heated by women, especially in winter for bathing. If it’s hot, they will place the water outside where it is heated using the sun.

Men may also do “maricho”(this is working on neighbouring farms for additional income).

I then engaged in a group discussion with both women and men showing them the way they had summarised a typical day for each. The men expressed the view that the work women undertook was acceptable, and there was not much they could do to question cultural norms.

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<sup>2</sup> This is a home brewed drink made from maize meal and fermented with malt.

However, the women felt the men had over done their roles. One that stood out was that of “maricho”, where it was felt the women were mostly responsible for this. The women argued that the men were generally proud and would not engage in “maricho” when there were younger children who could be sent to do that. Consensus building on the time use was not very easy as men also felt the women had overdone their roles. In the end, we agreed that this was an exercise that they could use to reflect on their relations within the household and should not be taken as an exercise to create contentions.

### **7. 13 Children’s roles**

Girls’ roles usually mirror those of their mothers or grandmothers. This was considered as part of the socialisation process and preparation for adulthood and marriage. Both boys and girls were given time to do their school work. They also attended community meetings where they were taught family laws, inheritance, and progressive lifestyles. These had also been introduced into the school curriculum. Those in female headed households would do more work according to the female household heads’ needs.

### **7.14 Use and control of income**

The women in male headed households were all in agreement as to how they managed funds. They reported that they were to some extent in control in that they could access money from their husbands when they needed it. Kudzai had the following to say,

*As long as I have money that I need to use, there is no need for me to worry about whether the money stays with me or my husband. After all, it’s our money as a family. I don’t need to cause unnecessary strife by questioning how we have always handled money. It is not a point of contention and I would not want to make it one now. (Kudzai, female participant, date of interview, 14 August, 2017).*

She also indicated that all she tried to do was to ensure that decisions with regards to use of money would be such that they worked in her favour. This was echoed by all the other married women who said that even when the men thought they were the ones who made decisions, the women knew that in actual fact it was them working round the men’s egos.

*This is not something that you go about bragging. What we know for a fact is that we as the women can control our men when we choose to.* (Grace, female participant, date of interview, 27 June, 2016).

This seemed quite contradictory in that, on the one hand, they agreed that the men in the households had ultimate control in the use of money, yet the women were, at the same time saying they had control. On further discussion, it was finally agreed that the men had control over financial resources but the men often gave some money to women to manage after taking off their “*pleasure money*”. This was money that the men would not be accounted for but provided latitude for them to socialise with other men without appearing poor or dependent on the benevolence of other men, especially in the purchase of beer. Appearances in this regard were important as it was believed that, to be considered a man in the community you had to buy some beer for other men in the local township where they gathered to socialise.

### **7.15 Coping strategies against food insecurity**

In order to contextualise the relationship between inputs and food security, I sought to understand how the households coped against food insecurity. The participants all noted that the community at times faced acute shortages of food in some periods of the year. Though Goromonzi is a province with good rainfall patterns and regular positive food security, some households were not always food secure. Reasons for food insecurity included shortage of inputs, inadequate labour and very few said limited knowledge. Inputs provided by CADS had been welcome but were only sufficient for half a hectare.

Food aid was also another coping strategy against food security provided by NGOs. This is an intervention that is usually provided in the short term beyond which it is usually integrated with other programmes such as *Zunde raMambo* (chief’s granary) and other livelihoods and social protection programmes. Traditionally, the chief’s granary was used to guard against drought or famine, and to mitigate the impact of any mishaps that might befall vulnerable members of the community, especially the elderly, the infirm and children (Mushunje, 2006). Kaseke and Dhemba (2007) observe that this concept has always been seen as a manifestation of community responsibility. Efforts have been made in recent times to revive this age old, tested and tried informal social welfare strategy. According to Kaseke and Dhemba (2007) participants to the *Zunde raMambo* did not consider themselves as volunteers, but rather as

beneficiaries of the programme. The two authors further explain, “Fulfilment comes from being able to solve community problems especially those of orphaned children, widows and the elderly, particularly with respect to food security” (p.91). Another way of coping against food insecurity involves storing surplus grain.

The table below shows some of the coping strategies by provinces.

**Table 7. 2: Household coping strategies against hunger**

	<u>Purchase %</u>	<u>Government %</u>	<u>NGO %</u>	<u>Carry over %</u>	<u>Retained %</u>	<u>Remittances %</u>	<u>Other %</u>	<u>Private contractors %</u>
Manicaland	49.2	33.9	2.4	1.5	7.0	4.6	0.1	1.2
Mashonaland Central	36	51.6	2.1	1.6	4.6	2.3	1.3	0.5
Mashonaland East	43.1	46.6	0.9	1.5	2.5	4.6	0.1	0.8
Mashonaland West	40.7	45.2	2.0	2.8	4.3	3.3	0.9	0.8
Matabeleland North	23.7	51.7	4.8	4.7	8.8	5.3	0.4	0.5
Matabeleland South	29.2	56.7	1.9	5.1	1.9	3.3	0.2	1.8
Midlands	44.3	39.9	1.4	3.7	4.0	5.8	0.2	0.7
Masvingo	47.9	35.4	3.2	1.8	4.1	5.8	0.0	1.8
National	39.4	45.2	2.3	2.8	4.6	4.4	0.4	1.0

Source, ZIMSTATS (2012).

Mashonaland East’s highest means of mitigating against food insecurity was through purchases and government support with very little coming from NGO support and remittances. I questioned the participants on these sources. They acknowledged that indeed government had been supportive in providing them with support but they also cited that remittances were also

a big source of support for dealing with food insecurity. For instance, Rutendo, a lead farmer explained,

*I am engaged in farming and I also get a little pension from government as a retired teacher. However, there are many times when this money is not enough and I am grateful that my children often send me money to augment this. I also think I raised the children well because even when I don't really need any additional money, they will send as they know that looking after parents has blessings.*(Rutendo, female participant, 21 May 2015).

They suggested that perhaps in other areas of Goromonzi, there were communities that were better able to access income to purchase food, but for the wards under discussion, this was not the case.

## **7.16 Presentation of case studies**

### ***7.16.1 Rufaro: Managing the politics of extended family relations***

Rufaro was a widowed woman. She was born on 3 September 1976 and had three children aged 21 (female), 16 (female); 8 (male). She was an avid advocate for HIV prevention and had declared her positive status to the community. She was regarded as an ambassador on issues related to HIV and AIDS and had benefitted from the nutrition programme supported by CADS. Her three children had tested negative for HIV which she acknowledged was a great relief. Her husband succumbed to opportunistic infections and died before he could access the ART programme. She had been fortunate in that she was placed on treatment before her condition had deteriorated and had responded well. She was healthy and could work to support her family. She lived on her in-laws' homestead on the piece of plot that was allocated to her and her husband when they got married. She had resolved to care for her children and ensure that they got an education that she was unable to complete because she became pregnant at 19 years and had to get married.

Her 20 year old daughter was training to be a teacher of which she was really proud and thankful. She was a subsistence farmer and occasionally bought and sold goods which were in demand at any given time. At the death of her husband she endured alienation from the community because he had become visibly ill and had not accessed ART which led the community to talk about her and her family members. She explained,

*People can be very cruel. When my husband was alive, all was well and we mingled with everyone within the community. However, when he died, it seemed I was suddenly an alien. No one wanted to talk to me. My children also suffered a lot in school as some parents actually told them not to play with us. I thank God things have changed. People are now more accommodating and understanding about HIV/AIDS. There are still some here and there that still try to isolate me but now I am no longer too concerned. I take my medication, I am healthy and that is what is important to me. My prayer is to live long enough to see my grand-children and who knows, maybe even my great grandchildren. (Rufaro, widowed female participant, date of interview 28 August, 2015).*

She felt there was more sympathy for her now especially with the sensitisation sessions that CADS has undertaken in the community. Her in-laws were initially very critical and judgemental of her and had even suggested that she should move back to her maiden home infected their son. She refused this arrangement as it meant she would be starting all over again at her parents'. She had not wanted to burden her parents as they already lived with their two daughters in law.

Rufaro had attended school up to secondary level and she became pregnant and could not continue which is when she married her husband. On average she made about USD80-100 from the sales of vegetables that she bought for resale from the nearby commercial farm. She also engaged in petty trading of goods that she bought from Harare whenever she travelled there. Her in-laws also provided her with support in the form of food rations whenever they could and this was not very often. She said they did this more for the sake of creating the impression within the community that they were looking after her rather than a pure sense of benevolence.

She was conscious of how she raised her children and tried to break the gender stereotypes. Her second daughter was still in high school and already Rufaro had instilled in her the importance of completing her education.

In addition to food rations, Rufaro was grateful for the support she now received from her in-laws in terms of agricultural activities. She did however note that she had to negotiate well in advance for such support. Her in-laws were really concerned about how the community viewed them and because of this they often succumbed to providing support to Rufaro. When she needed to prepare her land for planting, she could augment her draught power with that of her



in-laws. In her kraal, she had three cows one of which was milking. She shared the milk with her in-laws. Rufaro explained that there were no decisions that she made on her own without consulting her in-laws. For her, it was a question of survival and being strategic in how she navigated round decision making dynamics and how these would impact on her life, but more on those of her children. If she alienated herself by running her household without consulting her in-laws, her children would be affected and even regarded as outcasts. She noted this was not something that was blatantly done, but the treatment one would receive would be indicative of being considered a non-family member.

Rufaro's children were part of the decision making within her household. She explained as follows,

*My children need to be involved in everything that I do. I fear that I may die and I don't want them to be left clueless about my affairs. The discoveries that I made about my husband's HIV status and many other things that I would never have suspected of him taught me to be open. If my husband and I had really been open to each other, we could have gone for HIV testing and we would have gone on treatment but we never really talked about real issues. I don't want my children to be in the same situation. (Rufaro, widowed female participant, date of interview 28 August, 2015).*

With regards to access to inputs, she was also a beneficiary of programmes and had support from her in-laws who vouched for her widowed disposition. As senior members in the community, her father in-laws was influential and often sat in committees where community decisions were made including selecting beneficiaries for various programmes. Her participation in the CADS input project had helped her to open up about and live freely with her HIV status. She was empowered to be open about her status and took advantage of the many education sessions that taught her about good nutrition.

#### ***7.16.2 Gift: Maintaining the home from afar***

Gift was 38 years, married with three children (1 boy and 2 girls aged 1, 7 and). He was from Gore village. He worked in Harare as a security guard and came home on weekends. He had not moved his family to Harare because he felt that the economic situation was too unpredictable and they made a decision as a family that it is best for his wife to remain in the village and maintain the homestead since they did not own a house in Harare. His children were both in school and they lived with their mother in the village. They owned 4 cows and

live on the homestead that belongs to the extended family. His land was apportioned to him by his father and he also used the land that was apportioned to his two brothers who were in South Africa on the understanding that when they returned the land would be available to them. The use of the land was also a protective measure against the predatory “new comers” who were always on the prowl for land which was not utilised. He completed his secondary education and undertook a practical course in carpentry but had not been able to secure work related to his profession which was why he worked as a security guard. He provided carpentry services to the community members on weekends which also supplement the family income though he did note that the charges for his services were very minimal because the community members could not afford high costs. On average he made about USD 200-300 per month, both from the formal job and he community piece jobs.

His wife, took care of the household in his absence and also engaged in vegetable selling. Household decision making was joint and they both agreed that it was old fashioned to try and suppress women. He noted that his wife was a very gifted woman who worked hard to make extra money and ensure they always had enough food in the household.

### ***7.16.3 Lucas: Leading the community as a lead farmer***

Lucas was 68 years old, married, and had five children (three girls and two boys-all adults) and seven grandchildren. He came from Majuru village. He was one of the more senior members within the community. Lucas also acted as advisor to the various local committees such as school, dip-tank and development committees. He completed his primary and secondary education and trained as a teacher. He was a head teacher for about 10 years before retiring. Lucas was engaged in farming with his wife and often relied on hired labour when they could not cope with the required work. He said that as part of his plough back to the community, he employed the local women and men from the community to help on his farm. He was one of the first people to be resettled in the village and he had intimate knowledge of the way in which the community was evolving. Lucas received regular support from his children who worked in Harare. One of his children worked in Namibia as an engineer. His homestead was very neat, well organised and he had 13 herd of cattle, some goats and his wife, Tariro managed a broiler project where she raised a total of 50 broilers at any given time. The local market was where she sold her chickens. The household was well- respected within the community and I believe this was also to do with their social status as a well to do family within the community.

He considered himself to be an enlightened member of the community who was also very progressive and embraced development as it came. In focused group discussions, the community members also attested to the same. He believed he was chosen to be a lead farmer because he was already an avid farmer within the community and therefore did not need to be cajoled into farming. He walked the talk of farming, by which he meant he was a true farmer as evidenced by his source of livelihood of farming.

He believed in a democratic way of decision making within his household. Lucas said,

*I am a very progressive man. I consult with my wife on what to plant and when to plant. We generally tended to agree as a household. However, of course as the head of the household I also have to stamp my authority when we fail to agree on anything. In such cases my decision is what prevails.* (Lucas, a male participant, date of interview, 13 June, 2016).

He grew up at a time when women were generally regarded as an “extension” of their husbands but he quickly realised that this only hampered household economic and social progress. When other households refused to send their girl children to school, he turned a blind eye to the negative counsel he received from fellow community members and ensured that his children all went to school. Today he was the envy of the community. He also believed that his exposure to the world outside of the community as a result of his profession may have contributed to his open mindedness and progressive views with regards to life in general. The reason he had been so successful in the community he believed was because of the way in which he embraced new philosophies that were introduced within the community. This also enabled him to send all his children especially the girls at time when other families believed the education of girls was a waste of resources.

## **7.17 Conclusion**

From the discussion presented, the conclusion that could be drawn is that women and men were equally interested in the productive utilisation of agricultural inputs for the benefit of their households. The major difference was found in the manner in which they utilised the inputs. In female headed households, all the women indicated they always retained seed from the previous season to guard against cases where they would be unable to purchase seed or they

could not access the seed in other ways, whereas this applied to a few of the men. Women were keen to ensure that their households were provided with nutritious food. Most income they accessed was spent primarily on the provision of food, payment of school fees and the purchase of groceries such as soap. Men were more concerned about what they referred to as the “big projects that made them real men.” These were associated with practical tools such as wheel barrows, scorch carts and gardening utensils.

Attitude change takes time and this was evident in the manner the men viewed women and the roles assigned to them. The men were all convinced that women needed to be protected and provided for even if this was translated to women having to work harder under the “love and protection” of the husband. This is actually one of the core of the stories of gender stereotypes, inequality and oppression. Men and society often say that they are doing it for women’s own good. This ended up being normalised and accepted. Attempts to question these are seen as being synonymous with treasonous acts against the values and norms of the community. Widowed women seemed to have more control over what they had, but were still bound by cultural practises where they needed to submit to the male figure. It was noted that the household was regarded as a composite unit and all activities were done under the auspices of, and for the benefit of the household.

The next chapter discusses the gender dynamics of how resources were accessed.

## CHAPTER 8: THE GENDER DYNAMICS OF ACCESS TO AND UTILISATION OF LAND

### **8.1 Introduction**

In chapters Two and Three, I presented literature pertaining to the gender dynamics associated with agriculture and the use of agriculture inputs within a household. In the current chapter I discuss the dynamics related to productive resources with a particular emphasis on land as other productive resources have been discussed in Chapter 7. Land is a key productive factor for households living in rural areas and can be instrumental in determining household food security.

#### ***8.1.1 Land access and “ownership” patterns***

One of the key productive resources is land. Of importance to note is that generally land ownership was understood differently by the participants. In general, even though land ownership was vested in the state and under the Trusteeship of the President, cultural and customary practises specific to individual communal areas prevail. Discussions with participants therefore took cognisance of this factor and it was evident from the responses that traditional norms and practises were important in regulating the relationship to land.

#### ***8.1.2. Women’s perceptions of their relationship to land***

Moyo (1995) argues that it is important to differentiate types of women, asserting that it is single women who were never married who suffer more from lack of land rights. Furthermore, it is to consider is that about 70% of the farmers in communal and resettlement areas are women (ZFU, 1998) and they all have access to land through different means. This discussion therefore does not in any way suggest that women are a homogenous group.

The women that I interviewed, both married and widowed, were of the view that they had secure and predictable access to land. Their analysis was that as long as they had usufruct rights, all other pedantic notions of ownership were meaningless. Ownership was deemed to be relative and related to the ability to use the land. Ownership was understood in terms of the

right to use the land more than in the sense of the freedom to sell the land or a formal entitlement. As long as the women could grow crops for their households without impediments, they were satisfied with the relationship they had to the land.

*As a married woman I know that you young ones mean well with your ideas of human rights. But what you need to realise is that for us, the reason we are still married to our husbands is because we know our place. No matter how much education one receives, one should never forget our culture. We work together with my husband and children on the land. So why would I then want to be the one to cause chaos in my household by saying to my husband I want to own land. If my family heard that is what I was doing in my husband's village, they would be ashamed. I for sure do not want to be the one to bring shame to my in-laws and to my family back home. (Rudo, female participant, date of interviewed 12 August, 2015).*

All the widowed women indicated that they had experienced moments of uncertainty as to whether they would be allowed to continue “occupying” their pieces of land when their husbands had passed away. However, they had settled down after their in-laws had allowed them to remain on the land and to continue occupying the homestead. Nyashadzashe had the following to say,

*My husband and I did our things together, we worked as a unit and I was really devastated when he died. I was not sure of whether my in-laws would allow me to continue on the family plot as there were other family members living on the same plot. On the day of my husband's burial, I was waiting to hear my fate from my husband's family representative. I was pleasantly surprised when he announced to my parents that they wanted me to continue living on the plot and look after the children. As long as I was not remarried I could continue living on the plot. (Nyashadzashe, female participant, date of interview 12 July 2016).*

Given existing literature, their fears were reasonable as FAO (2002) notes that in Africa, in general, custom excludes women from ownership; property is held in a man's name and passed through patrilineal systems within communities. This is a common practice which the participants noted was prevalent in the communal area. Therefore, a widow's right to remain on the land is often not secure. The understanding with Tatenda's circumstances was that land was available to her but this was on behalf of her two sons, one of which was still a minor. In as much as she was allowed to stay on the land, she was also expected to behave in a manner that warranted her stay. She noted that there were thinly veiled connotations of chasteness and perpetual widowhood failing which she would have to move out of the land.

From the discussion with the women, it was evident they had accepted that their husbands or male children were the rightful heirs to the land. They had also internalised this culture and all felt that if they had the choice to bequeath land to their children, it would be their sons. Nyashadzashe, whose husband passed away about 11 years ago was regarded as the matriarch within the household. Two of her daughters-in-law live on the same compound which was the family homestead but they were running their homes separately in the absence of their husbands who worked in Harare. She noted that she understood that the land she occupied would eventually be her sons' or grandsons' and said,

*I am here because when my husband died, I had to protect the land on behalf of my sons and grandsons until they take over. The land is not getting bigger, once you lose it its gone. I never had ambition to own the land or even under the illusion that I could ever own the land. I have no such desire. (Nyashadzashe, female participant, date of interview 12 July 2016).*

The maintenance of a presence on the land was associated with a desire to maintain the household lineage in the community as girls were viewed as “passers-by” who would get married and leave the home. Even if the girls got married locally, they would still take up the husband's name and the family name would be dropped and girls were therefore regarded as not belonging. The lack of interest in land ownership by women in Goromonzi could also be influenced by cultural and traditional practices in which women are known to benefit from land through a male relative. Historically in Africa, women's access to land was based on status within the family and involved right of use, with limited women being able to own land under free hold title.

Tinotenda attested to the fact that when her husband died 16 years ago, she only felt secure on the land because she had three minor sons. Her source of security was vested in her sons who are now grown up. Two of her children (1 boy and 1 girl) are late and she suspects they died of HIV some years back but she could not be sure as they had never openly broached the subject. Tinotenda had been fearful of stigmatisation which she felt had since declined. HIV was still a topical issue in Mashonaland East. The ZDHS (2015) reported that HIV prevalence has decreased among both women and men since the 2005-06 ZDHS but Mashonaland East still had a high of 15% prevalence with 22% of women and 20% of men having discriminatory attitudes towards people living with HIV. Tinotenda's sources of livelihood were farming and she received remittances from her other children who worked in Harare. When her husband

died, her father in law who was late, explained that she would have to be responsible for ensuring the family plot was secured for her sons who were still minors then. It was clear as she had always known that she would never in her own right claim any land.

All the widowed participants had sons and they agree that this was their source of security with regards to use of the land. It was an accepted fact that a woman could not be allocated land through her husband. Those who had sons felt secure in the knowledge that the sons would eventually inherit the land. Sarudzai had this to say,

*Today the situation is not as bad as it was some years back, at least today, even if you are widowed and have no sons, you can still stay on your land and live with your girl children. However, the expectation is that by staying on you are making a statement that you do not intend to remarry and this is quite acceptable. In the event that one does remarry they are then expected to relinquish the plot of land and this is usually parcelled out to the other clan members. Your girl children, if they are still minors may also live with the extended family members if they are not accepted in the new home. (Sarudzai, female participant, date of interview, 28 May 2015).*

Sons were recognised as the rightful heirs to the land and the local leadership allowed her to continue on the homestead on the basis of her three minor sons who were regarded as the heirs to the land. According to Women and Land (2013), a common problem as regards acquisition of land through inheritance or in marriage is that social customs may be at odds with legal reforms that seek to achieve gender equality. Even when women inherit land, for example, the decision making power over such land may be assumed primarily by males in the family and by the husband upon marriage. This stems from the dual land systems. Zimbabwe, like many Southern African countries, bases its land administration on a dual system, namely, state and customary tenure. Councils co-exist with traditional bodies (chiefs, headmen, and village heads) under customary law which also reflects the land ownership patterns (World Bank, 2003). For instance, land is communally owned and is normally allocated to male heads of families (Gaidzanwa, 1995; Tsikata, 2010).

The acceptance by women that land belonged to the “men” reflected the taken-for-granted assumptions about patrilineal heritage and the more subservient positions of women. These are so normalized that women cannot envision them to be any different. This can be summarised in that sexist stereotypes, prejudice and gender discrimination are not reproduced by men only – women are actively complicit in this. Matondi (2012) notes that this is also reflected in that women have limited agency in decisions pertaining to land issues even in land



management institutions. Women tend to face more obstacles than men in accessing key resources such as finance, labour and equipment. They benefit from land by proxy and the burden of the triple role further incapacitates them from participating in more lucrative enterprises such as commercial farming.

Women's access to land is mediated through male relatives. From the discussions with the women participants, it was apparent that this practice was so normalized that they did not seem to be particularly concerned about this. It only became an issue when they felt threatened by a loss of access and use. Rufaro explained as follows,

*The only reason I feel comfortable being on my homestead is because I have a son even though he is a minor. What we all know is that he will grow up and inherit the plot. My interest right now is just to ensure that the land is protected especially as you know there are people that are people that are coming from other areas claiming land in this area. My two girls are grown up and there is no way they will be allocated any of this land. I chose to stay on this property when my husband died because I felt if I left I would be prejudicing him of his inheritance.* (Rufaro, widowed female participant, date of interview 28 August, 2015).

This is also typical in Africa where a major source of discrimination women face is in access to land, particularly in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (Agarwal, 1994; Tsikata, 2010). Land is the most valued form of property and a source of livelihood security in rural areas. According to Deininger and Binswanger (1999:256), it acts as a buffer against economic shocks, providing “almost complete insurance against malnutrition” as it reduces the dependency of the household on market prices for food commodities. For women, land is a pivotal resource for meeting subsistence needs, and for accessing other goods and services, such as credit. Access to credit often depends on the ability to use land as collateral security. The importance of land ownership by women is thus recognised widely. The *Gender and Agriculture Sourcebook*, prepared jointly by the World Bank, IFAD, and FAO, recommends that land policy promotes secure access to land and other natural resources for women. As Quisimbing (2010) notes, the question of access to land is thus not merely an economic issue, linked to improving the productivity of women farmers. The land also matters also as a source of women's empowerment and autonomy within the household, and provides women fall back options outside marriage. Articles 15 (paragraph 2) and 16(h) of CEDAW require State Parties to ensure that women have the same property rights as men. For rural women dependent on agriculture, land is the most important productive asset (World Bank, 2008).

Women were therefore very keen to have rights to land but they were also pragmatic enough to accept that they were governed under customary practices. They claimed to have come to terms with this and preferred to continue with the status quo as long as they could provide for their households. They noted that if changes were ever to occur to the current land regimes, they would not be alive to witness this as they felt it was a long way in coming. They were therefore not very optimistic about changes in land tenure systems but indicated that if these occurred, they would do well to serve future generations of women.

### ***8.1.3. Married women and land ownership***

Under communal land ownership in rural Zimbabwe, women's access to land is mediated by their relationship to men and usually and mostly through marriage (Walker, 2001). Married women also confirmed they accessed land through their husbands. It was noted that it was customary that land was allocated to the head of household who was in many instances a man. Married women, whether customary or civil, were considered as part of the men's family and therefore enjoyed the use of land through their husbands. This had led to discrimination of married women in controlling land. Zimbabwean women have always lagged behind in agrarian and land reform programmes that have been initiated in the country since 1980. In the first reforms a token 5% women were allocated land. In post 2000, the Fast Track Land Reform Programme, 18% of the women benefited but the number fell short of the 20% quota that had been the standing measure by government and fell short of transforming women's land rights (Chingarande, 2008). Bhatasara (2001) pointed out that the land question in Zimbabwe has always been political and gendered. Whereas land reform was necessary in the context of highly unequal land ownership patterns and poverty, it has not been catalytic to transform women's rights to land. Even before the Fast Track Land reform programme, women were discriminated against as they accessed land through their male relatives. Single women suffered doubly as they could not benefit from the presence of a husband.

For women in the current study area to say they had had no particular interest in owning land could be an indicator of their resignation to the customary practises. They were also not very concerned about ownership as they felt the land belonged to the state and could not really be

of much benefit. Again, it also points to the strong grounding of traditional practises which, regardless of the penetration of civil society education on human rights, has not as yet resulted in a strong enough case to warrant women's action to change or question the status quo. The women noted that land reforms, especially the fast track land reform, had been too cumbersome and required relentless commitment to attending meetings, extensive travel and at times having to spend nights in open spaces as a means of applying pressure on white commercial farmers to vacate land. The time investment was too burdensome and as they were convinced they would not get the land, they had given up pursuing land ownership in the land reform programme.

In concluding the discussion of access to land by women, it can be said that limited access to land and patriarchal power relations had been noted to hamper women's participation in community decision making and interaction with investors. Land ownership not only enhances women's role in household decision making, but also their participation in rural institutions that can augment their decision making power and leverage more collective rights and resources without land they are often left out of contract-farming opportunities, while losing access to the land they had been using (FAO, 2013). According to FAO (2013), providing secure tenure to land can improve the welfare of the poor, particularly by enhancing the asset base of those, such as women, whose land rights are often neglected. Women's property ownership has been shown to lead to improved children's welfare (Doss, 2005). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s Development Centre noted that countries where women lack any right to own land have, on average, 60% more malnourished children compared to countries where women have some or equal access to credit and land. There is clearly a relationship between women's control of assets, their share in decision making power within the household and nutritional outcomes (OECD, 2010).

Land ownership contributes to making a woman's household more economically secure by enhancing her self-confidence and self-esteem, her role in decision making, and her ability to garner more social, familial, and community support (ICRW 2006). In addition to tenure security for women, property ownership increases a woman's status as a citizen in the community. According to Meinzen-Dick et al. (1997), for women, land is not just an economic asset. It is also a secure source of shelter and provides her with the space to make a living and nurture her family. A study on the Indian state of Karnataka highlighted the central role that land ownership plays in facilitating the mobility of women (their capacity to travel alone), and

their capacity to make autonomous choices. Where women do not have a secure title to land, for example, they lack the collateral required for credit. Even though the same would apply to men, the latter are better off in that they have assets that they can refer to should they need collateral as these are usually in the name of the household head. Nyarai explained,

*I am probably one of the younger married women in this village and I have learnt very fast that some of the things I heard about marriage when I was growing up were very true as I am experiencing them. Even though I have good relations with my husband, I know there are certain things that I cannot do simply because I am a woman. The issue of collateral is one that has really frustrated me. I always need to go to him to give his authority for me to engage with anyone in the village. I often take stuff on credit from the local shop and my husband is the one that has to give the authority and satisfy the shop owner that he knows that I am getting some stuff on credit. It really makes me feel like an irresponsible person, but for the sake of what I need to do, I just end up complying. Anyway, it is good for the peace in the home and we don't lose anything. (Nyarai, female participant, date of interview 7 July, 2016).*

#### **8.1.4 Men's voices regarding access to land**

The men were also asked to express their views on the patterns of land ownership. They all had more interest in ensuring that they had rights to the land by way of a confirmation letter, be it from the chief or the local government. The cultural practises in Goromonzi also dictated that land belonged to the males. For this reason, they could not fathom the necessity of even engaging in discussions they deemed of no value especially if they were merely for “entertainment” as they saw it since it would not result in any changes. Lucas, was one of the more senior members within the community. He also acted as advisor to the local committees. He completed his primary and secondary education and trained as a teacher. He was a head teacher for about 10 years before retiring. He was engaged in farming with his wife and often relied on hired labour when they could not cope with the required work. He received regular support from his children who worked in Harare. He had very strong views about land which he considered was a cultural issue. He said,

*I am an educated man and fully understand the value of progressive thinking but at the same time I am very aware of our culture. Just because one is educated does not mean that they forget about their culture. It should actually be that the more educated one is, the more they should set the example and show the goodness of the culture.” Even the younger generation also had similar sentiments. Gift, who was 37 years old and worked in Harare as a security guard said, “The men is the head of the household and he should be seen to take leadership in grave matters such as land. I love and respect my wife but we both understand our culture. We have peace in the home because we both know our roles and responsibilities. I provide protection for my family and that includes*

*providing land on which they can work”*. (Lucas, a male participant, date of interview, 13 June, 2016).

All the men except for two, Clement and Mafaro felt content with the arrangement where the local leadership was responsible for allocating land. They saw land as their right which benefitted all other members of their households. One of their main pre-occupation for the time being was the invasion of the community by the new inhabitants.

*These people are really corrupting our culture. They have no respect for us and they think they can bulldoze and buy their way through our systems. We know they bribe the leadership to get allocated land but we are saying, this land will soon run out and we need to protect it for our future generations.* (Mafaro, male participant, date of interview 14 August, 2017).

Clement and Mafaro were of the view that Zimbabwe in general was changing and the community also had to change if it was to remain relevant.

*I fully understand the concerns of the older generation but they need to realise that things cannot remain the way they are. There is no going back and if one does not take absorb the change, they will always be miserable.* (Clement, male participant, date of interview, 28<sup>th</sup> August 2015).

*My culture is important to me but I realise that some of these things that we do are no longer relevant. Maybe it is easier for me to accept because I often go to Harare and see the changes that are happening.* (Mafaro, male participant, date of interview 14 August, 2017).

All the men interviewed were second and third generation inhabitants. The government, through the local leadership, allocates land to households and the local chief is responsible for maintaining records of all household in his or her jurisdiction. There was an expressed concern by both women and men that there seemed to be some corrupt tendencies where new families were paying the local chiefs and being allocated land to the detriment of the families already settled. This meant there was less pasture land for the community. For those whose children want to continue living on the land, they could be crowded out by those that are able to pay the local leadership. The men were therefore more concerned about these new comers than they were about equal access to land for women and men. For them, this was a bigger threat than women’s equal access. Ronald said,

*We need to protect our land. The reason we are here is because our forefathers protected this land for us. Imagine if they had allowed all sorts of strange people to come and live here. We would probably not have any left for us. I am still very young and I also need to ensure that my children have land even when I am gone. (Ronald, male participant, date of interview, 28 August, 2015).*

All the men fully understood the ownership patterns in which the land was vested in the state and that their “ownership” was purely usufruct secondary rights. They understood that the land belonged to the government and the local leadership acted on behalf of the government. They felt they were very secure in the land that they occupied although the issue of the “new comers/inhabitants” kept coming up. I asked how they thought this could be resolved. They were all in consensus that land was better off in the hands of government/local leadership though they had noted the corrupt tendencies. They felt this was better rather than outright legitimised land sales. Goromonzi, being very close to Harare would be invaded by those with money to purchase land at the expense of the locals. Garikayi lived on his father’s homestead with his wife. His views were that,

*The economic situation is so bad that we cannot even afford to fully provide for our families. How then can we even be talking of having to buy land that our forefathers left for us. (Garikayi, male participant, date of interview, 6 June, 2016).*

The male participants had concluded that if the land was privately owned and they had to buy or rent the land, many of them would be rendered landless as they would not be able to afford to pay for it. There was also a concern by both men and women that their pieces of land would be split. The increase in the number of “aliens” coming into the community was worrisome. The “original” occupants, as the participants called themselves, felt they were being slowly and systematically displaced. Their pieces of land were getting smaller and smaller. There was a huge concern that future generations would have insufficient land to provide for subsistence food security, let alone for growing crops for sale. Echoing Ronald’s sentiments, Ngoni said,

*We are the younger generation, we have to look after what our parents have provided for us. These people from outside just want to exploit us and the resources we have here but are not so concerned about the village as a whole. The economy is not doing well and there are no jobs out there. At least if you have a piece of land, you can never go hungry. (Ngoni, male participant, date of interview, 14 May, 2016).*

Mazhawidza and Manjengwa (2011) also note the same. They conclude that the legal reality is showing signs of an emerging informal land market and increasing individualisation

in relation to arable land. Communal areas surrounding “growth point centres” are greatly affected by the contradictions of traditional governance and government authority. This also confirms what Tsikata’s (2010) argument that land barons have a tendency to displace locals with little regard for their welfare.

In areas such as Goromonzi that are closer to Harare, such land epitomises and exposes the difficulties of two authorities (central government and traditional) in the management of land. As such, as land gains market value, local leaders may sell off pieces of land. Mazhawidza and Manjengwa (2011) also confirm this practice noting that the local authority is following up by regularising the plots through redrawing demarcations and recommending appropriate structures for such plots. The participants were aware of the regularisation alluded to but were wary of any transactions that involved money. They had misgivings as they felt they were vulnerable as they could not buy the land, especially if they wanted to expand their pieces of land. They preferred that the central government be involved in the administration of the communal area as they felt this could buffer them against privatisation which could ultimately lead to the pushing out of the already settled families. Tsikata (2010) has argued that conflicts historically often erupt first in conjunction with land transfers, especially to outsiders. The participants were therefore emphatic in their desire that the land should not be sold. The World Bank (2004) acknowledged that in customary systems, legal recognition of existing rights and institutions, subject to minimum conditions, is generally more effective than premature attempts at establishing formalized structures. Tsikata (2010) also argues that legally recognizing customary land rights subject to a determination of membership and the codification or establishment of internal rules and mechanisms for conflict resolution can greatly enhance occupants' security as opposed to outright sales which would discriminate against the dwellers. Ngoni noted the following,

*We are pleased that at least government has issued a warning against the illegal sale of state land. The community leaders and village heads and chiefs are well aware of this warning and I hope that they will take heed. For some of us, if the government decided to make us pay for the purchase of this land it would be impossible. Even more, we hear there are plans for us to pay some levy. I don't know what will happen there but I hope that it will not be a large sum of money. (Ngoni, male participant, date of interview, 14 May, 2016).*

On the other hand, with new inhabitants, there is the possible expansion of opportunities for the local community as it grows to absorb new people and ideas. Such expansion would be

associated with more secure land title. The World Bank (2004) notes that property rights affects economic growth in a number of ways. First, secure property rights will increase the incentives of households and individuals to invest, and often will also provide them with better credit access, something that will not only help them make such investments, but will also provide an insurance substitute in the event of shocks. It can also affect productivity, especially if there is a sense that the land could be taken away. Secure land tenure also facilitates the transfer of land at low cost through rentals and sales, improving the allocation of land while at the same time supporting the development of financial markets. However, the extent to which the locals and more so women would benefit from such growth is questionable. This would work in an environment where individuals had equal opportunities and access to necessary resource such as finance to enable them to participate in such transactions. Unfortunately as the men clearly indicated, they were not in a position to engage in transactions that would involve money. They therefore insisted that government needed to step in and protect them against the sales of the communal land. They were cognisant that the current sales were illegal and stemmed from greed and corrupt tendencies by the chiefs. Ngoni continued to say,

*We are hopeful that the chiefs will desist from any illegal land sales especially after the various government warnings. It was becoming a free for all, you wake up today you see a new neighbour and they tell you they have bought the land.* (Ngoni, male participant, date of interview, 14 May, 2016).

### **8.1.5 Joint titling**

Joint titling has only been recently instituted through the 2013 constitution. Even with this provision, married women interviewed did not feel the urge to push for joint registration. One woman said “*why stir sleeping waters. We are peaceful as we are.*” ZIMSTATS (2012) notes that of those households who reported being married (living together or apart), 83% did not have registered marriages. There was hesitancy on the part of the men interviewed to register marriages as they did not see the value yet this would have facilitated joint titling. All the women were afraid to convince the men to register marriages as it was inappropriate and they believed this would be viewed as being laden with ulterior sinister motives. Already some men in the community who had died were those who had registered their marriages. There were fears that it seemed when one registered a marriage the man died. There was an almost hidden suggestion that the women had something to do with the deaths so they could benefit from the land. Further, women’s land rights are seldom reflected in land certificates issued to households. This is also confirmed by Chirawu who explains that people don’t register marriages for fears that registration of a marriage gives women too many freedoms and rights



and a perception by some men that registration is signing one's death warrant as the wife will kill her husband so that she can take away all property. The other reason is that it is easy to "walk in and out" of an unregistered marriage because there is no need to go through complex divorce procedures. A study by Zongmin and Bruce (2005) showed that only 7% of land certificates were in the name of a woman, while 5% were issued to a man and a woman jointly. The remaining land-use certificates were in the name of the husband, father, or father-in-law (Zongmin and Bruce 2005, p.276). In India, even after amendments introduced in 2005 to the Hindu Succession Act giving women equal rights to their natal family assets, women's inheritance of property is rare. Women tended to renounce their claim to their entitled natal property in order to maintain good social relations with their brothers. Joint titling was therefore largely an attractive and progressive initiative but attitudes still appear to remain reserved.

The men were also asked on their views with regards to land ownership by women or the option of joint titling. This was regarded as blasphemous. After all, it is the women who joined the household. The question the males had, was, "why women would want to own land when they were outside "their home?" Women were caught in between. At their natal homes they were considered as belonging to their husbands' household. In their husbands' homes, they were not considered as truly belonging. Furthermore, women already were allocated land which they used for gardening. It was considered preposterous for them to desire to own land. Fungai had this to say, "*what more do women want, I hope you are not influencing our women to go against our culture?*" (Fungai, male participant, date of interview, 21 May 2015). This seemed to be contradictory as the males viewed themselves as progressive, having received trainings and education on topics like human rights and gender based violence. However, it is clear from this discussion that notions of "progressive" were subjective. To them, that they had allowed NGOs to address the community on human rights did not necessarily translate into them overhauling their culture. Sadik (1995) noted that the function of culture was to create a framework for well-being and this framework could be changed if it did not serve the well-being of people.

For men, land was a means towards asserting their status in the community. Their manhood and their belongingness to the community were reflected in the ownership of land. As Ngoni (34 years old) said, "*When I am here, I am a man. When I go to Harare to look for work, I am a mere lodger and have no status*" (Ngoni, male participant, date of interview, 14 May, 2016). The patriarchal nature of the relationship to land with women and men, which privileges male

ownership, was so entrenched it was regarded as unshakeable. According to FPE (2004), so globally universal is the rule of men, patriarchy in the home, in the assembly, in the field, and in the marketplace, that this dominance and its attendant subordination of women is seen to be “normal”. Indeed, it is a universal norm even in modern, liberal and “liberated” societies such as our own.

#### ***8.1.6 Land use and food security***

Use of land was mostly for subsistence farming for both women and men. Whilst both the women and men farmers aspired to graduate to commercial enterprises, they felt they did not have the required resources. The thirst for expansion had therefore been quenched by this reality and they were quite content to be able to provide for their immediate food needs. They were also reluctant to invest as they were no longer confident about the predictability of their rights to the land given the incoming of new households. Investment for them entailed capital projects such as community dip tanks which would benefit them and the community at large. They were more focused on facilities that were of benefit to their households such as the construction of pit latrines. The nature of their title was such they felt secure in the use of the land but not secure enough to spend their limited financial resources in investment.

With regards to food security, all the participants said they were able to provide household food security. There was very little surplus that they could sell off to cater for any additional needs. This tallies with a research by Women and Land in Zimbabwe (WLZ, 2006) and Kaseke (2004) on resettlement land where it was found that most of the land was being used for production of food crops for household food consumption with very few households producing for trade on urban food markets or contributing to national food security and export market. The participants were also limited by access to markets and the scale of production. In the adjoining ward, there was a commercial farmer who grew horticultural products. The prices of the products were very competitive which made it non-viable for the communal farmers to grow for commercial purposes. Some women had opted to buy from the commercial farmer and sell the produce at the nearby market.

Many traditional agrarian societies rely on women to produce food, particularly in Africa, where 80% of subsistence farmers are women. This needs to be understood in the context of what this production relates to. During times of famine these women know which wild grains,

roots, and berries can be eaten when there are no crops. The women also teach their children how to farm and survive off the land (FAO, 2007). Confirming Weinrich (1979)'s assertion that among the Shona, surplus was mainly produced through the agricultural labour of women, Vimbai explained,

*As women, we have to make sure that there is enough food in the home for the whole family and this should cover the next season. This means we have to make sure we grow even more than we need. We then sell off any excess once we have harvested in the new season.* (Vimbai, female participant, date of interviews, 4 July, 2015).

According to Chinyemba et al. (2006) women also play multiple roles in ensuring food security. They produce for household food security and they are also the labourers across the value chains of subsistence crop. Men on the other hand, play a supporting role as the legal custodians of land who facilitate women's access to the land for use for household food security.

## **8.2 Conclusion**

From the discussions, I make the conclusion that women and men were all concerned about ensuring they had household food security. The major difference was in the way this was translated into action. Married women tended to rely on the support of their husbands to ensure they provided inputs. They however, also had some inputs such as agricultural seed from the previous agricultural seed which they kept in stock and used. This would supplement what their husbands sourced. The main concern was about ensuring the dignity of the men was preserved by allowing them to source for inputs. They did note however, that usually, even though the men were "responsible, for inputs," the women also ended up having to be proactive in case their husbands failed to supply the inputs. Single women on the other hand had greater reliance on themselves and called on the extended family for support in the form of draught power. For both married and single women, the ISALs, though minimal in the value of cash, were a source of good information on where to acquire inputs and to know what was happening within the community with regards to available social services based support.

Men on the other hand were adamant that they were the providers of agricultural inputs and they attested to making sure that their households were provided with inputs in a timely manner. They also indicated they provided labour. From the discussion, I concluded that the

participation of men within the household was greater amongst those that lived in the community compared to those that worked outside of the community. Those outside the community tended to rely on the use of hired labour to assist the family and they would be responsible for paying for the services.

The evidence suggests that security of land tenure is not necessarily the only determinant of food production—adequate farming implements and support are essential resources for food production from this discussion. Even though a large proportion of the households “owned” the land on which they cultivated, this did not translate to food security. Other factors also needed to be considered. For instance, in the absence of adequate resources such as fertilizer, seed and labour with which to work the land, they would never grow enough food for their households. The farmers under discussion were food secure in as far as they were able to produce food for themselves.

The next chapter discusses the participants’ perception of empowerment. This was a discussion that focused on the female participants.

## CHAPTER 9: PARTICIPATION, POWER AND EMPOWERMENT: THE VOICES OF WOMEN

### 9.1 Introduction

In Chapter Two, I discussed the notion of empowerment and how it was defined by various authors. I discussed literature which shows the benefits of women's empowerment, some of which include improved nutrition for children, improved household food and nutrition security, higher retention levels in school and general improved wellbeing of the household. In this chapter, I present the findings I had with the female participants to try and understand the extent to which they felt empowered and could influence household decision making in the utilisation of agricultural inputs within their households. I discuss empowerment in relation to criteria identified in Chapter One which is: access to, and ownership of means of production, resources, income, leadership and time. The levels of empowerment also resonate with the USAID/IFPRI model where the women's engagement in the agricultural sector is discussed in five domains namely: decisions over agricultural production, access to and decision making power over productive resources, control over use of income, leadership in the community, and time use.

“Empowerment” within a domain means that the person has adequate achievements or has “achieved adequacy” for that domain. Production is concerned with decisions over agricultural production, and refers to sole or joint decision making over food and cash-crop farming. Resources refer to ownership and access to, and decision making power over productive resources such as land, livestock, agricultural equipment, and credit. Income has to do with sole or joint control over the use of income and expenditures. Leadership refers to responsibilities in the community and is gauged by membership in economic or social groups and comfort in speaking in public spaces. Time refers to allocation of time to productive and domestic tasks and satisfaction with the available time for leisure activities.

Kabeer (2001) notes that there has been a proliferation of studies attempting to measure empowerment, some seeking to facilitate comparisons between locations or over time, some to demonstrate the impact of specific interventions on women's empowerment and others to demonstrate the implications of women's empowerment for desired policy objectives. Different views of empowerment have been postulated and as a result there has been no

consensus that it can be clearly defined or measured. I therefore make my analysis of women's empowerment with that understanding and caution that there is not a universal position to place empowerment. I have anchored my discussion on Longwe's (1999) work. I acknowledge authors like Kabeer (1999; 2001), who note that Longwe's model is considered to be useful in that it seeks to shift the bases of gender inequality and the gendered assumptions of equality are made explicit. On the other hand, the weaknesses are that it is not designed to explain how or why a program works; neither does it explore the contributing or causal factors that lead to the progression from one level of impact to the next. The model assumes that there is a linear hierarchy of levels of empowerment. In the analysis of empowerment, my focus was on the agency of women and how the structural systems played a part in influencing women's empowerment. As Luttrell, Quiroz and Bird (2009:16) note, "the term agency refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices. The term structure covers the rules and social forces such as social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, customs that limit or influence the opportunities that determine the action of individuals".

One signified the lowest and five the highest in order. For instance, if the score was one for control, this would mean that there was very little empowerment. I decided to have a rating which would enable me to have some level of measurement for empowerment. I acknowledge that this is quite subjective but I am confident that with the amount of engagement that I had with the participants, I can safely and comfortably apportion a rating. Before the first focus discussion with the women, I explained to them that I would need for them to come up with a rating for empowerment. I allowed for discussion with the women so there could be a clear understanding of what I was referring to on the rating. Participants were responsible for the final rating after I had explained the different levels to be used. Amongst themselves, the women came up with a rating. These ratings were done outside of the group discussions that I facilitated as I wanted for them to have a sense of ownership of the ratings. A condition I placed on the rating was that there had to be consensus on each of the levels of empowerment. This often took a while and on a number of occasions, I agreed to let them discuss the rating at a time when I was not there and they could give me their rating at the second FGD. Consensus building was necessary as I wanted a group rating rather than individual ones. Again, I acknowledge that the voices of the more dominant amongst the women could actually be more influential and sway the ratings in the direction that they wanted.

In the next section I present the perception of empowerment by the participants and the levels at which they felt empowered.

### ***9.1.1 Control***

As discussed in Chapter 1, according to Longwe (1999), this is the highest form of empowerment. Stone (2013) notes that control refers to a balance of power between women and men, so that neither is in a position of dominance. In discussing this aspect, I focused specifically on the control of productive assets. Kabeer (2001) notes that whilst the focus on ‘control’ is an important conceptual step forward, it does not necessarily make the question of what to measure any easier to answer. Instead, what we find in the literature is a tendency to use concepts such as access, ownership, entitlement and control interchangeably so that there is considerable confusion about what ‘control’ actually means.

Control was considered with regards to the assets that the households had. All the women agreed that assets were important in deciding who had final say over these in cases of disposal or usage. There was a sense that the women had better leverage ever since they started generating income through Internal Savings and Lending schemes (ISALs) and were better able to determine decision making in the household. This was explained in that where people had money that they can manage, they were able to influence how it was spent. One of the participants explained that,

*If you have no money, you are regarded with less respect. Your husband will always complain about buying you stuff like clothes. They even forget that you are working on other projects like the garden. This is why we have decided we need to raise our own money that we can manage and these groups are helping us. It's still very little but at least we can buy small items. We no longer want to be buying just pots and pans, but we would also like to buy big assets like goats and even cattle. (Rutendo, female participant, 21 May 2015).*

It was noted that of the ten married women, seven were of the view that their husbands took time to consult them on the management of cattle, including disposal and purchase. However, they also believed this was almost tokenistic as ultimately, even after they had had discussion, the husbands would consult with relatives. The three remaining married women concurred that cattle was not a point of discussion for them. That was still the domain of the husband with his

brothers and sisters. The five widowed women felt bound to consult with their in-laws or older sons who also ultimately consulted with relatives. Lizzy, had this to say, “*blood is thicker than water. You cannot separate a man from his roots. They would rather talk to their mothers and brothers than to us about our households*”. One of the participants, Rutendo, a woman who had a daughter in law, expressed the view that her son had more consultations with her than his wife. She pointed out that this was not done consciously or actively engineered. It was, according to her, one of those social practices which was not gazetted but had become ingrained within the community to the extent it was almost a norm. Rutendo explained her thoughts as follows,

*I have no desire to control what happens in my son’s household. After all, I have enough of my family obligations and problems to deal with, if my son comes to me and asks for my opinion, of course I will assist. Who can take away wisdom grounded on life’s experiences? Why should I not assist my son and his wife with some good ideas?* (Rutendo, female participant, 21 May 2015).

It is interesting to note that while women, such as Rutendo framed their husband’s conferring with their families in negative terms, signifying the initial discussions with them as “tokenistic”, when they came into positions of authority such as that of a mother in law, they reproduced the same patterns of behaviour, with Rutendo’s justification of “wisdom grounded on life’s experiences”, framed in the language of help and assistance, and not control. The benevolence and benign paternalism within which social control is couched allows for its reproduction, for who can repudiate Rudendo’s rhetorical question: “*Why should I not assist my son and his wife with some good ideas?*”

In Pakistan, Kabeer (2002) notes that it’s common that women who live with their in-laws are less likely to exercise effective agency. Women’s acceptance of their secondary claims on household resources, their acquiescence to violence at the hands of their husbands, their willingness to bear children to the detriment of their own health and survival to satisfy their own or their husband’s preference for sons, are all examples of behaviour by women which undermine their own wellbeing. Jejeebhoy (2012) notes that women’s adherence to social norms and practices associated with son preference, discriminating against daughters in the allocation of food and basic health care to the extent of compromising the survival chances of the girl child, are examples of behaviour in which women’s internalisation of their own lesser status in society leads them to discriminate against other females in that society. While these



forms of behaviour could be said to reflect ‘choice’, they are also choices which stem from, and serve to reinforce, women’s subordinate status. They remind us that power relations are expressed not only through the exercise of agency and choice, but also through the kind of choices people make. This notion of power is a controversial one because it allows for the possibility that power and dominance can operate through consent and complicity as well as through coercion and conflict.

Three of the married women who had daughters in law were quick to point out that their sons seemed to find it normal to visit and discuss their households with them. There seemed to be double standards in which one rule applied when it suited the women and when it did not. It seemed the issue of mother or son and daughter-in-law was very dependent on what was happening at any given time. Older women who had graduated to being mothers-in-law did not sympathise with the younger women who felt side-lined by their mothers-in-law. To the older women, it was a set system and one had to graduate through the different levels to get to where they were. As Vimbai explained,

*We all started off feeling frustrated with our husbands but you get used to the system and you know you will also be a mother-in-law one day. There is no harm meant in us consulting with our sons. After all, these younger women need to be guided. No one starts off a marriage and establishes a household without guidance.* (Vimbai, female participant, date of interviews, 4 July, 2015).

It was clear from this discussion that there were set values and norms which were internalised to the extent that the women were part of the reinforcement of the system of “authority” and household management. The women’s narratives support the thesis of Freire (1970; 1973) about the oppressed becoming the oppressor, and highlights the complex relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. Without realising it, mother- in-laws also ended up oppressing their daughters-in-law in the manner in which they imposed their views on their sons and daughters-in-law. All the women agreed this was common and expected. Rutendo said;

*Life was about turns and knowing when it was your turn to behave in a particular way. What kept us going was the knowledge that one would be a mother-in-law as well.* (Rutendo, female participant, 21 May 2015).

The norms and rules governing social behaviour tend to ensure that certain outcomes are reproduced. Freire (1973) argued that the equation between power and choice finds it far more difficult to accommodate inequality when these appear to have been chosen by the oppressed

(women) themselves. This problem plays out in the form of behaviour on the part of women which suggests that they have internalised their social status as persons of lesser value. Such behaviour can have adverse implications for their own wellbeing as well as for the wellbeing for other female members of the family.

All the women reported that they felt they were better able to make decisions regarding small livestock such as chickens. The five widowed women were comfortable to make decisions, including how they managed goats. They, however, said that for the sake of maintaining cordial relations, they still had to defer to their male relatives who maintained some level of influence in their households. It was also noted that when widowed women slaughtered a goat, they would be expected to send a portion to the relatives as a token and recognition of the authority of a male figure. Tatenda, one of the widowed participants said,

*It's an unspoken custom that when you slaughter an animal to eat, you send a portion to the in-laws as a way of recognising their importance. It's not really a big portion but for me, it's no loss as it means I remain under the shadow of their cover. (Tatenda, female participant, date of interview, 27 June 2016).*

This was explained to mean that she stays under the protection of her in-laws. Taking this argument from the stereotype analysis, it can be argued that women were considered as “victims” or “fragile” members of the community that need to be protected. The patriarchal system operating in Goromonzi is such that men consider themselves to be acting in ways that are beneficial to women and the society normalises this.

Five of the women in male headed households perceived themselves to be in charge of the household in terms of finance and asset management. Following on this discussion, with further probing, I established that this seemed to be restricted to decisions related to the traditional reproductive female roles of what meals were eaten and that the children were in school. They agreed that this did not translate into control of resources. Tatenda explained as follows,

*We meant that we manage what is eaten when to go to the market, what to pack for children's school lunch boxes. We don't manage how our husbands manage their assets although we would want to be part of the decision making process. If the husbands heard us say we wanted to manage the households, there would be havoc. They would even accuse us of wanting to wear the trousers in the home. That is not what we want. We can try and manipulate the circumstances in the home but we know how far to go. At the end of the day, it is the men of the households whose voices carry. (Tatenda, female participant, date of interview, 27 June 2016).*

It was interesting that Lizzy even referred to the assets as “their’ and not “ours”. There were therefore some assets which were seen to be clearly women’s and some clearly men’s. I found the use of language by Lizzy very interesting especially from the CDA stand point. According to Fairclough (2003), CDA is interested in tying language to politically, socially, or culturally contentious issues and in intervening in these issues in some way. The language use and manner of interaction in the discussions that I held were key in understanding some of the community and household dynamics. From the discussion with Lizzy and from her language use, “ours” and “mine” were very distinct in defining ownership of items within the household. Gender relations are indeed not universal. According to Coates (2012) even though women are subordinated to men structurally in the patriarchal gender order, the intersection of gender with other systems of power based on race or ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, age, culture, and geography means that gender oppression is neither materially experienced nor discursively enacted in the same way for women everywhere. Points of oppression may differ from one society to another and what is an issue of concern may not be one in another context. Because of these arguments, the use of CDA with borrowings from FCDA was useful in the overall data analysis. Eckert (1989), for instance, has noted how gender operates in a more pervasive and complex way than other systems of oppression:

*Whereas the power relations between men and women are similar to those between dominated and subordinated classes and ethnic groups, the day to day context in which these power relations are played out is quite different. It is not a cultural norm for each working class individual to be paired up for life with a member of the middle class or for every black person to be so paired up for life with a white person. However, our traditional gender ideology dictates just this kind of relationship between men and women (p. 253-254).*

Matondi (2012) suggested that women across Zimbabwe are disadvantaged in terms of the control of the resources and means of production. Women generally face various challenges including poor access to means of production (land, capital, labour, mechanization, irrigation infrastructure, etc.) and lack active participation in highly capitalized agricultural enterprises. The food they eat, the incomes they get, their access to health and reproductive rights, and education are controlled by men directly or indirectly by institutions controlled by men. Women are also heavily engaged in food production but have limited control over the means of production (Mutopo, 2011). It was clear from the discussion that the men still owned and managed the means of production and cattle, which are highly valued and prized.

All 15 women were uncomfortable to say they had any definitive control of resources or decision making. They had more of selective control. They were of the view that this was a negotiated process in which they sought consensus with their husbands for the married women or extended family members for the widowed women. Claiming any level of control seemed to imply a position of “sell out” where in they would expose disharmony within the household since control was the domain of the men. Wodak (2012) notes that CDA is a discourse analytical research that “primarily studies the way social power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context,(p.525). Critical discourse analysts take explicit positions, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately challenge social inequality. As a researcher, I was interested in understanding the fears associated with interrogating and even normalising the status quo. It was evident that notions of control were something they regarded as foreign that would only cause trouble in the homes. They considered themselves as households with clear demarcations of roles and responsibilities. They were happier to let the men make decisions over productive assets than to risk censure from the family because they had questioned the status quo. They likened our discussion to cases where they saw women who thought were clever and better enlightened being beaten up by their husbands because they had dared to question their decisions. Rutendo said men could even become impossible just to prove a point if they felt the women were challenging them. She had this to say,

*We understand the importance of rights and what you are talking about, but we need to be clear that some of these things are to be taken carefully. When these organisations that teach on women’s rights come, yes we listen but one should always know that what they do in their homes is different from what they learn. How can I tell my husband that this is my money and my money alone, or this is my goat and I can do whatever I want with it? There is no such thing and I think this is where you young ones are getting lost. We always knew that our men are the heads. Now you are telling us something different. As a woman, I need to decide what works in my home and what does not. What use is it to say I have money and no husband, or I have cattle and no husband? Ask these widows that you see here, they are not happy being on their own, it’s not easy which is why they always keep close ties with relatives. I have enough authority over my chickens and pans, why would I want to compete with my husband? Why would I want to be the bad example in the village? (Rutendo, female participant, 21 May 2015).*

These findings cohere with the views of authors like Haddad and Hoddinott (1995) who note that households do always not act in a united manner when making decisions or allocating resources. This means that men and women within households do not always have the same

preferences, nor do they pool their resources. The non-pooling of agricultural resources within the household creates a gender gap in control of agricultural inputs. If women have limited control over resources, it means their autonomy to influence the decision making process in the utilisation of inputs is limited. The issues of men who had migrated to work in urban areas were also discussed in this context. They all agreed that the same rules applied.

The women still had to consult with the “present but absent” husbands. What was therefore clear from this discussion was that women and men had clearly defined decision making roles and the patterns were set within the community. Attempts to question these were seen as being synonymous with revolting against entrenched community values and norms. Control was also noted to be specific to certain areas and this confirmed by Jejeeroy (2012) who noted that for instance, in India women controlled the purchase of food and small items of jewellery, in Zimbabwe for women working outside the home, they could make decisions around what to buy in terms of household assets such as furniture. With regards to decision making, the ZDHS (2015) reported that urban women were more likely than rural women to participate in household decision making. Women’s participation in decision making, either alone or jointly with their husbands also increased with education and wealth which could also explain the decision making power as most had minimal levels of education.

With regards to control over the means of production, there was consensus that this was at level 2. In this rating, there were no arguments as they all agreed that they occupied subordinate roles and did not want to upset the system. They viewed the social structure of control as viable, it maintained harmony, they never went hungry, their children were in school, and they were part of the community order.

### ***9.1.2 Participation***

Longwe (1999) refers to equal participation in decision making at all levels by women and men. Agarwal (1994) argues that throughout the world, the power relations that shape social, political, economic and cultural life prevent women from participating fully in all areas of their lives, whether it’s in the home, or in the public arena. The following discussion sought to understand the extent to which social, cultural, economic and political life affected women’s

participation. In this instance, I considered participation in decision making from household to institutional levels. The institutions that I focused on were the home, the church, and various local committees i.e. school and the village boards.

#### *9.1.2.1 Household decision making*

Married women were generally in agreement that decisions were made by the husband especially on matters related to finances and household productive assets. They engaged in consultations but when there was no consensus they left the final decision to the men. One married older woman, Rudo, aged 52 years, explained,

*I am content to leave final decision making to the men as long as my grandchildren's school fees and school requirements were catered for. It is important to see my grandchildren attending school and being well fed than arguing with my in-laws or husband over resources cultural reality dictated I could never have control over. (Rudo, female participant, date of interviewed 12 August, 2015).*

She was quick to highlight that these were important assets, which were useful for the entire household, but the investment in her grandchildren took priority and she made sure that her household had enough food to eat. Rudo also mentioned that when the household had insufficient funds to cover all required identified expenses, she would always make sure her grandchildren were catered for. She would draw from her private coffers and slide some money for sweets into her grandchild's bag. This was money she considered under her control. This was private money which she raised from ad hoc vegetable sales or savings she made from frugal household purchases. She also used the money from the profits she made from the ISAL group to which she belonged. This seemed to be quite common amongst the married women who all expressed that no "clever woman" discloses all she has to her husband. She should always have some money or groceries "stashed" away in the event of emergencies, such as when there were unexpected visitors. It was seen as being disorganised and even shameful if one had visitors and didn't have anything to offer. There is a common belief in the community that one does not have to show to the world if one is going through a difficult time. This was also one of the reasons why women always kept some chickens in the yard.

Most of the women were of the view that decision making was all about negotiation. It was not a question of "who made the decision" but how the decision affected the household. Duflo and

Udry (2004) note that increasing women's share of cash income significantly increases the share of household budget allocated to food. This was also considered to be true.

*There are certain things that we cannot compromise. The household cannot go hungry when there is a woman like me. We women are known for making ends meet and ensuring that the basic provisions are provided for. I cannot let my household go hungry. I have hands and I will use them.* (Rudo, female participant, date of interviewed 12 August, 2015).

The widowed women were content that they were independent and made decisions on their own, although they often had to bounce these off with their in-laws or sons for those whose sons were grown up. I engaged a widowed woman, Tinotenda. She explained that her status as a widowed mother attracted attention in many ways. Though there were many widowed women in the community, there seemed to be an expectation of a higher standard in the way the women conducted themselves compared to the married women. She felt that it seemed as though when her husband died, he had taken away some of her "dignity". This was not openly said but it was insinuated in community meetings.

*I can tell by the way people look at me when I attend village meetings. One time, another woman even said openly, we cannot appoint or vote for widows for any position in the community. Imagine if there are meetings that stretch into the night, who will protect them when they are going back home. Surely we cannot expect our husbands to escort them home.* (Tinotenda, female participant date of interview 6 June, 2016).

It was always therefore strategic for widowed women to engage relatives in household decision making, especially if the decision fell in the public domain such as the sale or slaughter of livestock, such as goats and cattle. Respectable women are regarded as those in good standing with their extended families, who paid homage to them now and again so that they are not alienated. Gloria said,

*I have been married a long time and the reason I have survived is because I know how to relate to my in-laws. I make effort to be friends with each one of them and I can assure you it's not always easy but its good for maintaining relations.* (Gloria, female participant, in-depth interview, 02 July, 2015).

In the home, women's decision making was closely related to their roles as wives and mothers. They found it easier to decide on what was eaten, when and by whom. However, even within this level of decision making, there were set practises and decisions which were specific and defined by gender.

### 9.1.2.2 Churches

All the women were active members of one church or another. This was considered a key activity and those that did not participate in church activities were frowned upon. There was also a suggestion that those that did not attend church delved in ancestral worship and nobody wanted to be associated with this as it was considered evil. Attending church was important as this was also a place where some key community announcements were made including those related to the dates of agricultural input or food distribution. All the widowed women did not hold any positions of influence within the church. One of the women, Rufaro, a widowed woman, explained that the church had different arms, each with different functions. There was one that was responsible for running the women affairs, another for youths, and another for the men and another for the widowed women. The main body of the church was predominantly managed by men who held positions of church treasurer, chairperson and secretary. The women's arm was managed by the women and it was their domain to run their affairs as they wished though within the restrictions imposed by the church. The widowed women were not in positions because they had not been voted in. All positions were voted for and predominantly the married women outvoted the widowed. Rufaro explained that there was an element of discrimination amongst the women themselves. She felt there was no reason why they could not hold positions within the women's arm of the church but invariably the votes were never in their favour. She explained,

*Even if you have the capacity to hold a certain position within the church or community at that, it becomes very tricky simply because you are a widow. I held responsible positions in the church before but I tell you ever since my husband died, I have been politely told to confine my desires for leadership positions to the widows arm of the church. I think this is really discriminatory. I don't know, maybe I don't see if from the other people's views but it is really something that pains me especially considering the contribution I have made towards the church. You know, the painful thing for me also is that it is my fellow women who are at the forefront of decampaigning us widows. (Rufaro, widowed female participant, date of interview 28 August, 2015).*

She also explained that the men also tended to promote their wives within the church by continuously referring and acknowledging the work they did. This was almost regarded as the campaign platform for the women, especially when it came to times of voting people in for positions. For the widowed women, this element was very limited and unless they supported each other there was no one to do it for them. Rufaro said that it was not that they were not



capable of holding any positions in the church but somehow the system seemed to favour the married women. Widowed women were regarded with suspicion and their motives were always questioned within the community.

Lizzy, who was a committee member of the women's arm of the church said, "*the widowed women are not very active in the church therefore it's difficult to vote for them when they are constantly missing meetings*". (Lizzy, female participant, date of interview 21 May 2015). Lizzy also explained that it was more acceptable for the married women to participate as leaders in the church because they were more easily accepted by the community than widowed women, who were often looked at with suspicion and mistrust, especially by the married women who were very protective of their husbands. Rutendo explained that there was something associated with being a widow. The community tended to frown on giving leadership positions to the widows as they were considered to be already over-burdened with their other chores. Rutendo felt this was a way of discriminating against them and when they had meetings amongst themselves as widows, they often felt they were "cursed" because they could never really get into the mainstream of community activities. They felt there was a "pretend" care for them but in actual fact this was more of being side-lined. Rutendo also noted that the community also viewed widows with suspicion and refused to give them leadership roles. She noted the fear was that since they would be interacting with men, the widows could end up engaging in illicit affairs.

#### *9.1.2.3 Rudo: Case study: Working as a household towards household food and nutrition security*

She was a member of the women's committee in the church. By her own explanation, most of the younger women looked up to her for advice with regards to home making. She was a strong member of the ruling party and was often at the forefront in mobilising for meetings. She had primary level education. Her outgoing personality made her a natural leader amongst the women. This was quite evident during focused group discussions where she tended to want to dominate the discussions. She had no cattle of her own but as a household, they had four cows. She explained that the cows were her husband's and she could have access to them as and when she needed. I wanted to find out from her what it meant that the cattle were her husband's. She explained that she was bound by traditional practices that cattle belonged to her husband. She

did not feel there was need for her to question such long established practises. She felt she was not disadvantaged in any way as she had all the resources she needed.

Rudo considered herself to be a support system to her husband as she saw him as the farmer. However, on further exploration of how she supported her husband, it was evident that she actively participated in the farming enterprise at even higher levels than her husband. After the day's work in the fields, she would also engage in the housework whilst her husband relaxed in the home. The household made about USD 80-100 from the farming enterprises. On how this money was spent, Rudo acknowledged as follows,

*My husband takes the lead in decisions related to asset acquisition whilst my decision making is mainly associated with those decisions associated with the kitchen. I am at liberty to decide what is to be consumed in the household within the confines of what is allocated to me. In this process, there are particular food items and herbs that my husband prefers. I have to ensure that this is catered for in the purchase of the household items. Such food is traditionally associated with making the men strong physically. The extent to which this is true, I cannot say but she it gives my husband satisfaction to take such food so I ensure its available. (Rudo, female participant, date of interview 28 May 2015).*

In support of the above sentiments by Rudo, Rutendo said,

*“only a foolish woman fails to take time to understand her husband. After all, if we work together and understand each other, the better it is for the family. It is these young ones who make it look like there is no harmony in homes. A household can only have one head. We all know this, and these young ones just need to understand that their husbands are the heads regardless of what they are told out there”. (Rutendo, female participant, 21 May 2015).*

In trying to further explore the seemingly harmonious existence within this household, I drew on the CDA principles. From its inception, CDA was designed to question the status quo, by detecting, analysing, resisting and counteracting enactments of power abuse as transmitted in private and public discourses. A number of writers on CDA have different conclusions on CDA but all agree that it is relevant for questioning the status quo. For instance, it is understood to be critical in a number of different ways i.e. its explicit and unapologetic (van Leeuwen 2006); its analysis of social wrongs such as prejudice, or unequal access to power, privileges, (Fairclough 2009) and its interest in discerning which prevailing hegemonic social practices have caused such social wrongs (Bloor and Bloor 2007).

I engaged with Rudo on how she was the one who seemed to contribute more in terms of labour input in generating income. She was quick to point out that as far as she was concerned, that was the nature of their household and community at large. She was content with what she considered a respectable life style and would not jeopardise that in any way. She said;

*I have reached this age in marriage, not by fighting against our culture but by understanding it and knowing what to do, when to do it and how to please my husband. I intend to keep my marriage and if that is what it takes to do so, I will do so and be happy about it. (Rudo, female participant, date of interview 28 May 2015).*

#### 9.1.2.4 Community committees: school committees and livestock committees

I focused on two committees - the livestock and school development committees. Both of these were predominantly male dominated. All the women felt that when they attended meetings, they felt the discussions, especially for school development committees to be cumbersome and could go in circles. As a result of this, they often prioritised activities they considered were of direct benefit to their households. They would attend the general open meetings which were often called by political parties. This was done out of fear of being victimised by being excluded from development programmes. This was a common sentiment especially amongst the widowed women as Sarudzai explained,

*We have to attend all the community and political meetings, especially when our husbands are away at work because that is where you hear of new developments in the community. We cannot afford to be left out of these programmes that are brought by government. We therefore have to have a presence all the time. When we attend such meetings that is where we also get to be told of new programmes. The one we are doing now on ISALs, we learnt from these community development and political meetings. (Sarudzai, widowed female participant, date of interview, 28 May 2015).*

The above resonates with the discussion in Chapter One where I detailed the different roles that women play, one of which was the community role.

Out of the 15 participants, two were committee members of the livestock. The men were dominant in these because the assumption was that they managed the cattle and should therefore be responsible for decisions regarding this. Gloria said,

*How can you invest time in something that you know will not add value to your household. It's better to concentrate on my ISAL group where I know I have direct benefits, and in any case, these men choose odd venues to hold livestock or school*

*committee meetings. Imagine, the last livestock meeting was held at the growth point. What would people think if they saw me hanging around with men even if it's a legitimate meeting?* (Gloria, female participant, in-depth interview, 02 July, 2015).

Another factor to consider was the timing of the meetings. These were regarded as often uncondusive to women's participation. These were often on weekdays when they were attending to household chores with no assistance from children who were gone to school.

It was noted that women in general did not participate in livestock discussions though it was in the interest of the widows to know what was happening, especially on issues to do with cattle levies. Two of the participants in this study were members of the livestock committee but were often side-lined in operational decision making and policy. Their role was relegated to ensuring that the water points for the collection of water for household use and for watering livestock were kept clean. This again was associated with the role women played in the provision of water for household use, and had very little to do with livestock.

The initial rating for participation was three. There was substantive discussion with regards to this. Of the fifteen, three of the married and two of the unmarried women perceived their levels of participation to be at five whilst the rest rated it at three. I engaged the five on why they differed and they explained that they felt they were happy with their levels of participation and with their roles. They acknowledged that the problem came when they wanted to venture beyond their defined roles and social order. Within ISALs and home making they were very active. Once one starts to venture to livestock committees, the levels of participation start to dwindle and this was because it was deemed to be the function of the men. They agreed amongst themselves that it did not make sense to try and force acceptance to livestock or school committees. These were areas that men liked to dominate, it was a space in which they could meet and "unwind" amongst themselves. "*Why would we as women try to upset this?*" questioned Grace.(Grace, female participant, date of interview, 27 June, 2016).

The other ten had rated their participation at four. After discussion amongst themselves, the final rating was four. One of the younger women, Praise also noted that she had changed her mind because she did not want to go against the older members of the community whom she

considered to have more experience and likely to make better judgements. She did not want these discussions to be considered as a reference point for the future.

My perception was that there are ranks within the female hierarchy in as much as there are ranks between women and men. The younger women look up to the older women even when they are not in agreement with them, at times. The societal expectation is that because they are older, they are likely to be wiser and better informed. Grace said,

*You know that we are different. As a younger woman, I look up to the older ones and regard them as my mothers. Therefore, I do not want to upset them by going against them unnecessarily. We are always taught that it's better to live in peace. If agreeing with the older women leads to peace, then it's better that I do so than argue.* (Grace, female participant, date of interview, 27 June, 2016).

The final rating was four.

### **9.1.3 Conscientisation**

Longwe (1999) notes this is the third level of empowerment and comprises awareness of, and understanding of the constructed social basis of gender roles and the sexual division of labour. It was clear from the discussion with the women that they had internalised the gender relations prevailing in the community. The fact that they preferred not to upset community relations suggests that the level of conscientisation was quite low. Stone (2013) notes that conscientisation is the process of becoming aware that gender roles and unequal relations are not part of a natural order, nor determined by biology. Gender roles are typically conveyed through everyday messages in government policies, law, the mass media, school textbooks, and religious and traditional practices. Sewpaul (2013) used the metaphor of “inscribed in our blood” in discussing how such socially, culturally and politically constructed messages around gender (and race) permeate the daily consciousness of people, and influence day to interactions. Such inscriptions, she asserts, “are inferred from biology and are all too often consolidated through sociocultural norms” (Sewpaul, 2013,p.116). They often reflect systematic discrimination against a social group that limits choices or roles. Empowerment entails the recognition by men and women that the subordination of women is imposed by a system of discrimination which is socially constructed, and can be altered.

All the women were well aware that some of the roles they undertook were socially prescribed but they all felt too intimidated to question the status quo. Intimidation was a result of fear of censure by their families and by the community. They had been exposed to information such as gender based violence, nutrition education, and good agricultural practices. All the information was good and had raised their levels of knowledge but they all concurred they had to be careful in how they utilised the information.

An example was also given by Lizzy who explained that when the fight against HIV/AIDS started in their community, teachings were targeted at women with the aim of “empowering” them to exercise their rights to demand their husbands to wear condoms during sex, especially for those who knew their husbands were promiscuous. She sarcastically laughed and said “*where did that get us?*” This led to a lot of women being beaten up because the men then turned the tables and started accusing the women of being promiscuous, saying this is why they were insisting on condoms. She noted that,

*Of course this was not true, and as the women, we were simply listening to the experts and for sure there was a reason to listen to them as we had seen households being shut down, first the child dies, then the mother, then the father marries again, and has a child who dies and the second wife does, and the cycle begins. (Lizzy, female participant, date of interview 21 May 2015).*

Grace also explained,

*It's not enough to teach me that I can go to court if I am beaten up. When I get to the police, to make a report, the officers should be trained to listen to me without judging me. As it is, they even tell you, go and try to sort out your problem before you make a formal complaint. (Grace, female participant, date of interview, 27 June, 2016).*

Grace lamented that in as much as they could say women were empowered, it had become more a buzz word than a reality, because some of the actors around them, who were critical for them to exercise their empowerment, at the institutional level were always wanting in the dispensation of their duties. It was also noted that the culture was often used as a means to keep them in their traditional roles of subordination as women. She was perplexed that the men always seemed to survive and believed that maybe the man took ARVs without the knowledge of the women. Given this background, she was of the view that they could not go back to that kind of approach. Everyone has to understand the implications of women’s access to or lack thereof to resources.

This was the 3<sup>rd</sup> level and the rating for this level was placed at four. They felt they were conscientised in as far as knowledge about their rights, and at times unfair cultural practises but they were not prepared to be the change agents. There seemed to be contradictory reasoning in that to them, regardless of their inability to act, they felt knowledgeable enough to be able to be of more influence to their children and grandchildren. It was almost a vicarious and futuristic sense of conscientisation. They were aware, but recognised the potential risks of swimming against the stream, were not willing to take the risks, and voluntarily deferred to the authority of their husbands and/or extended family members. Theorizing around the relationships between men and women in Somalia, where family honour is paramount, and where the majority of women are subject to female genital mutilation, Barnes and Brody (1995, p.317) offer uncommon insights into gendered power dynamics, claiming that voluntary submission might be an indication of an assertion of power, and thus might exemplify a strategic mode of being. They proclaim that women “partially resolve the contradiction between their acceptance of the ideals of honour, and their incomplete ability to realize them, by deferring to those in authority voluntarily” (p. 317). They quote Lila Abu-Lughod, who claimed that: “What is voluntary is by nature free and is thus also a sign of independence. Voluntary deference is therefore the honourable mode of dependency” (Barnes & Brody, 1995, p.317). While this may seem a paradox, it does resonate with the voices of the women in this study.

#### ***9.1.4 Access***

The fourth level of empowerment is ensuring that women have equal access to the means of production such as land, labour, credit, education, training, marketing and all public services and benefits. Kabeer (2001) argued that the terms on which people gain access to resources are as important as the resources themselves. Terms may be exploitative or based on dependency which then defeats the agenda of empowerment. Access does not mean control and this was clearly explained to the participants. Access refers to women and men enjoying equal access to goods and services. This then leads to increasing a woman’s overall security. Access alone did not meet empowerment needs but was an important dimension of the empowerment process. Having explained this, I worked with the participants to list some of

the productive items, and I asked them to indicate whether they felt they had access to or control over these.

**Table 9.1. Women’s perception of access levels to productive resources**

Item	Access	Control	Neither	Remarks
Land	✓			<p>Land was considered to be readily available in terms of women’s ability to grow crops such as vegetables on the piece of land that they were allocated upon marriage. Land was also available for them to work on within the family plot.</p> <p>For married women, the same principle applied that they managed their “marriage” land and they would work with the family members on the family land.</p> <p>Widowed women had more autonomy with regards to how they managed their family farming land. They however stuck to the traditional crops of maize and followed the custom that they always had when the husband was alive.</p> <p>Access to land was therefore considered to be the means by which women had land. They were satisfied with access. Control was considered to be too controversial for them to even consider.</p>
Credit	✓			Credit was available through the ISALs to which the women belonged.
Training	✓			<p>As long as training was within the community, this was easily accessible.</p> <p>It was more difficult for the widowed women to attend trainings if these were outside. When the women had to attend for longer than two days away from home, it became harder for them to leave their households.</p> <p>Married women could negotiate to stay away from home for an average of two days.</p> <p>Training was thus considered to be accessible but they had no control over the management of this.</p>
Information	✓			This was readily available. Most of the training agriculture material had been translated into vernacular.
Marketing			✓	There was consensus that marketing was not a domain of women.



Extension services	✓	These were accessible and both the widowed and married women were satisfied with the level of access to extension.
Cattle	✓	This was a non-negotiable male domain.  Women had access through a male relative. When they needed draught power this was readily available as long as the household had the cattle.
Time	✓	Women felt they were overburdened with work and therefore time was not within their control but rather the activities that needed to be done was what determined their time use and management
Leadership positions	✓	The leadership positions were dominated by men.

All the participants agreed that access to productive resources was at level five. This was because none of them had ever been denied any access to resources that were available in the community, household or extended family network as long as it was within the realms of the management of the custodians. For example, Grace explained that the moment a woman joins a family as a new bride or daughter-in-law, she is allocated a small piece of land on which she can grow crops of her choice. This usually comprises “women crops” which are ground nuts and in-season vegetables. All the women were content with this. However, three of the 10 married women indicated that they felt competent enough to be able to work on bigger pieces of land. As Grace said, “*where I came from I used to work the land on my father’s plot, so why should I not have land to grow crops for commercial purposes?*” (Grace, female participant, date of interview, 27 June, 2016).

I also engaged them on how they felt about the assertion by FAO (2012) that the problem of low productivity in the smallholder farming areas is a function of factors which include poor farming skills, limited use of technical inputs, unavailability of technical inputs owing to poor infrastructure, poor soils and inadequate provision of extension back-up and farmer training rather than their capacity to farm. These, they all concurred were very factual. They all chorused that they were more than able to be effective farmers, maybe even better than men but they simply did not have adequate resources and at the right time. Tatenda, a widowed lady said,

*Whoever said those words knows what they are talking about and I fully agree with them. We are excellent farmers but at times because we have to rely on someone else for inputs and equipment, we end up not able to determine the pace at which we do things. At times I see that the rains are imminent and I need to prepare my land, but what do you do now if the one with the cattle for ploughing tells you they are using their cattle. (Tatenda, female participant, date of interview, 27 June 2016).*

She explained one incident in which she had decided to be proactive and prepare her land in advance. When she went to her brother-in-law to request the use of the draught power, she was told that the cattle were in use. She said she watched a whole month go by with the cattle not being used. Frustrated and angry, she had gone outside the family and hired some draught power from a neighbouring village. Though her field was prepared and she was able to plant timeously, she explained that the amount of animosity this created was such that she would never do this again. She preferred to maintain the peace with her relatives even though it compromised her cropping cycle and ultimately, her food security. She also explained that she was told that she had embarrassed the family by going to an external person for support. This was tantamount to “opening her armpits to everyone”. Opening of armpits is a common saying in the Zimbabwean context which simply means that one is displaying those things which should be private. Moser (2001) noted that, creating equality of access to these various valued resources for sections of society, who are otherwise excluded from them, is clearly a vital and legitimate area for public policy interventions. Changes in access to the kinds of goods we are talking about here are simpler to measure, regardless of context, than the subtle and open-ended negotiations that may go on within culturally-differentiated families as a result of such improvements in access.

### **9.1.5 Welfare**

This is the basic level of empowerment which seeks to meet women’s material basic needs relative to those of men. This is concerned with women’s access to health, food, income and shelter. I delineated these into different services which I discuss below.

#### **9.1.5.1 Family provided services**

I considered these services to include support from family members during times of hardships. Such times included bereavement, periods of shortage of food, and family rituals such as

marriages. The widowed women noted that they were able to draw on extended family resources when they came across situations that needed family interventions. This was particularly key as there was a general feeling of oneness in the community. Though Rutendo lamented as follows,

*In the past we used to ensure that no one went hungry in the community. During times of bereavement we used to each contribute a bowl of maize meal for the bereaved household to cook sadza<sup>3</sup>, but today you have to remind people to do that, especially these younger ones who are no longer cognisant of our values.*(Rutendo, female participant, 21 May 2015).

The overall consensus was that the community still managed to be supportive of each other and they noted that the reason why there was less of the community spirit was because of economic hardships rather than lack of care.

#### *9.1.5.2 State provided services*

The state has provided the community with agricultural inputs, mainly from the Presidential scheme which has been discussed in the preceding chapter. This scheme had only accommodated a few of the households, with a promise that future distributions would cover the rest of the community. Social welfare services had also administered a programme of food packs but this was also very limited. The packs were provided based on need but were never enough to meet the needs of those in need.

#### *9.1.5.3 NGO provided services*

In addition to these, there had been organisations such as Cluster Agricultural Development Services which supported farmers with vouchers. This was a programme that provided farmers with the opportunity to purchase agricultural inputs. Other services included gender based violence campaigns, HIV education and nutrition training. The women were the ones who were readily available to attend these. They also saw these as an opportunity to socialise and catch up. Some had been taken to Harare to attend training sessions, which was a very prestigious achievement. Such women would become champions on the subject matter.

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<sup>3</sup> Traditional staple food made from maize meal

#### 9.1.5.4 Locally organised services: Income Savings and Lending schemes (ISALs)

All the participants were active members of ISAL groups. Women used these as a means of generating income amongst themselves. I enquired into how funds they paid every month contributed to their overall well-being. On their own admission, the funds that they contributed were very negligible for any tangible projects, yet participation was deemed to be very high in these. The women had songs that literally translated, said

*“we no longer just spend time sitting on sofas, we have left that to our cats as we are too busy making money, we no longer just sit on our hands as we are busy making money, our husbands now revere us because we no longer ask for money; bring in money and are now very useful to the household”.*

They said that they composed the songs that they sang as it was part of the ISAL curriculum for team building. They explained that when they had been trained on the ISAL methodology, one of the things that had been impressed upon them was the importance of team building; one of the ways to do this was to compose songs which were appropriate for them. I took the discussion further with the widowed women since the songs all seemed to relate to how husbands viewed them. For the widowed ladies, Grace said,

*It's not just about showing husbands that I have changed and am now making my own money, it's also about showing the community at large and more importantly my extended family. It's important that they regard me as a useful member of the family and not simply there to benefit from their benevolence but to show that I can also reciprocate. (Grace, female participant, date of interview, 27 June, 2016).*

The issue of reciprocity was quite important with the widowed women as they all agreed that it was important to contribute to their extended families even though they were widows. This was mostly because they did not want to lose their independence completely. This seemed to be associated with not having resources of one's own because the terms of assistance would always be determined by the one who has the resources. Sarudzai, a widowed woman, actually laughed and said,

*No one can handle you with disdain if you have money in your pocket. We have seen people who are not educated but because they make money, the whole community bows down to them ... so, yes money is very important and we will continue to strive to make lots of it. (Sarudzai, female participant, date of interview, 28 May 2015).*

Married women felt participating in ISALs gave them space to buy personal assets. Their favourite purchases were those associated with the kitchen. It was important that when visitors came, they could be served with decent utensils and crockery. Appearances in this regard were important. It would not look good to have visitors think the household was suffering or the woman was disorganised. The next levels of purchases were for the children and husband. The women regarded clothes for themselves as the last priority. As long as the clothes she wore were clean, it did not matter that they had been bought a couple of years ago. For the children or grandchildren, it was associated with the children's self-esteem and the women did not want their children to be the odd ones out by wearing tattered clothes or going to school without a complete school uniform or to church in old clothes. It was regarded an investment as the expectation was that the children would later look after the parents. I asked the older women who had children that were already working if this was the case. Nyashadzashe laughed and said,

*With the way things are, it is us who are supporting these kids. We are quite happy to live in the village and work the land our children do not want, yet they do not even have decent jobs in Harare. We end up even sending them maize meal. Who knows, maybe when the situation gets better, and the industries open up again, our children will be employed again and they can support us.* (Nyashadzashe, female participant, date of interview 12 July 2016).

The women's voices were reflective of the socio-economic situation in Zimbabwe, which is characterised by high rates of unemployment. While young people leave the villages in search of decent jobs and living, primarily in the capital city of Harare, they soon face the daunting reality of thwarted hopes and aspirations. The Zimbabwe Statistical Agency carried out a Labour Force and Child Labour Survey in 2011, which showed that the employed population aged 15 years and above was estimated to be 5.4 million. Of this 4.6 million (84 percent) were considered to be in informal employment. The workforce landscape is also highly feminised, with females constituting 53 % of the population in informal employment. Nearly eight out of ten in informal employment were own account workers in the agriculture sector (communal, resettlement and peri-urban farmer), 10% were own account workers in other sectors, the remainder were either casual, temporary, contract or seasonal workers.

The widowed women had similar sentiments to share with regards to the importance of buying decent pots and pans. They did not want to be seen to be suffering just because the husband

was no longer there. It was therefore crucial to them to prove to their in-laws that they could survive and take care of the family.

Nyashadzashe further explained,

*You know, we women are considered the home makers. We have to live up to that name even if our husbands have died. I also need to show that I can also work and survive even without my husband. Of course it was better when he was around as there were certain functions he did but life has to go on and I have to find ways of filling the gap.* (Nyashadzashe, female participant, date of interview 12 July 2016).

They also did not want to feel obligated to the extended family as it would be construed to mean they wanted to be inherited and controlled. The tradition is that when a woman's husband dies, she can choose to be inherited by a brother to the deceased. She usually expresses this desire before the burial. They also used the money they saved to buy good clothes for their children. They explained that there was a stigma associated with being an orphan or widow. It was therefore important for them to protect their children by trying to provide for them to the extent that there would be no difference between those from homes with both parents and theirs. If anything, it meant a lot to them to make their children feel the same as those children from two parent families.

#### *9.1.5.5 The case of Tinotenda: A widow: Evidence of a progressive community*

Tinotenda was a 55 year old widow whose husband died 15 years ago. She reported that when her husband died, she had been afraid that the relatives would chase her away from the homestead or she would be forced to be "inherited". She was even more afraid because she was not originally from Goromonzi. She said,

*When my husband died, I was really fearful that I would be asked to leave the village. To start with, I was not originally from this village. My husband and I met when I was working as a housemaid. When he brought me to his village I could sense that they would have preferred a local girl from comments such as "are the girls in the village finished". These were thrown around his sisters and it was meant for me to hear. Now I am much older, I have established myself within the village and I am quite happy with my life. I am now also looking forward to being a mother in law and I believe I will be a better one from the experiences I have had in this village and family. The fact that I had sons was also useful as I was told that the homestead I lived on was for my sons.* (Tinotenda, female participant date of interview 6 June, 2016)

She had met her husband in Harare where she worked as a housemaid and her husband, as a casual labourer for a construction company at that time. She therefore had no ties with the local community, except through her husband. She was also afraid that her property which she had accumulated with her husband would be shared amongst the relatives in the tradition of “kugova mbatya” (sharing of the deceased’s property).

This is a system in which when one dies, their property is distributed amongst relatives. In the traditional system, the distribution is supposed to be symbolic and one can receive just a spoon. This has, however, been abused in some areas where relatives have been known to strip the entire household. However, she noted that her relatives did not take anything from her except the symbolic artefacts of the “tsvimbo” which was handed to her brother-in-law. The *tsvimbo* is the symbol of the headship of the male who is assigned to her household to be responsible for her when she needs a “husband” figure. She was allowed to stay on, based on the understanding that the land belonged to the men in the household. Fortunately for her, she had sons and it was clear that they would take over the land. The sheer uncertainty of her residency on the land had caused her much anguish. She said she had developed ulcers, especially because her husband had been terminally ill. She had seen other women being accused of bewitching their husbands in instances where there had been a long illness. She was grateful to her in-laws who were very understanding and supportive. She had, at one time, thought she would be expected to express her appreciation of the level of support she was receiving through agreeing to be inherited by one of her brothers-in-law.

In Zimbabwe, property inheritance is regulated according to customary or general law. When a person has left a will, general law always applies, and when a person has left no will, either customary law or general law may apply (WLSA, 2007). In the absence of a will, customary law, which varies between ethnic groups and is administered by chiefs, will be applied if a person married according to customary law and lived a customary way of life. Under customary law, the estate is shared among the spouse or spouses and the children, regardless whether the marriage was registered or not. The family of the deceased draws up an estate distribution plan which must provide for all persons who were looked after by the deceased. General law will be applied if a person had contracted a civil marriage and lived a more modern, westernised way of life (Rose, 2007).

## 9.2 Conclusion

Women's empowerment is not easy to measure. However, I am of the view that as long as there is tangible change that can be seen in the lives of the women, then some measure of empowerment is happening. This also means that empowerment is not a linear process. Fiedrich et al. (2003) suggest that "empowerment" is better understood as a set of metaphors that have normative value and symbolic power for the would-be "empowerers", rather than as a factual description or theoretical explanation of changes in the lives of the "empowered".

The levels postulated by Longwe (1999) should be viewed as being iterative and not set. One can experience access to resources and still find they are unable to exercise control over the same. This suggests that there is no single linear model of change by which a cause can be identified for women's disempowerment and altered to create the desired results. What can be deduced from this is that women's empowerment can only be a reality if they are able to influence their lives in a positive manner.

Empowerment is contextual. From the discussion it can be concluded that there is no universal definition of women's empowerment as factors such as socio-cultural, geographical, environmental, religious, political and economic, as well as many other aspects of countries and regions influence it. Longwe (1999) provided a framework from which to understand empowerment. This is relevant in trying to apportion a level of measurement. However, the ultimate empowerment lies with the woman as an agent for determining her destiny. Clearly, other factors come into play such as how she relates to society, what resources she has at her disposal and the extent to which she can command these to her benefit. Women and men had different understanding of empowerment. The extent to which inputs empower was debatable. It is not enough to provide inputs and assume there will be empowerment. In my analysis from the discussions, I ended up trying to put a value to the levels of empowerment simply for the sake of trying to assess the extent of empowerment based on my interpretation of what was being said, in collaboration with the participants. This could also be interpreted differently by someone else but having spent some time with the women through a number of home visits, group discussions and individual discussions, I felt I was in a position to comfortably do this. As a way of conclusion, it was agreed in a focus group discussion that:



1. Women are aware of some of the inequalities that exist in society but don't feel equipped to challenge them. The history of HIV/AIDS and how the initial approaches had caused havoc in the households was enough reminders that change should be a negotiated process and that it can take time.
2. Programmes also need to include men – the women were of the view that whatever programmes were to be introduced or were being done should always include men and women. They all concurred that programmes should target the family/household so that there is harmony, rather than separation or conflict. The household approach is important. Though there were some assets that were assigned to women and some to men, it's important that programmes take into consideration the cultural values and norms prevailing. It should also be noted that even though households may be targeted, the different needs of the individual household members must be considered, and programmes should aim to build on the capacities of each household member.

All the women concurred that in as much as they felt a lot had been done with regards to women's empowerment, it was absolutely important that the efforts be sustained lest they lose on the gains that they already had made. They felt that the environment had to facilitate their empowerment. This included the acquisition of skills and knowledge for them to be able to use the legal system which they acknowledged was very supportive of them.

In the overall analysis, I found empowerment to be very subjective and difficult to quantify. Though I had used a rating, it was clear that this would have different meanings in another context. It is informed by the context and time. Bearing this in mind, the measurement of empowerment was negotiated with the women. All the women agreed that the overall average score for empowerment was three. They felt this was a fair compromise amongst all the women taking into consideration the difference in ages, marital status and backgrounds.

The next chapter provides the conclusions derived from the study. It also provides recommendations for the social work profession.

### 10.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the main findings from the study and provides recommendations. The chapter also discusses possible areas for further research in social work.

#### Summary

This study focused on the gender dynamics of how agricultural inputs are utilised within households. It focused on a total of 30 participants of which 15 were married males, ten married women and five widowed women. In Chapter I introduced the focus of the study and provided a synopsis of what was contained in the presentation to the study. In Chapter Two, I presented literature which provided an overview of the state of agriculture and the distribution of roles for women and men in the agricultural sector. I presented the concept of gender and how it relates to agriculture and food security. The chapter also explained the manner in which women and men differentially accessed productive resources or agricultural inputs, which in turn determined their agricultural productivity levels, thus influencing household food and nutrition security. In the discussion, I drew primarily from two reports: the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO's) State of Food and Agriculture 2010–2011 (SOFA) and the World Bank's World Development Report (2012) which note the importance of addressing gender issues for increased agricultural productivity. The reports concluded that if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 to 30 percent and this could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5 to 4 percent, which could in turn reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12 to 17 percent. The chapter concluded by discussing the impact of women and men's access to, or lack thereof of these inputs on overall household food security.

In Chapter Three, I discussed food security concepts. I noted that food security was regarded as a social concept which embodied different facets. The concept included nutritional science and concerns about malnutrition and how these are connected with politics in the household. I also explained that food security was about the struggles for livelihood and the economics of food availability; the real constraints of deprivation, vulnerability, marginality,

disempowerment and the loss of economic strategies necessary to make food available, what Devereux and Maxwell (2001) referred to as loss of entitlements. I concluded the chapter by acquiescing that any concern with poverty and food security had to recognise not only that they were complex and multidimensional, but that the analysis of poverty and food security was location specific and could not be adequately addressed without including gender concerns.

In Chapter Four, I discussed the situation in Zimbabwe with regards to the general economic outlook and overall food and nutrition security situation. I highlighted that Zimbabwe had a fluctuating population of 10.4 million people in 1992, 11.8 million in 1997 and 11.6 million in 2002. The latest census undertaken in 2012 recorded a population of 13 061 239. In the chapter, I noted that key social indicators such as food security, health and education began deteriorating some ten years after independence in the 1990s when Zimbabwe adopted a neoliberal orthodox economy structural adjustment reform programme (ESAP). In the post-independence period, Zimbabwe implemented a number of poverty alleviation and development strategies in a bid to address inequalities that were associated with the colonial past. Of late, Zimbabwe has witnessed economic decline and poverty and inequalities have become increasingly evident. I noted that explanations for this melt down had been attributed to several factors, including recurrent droughts, the non-realisation of the objectives of the economic structural adjustment programme, and poor economic policies. There has been a major scaling down of industrial and agricultural production, both of which have led to increased levels of unemployment. Exacerbating the economic challenges that Zimbabwe currently face were factors like HIV/AIDS, the economic meltdown, cultural and social changes, low foreign exchange reserves and a decline in investment and hyperinflation, which was pegged at over 1200% in December 2006.

In Chapter Five, I presented the research methodology that I used for the study. I explained that I had used the ethnographic research design and the qualitative method, where I sought to engage with the participants at a very personal level. I also explained that I had anchored the ethnographical approach in critical theory which provides criticisms and alternatives to mainstream social theory, and is particularly concerned with how social criteria such as race, class and gender intersect to influence access to power and resources. I explained that this theory is particularly relevant as it is motivated by the emancipation of the oppressed, and that

the absence of food security implies oppression of groups of people by systems of exclusion, marginalisation, inequality and oppression.

Underpinning the study were the following assumptions:

1. Women's access to and utilisation of agricultural inputs leads to an improvement in the food and income security of these households in the short term.
2. Women and men make rational decisions in the utilisation of agriculture inputs, but inherent gender dynamics lead to different outputs.
3. Households receiving the agricultural inputs fail to generate enough food and income to become self-sufficient in future years. Self-sufficiency is measured by the generation of food that is enough for the household to last for a period of one year (or until the harvest of the next season) and enough to sell off excess to enable households to generate income for other basic needs beyond food.
4. Food insecurity is a result of structural inequalities and needs to be addressed at the structural levels before households that are food insecure can become self-sufficient. The fundamental causes of inequality are housed in institutions such as patriarchy that perpetuate gender disparities. These need to be dealt with at that structural level in order for interventions aimed at addressing food insecurity to make meaningful and long lasting impacts at the household and individual level.

In the same chapter, I also highlighted the objectives of this study which were:

1. To analyse the factors determining access to, distribution and utilisation of agricultural inputs among male and female agricultural input beneficiaries
2. To compare the factors influencing the utilisation of agricultural inputs between women and men
3. To understand the household decision making processes of agriculture input beneficiaries with regards to household maintenance.
4. To compare the use of income and proceeds from agricultural input between female and male beneficiaries
5. To determine the extent to which agricultural inputs contribute to the empowerment of women and men

In order to adequately address the objectives and to interrogate the key assumptions, I crafted broad questions which guided my interviews with the participants. The questions I sought to answer were:

1. What factors influence access to and utilisation of agricultural inputs at the level of the household?
2. What do women and men agriculture beneficiaries prioritise in the use of agricultural inputs?
3. How are decisions that impact on the household generally made by women and men with regards to the utilisation of agricultural inputs?
4. How have the agricultural inputs received been utilised by women and men?
5. To what extent are participants empowered through the agriculture input programme?

I also explained in this chapter that the research was carried out in Goromonzi which is an area in Mashonaland East. I audio recorded interviews and later transcribed these verbatim to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. Interviews were carried out in Shona and then translated and transcribed into English. The experiences of participants were the central entry point for the analysis. There was no manipulation of the participants' environment. I allowed participants to tell their stories from a safe space of their homes and communities. Because the trustworthiness of qualitative research has come under scrutiny, mostly by positivists, I was careful to address issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. This was done through thick descriptions of the interviews that I held. The use of triangulation in the collection of the data using in-depth interviews and case studies was also useful in the data analysis. Data analysis was informed by Critical Discourse Analysis. I explained that the main focus of CDA was on the relationship between structure and agency, the power of language and how language is both constitutive and reflective of social structures (Fairclough, 2009).

In Chapter Six, I presented brief biographies of the participants. The chapter explained the demography of each of the 30 participants, highlighting their levels of education, livelihood activities and marital status. In Chapters 7 - 9, I presented the findings and analysis of the discussions that I held. Specifically, in Chapter Seven, I focused on the various themes around which I held discussions with participants. Since my research study sought to understand the gender dimensions related to the utilisation of inputs, these inputs were delineated into these

i.e. extension services, training, finance, land, assets; and how these related to household gender dynamics. In Chapter Eight, I presented the findings related to the challenges associated with accessing agricultural inputs. The voices of women were highlighted. In Chapter Nine, I discussed empowerment and the extent to which women felt empowered within their households and the extent to which they influenced household decisions. This discussion was with women only and drew from their lived realities and experiences. I adapted Longwe's (1999)'s model to contextualise the discussion on empowerment. I assigned a rating from 1-5 across the levels of empowerment i.e. control, participation, conscientisation, access and welfare with 5 representing the highest sense of empowerment for the domain. I concluded this chapter by apportioning, in consultation with the women participants, an average score of three as the level of empowerment across all the domains.

The following discussion presents overall key conclusions from the study.

## **10.2 Overall conclusion**

From the data obtained, I drew a number of conclusions that address the key assumptions, objectives and the broad questions that I sought to answer in the analysis of the factors that determined access to, distribution and utilisation of agricultural inputs. Overall, conscientising and emancipating work with women and men is needed as they were all trapped in a culture which they felt powerless to question. Sewpaul and Osthuis (2014) have argued that engaging in conscientisation processes is crucial, where, through dialogue [the oppressed] critically reflect on the oppressive features of their lives, identify the real sources of oppression and their own destructive actions and take actions toward empowerment and change. Critical consciousness is a pronounced goal for the researcher, the research participants, and the readers of the research findings. Research within a critical theory framework intends to produce and convey critical knowledge, to create awareness, and to enable people to emancipate themselves (Wodak & Meyer, 2007:7). Freire (1993) contends that poor and oppressed people have the ability to reflect on their situations, including deeply entrenched structural factors like poverty and patriarchy, and that they have agency to act on such critical knowledge.

With regards to rational decision making, it was clear from the discussion that both men and women participants were rational in how they made decisions with regards to the utilisation of agricultural inputs. The driving factor was the desire to maintain gender roles and to show

conformity to these, whilst at the same time ensuring that their households were food secure. As such, decision making was disaggregated by gender, with women making decisions associated with the management of the “kitchen related issues”, and men making the more strategic decisions associated with more long term activities such as productive asset based procurement. Culture dictated and determined behaviour. About ten of the men indicated that even if they wanted to participate in kitchen based activities, like cooking, they felt constrained about how the wider society would view them. The cooking demonstrations that had been introduced by CADS facilitated the participation of men. This had been designed to break the stereotypes and establish male champions within the community but stereotypes still persisted. It is clear from this that it takes more than just a project to change attitudes and behaviour; the learnt behaviours that assigned specific roles to men made them, what I considered to be “prisoners” in their communities. Within themselves, they had a desire to be of help to the women but were constrained by set norms and practises, which were *not* beyond change but none felt the urgency to redress this. The women and men’s behaviour were determined by dominant stereotypes of feminine and masculine behaviour. The men did not want to lose their masculinity by undertaking “feminine” chores.

With regards to overall household decision making, I concluded that married women in male-headed households had less meaningful autonomy within the household and the males’ opinions prevailed if there was no consensus. In married households, men predominantly were responsible for securing inputs and providing the necessary ancillaries such as securing draught power. Widowed women were also driven by a desire to ensure household food security and they made efforts well before the agricultural season to ensure inputs were in place. They had more freedom to make decisions within the household even though they did consult with the extended in-law family as a way of conforming to expected behaviour. This also resonated with literature e.g. (Quisimbing, 2012) which explained that in general, single or widowed women seem to have more autonomy with regards to decision making. The same has also been established for other sectors such as health where married women tend to have less negotiation power over condom use as opposed to single women (UNFPA, 2005). For both married and widowed households, it was noted that if seed from the previous season was good, it could be retained for the next season as a means of saving money which could be allocated to other necessities such as fertiliser. Overall decision making in the household was noted to be influenced by the status of the woman and the reproductive cycle at which she was. The more years in marriage, the more influence she had. However, outside the home and in community

gatherings, married women had a higher status and were respected. Married women seemed to be accorded higher status in the household especially if they had sons. The number of years in marriage also influenced the extent to which a woman could negotiate with her husband. The more years in marriage the better standing she would have with regards to influencing decision making. The conclusion from all the married women was that as the number of years in marriage increased, one would also be getting to understand their husbands and how to work with them for the benefit of the household. If they were widowed, they were regarded with a combination of respect, sympathy and mistrust, but ultimately they were regarded as “minors” who needed care and supervision. This meant that it was expected of them to consult with their in-laws on how they managed their households and utilised agricultural inputs. The widow status changed a woman’s position in society. The men, on the other hand, were regarded in higher esteem. Though all the male participants to this study were married, they all indicated that once one was widowed, their status in the community went up. They were regarded as highly eligible for re-marriage given the scarcity of men in the community, there would be a high prize tag on the widower.

Gender roles and responsibilities emerged as important factors that influenced utilisation of agricultural inputs. The power dynamics between women and men in a household influenced the decision making process related to this. I concluded that one of the influencing factors were the status of the man or woman in the household. If a woman was more senior in the household i.e. had been married for longer and had older children who supported her, she had more decision making authority in that household than the younger women. Older women boasted that with more years in marriage, one reached a point where they knew their spouses well and could navigate around key decisions to work in their favour.

Reflecting the normalisation of gender role stereotypes, participants were of the view that decisions on the utilisation of inputs was the responsibility of the “head of household” and this was the man within the household. The widowed women also shared similar sentiments, noting that they always consulted with their in-laws unless there was an older independent son to whom they could defer. Warner (2008) explained this as inter-sectionality, arguing that:

*within a social category, those members that have more social power or status within that group tend to be perceived as prototypical for that social category . . . When individuals are non-prototypical in multiple social groups, . . . they are rendered inter-sectionally invisible. This invisibility leads to consequences such as misrepresentation, marginalization, and disempowerment (p.457).*



Men in this instance represented the prototype of power and those women who had an opportunity to wield power, also simply acted out the prototype they knew. Adopting the lens of intersectionality enables us to examine the social divisions and power relations that affect people's lives.

Power within the household was allocated in hierarchy, i.e. the father, mother, sons, daughters, or for widowed women, the woman herself in consultation with in-laws, her sons and daughters. What was interesting among the older women, who had daughters-in-law, is that they felt they had to wield some power over these households. It would appear as long as one had an opportunity to exercise some power, they would perpetuate what they experienced. Older women felt they had to influence their son's households and they reported that the sons did not mind this, the dynamic of the reproduction of oppression as so cogently discussed by Freire (1970) who argued, "But almost always, during the initial stage of the struggle, the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors, or 'sub-oppressors'. The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped" (p. 3).

Another factor affecting accessing inputs was the community standing of the individual. This meant that, according to the research participants, if one was in a position of authority within the community such as a village leader or committee member, they were more likely to have easy access to information about ongoing agricultural schemes and they could easily include themselves on the list of beneficiaries. As Freire (1970:6) says "the oppressors do not favour promoting the community as a whole, but rather selected leaders". Whilst a selection criterion had been available to identify potential recipients of agricultural inputs, the participants noted this applied once those in positions of authority had included themselves.

This influence in the community also translated to the household. The married men were of the view that since they had accessed these inputs, they should also influence how these were utilised in the household. Widowed female headed households, on the other hand, accessed inputs because of their status and these were considered as a priority. In the past, there had been reports that some beneficiaries had sold their inputs to meet immediate needs. However, after having experienced seasons of food shortages, all the participants agreed this was short sighted behaviour. The question of political affiliation was also raised as an aspect which could

determine whether one enjoyed any access to agricultural inputs. There was some apparent fear to talk openly about this.

Whilst it was clear that participants to the CADS project needed to have some resources, including labour of their own in order to qualify as beneficiaries to the project, some schemes such as the Presidential one were more aligned to meeting the needs of the poorest members of the community. Hence poverty levels were also a point to consider. In addition, there were some instances that some community members had received food assistance through the social services department. These were however usually very negligible and were seen as more of a “tick the box” activity where the social services declared it had supported the communities. The level of authority one held was important in influencing access to inputs.

Participation in community activities was also key, as it meant that one would be visible and known to be a committed community member with the interests of the community at heart. If one did not participate and was not visible, it was reported that questions would be raised as to how they had become part of the beneficiaries. Widows were therefore disadvantaged as they could not be present all the time. Those with grandchildren or older children could send these to represent them and when they needed to sign anything, they would then inform the grandmother.

On whether women’s access to and utilisation of agricultural inputs led to an improvement in the food and income security of these households in the short term, I noted this assumption to be true. Women tended to be concerned about ensuring that their households were food secure and that children were well fed when they went to school. This was true for widows and women in male headed households. The men tended to leave decisions on what was consumed in the household to the females. The peace of mind that women had when their households were food secure allowed them to progress beyond food security to income security. In this regard, they felt they could use excess food to sell or undertake other economic activities such as petty trading which would give them extra income.

Participating in kitchen related chores was considered to be unacceptable and was seen to be demeaning within the community to men such that no one wanted to be seen to be confined to their wives or their kitchens. This also meant that even if a man wanted to help his wife around the house, he was bound by the social order that dictated that he behaved in a particular way.

It shows from this that men also felt restricted to behave in certain ways even if they did not necessarily subscribe. Some male participants explained that once they had provided inputs, women then became the managers. Because of this, food was available. For married women this was almost a natural process. For the widowed women, they needed to go a step further and engage with their in-laws.

With regards to issues of empowerment, it was evident there was no common way of gauging empowerment. I found this particular aspect to be a very personal issue which I could not generalise across the women. I found that women were empowered in different ways, depending on the situation. Eight of the 15 women felt they were empowered if they had control over the area of cooking and managing the kitchen –which was very important to some of them and they were quite content to leave other decision making to their husbands in the case of married women. All the married women felt they were empowered if they could negotiate with their husbands on key decision making in the household especially decisions related to use of income. The ZDHS report (2015), showing similar trends also concluded that seventy-two percent of currently married women made decisions, either alone or jointly with their husbands, about their own health care, family visits, and major household purchases. However, using Longwe's (1999) measurement of empowerment, I gathered that the levels of empowerment were minimal across the levels. The women were conscious about the cultural constraints on them, but they did not feel sufficiently "brave" to question and to challenge the system. There was a calculated acceptance about their gender roles, which they considered functional for them. Having equality and power was less important to them, than "what worked" for them and what served their interests, reflecting an apparent contradictory, simultaneous experience of both power and subordination, or perhaps power in their subordination. Dominelli (2002) problematizes the dichotomous representation of the oppressor and the oppressed, arguing that, "people who are embedded in oppressive relationships engage in their reproduction in and through interactions with others" (p.11). Typical of this was the sentiments by the mothers in law within this study who did not see their roles in imposing their ideas on their daughters in law. Rutendo argued that this was not oppressive in any way but was way of assisting the daughter in law's household.

It was interesting to note that the grandparents watching over children did not apportion roles and responsibilities to their grandchildren by gender but by the needs and the tasks to be

accomplished. Grandparents tried to apportion work in a fair manner that did not overburden anyone. Whilst they did this, they also felt they could not apply the rules to themselves. They hoped their children and grandchildren would have the courage to stand up and bring about the change if they felt it was important and could better their lives. They were hopeful that these grandchildren would be better empowered than they were. This could also explain the sentiments that their generation could not be the change agents in an overt manner in the community, but within the households they could engage with their children and grandchildren for change. Whether this would result in changes in norms and values were beyond them, they at least would have done what was within their means.

I concluded that the women clearly understood the gendered dynamics of the issues relating to their communities but did not feel inclined to be the ones to initiate the change. They hoped their children or grandchildren would be the change agents. While their heightened awareness contributed to non-gendered approaches in their interactions with their children and grandchildren, it did not translate into social change initiatives for themselves.

Men also felt there was not much they could do to change the system. They expressed the view that they were born into a system, which favoured them as males and it was not for them to question the order. They did not want to be the ones to upset the system. To use Sewpaul's (2013) analogy, it was as though patriarchy was "inscribed in their blood". So normalised and naturalised are the ideologies, and taken-for-granted assumptions underpinning societal stereotyping, oppression and privilege that Hall (1985) asked the following: "A critical question in developed liberal democracies is precisely how ideology is reproduced in the so-called private institutions of civil society - the theatre of consent - apparently outside the direct sphere of play of the State . . . How a society allows the relative freedom of civil institutions to operate in the ideological field day after day, without direction or compulsion by the State" (p. 100).

It is interesting to note that all the men equated love with the instrumental and productive roles of women; the provision of free labour, which is used as justification for polygamy and the reproduction of patriarchal structures designed for the satisfaction of men. Despite this, the voices of the women spoke to the complementarity of roles, with women's active complicity

in the maintenance of such patriarchal reproduction. There were multiple factors which influenced this, such as who benefits, the culture, norms, values of a community, and the need to maintain harmony. The need for continuity, stability and harmony have often been used to reproduce gender role stereotyping, as reflected by the voices of the participants in this study. The arguments in favour of such continuity and harmony, with the popular refrain, “it’s in our culture”, is often the source of human rights violations, particularly in relation to gender.

Related to the assumption that households receiving agricultural inputs fail to generate enough food and income to become self-sufficient in future years, I noted there were a number of related factors. Self-sufficiency was measured by the generation of food that was enough for the household to last for a period of one year (or until the harvest of the next season) and enough to sell off excess to enable households to generate income for other basic needs beyond food. All the participants noted their households were food secure, not necessarily from the inputs they had received through the CADS project but also from their own mobilisation. Receiving inputs was not the determining factor for household food security. Other exogenous factors came into play. These include factors beyond the household’s control such as unforeseen weather conditions, e.g. drought. With conditions that they could control, the households made plans to address these. These included mobilising for labour, timely purchase of inputs, good agricultural practices, and engaging in local income-generation schemes. All the participants noted the importance of planning to ensure they were food secure. They were very rational about this and took seriously the need to ensure that their households were food secure. Some also stored food for lean seasons.

On whether food insecurity was a result of structural inequalities and needed to be addressed at the structural levels before households could become self-sufficient, I concluded that, the fundamental causes of inequality were housed in institutions such as patriarchy that perpetuated gender disparities, in addition to exogenous factors related to weather conditions and structural inequalities that contributed to food insecurity. The enactment of laws did not in itself result in changes in culture. As explained earlier, Zimbabwe has a number of progressive laws and the Constitution, all of which spoke to gender equality and equity. However, these have not been automatically adopted at the community and household levels as evidenced in Goromonzi. Exogenous factors have to be dealt with at that structural level in order for interventions aimed at addressing food insecurity to make meaningful and long lasting impacts at the household

and individual level. This is a matter of social justice and fair treatment of all peoples regardless of criteria such as gender and race (Dominelli, 2002; 2012). Orme (2002) argued from a feminist perspective that confining justice to the public domain denies injustices that operate at the family and interpersonal levels, hence the importance of addressing patriarchy at all levels.

Benhabib (1992,) said it is important to focus on the quality of our relationships in the “spheres of kinship, love, friendship and sex” (p.184). Grace explained that one of the reasons she did not engage in commercial based agriculture was because she felt she would not have control over the income if it became a successful venture. In the end she opted to do what was necessary for her household to have enough food, but not to stress herself with trying to be enterprising at the cost of household harmony. This was supported by evidence in Nkayi and Lupane in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe where it was found that women could control household income as long as it was negligible. However, the moment the money became significant, the men got involved in how it was spent (FAO, 2012).

Most of the women agreed with the fact that they had control over money if it was not substantive except for Rutendo who had the view that structural inequality affected one in as far as they allowed this to affect them. Rutendo represented a senior generation of women who perhaps had reached a stage in their lives where they had fully established themselves and had become the family and/or community matriarch. The views of the women reflected the complexities of the dynamics of oppression and power and powerlessness, and their resignation; the choice to accept “the order of things here”, and the agency exercised by women in their resistance to oppression and inequality. This coheres with the view of Dominelli (2002) who asserted that, “Those in oppressed groups do not engage in social relations *solely* on the terms set by those in dominant positions. They also act in ways that reflect their own interests and endeavours at either accepting or resisting their oppression” (p. 9), a view that resonates with that of Barnes and Brody (1995) who described women’s voluntary deferment to patriarchal authority and oppression as a way of retaining some measure of power and control.

From the interactions with the participants to this study, I concluded that the factors that influenced access to and utilisation of agricultural inputs at household level were varied. The status of the households determined some of the dynamics that influenced decision making. In

the widowed households, there was clear evidence of a desire by the women to stay connected to their extended family members. Because of this, they regularly consulted with their in-laws on strategic decisions. Widows with older male children deferred to them for consultations and decision making. Married women in male headed households, on the other hand, were less visible and they tended to be “protected” by their husbands. They made decisions that related to their ascribed roles, primarily as home-makers and as providers of food. Yet, they were granted more recognition and status outside the home, and were accepted into community leadership positions, e.g. in the church, while widowed women in these spaces were excluded. The marginalisation of married women was more apparent among the younger couples confirming what older women said about reaching a point of understanding in the marriage union. The older married women, had more influence over the process of decision making.

In the use of agricultural inputs, women were keen to ensure that they accessed agricultural inputs timeously and they provided for household food security as a first priority. Without a doubt, the income that accrued to women was prioritised for household food items. This also resonates with the literature presented in Chapter One, which shows that when women have income, they prioritise provision that benefit the whole family. Having said so, the men also felt responsible to ensure that their households were provided for in terms of the basic needs such as food, children attending school. To them, it was an embarrassment for their households to be beneficiaries of charity whilst they were still alive.

I gathered that men will prioritise community standing and how the community viewed them which also then applied the pressure on them to be responsible member of households. Married women discussed with their husbands the utilisation of inputs but always, when there was no consensus within the household, the voice of the men prevailed. The heavy influence of the interaction with CADS could have contributed to the male participants portraying an acceptable picture which was what was expected of them by CADS – to be male champions and role models within the community. Snippets from the expressions of women point to some level of sarcasm at the extent to which men took on responsibility to ease women’s work load. The women felt they bore the bulk of domestic and productive work.

A gender analysis by FAO (2012) on household decision making with regards to livestock in two districts of Zimbabwe (Nkayi and Lupane, both in Matabeleland North) showed that men

maintained strict decision making within the household. This was regardless of the fact that most of these were migrant workers in neighbouring South Africa and Botswana. Cases of children being expelled from school for non- payment of school fees were recorded even though the same households had cattle which could be disposed of for school fees. The women could not dispose of cattle even if it was the practical action to take. In some instances, cattle were allowed to die from drought because the absent husband was not at hand to make the decision to dispose. Two years later, after an injection of support from FAO and its partners to the said communities and a follow on study on the same parameters, it was found that the majority of the households had more responsible decision making. Children attended school from the sales of cattle, which they would not do before the project. My view is that, men tended to behave in a typical authoritative manner if they have not been exposed to developmental projects or participated in fora that exposes them to alternative forms of masculinity. The males in my study had been exposed to gender training sessions and seemed interested in the well-being of their families. Another factor could have been the desire to do what is perceived as right, especially after having been a part of a supported programme. Without ruling out the possibility of attitude changes on the part of the men, I also accede that the males could have been responding to me in a manner which they thought was acceptable, especially after having been beneficiaries of the CADS project. While the men represented themselves as responsible home-makers and providers, the gender training sessions did not translate into their willingness to challenge and change dominant constructions of gender.

The key issues emerging from the study are varied and discussed below.

### ***10.2.1 Normalising gender stereotypes***

In the discussion from previous chapters, I highlighted that women and men had all been exposed to some trainings and awareness campaigns with regards to rights and equal opportunities. There was consensus that this was a continuous activity intended to bring about change in gender relations within the community, and to bring to light some of the injustices based on the gender division of labour, which ultimately affected women more as they ended up spending more time working. However, questions related to this invoked discomfort to the extent that there was consensus that the prevailing ascribed “norm” was best left as is. The reaction by the participants points to a phenomenon Sewpaul (2013) describes as “normalising” a situation which should not be normal. The critical consciousness around issues of patriarchy and power which NGOs had tried to raise had resulted in recognition of the gendered power



relations within the community, but this did not translate to a desire or decision to challenge the status quo. The community had normalised the gender stereotypes to the extent they saw these as being functional. This means there was a sense of what Freire calls “fatalism” to which he argues there needs to be total denouncement of fatalism if the oppressed are to enjoy any justice. Freire (1970) argues, “Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift. It must be pursued constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man (sic); nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion” (p. 55).

It would appear a barrier had been built to protect themselves (both women and men) against any initiatives that questioned their culture, norms, practises and belief’. The fear of alienation was greater than the desire to change an oppressive situation. In this regard, I question who determines what is oppressive. I questioned myself as to whether the women saw themselves as being oppressed or this was an external imposition. My answer to myself was “yes, they knew of the work overload they bore and the unfair power relations as a result of patriarchy.” But, they were not keen to be at the forefront of change hence the focus on educating their children and grandchildren. The question of who should drive change in this instance came into question for me. Who makes the decision with regards to bringing about change? What happens if those in the oppressive situation do not have the courage to bring about change or do not want the change? What happens when change is forced on an individual and they are not ready for it regardless of how well intended it is? This suggests that change has to be driven from within and there must be enough conviction on the one to be changed to believe it is for their benefit. They must also be aware that there could be a backlash and they might not be prepared to deal with it.

The desire for change has to be pushed by a few who are prepared to lose all (life, resources, family) for the benefit of others. The fear of loss of support by some women pointed to the importance of having in place social protection mechanisms and social safety nets for those who may be victimised for having made efforts to question the status quo. Resistance brings counter-resistance, and change has the potential to bring about conflict and this must be addressed in a manner that is protective of the intended beneficiaries of change.

The important factor that I gathered from carrying out this study is that there needs to be a balance between conscientisation and the desire to act and change. One can be conscientised but that does not necessarily mean they are willing to change. Issues of safety and belonging are significant. The inequalities in this regard were “functional” within the community and there were claims that there was no value or gain in upsetting the system. Consciousness raising, therefore, as an end in itself has no value. As this study reflects, the men and women inhabited a space of what Gramsci (1977) called contradictory or dual consciousness. While they had their own understanding of the gender issues under discussion, they had largely internalised dominant societal constructions and stereotypes. They knew there was inequality and typical gendered roles that burdened women, yet many believed these to be acceptable and embedded in cultural norms that ought not to be tampered with. Drawing from the personal experiences and the work of emancipatory theorists, Sewpaul (2013) argued that, “confronting the influence of external systems on our thinking and engaging in an ideological critique are the first steps to understanding and undoing oppression and privilege” (p.116). Such deconstruction or ideological critique must be followed by reconstruction and engagement of people in constructive change efforts, with requisite interventions in support of such change. As social workers, we need to engage with the substantial sociological evidence that exists which shows that gender stereotyping and discrimination disadvantages women and men, more particularly women and children (Sewpaul, Mbaba and Seepamore, forthcoming). Blindly accepted practices such as female genital mutilation, female subordination, wife pledging among others should be openly addressed in communities and with policy makers and other relevant stakeholders.

### ***10.2.2 Empowerment is not a “destination or a permanent state of being”***

Empowerment, defined in its different ways is not linear and is not necessarily a final product of an intervention, but a process (Dominelli, 2002). It is a social construct, shaped by society and dependent on how members of a society respond to it. One can be empowered in one dimension of their lives and not the other. They can also feel empowered today, and tomorrow the opposite. Empowerment is therefore not an end in itself, or a permanent state of being. As Fook (2002) says,

*“.....[I] learnt that life cannot be administered by definite rules and regulations; that wisdom to deal with man’s (sic) difficulties comes only through*

*knowledge of his (sic) life and habits as a whole; and that to treat an isolated episode is almost sure to invite blundering” (p. 3).*

In this regard, considering the factors that I examined i.e. asset ownership, decision making, access to information, participation, it's quite evident that depending on the factor under discussion, levels of empowerment differed. For instance, decision making for women was easy as long as it was confined to decisions related to household food and nutrition security. Older women carried greater respect and agency, although they all did admit that this was closely related to household food and nutrition security. The level of consultation for these women was less and they seemed to enjoy less public and extended family scrutiny. The older men were also less stringent about the way they managed their households. They no longer felt the urge to exert themselves.

Based on this discussion, I concluded that empowerment could not be defined by rules and regulations. It is situational, it is not a point that one says I have reached my empowerment but rather, one goes through different processes which may contribute towards a sense of empowerment or result in one feeling without power or control over one's life or situation. According to the participants, empowerment was seen as being able to define one's destiny regardless of the accompanying challenges. They accepted this was not always possible but as long as they were able to provide food for their households, they were content.

### ***10.2.3. Social norms “inscribed” in the blood of women and men***

The analogy by Sewpaul (2013, p.117) of certain values being inscribed in human beings is pertinent here. The social norms and values of society still dictate the way gender relations are shaped. Such norms include women's subordinate and subservient roles and the superiority ranking of the people starting with men, married women, older women, widowed women, single women and children. Whilst there was recognition of the inequalities that existed within the community, it was also felt by the women that their response to these inequalities were functional and enabled them to navigate their survival and acceptance within society.

Realising that women and men don't live in a vacuum but co-exist, every household member contributes to the functional state of the family institution. What keeps the household intact is the acceptance of roles and responsibilities ascribed regardless of one's personal conviction. Given that there were clearly defined parameters of decision making for women and men, a question arises as to whether a compromise could be reached where decisions are made at family level where everyone, including children become part of the decision making process. Given the patriarchal nature of the household, it was clear that children were meant to be seen and not heard.

It was clear that women and men were on different wavelengths of their interpretation of gender relations in the community. Though they acknowledged the shortcomings of the patriarchal system and order, the men were convinced the way in which they had control over productive resources was a natural order and anything contrary to that was foreign and intended to bring discord within the community. This was rather contradictory as the same men realised there were some disparities and unfairness in the way women toiled. However, they also brushed this away by saying they also worked outside the home and did the work that required their strength and physical activity. Amongst the women, they were happy to have a class system amongst themselves. My conclusion is that if one has the opportunity to have power, one will embrace and exploit it to perpetuate a system that works in one's interest.

It appeared that the rules changed with the status of the women in the community. Those women whose households were better off and seemed to be doing well in generating income were more respected even by the men, but, they were still subject to the men's overall authority. These women were also accorded a different status in the community, slightly lower than men but definitely higher than the ordinary women.

Household decision making was seen as a negotiated process. Outside of this, it would be going against traditional values and norms and this was reason for the community to frown, something with which no one wanted to be associated with. Being married and being able to maintain harmony was prestigious and something that women actively sought. Given the past experiences where other women had tried to be confrontational in trying to bring about change,

it was apparent that any change which was desired by women or the community at large needed to encompass both women and men.

Even in scenarios where husbands were “absent but present”, i.e. in instances where they had migrated for labour, their decision making privilege had to be respected. Social norms were thus so inscribed in the women’s reasoning that they could not separate themselves from these.

#### ***10.2.4 Knowledge and social change***

Directly linked to the discussion above, I concluded that the knowledge of the existence of inequalities was not enough a factor to steer women and men in the direction of challenging stereotypes, the status quo or taking action for change. In as much as women were aware that there were inequalities in the society, they did not feel empowered enough to want to interrogate the status quo, and some expressed no desire to do so. There were concerns about the lack of systems to support anyone who dared to deviate from the “normal” way of life.

The existence of NGOs, as discussed earlier on, and the changes that they tried to introduce with regards to women’s empowerment were felt to be superfluous and not institutionalised enough to influence change. Institutionalisation would have been evidenced by the traditional structures of leadership advocating for change and taking leadership in community transformation. However, what is clear is that knowledge did not necessarily result in action or change. Comments like “*I don’t get my food from NGOs*” were common, or “*these will come and go, we have many experiences of these NGOs, they get money and they want to do this and that, once the money is finished they go*”.

Increased awareness in knowledge of gender, human rights, and empowerment do not automatically translate to behaviour and attitude change on gender at the household level. However, what did seem to be happening was that the women were trying to alter gender roles through the younger generation in their families, which the women saw as a safer option. Change can be frightening, and for women and men in this study to “swim against the stream” and risk familial and community alienation was unfathomable. Across the globe, gender inequality and discrimination exist, sometimes with gross violations to women’s rights to

security, bodily integrity and to life, in the name of culture. While cultural violations such as female genital mutilation, are reflective of patriarchal societies, it is women, particularly older women, who are often the direct bearers of these inflictions on women's bodies, in the name of cultural stability and continuity. Opoku (2016), for example, describes the normalisation of practices such as female genital mutilation, widow cleansing (where a woman has to have unprotected sex with a man, upon the death of her husband), and circumstances where older women pay bride wealth, marry and often abuse poor younger women who can bear them sons (a practice called Nyumba Ntobhu), among certain ethnic groups in Tanzania. The normalisation is such that it is women who are the "the 'torchbearers' of customary rites [who] choose to preserve these practices" (Opoku, 2016, p. 15).

The normalising influence of socialisation and culture, combined with capitalist and political hegemony, pose the most serious threats to working toward social justice and human rights (Dominelli, 2002; 2012; Sewpaul, 2016). Knowledge must go beyond talk and information dissemination to include the self as a site of politicisation (Sewpaul, 2013), directed toward reflexivity and transforming common sense taken-for-granted assumptions, into what Gramsci (1977) called good sense, that is empirically tested common sense, so that people might shift from being the "subjected being" to being the free subject who is the "author of and responsible for its actions" (Althusser, 1971, p.182). Sewpaul (2016) argued that "while respect for diversity is a fundamental value of social work, and the profession grants eminence to unity in diversity, we need to ask, how far do we stretch the boundaries of moral relativism?" She concluded that social workers must challenge the violation of women's basic rights that occur on the pretext of religion and culture.

#### ***10.2.5 Increased Household income is a key contributor to food and nutrition security***

An increase in household income should ideally correlate with increased food and nutrition security. However, the fact that income was generated in a household did not always translate to household food and nutrition security and overall improved family welfare. Of note is that the average incomes for the participants' households was US\$ 134 per month. Additional subsistence food was grown by the households. The income that was derived from livelihood activities by men was used mainly for the purchase of household assets such as wheel barrows. The women's income was used for the purchase of groceries such as cooking oil. The conclusion here is that income alone does not translate to household food security. Without

women's active participation in subsistence farming to augment food supplies within the household there would have been a deficit of food. The reasoning is that the men would continue in their line of thought which is the purchase of assets.

Increased access to finance did lead to ownership and control of assets and this was evident in the responses by men who were eager to gain an income to buy assets. They considered themselves to be forward looking and concerned about the bigger things in life. Even though women were concerned about buying pots and pans, I also noted that they preferred to purchase food which could be consumed by the whole family and such food was usually nutritious.

Increased income therefore had to be accompanied by cooperation within the household and making the decisions to purchase food or agricultural inputs. It was noted that some households in the communities had a good number of capital assets and some money, but if the men within the household were irresponsible, children from those households could be seen in school without any lunch boxes, which, to the community was an indicator of lack of food in the household.

For the participants in the study, an increase in income also correlated with increased food and nutrition security. This is also confirmed by studies by FAO which show that there are a number of pathways for having food and nutrition security, including growing own food and purchasing the food (FAO, 2006).

#### ***10.2.6 Neoliberal influence on the rural economy***

The project within which this research was conducted, is one of a number of pilot projects that have been implemented in Zimbabwe. Donors and NGOs have littered the country with pilot projects, which are rarely taken to scale. This indicates the level of need within communities that has necessitated the participation of NGOs in an attempt to ameliorate the suffering and hardships of people. This is a role that should ideally be carried out by government. However, as a result of a number of factors, particularly the neoliberal agenda, the government has failed to carry out its duty hence the proliferation of NGOs. Whilst these NGOs perform sterling

work, often with shoe string budgets, the results are often difficult to sustain because they are not institutionalised. With the implementation of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme, the government more or less abdicated its role and to date, as opposed to the promised trickle down of wealth, the larger population has continued to be negatively affected. Households that could afford to purchase food and/or inputs are unable to do so because these are now very expensive, especially with the removal of subsidies on basic commodities. Wealth has not trickled down as was expected but has remained with the already rich. The removal of controls on food prices takes from the poor a protective aspect aimed at food security. The removal of subsidies on inputs also means that rural farmers have to bear the costs of any price increases.

Neoliberalism has only brought on suffering to the ordinary citizens whilst the rich get richer. It is when ESAP came into force that communities started to suffer greatly. Social services including assistance in times of need were significantly reduced, almost rendering them non-existent. Structural unemployment has also resulted in the able bodied failing to get employment. This was evident with the participants in this study. Some had tertiary education but they could not secure work in their professional fields. Neoliberalism sees those who are unemployed as “lazy and unenterprising” (Guardian, 2016, p.1). In the recommendations I make later on, my conviction is that government cannot take a laissez faire approach to the support of the marginalised. It has to be an active partner and this may mean rethinking its stance on the neoliberal agenda and its prioritisation of resource allocation.

### **10.3 Areas for further research for social work**

As I explained in the methodology chapter under section 3.6, social work is about social change and development and seeks to empower the oppressed. Though empowerment has been difficult to quantify, and reach a neat conclusion on, social work recognizes that there are some echelons of society that are disadvantaged and the profession seeks to engage these and the structures that perpetuate disadvantage and inequality. The fact that there were issues of oppression of women speaks to social injustice. There is, therefore, scope for the social work profession to engage with issues of gender and food security in a manner that is transformative and empowering and fulfils a social justice agenda. This calls for a social work that deviates from the traditional philanthropic approach which has notably failed to address social



injustices. Critical social work, informed by the critical theory offers such a possibility. The core mission of critical social work is to promote social justice through social work practice and policy making. Critical practice theorists are adept at responding to challenges from outside of the proponents of conservatism, economic rationalism and, more recently managerialism (Dominelli, 1997; 2002; Ife, 1997; Rees, 1997). The focus on empowerment, liberation, respect for the inherent dignity and worth of all people and human rights, and social justice are fundamental principles of critical social work (IASSW/IFSW, 2014). It also emphasizes the importance of providing capacity to individuals to take charge of their lives using a variety of sources and systems.

As a profession, social work needs to continue to build a critical knowledge base around women's empowerment in the agricultural sector. What I sought to understand through this study was the gender dynamics that influence utilisation of these inputs and resultant benefits from these. I also sought to add value to the social work profession in showing the diversity of interventions social work practitioners can be involved in to bring about social change in various sectors, including agriculture. With the analyses presented, I conclude that women lag behind in strategic decision making, and are less empowered than men; conventional gender roles still influence their status in society, and that the utilisation of inputs is influenced by the prevailing cultural norms and practises.

Theory carries out four basic functions, and these are description; exploration; prediction; and control of management of events or changes. Reynolds (1997) argues that social work is a practice based profession that pursues all four. It describes a phenomena and attempts to explain the causes and attempts to predict the future including what might happen if certain interventions are not done or done. From this perspective, social work is ably placed to challenge food insecurity. The focus on human rights allows for an interrogation of the systems involved in providing for food security. These systems may include state machinery, household dynamics, welfare organisations and international organisations such as the United Nations.

Moreau (1990) alerted radicals about the futility of debates trying to show that any one particular form of oppression was somehow more debilitating and therefore more central than other oppressions. Based on his research and his practice, Moreau (1990) concluded that

ranking the various exploitative social divisions in a hierarchy of importance was not useful. Critical theory considers oppression as simply that, regardless of the form it takes. Basically stated, no oppression is more oppressive than the other. Often, rather than a hierarchy of oppression, there is a holistic interweaving of oppression (Dominelli, 2002; Albert, Cagan, Chomsky, Hanel, Kim, Sargent & Sklar, 1986). Only empirical investigation of a particular society at a particular time can verify the existence or non-existence of a hierarchy of dominations in that particular case. The assumption is that social problems arise from various forms of oppression as opposed to being a product of an individual's fault. Critical social work seeks to oppose all forms of oppression (Dominelli, 2002; 2012; Galper, 1975; Harold Throssell, 1975). When a household fails to secure food, it is more than a food issue, it also has to do with the politics of the time. Critical theory interrogates the dynamics of structural injustices and inequalities. It is committed to changing the world in ways that can help emancipate the oppressed by providing them with tools and insights to question the status quo. Leonard (1990:3) notes that there are three requirements to undertaking critical theory. It must:

1. locate the sources of domination in actual social practices;
2. present an alternative to a life free from domination;
3. translate these tasks in a form that is intelligible to those who are oppressed.

Critical theory involves the examination of the wider economic, social, political structures which oppress people (Dominelli, 2002; 2012; Payne, 1997; Whitmore and Wilson 1997; 2001; Sewpaul, 2013). Mullaly (1997), whose work has largely been carried out in Canada, notes that it is *descriptive* of the problems that confront social work in that they are inherent and part of the social order. Social institutions function in ways that discriminate against people on lines of gender, race, and sexual orientation among others. It is *prescriptive* as it indicates that the focus for change is mainly on the structures of society and not solely on the individual. It is also more *flexible* and inclusive and more realistic than other radical theories.

Fook et al. (2000) note that critical theory is based on a commitment to a structural analysis of social and personally experienced problems i.e. an understanding of how personal problems might be traced back to socio-economic structures, and that the "personal" and "political" realms are inextricably linked. In this regard, when an individual's right to food is not secured, the underlying assumption, according to the critical theory is not an individual issue, but rather

the prevailing socio-economic, political and cultural circumstances. The right to food and the availability or non-availability of food is therefore a political issue which needs to be addressed accordingly. It is vital to redefine the problem of food insecurity as social injustice, and in more political and people-centred terms that recognise the deep intersections between hunger, gender injustice and rights violation – and the central role of unequal systems of food production, distribution and trade in creating the current problem (Dominelli, 2012). A focus on social injustice necessitates addressing the gender-inequitable distribution of food within households (Bridge, 2014:5). Bearing this discussion in mind, I make the recommendations below.

### ***10.3.1 Increasing women's access to productive resources***

Given that women play a key role in household food and nutrition security, it is important that mechanisms be put in place to enable them to access productive resources. This has to be institutionalised at national levels and be enforceable. Such a system could involve the national government putting in place a basket of resources that are targeted at women. This would have to be distributed at decentralised centres where women in the communities are responsible for the stewardship of such resources. Productive resources are key to improving household food and nutrition security, and women need to be at the forefront in the management of these at community level.

### ***10.3.2 Participation of a multiplicity of players***

The current disconnected, 'siloed' ways in which hunger and malnutrition are being addressed limit our ability to understand the full nature of the problem and to develop the solutions required. We need comprehensive analysis and action. The argument has been made that women's participation in agriculture is important for attaining sustainable agriculture. What is key is to bring the multiplicity of players i.e. women, men, youths, community structures, local government structures, donors and philanthropic organisations to the same table to a discussion so that support efforts are coordinated and structured. The multiplicity of players targeting the same communities may in actual fact be increasing the work burden on women as they are generally the community workers since they would be required to participate in the numerous activities organised by the support agencies. A coordinated approach would synchronise activities.

### ***10.3.3 Labour saving technologies***

The time women spend on work, productive, reproductive and community based roles shows that they had very little time assigned to themselves. Given that both women and men were not willing to challenge stereotypes that divided functions on gender lines, the best means of addressing this challenge is to work with communities in the way in which they are comfortable. In this instance, the most appropriate is to ensure that the drive towards creation of labour saving technologies is increased. The drudgery of their work requires that labour saving technologies be a priority in strategic decision making bodies.

The rationalisation of roles so that there is a share of these is too foreign to the participants that I interacted with and because of this, it makes sense that any agency desiring to work in such communities do so cognisant of the cultural context. That is not to suggest that all developmental work that challenges harmful or oppressive cultural practises cease, but rather that organisations work be guided by the principle of “DO NO HARM” and recognise the best interests of the community at any given time. The women were not ready to change the way of existence in the community. It would therefore make sense to support them with what they feel most comfortable.

Appropriate labour saving technologies need to be identified and where they are already in existence, these should be made available to women and men. Numerous labour saving technologies and practices already exist, such as water harvesting and saving techniques such as drip irrigation, lighter ploughs and tools that could be used, and low-tillage techniques like conservation agriculture. Conservation agriculture has been proven to, in the long term, reduce time and labour constraints as total time spent on land preparation and weeding; tasks frequently undertaken by women and children. Other benefits of conservation farming include lower production costs as one is tilling a narrower band of land, and lower environmental impacts.

#### ***10.3.4 Creation of a social protection framework and safety nets***

Social protection is important for the development of any community especially in agriculture. Devereux (2012:1) notes that the primary functions of social protection are to alleviate income poverty and manage vulnerability. Poverty alleviation or reduction is achieved by raising household incomes, while income or livelihood vulnerability can be managed or reduced by stabilising incomes. Vulnerability also has a social dimension, related to marginalisation and exclusion, and this can be addressed through strategies that empower people. Specifically, Devereux (2012:3) notes that social protection can promote food security by stabilising incomes so that they can deal with shocks; raising incomes which would improve livelihoods and enhancing social justice which would translate to empowering farmers.

There is need to increase the scope of social protection to embrace new innovations such as social transfers where women could be targeted. Social transfers include cash transfers which are non-contributory, regular and predictable grants to households or individuals. A regular source of income through cash transfers whether conditional or not has been found to enhance the nutrition, health and education status of extremely poor households. Cash transfers give households options and decision making power over what to spend their money on, and help them to re-build their depleted asset bases. According to Devereux (2013), input subsidies can be key in ensuring that households have access to adequate inputs. Household gender dynamics are more apparent when there are shortages, hence households may become unsettled and restless which may be translated to exploitative household dynamics. In addition to social protection mechanisms, households could also engage in income generation projects. Income generating projects (IGPs) need to be crafted so that they are a part of larger comprehensive social protection framework.

Evidence indicates that making women primary recipients of these entitlements can have a beneficial effect in terms of challenging entrenched gender inequalities and empowering women. For example, Oxfam established a cash-for-work programme in Orissa, India, in response to the devastation caused by a cyclone. The programme targeted women to carry out work that might usually be associated with men, and to receive cash for this work. As a result, there were reports of an increase in gender equality – for example, women felt able to demand

equal wages for equal work after the Oxfam intervention because they had experienced this during the programme (Khogali & Thakar, 2001).

### ***10.3.5 Adoption of a rights based approach in addressing the gender dimensions of food security***

There is increasing realisation that the welfaristic approach has not solved the many social ills that plague Zimbabwe and its vulnerable populace. In response to this, it is recommended that the government focuses on increasing its focus on rights based support in compliance with conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). A rights based approach enables individuals and communities to become active participants in shaping their destiny and can be transformative by ensuring policy protects vulnerable members of society against social injustices. The human rights framework recognises governments' obligations to society while acknowledging the responsibilities and potential contributions of other players. Putting this framework into practice requires an increased focus on the capacities, systems and structures needed for protection, and recognition of communities' resilience as well as the importance of their participation. A human rights based approach to issues of gender and food security implies the application of a social justice lens. Once food security is addressed as a right, social protection mechanisms for those without this right invariably has to fall into place.

### ***10.3.6 Working with men to bring about desired change***

The positive changes that were evident in the men who participated in the study are a clear reflection that with knowledge and sensitization, change can come about especially that which is associated with regressive cultural practices. The fact that men were keen to assist their women within the household even though they feared community attitudes shows that there is scope for change. In this regard, there is much to gain in having programmes that target both women and men as change agents rather than targeting one group. By their own admission and from past programmes such as those related to HIV, success was only recorded when both women and men were engaged. The men in this study exemplify the gains that can be derived if they are provided with knowledge and skills that contribute to households working together towards food security.

## **10.4 Areas for further research for social work**

This study has highlighted a number of themes and I acknowledge that there is much scope for further research in the area of gender and food security. Areas of research that I consider to be key for further study within the realms of social work include:

### ***10.4.1 Issues of climate change and how these will impact on agriculture and gender and what it means for social work***

The emergence of crises such as those brought on by climate change means that the social work profession cannot continue to work with people in conventional ways. Climate change is emerging as one of the worst causes of food insecurity. Overwhelming evidence highlights that climate change is contributing to catastrophic environmental crises such as drought (Dominelli, 2012). Its adverse effects not only pose a serious threat to human well-being but are a major drawback to the global development trajectory (Giddens, 2009). Women, who according to Dominelli (2012) and Agarwal (2000), are disproportionately affected by climate change as they have to increase manual labor, find other alternatives to food supply while they are expected to fulfil other gender roles such as caring for the children and domestic chores.

The implications for social work lie in that as more households and communities become vulnerable, there will be need for effective, strategic support that protects vulnerable members of society against falling into deeper deprivation. With women at the epi-center of climate change, it is important for social work to engage with other professions for the development of appropriate social policy strategies. Initial work has already been and continues to be done by lead academics such as Dominelli (2012). This needs to be embraced by different areas of social work e.g. policy, administration, community development. Dominelli (2012), in her work on “Green Social Work: From Environmental Crises to Environmental Justice” makes a significant contribution to the roles of social workers in contributing to environmental justice. She argues that the gendered nature of climate change is underrepresented in climate change literature and also in the emerging field of green social work. There is need to engage in transformative social work that creates lasting impacts on people’s lives based on a human rights perspective, and a good launch pad for countries to adapt their social work interventions

to deal with emerging local issues but at the same time maintain the international flavour of social work.

#### ***10.4.2 How to maintain the social work agenda relevant in a changing global context***

Part of the essence of social work training is to prepare students for addressing challenges they face on a day to day basis and to act as advocates for social justice and the upholding of human rights (; Ife, 2001; Sewpaul & Jones, 2004). Critical consciousness of students must be raised from the day they enter class. The diversity of social work is evident in the uptake of roles outside the traditional realms of social welfare departments within government or other agencies. Mamphiswana and Noyoo (2000) argue that social work as a profession is still perceived by the people of Zimbabwe as a Western concept which, at times, has found itself conflicting with the social terrains of Africa.

By its very nature, the profession of social work is multifaceted and curricula should reflect the same. It should equip graduates to work in a number of settings from the traditional front line social work to the less visible functions in NGOs, policy formulation, advocacy and lobbying and engagement in the human rights of people especially given the changing nature, scope of challenges and demands people face. According to Lorenz (2001), “it is its paradigmatic openness that gives this profession the chance to engage with very specific (and constantly changing) historical and political contexts while at the same time striving for a degree of universality, scientific reliability, professional autonomy and moral accountability’ (p.12). At a global level, there is an evident drive to develop and maintain relevance of the social work profession, which at the national levels, has not been adequately understood to effect a “paradigmatic openness” and relevance. As context matters and is powerful, social work must be made more locally and nationally specific and relevant, bearing in mind inter-dependencies in a rapidly globalizing world.

#### ***10.4.3 How the social work profession can engage with other non-traditional sectors such as agriculture***

The scope of social work is very broad. As social workers delve into other areas it is important that there is sufficient research to inform practice. In the field of gender and agriculture it is important for social work to establish synergies with other sectors such as Ministries of Agriculture, Environment among others. Such engagement could also be informed by a large



scale quantitative study. The findings presented in this research could also inform the larger scale study. This calls for social work that engages in critical work. There is a growing body of knowledge around critical social work and the topic of gender and agriculture can also become a key agenda. Notably, there are contestations on critical social work. For instance, over the past decade, a small body of critically orientated practice literature has contested the truth status of established critical social work perspectives (Healy, 2000; Lerbalestier, 1998; Fawcett, Featherstone, Fook & Rossiter, 2000; Pease & Fook, 1999). Concern is expressed about the assumption that structural analyses can be imported into local contexts of social work practice and policy making processes. This is evident in Wise's (1990) assertion that additional challenges are raised from practice to the ethical foundations of critical practice. In particular, critical practice theorists claim that through rational thought and action people can change the way they live (Fay, 1987). This does not remove the value of the engagement of critical social work. This could also be hinged on feminist theory and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. Coates (2012) further argues that it is important to be guided by feminist principles in theorising about the oppressive nature of gender. Both men and women are the victims of dominant societal discourses. While women are disproportionately disadvantaged, men are also disadvantaged in various ways.

### **10.5 Overall reflection**

Through this study, I am of the view that empowerment is closely associated with the context in which one grows and lives. As people are socialised and learn to speak, assert themselves and exercise personal agency, they also adopt a particular way of presenting themselves including the manner in which they express themselves through the use of language. The use of language is closely associated with one's upbringing, prevailing norms and practices and overall acceptance of a status quo. Without taking the stance to question this, or alternatively, taking the position of passive acceptance of a status quo one can simply glide through life. The other alternative of questioning the status quo may result in some casualties and this is the point at which I believe one may start to be empowered. However, this does not happen in a vacuum. As Dominelli (2002) argued, "holding women personally responsible for the socio-economic and political forces which wreak havoc with their best laid plans, professionals intervening in their lives can pathologise them mercilessly and in doing so risk crushing the fragile blooms of self-sufficiency that women display. What they must be offered is 'a hand up, not a handout'.

However, a hand up without resources is futile and this is where I see the role of government being important.

Government has to take its responsibility as a duty bearer to ensure that its citizenry is supported in the quest for empowerment and food security. Government cannot continue to hide behind the neoliberal agenda. Whilst imploring government to take up its rightful role, the citizens, including women also need to exercise responsibility and partner with government in the quest for empowerment. Government can facilitate the removal of structural inequalities but women and men have to be convinced about the importance of addressing inequalities. Dominelli (2012) argues that feminist social work offers an attractive alternative as it seeks to place women and the elimination of structural gender inequalities at the centre of its practice (Dominelli, 2012). The social work profession can be a catalyst in the quest for achieving food security and women's empowerment.

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## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Participants' Consent Forms

#### Annex 1

#### Consent form for a Qualitative Study conducted by Mildred T. Mushunje a PhD

#### student registered with the University of KwaZulu Natal

#### Study Topic:

The Gender Dimensions of the utilisation of agricultural inputs for food and income security: A case study of subsistence farming in Goromonzi District, Zimbabwe

#### Background

You are being asked to take part in a research study because you were a beneficiary of an input programme that was implemented by FAO through its partners. This study is completely independent of the programme in which you participated. This study is purely for academic reasons. All information generated from this study will be confidential.

The objectives of the study are:

1. 1. Analyse the factors determining access to, distribution and utilisation of agricultural inputs among male and female agricultural input beneficiaries; Compare the factors influencing the utilisation of agricultural inputs between women and men;
2. Understand the household decision making processes of agriculture input beneficiaries with regards to household maintenance;
3. Compare the use of income and proceeds from agricultural input between female and male beneficiaries; and
4. Determine the extent to which agricultural inputs contribute to the empowerment of women and men.

**What we will ask you to do:** If you agree to be in this study, I will conduct interviews with you. The interviews will include questions broadly about:

1. Your experiences of the project
2. How you were selected
3. What you gained and lost as a result of the project
4. How were you selected to be part of this project?

5. How the project impacted on your household
6. What challenges you faced from the project and how you think these could have been addressed

The initial interview will take about at least hour to complete. With your permission, we would also like to tape-record the interview. I would like to make follow up visits, engage in further discussion and visit your farm/s at your convenience.

**Risks and benefits:**

There are no benefits or risks to you.

**Your answers will be confidential.** The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I make public we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records. If I tape-record the interview, we will destroy the tape on completion of the study.

**Taking part is voluntary:** Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

**Statement of Consent:** I have read the above information and each aspect of the information has been explained to me. I have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview tape-recorded.

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least five years beyond the end of the study. Records related to this study will also be kept as per university policy for a period of five years after which these shall be destroyed.*

## **Annex 2: Participants' individual Interview Guide**

INTERVIEW GUIDE - Note that the interviews will be conversational style to allow participants to be relaxed and to participate as fully as possible. The guide will be used with flexibility. The interview guide will be used with men and women and the gender dimensions will be extrapolated in the analysis.

1. How did you get to be a beneficiary on the Input Agricultural programme? – probe – tell me more about it.
2. Do you think being a man/woman made it easier or more difficult for you to access the agricultural inputs?
3. How were decisions made about how the agricultural inputs were used at home?
4. Who makes decisions about what is planted, when and how harvesting is done?
5. How many hours per week do you spend on household cleaning; cooking; digging; planting; harvesting; fetching water?
6. What are the other activities in the household are you involved in? and how much time do you spend on these?
7. What activities in the community are you involved in and how much time do you spend on these?
8. Have you been able to sell your products? Where, prices? What kinds of income were generated from the sale of products?
9. How much of the products are retained for use in the home – who decides this?
10. Have you been able to save any money from the sale of products?
11. Has your farming made a difference to members of the household e.g. are they able to access health care now more than they did before the programme; has it made a difference to the children's enrolment and retention in school? Other ways? Ability to buy school uniform; give the children spending money? New clothing; celebrate events that they could not before?
12. How are decisions about how money is spent made?
13. How and by who is livestock managed?
14. Has participation in the programme and your farming helped you to have more say in decisions in the home?

Has it helped you to become more independent? If so how?

**Annex 3: Gatekeepers Letter**

**Authorisation form for a Qualitative Study conducted by Mildred T. Mushunje a PhD student**

**registered with the University of KwaZulu Natal**

**Submitted to Cluster Agricultural Development Services**

**Background**

I, Mildred Mushunje am registered with the University of KwaZulu Natal as PhD student in the School of Social Work and Community Development, College of Humanities. My registration number is 214584714.

My study topic is:

The Gender Dimensions of the utilisation of agricultural inputs for food and income security: A case study of subsistence farming in Goromonzi District, Zimbabwe

I wish to use data from some projects that Cluster Agricultural Development Services has implemented with financial and technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in the 2012 -2013 agriculture season. I therefore seek your authorisation to use this information which is also largely in the public domain. The study is purely for academic purposes and will remain confidential.

The objectives of the study are:

1. Analyse the factors determining access to, distribution and utilisation of agricultural inputs among male and female agricultural input beneficiaries; Compare the factors influencing the utilisation of agricultural inputs between women and men;
2. Understand the household decision making processes of agriculture input beneficiaries with regards to household maintenance;
3. Compare the use of income and proceeds from agricultural input between female and male beneficiaries; and

Researcher: Name and Signature: Mildred T. Mushunje: Date: 20 August 2014

Cluster Agriculture Development Services Representative:

Name and Signature: 

Lilian Machivenyika, Executive Director: tel: +263 773079552;

email: [machivenyikal@cads.org.zw](mailto:machivenyikal@cads.org.zw); Date: 20 August 2014

*This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least five years beyond the end of the study*



To Whom It may concern

20 August, 2014

Re: Letter of support for Mildred Mushunje: The gender dimensions of the utilisation of agricultural inputs for food and income security: A case study of subsistence farming households in Goromonzi District, Zimbabwe

This is to confirm that CADS is in support of Mildred Mushunje's study in Goromonzi. My organisation will facilitate her entry into the community and to reach all the participants to the study. I understand the objectives of the study are to:

1. Analyse the factors determining access to, distribution and utilisation of agricultural inputs among male and female agricultural input beneficiaries; Compare the factors influencing the utilisation of agricultural inputs between women and men;
2. Understand the household decision making processes of agriculture input beneficiaries with regards to household maintenance;
3. Compare the use of income and proceeds from agricultural input between female and male beneficiaries; and
4. Determine the extent to which agricultural inputs contribute to the empowerment of women and men.

As an organisation we look forward to the completed work and hope to learn from it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lillian Machivenyika'.

Lillian Machivenyika  
Executive Director





**Annex 5**

**Q Interview Guide for Focus Group discussion for Qualitative Study conducted by**

**Mildred T. Mushunje a PhD student registered with the University of KwaZulu Natal**

1. What are the roles that women and men play in the community?
2. Who are the main decision makers in the community regarding community development?
3. What are the roles that women and men play in accessing agricultural inputs within households?
4. How are these inputs utilised within the household?
5. Within the households, do women men share roles equally?

