

**THE UNTOLD STORIES OF WOMEN FARMERS' EXPERIENCES, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS: A CASE OF NWANEDI FARMS IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA, 1994-2013**

**BY**

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**This thesis submitted to the Department of Development Studies in the School of Human and Social Sciences at the University of Venda in fulfilment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy in History Degree (PhD)**

**PROMOTERS**

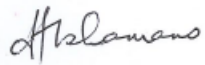
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**2019**

## DECLARATION

I, Humbulani Samson Tshamano, hereby declare that the thesis for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in History (PhD) in the Department of Development Studies, University of Venda, hereby submitted by me, has not been submitted previously for a degree at this or any other institution, that it is my own work in design and in execution, and that all reference materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.



Student's signature

21/05/2021

Date

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my three children, Zwonaka, Zwavhudi and Zwivhuya. I cannot forget you my love, Masala, for the love you have showered me with during this trying time. I sometimes had to work awkward, long and abnormal hours, trying to finish what I started, and you were always there, supporting me all the way. I thank you for that, dear, with this great achievement. I hope this would set a tone of hard work in my family for all of you, especially my children. May the Good Lord shower this family with all the blessings we desire.

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This one is for all my friends and colleagues who have unselfishly supported me throughout this trying time. If it was not for you my friends, Fhatuwani, Theodore, Justice, Joshua, Pfarelo, Patrick, Matodzi, Elizabeth, and all who have contributed in making my dreams a reality, I would not have come this far. It hurts me to mention just these few people as so many of you have in one way or another made your mark in my life. May the Almighty bless you with all the blessings you deserve.

Many thanks to the Almighty who gave me the strength to carry on with this thesis. My wife Masala and my parents, who started this journey with me, unfortunately mom could not wait to see the end of it, but her spirit made me persevere to the end. May her soul rest in perfect peace. You all have contributed a lot in my success, and may the Lord add more days in their lives.

I cannot forget all my promoters, Prof. R. R. Molapo and Prof. B. R. Mngomezulu, for their expert guidance and constant support. May God bless you. The whole Department of Development Studies cannot be left out on this one. Many, if not all of you have supported me in one way or another. Keep supporting each other for the betterment of our Department. *Aluta Continua.....*

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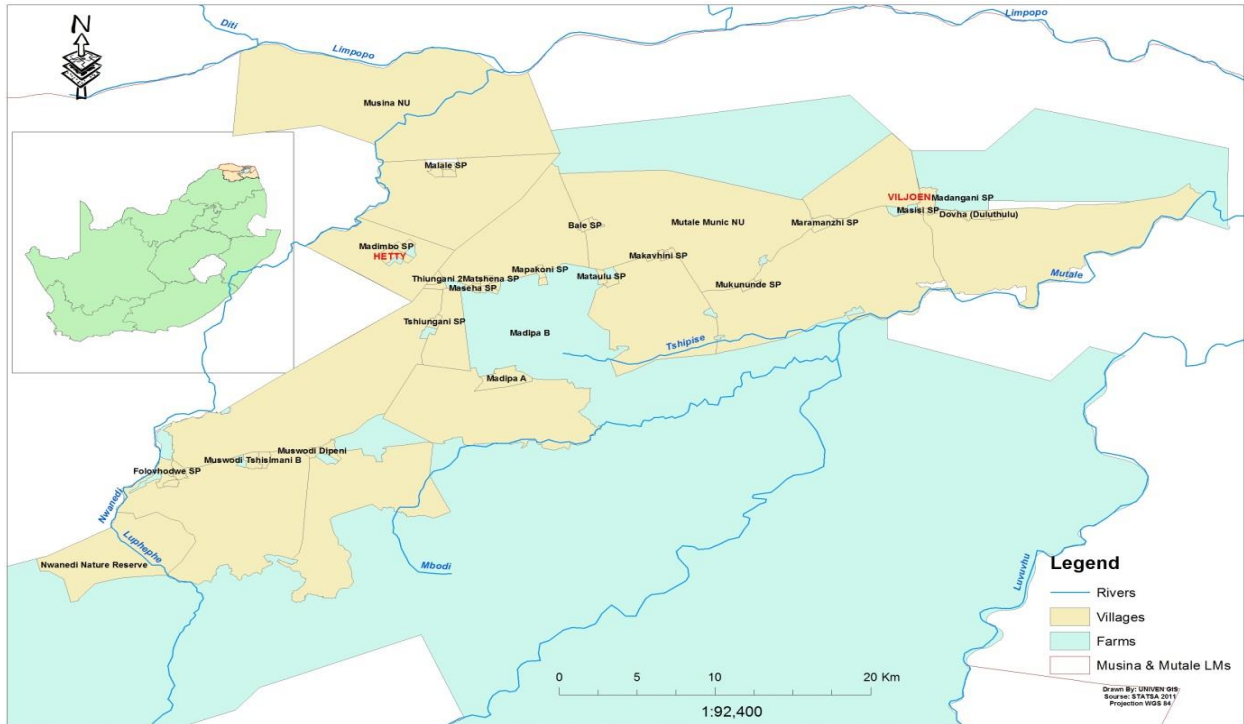
## LIST OF ACCRONYMS/ ABBREVIATIONS

ABET:	Adult Basic Education and Training
ABSA:	Amalgamated Banks of South Africa
ADB:	African Development Bank
AFASA:	African Farmers Association of South Africa
AISA:	Africa Institute of South Africa
ANC:	African National Congress
ATPC:	African Trade Policy Centre
CEDAW:	Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CLR:	Communal Land Rights
DBSA:	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DRDLR:	Department of Rural Development and Land Reform
DTI:	Department of Trade and Industry
GBV:	Gender Based Violence
GFP:	Gender Focal Persons
LB:	Land Bank
LED:	Local Economic Development
LEDET:	Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
LRAD:	Land Redistribution and Agricultural Development
MFC:	Master Farmer Certificate
NDP:	National Development Plan
NGOs :	Non-Governmental Organizations

NGP:	National Gender Policy
NTK:	Noord Transvalle Kooporasie
PhD:	Doctor of Philosophy
PTO:	Permission to Occupy
RAP:	Regional Agricultural Policy
REC:	Regional Economic Community
SACBTA:	Southern Africa Cross Border Traders Association
SADC:	Southern African Development Community
SADPA:	Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance
SAT:	Southern Africa Trust
SEDA:	Sector Education Development Agency
SSA:	Sub-Saharan Africa
TORs:	Terms of Reference
TVET:	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNECA:	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development
VSLs:	Village Savings Loans
WB:	World Bank
WDBIH:	Women's Development Business Investment Holdings
WPLR:	White Paper on Land Reform
WRCN:	Women Resource Centre and Network

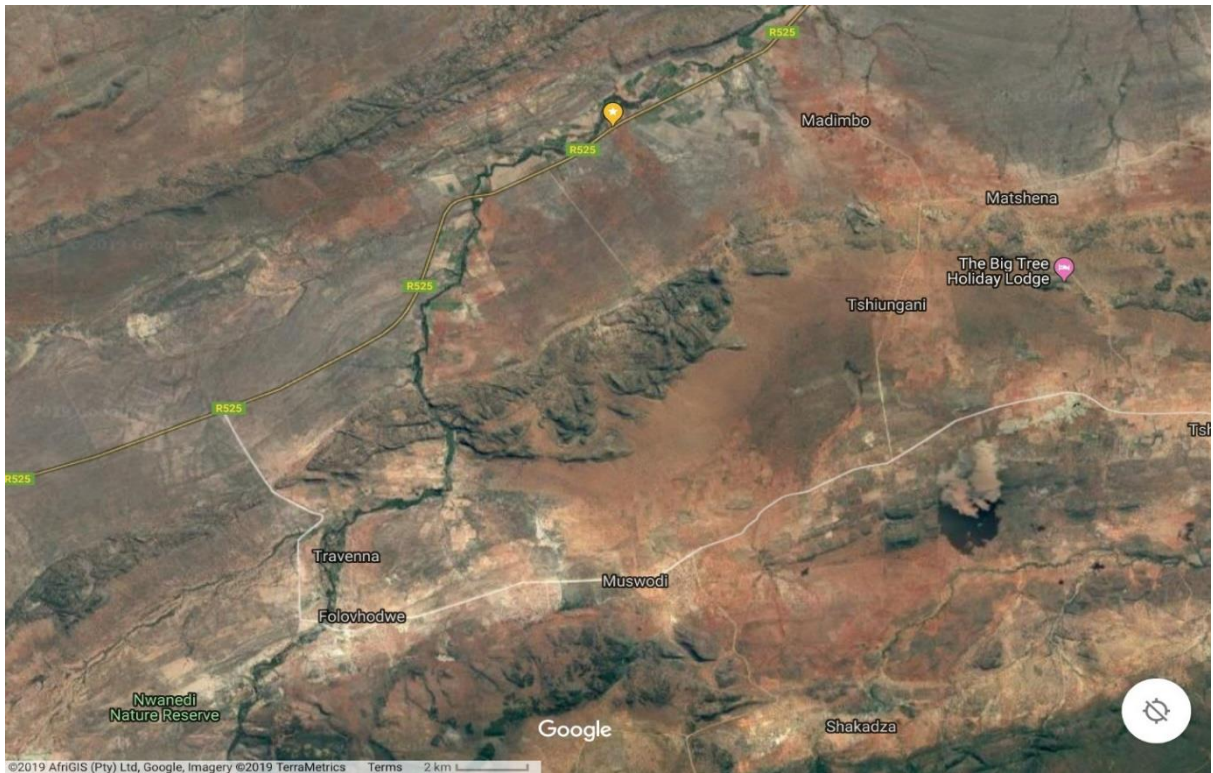
## MAPS SHOWING NWANEDI FARMS AND SETTLEMENT AREA

**Map 1: Topographic map**

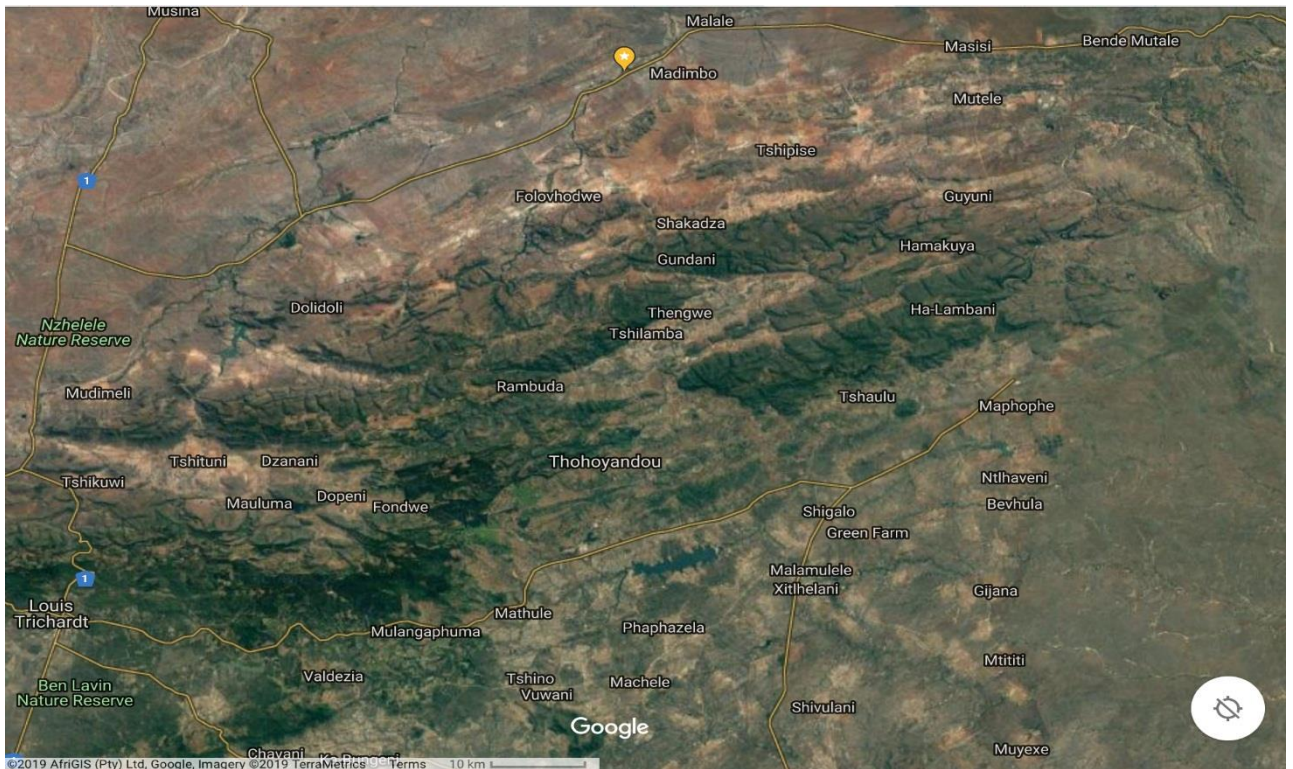


**Source: Univen GIS Resource Centre: School of Environmental Science (2015-02-20)**

Map 2: Satellite View of Nwanedi



## Maps 3 & 4: Nwanedi Farms in the context of Vhembe District and Limpopo Province



Source: AfriGIS (Pty) Ltd, Google Maps



## Abstract

The demise of apartheid in 1994 raised the hopes of many South Africans who, for a long time, had been dreaming of a non-racial and non-sexist South Africa in which everybody is guaranteed equal opportunities. This was further emphasised by Sections 9 and 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), which advocate equality before the law and freedom from discrimination, together with the right to human dignity respectively. Although the Constitution seems to have managed to protect every individual South African, one wonders whether what is enshrined in the Constitution is practical at grassroots level too. The untold stories of women farmers' experiences provide an opportunity for us to scrutinise the feelings of those previously marginalised groups of people in South Africa, particularly, women in the context of South Africa's new political dispensation and attendant Constitution. The focus is on women who owned farms in the Nwanedi area, with an aim of giving them a platform to play a meaningful role in the making of their own history. Women have been historically disadvantaged because of patriarchy. Historical accounts are loaded with stories that glorify patriarchy, thereby rendering women passive participants in the making of their history. Matters pertaining to land tenure rights were designed in such a way that women, under both Roman-Dutch Law and Customary Law, could not own land. By employing feminist theories that indict patriarchy for being responsible for women's oppression and by accepting that women's agency had been overlooked but not diminished, people will respect women's dignity and defend their capacity to emancipate themselves. To make this possible, a qualitative research method was employed to collect data for the study. The study gave this group of women farmers an opportunity to express their views about how they felt as women farmers, and of the challenges and obstacles impeding their way to becoming successful commercial farmers. Eventually, suggestions are made relating to how policy, research and developmental interventions can be made, to match the developmental needs of women farmers in the Nwanedi area, with the aim of enhancing their economic welfare.

**Key words:** Constitution, dignity, discrimination, equality, freedom, land tenure, patriarchy

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

The plight of women in the countryside makes one wonder whether the issue of feminism had impacted much on these groups of women. This is not to say that women in rural areas did not play any role when it comes to resistance by African women. Women in rural areas did indeed play a role in resisting oppression by the powers that be in South Africa, but the driving force behind this was not their feminist consciousness but the threat to their livelihoods as a result of some of the restrictions imposed on them by the government policies of the time. A good example was the Beer Hall Boycotts which took place in places such as Cato Manor, in Kwazulu-Natal on 17 June 1959. Here African Women protested liquor legislation, in the Native Beer Act of 1908, which restricted African women from brewing traditional Beer. Women demonstrators attacked African men found in Beer Halls and warned them against supporting municipal beer halls. In all these boycotts, the term feminism was not mentioned, as the women were simply influenced by defense of their livelihoods which revolved around the selling of traditional beer.<sup>1</sup> Yet, feminism seems to have been focused specifically on women in the urban areas. This is because feminists are mostly educated urban people, often living in the cities and many of them have little experience of rural life. This leads to consideration of the issue of 'diversity of experience'<sup>2</sup> as emphasized by Gouws, et al. Diversity of experience means the acknowledgement of different experiences which might contribute to a significant theoretical shift, not only in feminism, but in the social sciences in general.<sup>3</sup> The question, "Can white women represent black women?", which was posed during the 'Women and Gender in Southern Africa' conference in January 1991, helped in emphasizing the issue of diversity of experience. This led to a feminist debate which

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<sup>1</sup> Durban, Amandla (2016-11-10). "The Durban System and the Native Beer Act/ Amandla!" (<http://amandladurban.org.za/2016/11/10/the-durban-system-and-the-native-beer-act/>).Amandladurban.org.za. (Retrieved on 2017-09-24)

<sup>2</sup> A. Gouws, S. Hassim & E. Matynia. 1999. 'Women and Democracy', Cape Town, 1999, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

maintained that knowledge production is situated in social positioning and location.<sup>4</sup> The same applies to women feminists in urban areas. Obviously, they cannot represent rural women; hence, the imperative to give rural women an opportunity to reconstruct their own pasts.

In trying to justify her choice of the Vhembe District in the Limpopo Province as her area of research, Neeta argues, “to truly understand the human condition, there is the need to analyze and interpret it within the relevant social, cultural, political and historical milieu.”<sup>5</sup> Vilakazi on the other hand, made a call during the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Conference (UNESCO) in Pretoria in 2004, that we should all go back to the countryside<sup>6</sup>. This is because most of the women in the countryside, be it on the farms or rural villages, share the same social, political and economic experiences. For example, the majority have low levels of education, are prone to being subjected to violence, and do not have access to land. The violence that many women are prone to is usually associated with patriarchy, as many authors would attest. According to Schutte, “South Africa has been listed as the fourth most dangerous country to live [in] as a woman.”<sup>7</sup> She puts the blame squarely on patriarchy, which, according to her, “plays out in various degrees of cruelty and oppression in different countries.”<sup>8</sup> Statistics in 2013 show that in South Africa, three women are killed by their partners every day, and every 17 seconds, a woman is raped, yet only one out of nine women reports the case. With all these statistics, only 14 percent of perpetrators are convicted for the crimes committed.<sup>9</sup>

## 1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The contribution of patriarchy to women’s oppression manifests itself in various ways. In many historical accounts we hear stories glorifying patriarchy; for example, accounts of

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> N. Neeta. 2010. ‘Socio-cultural Argument Writing in English from South Africa: A Case Study of Students’ Writing from the Vhembe District, Limpopo Province’, VDM Publishers, Germany.

<sup>6</sup> The Star, 21 May 2012.

<sup>7</sup> The Star, 26 February 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

the bravery of Tshilwavhusiku Ramabulana, the relocation of the Ravele's from the Levubu area to Mauluma, the migrant labour system of the Venda men, the activities of the white male farmers on different farms, and presently, land claims and land restitution. This is further emphasized by Ogbomo and Ogbomo, who lament that the pre-colonial historical status of African women has been poorly researched,<sup>10</sup> even though there are some strides towards greater emphasis by historians towards exposing the plight of women in rural South Africa since Ogbomo and Ogbomo's assertion. Even when their writings have focused on women, researchers' emphases have been on outstanding women, founders of settlements, warrior queens and queen mothers, at the expense of normal women civilians. All these accounts fall short of acknowledging the contribution made by women throughout, even though they were the most seriously affected during these periods. Women, invisible as they were, were greatly affected, and the ones who suffered the most.

During the civil wars in places like Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan, for example, women were killed, maimed, raped and had to endure all the hardships, such as running away with children on their backs; yet, they are not acknowledged as heroines. As recent as 2014, the media reported that African Union peacekeepers in Somalia had raped women seeking medicine at their bases, including a 12-year-old, and paid teenage girls for sex, according to the Human Rights Watch (HRW).<sup>11</sup>

Another dimension brought about by the migrant labour system is that the Nwanedi area in the Limpopo Province of South Africa was left with few men to work on the farms because of the meager salaries they provided compared to what they received from other industries elsewhere, such as mines. Most of the men preferred to work in the mines, rather than be subjected to the kind of exploitation farm workers had to endure on farms, yet there was a high demand for farm labourers on the surrounding farms. This experience has continued in the Nwanedi area even after 1994, and very little has

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<sup>10</sup> O.W. Ogbomo and Q.O. Ogbomo, 1993. 'Women and Society in Pre-Colonial Iyede', *Anthropos*, Bd. H. 4/6, PP431-441.

<sup>11</sup> 'The Star', 09 September 2014.

happened to change the status quo. Farm owners regard the utilization of women as the solution to labour shortage. As a result, the majority of farm labourers in the area are women.

The new dispensation in South Africa has brought a fresh dimension to the outlook of the Nwanedi farms. During the apartheid period, and the reign of the National Party government, all the farms in the Nwanedi area belonged to whites. However, the new dispensation ushered in land claims from the people who were evicted from the area during the 1950s and 1960s, to give way to white farmers to settle. The issue of land claims, which gained momentum in 1998, unsettled white farmers. Many decided to leave the area and their farms became available to aspiring Black groups of farmers. Amongst them were a group of women farmers who form the backbone of this research.

The contestation that came about as a result of land claims amongst the three local chiefs in the area seemed to have worked in favour of those aspiring women farmers. Each chief wanted to secure a portion of land for himself, as one of the potential claimants. The best way to exert one's authority was to put people who would be loyal to the chief, and the best way to do that was to start allocating farms to those who would pay allegiance to them. Due to the severe shortage of men, the three chiefs found that the only people who could best substitute men was this group of aspiring women farmers. They were well qualified, given their experiences of working in previously white-owned farms and as subsistence farmers in their husbands' fields, while their husbands were working in the mines and cities. By giving this group of women lands to cultivate, the chiefs helped in empowering the women too.

### **1.3. RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Women are confronted with many challenges that they do not share, as they do not have a platform or an opportunity to do so, as a result of cultural expectations of them.

## **1.4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

### **1.4.1. Aim**

The study aims at giving women farmers a platform to tell their stories, thereby contributing in the making of their own history.

### **1.4.2. Objectives**

The objectives of the study are to:

- give an overview of the rural women's experiences in general,
- highlight the socio-cultural factors that mitigate against women farmers' advancement in the Nwanedi farms,
- investigate economic activities that contribute towards perpetuating women farmers' subordination in the Nwanedi area, and
- establish the political activities in the Nwanedi farms that contribute towards re-enforcing women's subordinate status.

## **1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

For one to gain insight into the experiences of rural women farmers in the Nwanedi area of the Vhembe District in the Limpopo Province of South Africa, the following research questions are addressed:

- What experiences do rural women face in general?
- Which socio-cultural activities mitigate against women farmers' advancement in the Nwanedi area?
- What are the economic activities that contribute towards perpetuating women farmers' subordination in the Nwanedi area?
- What are the political activities in the Nwanedi farms that contribute to re-enforcing women's subordinate status?

## 1.6. ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions are made:

- Women farmers based in rural farms of Nwanedi are struggling to find both a voice and a platform to highlight their plight, which negatively contributes towards reconstructing their own past.
- Women's historical experiences often lead to varied voices.

## 1.7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Neuman defines a theory as, “a type of systematic story telling that explains how some aspect of the social world works and why”.<sup>12</sup> He further argues that “theories are not static”<sup>13</sup>, as older ones are constantly modified, and new ones developed. It is through theory that people can sharpen their thinking about what they are doing in a study. When a study has a theory which is unclear, incomplete, or poorly formulated, it is obviously going to produce a weak study.<sup>14</sup> Welman, Kruger and Mitchel define theory as, “a statement or collection of statements that specify the relationships between variables, with a view to explaining phenomena such as human behavior (for example, producing machines, organizing an event, formulating a policy) in some or other population (universum).”<sup>15</sup> It is a system which orders concepts in a way that produces understanding or insights by incorporating more than one concept and links them together.<sup>16</sup>

Scholarly work on women's history and feminist history has played an important role in influencing the work. For example, the Feminist theory discourages people who look down upon the role of women. Crossman argues, “it is most concerned with giving a voice

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<sup>12</sup> W.L. Neuman, 2014. ‘Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches’, Seventh Edition, United States of America, 57.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>15</sup> C. Welman, F. Kruger & B. Mitchel. 2005. ‘Research Methodology’, Third Edition, Cape Town, 21.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

to women and highlighting the various ways women have contributed to society.”<sup>17</sup> Although there are four main types of feminist theories that attempt to explain the societal differences between men and women, this research focused mostly on theories of gender oppression. The theories argue, “not only are women different from or unequal to men, but that they are actively oppressed, subordinated, and even abused by men.”<sup>18</sup> This is where we find radical feminists, who argue that being a woman is a positive thing, but in patriarchal societies where women are oppressed, this was not acknowledged. To them, physical violence was the base of patriarchy, and “patriarchy can be defeated if women recognize their own value and strength, establish a sisterhood of trust with other women, confront oppression critically, and form female separatist networks in the private and public spheres.”<sup>19</sup> Even though the works of female historians were recognized from the mid-1970s, when they started equating women’s silence with powerlessness<sup>20</sup>, the works of theorists such as Fredrick Engels and Randall Collins could not be ignored with regards to the influence they had on the new crop of scholars. The contribution made by the two were also acknowledged by people such as Burton who lauded Marxism as having played an enormous contribution in the origins of feminist theory, singling out the works of Fredrick Engels as having had greater influence in this regard.<sup>21</sup>

Fredrick Engels’ theory served as one of the first crop of theories that brought the issue of family and women’s oppression to the fore and played an important role in influencing the 1970s scholarly work on women’s and feminists’ histories. His theory was evolutionary and materialistic. To him, primitive, non-capitalistic hunting and gathering societies were sexually egalitarian. Their role was that of upholding the doctrine of the equality of mankind. The development of the societies into capitalistic institutions of private property led to the concentration of power, “in the hands of a minority of men who then used their

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<sup>17</sup> A. Crossman. ‘Feminist Theory’, <http://sociology.about.com/od/Sociological-Theory/a/Feminist-Theory.htm>. (Accessed on 14 April 2015).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> L. White. 2000. ‘Speaking with Vampires: Rumour and History in Colonial Africa’, London, 74.

<sup>21</sup> Feminist Theory- Theoretical Models for Teaching and Research; <https://opentext.wsu.edu/theoreticalmodelsforteachingandresearch/chapter/feminist-theory/>. (Accessed on 23 May 2021)



power to subordinate women and non-property-owning men (slaves and workers) and to create political institutions designed to maintain their power (the state)".<sup>22</sup> The only means to rid women from this kind of oppression was through socialism.<sup>23</sup>

Engels was different from other theorists because he, "did not believe that women were naturally inferior to or subordinate to men. Nor did he believe that the subjugation of women characterised all societies."<sup>24</sup> Even though some theorists later discovered some inaccuracies in Engels' theory, the fact that he brought the discussion to the fore made him one of the major contributors in dealing with the women's plight.

Randal Collins' 'Conflict Theory of Sexual Stratification' puts greater emphasis on sexual aggression as well as the market relationships, as emphasized by Engels. To him, size counts significantly. He argued that males were more successful at sexual aggression than females, not because they have stronger drives than females, but because they are generally bigger and stronger than females, who are made more vulnerable by childbearing and childcare.<sup>25</sup> It was contributions by theorists like these that gave feminist theorists a stepping stone when formulating their theories, as highlighted in the discussion below.

Feminist theorists blame patriarchal societies' constraints as having an influence on women's oppression. These Feminist theorists argue that by recognizing women's agency they would have realized their mission of rectifying this. Women's subordination, according to the feminist theorists, hinders their ability to choose and act freely. It is further argued that feminist theorists must first accept that women's agency had been overlooked but not diminished, if they were to respect women's dignity and defend their capacity to emancipate themselves.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> C.G. O'Kelly. 1980. 'Women and Men in Society', New York, 41.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 50.

<sup>26</sup> D.T. Meyers. 2002. 'Gender in the Mirror: Cultural Imagery and Women's Agency', New York, 4.

Women also experienced a problem of internal oppression, which Bartky describes as, “to incorporate inferiorising material into the structure of the self – to see oneself as objectified, to value and desire what befits a subordinated individual, and to feel competent and empowered by skills that reinforce one’s subordination.”<sup>27</sup> This was what women needed to always realize and understand, if they were to fight their subordination. Those who favoured Voice theory, wanted women to be given a platform to discover, interpret and live according to their own ways.<sup>28</sup> In her attack on silence, Meyer argues that silence disables agency because it forces women to live according to the way people interpret their actions, rather than the way they see it fit.<sup>29</sup>

Feminists do not agree on the best way to achieve their objectives. This led Warren Hedges to divide gender theories into four categories; namely, liberal feminism, cultural feminism, separatism and queer theory.<sup>30</sup> Liberal feminists wanted equal rights for women through political and civil channels. Cultural feminists sought to recover lost female voices from the past (something that I strove to achieve in this research). Separatist feminists wanted to establish female-only spaces and a forum in which women could determine their own values and beliefs. Queer theory, on the other hand, explored the marginalized sexual identities, for example, homosexuality.<sup>31</sup> All these have shown how diverse feminists are.

There are feminists who are trying to identify the similarities between women from diverse cultures, by arguing that women share the same experiences. Economic oppression, commercial exploitation and legal discrimination are classified as external situations in which women find themselves. The feeling of inadequacy and a sense of narrow horizons are classified as internal responses.<sup>32</sup> This again fails to eliminate the controversy surrounding the issue of women identity. Black women and white middle-class feminists

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>30</sup> E. Ellen and D. Felluga, ‘General Introduction to Theories of Gender and Sex’, (<http://www.cla.purdue.edu>). (Accessed on 03 February 2010).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> R. Delmar. 1986. ‘What is Feminism Now?’, New York, 8.

do not agree over the universalization of women's experience of gender.<sup>33</sup> Beckman and D'Amico argue that, "many Third World women, ranging from conservatives to leftists, have rejected Western feminism by associating it with Western cultural decadence."<sup>34</sup> This shows how diverse women's experiences are, and the role that geographical locations play in shaping those experiences.

Engels' theory helped in conscientising feminists that women's oppression was not started by primitive societies, but a recent phenomenon introduced by the capitalists. His assertion that socialism was the way to go seemed rather far-fetched, because socialist theories seemed to have failed dismally. Engels can still be credited as one of the first crop of authors to tackle the issue of women's oppression efficiently.

Collins' theory emphasized the physical nature of men compared to women, as playing an important role in giving men an edge over women. Feminist theorists, on the other hand, put more emphasis on patriarchy as playing an important role in influencing women's oppression. The feminist theorists according to the researcher, seemed to be pitting women against men, which might lead to an understanding that only women can liberate themselves against gender oppression, yet we have men who are gender activists. Therefore, the researcher would prefer an all-inclusive approach which does not discriminate according to gender. This approach will conscientise everyone whether man or woman in addressing the question of gender.

## **1.8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Babbie and Mouton, define research methodology as, "the methods, techniques, and procedures that are employed in the process of implementing the research design or research plan, as well as underlying principles and assumptions that underlie their use."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> D.T. Meyers, 'Gender in the Mirror', 5.

<sup>34</sup> P.R. Beckman and F. D'Amico. 1994. 'Women, Gender and World Politics: Perspectives, Policies, and Prospects', London, 93.

<sup>35</sup> E. Babbie and J. Mouton. 2010. 'The Practice of Social Research', South Africa, 647.

It is the methodology applied and all the instruments used for data collection and data analysis.

### 1.8.1. METHODOLOGY

For one to understand the methodology better, it is imperative that one understands first the definition of a method. According to Booth, a method is, “a recognized and appropriate way of pursuing knowledge that can illuminate the object of enquiry through research practices.”<sup>36</sup> Booth further argues that the methodology, “comprises the grounds on which the method is (or methods are) understood, the epistemological, discursive commitments and the ethical considerations that underpin the method and are demanded by scientific discipline.”<sup>37</sup>

Neuman defines methods as, “the collection of specific techniques we use in a study to select cases, measure and observe social life, gather and refine data, analyse data, and report on the results.”<sup>38</sup> To him methodology means, “understanding the entire research process-including its socio-organizational context, philosophical assumptions, ethical principles, and the political impact of new knowledge from the research enterprise.”<sup>39</sup> The fact that each and every author feels compelled to give a definition of both method and methodology at the same time shows the interconnectedness of the two terms.

O’Leary defines methodology as “an overarching, macro-level framework that offers principles of reasoning associated with particular paradigmatic assumptions that legitimate various schools of research.”<sup>40</sup> Methodologies provide both the strategies and grounding for the conduct of study, for example, scientific method, ethnography, and action research.<sup>41</sup> Methods on the other hand are defined as “the actual micro-level techniques used to collect and analyse data.”<sup>42</sup> Methods of data collection involve

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<sup>36</sup> S. Booth. 2005. ‘Methods, Research, Science, and Methodology: Doing, Acting, Understanding, and Committing.’ *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 49 (3), 325-328.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> L. Neuman. 2014. ‘Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches’, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, United Kingdom, 2.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Z, O’ Leary. 2014. ‘The Essential Guide’, 10.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

interviewing, surveying, observation, and unobtrusive methods, while methods of analysis comprise quantitative strategies (that is statistics) and qualitative strategies (i.e. thematic exploration).<sup>43</sup> Both the quantitative and the qualitative are regarded as the two scientific methods in research.

Quantitative research, according to Schwandt, refers to, “a particular research design (experimental, survey or statistical) that relies mostly on the use of quantitative data, that is, data expressed in quantity or amount (numbers, graphs or formulas.”<sup>44</sup> He further argues that qualitative research is used by researchers who want to establish meaning out of human action.<sup>45</sup> Creswell, on the other hand, maintains that quantitative research is, “often characterized as an objective positivist search for singular truths that relies on hypotheses, variables, and statistics, is generally large in scale, but without much depth, whereas qualitative research, on the other hand, rejects positivist rules and works at accepting multiple realities through the study of a small number of in-depth cases.”<sup>46</sup>

### 1.8.2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Kumar defines research design as, “a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems. The plan is the complete scheme or programme of the research.”<sup>47</sup> Thyer, on the other hand, maintains that a research design is a detailed plan for how a research study is to be completed,<sup>48</sup> This includes, amongst others, “collecting data so to be used as basis for testing hypotheses, and analysing the results.”<sup>49</sup> Babbie and Mouton define research design as “a plan or structured framework of how you intend conducting the research process in order to solve the research problem.”<sup>50</sup> They further argue that many researchers struggle

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> T.A. Schwandt. 2001. ‘Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry’, Third Edition, Thousand Oaks.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> J.W. Creswell. 2013. ‘Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches’, London.

<sup>47</sup> R. Kumar. 2011. ‘Research Methodology: A Step-by-step Guide for Beginners’, Third Edition, London, 94.

<sup>48</sup> B.A. Thyer, 1993. “Single-systems Research Design”, in R.M. Grinnell (eds), ‘Social Work Research Evaluation’, Fourth Edition, Itasca, 94-117.

<sup>49</sup> Babbie & Mouton. “The Practice of Social Research”, 647.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

to differentiate between research design and research methodology, though they are two different dimensions of research.<sup>51</sup> The research design focuses on the end product; elucidating on what kind of study is being planned and what kind of results are aimed at. Research methodology, on the other hand, focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used.<sup>52</sup>

### **1.8.2.1. CLASSIFICATION OF RESEARCH DESIGNS**

Research designs are classified into primary and secondary empirical data. Primary data are those collected by the researchers themselves, whereas, secondary data had already existed when the research was conducted.<sup>53</sup> Primary data designs are studies in which the researchers gather new data through interviews or observation or any other method.<sup>54</sup> Secondary data studies are those studies in which researchers use data that had already been there, such as documents, texts or census data produced previously by others. The researcher has some degree of control over primary data collection, whereas the researcher has no control over the production of secondary data, as they were produced by someone else.<sup>55</sup>

### **1.8.2.2. THE FUNCTIONS OF A RESEARCH DESIGN**

There are two main functions of a research design, namely:

- (a) To conceptualise an operational plan to undertake the various procedures and tasks required to complete one's study; and,
- (b) To ensure that these procedures are adequate to obtain valid, objective and accurate answers to the research questions.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 76.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 76.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. 76.

<sup>56</sup> F.N. Kirlinger. 1986. 'Foundations of Behavioural Research', Third Edition, New York, 280.

The first should detail to everyone the procedures the researcher plans to use and the tasks they will perform to obtain answers to their research questions. This involves specifying everything clearly to enable the reader to understand the kind of procedures to follow and how to follow them.<sup>57</sup> The research study should provide detailed information about the following aspects of the study: who will constitute the study population? How will the study population be identified? Will a sample or the whole population be selected? If a sample is selected, how will it be contacted? How will consent be sought? What method of data collection will be used and why? In case of interviews, where will they be conducted? How will ethical issues be taken care of?<sup>58</sup>

### **1.8.2.3. TYPES OF STUDY DESIGNS**

There are two types of study designs, namely:

- (a) Quantitative study design; and
- (b) Qualitative study design

There are many more designs in quantitative research than in qualitative research, but for the sake of this study, more emphasis will be on qualitative study design.

### **1.8.2.4. STUDY DESIGNS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Some commonly used designs in qualitative research are listed below.

#### **1.8.2.4.1. Case Study**

Case study research, according to Babbie and Mouton, is “an intensive investigation of a single unit. This unit can vary: from individual people, families, communities, social

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<sup>57</sup> Babbie, et al, ‘The Practice’, 95.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 95.

groups, organizations and institutions, events and countries.”<sup>59</sup> A case study could be conducted on an individual, a group, a community, an instance, an episode, an event, a sub-group of a population, a town or a city. To qualify as a case study, it is important to treat the total study population as one entity. The case one selects becomes the bases of a thorough, holistic and in-depth exploration of the aspect(s) that one wants to investigate. Gilbert hails this as, “an approach in which a particular instance or a few carefully selected cases are studied intensively.”<sup>60</sup> Grinnell, on the other hand, argues that, “a case study is characterised by a very flexible and open-ended technique of data collection and analysis.”<sup>61</sup> Here, a single case can provide insight into the events and situations prevalent in a group from where the case has been drawn. It is useful when exploring an area where little is known or where one wants to have a holistic understanding of the situation, episode, site, group or community. The area of Nwanedi and the activities of women farmers in the area have not been given full attention by many researchers, so the research conducted met the requirements of a case study. Here, the focus was on the economic, social and political status of women who own farms in the Nwanedi area.

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell believe the unit of analysis in a case study does not necessarily have to be human; for example, an individual, family, or community, but may also involve personal documents such as, diaries or letters, and records like indexes, ratios, and calculation formulae. The present case study involves human beings, as it focuses on the activities of women farmers. When a case study investigates a group or institution, field work is used, conducting the investigation on the spot under the natural circumstances of the specific case.<sup>62</sup>

When studying an episode or an instance, one attempts to gather information from all available sources, to understand it in its entirety. If the focus of the study is a group or community, one should spend more time building a trustworthy rapport with members of a group before collecting any information from them. In the present study, I visited the

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 640.

<sup>60</sup> N. Gilbert (Eds). 2008. ‘Researching Social Life’, Third Edition, London, 36.

<sup>61</sup> R. Grinnell (Eds). 1981. ‘Social Work Research and Evaluation’, Itasca, 302.

<sup>62</sup> C. Welman, F. Kruger and B. Mitchell. 2005. ‘Research Methodology’, Third Edition, Cape Town, 193.



group of women farmers while they were attending a workshop. I was introduced to them the by the Assistant Director or Area Supervisor of Nwanedi Agricultural Service Centre, Mr Mushavhanamadi. The Assistant Director, in turn gave me an opportunity to introduce myself to the group of women farmers who were attending the workshop. This gave me an opportunity to identify myself and what I wanted from them. Amongst those attending the workshop were some women who knew me and that helped because they were able to tell their colleagues who I was. The positive response I received from these women gave me enough incentive to make appointments to visit them in their farms for interviews. Even though this could be achieved by using a single method, it is wise to use a variety of methods of data collection in a case study, namely in-depth interviewing, obtaining information from secondary records, gathering data through observations, collecting information through focus groups as well as group interviews.<sup>63</sup> In the present research, enough time was spent on consulting the stakeholders, which were women farmers found in the Nwanedi farms and different Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating in the area of Nwanedi. Working hand-in-hand with different Agricultural Managers found in the area, women farm owners were conscientised about why I was there and what information I was looking for and for what purpose.

#### **1.8.2.4.2. Oral History**

Kumar defines oral history as, “a process of obtaining, recording, presenting and interpreting historical or current information, based upon personal experiences and opinions of some members of a study group or unit.”<sup>64</sup> These could be based upon eye-witness evidence or information passed on from other sources such as older people, ancestors, folklore, stories and so on.<sup>65</sup> Richie, on the other hand maintains that oral history, “collects memories and personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews.”<sup>66</sup> Burns further emphasises that the memories being spoken about,

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<sup>63</sup> Welman, et. al. ‘Research Methodology’, 193.

<sup>64</sup> Kumar. ‘Research Methodology’, 127.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> D.A. Ritchie. 2003. ‘Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide’ Oxford, 19.

“are usually first person narratives that the researcher collects using extensive interviewing of a single individual.”<sup>67</sup> In the present research the bulk of the information was collected through interviews, but not all interviews were conducted with individuals, as suggested by Burns. In some instances, interviews were conducted with groups of people who felt comfortable in sharing their ideas not as individuals but as a group.

In terms of a design, one must first decide the types of account, experiences, perceptions or historical event one wants to find out about, then identify the individuals or sources that can best provide the needed information, and subsequently collect information from them to be analysed and interpreted.

#### **1.8.2.4.3. Focus Groups or Group Interviews**

Kumar defines a focus group as, “a form of strategy in qualitative research in which attitudes, opinions or perceptions towards an issue, product, service or programme are explored through a free and open discussion between members of a group and the researcher.”<sup>68</sup> Together with group interviews, focus groups are, “facilitated group discussions in which a researcher raises issues or asks questions that stimulate discussion among members of a group.”<sup>69</sup>

As a design, the researcher selects a group of people that are best equipped to discuss what they want to explore. The group could comprise individuals drawn from a group of highly trained professionals or average residents of a community depending upon the objectives of the focus group. The group should neither be too small or too large as this can impede upon the extent and quality of the discussion. The issues of the discussion must be identified carefully, bearing in mind that some additional relevant ones might emerge. The researcher must also decide, in consultation with the group, the process of recording the discussion. This may include time-fixing. The recordings of the discussion become the basis of analysis for findings and conclusions. The difference between group

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<sup>67</sup> R.B. Burns. 1977. ‘Introduction to Research Methods’, Second Edition, Melbourne, 368.

<sup>68</sup> Kumar. ‘Research Methodology’, 128.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

interviews and focus groups is that, “the issues discussed in focus groups are more specific and focused than in group interviews and they are largely determined by the researcher. In a group interview you let the group members discuss whatever they want. However, your role as a researcher is to bring them back to the issues of interest as identified by the group.”<sup>70</sup>

The advantage of this design is that it is less expensive and needs far less time to complete, when compared with other designs. Furthermore, the information can be detailed and rich and can be used to explore a vast variety of issues. The disadvantage of this design is that if the discussion is not carefully directed, it may reflect the opinion of those who tend to dominate a group. It is useful for exploring the diversity in opinions on different issues but will help if one wants to find out the extent or magnitude of this diversity.<sup>71</sup>

#### **1.8.2.4.4. Participant Observation**

Participant observation is another way of gathering information about a social interaction or phenomenon in qualitative studies by developing a close interaction with members of a group or ‘living’ in a situation which is being studied. In qualitative research, an observation is always recorded in descriptive format.<sup>72</sup> In addition to the observation itself, the information can also be collected through other methods such as informal interviewing, in-depth interviewing, group discussions, previous documents, oral histories. The use of multiple methods enhances the richness of the information collected by participant observation.<sup>73</sup>

In its design, a researcher gets involved in the activities of the group, creates a rapport with the group members and then, having sought their consent, keenly observes the situation, interaction, site or phenomenon. They make detailed notes of what they observe

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Kumar. ‘Research Methodology’, 128.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 129.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

in a format that best suits them as well as the situation. One can also collect information using other methods of data collection, if needs be. One can analyse records of one's observations and data collected by other means to draw inferences and conclusions.<sup>74</sup> The advantage is that, "as you spend sufficient time with the group or in the situation, you gain much deeper, richer and more accurate information, but the main disadvantage is that, if you are not very careful, you can introduce your own bias."<sup>75</sup>

The whole discussion above was designed to indicate that the study used the qualitative research design. Welman, et al, define qualitative research as, "an umbrella phrase covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning of naturally occurring phenomenon in the social world."<sup>76</sup> It is fundamentally a descriptive form of social research. Denzin, on the other hand, defines qualitative research as a field of inquiry. It crosscuts disciplines, fields, and subject matter.<sup>77</sup> Babbie, et al, maintain that qualitative researchers attempt always to study human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves with an aim of defining and understanding rather than explaining human behaviour.<sup>78</sup> They further argue that the term is used to refer to a collection of methods and techniques which share a certain set of principles or logic.<sup>79</sup> The qualitative approach was chosen because it is the best for understanding the complexities of the social, political and economic challenges associated with experiences of women farmers found in the Nwanedi area. Group interviews were also utilised as a method of data collection.

I employed a participant observation approach. Welman, et al, argue that, "participant observation requires the researcher, for an extensive period, to take part in, and report on, the daily experiences of the members of a group, community or organisation, or the people involved in a process or event (or whatever is being studied). The participant observer should become a member of the inner circle of the group or event being

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Kumar. 'Research Methodology', 129.

<sup>76</sup> Welman, et al. 2005. 'Research Methodology', 188.

<sup>77</sup> N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds). 1998. 'Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials', London, 2.

<sup>78</sup> Babbie, et al, 'The Practice', 270.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

studied.”<sup>80</sup> Participant observation was used in conjunction with unstructured interviews, to study this case. I attended participants’ workshops, meetings and awards ceremonies for those who had completed their courses with a company or institution. The first workshop I attended took place at Nwanedi Agricultural Centre, which was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015. It was a workshop for all women farmers in Nwanedi. I was given a platform to introduce myself and my reasons for being there. The reception I received from women farmers was very warm and that helped me in launching my research plans. It was at that workshop where I was able to get some contact numbers of some of the participants in my research. Potential study participants I had visited again helped by providing me with either the contact numbers of those they know or the directions to their farms, thereby giving me an idea of combining participant observation with the snowball approach.

The second event I attended took place at Malale Community Hall on the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015. The event was meant to award those who had successfully completed a course in farming with certificates. The event went well, and I was impressed by the reception I received during the event. The fact that participants were very ecstatic and appreciative made me realise how the little contribution one makes can change and shape the attitude of someone for the better. The last event I attended was another award ceremony which took place in Thohoyandou at the Lutheran Church Hall in Block F on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015. The mood of the participants was, as always, jovial. That helped me greatly, as far as networking was concerned. The service provider, Mr Zakes (not his real name) of Thembani, an NGO whose duty was to provide guarantees for farmers who wanted to access a bank loan, also extended an olive branch to the University of Venda, to assist as much as they can in empowering farmers in the region in general. Although Thembani was the one who provided training for the farmers who were awarded certificates on the day, their duty was not to offer training to farmers but had to do it after being persuaded to do so by the government, according to Zakes. He challenged institutions of higher learning to take the initiative and provide proper training to aspiring emerging farmers like the one their NGO had provided training to. He concluded by saying that his company

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<sup>80</sup> Welman, et al. ‘Research Methodology’,194.

would no longer provide training of a similar nature in future, as that was not their competency.<sup>81</sup> Another person who presented on the same Graduation Ceremony was Luke (not his real name), a representative of an NGO called Technoserve. The NGO provides farmers with technical support. It works with farmers who generate less than five million Rand per annum. It also helped in connecting women farmers with the necessary expertise with the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) at lower interest rate. The NGO further involves itself on matters pertaining to Rural Development and Land Reform.<sup>82</sup> The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) was also represented on the day and its presentation involved the rendering of services, such as the supply of processing machinery to the emerging farmers. Another NGOs present during the event was Lumentech which was based in Centurion, Pretoria, then LEDA which was based in Polokwane. LEDA's aim was to assist in marketing businesses of people with or without capacity. Big businesses could be invited to visit peoples' farms. African Farmers Association of South Africa (AFASA) also made its presentation through Moses (not his real name).<sup>83</sup> Sector Education Development Agency (SEDA) was also represented and rendered its presentation too. Its representative, Grace (not her real name) informed farmers that her company deals with business plans. It draws business plans for aspiring business people. It does not give money but can provide training to people who needed a service of that nature. It also makes trademarks and boards.<sup>84</sup> The last NGO to present was Kadinao, which stated that its aim was to bridge the gap between emerging farmers and commercial farmers. It fights acid while promoting natural feeding and encouraging emerging farmers to graduate into commercial farmers, according to Sam (not his real name).<sup>85</sup> The ceremony was concluded by providing deserving emerging farmers with certificates, followed by lunch.

It was through the availability of eyewitnesses that made it possible for me to collect as much information as I could and used the said information as my primary sources of evidence. This I did by employing snowball sampling, wherein those singled out first were

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<sup>81</sup> Interview with Mr. Zakes(NGO). 25 November 2015.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Mr. Luke of Technoserve (NGO). 25 November 2015.

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Mr. Moses of African Farmers Association of South Africa. 25 November 2015.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Ms. Grace of SEDA (NGO). 25 November 2015.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Mr. Sam of Kadinao (NGO). 25 November 2015.

able to refer me to others who they thought might provide useful information to support the body of knowledge already provided by those interviewed. That was made possible because the researcher had used some elements of field work in the process of collecting data. In the process, field notes were gathered. Welman, et al, describe field notes as detailed notes made by hand, tape recordings, and observations, and are compiled during qualitative interviewing.<sup>86</sup> Another factor that played an important role towards reliance on interviews was that there was little written information about the area under study. The idea was to add as much written information as one can to potentially assist those who might develop some interest in conducting further research in the area.

#### **1.8.2.5. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF ORAL HISTORY IN RELATION TO WRITTEN DOCUMENTS**

According to Perks and Thomson, oral history is, “the interviewing of eye-witness participants in the events of the past for the purposes of historical reconstruction.”<sup>87</sup> Oral history includes within the historical record peoples’ experiences and their perspectives that might have been hidden from history as written by social observers or in official documents, but rarely preserved in personal papers or scraps of autobiographical writing.<sup>88</sup> Raleigh, in her book *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Sciences*,<sup>89</sup> sees oral testimony as, “a research method par excellence because the researcher can question the narrator.”<sup>90</sup> In this way only a living witness can be asked and not a person who had already passed away.<sup>91</sup>

Raleigh further argues that oral testimony specialises on the interaction between the narrator and the interviewer. Their harmonious working together helps in discovering something new to the researcher. It is through interviewing people in their numbers that makes it possible for the researcher to achieve his or her objective of understanding the

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<sup>86</sup> Welman et al. “Research Methodology”, 211.

<sup>87</sup> R. Perks & A. Thomson. 2016. “The Oral History Reader”, Third Edition, New York, xiii.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> V. Raleigh. 1994. “Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists”, United Kingdom, 24.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

multiplicity of experiences in a total life context.<sup>92</sup> This is corroborated by Perks and Thomson who contend that oral historians speak to their sources, and their active human relationship transforms the practice of history in several ways. The narrator not only recalls the past, but also asserts his or her interpretation of that past.<sup>93</sup>

According to Perks and Thomson, oral history gives an opportunity to the previously marginalised groups of people such as the working-class men and women, indigenous people or members of cultural minorities, who then inscribed their personal experiences on the historical record while putting forward their own understanding of history, through oral history interviews.<sup>94</sup> It is through these interviews that aspects of historical experience that tend to be missing from other sources, for instance, domestic work or family life, resonated with the subjective or personal meanings of lived experiences.<sup>95</sup> It is true that in the process of collecting oral information through oral interviews, some things may have been forgotten but others may be recalled or remembered. The remembered version may have discrepancies but will be supplemented by what other sources have brought forth.<sup>96</sup>

Another primary aim of oral history lies on its tendency of empowering individuals or social groups through the process of remembering and interpreting the past, with an emphasis on the value of process as much as historical product.<sup>97</sup> The importance of oral history in the contemporary historical memory is seen on the role it plays on issues such as the truth and reconciliation projects of post-conflict societies, or war crime tribunals, the land claims of indigenous peoples or reviews into the abuse of children in institutional care.<sup>98</sup>

In her attempt to highlight the shortcomings of oral history, Raleigh argues that the weakness of oral history is that it is subjective in nature, which is totally unavoidable.<sup>99</sup> This subjective nature, according to her is “crucial to an understanding of the meanings

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Perks and Thomson. ‘The Oral History’, xiv.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, xiii.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Raleigh. ‘Recording Oral History’, 24

<sup>97</sup> Perks & Thomson. ‘The Oral History’, xiv.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Raleigh. ‘Recording Oral History’, 24.



we give to our past and present.”<sup>100</sup> The in-depth interview helps one to see how one views the world around him or her. It is only when one compares the information gathered from one individual with that of others that one would be able to reach a desired conclusion.<sup>101</sup>

It is not easy to determine which of the two, oral history and written documents are more important than the other. Written documents have been the major source of information when one wants to reconstruct the past, but its setbacks are its reliance on the history of the most influential people such as kings and the clergy, ignoring the plight of the downtrodden. Oral history now focuses on the history of ordinary people and is giving them a voice in the reconstruction of their own histories. This makes both oral and written histories important in the reconstruction of our past. In this instance oral sources were used as people are alive and the subjects of the study’s memories could not be found in archives.

#### **1.8.2.6. THE IMPORTANCE OF MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS**

The first map, drawn by Univen GIS Resource Centre: School of Environmental Sciences, indicates the area where the study focused on. It indicates the sites where the farms are and the names of the villages neighbouring them. Maps two, three and four were drawn by AfriGIS. All maps are found in the preliminary pages of the thesis and not at the back as appendices. They all serve the same purpose of indicating the area under study, the villages and the surrounding vegetation. The purpose of the maps is to give a clear direction of the area under study to anyone who may feel the urge to go and pursue further study in the area. Illustrations on the other hand are meant to emphasise the truthfulness of what the whole study is about. The first illustration, at (Addendum two), shows some kinds of farming that these female farmers engage in and the types of farm produce they are producing. The final illustration, (Addendum three), indicates the names of women farmers who entered the Women Farmer of the Year competition, since its inception in

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Raleigh. ‘Recording Oral History’, 24.

the year 2000 and won. Some of the names of participants in the oral interviews conducted are also in the list. This helps to indicate to the people that what these people said when interviewed was true as the list concurs with their sentiments. In the list, the names of those who participated in oral interviews are shaded in order to make it easier for the reader to recognise them.

### **1.8.2.7. LANGUAGE OF INTERVIEWS**

All interviews were conducted in Tshivenda, as it is the language understood by all participants. The interviews were given to Masters and PhD students who were serving as Research Assistants to help in translating them into English. At first, all interviews were written down in Tshivenda and then translated into English. Transcripts of the Venda translation have been kept but not attached in the document. I also went through the same interviews, comparing what the translators have done with what the interviewees might have been intending to say, and was convinced that the translators have done justice to the body of work. I am aware that some of the important information might have been lost along the way because of translation, for that reason, I decided to attach the interviews as addendum number one, so that those with time can also have an opportunity to go through them.

### **1.8.3. DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

A data collection method, according to Grinnell and Williams, is a procedure specifying techniques to be employed, the measuring instruments to be utilized and activities to be conducted in implementing a research study.<sup>102</sup> In data collection, the focus is primarily on data collection techniques. Data collection was grouped into two categories, which were, quantitative and qualitative, but for the sake of this study only qualitative type of data would be scrutinized. Qualitative data are, “data represented through words,

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<sup>102</sup> R.M. Grinnell and M. Williams. 1990. ‘Research in Social Science: A Primer’, Itasca, 44.

pictures, symbols, videos or icons.”<sup>103</sup> It collects data in the form of words or pictures as opposed to quantitative which relied on numbers.<sup>104</sup> Qualitative data came in different forms: photos, maps, open-ended interviews, observations, documents, and so forth. This data was simplified into two major categories: field research (including ethnography, participant observation, in-depth interviewing) and historical-comparative research. Field research is, “a qualitative research in which the researcher directly observes, and records notes on people in a natural setting for an extended period.”<sup>105</sup> Field researchers carefully observe and interact in the field setting for a few months to several years in order to know personally the people being studied through informal interviews. Notes would be taken every day and ideas refined daily.<sup>106</sup> After careful observation, I used some elements of field work in the process of collecting data, especially, interviews. I spent some time with the people under observation. Even though the amount of time the researcher spent with these people amounted to just several months, the researcher had enough time to observe their behaviour in totality and then do justice to their course.

The interviews were unstructured (to draw out rich and informative conversation) and informal (to allow the interviewee to gain trust and respond with openness). Group interviews as well as individual interviews were conducted. Women were interviewed and their conversations recorded. The focus was on life experiences of rural black South African women farmers with a variety of analytical focal points. The adoption of pragmatic and eclectic approach helped in giving the voices of ordinary women a special place in history. I did not follow a specific procedure in obtaining life stories of the women, everything depended on the information obtained, then ground rules were constructed.

Interviews were conducted in vernacular, Tshivenda, without the presence of a translator or other intervening party. This was because most of the interviewees were from rural areas, with little education, and were unfamiliar with the English language. Many interviewees were Tshivenda-speakers and I used my fluency in Tshivenda to obtain

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<sup>103</sup> O’Leary. ‘The Essential Guide’, 354.

<sup>104</sup> W.L. Neuman. 2013. ‘Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches’, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, USA, 46

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

valuable information from the interviewees and then transcribed the tapes and translated them into English.

Although I am a university-trained historian, the respondents treated me like a child who wanted to know stories of their experiences as women farmers and that made the whole exercise very interesting. This might have resulted from the fact that the majority of the women interviewed were old enough to be my mother, or since they have, possibly, never come across someone neutral prepared to listen to them as I did. It was something great to them when they found that finally there was someone unbiased prepared to listen to them. Eventually, I could get true life stories of the sixteen women farmers from Nwanedi area which laid the foundation for this study. A remarkably coherent collection of stories with a similarity of context enabled this cohort of women to be examined using historical tools. These women's stories reflected different types of life experiences as ordinary human beings before becoming women farmers. It became my duty to sift the relevant pieces of information from the transcripts. This was not a thumbs-down to the informants, as they also provided valid, important, and useful information that one could not find anywhere else. However, it is the responsibility of the researcher to sift useful information from the bulk of sources at disposal.

The interviews revealed information about those women farmers and their thinking capacities. The researcher's questions as well as the women's answers were included, as were lengthy extracts in which fluidity of their interaction was revealed. The interviewees were informed that their stories would be recorded, translated and made fully available to scholars. The women who agreed to be interviewed did so knowing well what this study's intention was and saw no reason to hide their identities even though their reasons to partake varied. Some agreed because they felt they had an interesting and important story to tell. Some saw it as an opportunity for them as women to claim their place in history, and their significance as historical actors. Some saw it as an opportunity to potentially better some aspects of their lives, especially those who were struggling as women farmers. All these and other aspects that one cannot easily detect

helped in encouraging these women farmers to partake in this research, and as a researcher I am very grateful for their goodwill and confidence in me as a person.

People representing different women organizations and non-governmental organizations were also interviewed. Efforts were made to visit rural communities in the Mutale and Musina Local Municipalities. The duration of the interviews depended on the amount of time available to the interviewee.

Efforts were made to make sure that interviews remained neutral in order to avoid interviewees telling stories they thought the interviewer wanted to hear. As the interviewer, I tried to avoid asking leading questions.

In my quest to find suitable secondary sources, I went through many books written about the experiences of women in rural areas, ranging from those that portrayed them as inferior due to patriarchy, colonialism, apartheid legislations and customary law to those that talked positively about women's achievements thus far. I also read several newspapers, extracting information relevant to women's activities in rural areas. There were some articles written by other scholars with vested interest on rural women's activities that I also used. Archival materials were gathered at the National Archive in Pretoria and Makwarela Archive found in the Vhembe district. Libraries such as The University of Venda Library, the University of Limpopo Library, Makwarela Community Library and Makhado Community Library were also utilized in order to gather as much information.

Historical-comparative research, on the other hand, is, "qualitative research in which the researcher examines data on events and conditions in historical past and/ or different societies."<sup>107</sup> This research method could be exploratory or descriptive. It is seen as, "a powerful tool for addressing many of the central issues in social theory."<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Neuman, et al., "Social Research Methods", 51.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

Sampling was utilized. However, the focus was on non-probability sampling, as it was the most relevant for the study. Although non-probability sampling has many types, the most relevant to this study were purposive and snowball sampling. These were the ones that made it possible to collect eyewitnesses' verbal evidence. In purposive sampling, we find that, "researchers rely on their experience, ingenuity and/ or previous research findings to deliberately obtain units of analysis in such a manner that the sample they obtain may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population."<sup>109</sup> The problem with purposive sampling is that , "different researchers may proceed in different ways to obtain such a sample."<sup>110</sup> Snowball sampling, on the other hand, relied on approaching a small number of individuals from the relevant population during its first phase. Those individuals acted as informants and identified other members (for example, friends or acquaintances) from the same population for inclusion in the sample. The latter, in turn, identified a further set of relevant individuals so that the sample, like a rolling snowball grew till saturated.<sup>111</sup> I used snowball sampling in conjunction with purposive sampling in collecting as much data as possible. People interviewed helped in referring me to some of their friends who knew more about the experiences of women farmers in the Nwanedi area, while some were women farmers themselves.

#### **1.8.4. DATA ANALYSIS**

As the methodology applied in this study was a qualitative method, so was the data analysis. Qualitative data analysis uses two methods of measurement; namely, the analysis of in-depth unstructured individual interviews and group interviews (focus groups). These were used in ethnographic and case study research as well as in participant observation.<sup>112</sup> This type of data analysis was relevant to the study, as it was a case study. Another measurement was content analysis of historical and personal documents, mass media, open-ended questions and unstructured interviews. This is usually described as quantitative analysis of qualitative data due to its reliance on counting the frequencies and sequencing of words, phrases or concepts, in order to

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<sup>109</sup> Welman, et al., "Research Methodology", 69.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 211.

identify keywords or themes.<sup>113</sup> This helped when one dealt with a huge amount of data collected during field work, interviews and when the information was from secondary sources in order to make people understand the content of the study.

### **1.9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Limitations refer to limiting conditions or restrictive weaknesses which are unavoidably present in the study design.<sup>114</sup> According to O’Leary, they are, “design characteristics or constraints that may have an impact on the generalizability and utility of findings, for example, small sample size, or restricted access to records.”<sup>115</sup> Any study has limitations and they should be noted but nonetheless this does not necessarily minimise the importance of the study. The problems encountered while pursuing this study included insufficient time with my respondents. To them, time is money and the fact that the area is far away from where I stay (Thohoyandou) made it difficult for me to visit my respondents daily. In order to frequent the area, I had to book myself at Tshipise Forever Resorts, which is about thirty to forty kilometres away from Nwanedi area. This had a negative effect on my itinerary. It was also difficult to locate some of the respondents because most of them were farm owners who were always absent from their farms due to the frequency of the meetings they were expected to attend. Sometimes I spent the whole day waiting for them, only to be told that they could no longer make it.

Despite of all these disappointments, further appointments were made, and these bore the desired results. The information I was able to gather was enough to make this study a success.

### **1.10. DELIMITATIONS**

According to Punch, delimitations means defining the limits of or drawing the boundaries around a study and showing clearly what is and is not included.<sup>116</sup> It is useful in avoiding misunderstanding by the reader. As the Mutale and Musina Local Municipalities covered

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<sup>113</sup>Welman, et al., ‘Research Methodology’, 223.

<sup>114</sup> L.F. Locke, W.W. Spirduso and S.J. Silverman. 1993. ‘Proposals that Work’, Third Edition, Newbury Park, 18.

<sup>115</sup> O’Leary. ‘Doing your Research, 351.

<sup>116</sup> K.F. Punch. 2010. “Developing Effective Research Proposals’, Second Edition, London, 69.

a wide area, it made sense for me to focus on a region within those municipalities. The focus of this study was on the Nwanedi region, which is situated at the border of the two municipalities. The area is rural and has several farms owned by women. The study also sought to establish the level of education of the women found in the surrounding villages, their employment status and finally stories that they were prepared to tell concerning their farming experiences. It focused on adult women who own farms in the Nwanedi area.

## **1.11. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics is always relevant and imperative especially when the research is focusing on human beings or human subjects. According to Bak, ethics is relevant if, “the research will involve people and/or vertebrate animals as research subjects.”<sup>117</sup> The idea behind all these was, “to ensure that no one is harmed because of your research activities.”<sup>118</sup> Some important aspects considered here when dealing with ethical issues were in accordance with Kumar’s groupings.

### **1.11.1. Ethics pertaining to research participants**

#### **1.11.1.1. Informed consent**

Informed consent refers to when respondents were made aware of the kind of information the researcher wanted from them, why the information was being sought, what purpose it would be put to, how they were expected to participate in the study, and how it would directly or indirectly affect them.<sup>119</sup> Participants should be informed that their participation was voluntary and that no one was pressuring them to take part.

It is unethical to collect information without the acknowledgement of participants, and their expressed willingness and informed consent. Schinke and Gilchrist claim that all informed consent procedures must meet three criteria: participants must be competent to give

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<sup>117</sup> N. Bak. 2004. ‘Completing your Thesis: A Practical Guide’, Pretoria, 28.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> R. Kumar. 2011. ‘Research Methodology: A Step-by-step Guide for Beginners’, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edn, London, 388 & 244.



consent; sufficient information must be provided to allow for a reasoned decision; and consent must be voluntary and un-coerced.<sup>120</sup> Competency concerned the legal and mental capacities of participants to give permission.<sup>121</sup> Examples of these are very old people, those suffering from conditions, people in crisis, those who cannot speak the language in which the research is being carried out, those depending on you for a service and children are considered not competent.

All these criteria were considered when this study was conducted. Participants were informed first of the reasons for conducting the study and they, in turn, indicated their willingness to participate in it.

#### **1.11.1.2. Providing incentives**

Some researchers provide participants with incentives for giving their time, but others think it is unethical to give inducements. Some authors feel that giving a small gift after having obtained your information is a token of appreciation, and not unethical, but giving a present before data collection is unethical.<sup>122</sup>

In the present study, incentives were not given and not a single interviewee demanded or requested them. What happened was some women farmers were generous enough to give me some of their produce and denying them would have appeared to be rude, according to their culture. I ended up having too much to carry home each time I visited these farmers. This was another way of showing how welcome I was in their farms.

#### **1.11.1.3. Seeking sensitive information**

Some information can be regarded as sensitive or confidential by respondents and thus an invasion of privacy. Asking for information may upset or embarrass a respondent but not asking may contribute to the adversely to the existing body of knowledge. Good examples of these are questions on sexual behaviour; drug use and shoplifting which

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<sup>120</sup> S.P. Schinke and L. Gilchrist. 1993. 'Ethics in Research', in R.M. Grinnell (eds), 'Social Work, Research and Evaluation', 4<sup>th</sup> Edn, Itasa, 83.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Kumar. 'Research Methodology', 245

may be considered as intrusive. To add on that, questions on marital status, income and age may be considered invasion of privacy by some. It is imperative for the researcher to first tell respondents the type of information you are going to ask and give them enough time to decide if they want to share the information with you, without any major inducement.<sup>123</sup>

The study did not warrant information that was sensitive or confidential at all. Participants were informed of the kind of information needed the very first day they were met, at Nwanedi NTK, when I was given the opportunity to introduce myself to a group of women farmers who were attending a workshop there. The women farmers were given plenty of time to think about my request as the interviews started some days later and others were conducted some months after my first meeting with them.

#### **1.11.1.4. The possibility of causing harm to participants**

According to Bailey, harm includes, “not only hazardous medical experiments but also any social research that might involve such things as discomfort, anxiety, harassment, invasion of privacy, or demeaning or dehumanising procedures.”<sup>124</sup> The researcher must examine carefully whether the involvement of his or her respondents is likely to harm them in anyway. If it is, make sure that the risk is minimal. In order to prevent any harm to my respondents I decided to use pseudonyms instead of using respondents’ real names. This was done even though respondents themselves had given me a go-ahead to use their real names as they felt comfortable about being exposed.

No harm took place during the study. This was so because no one, amongst the interviewees, ever showed signs of discomfort during and after interviews were conducted. The study itself did not present any semblance of harm to respondents, as it was all about women farmers and the journey that they had undertaken in their farming activities, with the aim of laying bare the struggles that women in this category were facing.

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<sup>123</sup>Kumar. ‘Research Methodology’, 245

<sup>124</sup> K.D. Bailey. 1978. ‘Methods of Social Research’, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edn, New York, 384.

#### **1.11.1.5. Maintaining confidentiality**

Sharing information about a respondent with others for purposes other than research is unethical. The best way of maintaining this is by keeping the information provided by respondents anonymous. Identifying individual respondent is unethical. After the information had been collected, its source cannot be identified. Being negligent in protecting the confidentiality and anonymity of the information gathered is unethical.<sup>125</sup>

Confidentiality was maintained throughout this research. No information received from a respondent was shared with another without her consent. In showing their confidence to me the interviewees indicated that they did not fear their identities to be revealed. They would be as much happy as anyone if they see their names and stories being revealed for everyone to read.

#### **1.11.2. Ethical issues to consider relating to the researcher**

##### **1.11.2.1. Avoiding bias**

Bias, according to Kumar, “is a deliberate attempt either to conceal or highlight something that you found in your research or to use deliberately a procedure or method that you know is not appropriate but will provide information that you are looking for because you have a vested interest in it.”<sup>126</sup> It is unethical on the part of the researcher as, “it is a deliberate attempt to hide what you have found in your study, or highlight something disproportionately to its existence.”<sup>127</sup> A researcher, who is unable to control his or her bias, should not be engaging in the research.

As a researcher, I did the best I could do to avoid being biased. For instance, I handed over the responsibility of translating and transcribing the data to my research assistants. I then recorded the women farmers’ words verbatim, for everyone interested to see and

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<sup>125</sup> Kumar. ‘Research Methodology’, 246.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 379.

<sup>127</sup> Kumar. ‘Research Methodology’, 246.

apply his or her mind on how I was able to translate their stories. This, I did without following any writing pattern conducted by any researcher before. This rendered my style unique, compared to any other style used by previous researchers, even though it was influenced by that followed by Bozzoli's 'Women of Phokeng'.<sup>128</sup>

#### **1.12.2.2. Using inappropriate research methodology**

It is unethical to deliberately use an inappropriate method or procedure to prove or disprove something that you want to, such as by selecting highly biased sample, using an invalid instrument or by drawing wrong conclusions.<sup>129</sup>

The methods used here were appropriate to the study of this nature and nothing was done deliberately to prove or disprove something. This was easy because conclusions were guided by the information gathered from the women farmers rather than from me as a researcher.

#### **1.12.2.3. Incorrect reporting**

To report the findings in a way that changes or slants them to serve your own or someone else's interest is unethical. Correct and unbiased reporting of findings are important characteristics of ethical research practice.<sup>130</sup>

Incorrect reporting would indeed tarnish the image of the whole research; therefore, I strove to prevent that as much as I could.

#### **1.12.2.4. Inappropriate use of information**

This occurs when someone uses the information obtained from the respondents in a way that directly or indirectly affects the respondents. Some people, to achieve benefits for their organisations - end up harming some individuals. For example, a study to examine the feasibility of restructuring an organisation, can be beneficial to the organisation but

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<sup>128</sup> B. Bozzoli, 1991. 'Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983', United States and England, 1-242.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 247.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

harmful to some individuals. The information obtained may be used against participants, but if not used, the organisation would suffer. It is ethical to ask questions provided the respondents are told of the potential use of the information, including the possibility of its being used against some of them, and you let them decide if they want to participate. Some may participate for the betterment of the organisation even though it may harm them, and others may decide against it. However, to identify either of them is unethical.<sup>131</sup>

Interviewees were assured that the information they were prepared to share with me would not be used in any way rather than scholarly work. No one would be called anywhere to account for what he or she shared with me. They were also assured that the information they shared with me would bear no harm to anybody, something they saw when the interviews got conducted. They acknowledged this by allowing me to use their real names rather than pseudonyms.

### **1.11.3. Ethical issues regarding the sponsoring organisation**

#### **1.11.3.1. Restrictions imposed by sponsoring organisation**

Most researchers use funds provided by sponsoring organisations for specific purposes. These organisations sometimes exercise controls either directly or indirectly either by selecting the methodology the researcher should use, may also prohibit the publication of what was found or impose other restrictions on the research that may stand in the way of obtaining and disseminating accurate information. Both the imposition and acceptance of these controls and restrictions are unethical, as they constitute interference and could amount to the sponsoring organisation tailoring research findings to meet its vested interests.<sup>132</sup>

Problems of this nature were never experienced by me because my research was sponsored by my institution, the University of Venda. They knew beforehand the kind of

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<sup>131</sup> Kumar. 'Research Methodology', 247.

<sup>132</sup>Kumar. 'Research Methodology', 247

research I was going to embark upon, as they were the ones who approved my proposal and provided me with the sponsorship.

#### **1.11.3.2. Misuse of information**

Sometimes sponsoring organisations use research as a pretext for obtaining management's agenda. It is unethical to let your research be used as a reason for justifying management decisions when the research findings do not support them, but it may be extremely difficult or even impossible for a researcher to prevent this from happening.<sup>133</sup>

The interviewees were assured this would not happen. The university had no ulterior motive, besides rather than promoting research capabilities on the side of their employees and students at large.

#### **1.11.4. Right to privacy**

Right to privacy concerned assuring respondents that their identities would remain anonymous. This right to privacy was explained to all interviewees before any interview was conducted. However, the interviewees never saw the importance of this as the information they were sharing with me did not qualify to be classified as secret information. As a way of acknowledging how comfortable they were in sharing their stories with me they gave me permission to publish their names in full.

#### **1.11.5. Protection from harm**

Respondents were ensured that they would never experience any harm, either physically or emotionally. This was also passed on to the interviewees and when they participated, they did it willy-nilly.

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

### 1.11.6. Involvement of the researcher

Burton and Steane maintain that all research has ethical dimensions and a good starting point for dealing with ethical issues is to realise that there are numerous stakeholders in every research. The ultimate goal should be to complete one's dissertation still in good standing, together with your university, with your participants, and with one's findings contributing to the advancement of knowledge or professional practice.<sup>134</sup> They further argue that a researcher's ethical responsibilities include principles of academic integrity and honesty, and respect for other people together with ethical issues in planning and executing the research centre on access, consent and participants' protection.<sup>135</sup>

Badenhorst argues, while tackling the issue of ethics, that the researcher's credibility is linked to ethics. Honesty and integrity could only be achieved when we respect our respondents, felt the research task was important and that the research conclusions were worthy. It is only when we recognize that our respondents are people, heroes in their own stories and not just side characters in ours that would make us protect our respondents.<sup>136</sup> This was highly considered while conducting this research and the respondents were duly protected from any harm.

This research placed the welfare of all participants first. This was to ensure that participants participated willingly. No participant was forced to take part in any interview without his or her consent. The researcher strove to maintain accuracy and honesty when compiling the final report on women's experiences or oppression in the rural areas of the Vhembe District. All sources have been acknowledged, including secondary sources such as books, newspaper articles, electronic documents, archival materials, internet materials, published and unpublished documents, dissertations, monographs, journals, reports and other relevant sources. I was, therefore, compelled to consider ethics, by acknowledging the authors of the materials consulted in the research study. Furthermore,

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<sup>134</sup> P. Steane. 2004 'Ethical Issues in Research', in S. Burton and P. Steane (Eds), 'Surviving your Thesis', London, 59-70.

<sup>135</sup> P. Steane. 2004 'Ethical Issues in Research', in S. Burton and P. Steane (Eds), 'Surviving your Thesis', London, 59-70.

<sup>136</sup> C. Badenhorst. 2008. 'Dissertation Writing: A Research Journey', Pretoria, 189.

I presented the evidence fairly by avoiding the concealment of data that may have conflicted with my views. I also provided evidence, to verify research results and avoided adjusting conclusions from references to suit the intended results. Those and others were highly considered when carrying out this research.

In conclusion, this chapter started with an introduction and then gave the background of the study. The problem statement was also put forward together with the aim and objectives of the study. These were followed by the research questions, assumptions, and a brief literature review as in-depth literature review would be dealt with in chapter two. The chapter also highlighted the theories applied, starting with those of Fredrick Engels and Randall Collins, and concluding with feminist theories, which started gaining ground from the mid-1970s onward. The chapter also provided a detailed account of the research methodology, highlighting how data were collected and analysed, delimitations and finally, ethical considerations. The literature review chapter to follow will give detailed information on the contributions made by other writers on matters related to this topic.

## 1.12. DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

**Apartheid:** “a social policy or racial segregation involving political and economic and legal discrimination against people who are not Whites; the former official policy in South Africa.”<sup>137</sup>

**Colonialism:** “a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people by another.”<sup>138</sup>

**Customary law:** the “customs and usages, traditionally observed, among the indigenous African peoples of South Africa and which form part of the culture of those peoples.”<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup>Apartheid. Available online at: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/apartheid>.. (Accessed on 26 January 2015).

<sup>138</sup> Colonialism. Available online at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism/>.. (Accessed on 26 January 2015).

<sup>139</sup> Recognition of Customary Marriages Act 120 of 1998 after amendment by the Jurisdiction of Regional Courts Amendment Act 31 of 2008.



**Domestic violence:** “a pattern of behavior which involves the abuse by one partner against another in intimate relationship such as marriage, cohabitation, dating or within the family. It is experienced by men and women in a heterosexual and same-sex relationship.”<sup>140</sup>

**Feminism:** According to Morgan, it is “a doctrine advocating social and political rights of women equal to those of men or an organized movement for attainment of these rights.”<sup>141</sup>

**Gender:** the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. This can also be clarified as: ‘male’ and ‘female’ are sex categories, while ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ are gender categories.<sup>142</sup>

**Kaffir:** an offensive ethnic slur used during the apartheid South Africa to refer to a black person. In South Africa today, the term is regarded as highly racially offensive, in the same way as ‘nigger’ in the United States and other English-speaking countries.<sup>143</sup>

**Land tenure:** the terms and conditions on which land is held, used and transacted.<sup>144</sup>

**Land tenure reform:** a planned change in terms and conditions, for example, the adjustment of the terms of contracts between land owners and tenants, or the conversion of more informal tenancy into property rights, to enhance and secure people’s land rights.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Domestic Violence. Available online at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic\\_violence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic_violence). (Accessed on 19 May 2014).

<sup>141</sup> S. Morgan. 2006. ‘The Feminist History Reader’, USA, 95.

<sup>142</sup> Gender. Available online at: <http://www.who.int/gender/whatisgender/en/>. (Accessed on 16 May 2014).

<sup>143</sup> Kaffir. Available online at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kaffir\\_\(racial\\_term\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kaffir_(racial_term)). (Accessed on 16 May 2014).

<sup>144</sup> M. Adams, S. Sibanda, S. Turner. 1999. ‘Land Tenure Reform and Rural Livelihoods in South Africa’, in Natural Resource Perspectives (39).

<sup>145</sup> Adams, et al, ‘Land Tenure Reform’, 39.

**Oppression:** “the inequitable use of authority, law, or physical force to prevent others from being free or equal.”<sup>146</sup> The type of oppression this study will focus upon is social oppression which is the relationship of dominance and subordination between categories of people in which one benefits from the systematic abuse, exploitation and injustice directed toward the other.<sup>147</sup>

**Patriarchy:** Contemporary feminists view patriarchy as relations between men and women, with women seen as subordinated to men.<sup>148</sup> Dorothy Hodgson argues that, “it is produced, maintained and transformed through cultural and social relations of power between women and men, but also among women and among men.”<sup>149</sup>

**Sexual harassment:** defined by The United Nations as “such unwelcome sexually determined behavior as physical contact and advances, sexually colored remarks, showing pornography and sexual demands, whether by words or actions. Such conduct can be humiliating and may constitute a health and safety problem; it is discriminatory when the woman has reasonable ground to believe that her objection would disadvantage her about her employment, including recruitment or promotion, or when it creates a hostile working environment.”<sup>150</sup>

**Women’s rights movement:** a “movement concerned with winning for women equality with men in all aspects of society and giving them access to all rights and opportunities enjoyed by men in the institutions of that society.”<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Oppression. Available online at: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/oppression>. (Accessed on 07 May 2013).

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> H.S. Tshamano. 2005. ‘Community Perceptions of the Role of Women in Witchcraft and Witch-burning Related Incidents in Venda, 1989-1995’, 22.

<sup>149</sup> D.H. Hodgson, ‘Pastoralism, Patriarchy and History amongst the Maasai in Tanganyika, 1890-1940’, 98.

<sup>150</sup> Harassment. Available online at: <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/svaw/harassment/explore/1whatis.htm>. (Accessed on 19 May 2014).

<sup>151</sup> Morgan, ‘The Feminist’, 96.

### **1.13. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY**

This serves to indicate how the thesis is organized.

#### **Chapter One**

This chapter presents the introduction and background of the study. Here the notion of women's experiences in South Africa is highlighted and the effort that the government is making to empower women in general. The chapter also discusses the problem statement, purpose of the study which includes the aim and objectives, justification for the study, methodology, limitations and finally structure of the study.

#### **Chapter Two**

The focus is on the historical overview of rural women's experiences in general. Special emphasis is on how other authors tackled the issue, in short, literature and conceptual framework. The literary analysis will also factor in historiographical information about the land questions and women.

#### **Chapter Three**

The chapter focuses on the Limpopo landholding and traditional authority in historical perspective. It does so by giving an overview of the history of landholding in the region through precolonial, colonial dispossession, and apartheid. In short, the chapter gives a historical context for land issues and traditional authorities through the apartheid and Bantustan eras.

#### **Chapter Four**

This chapter focuses on theme one of the interviews. The first theme focused on how women farmers first decided to get into farming and how this developed over time. It would compare how different participants experienced the struggles of establishing themselves. It brings out a variety of women experiences in the field.

## **Chapter Five**

The chapter analyses theme two from the interviews. This is the theme which explores how women build up their capacity and abilities to pursue farming as business, how they learned about markets and business development networks, strategies and failures they encountered.

## **Chapter Six**

The chapter deals with theme three from the interviews. The theme focuses on how these women farmers see themselves in terms of social identity and psycho-social perspectives, how they feel as farmers, wives, women, community members and entrepreneurs. It will also help in highlighting the narratives that help us understand these personal elements.

## **Chapter Seven**

The chapter weaves together the major arguments presented in the various chapters of the thesis. This it does by providing a summary, findings, recommendations and conclusion of the body of work covered in the whole study.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Introduction

According to Kumar, the literature review is, “the process of searching the existing literature relating to your research problem, to develop theoretical and conceptual frameworks for your study and to integrate your research findings with what the literature says about them.”<sup>152</sup> It places your study in perspective to what others have investigated about the issues, which then, helps you to improve your methodology.<sup>153</sup> This can be simplified as an integrated summary of all available literature relevant to the research problem. Kumar argues that going through the existing literature in order to acquaint oneself with the available body of knowledge in your area of interest is the most essential task when one is about to undertake a research study.<sup>154</sup> In order to complement what Kumar said, I used many books, ranging from feminist literature, comparative literature, and finally the literature about the history of women in South Africa.

Recently, many scholars have shown an interest in the history of women, but their studies vary according to their disciplines. Studies of this nature would serve as the intellectual background of the study. The differences between previous studies and this study is that this was an attempt to showcase rural women farmers’ experiences in the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province, something that many, historical accounts in this region have neglected. Here women farmers are provided with an opportunity to express their views about how they feel as women farmers and the challenges or obstacles that they encounter on their way to becoming successful commercial farmers. It is one of the rare studies that afforded rural women farmers the opportunity to reconstruct their own past. This is due to the omission that is visible in both African and imperial historiography as noted by Bradford who lamented female invisibility in African historiography by referring

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<sup>152</sup> R. Kumar. 2011. ‘Research Methodology: A Step-by-step Guide for Beginners’, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edn, London, 389.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, p. 31.

to it as “gross sins of omission”<sup>155</sup>. Bradford further argues that in most people’s writings, women’s existence is often denied and often subsumed linguistically under the category man.<sup>156</sup> It is because of this negligence that I decided to give Nwanedi women a platform to contribute in the reconstruction of their own history. The study managed to do that by bringing all the dimensions into play, that is, the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial situation regarding the status of African women. The women’s socio-economic status and the nature of patriarchy during the three phases is analysed with an aim of providing the reader with dynamism in patriarchal levels during all the three phases. This is the only scholarly work on women farmers’ socio-economic experiences in the Nwanedi area, hence the study makes a critical contribution to the existing knowledge in the field.

In order to put this into proper perspective, the study would use a three-way approach to demarcate this literature review, starting from an international, then continental and finally national or local perspectives on rural women farmers’ experiences.

## **2.2. The International Perspectives on Rural Women’s lives**

Internationally, the focus will be on the Iowa State, found in the United States of America (USA), India, Bangladesh and Turkey. These would serve as examples on how rural women, specifically rural women farmers, are treated in these countries regarding land ownership and division of work.

### **2.2.1. Iowa in the United States of America**

Rising conducted a study on Iowan women farmers titled “Iowan Women Farmers’ Perspectives on Alternative Agriculture and Gender”, and found that many of them have grown tired of being “arm wives’ and are increasingly claiming the ‘farmer’ identity.<sup>157</sup> The author conducted an ethnographic study of eleven (11) women farmers in order to find how these women understand the relationship between their gender and their work. The

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<sup>155</sup> H. Bradford. 1996. ‘Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and its Frontier Zones, c. 1806-70’, *Journal of African History*, 37, 351-370.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> A.L. Rising. 2013. ‘Iowan Women Farmers’ Perspectives on alternative Agriculture and Gender’. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 3(2), 127-136.

outcome was that the women, “pointed to women’s problem-solving skills, concerns with health and family, and intuitive relationships to the earth as ways in which their gender impacts their general farming experience.”<sup>158</sup> They also pointed out things such as their education, coworkers, or participation in farm organisations as having had an influence in shaping their farms’ sustainability.<sup>159</sup>

As in other countries, Rising has noted that women’s work on farms in the United States was largely undocumented and undervalued until recently. A perception that farm women work inside the home has survived many centuries, and with the support of middle-class farm families, the perception has gained the support of the public, too. Nowadays, many women are choosing farming as a profession, especially in the USA, where the 2007 Census estimated that a whopping 30.2 percent of farm operators were women.<sup>160</sup> Despite all these, the author found that the word ‘farmer’ continues to be associated with men. This, then, affects the identity of many farm women. The author also found that “the cultural perception that women on farms are not ‘farmers’ contributes to the distinct challenges American women farmers face today.”<sup>161</sup> This made this group of women feel like they were not being taken seriously, like their male counterparts, especially when they encounter some difficulties in securing loans or financial support for their farms. Eventually, the author discovered that eleven (11) of the women farmers interviewed acknowledged that their gender influenced their farming perspective in general.<sup>162</sup>

### 2.2.2. India

Regarding India, Casper van Vark wrote an article titled: *Left Alone to Tend Farm and Family: Reaching Female Farmers in Rural India*.<sup>163</sup> The author is worried about the effect of migration on Indian women. When rural Indian men migrated to the cities, they

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> C. Van Vark. “Left Alone to Tend Farm and Family: Reaching Female Farmers in Rural India”, *The Guardian*, 17 November 2014.

left the burden of farming on their shoulders, especially from 2008. This exodus placed agricultural work in the hands of Indian women alone. The issue of Indian men's mass migration was confirmed by the 2011 census, which showed that for the first time since independence, urban populations were growing faster than rural ones. The men leaving rural areas were living their agricultural responsibility on the shoulders of women. This was evident by the reduction in the number of small livestock, such as sheep and goats, because women were paying more attention on crops rather than livestock.<sup>164</sup>

Lack of title deeds by female farmers and the rise of 'special economic zones' to attract foreign direct investment, led to farmer displacement and women suffered more from this. According to Palagummi Sainath, a government programme called Kudumbashree, launched in Kerala in 1998, was an example of how to help these women. It mobilized four million women under the poverty line (many of them farmers) to tackle the structural roots of their disempowerment. The idea was to encourage women to work together. Since then, women have organized themselves into more than 47 000 farming collectives, known as Krishi, and negotiated leases to take over unused land. The collective may be 5, 10 or 18 women, who lease land which a landlord might be letting lie fallow, and they restore it. Here women gain solidarity more than anything. These women gain confidence by knowing that if one falls ill, they could cover for her.

Sainath concluded by saying that research shows that putting female farmers in control of resources benefits the nutrition of children. Women follow the principle that the needs of the families in the group come first and only what is left over goes to the market. There is no doubt that when women get greater rights in agriculture, things improve.

### **2.2.3. Bangladesh**

Shahnaj Parveen in the article: *Access of Rural Women to Productive Resources in Bangladesh: A Pillar for Promoting their Empowerment*, focuses on examining the extent of accessibility of rural women in Bangladesh to seven productive resources. These

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid.



include access to livestock rearing, access to capital, access to extension services and training, access to land and finally, access to production inputs. Data were collected from 159 farmers' wives, through interviews from three villages of Mymensingh District, namely, Boyra, Sutiakhali and Daribhabakhali.<sup>165</sup>

The findings show that the women had better opportunities for rearing livestock and capital availability. However, their access to extension services, training, technologies, institutions, land and production inputs were limited. Women's access to productive resources was hindered by lack of technical knowledge and land ownership, heavy household chores and some socio-cultural constraints such as restricted mobility and male resistance. The study concluded by providing a series of suggestions for rural women's empowerment. Special emphasis was given to forming social capital among rural women by various development actors which could increase productive resources under women's control.

#### **2.2.4. Turkey**

Havva Savran Al-Haik, in her PhD Thesis titled, "Exploring Women Farmers' Experiences: A Case Study of Gender Inequality on Small Turkish Farms", discovered that in Turkey agriculture is a major component of the rural population income and that women are the backbone of agricultural production.<sup>166</sup> Resources such as water, land, livestock, crops, and knowledge about agricultural production are important and access to, control over, and management of land determines what kind of farming one wants to pursue. Access to these resources is influenced by gender, thereby putting women in a disadvantageous side because men always maintain control of the decision making over the household and its economy.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> S. Parveen. 2008. 'Access of Rural Women to Productive Resources in Bangladesh: A Pillar for Promoting their Empowerment', *International Journal of Rural Studies*, vol. 15, (1).

<sup>166</sup> H.S. Al-Haik. 2015. 'Exploring Women Farmers' Experiences: A Case Study of Gender Inequality on Small Turkish Farms', PhD IN Agricultural and Extension Education, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

In this thesis Al-Haik managed to address research questions such as gender division of labour, women's work in agriculture and household, decision-making in rural families, access to resources and knowledge, agrarian change, and the effect of gender on small farm practices from the Turkish women farmers' standpoint.<sup>168</sup> Al-Haik discovered that there are gendered roles and responsibilities on small farm practices and that women are over-burdened with both farm and household work, thereby bearing the heavier workload than their male counterparts. This usually happens un-noticed.<sup>169</sup> It was also noted that those rural women's level of education was low as compared to that of men, thereby incapacitating them when it comes to decision making on household resources and income on these small farm practices.<sup>170</sup> Al-Haik concluded by making recommendations directed to individuals, community organizations, Turkish government agricultural policy makers, and extension of education systems to better assist these women in their work.<sup>171</sup>

## **2.3. Continental or African Perspectives on the Lives of Rural Women**

### **2.3.1. African Women's Historicity**

To better understand the status of African women one should first understand their evolution from pre-colonial times, during colonialism and then at post-independence. The post-independent state of events was represented by what the research managed to cover.

### **2.3.2. The Status of African Women Before Colonialism**

In their attempts to make meaning of the status of African women in pre-colonial times, many writers have characterised them as jural minors for most of their lives, under the guardianship of their fathers and later their husbands. Other writers have stressed the independence of African women, especially on matters pertaining to control of their own lives and resources.<sup>172</sup> Sudarkasa argues that in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa,

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> N. Sudarkasa, 1986. 'The Status of Women in Indigenous African Societies', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 12(1), 91-103.

except in the highly Islamized societies, women occupied high positions in precolonial times. Some were queen mothers, queen-sisters, princesses, chieftainess, and holders of other offices in towns and villages, occasional warriors, and, in one well-known case, that of the Lobedu, the supreme monarch. Some African women played an important role in the economic life of societies through involvement in farming, trade, or craft production.<sup>173</sup>

Sudarkasa disputes the notion that women were saddled with home and domesticity, arguing that they were outside the home, too. She also disputes Engels and his followers' argument that, "the critical or key variable in the subordination of women in class societies was their confinement to production within the domestic sphere and their exclusion from social production for exchange."<sup>174</sup> This was indeed a western way of misinterpreting African women's status in pre-colonial times which has been construed by many African scholars, Sudarkasa included, as untrue.

Sudarkasa suggests various conditions, including most probably, the development of private property and the market or exchange economy, brought forth situations where female and male became increasingly expounded as individuals that were hierarchically related to one another.<sup>175</sup> The author had at some stage argued that, it was not easy to distinguish between the public and domestic domains in pre-industrial African societies, as they both go hand in hand.<sup>176</sup> Boserup and other scholars further argue that the forces of modernization and development have denied African women equal access to formal education and have undermined their contribution to the political and economic arenas of their countries.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> K. Sacks. 1974. 'Engels Revisited: Women, the Organization of Production, and Private Property', in 'Women, Culture, and Society', ed. M. Z Rosaldo and L. Lampare, Stanford, 207-222.

<sup>175</sup> N. Sudarkasa, 1986. 'The Status of Women in Indigenous African Societies', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 12 (1), 91-103.

<sup>176</sup> E. Boserup. 1970. 'Women's Role in Economic Development', London.

<sup>177</sup> Boserup, 1970. 'Women's Role in Economic Development', London; A.M.D Lebeuf, "he Role of Women in the Political Organization of African Societies', in *Women of Tropical Africa*'

### 2.3.2.1. The Social Status of Women within the African Family

African women have rights and responsibilities towards their kinsmen and kinswomen that were independent of males. Female members were expected to meet certain obligations in the same way as their male counterparts; for example, provision of necessary material to their sisters and brothers at the time of rites of passage such as naming ceremonies, marriages, and funerals. Although women did not hold formal leadership positions within the patrilineal societies, they played an important role as fathers, sisters, and daughters by taking part in most discussions of lineage affairs. The more advanced in age, the more influence they wield. As mothers, sisters, and daughters within the matrilineages, some women hold leadership positions and exercise authority equivalent to that of men.<sup>178</sup>

In both patrilineages and matrilineages, interpersonal relations tend to be regulated by the order of birth rather than by gender; for example, senior sisters outrank junior brothers. Western scholars have always failed to interpret or analyse kinship in African societies. African extended families are built around consanguineal relationships, and failure to recognize this had led to misrepresentation of many aspects of African kinship, leading to the distortion of an understanding of the roles of women as wives, cowives, and mothers.<sup>179</sup>

Women as wives in both patrilineal and matrilineal societies differ. Western students of African societies have focused on husband-wife relationship in describing African kinship and sought to define conjugal relationship in terms of parameters found in Western societies. This has led to a misrepresentation of the essence and implications of what is generally called 'women-to-women' marriage. In this woman-to-woman concept three things can be observed: first, it signifies that gender is not the sole basis for recruitment to the 'husband' role in Africa. Second, the institution must be understood in the context of the meaning of the concepts of husband and wife in African societies, not in Western

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<sup>178</sup> N. Sudarkasa. 1975. 'An Exposition on the Value Premise Underling Black Family Studies', *Journal of the National Medical Association*, 67, 235-239; Sudarkasa, 'African and Afro-American Family Organization', *Anthropology for the Eighties*, 132-160.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

societies. Third, in African societies, the term 'wife' has two basic referents: female married to a given male (or female) and female married into a given compound or lineage, for example, among the Yoruba, a husband refers to his spouse as 'wife', a woman refers to her cowife as 'wife' of 'mate' and a female as well as the male members of the lineage refer to the in-marrying spouses as the 'wives'. In other instances, a woman, among the Yoruba, refers to her own spouse, and in certain contexts, to his lineage members, including her own children, as 'husband'.<sup>180</sup> Given these usages, it was important to recognize that the terms 'husband' and 'wife' connote certain clusters of affinal relations, and in 'woman marriage', the principles concerned emphasized certain jural relations.<sup>181</sup>

The concept 'woman-to-woman marriage' serves a proactive function, either on behalf of the female herself, or on behalf of her male spouse or male kinsman. Because marriage was the institution and the idiom through which procreation was legitimated in Africa, it must be entered by women (as by men) who want to acquire rights over a woman's childbearing capacity. The case of 'woman-to-woman marriage' demonstrated, however, that male gender did not exclusively determine entry into the husband role, which was more authoritative of the two conjugal roles.<sup>182</sup>

### **2.3.2.2. The Political Involvement of Women in Pre-colonial African Societies**

The idea here was to address the question of whether the relationship of females and males within the political domain was most appropriately conceptualized as a hierarchical one. In West Africa, the 'public domain' was not conceptualized as 'the world for men.' Rather, the public domain was one in which both sexes were recognized as having important roles to play.<sup>183</sup>

Women held formal leadership roles in matrilineages and were influential in decision-making patrilineages. Their participation in the affairs of their affinal compounds (within

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<sup>180</sup> N. Sudarkasa, 1986. 'The Status of Women in Indigenous African Societies', *Feminist Studies*. Vol. 12(1), 91-103.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

which women in patrilineal societies lived most of their adult lives) was channelled through an organizational structure in which the women were most often ranked according to order of marriage into the group.<sup>184</sup>

In West Africa, women controlled their own worlds; for example, they had trade and craft guilds, spoke in matters of taxation and maintenance of public facilities, such as markets, roads, wells, and streams. They also testified on their own in any court or hearing. In internal political affairs, women were generally consulted and had channels through which they were represented. External affairs were largely in the hands of men, but in any crisis, such as war, women were always involved: they served minimally as suppliers of rations for troops but in some instances acted as leaders of armies and as financiers of campaigns.<sup>185</sup>

Women were excluded in the male secret societies that were important in the political process in some Western African states. Women, as well as men, had representatives in the councils and women were consulted on most governmental affairs. Their participation through their spokespersons paralleled the participation of males through theirs. In cases in which the chief rulers were female and male, for example, the queen-mother and monarch-son, the complementarity of the relationship between the sexes was symbolized and codified in the highest offices of the land.<sup>186</sup>

### **2.3.2.3. The Economic Role of Women in Pre-colonial African Societies**

African women were traders, and crafts producers in different parts of the continent. Their economic roles were both 'public' and 'private'. Their economic activities were complementary, and traders were not subordinate to men. The division of labour promoted a reciprocity of effort. If men were farmers, women were food processors and

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Paulme, "Women of Tropical Africa; Sudarkasa, "Where Women Work", V. Uchendu, 1995. "The Igbo (Ibo) of Southeast Nigeria", New York, B. Awe, 'The Iyalode in the Traditional Yoruba Political System', in *Sexual Stratification: A Cross-Cultural View*, 99.

<sup>186</sup> Sudarkasa, 1986 'The Status of Women of Women in Indigenous African Societies', *Feminist Studies*, vol. 12(1), 91-103.

traders. As traders, women predominated in local market while men predominated in long-distance markets. In the management and disposal of their incomes, the activities of African women and men were also separate but coordinated. Within the conjugal family unit, women and men had different responsibilities which were met from the proceeds of their separate economic pursuits.<sup>187</sup>

A study by Croppenstedt, Golstein and Rosas on Policy Research Working Paper titled, “Gender and Agriculture: Inefficiencies, Segregation, and Low Productivity Traps”, maintains that women in agriculture often have lower levels of output per unit of land than their male counterparts. There are a range of institutional as well as norm-based constraints that contributed to this. Fewer women than men participate as principal claimants in agriculture or commercial production.<sup>188</sup> The authors termed this agricultural “segregation” and saw it as indicative of lower productivity trap. Women’s low participation in commercial or export agricultural production is a result of their lower access to resources. Some of these constraints can be addressed through policy interventions.<sup>189</sup>

Studies from Burkina Faso and Ghana confirm that women’s yield was far lower than that of men. In studies that showed male and female yield differences, these differences sometimes disappear when the level of access or usage of the factors of production are considered; for example, lack of access to extension, lack of experience, and lack of fertilizer may lead to gender yield differentials. It is constraints in access to and demand for land that prevent women to have yields equal to men.<sup>190</sup>

Studies conducted have also confirmed that women have less access to land than their male counterparts. Female-headed households are less likely to own land and even if they succeed, they own far less than their male counterparts. When it comes to the use of fertilizer[s], male-headed households are more likely to use chemical fertilizer[s] than are female-headed households; the same applies to mechanization, labour, human

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> A. Croppenstedt, M. Goldstein & N. Rosas. 2013. “Gender and Agriculture: Inefficiencies, Segregation, and Low Productivity Taps”, Policy Research Working Paper 6370, 2.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

capital and finally, technology.<sup>191</sup> Credit accessibility is another impediment that stands in the way of women's access to greater yields. Furthermore, it is not easy for someone who does not own land to obtain credit. The authors conclude that by maintaining the, "shortfall in use and limited control over resources may be reasons for agricultural segregation, the concentration of women in lower-value, less-marketed crops."<sup>192</sup> They further argue that women's weaker land tenure resulted from their lack of voice within the institutions that govern property rights and that those responsible for drafting policy must understand the roots of these problems and then address them.<sup>193</sup>

A study by Amadiume, a Nigerian sociologist, in her book *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*, negates the belief that all women in pre-colonial societies were subordinate to men. Her study focused on Igbo women found in the southeastern Nigeria and argued that sex and gender did not necessarily go together in pre-colonial society. She discovered that roles in Igbo society were not rigidly feminized or masculinized. There were women who were able to play the roles designated to men and were then classified as males due to the powers bestowed on them as a result of those roles.<sup>194</sup>

Amadiume blames the colonial period for undermining women's roles. The colonial period, in her opinion, brought economic changes that undermined women's monopoly over the sale of certain foods and reduced the economic sanctions they could have over men. The Christian church undermined customs that enhanced women's status. The colonial administration worsened the situation by appointing only male chiefs, thereby, reducing women's political roles. This, according to Amadiume, continues even during the modern period. She concludes by outlining a series of basic changes meant to reverse the continuing deterioration in Nigerian women's power and status.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid, 14-25.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>194</sup> I. Amadiume. 1987. 'Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society'" London, 125.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.



### 2.3.3. Status of African Women During Colonialism

The status of African women during colonialism is highlighted by Gordon in her book, *Understanding Contemporary Africa*. Here, Gordon argues that although women suffered the same fate as men did, “women as a group suffer more and have access to fewer resources and opportunities than men do.”<sup>196</sup> She further argues that there are diverse interests and perspectives between elite women and poorer women even though they both suffer from inequality as a group. These forms of inequality were influenced by colonialists who brought with them gender ideology and practices of the west that emphasize male dominance and female dependency. Africa’s male leaders promoted this western influence at independence and used it effectively to their advantage. Western international investors and donors then directed their development assistance to men.<sup>197</sup>

In short, the whole discussion by Gordon shows that, the end of pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence history is the growing possibility that women in as a whole will carry on losing ground economically, politically and socially<sup>198</sup>, until efforts are made by all stakeholders, that is, women, African governments and the international community, to distribute equally the fruits of development to both men and women.

De Beer and Swanepoel in their book, *Introduction to Development Studies* focus on the issue of land tenure in Sub-Saharan Africa. They argue that women had no access to land, both under communal tenure and private ownership, even though they were the ones responsible for family and national food production. They see land reform as the only means of altering inequitable owner structures for effective development of participatory institutions, local and national. They sum up their argument by pointing out that the main contributing factor to land reform failure was lack of political commitment and effective legislative framework. Those negatively affected by land reform are usually the poorest of the poor and the vulnerable, such as, women.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> A.A. Gordon. 1992. ‘Understanding Contemporary Africa’, London, 201.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> F. De Beers and H. Swanepoel. 2000. ‘Introduction to Development Studies’, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Southern Africa, 20.

Another author, whose contribution is worthy of being noted, is Van Allen, who contributed a chapter titled, *Aba Riots or Igbo Women's War? Ideology, Stratification, and Invisibility of Women* in a book *Women in Africa*, edited by Hafkin and Bay. Here, Van Allen focuses on the impact of colonialism on Igbo women. She did this by looking at the events which took place in southeastern Nigeria in November and December of 1929, known in Western social science literature as the 'Aba Riots'. The development and results of the crisis embraces all the elements of the system that had weakened women's position, not only in Igboland but throughout Africa, leading to women's 'invisibility'. The Igbo called the 'Aba Riots' 'Ugu Umunwanyị', meaning 'Women's War'. This was due to the women who converged on the Native Administration centers and chanted, danced and sang songs of ridicule, and demanded caps of office of the Warrant Chiefs. About 50 women were killed, and many wounded when the British District Officers called the police and troops. The British won and chose to call the 'Women's War' the Aba Riots and no mention of the women's involvement was ever made, thereby promoting women's invisibility.<sup>200</sup>

Another contribution by Van Allen is found in her article '*Sitting on a Man: Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women*'. Here she argues that westernization is credited as having emancipated African women by weakening kinship bonds, the provision of monogamous marriages, schooling, the introduction of modern medicine and hygiene and in other instances, female suffrage. This, in her opinion, is a mixed blessing, especially when looking at the experiences of Igbo women under British colonialism. Here western influence was seen as having weakened and destroyed women's traditional autonomy and power without providing modern forms of autonomy of power in exchange.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> J. Van Allen. 1976. 'Aba Riots or Igbo Women's War? Ideology, Stratification, and the Invisibility of Women', in N. Hafkin & E. Bay, eds, 'Women in Africa', Stanford UP, 59-85.

<sup>201</sup> J. Van Allen. 1972. 'Sitting on a Man: Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, VI, (ii), 165-181.

Van Allen argues that Igbo women played a significant role in traditional political life through participation in village meetings with men. Their solidarity provided them with real political power, through political institutions such as meetings (mikiri or mitiri), “their market networks, their kinship groups, and their right to use strikes, boycotts and force to effect their decisions”.<sup>202</sup> British colonial officers and missionaries failed to see the political roles and the political power of Igbo women, thereby, weakening or destroying women’s participation in modern institutions since they did not appreciate women’s political institutions. The dominant view among British colonial officers and missionaries was that politics was a man’s concern that prevented Igbo women from taking leadership roles in modern local government, nationalist movements and national government. All these because of their internalized set of values and attitudes about what they considered to be the natural and proper role of women because of them being socialized in Victorian England. As a result, people never asked themselves what happened to Igbo women’s organisations.

‘Sitting on a man’ is a traditional practice by Igbo women, applied to challenge male authority. This they did by publicly shaming a man for his unbecoming behaviour, by convening upon his hut, dancing and singing songs detailing the women’s grievances. Some people saw this behaviour as another way of ‘making war on’ man but employed to some women, too. Women partaking in this use yam pestles to beat the walls of a man’s hut and, in some cases, tear the roof off his hut.<sup>203</sup> During pre-colonial times, Igbo women employed the same tactics of sitting on a man, coupled with boycotts and strikes, to maintain the balance of power. If a man was accused of either ill-treating his wife, allowing his livestock to eat the women’s crops, or breaking the rules of the market, he was subjected to punishment of that nature. The women would wear ferns on their heads and don loincloths. They would also paint their faces with charcoal and carry sticks wreathed with palm fronds.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>202</sup>Van Allen. ‘Sitting on a Man’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, VI, (ii), 165.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid, 59.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

The same tactics were applied in 1929 with the 'Women's War', when Igbo women organised an anti-colonial protest to redress their grievances. The expression 'Sitting on a Man' was changed to 'Sitting on the Warrant Chiefs'. The tactic of 'Sitting on the Warrant Chiefs', was very popular with Igbo women, and used to great effect. Singing and dancing was done around the houses and offices of the Warrant Chiefs. The women would follow the Warrant Chiefs' every move, invading their space and forcing them to pay attention. That disturbed the wives of the Warrant Chiefs, who, in turn, put pressure on the Warrants to listen to the demands of women.

#### **2.3.4. Status of African Women in Post-Colonial Times**

A paper presented at the Joint 3<sup>rd</sup> African Association of Agricultural Economists (AAAE) and Agricultural Economists Association of South Africa (AEASA) Conference, in Cape Town, South Africa, September 19-23, 2010, authored by Labintan Adeniyi, titled, "Women farmer's and Agriculture Growth: Challenge and Perspective for Africa Face the Economic Crisis", highlighted the role of rural women farmers in the production of food for household consumption and for sale. Adeniyi argued that self-employed farmers account for more than half of rural employment in Sub-Saharan Africa and that majority of these group are women.<sup>205</sup>

The decline in food production and agricultural incomes during the 1980s, coupled with an increase in the population, worsened the conditions of rural women. Rural women started experiencing overwork, low productivity, little access to credit, land, training, and the use of rudimentary technology.<sup>206</sup> The failure of agriculture to provide the household contributed in increased workload on women as a result of the withdrawal by men of their labour from agriculture. By working as casual labour on larger farms, engaging in income generating activities and carrying on with their farming activities and other household chores, women had to make up for the family's food deficit. The government did little to

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<sup>205</sup> L. Adeniyi. 2010. 'Women Farmer's and Agriculture Growth: Challenge and Perspective for Africa Face the Economic Crisis', Poster Presented at the Joint 3<sup>rd</sup> African Association of Agricultural Economists (AAAE) and 48<sup>th</sup> Agricultural Economists Association of South Africa (AEASA) Conference, Cape Town, South Africa, 3.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

intervene, thereby neglecting the agricultural sector. Women rarely participated in national and regional policy-making, were invisible in national statistics and rarely participated in extension services. This meant that issues of greater concern to women had been neglected in developmental policies and programmes.<sup>207</sup>

Women lack access to land in many countries even though several countries are reforming landownership. This makes it difficult for them to recruit workers and get credit. A large group of women with small funds, little education and low social status, would find it difficult to enter markets. Therefore, these women had no option but to continue relying on male members of their family to provide them with access to land.<sup>208</sup> The economic crisis has negatively affected the rural landless, female-headed households and the urban poor.

### **2.3.5. South African or Local Perspectives on Rural Women's Lives**

An article by Cross and Friedman titled, "Women and Tenure: Marginality and the Left-hand power", focuses on women and tenure in South Africa. At first, they argued that tenure is best understood as a social and political than as a system of laws or rules. Since tenure is based on unspoken social assumptions, it is not easy to attack gender disadvantage in tenure through legal processes. Women are disadvantaged by social assumptions and informal land practices that are not controlled by law. These become particularly important when the land system is under pressure, either from overcrowding or from economic change. Therefore, tenure and power relations appear to bear down hardest on women.<sup>209</sup>

Cross and Friedman highlight the disadvantages faced by women within existing tenure systems and point out that these differ from system to system and in relation to different categories of women. To them, marital status, age and income are all factors which

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<sup>207</sup> Adeniyi. 'Women Farmer's and Agriculture Growth', 3.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>209</sup> C. Cross and M. Friedman. 1995. 'Women and Tenure: Marginality and the Left-hand Power', 17.

combine to determine the extent of women's disadvantage. Land priorities for women are in a different area. Since they are generally prohibited from using land in a political context, women tend to treat land as an economic asset. Their strategies for using land center on short-term social reproduction and the immediate support of their household and children. Support is obtained either through production and food security, or through selling, leasing or trading land in return for food or money to be used for household support. Research in the old homelands suggests that women are more inclined to treat land as a commodity than most men, and that women's land dealings can have the effect of individualizing the whole system of rights and community recruitment.<sup>210</sup>

The differing perceptions relating to land have to do with women's and men's concerns regarding production. Men generally see themselves as managers of strategies that relate the family in the community in a micro-political context, but also as providers of savings and of cash income. Women are managers of the internal resources of the household, and as providers of food, many provide income as well. Women tend to be subsistence farmers and grow staple crops. Men, as in other parts of Africa, concentrate on livestock and cash crops when they farm. When agricultural opportunities are small, women exploit them but if women's production efforts are seen to make money, men tend to take over.<sup>211</sup>

In seeing men's and women's priorities for land as being essentially opposed, men often seem to take on all-or-nothing view of the gender struggle for control of land. The fear is often expressed that if women are allowed any access to the land system, they will wrest control of both land relations and the domestic sphere from men. This change of control is then linked to the destruction of rural society through several processes.<sup>212</sup> In addition, women's access to land is perceived as leading women to reject the married family in favour of femme-sole-or idikazi-status. The rationale appears to be that if women have direct access to the means of production or reproduction, they will opt out of the subjugation implied in the formal marriage, and establish their own female-centered

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid, 28.

households, with the assistance of temporary lovers. It is feared that this, in turn, will lead to the collapse of society at family level. This outcome is feared not only by men, but also by conservative women.<sup>213</sup>

It is important to note two points here; first these social fears of political power of women to take over and subvert the land system are widely held by both women and men and are linked particularly to the modernizing changes which the land-tenure system has been undergoing. Secondly, that social changes are in fact taking place widely in rural communities, and are causing great anxiety, although changes in women's access to land are likely to be a result, rather than a cause, of the weakening of the older institutions in rural society. Whereas, in most social fields, youth are the social fraction challenging older male power-holders for dominance, in relation to land the perceived rivals are probably more often women.<sup>214</sup>

Shamim Meer, in her book, *Women and Authority: Perspectives from South Africa*, focuses on the beneficiaries of land reform. She notes the diversity of people involved in conscientizing people that women as a category are not a homogenous entity. Issues of class, age, marital status, kinship role and status - as wife, mother, sister and daughter – all intervene to create differences in power, authority and access to resources. Approaching the land question from this perspective allows one to uncover women's hidden experiences and reveal the forms of differentiations within communities and among categories of women.<sup>215</sup>

Although issues stressed above show the differences among women, Meer argues that there are common problems that women in general experience, especially in rural areas. For example, most rural women lack legitimate access to land and income. Their access usually depends on their link to a man, which forces married women to remain in problematic and even violent relationships, in order to secure other vital resources for

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>215</sup> S. Meer. 1977. 'Women, Land and Authority: Perspectives from South Africa', Cape Town, 3.

themselves and their children. Women also lack rights of inheritance, which is said to be often ambiguous or non-existent.<sup>216</sup>

In her concluding remarks, Meer suggests that land reform must incorporate empowerment objectives and the building of social movements to benefit women. This would enable the disposed groupings to serve as active agents in a process of democratization and development.<sup>217</sup>

Jacklyn Cock's contribution in an article titled *Domestic Service and Education for Domesticity: The Incorporation of Xhosa Women in Colonial Society*, detailed the way Xhosa women were incorporated into colonial society through domestic service, by highlighting the kind of violence that Xhosa women had to endure at the hands of settlers.<sup>218</sup> A touching story highlighted by Cock was that which came from Pringle's book titled, *Narrative of Residence in South Africa*, which described the plight of a *Kaffir*<sup>219</sup> woman with two children. The woman was one of the prisoners arrested for crossing the line or prescribed demarcation without permission. The punishment meted down to her was servitude among whites staying in the district.<sup>220</sup> This story clearly shows how Xhosa women were coerced into the service of the British settlers in the Eastern Cape.

Another incident, narrated by Maxwell and McGeogh, is that of a dozen *kaffir* women who visited Thomas Stubbs' family while looking for clay on the Kap River. While they were still eating the settler's bread, a group of men from the neighborhood arrived and made

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>218</sup> J. Cock, 'Domestic Service and Education for Domesticity: The Incorporation of Xhosa Women into Colonial Society', in C. Walker. 1990. 'Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945', Cape Town, 76-96.

<sup>219</sup> "In South Africa the use of the term to refer to a black African is profoundly offensive and inflammatory expression of contemptuous racism that is sufficient grounds for legal action. The term is associated especially with the era of apartheid, when it was commonly used as an offensiveness that has only increased over time. It now ranks as perhaps the most offensive term in South African English." <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/kaffir> (Retrieved on 2020-03-22). The term was originally used in South Africa to refer to the Xhosa people only before the Nationalist Party took over the government of South Africa in 1948 and then used the term to refer to every black South African. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/kaffir>. (Retrieved on 2020-05-01).

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.



them prisoners. They were taken to Grahamstown and hired out to farmers. Stubbs himself agreed that what he saw was the first piece of injustice done to the natives by the government and regarded it as direct coercion.<sup>221</sup>

Although the Xhosa women were willing to be incorporated into the colonial society, their wages were extremely low. It was justified that domestic workers received free boarding and lodging and that they were unskilled.<sup>222</sup> It was discovered that some domestic servants were exceptionally skilled but were not paid a living wage. This again serves as another indication of women's deprivation.

Cock tries to make sense of domestic servant-employer relations, by arguing that "domestic life was defined as the preserve of women"<sup>223</sup>, and that this prevented women's domestic experiences from being mentioned in any settler accounts. This serves to support Branca's definition of women's history as, "the history of the inarticulate."<sup>224</sup> Cock further argues that Xhosa women's inarticulateness was a result of their subordinate status within the colonial hierarchy of class and race.<sup>225</sup>

Missionaries are believed to have played an important role in shaping servant-employer relations. They promoted the settler notions of female inferiority. They did this by providing western-style education to Xhosa women. Xhosa women were seen by many missionaries as practically slaves to their husbands, beasts of burden exposed to brutalization at a tender by showing them that women's sphere was that of helpmate and not slaves of men.<sup>226</sup>

Another account which contributed as much on highlighting the role of women in South Africa was that of Margaret Kinsman in her article, 'Beasts of Burden: The Subordination of Southern Tswana Women, ca. 1800-1840'. Here Kinsman tried to put forward the

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<sup>221</sup> W.A. Maxwell and R.T. Mc Geogh. 1978. 'The Reminiscences of Thomas Stubbs, 1820-1877', Cape Town, 42.

<sup>222</sup> C. Walker. 1990. 'Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945', Cape Town, 79.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid, 84.

<sup>224</sup> P. Branca. 1978. 'Women in Europe since 1750', London, 14.

<sup>225</sup> Cock, 'Domestic Servant and Education for Domesticity', in Walker, 'Women and Gender'" 84.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid. 85.

structures which worked to keep southern Tswana women subordinated between 1800-1840. The intention is to provoke some discussion amongst historians about the role patriarchy had played among pre-colonial black communities in southern Africa, in order to understand the position of black women in colonial southern Africa. Women were mixed in communal ownership scenario and their contribution in the growing market for local grain was nothing but incidental. Women at first dominated the local market but the commoditization of grain production supported the growth of male-dominated peasantry and the wealthy agriculturally-based aristocracy.<sup>227</sup>

Although some women managed to sustain their independent production of grain, the majority of them relied on the fields of their brothers and husbands. In a case where a husband owns a field, he always claimed the harvest, leaving his wife in a position of increased dependence, subordination and exploitation.<sup>228</sup> Kinsman's paper illustrated the vulnerability of southern Tswana women in relation to their subordination to men. Different factors that intertwined contributed to this. These factors include: patterns of land tenure and ownership, work schedule imposed by subsistence production, vulnerability to deprivation and violence and, finally, the work ethics.<sup>229</sup>

There were variations between women's individual circumstances which occurred, especially between the very wealthy women and average or poor commoners. The wives of the chiefs enjoyed some material ease as they could trade their ornaments to distant communities for grain during extreme drought. They also had domestic and agricultural servants who assisted them in their tasks. Poorer commoners, on the other hand, depended on their own labour for subsistence and were, therefore, vulnerable to drought. They end up begging after abandoning cultivation.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> M. Kinsman. 1983. 'Beasts of Burden': The Subordination of Southern Tswana Women. Ca. 1800-1840', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 10 (1), 39-54.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Kinsman. 1983. 'Beasts of Burden', *Journal of Southern African studies*, vol. 10 (1), 39-54.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

Irrespective of all these, the wealthy southern Tswana women were subject to the same laws of land tenure, politically obscured by some customary prohibitions, which affected other southern Tswana women. The discovery of the plough and the acquiring thereof by men enabled men to extend their rights to private ownership over the grain harvested from the fields they ploughed. This enabled men to not only participate in but also benefit from commercial grain production in ways which women could not, leading to the re-ordering of southern Tswana society.<sup>231</sup>

Marc Epprecht, in the book “This Matter of Women is Getting Very Bad: Gender Development and Politics in Colonial Lesotho”, in his assessment of both Catholic and Protestant missions in Lesotho, shows how women’s groups in Lesotho contributed to both economic and political change. Women’s self-empowerment was done through prayer and home improvement that were both proto-feminist and proto-nationalist.<sup>232</sup>

Epprecht maintained that Lesotho’s male migrants, working in South Africa, constituted a quarter of the population in 1960. The absence of men opened new opportunities for female autonomy and achievement yet without any legal back up, experiencing sexual violence, and still relying upon men economically. Schools were dominated by girls who were being prepared for life of domesticity and motherhood. Catholic patriarchy saw no need to train civilized wifely helpmeets because their graduates were being trained for a life of celibacy. Protestants looked less discriminatory as seen when they ordained their first local minister in the 1880s while the Catholics only had its first Sotho priest in 1931. Protestants prioritizes education by forming the schooled elite while the Catholics were eager to befriend chiefs, thereby enabling them to gain the majority of followers amongst the chiefs.<sup>233</sup>

The second part of Epprecht’s book brought a different approach to his argument. He spoke about women’s associations such as Protestant Bo-ma-bana (Mothers of children)

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> M. Epprecht. 2000. “This Matter of Women is Getting Very Bad: Gender and the Politics in Colonial Lesotho”, Pietermaritzburg, 427.

<sup>233</sup> Epprecht. “This Matter of Women”, 427.

and Catholic Ladies of Sainte Anne, whose membership were over 20 000 combined in 1961. These associations were said to have played an important role in giving women an empowering sense of achievement and perfectibility, while facilitating uninhibited and nontraditional behavior.<sup>234</sup>

Another association was Basutholand Homemakers Association. It bolstered the economic self-reliance of the many women and their children who despaired of unreliable men and turned to autonomous profit-making. Homemakers Association encouraged people to have gardens and in 1986, nearly a quarter of vegetables eaten in Lesotho came from home gardens, which also generated income for one in four rural households.<sup>235</sup>

Hanretta Sean in her article, 'Women, Marginality and the Zulu State: Women's Institutions and Power in the Early Nineteenth Century', attempted to trace the changes in Zulu gender relations during the early to mid-nineteenth century by analyzing the different conditions and experiences of women and the cultural construction of gender. The outcome was that the social, cultural and material conditions of women became highly stratified during the early nineteenth century. The integration of women's lives into the Zulu state made possible the likelihood of dramatic increase in both the exploitation and the acquisition of power and prestige by Zulu women. Certain women's roles began to be seen as determined by their social and political associations rather than as inhering in the nature of the female body. One noticeable change that occurred was the appearance of a class of women diviners. This might have resulted from women's growing dissatisfaction with the extent of the state interference in their personal relationships, or with the disparity between their status and that of royal and other favoured women.<sup>236</sup>

Gender in Zulu society was viewed firstly, as the appropriation of women's productive and reproductive powers by men which was a fundamental economic transaction. Here all

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid, 428.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> S. Hanretta. 1998. 'Women, Marginality and the Zulu State: Women's Institutions and Power in the Early Nineteenth Century', *The Journal of African History*, vol. 39, No. 3, 389-415.

forms of political and social organization were possible by the extraction of surplus labour from women at the level of homestead. This rendered Zulu women as oppressed, though located at the very source of power which was agricultural production.<sup>237</sup>

Secondly, from the anthropological point of view, women were regarded as outsiders within the Zulu society. It is said that women joined the household through the major economic transaction in Zulu society, that is, the exchange of women as daughters, and cattle, as bride-wealth (lobola), between the male heads of households. The women's positions as outsiders in the homestead affected the power dynamics between themselves and their husbands in several ways. This can be altered through the relationship a woman had with her father's family, that is, lineage alliances, especially if she was from a high-ranking family. She can use this lineage alliance to affect the outcome of succession dispute by threatening the husband's control over the reproduction of the homestead.<sup>238</sup>

Zwodwa Memela, Minister of the Methodist Church of South Africa, in her article titled: "Racism and its Impact on Black Women: A South African Perspective", highlighted the effects of racism on black South African women to conscientise black theologians on how theology continues to perpetuate the aims and objectives of white and racist oppressive rule whilst claiming to be speaking from a black experience of the struggle. In her investigations, Memela discovered that black women experience oppression from both white men and white women, and then from black men. In order to put this into perspective, Memela started by putting forward her understanding of racism. She argues that, racism is greatly linked with colonialism in South Africa<sup>239</sup>, but the issue of race manifested itself since 1950 because of the apartheid ideology (separate development). It was assumed that the South African population consists of many discreet inassimilable groups and this, according to South African historian, Theal, provided whites with, the

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Z. Memela. 1994. "Racism and its Impact on Black Women: A South African Perspective", *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, Vol. 8. no. (1), 14.

way to defend disparity existing between the ruling and servicing classes.<sup>240</sup> After scrutinizing some definitions of racism, Memela concludes that ,“the core of racism therefore is injustice, irrespective of the name which it takes.”<sup>241</sup>

Memela further argues that racism brought about psychological trauma on black women. She discovered that black women were conditioned from early childhood to believe that they were intellectually inferior to black men, white men and white women. At school women were encouraged to pursue domestic subjects, whereas the males went for science and mathematics. As adults, black working-class women were expected to dress in overalls, a pinafore and headgear so that they did not dress like the madam. At church, black women were the most oppressed though in the majority. They were not considered for positions of power, yet they were expected to take care of those in power. She further points out that when black male theologians spoke of liberation, that liberation either excluded black women or, the lesser (women) was included in the larger (men).

Memela’s final argument is that racism reduced women to a servicing class. That involved economic exploitation of women, as Bennet observes, people with no rights and are easily manipulated and exploited in the labour market, are what the capitalist system needs most.<sup>242</sup> In the South African context, this group of people were the black working class and black women suffered the most as they were triply oppressed, which means that they were exploited as women, and because they were black, and that they were workers. When their husbands went to the cities they were left in rural areas, looking after their children. Those who ended up going to the cities were forced to do so by poverty and ended up working as domestic workers. They looked after white women’s children, leaving theirs unattended and without supervision. Racism here was used as a strategy to make black women feel ashamed both of their blackness and womanhood.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>242</sup> Memela. 1994. “Racism and its Impact on Black Women: A South African Perspective”, *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, Vol. 8. no. (1), 14.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

Memela concludes by saying that although women form the majority of the labour force, economically, they were the least paid. Politically, the few women who held positions of responsibilities were subjected to a lot of stress. They were expected to prove that they were capable. Religiously, women were not treated any better. They were constantly threatened if they spoke against men.<sup>244</sup>

In Kongolo and Bamgose's article, titled *Participation of Rural Women in Development: A Case Study of Tsheseng, Thintwa, and Makhalaneng Villages, South Africa*, they investigate factors which influence limited participation in the government process by women in South Africa's rural areas. The influence of the government's development policy, education and cultural values on rural women was sought and investigated. It was then discovered that most women in rural areas are illiterate, lack initiatives, innovations and self-reliance attitudes. They are also isolated, confined and marginalized due non-interactive government policies on rural areas. It is also realized that there is no proper structured development strategy to create needed opportunities in these areas, resulting in high employment among rural women in the country.<sup>245</sup>

Some of the reasons put forward as to why Kongolo and Bamgose decided to focus on rural women were that women play crucial roles in both subsistence and market food production in Africa. Furthermore, women are in the majority in rural areas and are responsible for 50% of all productive activities. It is also realized that overlooking the plight of rural women will have negative impacts on the development of rural areas and that of the nation. It was discovered that women outnumber men significantly in rural areas of South Africa, because they remain behind when men are away in search of jobs in urban areas. It was also realized that women's participation in development initiatives is strongly influenced by their educational levels. In other words, an educated woman stands a better chance of being employed, thereby joining the labour force, as compared to an illiterate one, who dominates the majority of the unemployed.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> M. Kongolo, & O.O. Bamgose. 2002. 'Participation of Rural Women in Development: A Case Study of Tsheseng, Thintwa, and Makhalaneng Villages, South Africa'. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, vol. (4).

<sup>246</sup> Ibid, 86.

The respondents themselves were able to identify problem areas hindering their active participation in the development process of their respective communities. Problems were reduced to six; namely, a lack of information, lack of resources, lack of government assistance, lack of education and skills, consideration and belief in cultural values, and the influence of discrimination practices. Despite these, women often contribute to family earnings by assisting in family farms, produce handcrafts, brew beer for sale, or can work somewhere else in the farm to support themselves.

Kongolo and Bamgose conclude that rural women continue to remain obscure and invisible in the process of economic development, although they comprise most of the population in rural areas of South Africa. They claim that, “participation of rural women in economic activities at all levels is crucial for the development of South Africa and for economic advancement of women. This can be summed up by saying rural women’s work is never finished; farm work and household chores are part and parcel of their daily activities, including looking after their children.”<sup>247</sup> They carry out subsistence and near-subsistence agriculture, and are said to comprise over 80 percent of agricultural labour force. They are also responsible for tasks such as planting, weeding, watering, harvesting, and storing of crops. It was found that lack of information, resources and government assistance, lack of education, cultural values and discrimination against rural women were the most important factors contributing to the inactive participation of rural women in developments.

Oberhauser, in her paper titled, *Gendered Livelihood Strategies in Rural South Africa and Appalachia*, gives a good account of the contextual nature of gendered livelihood by comparing rural women’s producer groups in former homelands of South Africa and Appalachia.<sup>248</sup> By producer groups, the author is referring to cooperatives, networks, and other collective economic activities that generate income for households and are part of

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<sup>247</sup> Kongolo, & Bamgose. ‘Participation of Rural Women in Development: A Case Study of Tsheseng, Thintwa, and Makhalaneng Villages, South Africa’. *Journal of International Women’s Studies*, vol. (4). , 88.

<sup>248</sup> A. N. Oberhauser. 1998. “Gendered Livelihood Strategies in Rural South Africa and Appalachia”, Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Division of the Association of American Geographers, Memphis.



community-based economic strategies. The discussion focuses on the link between socio-economic conditions and gendered livelihood strategies and the economic viability of these producer groups as sustainable income-generating activities, especially in rural areas. Comparison of production and marketing strategies of a sewing group in South Africa and a knitting group in Appalachia reveals similarities, yet important differences that derive from their specific historical and cultural contexts. Through comparison of the gendered nature of collective economic strategies in two regions of the First and Third World, the research aims at advancing knowledge of gender and rural development.

Women are excluded from many formal economic activities, especially in rural areas. This has contributed greatly to their involvement in casual or unregulated labour, in order to cope with economic hardship. This economic marginalization forces some rural women to engage in collective income-generating activities such as cooperatives and networks as part of household and community economic strategies which, in turn, has the potential to empower women.

In comparing these two regions, it was discovered that there were similarities as well as differences. Similarities encompass dependence on primary sector activities, relatively high levels of rurality, gender-segregated employment, and prevalence of informal economic strategies, especially among women. Differences include historically and culturally unique characteristics that have shaped the process of peripheralisation: Appalachia industrialised relatively earlier and developed distinct relations of production in extractive industries based largely on class while the homelands of South Africa are built on extreme social oppression in an economy that was until recently relatively isolated in the global economy.

In summary, the study established that the exclusion of women from mainstream economic opportunities has forced women to engage in casual, informal, and unregulated labour at rates that exceed those of men. According to the author very little research on the informal sector, however, compares these types of activities within advanced industrial and developing contexts. He further argued that women's contribution in the

family and community incomes is greatly looked down upon by contemporary analyses of rural production systems.<sup>249</sup> These findings further demonstrate the need for a careful analysis of women's roles in the household and local economy in order to incorporate it into rural development efforts.<sup>250</sup>

The literature reviewed here placed much emphasis on the deprivations brought about by colonialism on Third World women. Amadiume stresses that peoples' roles amongst the pre-colonial Igbo society of Nigeria was never feminized or masculinized, as women were also able to play roles designated to men. Gordon supported this by accusing colonialists of bringing gender ideology and practices of the west that emphasize male dominance and female dependency. After reviewing the activities of missionaries and settlers, Cock concludes that the violence that Xhosa women endured at the hands of these people played an important role in shaping servant-employer relations. Missionaries and settlers promoted the settler notion of female inferiority. Africaneye.wordpress.com also focused on the effect of colonialism on African women with special focus on the economic and the socio-political impact. Economically, the focus was on land alienation as experienced by women and socio-politically, women were rendered creatures of the private domain while the real work of ruling and running the nation was left to men. This was in sharp contrast with women's role and position in pre-colonial African society. Another contribution associated with the economic aspect of women was made by De Beer and Swanepoel, who argue that women have no access to land though they are the ones responsible for family and national food production.

In conclusion, although all the writers focused on how colonialism contributed to the misery that women endured for a long time, especially Third World women, my focus is on what women farmers in the area of Nwanedi, in the Limpopo Province of South Africa, have endured since 1994 and the silence around the whole experience. This has little to do with colonialism but everything to do with the history of the region (demography). The area is at the northern-most border of South Africa with Zimbabwe and experiences a

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<sup>249</sup> Oberhauser, 'Gendered Livelihood Strategies', 5.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

high rate of contact between the people living in the area and their neighbours from Zimbabwe. During the apartheid era, the border security was very strict and tight, however, with the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994, the border laws were relaxed, leading to a high influx of Zimbabweans in the region, not only through the border post but also through broken fences. Some of these people started working on local farms, especially women, and ended up mixing with the locals and unscrupulously gained identity documents and then houses in the area. The villages, small as they were, started experiencing an increase in population. Most of these people were women and they were the ones dominating the workforce on the local farms. This group of Zimbabweans are the ones that came in handy in providing abundance of labour force women farmers in the Nwanedi farms. It is this group of farm workers that many farm owners will always refer to as sometimes irresponsible and uncaring when it comes to looking after the farm in the absence of farm owners, especially when they are away to attend workshops or conferences (see interviews in Addendum 1). It is imperative for us to first look at the history of the area under study in order to understand the kind of people we are dealing with in this study. This brings us to the next chapter which will focus on the historical perspective of Limpopo land holding and traditional authority where greater emphasis will be on the history of land holding in the region through pre-colonial, to colonial dispossession, and apartheid. It gives a historical context for land issues and traditional authorities through the apartheid and the Bantustan eras.

## CHAPTER THREE: LIMPOPO LANDHOLDING AND TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY IN AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

### 3.1. Introduction

This section aims at giving an overview of the history of landholding in the region through precolonial, colonial dispossession, and apartheid. The idea is to give a historical context for land issues and traditional authorities through apartheid and Bantustan eras. In trying to make sense of their choice of mainly focusing on the issue of land tenure from the time of the arrival of the whites in South Africa, Miller and Pope emphasise that, “The indigenous peoples exercised the most fundamental land tenure in forms of existence which were inextricably associated with the land.”<sup>251</sup> Their work, however, is associated with the allocation of land in the form of title, which started with the arrival of white settlers.<sup>252</sup> To them, “land tenure represents social, political and economic considerations for a given society in a particular stage of development.”<sup>253</sup>

### 3.2. Land Tenure

According to White, land tenure refers to, “the rights of individuals or groups over arable, grazing and residential land, how such rights are acquired, what they consist of, how they operate in the holding, transfer and inheritance of land and how they may be extinguished.”<sup>254</sup> In their book, *Disputed Land: The Historical Development of the South African Land Issue, 1652-2011*, Changuion and Steenkamp argue that land tenure is a modern phenomenon. Men did not have to own land during prehistoric times as they were only nomadic hunters and gatherers. They did not cultivate the land. As time went by, they started to see the need to claim areas for themselves when they started hunting in

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<sup>251</sup> D.L.C. Miller and A. Pope. ‘Land Title in South Africa’, Juta & Co, Cape Town, 2.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>254</sup> C.M.N. 1959. ‘A Survey of African Land Tenure in Northern Rhodesia,’ in *Journal of African Administration*. Vol. 11, No. 4, October, 171-178.

groups and form clans. They had to defend their areas against other groups who wanted to use them. This then rendered land tenure communal. Even when they started the issue of cultivation in order to produce food, the land did not belong to an individual, but was regarded as communal property. This is supported by Marks and Atmore, who argue that during pre-colonial period, especially by the beginning of the nineteenth century, all African societies in southern Africa, “had long passed from any simple agricultural self-sufficiency or kinship-based political organisation to more complex social formations.”<sup>255</sup> They further maintain that ,“these societies were characterised by communal production and the absence of private property in land.”<sup>256</sup> The issue of an individual owning land came much later, making the two authors to regard land tenure as something to be associated with the right of ownership.<sup>257</sup>

With regards to the right to ownership, the two authors define it as, “the most comprehensive right any person can exercise in respect of any object.”<sup>258</sup> It is recognised in the constitutions of many countries, including South Africa. The authors wanted individual right to land to be prevented in order to prevent only the rich to own land at the expense of the poor. This was what the communists had advocated for without much success because this is one of the pillars on which capitalism and successful economic development are built.<sup>259</sup> This gives a person powers to do with his possession whatever he likes and when this is translated into land, it has led to many problems and conflicts.<sup>260</sup>

The argument put forward by Changuion and Steenkamp on the one hand, and by Marks and Atmore was placed under serious scrutiny by contemporary African historians who accuse them of providing a distorted pre-colonial historical account. The issue of communal ownership as the key feature of African land tenure was nullified by recent findings which brought forward evidence that homesteads and arable land were allocated to individual families instead of communally, though in a patriarchal way as shown by

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<sup>255</sup> S. Marks and A. Atmore. 1985. ‘Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa’” England, 10.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> L. Changuion and B. Steenkamp, 2012. ‘Disputed Land: The Historical Development of the South African Land Issue, 1652-2011’, Pretoria, 11.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid, 12.

Kinsman in her article titled 'Beasts of Burden: The Subordination of Southern Tswana Women, ca. 1800-1840'. In her attempt to demonstrate the kind of subordination Tswana women had endured during the period 1800-1840, which was a period before colonial subjugation of Africans, she maintained that arable land was the domain of men. The chief allocates blocks of land to the headman or ward heads. The headman would then assign blocks of arable land to the family elders, who then assigned fields to themselves or their sons for the use of their wives.<sup>261</sup>

The fields allocated to these individual families were for them to utilise individually, therefore nullifying the issue of communal land ownership.

### 3.3. The History of Land Tenure in Europe

Land belonged to the state in Europe until the Renaissance (500AD until 1450), when a feudal system of land tenure emerged. The development of technology, especially the plough, and the utilisation of domesticated animals to draw the plough, accelerated an increase in production.<sup>262</sup> This development in agriculture, made the peasant to produce enough, not only for his own needs, but also to sell or barter some of it and thus become affluent. Any dedicated and industrious farmer could get hold of land for himself, thus putting an end to communal ownership of land during the Middle Ages and eventually to individual ownership after the Renaissance.<sup>263</sup> Presently, land tenure is the key component in gaining and exerting economic and political power, therefore the pursuit of land tenure was one of the most powerful drivers in human history over many centuries.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> M, Kinsman. 1993. 'Beasts of Burden: The Subordination of Southern Tswana women, ca. 1800-1840', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 10, No. 1, 39-54.

<sup>262</sup> Changuion and Steenkamp. 'Disputed Land', 12.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

### 3.4. The Transfer of European Concept of Land Tenure to South Africa

The issue of individual land tenure was a new phenomenon, brought to Southern Africa by the Europeans. Africans have treated each territory inhabited or cultivated by a certain ethnic group as owned or utilised by the community in the name of their king or chief.<sup>265</sup> The arrival of the Europeans in the southern tip of Africa from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, made the European recognise the potential for utilising the land of the continent and the need arose to cultivate and own it. The European realised that because of the minor difference between summer and winter, there are no extremes in day temperatures. This placed South Africa as a country with a healthy and stimulating climate that is conducive to outdoor life and farming activities throughout the year.<sup>266</sup>

The assertion by Changuion and Steenkamp that individual land tenure is something new and was brought by Europeans in southern Africa, is dismissed by new crops of scholars. Schoeman, in his book “Archaeology of Farming Communities in Mpumalanga Province and the Adjacent Lowveld in North-eastern South Africa”, maintains that farming communities have lived in north-eastern South Africa since the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. These communities lived in scattered homesteads until the introduction of chiefdoms toward the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium. It was only by the 16<sup>th</sup> century that large-scale aggregation started, hence the beginning of the Bokoni towns. Food production and procurement ranged from small household-scale practices to specialised hunting and intensive farming which boasted the regional economy. This led to interaction between the local enterprises and international trade networks that were disrupted by the European colonial powers when they began exerting their control over southern Africa.<sup>267</sup>

Delius, Maggs and Schoeman in their article titled ‘Bokoni: Old Structures, New Paradigms? Rethinking Pre-colonial Society from the Perspective of the Stone-walled Sites in Mpumalanga’, also emphasised that pre-colonial society in South Africa have clear built evidence of a complex agricultural system. A good example of this is found in

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<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> A, Schoeman. 2021. “Archaeology of Farming in Mpumalanga Province and the Adjacent Lowveld in North-eastern South Africa”, University of the Witwatersrand, Oxford University Press.

an area between Ohrigstad in the north and Carolina in the south where there is an area with densely walled settlements with homesteads linked by walled roads interspersed among the spreads of agricultural terraces.<sup>268</sup> They further maintain that the terraced settlements represented a significant example of agricultural innovation and one that was unique in pre-colonial South Africa. The farming communities did not practice shifting agriculture as many researchers have alluded to when it comes to the common type of farming practiced in southern Africa. It is said that the Bokoni agricultural system as informed by its settlement terraces represents a direct contrast to the shifting type of cultivation as there is evidence of long-time maintenance.<sup>269</sup> These people were able to produce enough as motivated by trade links with the coast which enabled them to trade with other traders locally and internationally. A clear indication that Africans were very innovative even before the arrival of the whites and that what Changuion et al are alleging has no substance or in other words, they were ill-informed.

Widgren, Maggs, Plikk, Risberg, Schoeman and Westerberg also emphasised the role that Bokoni pre-colonial farmers played in the promotion of trade from the east coast around Maputo. They argue that the Bokoni people acted as intermediaries and supplied cattle and agricultural surplus to the coast between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This helps in the intensification of agriculture due to a huge demand of surplus for international or regional trade.<sup>270</sup> Trade which was taking place in the coast of Maputo enabled new crops such as maize to be introduced and ended-up as staple food well before European colonisation in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>271</sup> The extensive agricultural terracing and the long walled cattle roads is a clear indication of closer integration between animal husbandry and the cultivation of crops. These were skills that Africans had mastered long before the arrival of the whites in southern Africa.

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<sup>268</sup> P, Delius, T, Maggs and M, Schoeman. 2012. 'Bokoni: Old Structures, New Paradigms? Rethinking Pre-colonial Society from the Perspective of the Stone-walled Sites in Mpumalanga', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 38, Issue 2, 399-414.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> M, Widgren, T. Maggs, A, Plikk, J. Risberg, M.H. Schoeman and L. Westerberg. 2016. 'Pre-colonial Agricultural Terracing in Bokoni, South Africa: Typology and Exploratory Excavation', *Journal of African Archaeology*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 33-53.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.



### 3.5. Differences between Black and White on Land Tenure

The Western socio-economic and political dispensation and value systems differed radically from the traditional system and value systems of the black nations. The Western idea of socio-economic competition and the profit motive was foreign to traditional black society. Among blacks, the age-old customs and traditions determined the position, duties and responsibilities of everyone in the community. Land was communally owned and their agricultural produce mainly for own consumption and to a lesser extent for selling or barter.<sup>272</sup> According to Khapoya, communally owned land gives people, “the right to use it and not to own it or dispose of it as they saw fit.”<sup>273</sup> Africans’ believe that land was not a commodity or an economic factor of production that could be bought or sold that differentiated them from the Europeans and set the two in a collision course.<sup>274</sup>

The traditional leader, or chief administered all land occupied on behalf of his community. This he does through his sub-chiefs and headmen who regulate the distribution and use of land in their respective areas. Some writers, for example, Khapoya, call this the ‘hierarchical system’, which he describes as, “a highly centralized political system presided over by a very powerful king and served an efficient bureaucracy or military machine. The king, paramount chief, or military commander had subordinates, who exercised whatever power they had entirely at the discretion of the person at the top.”<sup>275</sup> The area is held in trust for the community and the chief never had an unlimited right to the land. Natural resources such as wood, water, grass et cetera were regarded as common property of the whole tribe. Livestock could be grazed by individuals wherever they wanted to, but within the communal land. Each family was entitled to a piece of land for habitation and cultivation as the chief allocated. The cattle of other members could graze on someone’s land, but nobody could cultivate somebody’s land. The land remained in his possession for as long as he lived, but he could not sell or barter it and

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<sup>272</sup> Changuion and Steenkamp, ‘Disputed Land’, 22.

<sup>273</sup> V.B. Khapoya, 1994. ‘The African Experience: An Introduction’, United States of America, 136.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid, 62.

should he and his family leave the land permanently, it would revert to the chief who could then give it to another member of the community. The chief made ad hoc decisions about land rights usually in consultation with his council of elders.<sup>276</sup>

The traditional setup had a king, as head of the ethnic group, then several chiefs who controlled headmen or indunas who, in turn-controlled groups of families who, together, made up a community. The chief was the head of a political system with his councillors as his advisors and held his position for life. His position was hereditary. They [Africans] knew nothing about political parties and factions in the Western notion that political power could be gained or lost in an election to be held regularly.<sup>277</sup>

### 3.6. History of Land Tenure in the Transvaal

The Sand River Convention of 1852 officially recognised the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR). Disunity amongst the Boers north of the Vaal River made the territory remain divided into three, the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, the Republic of Lydenburg and Soutpansberg, which is the region this study is focusing on. The three republics remained separated until they officially merged in 1860 to form the Transvaal Republic. This resulted in the Transvaal borders stretching from the Orange River to the Limpopo River.<sup>278</sup> The Sand River Convention was seen as the culmination of an eighteen-year quest by the Great Trekkers of achieving independence from the British, even though they were still disunited.<sup>279</sup> The British on the other hand saw this as a relief to the financial burden their country was experiencing as a result of an increase in British commitments in Europe by the time.<sup>280</sup> These borders included five ethnic groups, the Tswana (west), Venda (north), Shangaan-Tsonga (east), Swazi (east) and North Sotho (northern and eastern regions). This establishment of borders, irrespective of ethnic groups, took place

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<sup>276</sup>Changuion and Steenkamp, 'Disputed Land', 23.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid, 60.

<sup>279</sup> Muller, '500 Years', 178.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid, 179.

throughout Africa when European powers divided Africa among themselves during the so-called 'Scramble of Africa' in the last quarter of the nineteenth-century.<sup>281</sup>

The constitution, which was approved in 1860, allowed each farmer who arrived before 1852 to receive two farms (one for arable and the other for livestock farming). Some people in high positions, such as Paul Kruger (who had fourteen farms) and Piet Joubert (with twenty-nine farms), obtained large pieces of land.<sup>282</sup>

Farming methods in the interior were labour-intensive and farming depended mainly on black labour. This fuelled suspicion that much of the government legislation and the resolutions of the National Assembly about the regulation of black-white relations were focused on providing labour to white farmers. The National Assembly therefore provided for the allocation of land to black communities to live on in November 1853, on condition that they would make their labour available to white farmers.<sup>283</sup>

In order to curb labour shortage on farms in the Transvaal during the 1860s, the Boers resorted to forced labour. This, according to Hamilton, Mbenga and Ross, "took a more general and coercive form that in turn brought about widespread distress among the African communities."<sup>284</sup> The Boers despised the insufficiency of voluntary labour from Africans and decided to resort to forced labour. The Boers behaviour forced a contemporary writer, Fisher, to say the following about Africans in the Transvaal in general:

Africans were required forcefully to perform all the labour in the field, such as pouring manure in the land, weeding, reaping, building including making dams and canals, together with taking care of their own family and personal needs. In the process, Boers would go to villages and demanded that they be provided with a specific number of women to weed their gardens without being payed.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Changuion and Steenkamp, 'Disputed Land', 63.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> C. Hamilton, B.K. Mbenga, and R. Ross. 2012. 'South Africa: From Early Times to 1885', Vol, 1, South Africa: Cambridge University Press, 352.

<sup>285</sup> W.E. Garrett Fisher. 1969. 'The Transvaal and the Boers', New York: Negro University Press, 275.

The economic decline of the Transvaal in the 1860s was said to have also played itself out in exacerbating this forced labour practice. The previously profitable Soutpansberg area, known as a good and profitable hunting area, were showing some signs of decline. These diminishing resources forced the ZAR leaders such as Paul Kruger and Andries Potgieter to resort to harsher methods of taxation on Africans. These they did through “exhortation, fines, proclamations, and hectoring instructions to landdrosts, with little or no effect.”<sup>286</sup> The need for more African labour by the Boers forced them to resort to territorial expansion. This they did by engaging in military expeditions westward, eastward, and northward but with very little success until the 1880s and 1890s when it yielded much larger numbers of captive Africans.<sup>287</sup>

The discovery of diamonds in the 1860s and 1870s made labour scarcer to the farmers because of the attractiveness of diamonds. This came as a result of the short-term economic boom due to high demand for agricultural produce to feed the more than 30 000 population of Kimberley. This then led to the high demand for better agricultural land.<sup>288</sup> This period saw the revival of conflict over land by both the Boers and the Africans throughout the 1870s and the early 1880s.<sup>289</sup> The government introduced Act No. 9 of 1870, for the prevention of loitering, theft and irregularities. The Act aimed at making Africans subservient to the white inhabitants. Black labour was procured by the farmers on a forced basis.<sup>290</sup> After the end of the Mfecane, when conditions in the Transvaal became calm, some smaller tribes dispossessed during Mzilikazi’s reign of terror, gradually returned to their former places of abode and found their places already occupied by white farmers and failed to reclaim their land as they could not provide proof of land tenure. These people were then allowed to settle on the land on condition that they made themselves available as labourers on farms.<sup>291</sup> This led to tension between the black communities and the white immigrants. Conflicting land claims played an important role on these misunderstandings. The white farmers used the booking-in system which meant

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<sup>286</sup> S. Trapido. ‘Reflections on Land, Office and Wealth in the South African Republic, 1850-1900’, in Marks and Atmore (Eds), ‘Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa’, 356.

<sup>287</sup> Hamilton, et al, ‘South Africa’, 353.

<sup>288</sup> Shillington. ‘History of Africa’, 326.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Changuion and Steenkamp, ‘Disputed Land’, 64.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

the labourers had to work for the farmer against their will. Other contributing factors included, the levying of tax on black communities, the procurement of arms and ammunition by blacks, livestock theft and the struggle for supreme power contributed to the conflict between the two population groups.<sup>292</sup>

### 3.7. The Vhembe District

The present-day Vhembe District has been home to numerous groups of people over the years. The area is located along the important trade routes linking it to the broader southern African regional economy for centuries with the establishment of big historical trading centres such as Mapungubwe, Dzata, and Great Zimbabwe, connecting the Vhembe area with the world economy through trading in goods such as ivory, beads and pottery.<sup>293</sup>

The Ngoni were the first to settle in the area before the arrival of the more powerful Singo, who arrived much later and settled in the Nzhelele river valley.<sup>294</sup> It is at Nzhelele where the Singo established their capital Dzata in the latter half of the seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries. The Singo overwhelmed and subjugated groups of people that had lived in the area and expanded into the Soutpansberg area. They carried on conquering other groups living in the Soutpansberg range region until they split into three groups, the eastern, western and southern groups. This took place between 1750 and 1800 during the reign of Thoho ya Ndou. The western group belonged to Khosi Mphephu and his relatives, Sinthumule and Kutama, and the eastern group comprised of people belonging to Mphaphuli and Tshivhase lineages.<sup>295</sup>

An increase in white presence in the area was signalled by the establishment, in 1848, of Schoemansdal by the Boers in the Soutpansberg area.<sup>296</sup> The dominant economy in the area centred on elephant hunting and ivory, and in some cases the area's African

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> P. Delius, M. Hay, N. Leontsinis and R. Molapo. 2019. 'Historical Research Report on Certain Land Claims in the Vhembe District', Rural Research Associates, 02.

<sup>294</sup> Delius, et. al. 'Historical Research Report', 02.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid.

communities traded their agricultural surplus and hunting produce with the Boers. Ivory dominated the trade in the area to such an extent that Beyer, from the Berlin Society missionary, in his account about Schoemansdaal in 1872, maintain that, although “the most celebrated cases of slave-trading in the Boer republics did feature Soutpansbergers, no one has suggested the prosperity of their village was founded upon it. That honour is reserved for another valuable African product – ivory.”<sup>297</sup> This confirms that a trade in captives also developed in the area in order to counter labour shortage that befell the Boer farming communities, according to Nemudzivhadi.<sup>298</sup>

The Boers in the Soutpansberg area clashed with the Vhavenda of Ramabulana about land tenure and other issues from 1854. The Vhavenda began to worry more with the arrival of whites in large numbers in the Southpansberg area from the south. There were between forty and fifty families in Schoemansdal in 1858, which grew to seventy families in 1861. Whites began to farm further away from Schoemansdal into land regarded by the Vhavenda as their ancestral land. White farmers started accusing Vhavenda of livestock theft, coupled with labour disputes and disputes about wages. All these contributed to growing animosity between white farmers and the Vhavenda communities. The Vhavenda were hired by white farmers to work in their farms. White hunters, on the other hand used the Vhavenda to hunt for them. Often these Vhavenda hunters would not return and the white hunter lost his gun and ammunition. The demand for tax on the Vhavenda communities further led to unhappiness across the Republic.<sup>299</sup>

This northwards expansion of the Boers brought with it new concepts of property ownership and labour, with slavery, forced labour and some elements of wage labour, as dominant forms of labour. According to Hamilton, Mbenga and Ross, forced labour became coercive, thereby bringing about “widespread distress among the African communities.”<sup>300</sup> Hamilton, et. al. even quoted another contemporary writer who

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<sup>297</sup> Marks and Atmore. “Economy and Society”, 315.

<sup>298</sup> <sup>298</sup> M.H. Nemudzivhadi, 1977, *The Conflict Between Mphaphu and the South African Republic (1895-1899)*, MA Dissertation, University of South Africa,12.

<sup>299</sup> Changuion and Steenkamp, ‘Disputed Land’, 70.

<sup>300</sup> C. Hamilton, B.K. Mbenga and R. Ross. 2012. ‘The Cambridge History of South Africa: From Early Times to 1885’, Vol. 1, New York, 352.

expressed his displeasure about the way Africans were being treated by the Boers when he mentioned that he observed Africans being forced to perform activities such as “manuring the land, weeding, reaping, building, making dams and canals, and at the same time support themselves.”<sup>301</sup> The writer also argue that he witnessed Boers arriving at a village and demanded about twenty to thirty women to go and weed their gardens, and the women, without any qualm did what they were told to do.<sup>302</sup>

The Boers considered voluntary labour as insufficient, hence their resorting to forced labour. Manual labour was seen as the responsibility of the black population. The most dominant form of labour supply was in the form of rent for residing on white owned or controlled land. Every white male was entitled to two farms during the 1800s as land alienation was not experienced as a result of the smaller size of the white population in the area and the limited capacity of the state to support the farmers. The state had to pay some government officials through land due to lack of capital and its inability to extract taxes systematically to finance its military expenditure.<sup>303</sup> This was easy because land was the only commodity in abundance which could be used to pay for much of the services rendered and also provide some additional income to the state.<sup>304</sup> The Boers demanded tribute and labour from African inhabitants through coercion and force, which eventually led to the destruction of Schoemansdal by Venda chief Makhado in 1867.<sup>305</sup>

The white farmers in Schoemansdal did not plant on a large scale so clashes between them and the Vhavenda were mostly about land for grazing and hunting fields and about where farmers had individual farms surveyed for them. The tension between the Vhavenda and whites in Schoemansdal became serious after the passing on of Ramabulana in 1864. A struggle for succession ensued between Ramabulana’s sons, Davhana and Makhado. The whites supported Davhana but Makhado won and immediately declared war against the whites which lasted for five years. These hostilities forced the Transvaal government to evacuate the town in 1867 and moved the people to

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<sup>301</sup> Ibid, 353

<sup>302</sup> Hamilton, et. al. “The Cambridge History”, 353.

<sup>303</sup> Marks and Atmore. ‘Economy and Society’, 35.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Delius, et.al. ‘Historical Research Report’, 20.

the south. In 1886, they founded a new town, Pietersburg and more and more farmers acquired farms in the vicinity of Pietersburg.<sup>306</sup>

The commandos, with the support of the Swazi, launched a series of attacks on the Vhavenda and peace was reached in 1869, at least temporarily. Makhado occupied Schoemansdal and its surroundings and announced the entire region between Doorn River in the south and east, the Brak River in the west and the Limpopo River in the north as his territory.<sup>307</sup>

### **3.8. Shaping the Land Policy through the Native Land Act of 1913**

There was a need to formalise the issue of black areas after 1910 with legislation. The South African Party (SAP), applied a policy of segregation (separation) in politics, labour affairs, urbanisation and land tenure. The Union legislation permitted each province to apply its own Native policy. In the Cape and Natal, blacks had qualified franchise, while in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, sharecropping, (also referred to as squatting) and leasing and selling of farms were increasing. Whites provided the land, blacks the labour and at the end of the day, the yield was divided. Those in favour of a republic saw this as a serious concern.<sup>308</sup>

With the appointment of General Hertzog as Minister of Native Affairs in 1912, a policy of racial segregation had to be maintained. The bill that Hertzog proposed aimed at preventing Black encroachment on White areas.<sup>309</sup> Blacks were encouraged to stay in demarcated areas where they would be afforded an opportunity to develop themselves economically and politically. Whites would be prohibited from owning land in the reserves and blacks would not be permitted to purchase land in areas demarcated for whites. Hertzog's idea would have paved the way of leading blacks to self-determination. Hertzog's slogan of 'South Africa First' led to a clash with Louis Botha, Prime Minister,

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid.

<sup>307</sup> Changuion and Steenkamp, 'Disputed Land', 71.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid, 130.

<sup>309</sup> Muller. '500 Years', 394.



and he was forced to resign in 1912, thereby excluded in the new Union cabinet. He continued to state his viewpoint on racial dispensation in his Pretoria speech of 20 January 1913, where he warned that whites should not take the entire Union for themselves but share it with the Natives. Natives should be allowed to develop themselves according to their own nature under the supervision of the Union government.<sup>310</sup>

The Natives Land Act of 1913 (Act No. 27 of 1913), stated in its preamble that it aimed at providing for the purchasing and leasing of land, including the regulation of land tenure by blacks and other persons. It is through this Act that a policy of segregation for South Africa was established. According to Muller, the bill introduced by Sauer in 1913, “gave the Blacks their own territory and prohibited the sale of White territory to Blacks and of Black territory to Whites.”<sup>311</sup> The Act did this by dividing the whole of South Africa into Native Reserves in which land could only be owned by Africans and the rest, approximately 88% owned by whites. Africans have no permission to stay in demarcated white land and those found were there temporarily.<sup>312</sup> According to Liebenow, the Union government used passes and other obstacles to limit Africans mobility after the 1913 Land Act. Africans who remained in their ancestral land were regarded as illegal squatters and allowed to stay because they were providing a pool of cheap labour to white farmers.<sup>313</sup> In the Cape Colony, some provisions of the Act were excluded, while sharecropping was restricted in the Free State. In the Transvaal, blacks on farms were protected but once they leave the farm on which they were registered when the act came into force, the protection was gone.<sup>314</sup> Muller further states that the bill, though applicable to the whole of South Africa, could only be enforced practically in the Transvaal and Natal. In the Free State there were legislation already in place which prohibited Blacks from purchasing land in White areas, that is, Ordinance 1 of 1876. In the Cape, the Black franchise was

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<sup>310</sup>Changuion and Steenkamp, ‘Disputed Land’, 133.

<sup>311</sup> C.F.J. Muller. 1993. ‘Five Hundred Years: A History of South Africa’, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Pretoria, Academica, 394.

<sup>312</sup> P. Curtin, S. Feierman, L. Thompson and J. Vansina. 1988. ‘African History’, London, 505.

<sup>313</sup> J.G. Lienenow. 1986. ‘African Politics: Crises and Challenges’, USA, 26.

<sup>314</sup> Changuion and Steenkamp, ‘Disputed Land’, 134.

entrenched in the Union of South Africa constitution, so any law forbidding Blacks to own property would have conflicted with the constitution.<sup>315</sup>

Despite opposition from Merriman in the House of Assembly and W. P. Schreiner in the Senate, the Natives Land Act (No. 27 of 1913) was passed in June 1913. All Black leaders, except Jabavu, who had trusted Sauer so much, opposed the law. The South African Native National Congress, the later African National Congress (ANC), reacted by sending deputations, first to the Minister of Native Affairs in May 1913, secondly to the Acting Minister of Native Affairs in July 1913, and finally to London in 1914. In all these attempts the ANC failed to get sympathy from any of the offices they visited. The British government refused to be drawn into the internal affairs of another country. The bone of contention on the side of Africans was the powers given to White farmers “to eject them from land on which they had been living for generations.”<sup>316</sup>

Black areas (Native territories) and locations (reserves) were indicated and found to comprise only 7.3 percent of the total area of the Union of South Africa. With further additions this was increased to 8.3 percent. This land was mainly situated where the various black nations were concentrated, particularly in the Transvaal where these areas were mainly the areas that had been proclaimed as reserves for the black nations under the old ZAR government. Blacks would now be able to operate their own separate socio-economic and political system in these areas and the whites in the rest of South Africa. The Act became the first unitary measure in which the principle of segregation was applied in practice and recognised by law.<sup>317</sup>

According to Beinart and Bundy, the Natives Land Act of 1913 gave Africans a small portion of land, about 7% in 1913, then 13% in 1936. An increase in the African population contributed to shortage of land and land degradation. The government’s aim was to

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<sup>315</sup> Muller. ‘Five Hundred Years’, 394.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid, 396.

<sup>317</sup> Changuin and Steenkamp, ‘Disputed Land’, 135.

frustrate Africans, who were subjected to taxation, so that they solve the problem of shortage of labour, especially on farms.<sup>318</sup>

In their analysis of the behaviour of people in rural areas during the 1920s, Beinart and Bundy argue that people in rural areas of South Africa tend to organise themselves differently. In the western and southern Cape, agrarian protest focused more around the issue of wages whereas in the Transvaal, Orange Free State and Natal, those with tenancies on white-owned farms, fought for continuous access to land, and against the intensified demands for agricultural labour.<sup>319</sup> In the reserves, few reserve families could escape an increasing dependence on wage income. State measures in the reserves, particularly the attempts to regularise the system of taxation for four provinces, to extend the council system and control the distribution of communal land, provoked widespread resistance from people living in rural areas of South Africa.<sup>320</sup>

### **3.9. The National Party Rule (1948-1994)**

The implementation of apartheid by the National Party government was a continuation of racial policies implemented earlier in South Africa before the National Party took over the government. When the National Party took over their focus was to develop the black homelands (reserves) to greater degree of self-government. They, therefore, introduced the Native Authorities Act of 1951 (Act No. 68 Of 1951), the first law to introduce measures to realise this ideal. It provided the foundation for the development of separate political institutions for blacks and provided for black political and administrative systems based on tribal authorities comprising the chief or tribal chief and his councillors. It gave recognition to the traditional form of government to the black tribes.<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> W, Beinart and C, Bundy , 1987 'Amafelandawonye (The Die-hards): Popular Protest and Women's Movements in Herschel District in the 1920s' in 'Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa', London, 222.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid, 223.

<sup>320</sup> ibid, 222.

<sup>321</sup> Changuin & Steenkamp, 'Disputed Land', 194.

### 3.10. The Promotion of Bantu Self-government Act, 1959 (Act No. 46 of 1959)

Until the promulgation of the Promotion of Black Self-government Act of 1959, black representatives in government comprised white representatives in both the National Assembly and the Senate. The Act put an end to the representation of Blacks by Whites in the House of Assembly, and, “laid down further guide-lines for the development of governmental systems in the homelands.”<sup>322</sup> Those representing blacks people in the House of Assembly stopped doing so in 1960.<sup>323</sup> The Act maintained that various black nations be recognised as separate national units which would lead to each receiving self-government and eventually sovereign independence. By this, the black nations had received full tenure of their tribal lands which would then lead to territorial segregation and then homelands. The historian, du Pisani sees the Act as linking the special demarcation of black areas as direct to ethnic identity. The Act led to the foundation for the consolidation of the homelands as the territorial basis for the development of the black ethnic groups.<sup>324</sup> The Act provided for the extension of self-government as introduced by the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, “which provided for a greater degree of self-government in the homelands”<sup>325</sup>, and took place within the framework of eight national units: Xhosa, Zulu, Swazi, South Sotho, North Sotho, Tswana, Venda and Tsonga.<sup>326</sup> Each territorial authority would appoint a representative in the cities to attend to the interests of their nationals there. The blacks working in areas designated for Whites were assigned a particular homeland in accordance with their ethnic unit and had to exercise their vote in their specific homeland, thereby finalising the principle of separate development in the political sphere.<sup>327</sup> Black people with cultural ties and ethnic links with an ethnic group would exercise their political rights in that group, that is, vote in elections for the parliament

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<sup>322</sup> Muller. ‘500 Years’, 486.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> Changuin and Steenkamp, ‘Disputed Land’, 208.

<sup>325</sup> Muller, ‘500 Years’. 487.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid, 490.

<sup>327</sup> Changuin and Steenkamp, ‘Disputed Land’, 208

of that state, irrespective of where they lived.<sup>328</sup> Venda became a self-governing state in 1973 in the Northern Transvaal.<sup>329</sup>

In September 1979, Venda became independent with P.R Mphedu as president, and Thohoyandou as the capital. Four laws were promulgated by the South African government in order to implement this independence namely:<sup>330</sup>

1. The Republic of Venda Constitution Act, 1979 (Act No. 9 of 1979)
2. The Venda Advisory Council Act, 1982 (Act No. 8 of 1982)
3. The Republic of Venda Constitution Amendment Act, 1987 (Act No. 4 of 1987)
4. The Venda Border Extension Act, 1987 (Act No. 31 of 1987)

This meant that all blacks regarded as citizens of a national state would lose their South African citizenship when a state became independent. The aim was to ensure that there would be no black South Africans when all the self-governing black states had become independent. Only whites, coloured and Indians would be regarded as South African citizens.<sup>331</sup>

With the dismantling of apartheid during the early 1990s, South Africa saw many apartheid legislations being revoked, especially after President De Klerk's address in Parliament on 01 February 1991. The 1913 and 1936 Land Acts were removed from the statute book through the promulgation of the Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act, 1991 (Act No. 108 of 1991) and the Upgrading of Land Tenure Rights Act, 1991 (Act No. 112 of 1991). These amendment laws eliminated racial discrimination in ownership, occupation and leasing of land and property.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>328</sup> Ibid, 209.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid, 223

<sup>330</sup> Ibid, 238.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid, 241.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid, 265.

### **3.11. New Land Policy during the New Dispensation (1994- )**

The Interim Constitution, set up in 1993, placed the issue of land redistribution high in its agenda. The government of National Unity, composed of representatives of all major parties, took over after the 27 April 1994 general election. During the drafting of the new constitution concern from the white farming community about the right to ownership, was raised from various quarters. By the finalisation of the constitution, F.W De Klerk assured white farmers that their title deeds were safe. The new government brought with it a new era of land reform by introducing legislation and measures to obtain a better dispensation for the population groups they represented, but in accordance with the agreements they concluded in the negotiation phase before the election. The whites were promised that their land would not be taken from them without reason, whereas Africans were pressurising the government to make more land available as promised. It is said the government, therefore, embarked on planning after planning without implementation.<sup>333</sup>

### **3.12. Classification of Land under the New Dispensation**

The newly elected ANC government recognised various categories of land tenure, namely:

3.12.1. Tribal land which was a property registered in the Deeds Office in the name of the former Minister of Native Affairs and his successors, in trust for the tribe, headman, community or individual. The minister acted as trustee, about land affairs, for the above stakeholders. It cannot be regarded as state land because those involved had bought the land with their own funds. The trustee could not dispose of the land unilaterally and acted only on the advice and recommendation of the stakeholders.

3.12.2. Allocated tribal land which was former South African Development Trust (SADT) land transferred by proclamation to the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC) states and self-governing territories but allocated to

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<sup>333</sup>Changuin and Steenkamp, 'Disputed Land', 270.

certain tribal authorities in terms of government notices and included in tribal territories. The land was utilised by the tribe for their own benefit, but registered in names of the TBVC governments, self-governing territories or the SADT. This has become state land since 1994.

3.12.3. Transferred land refers to former SADT land transferred by proclamation to the TBVC states and self-governing territories and registered in the name of former TBVC governments, self-governing territories or SADT.

3.12.4. SADT land refers to former SADT land intended to be transferred, but which had not been realised. It becomes state land.

3.12.5. Private land is land registered in the names of private individuals or undivided shares in farms or portions of farms registered in the names of several owners.<sup>334</sup>

### **3.13. The Restitution of Land Rights Act, 1994 (Act No. 22 of 1994)**

There was a huge debate concerning the cut-off date for land restitution. The Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) wanted claims on land before 1913 to be considered as well. This law became one of the first laws to be passed by the new government. The Restitution Act of 1994 automatically replaced the laws of 1913 and 1936.<sup>335</sup>

The Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994, as amended, provided for the restitution of land tenure to persons or communities who were deprived of land after 19 June 1913 as a result of discriminatory legislation or customs by the government. The Act also provided for the appointment of commissions for restitution of land rights in the various provinces and for the establishment of a Land Claims Court. A regional commissioner and a chief commissioner for land claims were appointed for in terms of this Act as a result of

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<sup>334</sup> Changuin and Steenkamp, 'Disputed Land', 272.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.

discriminatory law or custom, could submit a claim to the commission on Restitution of Land Rights to recover the land. The 31 December 1998 was chosen as the cut-off date for submission of claims. The Commissioner on Restitution of Land Rights had to check the correctness of the claim, then published it on Government Gazette and notify the current owner that there was a claim on his farm. The current owner could oppose the claim if he/she believed that he can prove otherwise. If the dispute could not be resolved through negotiation and mediation, the commissioner would refer the claim to the Land Claims Court for settlement. The restitution law was not used to expropriate land. More laws to support land reform programme were promulgated: The Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act, 1996 (Act No. 3 of 1996) and the Extension of Security of Tenure Act, 1997 (Act No. 62 of 1997). In 2004 the Communal Land Rights Act, 2004 was tabled.<sup>336</sup>

### **3.14. The New Constitution and the Issue of Land Redistribution in the New South Africa**

The New Constitution of South Africa was passed in Parliament as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996). The issue of land redistribution remained contentious even during the new dispensation.<sup>337</sup> This happened even after De Klerk's government repealed both the 1913 and the 1936 land legislation in 1991, with an aim of restoring, "to Africans land which the state expropriated since 1913 for racially-based reasons."<sup>338</sup> Together with the new constitution, a new Constitutional Court was established to preserve the constitution and hear cases in which the constitution had been contravened.<sup>339</sup>

The new constitution also contained the Bill of Rights clause to protect the basic rights of the citizens of the country. Section 25 of the Bill of Rights concerned Land Reform since it protects the right to ownership and that of owning property. Land was regarded as property. The state had the right to expropriate land provided certain prescriptions were

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<sup>336</sup> Changuin and Steenkamp. 'Disputed Land', 273.

<sup>337</sup> Davenport and Saunders. 'South Africa', 571.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid.

<sup>339</sup> Changuin and Steenkamp. 'Disputed Land', 274.



followed. The government had to prove to the court that expropriation would be to the benefit of the public at large or the benefit of the community. The government also had to provide for the protection of the right to cultivate land.<sup>340</sup>

The decision to use the 1913 Land Act as a cut-off date was the only practical one because it was the first land tenure law to be promulgated after the unification. Before that land tenure laws in South Africa were promulgated by four different governments of the two colonial governments of the two British colonies (Natal and Cape) and the two Boer republics (Transvaal and Free State). Their laws on land tenure were different.<sup>341</sup>

The 1997 White Paper on Land Reform, meant to undo the legacy of colonialism that had led the black majority South Africans landless, proposed three objectives for land reform, namely:

- 3.14.1. Restitution of land tenure which comprises the handling of specific claims of individuals or groups. This happens by returning the land of giving other compensatory or financial compensation to people who had lost land through forced removal or as a result of discriminating legislation and customs.
- 3.14.2. Reform of the right to ownership comprising reform of the current system of land tenure. Also provides for different systems such as communal tenure, that is, a new forms of land tenure that would be non-racist and non-sexist and based on equality and unity.
- 3.14.3. Redistribution of land tenure which is meant to grant access to land tenure to groups that had been excluded previously and therefore make property available to all who needed it.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> Changuin and Steenkamp, 'Disputed Land', 275.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid.

The chapter managed to locate the struggle for land in the Limpopo. This could only be realised by looking back at the history of land holding in South Africa ever since the arrival of the whites. The chapter started by looking at the history of land tenure as it is understood today. This included tracing its origins from Europe and how it was transported to Africa through colonialism. The focus then shifted to looking at the differences between black and white on land tenure. This was then followed by the focus on the history of land tenure in the Transvaal from as early as 1852, then the Northern Transvaal which is the region under study. The chapter also highlighted the role played by the Native Land Acts of 1913 (Act No. 27 of 1913) and other Acts such as the Natives Authorities Act of 1951, Promotion of Black Self-government Act of 1959, the Republic of Venda Constitution Act of 1979, the Venda Advisory Council Act of 1982, the Republic of Venda Constitution Amendment Act of 1987 and finally, the Venda Border Extension Act of 1987. All these Acts, apart from the Natives Land Act of 1913, were promulgated during the apartheid era by the then National Party government. The Acts left a legacy that is still felt even today in South Africa. The chapter ended by looking at the efforts that the present government is trying to make through different approaches to land reform aimed at redressing the imbalances of the past. The chapter that follows is specific to the case study in that it focuses on the theme aimed at exploring how women farmers at Nwanedi first decided to venture into farming and how they established themselves over time. This would be done by exploring how different participants experienced the struggles of establishing themselves.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: NWANEDI WOMEN'S ADVENTURE INTO COMMERCIAL FARMING**

### **44.1. Introduction**

The chapter aims at finding out why Nwanedi women farmers decided to get involved into farming and their struggle to establish themselves as successful commercial farmers. Majority of women interviewed were farmers wives and one would love to find out whether they grew tired of being farm wives and then decided to claim farmer identity just as lowan women did? Was it a matter of trying to experiment or experience something new which led them desiring to venture into farming? These and other questions would be answered by Nwanedi women farmers themselves in their narratives. In order to establish how women farmers first decided to get into farming and how they have sought to establish themselves over time, one must compare what different participants experienced in their struggle to establish themselves. Their choices at the beginning would be analysed to show how women came to make those decisions and then stick through with them. This is where the issue of gender elements emerged as would be shown during the discussion.

Before focussing on how Nwanedi women farmers decided to venture into farming and how they thought to establish themselves over time, I saw it imperative to first look at the history of women's location in African lives with special reference to the role played by colonialism on African women, then the status of women at post-independence South Africa. This will help us understand the type of people we are dealing with in this chapter.

### **4.2. The Effect of Colonialism on Women Found in Nwanedi**

Colonialism has impacted negatively in all spheres of African lives irrespective of one's gender, sex or creed. Its impact reflected itself economically, socially and politically. In this colonialism saga women were not spared of the abuses that Africans, in general, experienced, so do women find in the Nwanedi area. This section intends to highlight the kind of impact Nwanedi women experienced during colonialism with an aim of making it easier for people to understand how Nwanedi women decided to venture into farming.

### 4.2.1. Economic Impact

Matters to be addressed under to economic impact of colonialism on Nwanedi women concern amongst others: the alienation of land, provision of labour, withdrawal of African wage labour, the introduction of the migrant labour system, the introduction of cash crop in Africa and lastly, women's inability to access land.

#### 4.2.1.1. The alienation of land

The historical context of land alienation in Southern Africa stemmed from the rapid industrialisation of South Africa during the second half of the nineteenth century. This came as a result of the discovery of diamond in Kimberley in the period 1869-1871. This phenomenon became known historically as the southern African Mineral Revolution. It is said that the whole activity transformed the social, economic and political life of the people found in the southern tip of Africa.<sup>343</sup>

In 1886 a second phase of the Mineral Revolution took place at the Witwatersrand in the central Transvaal. This was after the discovery of huge quantities of gold in the area. These discoveries brought to the fore the system of migrant labour as people from rural areas started converging in large numbers to these industrial centres. The development of regular labour migrancy was promoted by extensive white seizure of African land during the 1880s and 1890s. The rural Boers gained significantly as a result of greater demand for agricultural produce due to the rapid growth of Johannesburg and Kimberley. The Boers started toughening their tenancy agreements in order to gain more and more free labour from Africans. This forced Africans to provide more free labour in order to stay in the land that was originally theirs.<sup>344</sup>

The discovery of these precious metals brought many into cash economy although not out of choice, be it farmers selling their crops, woodcutters selling fuel or individuals selling their labour. These people returned home with cash, wagons, guns or imported cloth, together with cheap metal manufactured goods from Europe.<sup>345</sup> Many Africans

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<sup>343</sup> K. Shillington. 2012. "History of Africa", Third Edition, USA, 328.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid, 331.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid, 329.

would have preferred to stay and carry on living on their land, but the dwindling of their land meant that they could no longer survive out of it, hence their participation in migrant labour activity.

Atkinson, in his analysis of the strategy used by colonial administrators to satisfy labour demands during the discovery of diamond and gold, spoke about some coercive way that were used by whites to alleviate labour shortage. These included land expropriations, population removals, taxes, forced labour, pass [laws], constricted black reserves and corvee services that eroded black peasant society and freed up labour for white farms.<sup>346</sup> South Africa introduced a policy of ethnic reserves, later called Bantustans or homelands, which served as a source of cheap labour. The introduction of taxes in the reserves of homelands forced black men to leave their homesteads to go and find work in the pursuit of cash payments of taxes whose revenue was diverted to railroads, roads, and agricultural extensions that served the white farmers.<sup>347</sup> Both the mining and the commercial white farmers needed cheap supply of labour which pitted them against each other.<sup>348</sup>

After the formation of the Union Government in 1910, the frustration and confusion amongst the Black communities became apparent. The formation of the reserves had led to the dwindling of African land which resulted in Africans encroaching on White areas. Blacks were therefore accused of settling on private and state land. This concern led to the Minister of Native Affairs, J.W Sauer to come up with a plan to curb this. It resulted into the passing of the Natives Land Act (No. 27 of 1913), which recommended 10.4 million morgens for the Black reserves and locations combined. The Act also prohibited blacks from purchasing land in white areas and decreed that whites have the right to eject Blacks from land on which they had been living for generations. Although the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) and later the African National Congress (ANC) showed their disapproval of the Act and responded by sending deputations, first to the

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<sup>346</sup> D. Atkinson. 2007. "Going for Broke: The Fate of Farm Workers in Arid South Africa", Cape Town, 26.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid.

Acting Minister of Native Affairs and later to London, nothing positive came out of it. The British government said they were not prepared to intervene on South African affairs.<sup>349</sup>

An attempt to grant further land to Blacks failed after the Beaumont Commission, which was tasked to look at the matter failed to garner two-thirds majority in Parliament which was needed to approve the recommendations. It was only after twenty years that General J. B.M Hertzog incorporated these recommendations into the Native Trust and Land Act (No. 18 of 1936).<sup>350</sup>

Hertzog's approach to the issue of non-whites brought with it a new dimension in the Union parliament. He proposed a solution to the Native-Coloured question by advocating a policy of segregation towards Blacks and that of integration regarding the Coloureds. As early as 1926 Hertzog tabled four bills that after a lengthy discussion in parliament were finally rejected in 1929 due to its failure to obtain a two-thirds majority. Hertzog never stopped trying until he got his break in 1935 after the fusion between his party and that of J. C Smuts. A select committee was appointed which, at the end, recommended only two bills, which were: The Representation of Natives Bill and the Natives Trust and Land Bill.<sup>351</sup>

The Native Trust and Land Bill enlarged the land available to Blacks by 7.2 million morgens, which together with the Natives Land Act brought the total area belonging to Blacks to 12 percent of South Africa's total land area.<sup>352</sup>

Hertzog's two segregation acts of 1936 served as important cornerstones of relations between White and Black in South Africa. The governments to follow, for example, that of Malan, Strijdom, Verwoerd and Vorster (apartheid governments) continued to build on this foundation.<sup>353</sup> It was this erosion of Black land as a result of the introduction of the reserves, the passing of the Natives Land Act (No. 27 of 1913) and the Native Trust and Land Act (No. 18 of 1936) that Blacks had to engage in the migrant labour system in order

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<sup>349</sup> C. F. J Muller. 1993. "Five Hundred Years: A History of South Africa", Third Edition, Pretoria, 395-396.

<sup>350</sup> Muller. "Five Hundred Years", 396.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid, 429.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

to support their families. These were meant to satisfy the need for cheap labour by both farmers and the capitalists. This together with the introduction of different types of taxes and pass laws compelled Blacks to look for jobs in order to earn the currency required to pay such taxes even though the money generated from them was used to advance the Whites' interests.

It is argued that land in rural areas provides natural resources required for subsistence. People with arable land can improve their agricultural productivity and food security. If found lacking secure land rights, access to credit would only be a pipe dream. Land ownership also enhances one's social status. The fact that most rural women have no access to land and inheritance rights caught the attention of the International community, who decided to put this high on their agenda of the Millennium Development Goals. They realised that food security and family's well-being depend on protecting or enhancing the rights of women to land.<sup>354</sup> In addition, statistics show that women own very little agricultural land, even though they produce about half of the world's food. What hinders women's acquisition of land is believed to be customary practices. This results in constraining women's effective participation in decision-making at both family and community levels on issues related to agriculture.<sup>355</sup> Although most Africans experienced land alienation, women were affected more than their male counterparts. Lack of land forced women to depend on their male counterparts economically, leading to domestic patriarchy which gained support from colonial social institutions. This took away African women's productive value of producing and processing food which was their means of establishing and maintaining their rights in domestic and other spheres of their lives, such as, economic, cultural, religious, social, political and so forth.<sup>356</sup>

To many African women, the loss of land was tantamount to a loss of access to and authority over land. Lack of land subjected women to smaller pieces of land for cultivation and which in turn, these became exhausted as a result of excessive cultivation. The result of excessive cultivation was less productivity. Land alienation reduced African women's

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<sup>354</sup> United Nations. 2008. 'Rural Women in a Changing World', 27.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

economic independence as their perceived importance of agricultural contribution in the family was reduced due to the colonialists' insistence on cash crop cultivation.<sup>357</sup>

These too have been factors affecting women in the Nwanedi area. Although they have been the backbone of agricultural production for so many years, they were discriminated against during colonial and at post-independent times. This came as a result of them being left behind when their husbands engaged in migrant labour. Women in the Nwanedi area were denied access to land even though they have proved beyond reasonable doubt that they could work and maintain land as much as their male counterparts. The departure of their husbands gave them an opportunity to carry on ploughing the family plots given to their husbands and in the process provided food security for their families. These were confirmed by people like Mrs Maria, Mrs Hangwani and others who confirmed that they were already experienced farmers before acquiring their farms. They were able to keep the fire burning in their families in the absence of their husbands who were working in Gauteng.<sup>358</sup> The women's efforts did not go unnoticed. This was shown when these women applied for land, especially Mrs. Hangwani, the Chief never asked her many questions because of her reputation all over the area. However, when Mrs Maria applied for her farm, the same Chief, Chief John, demanded evidence that she was indeed a farmer. The differences in the treatment of the two might have resulted from the differences in the age group of the applicants. Mrs Maria still fell under the youth category, while Mrs Hangwani was a middle-aged woman and a well-known farmer in the village when she applied.

#### **4.2.1.2. Provision of wage labour**

African women had to provide wage labour for European plantation economies. During peak labour, African women were required to work on European farms in large numbers. They, together with children, provided casual labour during labour peaks. This forced women to leave their own duties in order to provide labour for Europeans, and on the

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<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

<sup>358</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria & Mrs. Hangwani. Women Farmers. 03 & 04 November 2015.



other hand they were still expected to perform domestic chores when they arrived at home. They did this irrespective of whether they were tired or not. Sometimes this was accompanied by acts of physical and sexual abuse, often committed by African men themselves against their own women.<sup>359</sup>

In the Nwanedi area, women were the main source of labour on European farms. The farms that they currently occupy used to belong to Europeans before the new dispensation that came about in 1994 in the country. The land claims that followed the first all-inclusive South African government, scared European farmers based at Nwanedi area, and consequently, there was an exodus of European farmers, which left the area open to aspiring African farmers. However, although farms became available, very few people were prepared to venture into farming. As a result, this left many farms unoccupied in the area. Three chiefs laid claim to the area previously occupied by European farmers. In order to rubber stamp their authorities, they had to find people loyal to them to occupy the farms in order to stop another chief to claim the area as his. This arrangement favoured women more than any other group in the area. As most men were working in Gauteng, and this resulted in the three chiefs' recruitment of women into farming. Many women in the area of Nwanedi seized the opportunity and started applying for farms. This occurred while disregarding the age-old practices of providing land to men only. It was a clear indication of how easily customary laws can be easily bent in order to accommodate the interests of its custodians who, in this instance, were traditional leaders. This illustrates the flexibility of un-written customary laws compared to the rigid Roman-Dutch Laws preferred by the Europeans. For the first time in the history of the area, women were able to own farms like their male counterparts.

#### **4.2.1.3. The withdrawal of African male labour**

The migrant labour phenomenon basically meant that male labour was withdrawn from peasant production, thereby exacerbating female labour and a drop in cultivated land.

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<sup>359</sup> The Effect of Colonialism on African Women. Available online at:<http://afrkaneye.wordpress.com/2007/03/08/the-effect-of-colonialism-on-african-women/2009/07/13>

The removal of male labour meant a double burden on the side of African women who were expected to fulfil their traditional duties as women and then perform the duties previously performed by men.<sup>360</sup>

When African men decided to leave the rural areas looking for greener pastures as migrant labourers, they over-burdened their wives at home, because women's work doubled. Women's work has always been associated with the private sector and men with the public sector. The role that men had played had to be played by women now. These trained women to become strong and do exactly what their men-folk used to do. In the case of the Nwanedi women, the acquisition of farms showed how far rural women had gone regarding gaining experience in the male domain.

The assertion that women's work has always been associated with the private sector has been disputed and regarded as having been promoted by writers whose approach is Eurocentric by contemporary writers. Some have shown that the assertion was made without any evidence to support it. When one looks at Kinsman's view on the article, 'Beasts of Burden: The Subordination of Southern Tswana Women, ca. 1800-1840', one can understand that Tswana women had been producing grain for the market independently of their male counterparts well before colonialism set its foot in southern Africa. It is argued that women at first dominated the local market until grain production was commoditized. This process supported the growth of male-dominated peasantry and the wealthy agriculturally-based aristocracy.<sup>361</sup> Some women managed to sustain their independent production of grain, but the majority relied on the fields of their brothers and husbands. This left Tswana women in positions of increased dependence, subordination and exploitation.<sup>362</sup> All these stemmed from patriarchy which preferred men over women on issues pertaining to land.

Another example with respect to women's contribution on the public sphere which those with a Eurocentric view had ignored was brought to the fore by Epprecht in his book titled,

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<sup>360</sup> The Effect of Colonialism on African Women. Available online at:<http://afrkaneye.wordpress.com/2007/03/08/the-effect-of-colonialism-on-african-women/2009/07/13>

<sup>361</sup> M, Kinsman. 1983. 'Beasts of Burden: The Subordination of Southern Tswana Women, ca. 1800-1840', *Journal of Southern African Studies* Vol. 10, No. 1, 39-54.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

“The Matter of Women is Getting Very Bad: Gender Development, and Politics in Colonial Lesotho”<sup>363</sup>. The author spoke about a quarter of Basotho men working in South Africa as migrants in the 1960s and the impact that had on Basotho women. He argued that the absence of men opened new opportunities for female Basotho’s autonomy and achievement yet without the requisite legal protection and guarantees usually accorded land owners. Basotho women who were left behind started forming associations such as Basotholand Homemakers Association which is said to have bolstered the economic self-reliance of the many women and their children who despaired of unreliable men and turned to autonomous profit making. This Association encouraged people to have gardens which generated income for one in four rural household.<sup>364</sup> This is a clear indication that women, if given an opportunity, can do everything that men can do not just in the domestic sphere but in the public sphere as well. This had been the norm in pre-colonial times and any view contrary to this should be supported with evidence.

#### **4.2.1.4 Introduction of the migrant labour system**

Delius in his study of migrant labour system amongst the Pedi discovered that it started before the discovery of both diamond and gold in South Africa. He argued that as early as the 1840s, the Pedi had been travelling from the north-eastern Transvaal to the Cape Colony. Each year a significant number of young men, on reaching maturity, went to the Cape Colony for one or more years [leaving their womenfolk vulnerable to economic exploitation].<sup>365</sup> This group of Pedi were joined by Tsonga and Sotho in their sojourn to the Cape Colony.

The discovery of diamond and gold gave the Pedi an opportunity to provide labour as they were already accustomed to migrancy. The high wages and the shorter distance between north-eastern Transvaal and the areas where minerals were discovered meant

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<sup>363</sup> M, Epprecht. 2000. “This Matter of Women is Getting Very Bad: Gender Development, and Politics in Colonial Lesotho”, Pietermaritzburg, 428.

<sup>364</sup> Epprecht. “This Matter of Women”, 428.

<sup>365</sup> P. Delius. 1983. “The Land Belongs to Us”, Johannesburg, 62-63.

spending lessor time away from home by the Pedi migrants.<sup>366</sup> It was not only guns that contributed to Pedi migrancy alone but the need for cattle as well. Diseases of the 1820s and raids that took place in the 1850s played an important role in influencing this migrancy. Cattle had an important role to play in bridewealth and tribute. They also provided milk, hides, meat and its size were an indicator of wealth and status within the society.<sup>367</sup>

In a book titled, “A Long Way Home: Migrant Worker Worlds, 1800-2014”, Delius, Phillips and Rankin-Smith narrate the long history of the migrant labour system and migrant workers in the South African context. They argue that South Africa is the only place in the world where urbanisation and industrialisation is based on migrant labour. According to them, migrancy and institutionalised apartheid racism fed off each other and shaped the lives of South Africans over time.<sup>368</sup> Some writers argued that labour migration destroyed rural livelihoods but, in some instances,, it is accredited with sustenance of rural economies, for example, William Beinart noted the way Mpondo migrant labourers survived devastating droughts and accumulated livestock through their wages. Michelle Hay on the other hand spoke about the survival of rural women in the Letaba District during the 1940s and 1950s, through remittances from their spouses, brothers and uncles in difficult times.<sup>369</sup>

The loss of male labour was often in the form of migrant labour. Men would leave rural areas to seek employment in urban areas. According to the United Nations, migration of males has led to a rise in female-headed households, thereby challenging the traditional patterns of gender-based roles in rural areas. For example, an estimate has shown that approximately one third of the households in Sub-Saharan Africa are headed by women, either widows or single women, divorced or separated from their partners.<sup>370</sup> They further maintain that, “many more farm households are de facto headed by women while men

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<sup>366</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>367</sup> Delius. “The Land”, 68.

<sup>368</sup> P. Delius, L. Phillips & F. Rankin-Smith. 2014. “A Long Way Home: Migrant Worker Worlds, 1800-2014”, Johannesburg.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

<sup>370</sup> United Nations, 2008. ‘Rural Women in a Changing World: Opportunities and Challenges’, Published to Promote the Goals of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform of Action, 20.

are away”.<sup>371</sup> As a result of this, women took over traditional male tasks and responsibilities which resulted in increased burdens on their time, lack of access to resources, restrictions on their ownership of property and a role in decision-making within their communities.<sup>372</sup>

In areas where social support systems were weak or eroded, women experienced serious impacts concerning their workload. Their children, especially girls, were forced to step in and take over tasks that were reserved for their mothers, which had a negative impact on their education. To compensate for their loss of male labour, women employed different strategies. These included organizing labour exchanges with other women, working longer and abnormal hours, or hiring additional labour if they could afford to pay. In other instances, they were forced to reduce the area under cultivation or switch to crops that were less labour intensive.<sup>373</sup> The absence of men meant that women had to hire labour to substitute for absent males. This hired labour had its costs on women, adding to their economic strain. The change in bride-wealth payment arrangements from livestock to cash forced young men to migrate to urban areas in search of work. This meant that women lost both the support of their husbands and that of their sons.<sup>374</sup>

This was not all doom and gloom on the side of female-headed households. This is because male migration can benefit females in that they were empowered to acquire new skills and capacities. Women also gained more self-esteem and independence when running households in the absence of their husbands. They also benefitted from remittances sent to them by their husbands, acquiring budgeting skills in the process.<sup>375</sup>

Taxes, introduced by the colonial economy, contributed to the male migrancy as taxes were paid by men to the colonial authority. In other situations, taxes were imposed on women as young as fifteen years. Some African male patriarchs and guardians started seeing the paying of bride-wealth as a means to accumulate cash to pay taxes and meet other financial obligations. Bride-wealth, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica is the

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<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>374</sup> Afrikaneye Word Press, 2007. ‘The effect of colonialism’.

<sup>375</sup> United Nations, 2008. ‘Rural Women in a Changing World’, 20.

“payment made by a groom or his kin to the bride in order to ratify a marriage.”<sup>376</sup> The practice involves money or goods that can be paid at once or in instalments over a period of time.<sup>377</sup> This, in turn, commodified a woman’s value to her family. This is because the exchange of this manner symbolises the social and economic reciprocity between the two intermarrying families with an aim of consolidating friendly relations between them.<sup>378</sup> Traditionally, among other cultures, a woman retained a measure of control of her bride-wealth, which economically empowered her, but with the new financial constraints experienced by males, due to heavy taxation, bride-wealth became a source of income that males sought to control. This excluded women from the traditional provisions that previously gave them some measure of economic independence.<sup>379</sup>

#### **4.2.1.5. Women’s inability to access land**

Colonialists brought with them private ownership of land, which excluded women. In Kenya, according to Berger, the Swynnerton Plan of 1954 began a process of registering and consolidation land and granting titles to individuals, almost all of whom were men. This policy weakened rural women’s autonomy in the economy. Therefore, the advance of colonialists saw African women’s labour being increasingly exploited, their autonomy decreased and their levels of dependence on males increasing.<sup>380</sup>

The issue of private ownership of land, brought by the Europeans, had a similarly bad effect on women of Nwanedi during the colonial and apartheid periods in South Africa. This was because colonialism and apartheid brought with them patriarchy which emphasised male dominance over women. Commodities such as land was only owned by men with women dominating the bulk of workers on white-owned farms. The idea

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<sup>376</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica. *Bride-wealth*. Available online at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/bridewealth>. (Accessed on 21 June 2020)

<sup>377</sup> Ibid.

<sup>378</sup> Ibid.

<sup>379</sup> United Nations, 2008. ‘Rural Women in a Changing World’, 20.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid.

behind that was for white farmers to acquire as many workers to work in their farms as much as they could.

After looking at how colonialism impacted on women of Nwanedi one would like to see how these women's plight shaped up in post-independent South Africa. In order to understand the South African situation better, one must first look at the history of land in South Africa. According to Van Wyk, women generally access land through their relationships with male relatives, in communal land tenure systems.<sup>381</sup> Women generally lack authority in society, and this limits their control over the land resources that they can access. In communal tenure systems, the sale of land is prohibited. Land transaction takes place privately and where disputes arise, they are addressed privately. Cross supported this by maintaining that, "this insecurity of land transfer is serious for men but reach prohibitive levels for women."<sup>382</sup>

In South Africa, the passing of the Native Taxation and Development Act in 1925, contributed much towards the erosion of women's rights to inheritance. The tax compelled men to pay poll tax of one pound and hut tax as well. Poll tax was paid by every male from the age of eighteen whereas the hut tax was for every married man.<sup>383</sup> This affected the old system of land registration as it became biased against women. Land was believed to be, held in the name of a man, and in colonial times, the right to use a plot was specifically associated with the payment of the hut tax by a married man.<sup>384</sup> In theory, this land should be passed on to male heirs, but, in practice, widows, or women left behind by men in town, were able to secure significant rights over such land.<sup>385</sup> In other instances, the land might be held in the name of the male heir but with effective control still at the hands of the mother of the orphaned son. This new registration system threatened to disturb this practice, hence women's disapproval of it. In order to defuse the tension, officials denied any intention of enforcing this element of regulation.<sup>386</sup> This

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<sup>381</sup> G. Van Wyk. 1999. 'Gender Policy and Land Reform', *Agenda*, Vol. 42, 66.

<sup>382</sup> C. Cross. 1999. 'Women and Land in Rural Areas', *Agenda*, Vol. 42, 21.

<sup>383</sup> B. Bozzoli. 2017. 'Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives', Johannesburg, 334.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*

discussion serves to highlight how women's rights to land was systematically eroded during colonialism.

#### **4.2.1.6 The introduction of cash crops in Africa**

The migration of men from rural to urban areas was stalled at some point by the introduction of cash crops in Africa which gave African farmers an opportunity to engage in this kind of farming. Given this scenario and the migration of men in large numbers which was taking place, one would have thought that women, who remained behind practising subsistence farming, would easily move from subsistence to cash crop farming. Instead of the opportunity to be given to women farmers, the colonialists gave only men permission to cultivate cash crops, leaving women engaging in subsistence farming. Men took control of the crop's proceeds, although the cultivation was done by women. Women's labour was also required in the growth of cash crops, thereby doubling the agricultural load on women. The introduction of new technology, especially the plough, had a negative impact on women too, as men were able to cultivate more land, leaving the highly backbreaking, labour intensive work of sowing and weeding to women. This emphasises the issue of the division of labour as the heaviest and highly labour-intensive work of sowing and weeding was the domain of women. The plough also made men more directly involved in crop cultivation, thereby increasing the men's rights over proceeds earned from cash crop. It was possible for men to claim proceeds as in many instances women did not own land, but their husbands did. However, when men were engaging in the migrant labour system it was women who carried on with the farming business, yet the introduction of cash crop encouraged some men to return and then reclaim the land that their wives had taken care of during their absence. The return of men into farming co-incided with the arrival of the plough in Africa which because of how the plough operates favoured men over women. The plough was not as much user-friendly to women as to men, so men started to dominate this kind of farming because of such an advantage. Furthermore, many men could use money earned without consulting the women who did



most of the work in earning the money, hence, women's economic dependence on men.<sup>387</sup>

In southern Africa Kinsman highlighted a scenario like the one addressed above by looking at the experiences of southern Tswana women between the period 1800-1840. Although the focus was on the role of patriarchy on southern Tswana women in pre-colonial times, their experiences were comparable to what was shared in the preceding paragraph. Southern Tswana women, as shown by Kinsman, dominated the local market but the commoditization of grain production favoured the growth of male-dominated peasantry together with the wealthy agriculturally-based aristocracy. There were women who managed to sustain their independent production of grain, but the majority relied on the fields of their brothers and husbands. In a case where a husband owned a field, he always claimed the harvest, leaving his wife in a position of increased dependence, subordination and exploitation.<sup>388</sup>

Southern Tswana women were discriminated against with regards to matters pertaining to land ownership. It was men who had hold over the land. The chief, usually a male, allocated land to the headmen for them to assign it to their followers. The headmen subdivided those blocks of land to family elders, who assigned fields to themselves or their sons for the use of their wives.<sup>389</sup> Men's access to land is through their birth right. The right to inheritance of fields and transfer were also conferred to men.<sup>390</sup> This kind of arrangement puts men in a more advantageous position compared to their female counterparts. Although it started during precolonial times, it was carried over into the colonial period, according to Callinicos after her assessment of the experience of Seketi Molewa from Sekhukhune who was a migrant worker during the 1940s and 1950s. She argues that although Mr. Molewa started from a humble beginning, working on farms, he eventually got employment on a mine in Witbank. He worked for several years in the

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<sup>387</sup> Afrikaneye Word Press, 2007, 'The Effect of Colonialism on African Women', Available online at: <http://afrikaneye.wordpress.com/2007/03/08/the-effect-of-colonialism-on-african-women/2009/07/13>

<sup>388</sup> M. Kinsman. 1983. 'Beasts of Burden: Subordination of Southern Tswana Women. Ca. 1800-1840', Vol. 10. No. 1, 39-54.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid.

mines but always returned home to help during ploughing seasons.<sup>391</sup> To Mr. Molewa, the transition to city life was gradual. Although he avoided the Rand during the 1940s, he needed money to support the declining homestead economy. The pull of better wages ended up drawing him to the Rand. Although he spent more than 20 years in the Rand, his heart remained in Sekhukhuneland.<sup>392</sup>

A revelation of this nature negates the perception that migrant workers only returned to the countryside as a result of the introduction of cash crops. There were many migrants who never regarded the growing cities as their place to reside and continued making their journeys to the countryside just like Mr. Molewa. The fact that cities were never meant to be a place for Blacks, especially in the South African context, contributed towards Mr. Molewa's behaviour together with some Blacks who shared his view. Their journeys, to and from the cities, were just but a temporary arrangement aimed at supplementing the declining homestead economy.

### **4.3. The Status of African Women at Post-Independence South Africa**

#### **4.3.1. The Impact of the Land Tenure System on Post-Apartheid South Africa**

The South African land tenure reform policy has done very little to address the needs of most poor, black women in South Africa's rural areas. The 2001 proposed Communal Land Rights Tenure Bill, appeared to increase the power of traditional authorities regarding land allocation, and introduced contentious concepts such as 'tribal' land ownership. Some saw it as something that would undermine the land rights of vulnerable groups, especially women.<sup>393</sup>

Communal land tenure systems make it difficult for women to own land, as compared to freehold tenure systems, where women have a legal right to own or rent land. Lack of resources would prevent the women from doing so. The bad side of freehold tenure is that women would end up with access to less land than under communal or traditional

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<sup>391</sup> L. Callinicos. 1993. "A Place in the City: The Rand in the Eve of Apartheid", Vol. 3, Bloemfontein, 23.

<sup>392</sup> Callinicos. "A Place in the City", 24.

<sup>393</sup> Cross. 1999. 'Women and Land in Rural Crisis', *Agenda*, Vol. 42, 12-27.

land tenure systems. Another disadvantage is that freehold tenure system requires a husband or other male relatives' names, and this is a clear indication that women's positions are not necessarily better under freehold land tenure system.<sup>394</sup>

Although women are vulnerable under traditional and communal land tenure systems, no other system has guaranteed them any land rights. According to Cross and Friedman, tenure is best understood, not as a system of laws, but rather as a social and political process. As such, a tenure system is determined by the values of a community, the power relations in a community and the unspoken assumptions that operate in a community, rather than by a set of official rules.<sup>395</sup> Cross and Friedman further argue that it is very difficult for any government to change tenure systems and women's positions therein by means of formal legislation. By looking at the Bangladesh example of 1997, which stipulated that redistributed plots in the project be leased on a permanent basis, jointly, in the names of husband and wife, one cannot rule out the possibility of legislating tenure systems despite all difficulties associated with it. In case of divorce, Bangladesh legislation stipulated that the wife would retain access to the land.<sup>396</sup>

#### **4.3.2. Women's lack of access to credit**

Rural populations can reduce poverty and expand their economic activities if they have access to credit. This kind of credit can be divided into two; namely, short-term credit and long-term credit. Short-term credits are those that enable the purchase of things such as seeds, fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides, together with the hiring of labour, with repayments mostly after harvest. Long-term credit entails such things as the purchase of technology that serve as labour-saving tools, or the establishment of enterprises such as small-scale dairy, poultry or tree crop activities.<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> Cross. 'Women and Land in Rural Crisis', *Agenda*, Vol. 42, 12-27.

<sup>395</sup> C. Cross and M. Friedman, 1997. "Women and Tenure: Marginality and the Left-hand Power", in S. Meer (Ed), 'Women, Land and Authority', Cape Town, 17.

<sup>396</sup> T. Islam, 1997. 'Development Bangladesh: Land Rights take Poor out of Poverty Trap'. *World News*, November 4.

<sup>397</sup> United Nations. 2008. 'Rural Women in a Changing World', 31.

The United Nations has discovered that, “producers with limited resources, especially women, receive only a small share of formal agricultural credit even in countries where they are major producers.”<sup>398</sup> As land is the major asset used as collateral to obtain rural credit, it is difficult for women in rural areas who do not own land or resources to access credit from commercial financial institutions. Women, therefore must rely on their unregulated informal sector to meet their basic needs.<sup>399</sup> Many women are treated as minors and cannot get contracts without the consent of a male guardian. A good example is that of the Basotho women who must obtain permission from their absent husbands in order to access a loan from a creditor. In a measure to address this issue, South Africa appointed the Strauss Commission which recommended that the government fund a gender awareness programme for staff employed in the state rural financial sector.<sup>400</sup>

Access to credit will increase agricultural productivity and profitable entrepreneurial activity among women. Increases in women’s income should contribute to increased overall household welfare. Increased access to financial resources would decrease women’s dependence on male relatives, thereby enhancing their status within households. The South African government, through the Department of Land Affairs, made some attempts to address the gender inequality by introducing the Khula Trust in 1999. The Land Bank came with another product that provides small loans to individuals who require credit for small-scale operations (micro-credit scheme) such as vegetable gardens. Repayments qualify them for larger second loans and so credits build up a credit worthiness record, which allows them to qualify for standard Land Bank products.<sup>401</sup>

Governments and international aid agencies popularised micro-credit schemes as a method to enable women’s access to credit. Increasing popularity resulted from the success of the Bangladesh micro-credit schemes, where they dramatically increased the credit available to poor rural women since the mid-1980s. The success was seen by continued high demand for loans by women and the 98% repayment rate.<sup>402</sup> Whether this

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<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid.

<sup>400</sup> H. Dolny. 2001. ‘Banking on Change’, South Africa, 55-60.

<sup>401</sup> Dolny. 2001. ‘Banking on Change’, South Africa, 115.

<sup>402</sup> A. Rahman, 1999. ‘Micro-credit Initiatives for Equitable and Sustainable Development: Who Pays’. *World Development*, 27(1), 73.

has translated into actual women empowerment in South Africa is yet to be determined. Women continue to live and function as members of patriarchal households.

Although the Bangladeshi example was hailed by many as a success story, a study by Goetz and Gupta found that most of these women were being fronted by men, who end up using the said loans for their own benefit. The issue of fronting of women by their male counterparts is something that this study also discovered, and this is listed in Chapter Five, as one of the drawbacks towards the advancement of women farmers at Nwanedi farming area. The Bangladeshi study discovered that men were the users of more than 60% of women's loans, and that men were either 'encouraging' or forcing women to obtain loans for exclusive use by the men.<sup>403</sup> In order to avoid this, the South African government should provide smaller loans for activities such as vegetable gardens and poultry rearing, the so-called, short-term loans, according to the United Nations.<sup>404</sup> Other interventions include women's access to education, training, technology, markets and infrastructure, thereby increasing their economic and decision-making powers and reducing the role of males as economic mediators.<sup>405</sup>

Goetz and Gupta further point out that women's access to credit in Bangladesh had become a source of capital acquisition for men, putting a lot of pressure on women and in some instances, leading to domestic violence. Many respondents in this study claimed that domestic violence had increased since they became members of the micro-credit scheme.<sup>406</sup> This, therefore means that assessment of credit schemes should be based, not only on repayment rates, but also on the investigation of relations of power and gender within the households and societies.<sup>407</sup> Rahman also discovered that many loan repayments were made through a process of recycling (paying of bank loan by acquiring additional loans from money-lenders). This increased the overall debt on ultimately impoverished households.<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> A.M. Goetz and A.M. Gupta. 1996. 'Who Takes the Credit: Gender, Power and Control over Loan Use in Rural Credit Programmes in Bangladesh'. *World Development*, 24(1).

<sup>404</sup> United Nations. 2008. 'Rural Women in a Changing World', 31.

<sup>405</sup> Goetz and Gupta, 'Who Takes the Credit'. *World Development*, 24(1).

<sup>406</sup> Rahman, 'Micro-credit Initiatives'. *World Development*, 24(1).

<sup>407</sup> Ibid.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid.

Informal credit associations are more effective ways of empowering women financially and socially or politically. The majority of these informal credit associations are organised according to sex and women-only informal credit associations were the most successful.<sup>409</sup>

The majority of women farmers at Nwanedi lamented financial challenges they were encountering as women farmers. They complained about qualifying for a small amount of credit as a result of them not having assets that can be used as guarantee. They mostly qualify for less than half a million which, according to them is not enough given the expenses required for one to generate profit at the end of each harvest. Where credit was granted, Nwanedi women farmers were not happy about the interests imposed on them. Some ended up struggling to repay their debts thereby risking being blacklisted. One victim of blacklisting was a Mrs. Netsianda who, after borrowing money saw her plants being washed away by heavy rains before harvest and lost everything. Without a single source of income, Mrs Joyce was unable to pay her debt and ended up being blacklisted.<sup>410</sup> It was lack of credit which prompted Mrs. Joyce to persuade her husband to resign so that they can use his pension fund to finance their farming business, unfortunately her husband refused because he had another family to support as he was in a polygamous relationship with two wives.<sup>411</sup> This again shows clearly how desperate these women farmers were about finance.

Almost all women farmers interviewed admitted that they have never ploughed the whole farm. They have been provided with big farms but due to lack of credit they were unable to plough their whole farms resulting in them lying uncultivated most of the time. The Bangladeshi example cited above demonstrated that if things are done properly and well-regulated, progress can be made regarding the plight of women farmers. The only downside to the Bangladeshi example was the issue of fronting of women by their husband in order to access funds earmarked for Bangladeshi women farmers. The issue of fronting was also raised by one of my informants who acknowledged that most women

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<sup>409</sup> Ibid.

<sup>410</sup> Interview with Mrs. Joyce, 06 November 2015.

<sup>411</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015.

who were working with their husbands were being fronted by their husband in order to gain government sponsorships. She acknowledged that whatever they get from the government belongs to their husbands as they were the ones who own the farm accounts. Mrs Mavis started her farming activities by working jointly with her husband. They bought many equipment including cars and a tractor together but the money they generated from the farm's proceeds was going straight into her husband's account. When she wanted something from her husband, he started up conflict with her and ended up refusing to help her. That created greater animosity between her and her husband which ended in a divorce. She is now a happy independent farmer of a 42-hectare farm after requesting her own farm from the chief and got it.<sup>412</sup>

The issue of fronting of women mostly goes hand-in-hand with women's abuse. It cannot be right for someone to work as hard as Nwanedi women farmers are and enter competitions as the face of a farm, only for the proceeds to go to the pockets of a husband whose contribution was mostly that of encouraging his wife to work as hard as she did. If this practise is detected and discouraged by imposing severe punishment to those who practise it, women farmers will be saved from being treated as slaves by their husbands.

#### **4.3.3. The demand for land by African women**

Employment in urban sectors seems to be a tough ask for many rural women. Furthermore, access to land remains a crucial factor in the economic survival of female-headed households in rural areas. Women have very different demands and needs for land (compared to men), however, they tend to be excluded from the benefits of land reform projects.

Men are more vocal about their land demands than women. In Merino Walk (Ciskei), the initial resettlement plan was based on the community's demand for large residential and arable plots, and ample grazing land. However, when women were consulted, it was

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<sup>412</sup> Interview with Mrs. Mavis, 01 December 2015.

discovered that they only needed small gardens or fields on which to grow vegetables and not large grazing areas.<sup>413</sup>

In Ekuthuleni in the Midlands region of KwaZulu-Natal, the dominance of men in decision-making structures was seen when a large proportion of the land was set aside for grazing, even though female-headed household of this community rarely owned cattle (considered a source of wealth). These female-headed households that do not own cattle do not benefit from having a portion of land available for grazing. In most instances, women end-up renting their land to men or wealthy households as grazing land. When interviewed, Ekuthuleni women indicated that they needed land for cultivation (subsistence cultivation) but, because men dominated the decision-making process and negotiations with the Department of Land Affairs, large land areas were allocated for grazing needs. It was again discovered that women, especially single women, tended to obtain access to more marginal, more remote and less fertile land. Many of those who own land have indicated that they feel like their male relatives were the ones owning their land.<sup>414</sup>

Many women's demands for land is tied to their socially reproductive function in society. Most women interviewed at Ekuthuleni said they only wanted land for gardens for subsistence and income generation, infrastructure, residential use and the growing of thatching grass.<sup>415</sup>

The Ekuthuleni study serves as an example of what women went through in other parts of South Africa in order to gain access to land just as experienced by women farmers at Nwanedi. Although the scenario looks somewhat different, what one should take note of is the difficulties women had to undergo to get access to land, not at the hands of the outsiders but at the hands of their menfolk. The Ekuthuleni example shows how neglected and undermined women's inputs were compared to those of their male counterparts. In the Nwanedi scenario, women who wanted land from traditional leaders were able to get it but after going through a lot of scrutinization just like what Mrs Maria had to endure. At

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<sup>413</sup> S. Middleton. 1997. 'Women's Rights and Needs: The Case of Thornhill and Merino Walk', in S. Meer (Ed), 'Women, Land and Authority', Cape Town, 74-83.

<sup>414</sup> J. May. 1996. 'Assets, Income and Livelihoods in Rural South Africa', Volume 2, in M. Lipton, K. Ellis, & M. Lipton (Eds). *Indicator Press*, December.

<sup>415</sup> S. Ngubane. 1999. 'Title to Land'. *Agenda*, Vol. 42



first, she highlighted that many women were finding it difficult for their applications to get approved. She sent her application for a land to the traditional authorities and was told that her husband was not into farming so why was she looking for a farm. When she told the chief that the land she was applying for was hers, the chief wanted to know when she started farming. She was saved by pictures she took while working on a hired farm but still the chief was not convinced. He ended up choosing someone to go and inspect her farm to see whether what she was alleging was true. After the inspector has spoken well about her, then her application got approved.<sup>416</sup> Unlike their male counterparts, this was what women farmers had to endure in order to get land. The treatment women had to endure shows clearly how discriminated women are in the countryside.

Other case studies have shown that women and men have different interpretations of the optimum resolution of their land claims. Women push for options that allow them to remain in the same settlement areas, that is, close to employment opportunities, schools, and community structures, together with additional land and priority access to development and social services, while men tend to argue for resettlement and agricultural production and or grazing land. Being nearer to the homestead gives women more control over their resources so that men are less likely to appropriate the land. It also enables women to engage in agriculture while fulfilling social responsibilities like child rearing at the same time.<sup>417</sup> As a result of oppressive societal relations, women tend to demand land for the production supplies to supplement household income and food security. Their demands are centred on survival and securing a place to live.<sup>418</sup>

Further researchers have discovered that women place more emphasis on the provision of social infrastructure such as schools, clinics, roads employment opportunities, sports facilities, training and water, while older male members were interested in large-scale

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<sup>416</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015.

<sup>417</sup> N. Mjoli-Mncube.1999. 'Land and Housing: Women Speak Out'. *Agenda*, Vol. 42, 4-6.

<sup>418</sup> T. Marcus. 1996. 'Demand for Land: Down to Earth', in T. Marcus, K. Eales, and A. Wildschut (Eds), "Land and Agricultural Policy Centre". *Indicator Press*, Natal, 6-11.

farming and grazing land. According to Walker, this preference is strongly linked to women's desire to invest in the future of their children.<sup>419</sup>

#### **4.3.4. The effect of beneficiary selection procedures on African women**

International experience indicates that beneficiary selection procedures based on assumptions about 'sustainable' and 'efficient' land reform have discriminated against women. Gender and marital status have been used to identify potential beneficiaries internationally.<sup>420</sup> This is true to what women from Nwanedi had to encounter while looking for land. Mrs Maria's experience also comes handy when one must deal with this matter. When she applied for land, she was told that her husband was not into farming, so why was she applying. This was a clear indication that the chief never expected a woman to apply for land given the history behind land ownership. When she made it clear that it was she who was looking for land, they came with unnecessary demands in order to find an excuse to not provide her with land. It was through God's grace that she had everything in place that the chief wanted and on top of that satisfied the inspector sent to inspect the farm that she was working on. Although men were not interviewed, I doubt whether the requirements Mrs Maria had to meet were the same requirements men had to go through while applying for their own land.<sup>421</sup>

It is again amazing that out of those Nwanedi women farmers interviewed, except for one who had to undergo a painful divorce process, almost all of them they were single mothers. The majority of those interviewed indicated that the farm was given to their husbands and they took over later after their husbands had decided to focus on something else. Others as already stated while addressing the issue of fronting, might have been brought before me after I had indicated that I was dealing with women farmers only. This reminds one of the roles played by the marital status of an individual in accessing the

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<sup>419</sup> S. Walker, 1998. 'Land Reform and Gender in Post-Apartheid South Africa'. United Nations Institute for Social Development, Poverty and Well-being, October.

<sup>420</sup> B.H. Kinsey and H.P. Bunswanger. 1993. 'Characteristics and Performance of Resettlement Programmes: A Review and some Lessons from Experience', World Bank & LAPC Workshop Paper, Swaziland, November.

<sup>421</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015.

land. Those who were single were either divorced or widowed. It might have been extremely difficult for a single mother to get access to land, hence the dominance in the number of married female farmers in this regard.

#### **4.3.5. The effect of cultural and social discrimination on African women**

According to Turner and Ibsen, the 1997 White Paper on Land Reform acknowledged that discriminatory customary and social practices were largely responsible for gender inequalities in land ownership and access and required that traditional tenure systems adapt to accommodate the changing position of women.<sup>422</sup> The government's commitment to gender equity had not translated into reality because, firstly, of patriarchal attitudes among community members and leadership structures ensure that women did not participate effectively in the land reform process, and, secondly, there appeared to be a tension between the ANC's commitment to gender equality and its reluctance, to effectively curtail the powers of traditional authorities.<sup>423</sup>

Women's access and rights to land were mediated through male relatives in communal tenure systems and land reform projects. An illustration of this was Mrs Maria experience when she applied for her own farm at the local traditional authority, and she was told that her husband was not a farmer so she should not ask for a farm. When she told the chief that she was not applying for her husband but herself instead, she was then requested to show proof that she indeed can farm. It was only after she had shown the chief some pictures of her crops that the chief believed her to an extent. She had to be subjected to an inspection by one of the chief's right hand men before her application was approved, said Mrs Maia.<sup>424</sup> In other words, the chief was biased against her, not because she was not fit to become a farmer but because of her gender. Another female farmer, Florah, thanked the goodwill of her husband who, after working on his farm together with her,

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<sup>422</sup> S. Turner and H. Ibsen. 2000. "Land and Agrarian Reform in South Africa: A Status Report", Occasional Paper Series, PLAAS, UWC, November. S. Walker. 1998. "Land Reform and Gender in Post-Apartheid South Africa", United Nations Institute for Social Development, Poverty and Wellbeing, October. G. Van Wyk. 1999. 'Gender Policy and Land Reform', *Agenda*, 42.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>424</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria. Female Farmer at Nwanedi. 03 November 2015.

decided to venture into cattle farming and left the farm in her hands. She was managing the farm and had to request her husband to stand on her behalf when she was not there. Her husband had been helpful, and the farm was still registered in his name and not in Florah's name.<sup>425</sup>

Mrs Maria's situation can easily lead her to fall into the trap of gender violence just like Mrs Mavis who worked with her husband on his farm for a long time only to be kicked out after accumulating enough wealth for her husband. Her husband was the one with access to the account of the farm and was able to utilise it without consulting her. In her own words Mrs Mavis said "It starts off by being told the money must go to the husband's bank account. From there you won't even know what happened to it. You can't even ask because if you do so, you are asked whose property is it you are talking about."<sup>426</sup> The trouble started when he started neglecting his responsibilities as the head of the family. He stopped supporting his children and when she asked for money, he asked her whose money was she talking about. He went to an extent of refusing her permission to use the family car, telling her that it does not suit her.<sup>427</sup> The confrontation that arose ended in a divorce and fortunately Mrs Mavis got her own portion of twenty-four hectares when the farm was shared and a further eighteen hectares that she applied on her own from the chief. Mrs Mavis became a proud owner of a forty-two hectare-farm at Nwanedi as a result.<sup>428</sup>

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's report, there were government selected bodies in other African countries; for example, Zimbabwe, that are responsible for the allocation, occupation and use of communal lands. These bodies grant occupation in accordance to customary law, which only give land to an adult married man for use by himself and his family. Women, on the other side, can only access land and other natural resources through their spouses or male relatives.<sup>429</sup> There is enormous variation from one communal tenure system to another and different groups of women

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<sup>425</sup> Interview with Mrs. Florah. Female Farmer at Nwanedi. 05 November 2015.

<sup>426</sup> Interview with Mrs. Mavis, 01 December 2015

<sup>427</sup> Ibid.

<sup>428</sup> Ibid.

<sup>429</sup> UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2004. 'Land Tenure Systems and their Impacts on Food Security and Sustainable Development in Africa'" 69.

experience different levels of discrimination. Nevertheless, women usually do not qualify to hold land independently from men. A survey in the Eastern Cape in South Africa found that communities considered the allocation of land to married women impossible. The rights to own land are vested in the husbands who are considered household-heads.<sup>430</sup>

The same survey yielded a considerable relation of traditional attitudes toward single women, who were increasingly gaining rights to residential land. In other cases, single women were denied access to land altogether, unless male relatives mediated on their behalf.<sup>431</sup>

Widows, in some cases, gained access to residential and productive land through inheritance, especially, when they were older with children. There were cases in South Africa where widows were deprived of their property after the death of their spouses.<sup>432</sup> Inheritance in rural South Africa was along patriarchal lines, despite the promulgation of the Promotion of Equality and prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act that stated in Section 8 that, “all forms of gender discrimination”, including “the system of preventing women from inheriting family property”, are prohibited.<sup>433</sup>

Widows can inherit land but would usually claim or receive it in the name of a son. Women who inherit land often sell their land before a male relative can claim it. The promulgation of the Deeds Registries Amendment Act of 2003 seemed to have given women stronger land rights, thereby undermining some of the current patriarchal inheritance practices.<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>430</sup> Turner and Ibsen, 2000. ‘Land and Agrarian Reform in South Africa: A Status Paper’, Occasional Paper Series, PLAAS, UWC, November 27-30.

<sup>431</sup> L. Thorp, 1997. ‘Access to Land: A Rural Perspective in Tradition and Resources’, in S. Meer (Ed), ‘Women, Land and Authority’, Cape Town, 36-43.

<sup>432</sup> Thorp, ‘Access to Land: A Rural Perspective in Tradition and Resources’, in S. Meer (Ed), ‘Women, Land and Authority’, 36-43.

<sup>433</sup> M. Mann. 2000. ‘Women’s Access to Land in the Former Bantustans: Constitutional Conflict, Customary Law, Democratisation and the Role of the State’. Occasional Paper Series, PLAAS, UWC.

<sup>434</sup> *The Star*. 2003. ‘Deeds Amendment Act’, June 9.

#### 4.3.6. Women, potential and small-scale agriculture.

Approximately 60% of South Africa's women are the mainstay of small-scale agriculture but not generally involved in commercial or large-scale production.<sup>435</sup> Women engage in subsistence and small-scale production primarily for food security, to save money for household budgets and as insurance against cash income failure or unemployment.<sup>436</sup> Lack of resources (financial and land) necessary to farm large pieces of land, relegates women to small-scale and subsistence agriculture. A survey in the Northern Province (now Limpopo Province) in 1995, found that men consistently achieved higher earnings from agricultural production due to their larger land holdings. Basically, social norms and cultural discrimination also contribute to women's inferior economic status.<sup>437</sup>

The World Bank sponsored researchers during the 1993 land reform policy formation process, argued that although small-scale female farmers need assistance, to focus development aid on them would be too costly and non-replicable, as opposed to concentrating resources on more commercially oriented farmers.<sup>438</sup> Cross further found that women are more risk-averse than men, that men are more likely to risk cash investments, that men's approach to farming is more profit driven, and that men are more likely to invest in agricultural equipment.<sup>439</sup>

This perspective was also adopted by the Land Redistribution and Agricultural Development Programme (LRAD) in 2001. There were some doubts about women's ability to benefit given the limited resources available to them. It was discovered that in

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<sup>435</sup> M. Adams, V. Ashworth and P. Raikes. 1993. "Agricultural Supporting Services for Land Reform", LAPC, World Bank, September. C. Cross. 1999. 'Women and Land in Rural Areas'. *Agenda*, 42, 20-23.

<sup>436</sup> C. Cross, 1999. 'Women and Land in Rural Areas'. *Agenda*, 42, 20-23.

<sup>437</sup> M.T. Ngqaleni and M.J. Makhura, 1996. 'An Analysis of Women's Status in Agricultural Development in the Northern Province', in M. Lipton, F. Ellis & M. Lipton (Eds), "Land, Labour and Livelihoods", Vol. 2. *Indicator Press*, December.

<sup>438</sup> M. Adams, V. Ashworth and P. Raikes. 1993. "Agricultural Supporting Services for Land Reform", LAPC, World Bank, September. C. Cross, 1999. 'Women and Land in Rural Areas'. *Agenda*, 42.

<sup>439</sup> Cross, 1999. 'Women and Land in Rural Areas'. *Agenda*, 42. J.W. Bruce & S.E. Migot-Adolla (Eds), 1994. "Searching for Land Tenure Security in Africa. D. Bryceson, 1995. 'Women Wielding the Hoe: Lessons from Rural Africa for Feminist Theory and Development Practice'. C. Cross, T. Mngadi, T. Mbhele, N. Mlambo, K. Kleinbooi, Z. Saayman, H. Pretorius and S. Bekker, 1997. 'An Unstable Balance: Migration, Small Farming, Infrastructure and Livelihoods in the Coastal Provinces', Volume 1, Development Bank of Southern Africa.

setting up a distinction between land redistribution for the poor focusing on subsistence, and economic growth through support to mostly male commercial farmers, the DLA has created a land reform mechanism that will exclude the very poor in rural areas (mostly women) and has consigned women to the limitations of subsistence activities<sup>440</sup>

Contrary to previous findings, some researchers have discovered that women have the potential to make a significant contribution to agricultural and rural development. Cross found that women are willing to start production with less land and that women plant all their land more often than men do (see Nwanedi women's narratives). The 1995 Northern Province survey found that women consistently had higher yields, had a strong interest in deriving an income from agriculture, were very responsive to incentives and, made greater use of technological improvements such as seed varieties and fertiliser.<sup>441</sup>

Although agricultural production makes up only ten percent of income of rural African households, it is the third most popular source of livelihoods and remains one of the only options open to the very poor (female-headed households) in rural areas. About livelihoods, it would probably be more appropriate to provide poor women with access to small pieces of land (to produce food for household consumption), close to their homesteads (enabling them to exert control), and which is suitable to the amount of time and labour they have available.<sup>442</sup>

Given the prevalence and importance of women in farming areas and the lack of employment opportunities in rural areas, transformation of rural economy will not be possible without accommodating women in the process.<sup>443</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> Cross, 1999. 'Women and Land in Rural Areas'. *Agenda*, 42. J.W. Bruce & S.E. Migot-Adolla (Eds), 1994. 'Searching for Land Tenure Security in Africa'. D. Bryceson, 1995. 'Women Wielding the Hoe: Lessons from Rural Africa for Feminist Theory and Development Practice'. C. Cross, T. Mngadi, T. Mbhele, N. Mlambo, K. Kleinbooi, Z. Saayman, H. Pretorius and S. Bekker, 1997. 'An Unstable Balance: Migration, Small Farming, Infrastructure and Livelihoods in the Coastal Provinces', Volume 1, Development Bank of Southern Africa.

<sup>441</sup> Cross. 'Women and Land'. *Agenda*, 42.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid.

<sup>443</sup> M.T. Ngqaleni and M.J. Makhura, 1996. 'An Analysis of Women's Status in Agricultural Development in the Northern Province', in M. Lipton, F. Ellis and M. Lipton (Eds). 'Land, Labour and Livelihoods', Vol.2. Indicator Press, December.

#### 4.4. Study subjects

This study was conducted on a group of women farmers found in the Nwanedi area of the Limpopo Province with an aim of examining their experiences as black women farmers, their experiences as a result of their gender and the level of consciousness they have shown while interpreting their own histories. A total of fifteen individual women were interviewed, ranging in age from 35 to 65. This group of women was composed of illiterate, semi-literate and some retired professionals as one lady disclosed that she was a teacher by profession but decided to retire and venture into farming. Although there were greater disparities about the level of education amongst my informants, they all acknowledged the importance of education for one to become a successful farmer. Those who were totally illiterate, just two in number, maintained that they always send their children to different workshops in order to empower them and their farms as well because the knowledge they acquire in the workshops would only be made meaningful if put into practice.

Nwanedi women farmers specialise in different types of crops but the main ones are tomatoes and butternuts. There are those who plant maize, different vegetables such as cabbage, spinach, baby germs, baby marrow etc, and if it was not for a shortage of pack house they would be engaging in a more diverse kind of vegetables, according to Mrs Maria.<sup>444</sup>

Bozzoli argues that oppressed people do not choose nor shape the institution within which they live. This brought to life the question, “how much of our lives is determined for us and how much by us.”<sup>445</sup> The balance between the two differ depending on where we stand in relation to social power.<sup>446</sup>

The approach used in this chapter was like that which was used by Bozzoli, in her book *‘Women of Phokeng’*, where she opted for an unconventional way of approach, both in

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<sup>444</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015.

<sup>445</sup> B. Bozzoli, 1991. ‘Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983’, Johannesburg, p. 1; A. Giddens, 1984. ‘The Constitution of Society: The Outline of the Theory of Structuration’, Cambridge, Polity Press. M. Roche, 1987. ‘Social Theory and the Lifeworld.’ *British Journal of Sociology* 38, no. 2.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid.



form and content. She saw conventional sociological methods, such as the structured survey, the questionnaire, or the rigid interview, as poor tools because informants responding to these might decide to be dishonest, and researchers' preconceived notions of consciousness being thrown back to them as a result of their 'scientific' survey.<sup>447</sup> Although this is not a sociological but a historical research, historians have also acknowledged the difficulties of grasping the 'inherent' ideologies of ordinary people, let alone in an undocumented African context.<sup>448</sup> In order to achieve the intended results this study used life stories, based upon lengthy recorded interviews that would help in exploring the trajectories of the lives of the informants.<sup>449</sup>

The study revolved around the lives of fifteen women farmers in the Nwanedi area. Although they are not all from the same area, their interest in farming has brought these individual women together. They began to share the same sentiments as a result of this shared experiences.

Nwanedi is an area situated in the far north-eastern part of the Limpopo Province of South Africa. It is at the border between South Africa and Zimbabwe. The area has been subjected to agricultural improvement planning (schemes), in which people living in the area were provided with plots to plough. These were allocated to Africans living in Folvhodwe village. The village was then surrounded by farms on the western and northern sides that were all owned by whites until the new dispensation in South Africa, in 1994. The issue of land claims had resulted in people from different communities living nearby claiming the area as theirs, leading to an exodus of white farmers who had farms in the area. This desertion by whites brought with it a different dimension to the history of the area. There were three chiefs; Chief Nefolvhodwe, Chief Manenzhe and Chief Tshikundamalema, who all claimed the area as theirs. The jostling over the area has created an opportunity for women to have access to land, something which was totally

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<sup>447</sup> Bozzoli, 'Women of Phokeng' p. 3; W. Hudson, G.F. Jacobs, and S. Biesheuvel, 1966. 'Anatomy of South Africa', Cape Town: Purnell.

<sup>448</sup> P. la Hausse, 1990. 'Oral History and South African Historians', *Radical History Review*, pp. 40-47; H. Alverson, 1970. 'Mind in the Heart of Darkness: Value of Self-Identity among the Tswana of Southern Africa', New Heaven: Yale University Press; J. Comaroff, 1985. 'Body of Power, Spirit and Resistance: The Culture and History of A South African People', Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>449</sup> Bozzoli, 'Women of Phokeng', 4.

unprecedented, given the history of Africans on matters pertaining to land tenure. Historically, land was allocated to men who were perceived as head of the families (see 4.2.3.5 and 4.2.3.6 above for more information on women's access to land).

For the three chiefs to stake their claim on an area, they decided to allocate or give a farm to anyone who shows allegiance to them. The person should show his or her keenness to farm and start the business of farming as soon as the farm is allocated to him or her. Although there were men who showed an interest in farming, it was realised that the farms were more than the people who were keen to engage in farming as a business. Instead of allocating the land to men only, these chiefs started allocating land to women, too, bringing to the fore a new breed of farmers; namely, women. Some of these women farmers' experiences form the basis of the discussion in this research.

In order to get more clarity on the kind of agreement reached between the different chiefs and the women who were given farms by these three chiefs, I visited Chief John, a school teacher at Dzimauli Secondary School, found at Folovhodwe. He confirmed that he was one of those who had allocated some farms to women who applied for farms and gave the names of women he had allocated some farms to.<sup>450</sup> Chief John further clarified the kind of an agreement entered into between him and the women who were given farms, stating that women farmers were only given permission to occupy (PTO) and not permanent ownership rights. The farms were given the status of 'Orchard', in order to allow those interested in specialising in fruit trees to plant trees. Some of these farms were leased out to women farmers.<sup>451</sup> It was imperative for me to get such important information given the fact that the majority of women farmers interviewed could hardly clarify the statuses of their farms. Others do not seem to know what kind of an agreement they have entered into with the chiefs who have allocated farms to them.

A thematic analysis approach was used to analyse these data. About sixteen interviews were conducted with different women farmers. Each of the woman farmers was given an opportunity to share her experiences of being a female farmer, and issues such as what made them decide to venture into farming, how they had sought to establish themselves

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<sup>450</sup> Interview with Chief John. 01 December 2015.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid.

over time, what challenges they encountered, and what they thought might solve those challenges. Answers to all these questions would only be achieved after careful scrutinization and analysis of all individual interviews as documented in this chapter. I then identified patterns and themes and analysed them according to the way the interviewees responded.

Mouton defines analysis as, “the resolution of a complex whole into its parts.”<sup>452</sup> The term is usually contrasted with synthesis, which is said to mean, “the construction of a whole out of parts.”<sup>453</sup> Interpretation, on the other hand, “refers to the stage in the research process where the researcher tries to bring it all together, either by relating the various individual findings to an existing theory or hypothesis, or by formulating a new hypothesis that would best account for the data.”<sup>454</sup> The main aim of this chapter is to analyse first the data collected during field work and the interpretation thereof. The information gathered was raw and needed a lot of scrutinization on my part in order to understand it.

#### **4.5. How Women Farmers at Nwanedi Decided to Venture into Farming**

Each of the women interviewed gave her own version of what compelled her to venture into farming. Different circumstances compelled them to enter farming activity. This is confirmed by the conversation I had with my first interviewee, Mrs Maria who maintains,

I still remember when I first applied for the land at the traditional authorities. I was told that my husband is not a farmer and I said the land is for me. The chief asked me when I started farming and that is where pictures of farming which I have been taking came in handy. The chief sent a person to the land I was farming just to confirm what I was showing him on the pictures, and the person found that I was busy farming and the land was given to me because of that.<sup>455</sup>

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<sup>452</sup> Interview with Chief John. 01 December 2015.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

<sup>455</sup> Interview with Mrs Maria, 03 November 2015.

This makes it easy to understand the frustrations that women must endure before they could be granted land to farm on. The way the chief responded to the application for land by Mrs Maria shows a clear indication that women have long been subjected to discriminatory activities as a result of their gender. The line of questioning by the chief to Mrs Maria shows how biased the chief was towards her which brings one to conclude that women were being unfairly discriminated against because of their sex. Mrs Maria had to go to an extent of producing proof that indeed she has the potential to be a successful farmer in order to obtain land for herself, something that male farmers might not have experienced at all.

Before Mrs Maria could get a response pertaining to her application from the chief, the chief sent a messenger to the land that Mrs Maria was farming. This was done to make sure that the pictures shown to the chief were indeed authentic. When the messenger arrived at Mrs Maria's farm, he found her busy working on her farm. It took that long and crooked road for her application to get approval from the chief. Male applications do not attract such scrutiny, rendering this whole process that the chief had shown, a bit distasteful towards women. This is a clear indication of the difficulties that women are experiencing daily in rural South Africa.

Mrs Maria's account of acquiring her farm stands in sharp contrast with Mrs Mutshekwa, who stated,

I was just a woman whose work was to look after family duties. The owner is my husband. It came to a point a woman had to engage in agricultural farming. I then told my husband that I wished to have my own piece of land because there were rumours that women will be given sponsorships and must enter some competitions; so, for one to participate in those initiatives, one should have a piece of land. So, because my husband had already gone to the tribal offices, he also thought of accompanying me there. We went there with a letter to Chief Nefolovhodwe. He advised me to take 5 hectares, and then a lease of 5 hectares

will be left with me. So, the chief also wrote a letter and officially I was given 5 hectares in 2006.<sup>456</sup>

The first sentence by Mrs Mutshekwa shows how she regarded herself before engaging in farming activities. She saw herself as just a woman whose duty was to look after her family on a farm belonging to her husband. Her interest in farming came after hearing rumours of sponsorship and competitions for women farmers. Only women who own land could participate. With the assistance of her husband she went to Chief Nefolovhodwe with an application letter and was given a five- hectare farm by the chief in 2006. Compared to the way Mrs Maria went through when applying for her farm, one would be forgiven to conclude that the chief seems to be applying double standards in treating applicants. Mrs Mutshekwa was never subjected to too much scrutiny, such as that endured by Mrs Maria, like being compelled to produce evidence that she was indeed a farmer. The latter ended up producing pictures of her farming and a messenger was sent to check the authenticity of her claims. The fact that Mrs Mutshekwa went with her husband to the chief might have worked in her favour. This shows the extent of patriarchal influence in customary law. Mrs Maria's husband works in Gauteng and has no record of farming as one of the questions from the chief suggested, and Mrs Mutshekwa's husband is a farmer who also seems to have a good relationship with the chief. This seemed to have helped the cause of Mrs Mutshekwa, hence her speedy acquiring of the land. This is a clear indication of the patriarchal constraints that rural women must endure in agriculture.

Mrs Hangwani's approach was different from the approaches used by the first two interviewees. She maintains, "I went to the chief when my husband was in Pretoria and told the chief that I wanted to work, and he understood. The letter that shows that the farm is mine is in the house."<sup>457</sup>

Her exclamations indicate that Mrs Hangwani did not struggle that much and the chief himself did not demand too much from her like he did from Mrs Maria. She approached the chief and told him that she wanted to work, and according to her, the chief understood.

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<sup>456</sup> Interview with Mrs. Mutshekwa, 04 November 2015.

<sup>457</sup> Interview with Mrs. Hangwani, 04 November 2015.

This is a clear indication that there is no standing procedure in place that one must follow in order to apply for land. Sometimes one may think it depends on who you are instead of what steps one should follow when applying for land. Mrs Hangwani's husband was working in Pretoria (Gauteng) when she requested land but she was never asked whether her husband was a farmer or not and to reinforce my view, she was never requested to produce proof in the form of pictures of her farming exploits nor had a messenger sent to verify the authenticity of her claims like what happened to Mrs Maria. What baffles me is the difference between the two applications. Mrs Hangwani applied in 2000 and Mrs Maria in 2004. There is not much differences in time lines, yet the processes toward applying for land differed drastically, a clear indication of what a four-year gap can do in rural areas.

Mrs Florah was my fourth interviewee and a woman farmer in the area. According to her, her passion for farming developed at an earlier age when she used to sell her labour in exchange for tomatoes that they used for consumption at home. In her own words, Mrs Florah said the farm, "belongs to me and my husband. I am saying this because my husband and I are one through marriage, so I was given an opportunity by my husband to manage it."<sup>458</sup> Her husband is now engaged in livestock farming and only comes to her aid when she is not around.

When one looks at how Mrs Florah got involved in farming, one can notice that she never had to undergo the long process of applying as her husband was the one who owned the farm. She was fortunate that her husband who owned the farm got tired of crop farming and decided to engage in cattle farming. This gave her an opportunity to engage in crop farming herself. Unlike the three women farmers interviewed earlier, she did not apply for a farm and has put it correctly that she was managing the farm instead of owning the farm. If her husband decides to go back to crop farming, the possibility is that she may be forced out of farming or else decide to work together with him if he agrees to that kind of arrangement.

Mrs Sanna, a resident of Matangari, some 50 kilometres away from Nwanedi, also owns a farm in Nwanedi. She is an old lady who started farming in 1982 at Matangari irrigation

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<sup>458</sup> Interview with Mrs. Florah, 05 November 2015.

scheme. She only owed two hectares that were separated. The separation coupled with shortage of water to water her crops made her decide to look for a bigger and better place for farming. She then went to Nwanedi where she rented four hectares from someone and started farming there. She realised that renting was not profitable and decided to approach the local chief to apply for her own farm. In her own words when asked to tell the difficulties she encountered when applying for land she said,

The chiefs around here are not that difficult and even the land is not that expensive, like at Tshivhase. In 2010 I went to the chief with R300,00 to apply for a piece of land and later paid another R700,00 and got these ten hectares. It shows that I got this whole ten-hectare land for R1000,00 only. Moreover, these days land is very difficult to find because there are too many people engaging in farming, but if you are looking for a plot you can get it.<sup>459</sup>

This was by far the easiest way of obtaining land by a woman I ever came across since I started interviewing women farmers around Nwanedi. What surprises me is the way the whole process has become over time. Initially women had to dig deep for their applications for land to be a success. Mrs Maria had to produce proof in the form of pictures and had an inspector sent to see whether what she was claiming was indeed true. When it comes to Mrs Sanna demands of that nature never happened. One would expect that with such a huge demand and competition for land, obtaining land would become more and more difficult as time went by. It seems like things were more difficult in 2004 than it was in 2010. This can lead one to conclude that the influence of patriarchy was stronger in 2004 than it was in 2010. People were not accustomed to seeing women owning land that is why there were many impediments in place to those women who were looking for land. In 2010, when more and more women were owning land, traditional leaders were by then beginning to understand that change has come, and the only way was for them to welcome it and move on.

Even though Mrs Joyce did not elaborate much on the processes she went through applying for land, she gave me a hint that she did not come across too many difficulties

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<sup>459</sup> Interview with Mrs. Sanna, Female Farmer, 05 November 2015.

in acquiring her land. She started by renting a farm where she had to pay R18 000,00 a year as her rent, but after some successive misfortunes decided to apply for her own land. She then approached Chief Manenzhe who requested her to pay R700,00 as a start and then R10,00 per hectare. In her own words Mrs Joyce said, “Mr Manenzhe is very kind, he gave us documents from the government and everything is in order, the farm becomes yours for real.”<sup>460</sup>

This again clearly indicates how things got better with time for aspiring women farmers. Mrs Joyce applied for land in 2010 and her application became a success immediately. She also did not go through the treatment her predecessors went through and ended up owning two farms even though she was not utilising them all. No one was threatening to take any of her land and that was a great achievement for women.

Mrs Dorcus’ journey to secure her own land was a little more complicated compared to the other women farmers already interviewed. She developed an interest in farming at an early age and started planting on a one-hectare plot at Khomela where she was married. The one-hectare was not enough for her and, as a result, she decided to request for a slot from her mother who was a resident of Folovhodwe in the Nwanedi area. While farming on her mother’s plot she was given a farm by her uncle in 1999. In 2000 all her crops and the whole farm were swept away by heavy floods which left her with nothing, nor a place to cultivate.<sup>461</sup>

Mrs Dorcus rented a hectare from someone and planted maize. Mrs Dorcus highlighted her frustrations in this way,

As I was working, I was told that the farms must be applied for afresh. My husband is a sheriff and it was said that those related to the sheriff and their spouses do not qualify for farms. The person who lent me a farm said I could cultivate it because the farm did not belong to him, it belonged to Lukas. It turned out that Lukas is my uncle, but I did not know at that time. When he came one day, he told me that I was his relative and that I must take the farm as he already

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<sup>460</sup> Interview with Mrs. Joyce, Female Farmer, 06 November 2015.

<sup>461</sup> Interview with Mrs. Dorcus, Female Farmer, 06 November 2015.



had another farm. Lukas then told my husband to take the farm as he can see that I was interested in farming. He then wrote a letter to Makwarela Land Affairs offices and the farm was registered in my husband's name. I now have a farm. My husband was doing it for me.<sup>462</sup>

When listening to Mrs Dorcus' story about how she managed to acquire land, one can easily realise some of the discrepancies around her story, but what is interesting is the effort she puts as a woman which made her finally acquire her own land. At first her husband, a sheriff, and his relatives, including his spouse did not qualify to apply for land. At the end as a result of the effort made by Lukas, her uncle, her husband finally got the land from Lukas. The red tape associated with being a sheriff fell off because of the involvement of Lukas and Mrs Dorcus is now a female farmer.

Mrs Nancy's story about how she acquired her farm was a very short one since she took over this farming business from her husband. She was born into one of Botswana's royal families where she developed a passion for farming as her parents were farmers themselves. When she got married in Venda, she found a husband who also had a great passion for farming. That motivated her a lot too. She worked hand in hand with her husband until her husband began to lose interest in farming and then took over the button from him. She, together with her son, have taken over the family business. They are now ploughing their fifteen-hectare farm which they think is not enough.<sup>463</sup>

Mrs Mavis has a simple story to tell about how she ended up acquiring a forty-two-hectare (42) farm. She used to farm on her husband's farm and ended up entering a Female Farmer of the Year Competition which she won in 2006. Mrs Mavis said that on her way back from collecting her prize, "other farmers taught me how to write a letter to ask for land from the chief, who gave me sixteen hectares and other hectares, an inheritance from my husband: together they make up forty-two (42) hectares."<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>462</sup> Ibid.

<sup>463</sup> Interview with Mrs. Nancy, Female Farmer, 01 December 2015.

<sup>464</sup> Interview with Mrs. Mavis, Female Farmer, 02 December 2015.

Mrs Mavis' involvement in farming through her husband, had propelled her to greater heights. She started farming with her husband in his farm and was able to enter the Female Farmer of the Year Competition while still using her husband's farm and won. After winning the competition, she was advised to apply for her own land, did so and got it. She never spoke about any difficulties she came across when applying for her own land and is now a happy owner of a forty-two-hectare farm. The difficulty she mentioned concerned the land she inherited from her husband when they separated. He wanted all the land for himself and even took her to court. It was only after involvement of social workers and his lawyers that the matter was resolved. She ended up gaining twenty-five hectares on top of the seventeen she applied for which then gave her a total of forty-two-hectare farm.<sup>465</sup>

Mrs Jenny inherited her farm from her husband when he retired from farming. She said, "he is the one who gave me twelve (12) hectares. He gave it all to me for good because he is no longer using it."<sup>466</sup> The farm was still registered in her husband's name, but acknowledgement was made by the chief that the farm would, henceforth, be utilised by Mrs Jenny.<sup>467</sup>

Mrs Merriam was another female farmer I interviewed who said, "I come from Dzimauli. I came here to farm. I started in 2000. We asked the chief for a plot and were given twenty hectares and got down to business."<sup>468</sup> Mrs Merriam said she asked the farm from the headman, Rambuda of Madimbo.

He said I should write a letter to the Civic Association and I did that. The Civic Association told me to take the letter to Rambuda in Dzimauli. I sent it there, he signed and said we should be shown where we can farm. The Chief then showed us this plot we are using now. It was very bushy, and we had to work very hard for it to be like it is today.<sup>469</sup>

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<sup>465</sup> Ibid.

<sup>466</sup> Interview with Mrs. Jenny, Female Farmer, 02 December 2015.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

<sup>468</sup> Interview with Mrs. Merriam, Female Farmer, 03 December 2015.

<sup>469</sup> Ibid.

In all our discussions, Mrs Merriam kept on using the ‘we’ to show that she was not the sole owner of the farm. She acknowledged the fact that the farm belonged to her and her husband and that they were together on this journey. They did the application together and are jointly owning the farm.<sup>470</sup> I did not see their Permit to Operate (P.T.O.) to confirm in whose name the farm was registered after thinking that demanding one would have sounded as if I did not trust her as my informant. What was more important was that Mrs Merriam remained part and parcel of the farm and had an opportunity to enter competitions such as Female Farmer of the Year Competition.

The story of Mrs Portia is different from other stories that I narrated above. She started farming in 1995, but as a tenant on someone else’s farm. That made her desire to have her own farm. She then, “applied for a plot in Makwarela (Department of Land Affairs) for which she paid R2 000,00. “I then attended an interview that took place at Makwarela, and I was fortunate enough because I got the plot.”<sup>471</sup>

Mrs Portia further informed me that she started working on the farm in 2003 and then registered it in 2007 under a company called ‘Portia Farming’. The difference between Portia’s processes of applying the land and that of others was that Portia’s application was referred directly to the Department of Land Affairs rather than to the local chiefs. Even though she was overcharged compared to the others, she consoled herself with the fact that she has a title deed for her farm.<sup>472</sup> Mrs Portia also revealed that she had another forty-eight-hectare farm bought for her by a company called ELRAT but had not yet started utilising it by the time she was interviewed.

Mrs Lena revealed very little about the processes she went through when applying for land besides that she developed an interest in farming after attending the Female Farmer of the Year Competition’s ceremony.<sup>473</sup>

Mrs Lilly was the last woman farmer I interviewed. She did not undergo the processes that her fellow peers went through. This was because she obtained her 28-hectare farm

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<sup>470</sup> Ibid.

<sup>471</sup> Interview with Mrs. Portia, Female Farmer, 03 December 2015.

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> Interview with Mrs. Lena, Female Farmer, 04 December 2020.

from an old man who was tired of farming and had no one to inherit the farm from his family. She also confirmed that she had a title deed which shows that the farm belonged to her.<sup>474</sup>

The whole engagement in this chapter has indicated the disparities which women farmers at Nwanedi have gone through in their quest to obtain land. Some secured their land from the local chiefs while others had to apply directly from the Department of Land Affairs as it was called then. Others, even though applying within the same time line and from the same chief were treated differently, for example, the treatment of Mrs Maria compared to that of Mrs Hangwani. These two ladies were residents of Folovhodwe and had applied for land at the same time. Mrs Maria was requested to provide proof that she, indeed was a farmer, whereas Mrs Hangwani only told the chief that wanted to work, therefore she needed land and land was given to her.

In other instances, women used their husbands to apply for land. This had put many women in a precarious or compromising position because the land they were working on was registered not under their names but their husbands'. This gave rise to the fronting of women by their husbands especially when competitions like Female Farmer of the Year came. The money they won went directly into the accounts of their husbands who, according to Mrs Gladys, might choose to spend it without consulting his wife and in extreme cases decide not to share it with the woman who laboured for it.<sup>475</sup> This clearly indicates the extent which women farmers at Nwanedi have to undergo in order to obtain land in such a patriarchal environment.

This chapter started by trying to trace how Nwanedi women farmers decided to get involved into farming and managed to establish themselves, in effect, it started by looking at the history of women's location in African lives. This was done in order to give readers an idea of how far African women had to go to reach where they are presently. This was done by tracing the effect of colonialism on African women and finally, their status in post-independent South Africa. The chapter concluded by specifically focusing on recording stories as narrated by Nwanedi women farmers on how they decided to get involved in

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<sup>474</sup> Interview with Mrs. Lilly, Female Farmer, 04 December 2020.

<sup>475</sup> Interview with Mrs. Gladys, Female Farmer, 01 December 2020.

farming and then managed to establish themselves. The next chapter carries my second theme which focuses on how Nwanedi women farmers managed to build up their capacity and abilities to pursue farming as agricultural businesses, how they learn about the markets and the way they build up networks and some business strategies, coupled with the challenges they encountered along the way.

## CHAPTER FIVE: NWANEDI WOMEN FARMERS' CHALLENGES AND CAPACITY BUILDING

### 5.1. Introduction

Capacity building, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is, “the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time.”<sup>476</sup> Capacity building is presently the cornerstone of successful farming as no one can achieve his or her goals without engaging in capacity building. Women farmers in Nwanedi have realized the importance of capacity building and have been actively engaging in activities aimed at enhancing their knowledge in farming with an aim of increasing productivity.

The previous chapter managed to showcase Nwanedi women farmers' decision to engage in farming and the way they established themselves over time. In the process of achieving that the author relied on Nwanedi women's narratives regarding how they decided to venture into farming and then managed to establish themselves in the farming business. It is the sustenance part which led to this chapter which focuses on Nwanedi women's capacity building. The current chapter will give us a hint on how women came to build up their capacity and abilities to pursue farming as an agricultural business, how they learn about the markets and how they develop business networks and strategies and what failures they encountered. The chapter will also detail the way women dealt with issues pertaining to infrastructure, finance and other challenges related to these.

The chapter will also show what Nwanedi women farmers have endured while building their capacity as farmers, the workshops and trainings they have attended and the effort by both the Non-Governmental Organisations and the South African Government to

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<sup>476</sup> K. Wignaraja. 2009. 'Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer', New York, United Nations Development Programme, p. 5.

empower these women farmers. The challenges and the achievements these women farmers encountered along their farming journey will also be scrutinised.

## **5.2. Capacity building and abilities to pursue farming as an agricultural business by women of Nwanedi**

Women farmers in Nwanedi have engaged in different training and workshops aimed at empowering them with proper farming knowledge. The first meeting between myself and the majority of the Nwanedi women farmers took place on the day they were attending a workshop for women farmers which was taking place at Nwanedi Agricultural Centre (Co-operation/ Koporasi). Most women interviewed have praised both Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the South African Government's initiatives aimed at empowering women with greater farming knowledge. A good example of this was given by Mrs Merriam, one of the women farmers interviewed who, when referring to the assistance that women farmers were receiving from the trainings they were undergoing in regular intervals said: "their help is quite visible; especially Timbali. They teach us how to use manure; how to use pesticides; how to spray them; we find this knowledge and information very helpful. Since their arrival there have been positive changes."<sup>477</sup>

### **5.2.1. The Importance of Adult Agricultural Education**

The provision of adult agricultural education is important in the sustenance of the new generation of farmers, particularly rural women farmers. It is through education that new information and knowledge can easily be generated and exchanged. Training helps in the provision of the kind of information, resources, and activities that women farmers need to succeed. Nwanedi women farmers have realised that proper and relevant training was what they needed most just as Mrs Portia alluded to when she said:

... another thing that I wanted to say before I forget is that I wish we, as farmers, can receive training on drying up vegetables for preservation. One day the University of Limpopo visited us, and they taught us how to dry up our

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<sup>477</sup> Interview with Mrs. Merriam, 03 December 2015.

vegetables, like to pour enzymes on our vegetables, so that the vegetables would stay green. They also taught us how to pour sulphur on bananas and mangoes, so that the two will always be in good shape. I like to go for such trainings, and I want my dried-up vegetables to be sold. They also taught us how to dry our produce utilizing solar, so many things.<sup>478</sup>

She heaped praise on the people from the University of Limpopo who came and taught them many things aimed at enhancing their understanding of farming and how they can better improve their productivity.

Although Mrs Portia, favoured training to empower women farmers, she also showed concern about the way some NGOs and companies assisting with training conduct themselves. Some prefer that trainees go out on a workshop and spend a week away from their farms. That, according to her and her colleagues, is counter-productive. They argue that going out for a week can mess up their whole production for the whole season because they cannot rely on their managers to take care of everything in their absence. This is a clear indication that the majority of these female farmers are hands-on to such an extent that they cannot afford to look sideways if they are serious about making progress into farming. Procedurally they were supposed to be just monitoring or supervising but that seems like a luxury these people cannot afford.

Mrs Portia recalled another incident which took place some time back which made her and her colleagues, fail to attend one important workshop on computer training when she said:

we were once told to go to Polokwane-LEDET, where transport and accommodation were our own responsibility. They only provided breakfast, lunch and computers and the training would be for a week. You see it won't be nice to leave a farm for a week. It is better if they come here where we are.<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>478</sup> Interview with Mrs. Portia, 03 December 2015.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid.



This was supported by Mrs Maria when she said:

Another challenge is that we fail to even attend a single workshop which is very important in terms of providing us as farmers with knowledge and skills especially workshops that take long because when you are attending workshops your produce back on the farm is not being properly attended to. This is because in most cases workers work well when the farm owner is present and when they get tired in your absence, they just sit down and the work that they normally do in two days in your presence will take five days in your absence, and these things badly affect your production. To avoid this kind of situation, in most cases I opt not to attend the workshops, because it will help me gain the knowledge and skills but when I come back, I find all my crops dead. It's a dilemma because for me to produce well and quality produce, I should attend workshops.<sup>480</sup>

The fact that they did not trust their workers that much were reasons enough to make the women farmers fail to attend some of the workshops meant to empower them. They seemed to be aware of the attitude of some of their employees when they were not around and saw the only solution as staying away from some of these weeklong workshops away from their farms and focusing on monitoring their employees for better yields.

Mrs Maria maintained that: "a farmer should not leave the farm. Even the hired foreman works well in the presence of the farmer because he/she is a human being too; if I leave the farm, he/she is tempted to be lazy or misbehave."<sup>481</sup>

The same sentiment was expressed by Mrs Joyce when she said:

it is also problematic when I don't have all the equipment to use in the farm, if I had I would always be in the farm. A farmer's duty is to wake-up and go to the farm with enough money and equipment to run the farm. People who visit my farm should always find me here. We attend week-long workshops, which leave the employees on the farm doing as they please and when you come back with

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<sup>480</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid.

the knowledge and skills that you acquired in the workshop, you find the crops dead in the farm.<sup>482</sup>

Mrs Maria echoed the same sentiment as Mrs Portia when she said:

for example, there are institutions like the university that can assist us as farmers in many ways. These institutions can teach us different and better ways of doing what we do as farmers and this could assist us. Again, sometimes we find that some of the butternuts that we produce for market purposes, such as the small and medium sizes, are not being sold on the market, as they prefer extra-large and large sizes. The university can assist us with knowledge of how to process these butternuts and make certain products from them. This will minimise our losses and promote maximum use of our products for the benefit of our people, who will be able to enjoy a [wide] range of products from us as farmers.<sup>483</sup>

Considering what Mrs Maria was saying, one can understand the value of capacity building to an aspiring farmer especially women farmers as in the case of Nwanedi.

Mrs Portia, too, bought into the idea that the training needed should not end in providing women with the knowledge of how to plant, pour manure and how to water the plants by suggesting that they also need knowledge of computers. This she showed when she said:

another thing I humbly ask you to help us if possible, to get us trainers on our farms in computer literacy for a week; it might help because if we can understand how to use google, it might help because if we need anything from google, we can just google it and it will also help us to use email. I would be grateful for that kind of training.<sup>484</sup>

She appreciated the training that was offered to them that not only concerned the practical way of dealing with the crops by praising the youth who provided them with training matters pertaining to expenditure and income when she said:

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<sup>482</sup> Ibid.

<sup>483</sup> Ibid.

<sup>484</sup> Interview with Mrs. Portia, 03 December 2015.

These children are doing a good job because they train us. For instance, we now know that there is expenditure and income. We learnt everything at a workshop. Now I know that if I sow the whole plot, I will get how many tons and how much profit. And I now know that if I harvest so much, I will get so much profit.<sup>485</sup>

This, according to her, was the knowledge that women farmers, if they were to be a force to be reckoned with, should be provided with, hence her high regard for the youth who provided them with such a knowledge.

### **5.2.2. The Role of Finance in Capacity Building**

Capacity building relies in the main on the ability by a person to access financial support. Mrs Portia has shown the importance of financial support in the advancement of women farmers and that the lack of it was leading women into failure. In one of the trainings she attended sometimes back, she was taught how to dry up vegetables but was unable to do so because she did not have a machine for that. It was great that she acquired the necessary knowledge but knowledge without application is nothing.<sup>486</sup>

It was also noticeable that the women farmers revealed much awareness that education alone was not going to solve some of their problems. They appreciate the efforts made by the government and the NGOs, but caution that knowledge without proper equipment cannot yield satisfactory results<sup>487</sup>, as alluded by Mrs Maria when she acknowledged the importance of acquiring knowledge but lamented that knowledge without the necessary equipment such as a tractor is nothing to an emerging farmer like her. Their reliance on government tractors and the ones they hire themselves was always posing a serious challenge to them. Government tractors do not arrive on time, leaving those that the farmers hire with too many people competing for their services. This leads to delays in

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<sup>485</sup> Ibid.

<sup>486</sup> Interview with Mrs. Glenda, Female Farmer, 02 December 2015.

<sup>487</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015

production, thereby impeding proper growth of their plants and the marketing of their products.<sup>488</sup>

Mrs Maria further appreciated the assistance the women were receiving from the universities; both the University of Limpopo and the University of Venda but added that,

it would be great if the university can also provide us with knowledge and skills, especially in areas that we are lacking. However, I must say that it is sometimes frustrating to have knowledge and skills that you cannot put into practice due to lack of resources. When they teach us how to store chemicals properly, both the storeroom and the chemicals must be available, so that one can practice these things. This is because if when you go back to the farm and find that indeed you have those chemicals they were talking about, but you don't have the store room to store them properly, it means you will be using chemicals which cannot work properly due to storage challenges and this may in turn affect your production negatively. There is also the fact that we know that we need to store our products after harvesting in the shed, so that they don't get sun burn. But this knowledge cannot be put into practice as we don't have sheds and our products are turned down at the market because they are sunburnt. It is difficult.<sup>489</sup>

### **5.2.3. Women's organizations and capacity building**

The issue of capacity building did not rest on the shoulders of Non-Governmental Organizations and the government only. Mrs. Maria, just like the women farmers of Iowa, in the United States who sung praises about the importance of farm organisations' influence in shaping their farms' sustainability (see Chapter Two), praised organizations such as *Maanda nga u pfana* as having played an important role in capacitating women farmers at Nwanedi. She described *Maanda nga u pfana* as,

an institution formed by women farmers of this area; it assists us in information sharing and knowledge on how to produce better. What we are discussing is that we should balance our crops because all of us being 60 in number plant butternut

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<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid.

at the same time, we are going to float the market and some of our farmers will experience a loss in the market, so we agreed that we will plant different crops so as to adjust to market demands and avoid unnecessary losses. We also conduct some workshops especially for new people who want to enter the farming business and provide them with the dos and don'ts in farming.<sup>490</sup>

The importance of *Maanda nga u pfana* in capacitating Nwanedi women farmers was further highlighted by Mrs Florah who, when asked to express her feelings about the role that the organization was playing to its members said:

I think it is going well because when other women see that someone is struggling, they go to her to encourage her, give support and help as much as they can to make sure we prosper together as farmers. We are working very well because we comfort each other, [and] help each other in financial management.<sup>491</sup>

Mrs Florah's analysis of the role and the importance of *Maanda nga u pfana* as an organization showed me the importance of this organization, especially to new and aspiring women farmers. If one was a member of the organization, one should rest assured that there was always a shoulder to lean on when one was experiencing some difficulties. Members empower each other, especially those women entering farming for the first time, through proper farming knowledge and in other circumstances a struggling farmer was provided with financial assistance. These and other assistance offered had the ability of making an aspiring woman farmer feel at home and welcomed into farming, thereby capacitating her. If a spirit of this nature is encouraged among Nwanedi female farmers, it can propel women farmers to think out of the box and start things like cooperation which in the long run can help them and their dependents. The knowledge regarding the establishment of a cooperation is one that is also important for the historically disadvantaged groups like these women farmers found at Nwanedi. This would capacitate them and help in encouraging growth in what these women are doing.

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<sup>490</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015

<sup>491</sup> Interview with Mrs. Florah, 05 November 2015.

Mrs Maria, while still on the issue of capacitating women farmers through *Maanda nga u pfana* stated that, experienced women farmers who helped by educating and training of novice women farmers are helping a lot in capacitating those new farmers and all credit should be accorded to this organisation. The organisation is helping novice women farmers by making them understand that the knowledge of a farmer should not be limited to manure and seeds; they must be able to know everything there is to know about what they produce.<sup>492</sup> This was a clear indication that some of these women farmers were not simply satisfied with the training they were receiving but wanted the knowledge they acquired pertaining to farming to be imparted to others as well for the benefit of all. This would help in making sure that a novice farmer become an accomplished or a complete one.

The inability by Nwanedi women farmers to form a cooperation is a serious concern, according to Mrs Maria. Her worry is that this is leading to the exploitation of women farmers who are forced to rely on external service providers to provide them with things like crop seeds. She is of the opinion that the training women receive include things such as the creation of nurseries. Mrs Maria does not think that the creation of a nursery is that complicated to such an extent that women, if properly trained, can struggle to create one. To her, the creation of nurseries can easily be achieved if women farmers are properly trained and encouraged to form cooperations.<sup>493</sup> Mrs Maria's main concern came as a result of the way Tiger Brands was treating women farmers in Nwanedi. Many women have accused the company of taking all their profit in order to recoup the loan that the farmer had taken in the form of crop seeds. They accused Tiger Brands of taking grade one and grade two tomatoes, leaving them with grade three tomatoes that did not appeal much on the market. This meant that the farmers would always rely on borrowing seeds from Tiger Brands as they would never make enough profit to buy seeds on their own because of the loss that they have incurred as a result of them selling third grade tomatoes. Instead of the relationship between the Tiger Brands and the Nwanedi women farmers being a symbiotic one, one would be forgiven to view it as being one-sided. It

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<sup>492</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid.

seemed as if Tiger Brands was having an upper hand over women farmers because they were the ones to benefit from first and second grade tomatoes that appeal more at the market than the third-grade tomatoes that women farmers were compelled to sell. It was Tiger Brands which served as the market for the very same farmers and may choose not to buy third grade tomatoes or buy at less than the market price and the farmers have no say in that regard.

#### **5.2.4. Some impediments to capacity building**

Mrs Maria brought another dimension to the issue of capacity building when she showed her concern about the lack of interest in farming by the youth in the Nwanedi area. The training, important as it was, would serve little if any purpose at all, if only directed to elderly farm owners who may not use it for long because of them coming of age, saying that;

Another thing that is painful in this farming business, especially in this area, is that there are no young people who are farming; it is mostly old people. Young people are not engaging in farming and formal education is not the only way to succeed in life; even farming can make young people rich and I think this is the education that must be channelled to young people.<sup>494</sup>

She sees herself as a good example as she too started farming at a very young age. One successful young farmer would greatly serve as motivation to other youths and help in promoting farming to other youth as well.

What Mrs Maria raised was indeed a serious setback when it comes to farming in the area. I saw it myself when I was visiting different farms that you could hardly see youngsters whose interest was in farming. The area is full of unemployed youth who were supposed to be seen trying their luck at farming as a solution to unemployment. If a way of encouraging the youths in the area could be found, the youths from this area can be saved from engaging in things such as alcoholism, teenage pregnancy, drugs, assaults,

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<sup>494</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015.

house breakings etc, that are damaging their future given the criminal records that they are acquiring at a tender age.

Absenteeism is another challenge according to Agroforestry World; not all farmers avail themselves in workshops thereby constituting the bulk of absentees. Absentees always have reasons why they did not make it. Some would claim that the topic was irrelevant to what they were looking for. Others would suggest that their concern had nothing to do with what was being discussed as they already have a solution to such a problem.<sup>495</sup>

The issue of absenteeism cannot be taken lightly as it also propped up during my interview with some of my informants. They lamented that spending a whole week out attending a workshop can be counter-productive as they cannot rely on their managers, who they accused of deliberately neglecting proper instruction which might contribute to one losing everything she/he had worked for. One can take this as an excuse whereas to them it is a genuine concern which needs special attention on the part of the NGO or government if these people are to be accommodated. Ignorance was also mentioned as another challenge. Here farmers were accused of not applying what they were taught during workshops thereby rendering everything done in the name of capacitating them, futile.<sup>496</sup>

In order to prevent this from happening Thanh Tu suggested that before a workshop is agreed upon, people should first conduct capacity-building needs assessment. This can be done by first addressing the current level of capacity, gaps and priorities. This would make the activities to target the right topics and the right participants.<sup>497</sup> Another possible solution suggested was that of work division by gender which should be considered when targeting participants. There are training sessions that women participate a lot in relating to agricultural production and marketing. If the training undertaken is related to women's specialisation, they should be the ones specifically targeted.<sup>498</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> M. Thanh Tu. 2015. "Building Farmers' Capacity More Effectively and Inclusively". Available online at: [blog.worldagroforestry.org/index.php/2015/28/building-farmers-capacity-mor-effectively-and-inclusively/](http://blog.worldagroforestry.org/index.php/2015/28/building-farmers-capacity-mor-effectively-and-inclusively/). Accessed on 24/02/2020.

<sup>496</sup> *ibid*

<sup>497</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>498</sup> *ibid*



What was of utmost importance in this discussion was that for one to conduct a workshop aimed at capacitating women, one must first understand the people concerned and then establish the type of capacity-building needs the people were looking for. If this is not done first, conducting a workshop would be another futile exercise. Problems such as absenteeism and ignorance with regards to the implementation of what people were taught, would be experienced.

According to LRD, the Pacific Community, emphasis was placed on the importance of introduction of Agricultural Extension Centres. These centres would help in giving farmers, especially, smallholders in developing countries, knowledge of agronomic techniques and skills to improve their productivity, food security and livelihoods.<sup>499</sup> These Extension Centres should be supported by a range of government, donor-based, co-operative and farmer groups and private agents.<sup>500</sup> Extension Centres should have two important components; starting with, dissemination of practical information, including an improved seeds, soil quality, tools, water management, crop protection, agricultural practices and livestock and, finally, the application of this knowledge on the farm.<sup>501</sup>

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is characterised by slow growth in agricultural productivity. Extension Services are currently supported by a range of government, donor-based, co-operative and farmer groups and private agents.<sup>502</sup> Those seen as impediments include, lack of land ownership, underinvestment in micro-credit facilities and lack of competition in input provision and markets limits farmer's willingness to risk land improvements required for increased productivity.<sup>503</sup>

The difficulties that many women encountered when trying to access or acquire land which is the most important tool in capacitating women was highlighted by Mrs Maria whose sombre mood could be seen immediately, she started narrating the difficulties she

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<sup>499</sup> LRD. "Global Review of Extension Approaches and Models". Available online at: <https://pafpnet.spc.int/attachments/article/516/Global> Review of Extension Approaches. Accessed on 25 February 2015.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

<sup>502</sup> Ibid.

<sup>503</sup> K. Berhanu and C. Paulton. 2014. 'The Political Economy of Agricultural Extension Policy in Ethiopia: Economic Growth and Political Control', *Development Policy Review*, 32 (52), 197-213.

encountered when she applied for her own farm land. She spoke about the number of female applicants who find it difficult for their applications to get approved. She started by managing her brother's farm where she learned the ins and outs of farming and got attracted to it. The interest became intense when the money from her brother's customers was collected by her and she realised that farming can generate enough for one to feed one's family. Her brother was a teacher by profession but was able to generate extra income through farming. She realised that if her brother who is a teacher could generate this much while working on the other side, there was so much potential for her to emulate that since she would be working full time in her own farm.<sup>504</sup>

The money that she was collecting, between R50 000 and R70 000 a day, on behalf of her brother served as great motivation to her. That gave her an idea of renting a farm first to see how far that would take her. The idea proved to be a good one as her farming experience became an immediate success, but not without a challenge of course, as indicated by Mrs. Maia when she said:

While working on the borrowed farm, I had some challenges, but I was able to plough it successfully and started selling my produce and bought a bakkie. The owner of the farm became jealousy and increased the rent. I was then given two or one year, depending on how he and his family planned, as there were relatives who wanted to use the same farm and that encouraged me to look for my own farm. As I was staying in a village that had a civic organisation, I happened to be serving as secretary of the local civic organisation. I then had a chance to apply for my own farm. As people working at a civic organisation are not paid, I applied for a farm and then realised that I could have my own farm. I carried on working on the borrowed farm, as you can see that this one is too far away from the water; about 1.8 kilometres from here to the river and I did not have money to buy pipes to bring water here. I also did not have money for electricity as the generator does not have enough pressure to bring water from the river up to here. To work this far needs plenty of water and the workers also experienced some hardships. I wanted to use drips as my system of irrigation.

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<sup>504</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria. 03 November 2015.

You cannot use drips without a powerful generator from the river. I then carried on working on the farm I had rented, while budgeting so that I can relocate later to this new farm when the time permitted. The trouble came when the owner decided to forcefully take away his farm. When I was planning to relocate to my new farm, while still planning to erect a fence, the farm owner took over his farm. When he took it, he ploughed down my drips, all plants and pipes; I was left with nothing.<sup>505</sup>

Although what she came across was very bad, this helped her in obtaining her own farm as the pictures she took from that farm ended up being her mitigating factors which enabled her to get a farm of her own.

While still focusing on the issue of capacity building an old lady, Mrs Nancy, praised the government and some NGOs for empowering them with relevant knowledge aimed at helping women farmers irrespective of their age when she said:

We have that kind of assistance although we are getting old. There are people from the Department of Agriculture and others who are offering that support. They also monitor if we are doing it correctly. They correct us if we are wrong. We are also sent for different kinds of training on bookkeeping and budgeting.<sup>506</sup>

When trying to show what motivated to follow farming as a career, Mrs Gladys spoke about her upbringing as a child and her fondness for farming which led to her involvement in gardening at a local primary school. In her own words Mrs Gladys said:

I did gardening at school. I went to a rural and traditional school, where we used sticks to count. I also learned needlework. I was fond of planting vegetables like cabbages, spinach and Chinese cabbages. My mother had a very big farm, I was happy when she debused the place right before my eyes. It made me realise that women can also do these things because my father was in Gauteng looking for work. I remember my mother asking me why I seemed to be fond of planting things, and I told her I wanted to do farming as a career. It is

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<sup>505</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria. 03 November 2015.

<sup>506</sup> Interview with Mrs. Nancy, 01 December 2015.

a passion I have had for a while. I realised that it was possible. I was lucky to marry a businessman. I learned a lot from when he was working. In 2005 I asked another man for a piece of land, not my husband. The man gave me 5 hectares and it flourished. In 2006 I did the same and it flourished again. The man then said to me that I should hold on to the land as I was doing a good job. Some farmers came to ask me to enter the women farmers competition because they always saw me working on the farm and they believed that I have perseverance. Although I was sceptical about it, I entered the competition. I thought I would fail but I won. I competed from the municipality level right to the national level and I always won 1<sup>st</sup> price, so you can see that my mother's influence played a big role.<sup>507</sup>

Mrs Gladys' experience helped her to develop an interest in farming, and as a result she ends up having her own farm. Another source of encouragement came as a result of her winning the Female Farmer of the Year competition after being encouraged to do so by her mother and some local farmers who had faith in her and her farming ambition.

### **5.3. How the women farmers learn about the markets**

Nwanedi women farmers have shown concern about finding the markets to sell their produce. What I discovered was the awareness that those women had with regards to attracting customers to come and buy their products. Mrs. Maria spoke about the importance of producing quality to appeal to good markets. She said:

For us to find a market, we need to produce quality products then we can appeal to good markets. I am saying that because there are markets that are difficult for one to enter, like the one for vegetables, such as baby germs, baby marrows, etc. The market for these has a lot of profit and the life cycle of these vegetables is very small. If I plant petti pen on the 1<sup>st</sup> of this month I will harvest them on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month. It's unlike tomatoes that need three

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<sup>507</sup> Interview with Mrs. Gladys. 01 December 2015

months while I am paying for electricity with nothing to gain. I, on the other hand, will just be paying. With petti pen, what I like about them is that when the month ends, when you go to pay for electricity and labour, the products pay for them because they'd be beginning to get ripe. Now we are having a challenge with ploughing them because we do not have a shed for baby vegetables. You can see how hot it is; it means that if I cut them, I would not have a place to store them; then they will become lifeless, and they do not need lifeless plants at the market. Its flower should be intact here at the back for them to accept them. This scorching heat prevents us from ploughing them because we do not have cool houses to store them after cutting them. We would cut them in the morning and in the afternoon and put them in the cold storage, where it is cool. Maybe you cut them again the following day and take them to the pack house. Now that we do not have all that means it would be difficult for us to plough them, thereby making it difficult for us to grow them as farmers. Even if you plough them, there is no transport to take them to the pack house. Pack houses can only be found in places like Tshakhuma, as they are still planning to build one around Nwanedi. But here at the farm for us to be seen competing with others, with quality petti pens and baby merrows, how can we do it when, after harvesting them, one must put them under a tree, with all these winds blowing sand on them, making them change their colour to brown, thereby, making them unattractive. They need to be taken from the farm straight to where they are supposed to go.<sup>508</sup>

The issue of the markets has been creating havoc towards the success of emerging small women farmers in the area. The majority of them have revealed the struggle they were facing in obtaining a reliable market. This was highlighted by Mrs Mavis who said:

The other challenge is the market; the market is very difficult for us. We just sell to any person passing by the road. I would like the government or the university to connect us with some companies, so that we know who to contact after harvesting. We produce tomatoes but if we don't have foreigners who

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<sup>508</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria. 03 November 2015.

always buy from us, it does not work well for us. Sometimes we take them to Tiger Brands, but they don't always take them.<sup>509</sup>

The issue of markets is also linked with the type of crops one produces. Some Nwanedi women farmers, like Mrs Maria, have contacts with their markets but the challenge comes when they were unable to deliver on time. This, according to Mrs Maria, is the real impediment to their success. This how Mrs Maria puts it:

Yes, because the market, like I said, will be very difficult. Another thing is that some of the crops that we produce, we have contacts with our markets and if you don't deliver on time, you would have disappointed your clients and they will not be happy. Government tractors are helping us, of course, but we have a problem with timing. A farmer should have his/her own farm for effective production and not only a tractor but other equipment necessary for agricultural production too.<sup>510</sup>

Mrs Maria also indicated the importance of acquiring a certificate that allows one to trade globally. She demonstrated the importance of having such a certificate as they help one to trade independently all over the world or globally when she said:

As a farmer I have the desire to acquire certificates that will allow me to export my products, so that my products can be enjoyed in other countries, while I generate more profit. It is difficult because to get the so-called global certificate, I must have a nice place, clean and functional toilets, where people will be able to wash and maintain cleanness all the time. There must also be a proper fence, and everything must be of a good standard. But because I don't have money, I cannot have that certificate, but one day things will improve.<sup>511</sup>

This discussion has shown me how important it was for these farmers to have a reliable market that would help in taking their produce while they were still fresh. They should also be given an opportunity to spread their wings by getting certificates that do not limit them

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<sup>509</sup> Interview with Mrs. Mavis, 02 December 2015.

<sup>510</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria. 03 November 2015

<sup>511</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria. 03 November 2015.

but allows them to sell globally. This would give women farmers an opportunity to grow as farmers and gain recognition all over the world.

#### **5.4. Development of business networks by women farmers**

When looking at how these women farmers were able to develop business networks, one should not forget the role played by different NGOs that provided this group of women farmers with the knowledge they desired and the certificate they so desire that would give them the rights to sell to people around the world. In her own words Mrs Maria spoke fervently about the role institutions such as universities can play when she said:

for example, there are institutions like the university that can assist us as farmers in many ways. These institutions can teach us different and better ways of doing what we do as farmers and this could assist us. Again, sometimes we find that some of the butternuts that we produce for market purposes, such as the small and medium sizes, are not being sold on the market, as they prefer extra-large and large sizes. The university can assist us with knowledge of how to process these butternuts to make certain products from them. This will minimise our losses and promote maximum use of our products for the benefit of our people, who will be able to enjoy a range of products from us as farmers.<sup>512</sup>

What Mrs Maria said was also echoed by Mrs Florah who said:

These children are doing a good job because they train us. For instance, we now know that there is expenditure and income. We learnt everything at a workshop. Now I know that if I sow the whole plot, I will get how many tons and how much profit. And I now know that if I harvest so much, I will get so much profit.<sup>513</sup>

These women farmers have seen the importance of proper education in giving women farmers an opportunity to network with others from different parts of the world. Attending

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<sup>512</sup> Ibid.

<sup>513</sup> Interview with Mrs. Florah. 05 November 2015.

workshops again can give this group of women an opportunity to network even though not all these women were keen to attend all the workshops prepared for due to the issues like leaving their farms at the mercy of employees who usually do not take proper care of farms in the absence of their owners.

### **5.5. What failures the women farmers encounter**

Most women farmers interviewed at Nwanedi have appreciated the assistance they were getting from the government and different NGOs that were helping as much as they can in providing them with the training they needed and the knowledge they have acquired. The only dent noted by many was the lack of equipment that seemed to be standing on their way to progress. This was put clearly by Mrs Maria when she said:

I believe that if a farmer can have this kind of knowledge, coupled with equipment like having your own tractor, things can improve. This is because even if you have this knowledge, if you lack your own tractor, you will still have a challenge because currently we rely on government tractors and those that we hire ourselves. This becomes a problem, as government tractors only come to service us at their own time and these ones that we hire ourselves will have a lot of people using it, which makes it difficult for one to get the services on time. As a result, there are delays in production and once you delay production you will have a problem when it comes to marketing your products or your products will not grow adequately.<sup>514</sup>

From this discussion one can see that Mrs Maria appreciated what the government and the NGOs were doing in trying to address the problem of lack of proper farming skills by women farmers but saw this as a futile exercise if the issue of shortage of equipment was not addressed. The fact that at times they plough not in time as a result of not having their own tractors, was hampering productivity and leading to greater losses. She believed

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<sup>514</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015.



addressing these would help in promoting women farmers thereby making them self-sufficient.

Mrs Maria acknowledged the fact that she had some challenges when she said:

Yes, my challenges are too many, but I believe that I have learned a lot from these challenges. I believe in the saying that perseverance is the mother of success. The biggest lesson of them all is that I will never in a million years plant tomatoes in winter. I have come to appreciate the importance of timing, knowing when exactly to plant what kind of crop. Those are some of the things I have learned from all these challenges and experiences. I must say that I have realised that with this kind of a job I have a potential to change my life for the better and I love this job, as I have chosen it myself. I believe that if I can be supported when it comes to electricity, labour, transport to and from the market, I will do better. I don't believe that the government must do everything for me but if it can subsidise me in this work, I would grow to be a massive producer. I started farming when I was still young, but I am now over 35; that is why you may have seen on the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) board, indicating that I obtained the farm at an early age. The government should be able to support us as farmers because, apart from creating jobs for others, we are producing food to fight hunger and food insecurity. My desire is that I would want to see all this land being utilised, but I can't do that because of all these challenges that I am not getting support to deal with.<sup>515</sup>

What was interesting from the sentiments reproduced above was that Mrs Maria welcomed the challenges as they were building her capacity as a woman farmer, instead of regarding them as stumbling blocks. This shows how strong these women farmers were mentally.

Mrs Mutshekwa also lamented about the shortage of equipment such as car, drips and a tractor. All these coupled with borrowing of seeds make her life as a farmer very difficult. She also appreciated the effort that the government is doing, for example, the supply of

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<sup>515</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015.

water engines, as a blessing to all women farmers even though the project was still half way. This clearly shows that life is still a struggle to these women farmers and that there is a need for the government to get involved in order to empower these women farmers.<sup>516</sup>

## 5.6. How the women farmers deal with infrastructure and finance

The shortage of infrastructure was one of the issues spoken about by the majority, if not all the women farmers interviewed. Mrs. Maria, in her narration of the problem she encountered when her drips were ploughed down by the owner of the farm, she had hired indicated how important it was for a farmer to have the necessary equipment in order to succeed in the farming business, when she said:

after that I no longer considered myself as a farmer. This is because I was failing to get pipes that could take water to my crops, I was also failing to get money for the fence, money to pay my employees was difficult to secure, and I was also unable to pay for electricity, as this place requires too much electricity. I then took a loan from Standard Bank and took another R150 000 loan from a structure called Techno Serve under the Women Development Division. It was then that I was able to apply for electricity which cost me R23 000. Although I did not manage to do everything I wanted to do, as R150 000 was not enough, I managed to buy pipes, seeds, manure, fence. I did all I could manage and had to remember that whatever I did I must produce, as the money needed to be paid back because it was a loan.<sup>517</sup>

The issue of infrastructure goes hand in hand with the issue of finance, therefore Mrs Maria could not express her frustrations with the infrastructure and dissociate it with the problem of finance. She mentioned some financial service providers that she consulted in order to solve her financial woes when she said:

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<sup>516</sup> Interview with Mrs. Mutshekwa, 04 November 2015.

<sup>517</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria. 03 November 2015.

I went to Vanecia Mine to apply for another loan and they gave me R100 000. Because I had made a quotation of things, I needed the money for, they paid the money to the suppliers and they delivered all the things that were paid for and the balance was used for paying my employees, electricity and I added some drips, as they were not enough. That is why you see me in this kind of a situation, I am operating through loans.<sup>518</sup>

What was important was that the financial assistance she received helped her to access some of the equipment she desired most, thereby launching her into the farming business.

Mrs Mutshekwa also highlighted the frustrations that women farmers were experiencing as a result of lack of the necessary resources needed if one had to succeed as a farmer when she said:

We as female farmers I think we lack the necessary resources for farming. We don't have tractors and store houses, a place where we can store our products in; we also lack our own transport, for instance, if we want to send our products to Johannesburg it is very difficult. We depend on hired vehicles to transport our goods. That is the current situation faced by female farmers. Another problem is electricity which is expensive. Now as I am speaking, I have just received a statement indicating that I am owing R6 000,00 which I don't even have.<sup>519</sup>

Mrs Mutshekwa spoke about shortage of transport meant to transport their goods to the market and mentioned that hiring transport to ferry their produce to the market was a costly exercise that again hinders their progress as female farmers.<sup>520</sup>

The problem of transport was also highlighted by Mrs Hangwani who said: "It is important to have a truck, for me to transport all the butternuts I get paid R4 400, that's all my profit. I must take them to be weighed and that is extra cost and some of my profit goes to hiring

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<sup>518</sup> Ibid.

<sup>519</sup> Interview with Mrs. Mutshekwa. 04 November 2015.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid.

trucks. At the end of the day, the transport challenge is taking all my profit.”<sup>521</sup> Basically, she saw transport as a challenge that needed to be dealt with as it was taking all her profit away.<sup>522</sup> The only thing that she thought she could manage was to acquire her own tractor and she was thinking of going to Johannesburg to look for a less expensive but with longer life-span second-hand tractor. She lamented the fact that hiring a tractor to plough the whole farm was very expensive as all her profit was going into paying for the tractor.<sup>523</sup>

In order to ease their financial burdens, the majority of Nwanedi women farmers relied on loans from different financial institutions. Mrs Florah praised some of these financial institutions as being helpful when she said:

On the issue of loans there is WDB that a lot of women use, and they are very helpful. I am saying this because they check the months of sowing and the month of harvesting and only expect you to start paying the debts then. The loan has low interests for farmers because they also consider the days of payment and if we haven't finished paying the money at the expected time, they allow us to continue paying during the next production cycle. Is just that we sow different things at the same time. We can also service the loan when it is closed, just to get out of debt. Therefore, we always encourage each other as female farmers. If you haven't worked well the WDB will come here to photograph the disaster so that they can present it to their seniors. This helps to explain why we are not paying. WDB is working very well because I haven't experienced problems with them.<sup>524</sup>

Mrs Florah praised WDB for the manner it conducted its business saying they conduct regular visits to check or monitor the progress in your farm. The idea behind the monitoring was to check how the money was being utilised. They did not give money directly to those who requested or asked for a loan but rather request for a quotation for

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<sup>521</sup> Interview with Mrs. Hangwani. 04 November 2015.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid.

<sup>524</sup> Interview with Mrs. Florah. 05 November 2015.

the materials needed from farm stores such as NTK and WDB pays and NTK delivers. The only cash they received was that meant to pay for labourers.<sup>525</sup>

Mrs Sanna also narrated her experience in relation to her financial predicament. She, like other female farmers, had to apply for a loan to ease her financial woes. This was what she said regarding her experience about loans:

Yes, people do get it. I did apply for a loan at WDB Investment Holdings and got it. I was working on that 4 hectares that I hired. I used the money from the loan to buy a second-hand engine and pipes that stretch from the river to the farm. I also bought drips that can cover 3 hectares and expensive ones that can last for a long period, while for the other 2 hectares I use the cheap ones, because they're cheaper. Another thing, I was obliged to pay the workers, buy diesel, manure, pipes, drips and an engine. The loan was very helpful. I started sowing, but I failed to buy enough seeds. I was given some seeds by Tiger Brands. I started sowing and supplied Tiger Brands, but my produce started to go as expected. When I harvest Tiger Brands charged me the money for seeds, as per our agreement. During harvesting, I needed a lot of workers and even the money from loan was finished, so I had to use money from my own pocket. If I have used my own seeds and not those from Tiger Brands, I would have done well in terms of profit but the loan from WDB was very helpful and it took me to a better and higher level.<sup>526</sup>

Pertaining to the infrastructure, Mrs Sanna echoed the same sentiments to those expressed by other women farmers at Nwanedi. She reiterated that lack of tractors and the reliance on government tractors was impeding on the advancement of women. Farmers do not plough on the date that they have planned to plough as a result of the differences in the planning of the government and that of the farmers themselves.<sup>527</sup>

Concerning the infrastructure, Mrs Sanna further argued that: "The infrastructure that will allow unlimited flow of water will help a lot as water is one of the biggest challenges for

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<sup>525</sup> Ibid.

<sup>526</sup> Interview with Mrs. Sanna. 05 November 2015.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid.

me. Again, drips are a serious challenge and if I can get enough for my 10 hectares, I think I will be able to plough more and generate more profit.”<sup>528</sup>

Mrs Sanna lamented the issue of affordability when she said:

There were some tractors that were offered to plough for us, free of charge and there were some that we were promised, I hear one hectare will cost R400,00. But I am doubtful about that because it has not worked on my farm. If you plough a dazzler it is R900,00, the rigger is also R900,00 and is about R3000,00 for one hectare. You see it is unaffordable. The land is available; it is just that we don't have the necessary equipment. We would prosper if we were in that position, if we could get any help we would go far because you can see that people are very serious about farming, working under conditions of the scorching sun is a good example to indicate the degree of seriousness.<sup>529</sup>

Although loans were affordable, it was not everyone who was eligible to acquire loans as Mrs Dorcus had highlighted: “Loans are indeed available. They first check whether you are credit worthy. My name was blacklisted by the transport business way back. This means that I cannot get a loan because my credit record is not good. Loans are secured only by people who have clean traceable credit records.”<sup>530</sup> She was the only one to indicate that there were some women farmers, like her, who do not qualify to acquire loans. It all depends on one having a good credit record and unfortunately, she was one of those whose credit record had been tarnished because of her inability to pay some of her loans.<sup>531</sup>

Mrs Lilly also mentioned the issue of infrastructure as a challenge when she said:

There are many challenges; firstly, it is the infrastructure. As a small-scale farmer who is just starting off, I cannot plough the whole farm right up to that mountain. It is difficult to plough the whole farm because I do not have enough pipes and

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<sup>528</sup> Ibid.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid.

<sup>530</sup> Interview with Mrs. Dorcus. 06 November 2015.

<sup>531</sup> Interview with Mrs. Dorcus. 06 November 2015.

drips because these things are very expensive. As a result, I usually manage 5 hectares instead of the 28 that I have.<sup>532</sup>

According to Mrs Lilly, small-scale farmers like her cannot plough the whole farm due to lack of infrastructure as equipment was very expensive and as a result, she was only able to plough five hectares out of the twenty-eight hectares that constitute her farm.<sup>533</sup>

To sum-up, one must take cognisance of the fact that Nwanedi women farmers have gone through much in order to build their capacity as farmers. They mentioned different workshops and trainings they have attended and brought forth their certificates to support their claims. The majority of those interviewed have praised both the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the South African Government for doing everything they possibly could in order to empower Nwanedi women farmers. The issue of the markets was also highlighted together with the difficulties these women farmers were encountering in that regard. Other challenges included developing business networks and finally, the issue of infrastructure and finance. The chapter managed to indicate that even though there were some challenges, not all was doom and gloom. Some women farmers spoke fervently of their achievements irrespective of all the setbacks and saw this as strong motivation for them to carry on with farming. Chapter Six focusses on Nwanedi women farmers' views on their social identity and psycho-social perspectives. This will show their feelings, thereby helping us understand their personal internal dynamics.

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<sup>532</sup> Interview with Mrs. Lilly. 04 December 2015.

<sup>533</sup> Ibid.

## **CHAPTER SIX: NWANEDI WOMEN FARMERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR SOCIAL IDENTITY AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL DYNAMICS**

### **6.1. Introduction**

The focus of this chapter will be on the way Nwanedi women farmers see themselves in terms of their social identity and psycho-social dynamics as farmers, wives, women, community members and entrepreneurs. This is where a feminist theory which argues that not only are women different from or equal to men, but that they are actively oppressed, subordinated, and even abused by men, will be put into focus. This will be done to support a stance by radical feminists who argue that patriarchal societies, with their tendency of oppressing women, do not realise that being a woman is a positive thing and instead, use physical violence against women. An accession of this kind will be made possible by looking at some of the comments made by Nwanedi women farmers on issues pertaining to their relationships with their spouses during interviews. Taking cognisance of what Nwanedi women went through in their attempts to capacitate themselves, as captured in Chapter Five, this chapter carries on from where the previous chapter left off. It is from these narratives that some women could indicate how badly they were hurt by people closer to them like their spouses and some male folk from the public, thereby exposing the ugly face of patriarchy. It is in these discussions where suspicion that some women were being fronted, came to the fore. Some of those fronted are unfortunately not enjoying the fruits of their labour as the money they generate go straight into the accounts of their husbands who, unfortunately choose to spend it without consulting them. The chapter will try to analyse all the interviews gathered from the fifteen women farmers and one traditional leader interviewed. It will also show the narratives that help people understand those internal personal dynamics. The data after being analysed and interpreted will carry us into the final chapter, Chapter Seven, which gives us the summary, findings, recommendations and conclusion of all the findings that emanated from and were analysed in the whole research.



## 6.2. The relationship between Nwanedi women farmers and their spouses

The focus on the activities of Nwanedi women farmers and their achievements can make one forget that these are wives, mothers, community members and entrepreneurs. It was only when I interviewed a lady referred to in my interviews as Mrs Sylvia that I realised that there is the other side of women farmers that many never divulged in the conversations I had with them. She did not ask me to hide her identity, but I chose to do so to protect her and the identity of her spouse. Her narrative went as follows:

It starts off by being told the money must go to the husband's bank account if you are working together. From there you won't even know what happened to it. You can't even ask because if you do, you are asked whose property is it you are asking about. But we worked together; if it is a load to be taken, we are two people. It's a pity and it hurts; that is why women give up. It is because they are being abused. I worked with my husband for a long time; we had many tractors but when he retired, he started some tricks. He does not support his children to this very day; I must do everything. I struggle just to put food on the table at home, and so that the children can get all the necessary supplies for school. When I tell my husband about money, he asks whose money am I talking about. Despite us working together, today it [the farm] has a single owner. It is a difficult situation; that is why some women commit suicide. I was even taken to some lawyers and told to vacate the farm. Fortunately, the lawyer was a woman. I asked her how she would feel if she and her husband bought a car, house or a farm and started together and suddenly there are boundaries on those things, and you have children you carried for 9 months. Then the lawyer, who was a white lady, just bowed her head. The lawyer said to my husband he was not honest with her and didn't tell her I'm his wife. My husband then said I should not be on the farm; because he wanted to use it for cattle and my eldest daughter is also farming there. The lawyer asked if he was taking the farm from his daughter too and he said no. The lawyer then said if he was taking the farm from me, he should also take it from his daughter because he has children with

me. I said the case should go to court, but the lawyer refused, and she settled it with my husband.<sup>534</sup>

Mrs Sylvia first highlighted the problem of using her husband's account instead of having her own account. They worked together and generated enough money but when it came to how the money is spent, only the husband has the right to squander it without consulting her. Her worry was that as a woman she was not expected to ask her husband about it. If she enquired, she was asked whose property it was. This was because most of these farms belonged to these women's spouses. Many of these women farmers did not own the farms, let alone have a bank account of their own.

Theoretically Mrs Sylvia's experience confirms feminist theorists' assertion that patriarchal societies' constraints play an important role in women's oppression. It is patriarchy that reinforces women's subordination, thus hindering their ability to choose and act freely. The story by Mrs Sylvia is a clear example as for so long she had been working jointly with her husband on her husband's farm. In her narration, she even indicated that she was the one who was always hands on and available all the time. Despite all these, she never has a say on the income she was generating as the account that they were using belonged to the absent husband who had the powers to use the money without consulting her. Given the openness that Mrs Sylvia showed when she disclosed something that many would think twice before disclosing, it serves as a clear indication that she has gone beyond the realisation of internal oppression, something that women need to realise and understand if they are to fight their subordination.<sup>535</sup>

Mrs Sylvia was brave enough to talk about the strife that took place between her and her husband and to show the other side of the coin that many women farmers were not brave enough to talk about. What she highlighted was a terrain that many women farmers are afraid to tread and would never put before the public for scrutiny. Not many women farmers are brave enough to put it before the public that most women are being fronted by their husbands, and thus have nothing to show of it, as the respondent did when she

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<sup>534</sup> Interview with Sylvia. Woman Farmer. 01 December 2015.

<sup>535</sup> Meyers. 2002. "Gender in the Mirror", 4.

said: “I am happy that I am not the first person to point out the challenges that women are facing, fronting and benefiting nothing from it. The truth will always remain.”<sup>536</sup>

The story by Mrs Sylvia emphasises feminists’ argument that women are not just different or unequal to men, but that they are actively oppressed, subordinated, and even abused by men. What Mrs Sylvia and other women farmers are experiencing is a clear indication that we are a long way in realising equality between men and women thus putting an end to women’s economic oppression.

The fact that in some cases men were the ones benefitting after fronting their female counterparts was mind-boggling because when one thinks of assisting female farmers who needed assistance and one does not know which ones indeed are the real farm owners, it is discouraging. There were those who needed serious interventions on the side of the government and NGOs and those who can afford because of the support they get from their husbands. It becomes difficult to distinguish between these two groups and thus those who seriously needed intervention were left out. Therefore, it is important for people to be honest when they are asked if the farm was theirs or who it was registered under. It is also not good if men are benefiting while women are fronting. That is another way of men being dishonest.

In her concluding remarks, Mrs Sylvia likened her life with that of people who were in bondage when she said: “I have escaped slavery; I have 42 hectares of my own now.”<sup>537</sup> This concluding remark shows how relieved the respondent felt after undergoing such an ordeal. This was what many women farmers might have been going through without telling a soul to protect the image of their families. The respondent had nothing to lose as she was a divorcee by then and would also have appreciated if her name had been published for everyone to know her plight and what other women might have been enduring silently daily.

Mrs Maria’s experience was a different one compared to that of the respondent above. She acknowledged that in the beginning she used to have some misunderstandings with

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<sup>536</sup> Ibid.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid.

her husband when, instead of buying groceries, she diverted money to buy things that she needed most in her farm. This she acknowledged in this way:

It is true: we used to fight, when there was no food because I thought if I could take this money meant for food and buy Ammonium Sulphate manure, maybe my Okra will be in good condition. Yes, these are things that we used to fight about because my dreams are to see this farming business growing and I find myself diverting money that is meant for something else to farming.<sup>538</sup>

Mrs Maria's passion for farming contributed much towards these kinds of misunderstandings. She loved farming so much that she could sacrifice everything in order to make farming a success. It took a long time for her husband to buy into her farming business and now that she had won him over, his support for farming can no longer be compared. She was happily living with her supportive husband and was even thinking of persuading him to leave his job and come home and join her in farming. This was how she put it:

Yes, he supports me. At first, as people's minds are not alike, he didn't realise that this is a business but now he is very supportive, and he encourages me. Before he could not understand this thing as a business. He used to say to me, I am always pumping money into these things that you are doing, but I do not see what good is coming out of it; maybe it'd better if you come with me to Johannesburg and work at my *spaza* shop. I then told him that his idea was not good, but I am glad that he now realises that, and he is supportive of my farming initiatives. He witnessed a big truck leaving this farm full of butternuts from this farm and that is when he started to consider farming as a business.<sup>539</sup>

Mrs Hangwani had a different story to tell pertaining her relationship with her husband. Her husband was no longer working in Gauteng and had been working with her ever since his arrival home. She did not appreciate working with her husband, something that some women farmers were looking forward to, and expressed it by saying:

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<sup>538</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria. 03 November 2015.

<sup>539</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria. 03 November 2015.

It is difficult to work with my husband; it slows down the business. I was teaching other women that they should be independent and refrain from collaborating with their spouses. He is the father of my children, but everyone should conduct their own business. You might think you are working very hard and the trucks are carrying away your produce, only to find that there are loses that you were not aware of. This is a challenge people encounter. Imagine your child has completed school but you don't have university fees. Many women fail to see that, but some are becoming aware.<sup>540</sup>

In her opinion, working with one's spouse had a negative effect on profit. She mentioned that having many trucks taking away your produce sometimes did not translate into making good profit. One may find herself struggling to send her children to school if she was not careful. Her utterances brought home the realisation that she is just trying to be diplomatic in her approach. It seemed as if her main problem was that instead of bringing all the money before her, her husband was pocketing some of it, hence her preference for going it alone instead of working with him. This clearly supports feminists' assertion that women find themselves subjected to economic oppression, commercial exploitation and legal discrimination that are classified as external situations, which leads into a feeling of inadequacy and a sense of narrow horizons that are classified as internal responses. Mrs Hangwani is not happy about the situation that she finds herself in but cannot take herself out of it because people see it as a normal arrangement. She is bottling up a feeling of discontentment that no one externally can see or visualise. Feminist theorists have also referred to a feeling of this nature as internal oppression which usually leaves many oppressed women feeling helpless and hopeless. If this feeling worsened, it may lead to an outburst that can breed things such as separateness between spouses and affects not only the two spouses but their children as well. Irrespective of what people may see it, it is imperative that common ground should be found in order to avoid things degenerate into such reactions.

When asked whether it does not create unnecessary tension in the family when a woman was more successful than her male counterpart and that a husband no longer earns more

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<sup>540</sup> Interview with Mrs. Hangwani. 04 November 2015.

than or as much as his wife, Mrs Hangwani said: “I always advise women that they should not be too proud to earn more than their husbands. They should always respect their husbands. Having money does not make me a man, I will always be a woman even though I earn more than him; life will always be enjoyable.”

That sounds like good advice from an experienced and matured woman who always wanted to see peace prevail in the family. She said she always advised other women to respect their husbands no matter what. Having money does not make one a man. This was coming from someone who still believed in the institution of marriage. She seemed content about her status as a woman and was prepared to even go a long way in encouraging other women, especially the younger ones, to respect their spouses no matter what. She concluded our discussion by saying, “We don’t like or encourage that. We have respect for our husbands because we are here because of their love and understanding as well as their encouragement.”<sup>541</sup> This shows that Mrs Hangwani had greater respect for her husband and would like every woman to do likewise.

Some women interviewed showed greater appreciation of the support they were getting from their spouses, something that is uncommon in a patriarchal society such as this one, for example, Mrs Dorcus who acknowledged getting support from her husband especially in times of need. This was how she put it:

When I am working it is just me. My husband supports me in times of need. Sometimes I ask him to buy me some manure when I don’t have the money. The children also support me sometimes on the farm during school vacations. I remember when my son who is a sheriff in town realised that I didn’t have a car anymore, he sent me a bakkie to carry my goods.<sup>542</sup>

The support Mrs Dorcus was getting was not only from her husband but from her son as well. She also spoke fervently about her son who provided her with a bakkie to assist her on her farm. When one’s effort is being appreciated by people closer to you, it is

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<sup>541</sup> Interview with Mrs. Hangwani. 04 November 2015.

<sup>542</sup> Interview with Mrs. Dorcus. 06 November 2015.

encouraging thus rendering the spirit of feeling worthwhile or adequate. This was the feeling that Mrs Dorcus was experiencing.

Mrs. Mutshekwa, on the other hand, said she used to get support from her husband but now that he was sick, support was very hard to find. Her husband was no longer working and had been bedridden for more than six years. Mrs Mutshekwa said: “It’s been long enough, now I have no support from him; I am both the father and mother of the family. It is like I have given birth to a disabled child because my husband is paralyzed, he is crippled in such a way that he can’t even walk.”<sup>543</sup>

What Mrs Mutshekwa said shows how important it is to some of these women farmers to get as much support as one needs from everyone around you, especially your spouse. For the past six years she had been taking care of her husband hoping that one day he will be alright and give her a helping hand as he used to. It takes one with a strong belief in the institution of marriage to carry on no matter how difficult things might have turned out to be.

In analysing what these women farmers said when interviewed, it is evident that they all needed some form of assistance in one way or another from either their husbands or their children. The only difference is that some prefer to work with their spouses while others, although they appreciate their spousal support, wished to be left alone to work in their farms. Although they appreciate the interest their spouses were showing in their farming business, they prefer to be left alone because working with their husbands sometimes adversely affects their profit. In other words, there was a suspicion that someone was helping himself to some of the money brought by the customers.

### **6.3. SUMMARY OF DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

In Chapter One there is a section that dealt with the methodology applied when data were collected. The emphasis was placed on qualitative method as this is social research. It was also realised that qualitative approach, as a descriptive form of research, would be

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<sup>543</sup> Interview with Mrs. Mutshekwa. 04 November 2015.

useful in qualitative field studies in the description of groups, communities and organisations.<sup>544</sup> As the focus was on historical research, my duty was to locate the sources, as indicated in the methodology, and then describe, analyse, and interpret them accordingly, without interfering with them.<sup>545</sup> Although secondary sources were utilised, it was made clear that greater emphasis would be on primary sources of information. The reason behind this was that “with each transfer of information from one source to another, the information may be inadvertently or deliberately distorted.”<sup>546</sup> To avoid that, all information was subjected to stringent criticism, encompassing both external and internal criticism. External criticism dealt with the authenticity of the source whereas internal criticism dealt with the accuracy or credibility of the content of the source. Both internal and external criticisms required historically-minded researchers with intimate knowledge of the period in which the event took place in order to detect inconsistencies and question the validity of such a source.<sup>547</sup> That would then be followed by synthesising and interpretation of facts that stood the test of both these criticisms, to propose causal explanations.<sup>548</sup> Such explanations involved interpreting the evaluated information through inductive logic which involved proceeding from a particular point of view or frame of reference.<sup>549</sup>

In historical studies, it is understandable for studies operating from different points of view to present contradictory explanations for the same historical event. To achieve that, one had to pay attention on three aspects when dealing with the causal explanations; namely, replicability, internal validity, and sampling.<sup>550</sup> Replicability means the ability to duplicate the procedures, analyses, and conclusions. The idea is to make sure that other researchers can reach a comparable conclusion after locating, evaluating, synthesising, and interpreting the sources.<sup>551</sup> Internal validity, when obtained, should make it possible for available sources to rule out alternative explanations. Sampling, on the other hand,

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<sup>544</sup> C. Welman, F. Kruger and B. Mitchell. 2009. “Research Methodology”, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Cape Town, 188.

<sup>545</sup> Welman, et. al. ‘Research Methodology’, 189.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid.

<sup>547</sup> L. Gottschalk. 1969. ‘Understanding History: A Primer of Historical Method.’ New York, Knopf, 122.

<sup>548</sup> Welman, et. al. ‘Research Methodology’, 190.

<sup>549</sup> Ibid.

<sup>550</sup> Ibid.

<sup>551</sup> Ibid.



depended on accidental survival of documents that prevented historical research from reaching scientifically justified conclusions.<sup>552</sup> This might result from an excessive dependence on secondary sources of information, personal biases and favourite convictions, as well as inability to refute or deliberate concealment of explanations of past events.<sup>553</sup> All those were the drawbacks of historical sampling.

The qualitative research methods used to analyse these data originated from the ethnographic methods and are often referred to as qualitative research approaches. Welman, et al. describe ethnography as, “an essentially descriptive design which is used in investigations amongst individuals or groups within a given community, group, or organisation.”<sup>554</sup> It focuses on the behavioural regularities of everyday happenings that were usually expressed as patterns, roles, and language thereby providing the inferential keys to the group of people under study, such as a farming community just like the one understudy.<sup>555</sup> The idea of collecting field notes was to uncover and explicate the ways in which women farmers at Nwanedi came to understand, account for, take action, and manage their situations as well as problems and difficulties they encountered on a daily basis on their farms. The only way to uncover and explicate those problems and difficulties was through successive observations and interviews and then evaluate them analytically.

Smith is of the view that, the terms ethnography, case study, and participant observation are practically the same type of research approach.<sup>556</sup> In case study research, a limited number of units of analysis (often only one) are studied intensively. Units of analysis are, for example, individuals, groups, and institutions.<sup>557</sup> This study is a case study because it focuses on a group of Nwanedi women farmers, instead of the whole farming community of Nwanedi in general. The idea was to understand the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of women farmers found at Nwanedi in all their complexities.

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<sup>552</sup> Ibid.

<sup>553</sup> Welman, et. al. “Research Methodology” 190.

<sup>554</sup> Ibid, 193.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid.

<sup>556</sup> L.M. Smith. 1992. “Ethnography.” In M.C. Akin (ED), *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*, Volume 2, 458-462.

<sup>557</sup> Welman, et al. ‘Research Methodology’, 193.

This chapter focuses primarily on data analysis and interpretation. Mouton, in his assessment of data analysis, places emphasis on two steps involved: firstly, the data collected should be reduced to manageable proportions; and secondly, patterns and themes in the data should be identified.<sup>558</sup> These have been considered in this chapter.

The first interviewee was Mrs Maria, who spent almost a day with me on her farm. She described herself as a resident of Folovhodwe village and a farmer at Tshikhudeni. Her twenty-five (25) hectare farm is called Travenna. She applied for it in 2004 and is still working on it. She is presently ploughing only seven (7) hectares, due to financial constraints. She is gradually de-bushing it, hoping that one day she would be able to plough all of it. Her biggest challenge is that she has to hire everything, from labour, electricity, equipment and so forth. She then showed me a heap of butternut on the ground and told me that she needs transport to take them to the depot, then Farmwise Market and others to Woolworths and Checkers. When one includes packaging and people who cut them, everything needs money. This, coupled with the kind of competition that they had to endure, leaves a significant gap in their profit. She lamented the fact that, “sometimes when you take your butternuts to the market, they are found small and are bought at a lower price.”<sup>559</sup> She was also worried about her electricity bill saying her electricity statement says she owes R 11 600.00. The expensive electricity was another impediment that was preventing her from extending the hectares she ploughs because extending means extra budget.<sup>560</sup>

When I asked her how much she was supposed to spend per month from the day she planted until harvest she said,

there was electricity which amounted to between five and six thousand Rands. This should be multiplied by three because it takes three months to reach harvest. There are workers looking after and preparing the plants for the three months duration, who also need to be paid every month-end, chemicals to take care of insects and different diseases, fertilizers to be poured for three months

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<sup>558</sup> J. Mouton. 2015. ‘Understanding Social Research’, Pretoria, xii, 161.

<sup>559</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria. Female Farmer at Nwanedi. 03 November 2015.

<sup>560</sup> Ibid.

on your butternuts, then paying for seeds because they were prepared for you and it is your responsibility to pay for them as a farmer; throughout these three months the farmer must find a way of financing all these and come harvest, transport, packaging and extra labour should be provided for by the farmer before getting any money from the sales of your produce.<sup>561</sup>

When one arrives at the market and finds prices low, you feel negatively affected when you think of the total expenditure that you have endured for three months only to find no profit at all. These were among the reasons why these farmers were not progressing at all.<sup>562</sup>

I was shocked to see how dedicated these women were, after seeing them hard at work in the scorching sun, with temperatures as high as 44 degrees Celsius. When I asked Mrs Maria why they were working in such unbearable conditions, she replied that they do not have any option but to continue working irrespective of the scorching sun. When it was time for harvesting butternuts, you do not keep them for long in the sun, otherwise they experience sunburn and develop two colours. At the market where they were contracted to supply the butternuts, they refuse to take them when the butternuts are sunburnt.<sup>563</sup>

Mrs Maria was worried that even though she was aware that her butternuts would experience sunburn, thereby losing quality, there was nothing she could do to prevent that. She needed a shed to store her butternut before they were transported to the market. At the market, they do not take butternuts with sunburn and that would mean a huge loss of profit and serious setback for her. It would mean that she would struggle to plant the season to come because of the loss she had encountered. Another setback can be due to overproduction, just like what happened the previous year. They were told that their butternuts would no longer be considered as they had had enough already. Their

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<sup>561</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015

<sup>562</sup> Ibid.

<sup>563</sup> Ibid.

butternuts ended up getting rotten on their farms and that was a huge loss and a serious setback.<sup>564</sup>

Another setback was that, as producers, they do not set prices themselves. It was those whom they were doing business with who set the prices for farmers and when they felt they no longer need their products they simply stopped buying and what you remained with became wasted. This applied to the tomatoes, too. Here Tiger Brands supplies a farmer with tomato seeds to plough at a cost of R15 000,00 per hectare and took their money from the first harvest, which is a grade one tomato. The fact that you have laboured to buy insecticides, manure and fertilizers, labour and electricity for three to four months does not concern them. After deducting their money, they would tell a farmer how much they were going to pay for her tomatoes per ton, which usually came down to R1 200,00. One-ton equals 44 crates and if you divide R1 200 by 44 it gives you R28,00 per crate which is too little. As someone who relies on Tiger Brands for seeds, she is always selling her crates to Tiger Brands for R28, 00 and if her tomatoes get red before she could sell them Tiger Brands reduces the price to R27,00. She is forced to accept the offer because there is no other market to take her tomatoes to.<sup>565</sup>

After she highlighted the issue of the shortage of markets, I wanted to find out from her how this problem of shortage of markets could be resolved. Mrs Maria said they need to produce quality as farmers for them to appeal to good markets; for example, vegetable markets. There are vegetables such as baby germs, baby marrows, petti pans, and others with a very small lifecycle and a very profitable market. For example, if you plant petti pans on the 1<sup>st</sup> of this month you harvest them on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month. This is sustainable because it pays for its own expenditure, unlike the tomatoes that need three to four months to harvest while you pay for everything from your pocket. Lack of a storage place makes it difficult for them to plough these vegetables because they can easily get worn-out if not placed in a suitable storage place. This is yet another impediment that is preventing these women from growing as farmers. The nearest packhouse from their farms is at Tshakhuma, and one would need transport to take them there, which they do

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<sup>564</sup> Ibid.

<sup>565</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015

not have. There is a plan for a packhouse to be built in the Nwanedi area, and as farmers, they hope this would change their situation for the better.<sup>566</sup>

I asked Mrs Maria if she thought there was any solution in sight for their problems, or if there were other stakeholders that were prepared to assist them as farmers. She replied that the government had initiated a water project for their farms. They have hired a contractor that was installing engines or generators and pipes to pump water from the Nwanedi River to their farms. They have also built engine houses to protect the engines or generators from being vandalised. The only problem, according to her, was that the contractor was installing smaller pipes that were unable to pump water to bigger farms like hers and when she asked them why they were installing smaller pipes, they told her that they work according to plan. They tested it only to find that the water did not go far enough, and the electricity was tripping because the machine was too small. They did not check the sizes of the farms or the distance from the river, treating all farms equally. This meant that farmers with 5, 10- or 25-hectare farms and different distances of the farm to the river were treated equally and were using the same-sized pipe. The solution, in her view, would be for the government to give farm owners vouchers so that they hire their own service providers who would install a generator and pipes that fit the size of the farm. Mrs Maria and her colleagues suspect that the contractor might be buying inferior pipes to gain more profit. The pipes that were fitted were fitted on 15 hectares and she did not know what was going to happen on the remaining 10 hectares. She did not understand why her farm was not completed, saying that some farms were just 3, 4 and 5 hectares in size and were allocated the same funds, and she questioned where the remainder of the money from those smaller farms went to, because their owners were never given any refunds. She wanted money left from the smaller ones to be used in funding the bigger ones as no refunds from the smaller farms were being given back.<sup>567</sup>

Another challenge that Mrs Maria highlighted was that she did not have a good fence around her farm. She showed me some tree branches that she used as a fence to prevent cattle from entering her farms and graze. She even showed me some mielies that were

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<sup>566</sup> Ibid.

<sup>567</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015

eaten by marauding cattle that jumped over her fence. When they talk about assisting farmers, they should consider every aspect. It meant a farmer should be given money, enough money to produce quality and that his/her produce be harvested properly because quality, when you do not have enough, labour is compromised.<sup>568</sup>

Additionally, lack of petty cash to hire enough casual labourers during harvest time compromises quality because instead of harvesting, your butternuts within a week, for example, you end up spending a month harvesting them. If you have enough cash, you can hire as many people as you can and deliver your butternuts to the market before exposing them to the scorching sun.<sup>569</sup>

I wanted to know where this interest in farming started and Mrs Maria told me the difficulties she had encountered up until she finally got her own farm detailed to me how helping out at her brother's farm stimulated her interest in farming. She started by telling me how she worked as a manager at her brother's farm. Her brother was a teacher at a local high school, Dzimauli Secondary School. He hired her to assist to supervise his employees during the day when he was at work and to collect money from customers during harvest time. She used to collect as much as between R50 000,00 and R70 000,00 a day during harvest. After realising how much her brother, a government employee, could get in one day, and how much he was paying her, it made her realise that she should be the one making this much for herself, as she was not employed, instead of her brother. She then decided to hire a farm to experiment with it. She got a farm and agreed with the owner that she would pay rent once a year. It was there that she realised her potential as a successful farmer because in the first year she ploughed mielies and became a success but continued assisting her brother in times of need.<sup>570</sup>

Her success saw her buying herself a bakkie, and that made the owner of the farm envious, so he increased the rent. He then gave her one to two years notice, saying there was a relative who wanted to use the farm. Mrs Maria then applied for her own farm while still working at the borrowed farm. She was the secretary of the local civic association

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<sup>568</sup> Ibid.

<sup>569</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015

<sup>570</sup> Ibid.

when she applied for her farm. Fortunately, she got a farm of her own, but the farm was too far from the river; about 1.8 kilometres. That made her carry-on ploughing at the hired farm as she did not have money to buy pipes and a bigger generator to bring water from the river to the new farm. She wanted to use drips, and these required more pressure from a powerful generator for them to be used with success. She then decided to carry on ploughing at the hired farm. However, the owner decided to take back the farm. As if he was fighting her, the owner decided to plough down her drips, plants and pipes, and left her with nothing. It happened in the middle of the season.<sup>571</sup>

The owner demanded that she started paying rent twice a year which was contrary to their initial contract. She reminded him about their contract, while requesting him to wait until the end of the year for them to negotiate a new contract, but he was having none of it. The whole misunderstanding left her with nothing, as all her pipes, drips and plants were destroyed, and she had to start from nothing. She then took a loan from Standard Bank and another of R150 00,00 from Techno Serve and applied for electricity and managed to buy pipes, seeds, manure and fence, but it was not enough. She then applied for another loan at Vanecia Mine and got R100 000,00. She had to submit a quotation and the money was paid directly to the suppliers, who then delivered everything paid for and the remainder paid her employees, electricity and an additional drip. She acknowledged that she was where she was because of the loans she had applied for.<sup>572</sup> The four-month waiting period that she had to endure while waiting for the electricity to get installed slowed/delayed her preparations, too. She ended up planting her tomatoes during winter and when they got ready for harvest in October, the markets had already closed in September. She ended up selling very few and the rest got spoiled; a serious loss indeed, especially with two loans to repay.<sup>573</sup>

I asked her what lessons she learned out of all that and Mrs Maria said she had learned that, "*perseverance is the mother of success.*"<sup>574</sup> Amongst other things, she mentioned things such as, never plant tomatoes in winter; appreciate the importance of timing,

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<sup>571</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015.

<sup>572</sup> Ibid.

<sup>573</sup> Ibid.

<sup>574</sup> Ibid.

knowing when exactly to plant what kind of crop. Another lesson was that she had the potential to change her life for the better through farming. She believed that she could do better with the necessary support in the form of such things as electricity, labour and transport to and from the market. She did not think the government should provide her with everything but believed that a small subsidy would go a long way. Her opinion was that the government should step in and support them as farmers because apart from creating jobs for others, they were producing food to fight hunger and food insecurity. She wished she could utilise all the land allocated to her, but it was not possible because of the challenges she had highlighted above.<sup>575</sup>

Mrs Maria proceeded to challenge institutions such as universities to come forward and assist them as farmers. She believes universities can teach them different and more effective ways of farming. For instance, as butternut producers, they sometimes found that some of their butternuts, especially small and medium sized ones, were not preferred at the markets, and universities could teach them what other products they can produce for peoples' consumption rather than throwing them away. This would minimise losses and promote maximum use of their products for the benefit of the people who would enjoy a wide range variety of products from them as farmers.<sup>576</sup>

Concerning crop rotation, Mrs Maria, rotates her crops by planting butternut, then maize and okra at the same place in different times or seasons. This helps to generate extra cash between seasons and to revive the soil. The problem was that they rely heavily on tractors provided by the government or by private owners, who are not readily available when they need them. This would cause delays in planting on time and consequent losses due to producing products that were no longer needed at the market by the time they were produced. They usually produce after agreeing with their clients that they would supply them with these kinds of products at a given time, and not supplying them on time disappoints them and you end up having a bad reputation. It was therefore necessary for a farmer to have their own equipment to meet the demands of the market. Another setback was that as farmers, they did not attend workshops regularly for fear of leaving

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<sup>575</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria. 03 November 2015.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid



their plants with workers only. Mrs Maria stated, “they only work seriously when the boss is around and tend to sit under the shade the whole day when you are not around.”<sup>577</sup> She saw attending a workshop as no solution especially when you have already planted something in your farm because leaving them unattended may lead to a huge loss as you may find all your crops withered. It was a dilemma because for farmers to produce well and produce of high quality they should attend workshops but with these kinds of dilemmas it was not possible for one to attend them.<sup>578</sup>

Mrs Maria lambasted those workers who stole insecticides meant to spray crops as short-sighted, because if a farmer loses out, their jobs would be at stake, too. For them to keep their jobs safe, they should do as expected, so that the harvest could be good as well.<sup>579</sup>

Although her husband works in Gauteng, Mrs Maria prides herself on the support he was offering her, even though he was not that much supportive at first because of his lack of understanding that farming was a business. He used to complain about pumping money into farming without seeing any progress and wanted her to accompany him to Johannesburg where she would work at his spaza shop.<sup>580</sup> “It was only after seeing a big truck, full of butternuts, leaving my farm one day that he realised that farming was indeed a business that needs to be supported all the time.”<sup>581</sup> She mentioned that she would greatly appreciate any financial support that could give her access to, say, a Million Rands which could help her de-bush, fence, buy manure and chemicals, a tractor and a truck. Mrs Maria further indicated that that kind of money could solve all her problems, increase productivity and improve quality. She wished her husband could leave his job and come and join her to make it easier for one of them to attend workshops and meetings at a time. She once advised him to leave his job and come and join her. She imagined that he would take five hectares and plant mixed vegetables such as gems squash, baby marrow, patty pans and brinjal. All these are vegetables that can make money quickly.<sup>582</sup> She added

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<sup>577</sup> Ibid.

<sup>578</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria. 03 November 2015

<sup>579</sup> Ibid

<sup>580</sup> Spaza shop is a mini shop, usually unregistered, erected sometimes at the gate, garage or outside on the street for locals to buy amenities that are usually needed by people within that community.

<sup>581</sup> Interview with Maria. 03 November 2015.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid.

that the only problem with him was that he had two wives, and the other one was not into farming. He was worried that the other one would not approve of him leaving his job as he would not be able to support them. She said she had assured her husband that there was enough in farming to support even the other wife and her children, but he was still not prepared to leave his job for farming, and she wished he could see things her way, adding that their lives were going to change for the better.<sup>583</sup>

In addition, Mrs Maria highlighted that women were still finding it difficult to access land because of male prejudice. She remembered how she got her farm and said when her application arrived before the traditional authorities, she was told to prove first that she was indeed a farmer and had to produce pictures of what she had planted on her hired farm. As if that was not enough, a messenger was sent to go and find out whether she was telling the truth; however, his good report made her application become a success.<sup>584</sup>

She further lamented the abuse some women were facing, especially married women, at the hands of their husbands, saying some work hard for their money but their husbands took their money, leaving them stressed. Some men do not want women to have resources due to fear of disrespect from their wives; that was why women were being denied an opportunity to access resources that can improve their lives. Men often think that hard-working women would come back home tired and denied men their conjugal rights which, in her view was not true. She appreciated the effort that women were putting and congratulated the chiefs who were appreciating women's efforts by giving them land to plough.<sup>585</sup>

Mrs Maria was also looking forward to having an international certificate which would allow her to trade globally, but with all the challenges they were still encountering she still had a long way to go to achieve that. She appreciated getting knowledge and skills from other stakeholders such as universities but worried that this should be practical for it to become effective. For instance, it was no use for one to know how to store chemicals properly in the store room when you do not have the store room. They were also told that

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<sup>583</sup>Interview with Mrs. Maria. 03 November 2015.

<sup>584</sup> Ibid.

<sup>585</sup> Ibid.

in order to prevent sunburn on the products, they should store them inside the shed but they do not have the shed so their knowledge could not be practiced.<sup>586</sup>

She also lamented the fact that people providing loans to farmers do not seem to know anything about farming. They do not know that it takes three months for a farmer to harvest but they expect you to start paying your loan immediately after taking it. If you fail to pay, interests start mounting and by the time you start with the payments your loan had already doubled due to interests. Furthermore, they allocate a loan according to the assets that you have; for example, you may apply for a loan of R500 000,00 and get only R52 000,00 because you qualify for such an amount.<sup>587</sup> In order to alleviate this problem, women farmers formed an organisation called *Maanda nga u pfana*.<sup>588</sup> It assists women farmers with knowledge and information-sharing on how to produce better. They agreed that the 60 of them should not plant similar crops at the same time in order to avoid floating the market and experience unnecessary losses. They also conduct some workshops for new people who want to enter the farming business and empower them with knowledge.<sup>589</sup>

Mrs Maria believes that university students should also visit farms and help in giving valuable information to farmers which crops to plough and for what reason. Farmers should be encouraged to know more about the crops they plant and the benefit it had to the consumers. She made mention of crops, such as brinjal and goose berry, as crops that she regards highly, and wanted farmers to be educated on how beneficial their crops were to the consumers. She also believes that with proper education, farmers would be able to make their own nurseries instead of relying on service providers like Tiger Brands who were literally “changing farmers into their servants for life”.<sup>590</sup>

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<sup>586</sup> Ibid.

<sup>587</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria. 03 November 2015.

<sup>588</sup> *Maanda nga u pfana* literally translated to mean “Strength in Unity”, was an all-female farmer organisation formed by female farmers from Nwanedi area with an aim of assisting up-and-coming female farmers who have just joined farming by empowering them on matters related to farming. Its popularity had attracted the attention of President Jacob Zuma who gave an instruction to the relevant government Department to subsidise its members with engines, pipes and store rooms to house the engine and other agricultural equipment.

<sup>589</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015.

<sup>590</sup> Ibid.

In her conclusion, she lamented the shortage of young people who were interested in farming, saying that young people should be made aware that farming is a business and be encouraged to venture into farming in order to alleviate hunger and poverty. She stated that formal education is good, but it is not the only way to succeed in life, and that if one successful farmer is called to come and share their successful story with the younger generation, they would be able to understand that farming can be a way to success.<sup>591</sup>

The second interviewee was Mrs Mutshekwa, a woman who was taking care of her bed-ridden husband but also able to manage two farms. After telling me all the difficulties she endured working with her husband on his farm, she told me how she ended up owning a farm herself. The farm was still in the hands of her husband and she was just looking after the family. But when she heard that women farmers would be given sponsors, she persuaded her husband to help her apply for her own farm. Together with her husband, they went to Chief John to submit an application for a farm. She was then given her own five-hectares farm on the northern side of her husband's in 2006. The farm was like a jungle, but they hired a caterpillar which helped in de-bushing the area. They could not plough the whole area at the same time, but as time went by, they ended up ploughing it all. She started planting tomatoes on two hectares and then entered the female farmer competition. She won the competition and was even given two-hectare drips by the government.<sup>592</sup>

When her husband retired from farming, her son took over her husband's farm and she carried on farming her own farm while her son focused on his father's farm. Her husband assisted her by buying her an engine to pump water from the nearby river.<sup>593</sup>

She was struggling financially because all those years the money she was generating was going into her husband's pocket. She depended on him for everything and when she needed something, he would buy it himself. This made her and her friends form an organisation called '*Maanda nga u pfana*'. They agreed to contribute R220, 00 each month. The money would help them buy equipment such as drips, pipes, and others.

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<sup>591</sup> Interview with Mrs. Maria, 03 November 2015

<sup>592</sup> Interview with Mrs. Mutshekwa, 04 November 2015.

<sup>593</sup> Ibid.

Even after all these, she could not generate enough money to meet all her farming necessities and approached her husband again for assistance. He gave her permission to use his employees whenever she needed their assistance. This made her to grow as a business woman.<sup>594</sup>

Money problems continued to haunt her despite all the assistance she was getting from her husband. She relied on her husband's car, as she did not have a car of her own. She did not have enough drips, as the ones she was using were for two hectares only. Her crops the previous year were affected by a crop disease which destroyed all of them. It happened again in 2015, the year I interviewed her, and she was struggling to pay back the seeds she loaned from Tiger Brand. She owed R12 000,00 for the previous year and had borrowed R100 000,00 from NTK to pay for tractors, buy manure and crop medicine, and to pay workers. She did not know how she was going to pay all her loans because the crop disease had affected all crops she had planted that year. She even borrowed R10 000,00 from her husband and another R5 000,00 from her husband's friend to pay her employees and service the machine respectively.<sup>595</sup>

She also spoke fervently about their organisation, *Maanda nga u pfana* and its popularity, saying even the President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, had heard about it and recommended that the organisation get sponsorship. The sponsorship they got gave them machines or generators with pipes to draw water from the nearby river and built storage houses to store their machines. The pipes were tested and found to be working. By the time of the interview, they were just waiting to be given the keys for those storage houses.<sup>596</sup>

Some of the problems she highlighted included lack of the necessary farming resources such as tractors, store houses to store their products during harvest, transport to ferry their products to the market and expensive electricity; for example, the statement that she had just received was to the tune of R6 000,00, which she said she did not have.<sup>597</sup> She

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<sup>594</sup> Interview with Mrs. Mutshekwa. 04 November 2015.

<sup>595</sup> Ibid.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid.

further clarified the issue of the lease that she mentioned earlier and said that it was not her farm that was on a lease contract but her husband's. Hers was given to her permanently and she did not have to pay anything at the end of the year.<sup>598</sup>

Concerning family support, she lamented the fact that her husband was not able to support her anymore, as he had been bed-ridden for more than six years. He no longer walked. She had taken all family responsibilities and was also the head of the family. Her children, except for one, were not keen on farming and two of them were working in Johannesburg. The one who had been farming on his father's farm had gone to Johannesburg, too, but could not find a job as he had not passed matric. The other two, she said, were not into farming. She concluded by assuring me that she would encourage the one who was keen on farming to go to a TVET College to study farming and improve his farming skills.<sup>599</sup>

Mrs Hangwani, another female farmer, was my third interviewee. She owns two farms and the one she was busy working on was a 20-hectare farm. She specialises in butternut and tomatoes, and when I visited her, she was harvesting butternut. She disclosed to me that the farm belonged to her as she was the one who applied for it while her husband was working in Pretoria.<sup>600</sup>

She had a dam nearby and had no problem with water. She owns two bakkies but said they were not enough to carry her produce to the market; therefore, having a truck of her own would be a blessing. She was worried about the market, which was not close by. Not having a pack house was another concern because customers prefer fresh vegetables. Having a shed would assist in making sure that their butternut did not experience sunburn before reaching the market since sunburn reduces the quality, especially of butternut, which ultimately leads to the lowering prices.<sup>601</sup>

Another concern, according to Mrs Hangwani, was that of getting a loan. She lamented the fact that farmers were not being given enough loans by moneylenders to use on their

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<sup>598</sup> Interview with Mrs. Mutshekwa, 04 November 2015.

<sup>599</sup> Ibid.

<sup>600</sup> Interview with Mrs. Hangwani, 04 November 2015.

<sup>601</sup> Ibid.

farms. Her twenty-hectare farm needs R2 000 000,00 to cultivate, but moneylenders do not give them anything more than R300 000,00. When asked why they were only lending a small amount of money, they said they have limits. Another setback concerned people who market their products, saying a bag of 10 kg butternut is worth between R50, 00 and R60, 00 but those marketing would agree to a R45, 00 price per bag, claiming that some of the butternut got spoiled along the way. This had been the norm, which ultimately led to the government's involvement the previous year, forcing the government to tell them to stick to the agreement. Another concern related to the interests charged when taking a loan. She said if you borrowed R200 000,00 you pay R400 000,00, which means the interest that one was expected to pay was 100 percent. The repayment of the loan should be done in two years but the ones they took in 2015 should be paid in one and a half years, starting from the time of harvest. If you suffer a loss, they come, check and note it but would again add some interest, even though they were not going to force you to pay.<sup>602</sup>

Farming had done a lot of good for her and her family. She said she could pay school fees for her children and support her family through farming. She saw not having a truck to transport her produce to the market as a setback because she has to pay for a truck to transport her goods to the market and extra cost was incurred when she took them to be weighed. She said the amount she pays equals her whole profit.<sup>603</sup> She added that she was planning to buy herself a tractor as hiring one was taking too much of her profit.<sup>604</sup>

She despised working with her husband, saying it was slowing down her business. She had been advising other women to refrain from collaborating with their spouses and remain independent. She blamed the loss of profit on her collaborating with her husband and just fell short of accusing him of swindling some of her monies. Nevertheless, she had also advised other women not to look down upon their husbands now that they were making more money than their husbands, telling them to keep respecting them as heads of their families. She said, "having money does not make me a man, I will always be a

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<sup>602</sup> Interview with Mrs. Tshisevhe, 04 November 2015.

<sup>603</sup> Ibid.

<sup>604</sup> Ibid.

woman, even though I earn more than him".<sup>605</sup> She concluded our interview by saying that she would always discourage women from being disrespectful to their husbands, no matter what.<sup>606</sup>

Mrs Flora's farm was the fourth I visited. After introducing myself to her but even before I could ask her anything, she started telling me all her troubles as a woman farmer. She told me about the prizes she had won over the years, how experienced she was as a farmer, where she got the farm and what kind of problems she was encountering. Those included not having a fence, which was making her a victim of marauding cattle, problems concerning water payment, manure, insecticides and government sponsors, her attendance of workshops and paying taxes to the government and the royal family.<sup>607</sup>

When asked how she developed an interest in farming she revealed that her interest came at a tender age when she used to deliver buckets full of manure to people with farms in Nzhelele, where she was born, in exchange of vegetables. She used to work on weekends at other people's farms in exchange for tomatoes for home consumption. Her experience made her realise that she herself should strive to have a farm of her own when she became an adult so that she could sell what she had produced herself.<sup>608</sup>

The farm belongs to her and her husband, but she was the one who was hands-on with matters pertaining to farming. Her husband was by then specialising in cattle farming, and only came and assisted on request, especially when she was not around. She was using an engine to pump water for irrigation from the river because installing electricity would cost her an estimated R100 000,00 as her neighbouring farm did not have electricity too. She preferred using an engine rather than electricity due to rumours of exorbitant electricity charges from other farmers using electricity. She said she was not aware of the pack house that was about to be built in the vicinity but would greatly appreciate if the rumours were true. She also would prefer that they build a shed in her house that would help in storing her crops after harvest, so that her produce could be transported to the

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<sup>605</sup> Interview with Mrs. Hangwani, 04 November 2015.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid.

<sup>607</sup> Interview with Mrs. Florah, Female Farmer. 05 November 2015.

<sup>608</sup> Ibid.



market at once. She was also a beneficiary of new engines supplied by the government, together with store rooms build to house them and was very excited about it. Her children were very supportive and visited regularly and assisted her with farm work. Their organisation, *Maanda nga u pfana*, was also providing enough support by encouraging someone who was seen to be struggling and teaching them how to manage their finances properly.<sup>609</sup>

When it came to loans provided to female farmers, she praised WDB for its professionalism. She said they count the months and demanded that you only start paying after harvest. When disaster struck, they came, took pictures and spared you from paying until your next harvest. She praised WDB because she had never experienced any problems since she started taking a loan from them. They were doing fine because they do not provide people with cash. Instead, they request quotations from either NTK or any other farm shop and bought everything you requested. They also visited your farm during the farming season to check how your crops were progressing. The only cash they give is for the salaries for your workers.<sup>610</sup>

My fifth interviewee was a grandmother farmer, Sanna. She had a ten-hectare farm, which she was struggling to plough because she did not have the necessary resources. By resources she meant drips, pipes and electricity. She was using an engine or generator to draw water from the river to her farm. She was using only five hectares from the ten hectares she had. She specialises in tomatoes, maize, butternuts, and different types of Indian and Chinese vegetables.<sup>611</sup>

She started farming in 1982 at Matangari Village (Ha-Tshivhasa). She started from humble beginnings, where she used to borrow irrigation tools from others. She was given two hectares of land to plough but from different areas. The problem she encountered was a shortage of water, and that prompted her to look for opportunities elsewhere and

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<sup>609</sup>Interview with Mrs. Florah, 05 November 2015

<sup>610</sup> Ibid.

<sup>611</sup> Interview with Mrs. Sanna, 05 November 2015.

applied for a farm at Nwanedi in 2010. That was how she got her ten hectares. She paid only R1000,00 to Chief Manenzhe to secure a ten-hectare farm.<sup>612</sup>

As a single parent, she got support from her children who came during school holidays and assisted with irrigation, cleaning, pouring manure and even harvesting. Two of her children had already shown some interest in farming. The tax was only R100,00 per annum, which in her opinion, was very reasonable. She praised Chief Manenzhe as a very reasonable man, who always wanted to see his village prosper.<sup>613</sup>

Mrs Sanna mentioned watering of her crops as one of her biggest challenges. She did not have enough capital to buy the necessary equipment. She was using an engine instead of electricity because she did not have enough cash to apply for electricity. Another challenge was expensive seeds. Seeds of tomatoes for one-hectare cost R15 000,00, excluding maintenance throughout the three-month period. Another challenge was insufficient drips and filters which made it difficult to water the farm. All those impediments were harming her prospects of being an established and self-sufficient farmer.<sup>614</sup>

She spoke enthusiastically about the loan she got from WDB the previous year. The loan was very helpful to her because she was able to buy a second-hand engine, expensive and strong drips for three hectares, and cheap ones for two hectares, pipes to draw water from the river to her farm, diesel and manure. She went to Tiger Brands, who loaned her seeds to be paid back during harvest, something she had regretted because all her profit went straight to Tiger Brands. She had an old tractor which was no longer reliable, so she was relying on tractors supplied by the government. The only problem with government tractors was that they did not come on time and compelled her to sow some of her crops very late.<sup>615</sup>

As a solution in making her farming life easier and more profitable, she thought improvement in infrastructure, to enable water to flow regularly, and enough drips for her

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<sup>612</sup> Interview with Mrs. Sanna, 05 November 2015.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid.

<sup>614</sup> Ibid.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid.

ten hectares, would help. The whole business of hiring a tractor was also expensive, as one-hectare costs close to R3 000,00 to plough. This was unaffordable to her and she would greatly appreciate any assistance from whomever to relieve her of this burden.<sup>616</sup>

Mrs Joyce was my sixth interviewee. Born at Folovhodwe village, she was one of the younger generations in this female farming community who had chosen farming as a career. She grew up seeing people farming and that sharpened her desire and interest in farming, even though her parents were not farmers. She started farming in 2010, after renting somebody else's farm, paying R18 000, 00 per annum. She had saved R317 000,00 from her previous businesses and used nine hectares of the hired farm on her first stint in farming. Unfortunately, all her crops were swept away after some heavy rains in the area. She suffered a great loss and had to request for a loan for R18 000,00 from Burnets, and managed to plough one hectare, but disease destroyed her crops again. She struggled to repay the loan and was blacklisted as a result.<sup>617</sup>

Despite all these challenges, however, she never gave up farming and had planted two hectares at the time of the interview. She was also a beneficiary of the Women Development Programme and was waiting for her engine and pipes to be installed on her farm. She was also struggling with de-bushing the other hectares on her fifteen-hectare farm. She was hoping to work hard and pay back the loan so that her blacklisting could be lifted and said she would welcome any assistance in this regard.<sup>618</sup>

She specialises in tomatoes, okra, green vegetables, and was by then harvesting wild berries. She was hoping to use the little money she got from the sale of wild berries to buy manure, so that she could carry on farming.<sup>619</sup> Her challenges included the sun, which was too hot and burning the tomatoes, workers who were at times not faithful, especially when she went out to attend workshops. The workers would incorrectly pour pesticides that led to the burning of some crops, while others got infected with diseases. She was always improvising in order to find money to pay her two employees. She had another

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<sup>616</sup> Interview with Mrs. Sanna, 05 November 2015

<sup>617</sup> Ibid.

<sup>618</sup> Interview with Mrs. Joyce. Female Farmer, 06 November 2015.

<sup>619</sup> Ibid.

farm besides the fifteen-hectare one, which she got cheaply from Chief Manenzhe, but was not utilising at the time because of her financial constraints.<sup>620</sup>

My seventh interviewee was Mrs Dorcus, who was born in Folovhodwe village, but married in Khomela village and was obliged to relocate to Biaba/Makhado Townships for her children to be closer to schools. She started farming on a one-hectare piece of land in Khomela. Upon realising that it was very small she went to Folovhodwe where her mother gave her another one-hectare plot. In 1999 her uncle, Lucas Mukwevho, lent her his underutilised farm, but the year 2000 floods washed away all her crops. After realising how passionate she was, her uncle decided to give her the farm, saying he had been impressed by her enthusiasm. Lucas then wrote a letter to the Department of Land Affairs in Makwarela and the farm was consequently registered in her husband's name. The farm then became hers as her husband was doing it for her.<sup>621</sup> She started farming from scratch on her ten-hectare farm and had to work hard to survive. She always strives to cultivate all of it, like the previous year, but it was not easy to achieve that feat, but both her husband and children support her in times of need. She confirmed that the truck I met full of butternuts was coming from her farm and was transporting butternuts to be weighed and graded before being transported to the market.<sup>622</sup>

Her biggest challenge was that she did not have enough drips. Her drips were worn out and aged, as some were already six and others seven years old. She was always encouraging her children to take farming as a career and praised the chief for giving farms to women, although she acknowledged that not having a good credit record was preventing her from accessing loans. She said screening had to be done first before one was granted a loan and the blacklisted ones like her do not qualify. Water was not a challenge to her as it was for others. Her farm was closer to the river and she had electricity to draw water from the river.<sup>623</sup>

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<sup>620</sup> Interview with Mrs. Joyce. Female Farmer, 06 November 2015

<sup>621</sup> Interview with Mrs. Dorcus. Female Farmer. 06 November 2015.

<sup>622</sup> Ibid.

<sup>623</sup> Ibid.

Round two of my interviews started on 01 December 2015. This was when I met my eighth interviewee, Nancy, who owns a fifteen-hectare farm. She started farming in 2008. She started by highlighting some of the challenges she was facing. The first major problem she mentioned was crop disease, which in her view, had seriously hampered her tomato harvest. She used Tiger Brands and was unable to meet their target because of the setback. As a solution, she planted butternut and the harvest was satisfactory. The problem with butternut was that if someone made an order and ended up not coming to collect them on time, they got easily spoiled and lose their value. Another challenge she mentioned concerned expensive electricity. The problem was lack of consistency with the issuing of statements from ESKOM. Sometimes they charged a little and at other times a very large amount. As a result, you ended up not knowing what amount to put aside for electricity. She further complained about the old drips she was using and the money to pay her employees, saying all her profit was spent on paying her workers.<sup>624</sup>

She was using electricity on an estimated basis and was worried that meter readers sometimes did not come but issued estimated readings. Her worry was that the estimates were sometimes highly inflated, to such an extent that she ended up struggling to pay. The issue of pre-paid electricity can only work when drips were in good order, as old drips can worsen the electricity burden.<sup>625</sup> Her passion for farming started at an early age. She is from Botswana and of royal blood. They do a lot of farming in Botswana and when she arrived here, she got married to a farmer. Her husband and her son were very supportive, and her son was the one ploughing with a family tractor and sometimes used his own money to buy diesel and do de-bushing. She owned a fifteen-hectare farm which, in her view, was not enough. She specialises in butternut, watermelon and tomatoes and when I visited her, she was harvesting the butternut. Like other female farmers, her challenges included her ineffectual drips, which were old and worn out. She had plenty of knowledge concerning book-keeping and budgeting, which she got from different workshops she had attended, conducted by people from the Department of Agriculture.<sup>626</sup>

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<sup>624</sup> Interview with Mrs. Nancy, Female Farmer, 01 December 2015.

<sup>625</sup> Ibid.

<sup>626</sup> Interview with Mrs. Nancy. 01 December 2015.

Our interview was concluded when I revealed to her that as an institution, the University of Venda can only empower women farmers with knowledge and not financial support. She understood my standpoint and we then parted our ways after taking pictures of her and the butternuts that were being loaded into a huge truck for delivery to the Johannesburg's City Deep Market.

My ninth interview was with a grandmother called Mavis. She specialises in tomatoes, butternuts, pepper and cabbages on her forty-two-hectare farm. She owns one of the biggest farms I have ever visited. Twenty-four hectares were on one side and the other eighteen hectares on the other side of the fence. The hectares were close to each other; it looked like one farm because of the gate that allowed the movements of people from one side to the other.<sup>627</sup>

Although her farm was by far the biggest, Mrs Mavis stunned me when she claimed that she was able to cultivate her whole farm. She had requested Tiger Brands to sponsor her with tomato seeds for nineteen hectares and she herself provided seeds for seventeen hectares and on the remaining hectares she cultivated butternuts and maize.<sup>628</sup> Her passion for farming started at an early age. She did gardening at school and cultivated vegetables such as conventional cabbages, spinach and Chinese cabbages. Her mother on the other hand was into farming, because her father was working in Johannesburg, and the whole experience made her realise that women can do farming as well. Her mother also noticed her passion for farming and when she asked her what her dream career was, she told her that farming was what she desired. She was lucky to marry a businessman who taught her many things, including farming. She then hired a five-hectare farm from a local man in 2005 and had an outstanding harvest. She cultivated the same farm again in 2006 and the harvest again was a success and the man who had leased the farm to her encouraged her to carry on cultivating, as she was doing a sterling job. Some farmers advised her to enter a competition for 'Female Farmer of the Year' in 2006. Although she was sceptical about entering the competition because of her inexperience, their persuasions made her take part in the competition. She ended up

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<sup>627</sup> Interview with Mrs. Mavis. Female Farmer. 01 December 2015.

<sup>628</sup> Ibid.

winning the competition, starting from municipality level up to national level, taking position one at all levels. She dedicated her wins to her mother, whom she said had played a pivotal role in all her successes.<sup>629</sup>

She was happy that her son was very fond of farming. He started assisting on the farm, ploughing with a tractor, at a tender age of thirteen years. He had entered competitions for 'Young Farmer of the Year' and won twice. She had seen how passionate her son was and was certain that he would take over when she left farming.<sup>630</sup> She singled out electricity as something that was posing a serious challenge to her. The electricity they were using was very expensive and they were told that the pre-paid one was not a solution because it was not powerful enough to supply enough water to farms as big as hers. She said the government had promised to provide them with machines that did not need a lot of electricity and she was still waiting for hers. She lamented the fact that estimated electricity had a monthly service fee of R3000,00 and Eskom was not informing farmers. That meant that whether you used your electricity or not you would still be expected to pay the service fee. The solution would be for farmers to be educated on how electricity works.<sup>631</sup>

Another challenge she highlighted was lack of a reliable market to sell their produce. Farmers were just selling their produce to people on the street because they did not have a reliable market. The government and institutions of higher learning should help in finding markets for their produce so that they know who to contact after harvest. Tiger Brands sometimes did not take all their produce. She also complained about lack of drips as another challenge and said she would greatly appreciate any assistance from whomever.<sup>632</sup> After explaining to her that as an institution the university can only provide knowledge and not financial support, she understood and then our interview came to an end on that note.

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<sup>629</sup> Interview with Mavis. 01 December 2015.

<sup>630</sup> Ibid.

<sup>631</sup> Ibid.

<sup>632</sup> Ibid.

Interview number ten was like session two with Mrs Mavis who, after our first interview, realised that I did not give her an opportunity to give her side of the story pertaining to her relationship with her husband. She said it was good at first and the business was booming. Her husband then bought some cars because of the booming business but started refusing to let her use them, let alone touch them, saying they did not suit her. When he was cross, he always warned her not to touch anything that belonged to him, even though she was the main contributor financially.<sup>633</sup>

She worked with her husband for a long time. When the business started booming, they opened an account in the name of her husband. All the money the business generated was saved in that account, and he would use it as he pleased. When she requested for some financial assistance, he refused. The abuse that the woman had to endure showed why women had given up farming. She worked with her husband for a long time and bought many tractors but when he retired, he stopped supporting her children. To make matters worse, he refused to share the money they earned together for so long. She was even taken to court but her husband's lawyer, after hearing her side of the story, realised that the husband lied to her when he said she was not his legal wife. The whole matter was then settled out of court.<sup>634</sup>

She also acknowledged that many women were being fronted because they were not wise enough. The women who entered competitions independently were well off, compared to those still under their husbands' shadow. She herself had learned the hard way, saying "once bitten, twice shy."<sup>635</sup> She then applied for her own farm and got it. When her husband realised that she then had her own farm, he offered her his piece of land from the old one, but she refused because she knew that he wanted to have a share on her new land.<sup>636</sup>

She compared fronting with slavery, saying now that she had her forty-two-hectare farm, she felt relieved. She was also happy that she was not the first to speak out about the

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<sup>633</sup> Interview with Mavis. Female Farmer. 01 December 2015.

<sup>634</sup> Ibid.

<sup>635</sup> Ibid.

<sup>636</sup> Ibid.



fronting of women as some of her colleagues had spoken about the issue of fronting as an impediment to women progress.<sup>637</sup> In my concluding remarks I indicated that women should be honest when it comes to who owns a particular farm, so that if one finds people interested in assisting women in whatever way, one may not feel ashamed to hear that farms did not belong to all the women he or she was representing; that would be an embarrassment.

For my eleventh interview I visited a farm owned by a grandmother called Glenda, a female farmer who had started farming behind her house in 1994. She also used to buy old clothes and re-sold them at pensioners' pay points. However, everything changed in 2000 when her husband gave her a five-hectare farm to plough on it. She started by ploughing two to three hectares while using the engine for irrigation. She then made an agreement with Tiger Brands who supply her with seeds which she would pay back during harvest.<sup>638</sup> Her challenge was lack of equipment, especially drips. Old drips made one spend more time to water just a hectare. She also did not have a truck to transport her produce to the market. If she had a truck and a tractor, she was going to pay for diesel only. She acknowledged the government for the assistance they rendered when they provided female farmers with drips, pipes and storerooms, even though in her case they were not enough to connect the whole farm.<sup>639</sup>

She was from Muswodi and owned a twelve-hectare farm which she got from Chief Nefolovhodwe. The farm was secured by her husband who gave it to her when he left farming but it was still registered in her husband's name. She went, with her husband, to the chief to inform him that her husband had given the farm to her and the chief gave approval for the arrangement.<sup>640</sup> She specialises in tomatoes, butternuts, okra and pumpkins. She specialises mostly in tomatoes because of the contract she had with Tiger Brands. She thought if she could pay a visit the Department of Trade and Industry and ask for assistance they could help. She once approached them, and they sent someone to come and assess her farm but for the previous two years they had never heard from

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<sup>637</sup> Interview with L.M. Mulaudzi. Female Farmer. 01 December 2015

<sup>638</sup> Interview with Mrs. Glenda. Female Farmer. 02 December 2015.

<sup>639</sup> Ibid.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid.

the Department. Concerning transport to the market, they were using a company called Limpopo before but after realising that they did not just come for small loads, they found another transport company which they paid after their produce had been sold and the owner had been very helpful so far.<sup>641</sup>

She also spoke about some service providers who were extorting money from them like a certain transport company which, after taking their produce to the market, failed to pay them their money on time. When they confronted the company, they were told that there was no money because some was used to buy the nets and planks for the trucks. They vehemently refused that saying that was not part and parcel of their agreement, then the company ended up paying back their money which was not enough of course.<sup>642</sup> Our discussion was concluded when she said she had a son who had a passion for farming and was very helpful, especially when she was not around.<sup>643</sup>

The twelfth female farmer to be interviewed was Mrs Merriam, a resident of Dzimauli Ha Rammuda. She started farming in 2000 when she and her husband applied for a farm from Chief Rammuda and got a twenty-hectare farm. They were practicing mixed farming where they bred cattle and goats and then ploughed tomatoes, butternuts, maize and okra. They have a contract with Tiger Brands which took tomatoes after every harvest. Butternuts, maize and okra were usually sold locally, and the remainder used for consumption at home.<sup>644</sup> She also confirmed that some of her produce is sent to Johannesburg City Deep Market, especially okra.

Mrs Merriam credited her love for farming to the encouragement shown by her parents when she was still young. Her parents were farmers and their die-hard attitude encouraged her to take farming seriously at a tender age. When she got married, she first started her sewing business but was discouraged when people took her clothes on credit and ended up not paying. She then thought of getting into farming, as her parents have taught her and realized that farming was indeed a viable activity compared to the sewing

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<sup>641</sup> Interview with Mrs. Glenda. Female Farmer. 02 December 2015.

<sup>642</sup> Ibid.

<sup>643</sup> Ibid.

<sup>644</sup> Interview with Mrs. Merriam. Female Farmer. 03 December 2015.

business she was involved in. She had also learnt to process tomatoes to make chili sauce and jam. Some of her tomatoes were sold to people as far away as Mozambique and Durban. To her, farming was the cornerstone to the economy “*because the food industry is the biggest.*”<sup>645</sup> She encouraged people to take farming seriously in order to stave-off starvation and the thought of that always made her push harder.<sup>646</sup>

I wanted to know whether they were also making tomato jam at her farm and her response was she and her friends were trained by the University of Limpopo to make jam, but they were unable to do so due to lack of machinery. They also joined another organisation called SAWENI, which also trained them how to make tomato jam and tomato sauce, but they do not have the machines and preservatives to start that kind of business. However, those who make tomato sauce and jam buy from them.<sup>647</sup>

She would cherish the idea of having a market nearby because they would work hard as women farmers and help creating employment for the youths. The process of applying for the farm started by writing the letter to headman Rambuda of Madimbo who advised them to refer the letter to the local Civic Association. The next step was to take the letter to Thovhele Rambuda who, after signing the letter referred them back to Chief Rambuda for him to show them the farm. The twenty-hectare farm they got was very bushy and they had to work hard to de-bush the whole area.<sup>648</sup> Amongst her challenges, electricity occupies the top spot on the list of her worries. She is paying R5 000.00 to R6 000.00 per month. To her, it was as if they were working for electricity. If it was not for the expensive electricity, the farmers would be making a good profit. She was using estimated readings and had no clue whatsoever which one (between the estimated and the pre-paid electricity), was the best because she had never used the pre-paid one before. Another of her concerns included expensive tomato seeds, which went as high as R14 000.00 per hectare. The very same tomato seeds die easily whenever they experience too much heat or got affected by diseases and die. Manure and pesticides were amongst some of

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<sup>645</sup> Interview with Mrs. Merriam. Female Farmer. 03 December 2015.

<sup>646</sup> Ibid.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid.

<sup>648</sup> Ibid.

the things she said were very expensive. Above all that, electricity was the major stumbling block in the progress of women farmers in the area.<sup>649</sup>

She praised Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), such as Timbali, which taught her how to use manure, pesticides and how to spray it. The knowledge and information they got was very helpful. Their arrival had produced positive changes. She further showed gratitude to the pumps that Timbali had given them. She has two children who had shown great interest in farming and her son helps her husband with ploughing, using a tractor whenever he was around.<sup>650</sup>

The thirteenth interviewee was Mrs Portia who started farming at a plot in Ziska in 1995. She worked on that hired farm until she applied for and was allocated her own farm at Makwarela government buildings, where she paid R2 000.00 for her application and got her own farm. The farm was very bushy, and she had to clear it first and started ploughing it in 2003. There was no water and electricity and Mrs Portia had to rely on borehole water and an engine to water her farm. In 2007 she decided to register her farm and called it Portia Farming. She started by ploughing just three hectares, as there were many anthills. She borrowed money to the tune of R57 000.00, which she paid in one instalment after harvest. She then went to Nedbank for another loan of R25 000.00 to buy drips and paid all of it in one instalment after harvest. The third money lender was ABSA Bank, which loaned her R30 000.00, which she also paid in cash after harvest and then approached Venetia Mine for a R100 000.00 loan which she repaid again. When I arrived for an interview, she had just loaned R100 000.00 from WDB, which she managed to pay in one instalment again.<sup>651</sup>

The government offices where she submitted the application, at Makwarela, were for the Department of Land Affairs then but currently called the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. During the interview, the farm was under the control of the chief as a result of land reform.<sup>652</sup>

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<sup>649</sup> Interview with Mrs. Merriam. Female Farmer. 03 December 2015

<sup>650</sup> Ibid.

<sup>651</sup> Interview with Mrs. Portia. Female Farmer. 03 December 2015.

<sup>652</sup> Ibid.

Mrs Portia specialises in farming tomatoes, pumpkins, sweet melons, butternuts, peri-peri, habanero and green, red and yellow peppers. She experienced crop disease on tomatoes and decided to plant baby vegetables such as baby marrow, baby jam and petti pans. That helped her a lot because of the short life-cycle those baby vegetables had. It takes only four to five weeks to start harvesting them, thereby generating quick cash. The baby vegetables brought her a lot of prosperity during those trying times.<sup>653</sup>

Another problem she highlighted concerned a shortage of water. The river was said to be running dry and she had called the Local Economic Development office (LED) and was told that application for grants had stopped until January the following year. She owned two farms, a twenty-one-hectare, the one I visited, and a ten-hectare which she said was behind the mountain. She would continue to farm tomatoes on the twenty-one-hectare farm and the ten-hectare farm would be used to farm baby vegetables.<sup>654</sup>

She desired to have a vegetable drying machine which would help in drying up and processing vegetables into finished products. That was because of the experience she had encountered many times when transporting her produce to markets as far as Botswana, saying they get spoiled, thereby affecting quality and price. She even obtained a quotation for the machine and was told that it would cost her R1000 000.00 to have one of her own.<sup>655</sup>

Transport was another problem; she highlighted that she did not have a truck of her own. The ones she relied upon did not bring money on time and sometimes they did not pay all money as agreed. The only solution to that, in Mrs Portia's view, would be to cut the middle man and take your produce yourself to the market, then you would see progress. On matters pertaining to creating operatives with other female farmers, Mrs Portia was not so impressed about it, saying another company called ELRAT had bought her a 48-hectare farm with the aim of forming a cooperative with her. They promised to give her one tractor but when she asked them what was going to happen if the tractor broke, and who was going to pay for other responsibilities, they could not answer all those questions

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<sup>653</sup> Ibid.

<sup>654</sup> Ibid.

<sup>655</sup> Ibid.

and then Mrs Portia backed down on the deal.<sup>656</sup> The only solution to such dilemmas was to have your own tractor and a truck.

She had R200 000.00 in her account and wanted to buy a cold storage and two trailers. The money was not enough for all that and she did not know where to find extra cash. She would try to ask them to sell her on credit so that she, could pay over time. She was also yearning for training on how to dry up vegetables, saying some people from the University of Limpopo once visited them and taught them how to dry their vegetables and how to pour enzymes on vegetables, so that they remained green. If someone could come and teach them again, she would embark on business of that nature in future. That would help her preserve everything she had produced in her farm. She also suggested that those prepared to train farmers should be prepared to train them closer to their farms. They must also train them how to search for information using the internet.<sup>657</sup>

Mrs Portia echoed what other female farmers have spoken about earlier, when she said training should be conducted nearby because it would not be nice for a farmer to spend the whole day at training, leaving the farm at the hands of their employees only. The employees were sometimes unreliable to such an extent that the damage you may incur might make you lose everything. She missed another computer training by The Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) because they wanted them to spend the whole week at training in Polokwane.<sup>658</sup> She also recommended that trainers should also be told that they would be dealing with people whose level of education was very low, so they should be patient enough when dealing with them.<sup>659</sup> After assuring her that I would take care of that, I said my goodbyes and promised to visit again if needs be.

Mrs Lena was the fourteenth female farmer to be interviewed. She started farming in 2009 after leaving her work at a local butchery. Her interest in farming started after she attended woman farmer of the year competition. She loved it and decided to join farming in 2009.

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<sup>656</sup> Interview with Mrs. Portia. 03 December 2015.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid.

<sup>658</sup> Ibid.

<sup>659</sup> Ibid.

She had saved R25 000.00 and decided to use it as a starting point and started by ploughing only one hectare. She had to deal with pests but managed to garner profits amounting to R35 000.00. Her second stint saw her gaining R40 000.00 profit after ploughing two hectares. On the third time, disaster struck. Some youngsters stole her electric cable and when she reported the matter to Eskom, they took their time to go and fix it. Her tomatoes began to wither as a result of shortage of water, leading to a great loss. She harvested a little that season but carried on with farming.<sup>660</sup>

She requested a loan of R20 000.00 from Women in Development. She bought manure, more drips and electricity and then ploughed four hectares and got good harvest and paid back the loan. She requested another loan of R300 000.00 from the same money lender and got it. She decided to use only R70 000.00, but her tomatoes were affected by a disease. She acknowledged her failure that year and had to wait for another year to come. All farmers started experiencing water shortages and had to take turns irrigating their vegetables.<sup>661</sup>

Mrs Lena specialises in tomatoes, butternuts, okra, gooseberries, brinjal (eggplant) and green peas. She hailed the company that gave them loans, saying the company had empowered them a lot. They used to come and check whether there was any progress or not if they have given you a loan. She bought a bakkie using the profit she could generate.<sup>662</sup> She had two farms which she was sharing with someone. The first was thirty-hectares and the other nineteen-and-half hectares. The major challenge she mentioned included crop diseases, pipes that carry the water from the river to the farm, drips and a tractor. The government had promised to provide farmers with drips, pipes, engines and storerooms.<sup>663</sup>

Concerning transportation of her produce to the market, she hailed a young man who had been helping farmers transport their produce to the market. To her, the young man was doing a sterling job and had solved all the farmers' problems concerning transport. She

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<sup>660</sup> Interview with Mrs. Lena. Female Farmer. 04 December 2015.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid.

<sup>662</sup> Ibid.

<sup>663</sup> Ibid.

also mentioned expensive electricity as another challenge she was facing. They charge anything from R5 000.00 to R15 000.00, which made farmers operate at a loss all the time. The farmers had requested Eskom to provide them with prepaid electricity, but it was taking its own time. According to her, the expensive electricity was choking farmers thereby preventing them from flourishing.<sup>664</sup>

She had a son who was assisting her and had shown interest in farming. She hoped he would carry on when she called it a day when it came to farming.<sup>665</sup>

The last woman farmer to be interviewed was Mrs Lilly, who was from Thohoyandou and only went home on weekends. She farms crops such as tomatoes, butternut, maize, okra, gem squash, gooseberry and different kinds of peppers, such as serrano and habanero.<sup>666</sup> She singled out tomatoes as the most challenging crop to plough, saying they needed to be sprayed constantly from a tender age until harvest because they were prone to different kinds of diseases and pests. For the whole three and half months, as a farmer, you must contend with that because that was the amount of time tomatoes needed before harvesting them.<sup>667</sup>

Mrs Lilly bought the farm from an old man who said he was tired of farming. The farm was then registered in her name and she had a title deed to prove that. She said she never experienced any challenges as a woman in acquiring the farm and ascribed that to the changing nature of South Africa's political landscape. Her family was behind her in everything she did and that again helped her survive farming and its challenges. One of her sons had shown immense interest in farming and had even bought some goats that she was taking care of. He once planted some tomatoes on the farm and was the one who was pushing her not to give up on farming. Her only worry was that the one interested in farming was based in Pretoria and could not be available all the time when she needed him most.<sup>668</sup>

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<sup>664</sup> Ibid.

<sup>665</sup> Ibid.

<sup>666</sup> Interview with Mrs. Lilly. Female Farmer. 04 December 2015.

<sup>667</sup> Ibid.

<sup>668</sup> Ibid.



She owned a twenty-eight-hectare farm but was ploughing only five hectares. She mentioned challenges such as not having enough money to buy pipes and drips as they were very expensive. Any assistance of that nature would be greatly appreciated.<sup>669</sup> Our interview was cut short because of the nature of the business she was busy with when I visited her, which compelled me to say my goodbyes and I left her busy assisting customers who were awaiting her assistance.

In conclusion, the chapter emphasised Nwanedi women farmers' perspectives on their social identity and psycho-social dynamics as farmers, wives, women, community members and entrepreneurs. This became possible by looking at some of the comments made by Nwanedi women farmers during interviews. It was through these narratives that some women could indicate how badly they were hurt by people closer to them like their spouses. It was in these discussions where suspicion that some women were being fronted, came to the fore. Some of those fronted were unfortunately not reaping the fruits of their labour as the money they generate goes straight into the accounts of their husbands who, unfortunately chose how to spend it without consulting them. The chapter concluded by analysing all the interviews gathered from the fifteen women farmers and one traditional leader interviewed. The data analysed and interpreted carry us into the final chapter, chapter seven, which entails the summary, findings, recommendations and conclusions of findings discovered and analysed in the whole research.

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<sup>669</sup> Ibid.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **7.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to capture some important points, as highlighted throughout the study with an aim of drawing conclusions to the whole study. The chapter focuses on the lessons learnt and then makes proposals on constructive ways of improving the plight of women farmers found at the Nwanedi area. The chapter further emphasises the research findings and then concludes by making recommendations, based on the research findings.

### **7.2. Research Summary**

The research aimed at ascertaining the obstacles faced by rural women farmers in the Nwanedi farms of the Musina Local Municipality, which is found in the Limpopo Province, South Africa, with a view of giving a voice to this historically disadvantaged group of rural women and it covers the years 1994 and 2013. Nwanedi is an area which stretches across the villages of Folovhodwe, Muswodi, Madimbo and Malale. There are three traditional leaders, chiefs, who oversee this area and one can hardly determine the boundaries in the area the three traditional leaders are in control of. The three chiefs are Chief Rambuda, Chief Manenzhe and Chief Tshikundamalema. Different female farmers found in the area have received their farms from one of the three traditional leaders mentioned above.

The women have been historically disadvantaged because of patriarchy. Historical accounts are loaded with stories that glorify patriarchy, thereby rendering women passive participants in the making of history. Matters pertaining to land tenure rights were designed in such a way that women could not, in any way, have access to land both under the Roman-Dutch Law and Customary Law, in the South African context. Ever since the

dawn of apartheid in 1994, there is a struggle in South Africa's predominantly westernised courts to interpret the customary values of the use of land with an aim of determining the nature of the land tenure rights.<sup>670</sup> Some discrepancies between constitutional laws that are mostly gender neutral and customary laws that discriminate against women's ability to own, inherit or individually use land, have been noted.<sup>671</sup>

By giving women farmers an opportunity to tell their stories, the study aimed at giving this group of women an opportunity and platform to contribute in the making of their own history. It was through this platform that Nwanedi women farmers, through their own voices, were able to make us aware that although people consider them successful commercial farmers, there are problems, such as those concerning finance, transport, electricity, sheds and Parkhouses and the setting of prices, that they worry about daily.

These problems also go hand in hand with challenges such as, production of quality produce to appeal to good markets, entering vegetable markets, government support, family support, money-lenders, women's organisation, the middleman, relations with spouses, fronting and finally, the challenges and impediments to getting one's own farm (land tenure). All these were factors that the women themselves, when interviewed, were able to bring forth. Without giving them the platform to narrate their own stories, one would have written stories about them that one presumed that was how they felt.

To achieve its aim and goal, the study had to employ the qualitative research methodologies. This was because the study did not use any numeracy or calculations that would have warranted the use of the quantitative method. The study further used snowball sampling to collect data from more than 20 informants, the overwhelming majority of them female farmers, with the exception of the chief. The author did not know the farmers before the study. These informants proved to be knowledgeable about their farming business.

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<sup>670</sup> P. Pienaar. 2012. 'The Methodology Used to Interpret Customary Land Tenure', Southern African Legal Information Institute, 39. [www.saflii.org/za/journals/PER/2012/39.html](http://www.saflii.org/za/journals/PER/2012/39.html). (Accessed on April 22, 2018).

<sup>671</sup> K. Benbih and J. Katz. 'Land Tenure Rights for Women Under Customary Law'. [www.globalhousingindicators.org/sites/globalhousingindicators.org/file/Land](http://www.globalhousingindicators.org/sites/globalhousingindicators.org/file/Land). (Accessed on April 22, 2018).

The thesis is structured in seven chapters. The first chapter presents the introduction and background of the study. Here the notion of women's experiences in South Africa is highlighted and the effort that the government is making to empower women in general. The chapter also discusses the problem statement, purpose of the study which includes the aim and objectives, methodology, justification for the study, limitations and finally the structure of the study. Chapter two focuses on the historical overview of rural women's experiences in general. Special emphasis is on how other authors tackled the issue, in short, literature and conceptual framework. Chapter three looks at the Limpopo landholding and traditional authority in historical perspective. This involves giving an overview of the history of landholding in the region through precolonial, colonial dispossession, and apartheid. In short, the chapter gives a historical context for land issues and traditional authorities through the apartheid and Bantustan eras. Chapter Four focuses on theme one of the interviews. The first theme focused on how women farmers first decided to get into farming and how this developed over time. It would compare how different participants experienced the struggles of establishing themselves. It brings out a variety of experiences in the field. Chapter five analyses the theme which explores how women build up their capacity and abilities to pursue farming as a business, how they learned about the markets and business development networks, strategies as well as failures they encountered. Chapter six deals with the theme of how Nwanedi women farmers see themselves in terms of social identity and psycho-social dynamics around being farmers, wives, women, community members and entrepreneurs. It will also help in highlighting the narratives that help us understand these personal elements. Chapter seven, which is the last chapter attempts to weave together the major arguments presented in the various chapters of the thesis. This is achieved through providing a summary, findings, recommendations and conclusions of the body of work covered in the whole work.

### **7.3. Research Findings**

I found that women farmers at Nwanedi farms are women of integrity, and hard-working. They start working as early as 05:00 in the morning, until dawn during summer. They are all eager to learn, something that sometimes makes them vulnerable to manipulation. They all want to succeed at all costs, and this again makes them easy targets for exploitation. They do not generate enough income due to many obstacles that impede their way towards success, such as lack of their own storage, and transport, as well as relying heavily on loan sharks that wipes off all their profits, thereby making them permanent borrowers. Lack of important equipment and other essentials such as tractors, seeds, manure and so forth, is another concern that the women farmers are encountering. The main findings are highlighted below.

#### **7.3.1. Women must produce quality products to appeal to good markets.**

Farming is a very competitive business and whoever is involved in the activity must be well prepared for competition. These women farmers are not only competing against each other but also must compete with all farmers who are engaged in the same farming activity, including their male counterparts. All the farmers are competing for the same markets and whoever is in the farming business must be prepared for this challenge. These women are aware of that and must double their efforts despite working on a tight budget.

#### **7.3.2. Entering the vegetable market can help women yield more profit.**

Some women farmers have indicated that there are vegetables such as baby germs, baby marrow and so forth, that can help yield more profit. These women are unable to plough these vegetables because they do not have cool places to store them.

### **7.3.3. Government Support**

The women have welcomed the government water project, aimed at assisting women farmers in resolving the water crisis on their farms. The women's concern is that the government seemed not to be monitoring the contractor who, according to some women farmers, installed small pipes that cannot cover big farms like a 28-hectare farm. The government is also providing tractors to assist women farmers without tractors. The only concern with this government initiative is that government tractors usually arrive late when the proper time to plough has passed. This is an inconvenience to women farmers and therefore had a negative impact on their profit.

### **7.3.4. Family Support**

Most of the women farmers indicated that they are getting enough support from members of their families. Some family members are physically present while others are working as far as Gauteng but are still able to provide moral and if possible, financial support. There are minimal incidences of misunderstandings between some female farmers and their spouses. In one of these spousal conflicts, divorce becomes the only option and they are now permanently separated. Some elderly farmers are getting support from their grown-up children. Some of these children had even joined farming and are actively involved. Another proud woman farmer told me about her child who has taken over this farming business and ended up entering competitions and won in different stages until he reached the last stage at national level. However, some women farmers are worried about lack of interest on the side of their children. This might compel them to either sell or lease their farms when they are no longer strong enough to work the land.

### **7.3.5. Money-lenders**

Many of the women farmers showed their frustration regarding the difficulties they encountered in obtaining credit or loans. Some women farmers, on the other hand, praised the moneylenders or creditors as people who played an important role in making

sure that their farms were sustained for so long. This group of farmers said they were able to pay back their loans in one instalment.

However, some women farmers regarded creditors as people who had contributed to their miseries. Some were worried that they had been blacklisted because of inability to pay back their loans on time. They requested loans but never expected natural disasters such as droughts, diseases, and insects to befall them after spending all the money they had obtained from the creditors.

Other women farmers complained about the interests that these creditors were charging. They alleged that some interests went as high as 100%. One female farmer alleged that these interests started on the first month one received the loan and when harvest time arrived, one had already accumulated three months' interest. Another concern raised by these women farmers was regarding the amount of loan they qualify for. They said it is insufficient for someone with a farm of about 25 hectares and above to make any impression. They said if you ask for a R500 000,00 loan, they might give you as little as R52 000,00, which, in their view, is too little, as one hectare of tomatoes needs as much as R100 000,00 to maintain.

On a positive note, some of these women farmers regarded some creditors, such as WDB, as lifesavers. They portrayed creditors as people who understand their customers. If one borrows from them, they give you a chance until harvest before asking for monthly repayments of the loan. These creditors made regular visits, checking how your plants are growing and if disaster struck, they noted it and gave you another chance to recover from the disaster. Furthermore, they do not give cash but vouchers for those who have qualified for a loan to go and collect what they want from a shop that has an agreement with the said creditors. The only cash they give was the one meant to pay the salaries of the employees.

Those who failed to pay back their loans are blacklisted and therefore disqualified from accessing any loan in future, until such time that they settle their debts.

### **7.3.6. Women's Organisation**

The Nwanedi women farmers made mention of their organisation, called '*Maanda nga u pfana.*' The organisation helps in empowering women with knowledge-sharing and how the women can improve productivity on their farms. They make a monthly contribution of R220,00, the money used to help those new and struggling women farmers.

Some women farmers spoke fervently about this organisation and the popularity it had managed to garner. One female farmer spoke enthusiastically about President J.G. Zuma, whose attention was also attracted by the popularity of this organisation. He then promised to sponsor the women farmers. The government then built storerooms to house the generators and the water pipes that were sponsored to them. The whole water scheme came because of the popularity of this organisation.

### **7.3.7. The Middleman**

Some women farmers are worried that people who take their produce to the market, the middlemen, take long to pay them. Sometimes they pay them too little while pocketing the rest of the money. When asked why, the middlemen alleged that some produce arrived at the market already expired and that the customers forced them to reduce the price. This is a serious concern, indeed, because no woman farmer accompanies the middlemen to the market.

### **7.3.8. Relations with Spouses**

Some women farmers indicated that their relationships with their spouses are poor. Some, who started farming when their husbands were still working as migrants and are no longer working, indicated that they were doing well when they were still farming without their spouses. Some indicated that working with their husbands is a challenge. Even though it was difficult for them to explain why it is so, one could sense that this had something to do with the financial aspect of this business. One-woman farmer added that



she always advised other women not to involve their husbands in their farming business. This shows how serious this is to her. Another woman farmer indicated that she once left her booming farm and went home, in Botswana, to visit and spent three months there. She left her farm in the hands of her husband, and when she came back, she found that he had squandered all her money by sleeping in hotels with concubines. She had to start all over again. In addition, she decided not to involve him again and she was happily working with her son now.

Another woman farmer who was working with her husband also shared her experience with me. After working for years with her husband on their farm, the husband started refusing her permission to drive his car. They had worked together for a long time and the money was in her husband's name. He then stopped supporting her kids, and as if that was not enough, he took her to his lawyer who, after listening to her side of the story, advised them to settle the matter out of court. As an independent woman farmer, she is now a proud 42-hectare farm owner.

### **7.3.9. The Fronting of Women**

The issue of women farmers being fronted by their husbands is another concern raised by some of the women farmers interviewed. An attempt by the government to address gender inequality is the primary cause of this fronting business. The government had realised that commercial farming was mostly the domain of men and decided to bring about some incentives to encourage women to venture into commercial farming. The government introduced competitions such as 'Female Farmer of the Year' and 'Young Farmer of the Year', to encourage both women and the youth into becoming commercial farmers. However, it was not easy for the government to find groups of people who were already established farmers, given the history of land tenure in South Africa. This group of people has been there for a while but playing second-fiddle to men who can secure land for themselves and use their families to work the land. As the English proverb says, "Behind every successful man there is a woman", this was indeed the case because women, invisible as they were, had been there right from the beginning. They may not

have been given the recognition they deserve because of the patriarchal nature of our society then, but they were in the forefront of farming activities. The experiences that these women gained while working on their husbands' farms made it easy for these women to give a proper analysis of their farming activities.

These informants said that when it is time for competitions, some male farm owners placed the farms in the hands of their wives. They would encourage their wives to enter the competition but when they won, the rewards would be taken by the husbands, leaving the women destitute. They added that those who were lucky enough to enter the competitions independently, especially those who had inherited their farms from their husbands, were well-off.

The fact that most these female farmers, when asked how they got their farms, always mentioned their husbands as having played a significant role during the whole process of applying for a farm, is a clear indication that the women did not find it easy to acquire these farms. Patriarchy stood in the way of women success for a long time and still stands in the women's way even now. Some of these women were cagey when asked how they got their farms. This was not because they did not know how to explain it but because they could not talk about their farms without mentioning their husbands.

Some of these women farmers complained about reliance on their husbands' accounts in the beginning and having to beg their husbands for money to buy equipment. This gave birth to the idea of forming an organisation for women called, '*Maanda nga u pfana*' which means, 'Power in Unity'. It was formed by women who were experiencing common challenges, with the aim of helping each other buy the necessary equipment, instead of having to beg their husbands to do it for them.

### **7.3.10. Getting one's farm is a challenge**

Most of the women farmers at Nwanedi, except for a few, confessed about having relied on their husbands when applying for their farms. Others had inherited theirs from their husbands, who had either decided to leave farming and focus on something else or retired

due to old age or deteriorating health. This might have contributed to the manipulation of women farmers by their spouses, as the women could not open a business account of a farm that does not belong to them. These women were not prepared to admit this but given their accounts of how they obtained their farms, one can conclude that the reason they relied on their husbands' accounts might have been because of this.

Some women farmers, when asked how they had obtained their farms, avoided giving a direct answer by using the plural, "we", instead of saying, "I". When you are confronted with such a situation, the best way is to avoid asking too many questions. This again reminds one about the issue of fronting that was highlighted by some interviewees.

Only one women farmer indicated that she got her farm after applying at the Department of Land Affairs, presently the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, at Makwarela Government Offices. She also registered her farm in 2007 as a company, but because of the government's land reform programme, her farm is currently under a chief.

#### **7.4. Challenges as Highlighted by the Majority of Women Farmers**

Many women farmers interviewed indicated financial, transport, electricity, a shed, a pack-house and the setting up of prices, as some of the problems they are experiencing as women farmers.

##### **7.4.1. Financial Problems**

As a direct consequence of the financial challenges these women farmers are experiencing, the majority are unable to cultivate their entire farms. Some were struggling to clear the bush, while others do not have enough drips to water the whole farm. Due to lack of finance, the women cannot hire enough employees, pay electricity and hire equipment at the same time. Some women, in their lamentations, spoke about not having a Pack-house nearby as something that is preventing them from keeping their vegetables

fresh for a long time before being sold. Vegetables such as butternuts are easily affected by sunburn if kept in the burning sun after harvesting.

#### **7.4.2. Transport**

The issue of transport was mentioned by almost all the women farmers as a serious impediment to their success as women farmers. They hired transport to ferry their produce to the market. The main challenge with hiring transport is that you must have harvested enough to fill the whole truck or else you combine your produce with someone, to fill the whole truck. The challenge with this arrangement comes when your produce is harvested at a different time with that of other farmers; you end up paying for the whole truck alone for the produce that do not fill the load.

Many of these women farmers were worried that the little profit that they were supposed to be generating went to transport costs. They only got paid after those who had taken their produce to the market got payed, an exercise that made it difficult for these farmers to get paid earlier.

#### **7.4.3. Electricity**

Electricity was reported as a serious challenge in the advancement of women farmers in the Nwanedi area. Almost all the women interviewed have singled out electricity as the greatest impediment hindering their progress as women farmers. All of them indicated that electricity is very expensive, especially the estimated readings. This is because of the service fee of about R3000,00 that one is expected to pay every month. This is what most women farmers were concerned about.

#### **7.4.4. A Shed and a Pack-house**

Many women farmers are worried about not having facilities such as a shed and a pack-house. These facilities help in extending the lifespan of their produce before they can be transported to the market. The women are all seeking government intervention, to provide them with these.

#### **7.4.5. Setting of Prices**

Nwanedi female farmers are also concerned about not being involved in setting prices for the produce they sell. Their customers, especially Tiger Brands, are the ones setting up the prices, without consulting them. Basically, their attitude is best summed up as, 'Take it or leave it'. This is counterproductive because no profit will be generated by the women farmers in this way. This is indeed a worrying factor for these women farmers.

### **7.5. Research Recommendations**

After listening to the women farmers in the Nwanedi farming area, I have realised that there are some things that need to be considered, to alleviate the plight of these women farmers and other women farmers in rural areas of South Africa. I, therefore, make the following recommendations to the government.

#### **7.5.1. Revisiting Land Tenure and making it gender-sensitive**

The South African Constitution is credited as the most advanced and democratically created piece of Constitution. It is said that its credibility has no equal anywhere around the world. However, these accolades do not mean anything if the government is unable to enforce or implement the Constitution or make it practical. The issue of land tenure in South Africa is clear in the Constitution. To avoid making the Constitution gender insensitive, those who were tasked with drafting the constitution have done the best they

could to make the Constitution gender neutral. However, it is the gender-neutrality of this Constitution that is making it vulnerable to exploitation, especially when interpreted by people from different sectors of life. In rural areas, there is a need for gender equality awareness campaigns that would put an end to practices that hinder women's fair access to land security, either due to tribal or religious practices that overpower the legal framework, or because people do not see anything wrong when it comes to gender inequality. The interviews conducted offer the reasons to emphasise the importance of this awareness.

### **7.5.2. Providing quick solutions on matters pertaining to land claims**

Some areas in South Africa, such as the Nwanedi area, are areas that were claimed by the local communities during the late 1990s. Although the owners of the farms in the area, the whites, had left the area at the hands of the government, the government was still struggling to find the correct formula to return the land to its rightful owners. Furthermore, there are many claims from different individual groups of locals and the government seems to be struggling to establish who the rightful owner of the area amongst the three local chiefs was. Therefore, all of them were distributing the land the way they saw fit, while the government was turning a blind eye to what was happening. This made the farm owners, especially women, vulnerable to exploitation from the three traditional leaders.

### **7.5.3. Empowering women farmers with proper skills and capacity building**

Most of the women farmers interviewed also complained about lack of proper farming knowledge. Some have a very low level of education and need education and training for them to understand what is expected of them as farmers and how to improve their farming skills. Although there are Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that are prepared to offer training to this group of women farmers, their low levels of education prevent them from acquiring the necessary skills that would allow them to shrug off the 'emerging farmers' tag and become commercial farmers. Lack of proper training had even

compelled another NGO called Thembani, which provides guarantees when one wants to access a bank loan, to agree to provide training to emerging women farmers at Nwanedi. During a graduation ceremony held at Thohoyandou Lutheran Church Headquarters Main Hall on 25 November 2015, Mr Zuko, a representative from Thembani, extended his invitation to service providers such as institutions of higher learning, such as, the University of Venda, University of Limpopo and Further Education and Training Colleges around the region to assist in training these emerging farmers.

#### **7.5.4. Guarding against patriarchal stereotypes in rural areas**

The government should be careful when it comes to policies that concern land tenure, especially in rural areas. Customary Law has the tendency of being gender-insensitive sometimes. People in some rural areas see nothing wrong when women's rights are being trampled upon because they have been conditioned in that way. It is therefore the responsibility of the government to rule over matters pertaining to gender inequality. This the government can do by encouraging and assisting women farmers to apply for the farms themselves, rather than relying on their husbands. Women farmers also need to be encouraged to open their own accounts, rather than putting money in accounts in their husbands' names. All women farmers who relied on their spouses' accounts were crying foul.

#### **7.5.5. Monitoring the activities of credit providers or money-lenders**

Credit providers should be monitored if fairness is to be ensured. Many women farmers at Nwanedi complained about the high interests and the little amount of money they qualify for. Women farmers are being provided with big farms but without access to credit. As a result, the farms are just lying uncultivated. Farmers are only ploughing small portions of the farm, leaving the bigger portions of the farm fallow. Some women farmers were blacklisted because of inability to pay back their loans. Most of the blacklisted ones cited natural disasters as something that contributed to disastrous yields or no harvest at

all, but there was no one listening to them, let alone, intervening. The government should therefore use money from their Disaster Fund to help women farmers' quick recovery. This would prevent many of these women farmers from being blacklisted.

#### **7.5.6. Making use of women's organisations to mobilise women farmers**

The government should use the women's organisations to mobilise women into forming a cooperative. This approach would help women farmers to create their own businesses, markets and so on, under the guidance of the government. Women farmers would then be trained in how to market their products, to avoid relying on the middleman. Proper training needs to be done and women farmers should be encouraged to do things by themselves.

#### **7.5.7. Encouraging women farmers to produce quality**

The production of quality products would help women farmers to appeal to good markets. When proper training is provided to these women farmers, what they would produce would be quality. Although different NGOs such as Lumentech, LEDA, AFASA, SEDA, KADINAO, Technoserve, DTI and Themabani are there to assist, skills are still needed to empower this group of women. Impediments such as illiteracy should be tackled with care and women farmers who left schooling at lower levels, such as primary school level, should be encouraged to enrol for ABET.

#### **7.5.8. Assisting with farming equipment**

The government should assist women farmers with the necessary equipment, such as tractors, drips, seeds, insecticides and manure. All these forms the backbone of farming and without them, women farmers struggle. Some women farmers showed their desire to enter the vegetable market, which they said it has a quicker lifespan and yielded more profit. The government should support this group of women farmers with equipment such



as coolhouses and vegetable dryer machines. This equipment is too expensive for these women farmers; the government should therefore assist them.

## **7.6. Conclusion**

The period from 1994 to 2015 raised the hopes of many South Africans because of the government's promises of a better life for all. The Constitution placed greater emphasis on equality before the law, freedom from discrimination and the right to human dignity. The Constitution was hailed as a masterpiece the world over, but the challenge lay with the implementation thereof. The 'Untold Stories of Women Farmers in the Nwanedi Area of the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province, South Africa, 1994-2015', gave us an opportunity to scrutinise the practicality of the South African Constitution in relation to land ownership.

The discussion gave women farmers in the Nwanedi area an opportunity to lay bare their experiences as women farmers. The discussions focused on women who own farms. A sizeable number of them, fifteen in total, were interviewed individually. After being assured that the information they provided would not be used against them in any way, they willingly participated in the research. It was out of these discussions that made all of us aware that patriarchy was a hindrance for Nwanedi women farmers. The women have been struggling to obtain their own farms and had to rely on their spouses to apply on their behalf. Those who relied on this method suffered a great loss, not only of their energy while working on their farms, but financial loss as well. For example, they could not open accounts for themselves because the farms were not registered in their names and had to use their husbands' accounts to save their money. In almost all these cases, the men would use the money without consulting their partners and, the women farmers had to beg their husbands to access the money. Issues like these have created unwarranted animosity between spouses and, in extreme circumstances, led to official separation between them.

In all the discussions or interviews, the women indicated similar challenges, such as lack of transport, insufficient money to buy enough drips, which compelled them to plough just

a small portion of their farms. Women farmers have, on many occasions, indicated their displeasure with the conduct of some of the credit providers, the high interests charged on them, the little amount of money they qualified for, and lastly, the way some of these creditors demand loan repayment, irrespective of disasters one might have encountered during that season. Some were even blacklisted for not paying their loans on time or not paying at all, and as a result, they no longer had access to any credit at all.

Some women farmers indicated that they would appreciate any support in the form of initiatives, such as the building of storerooms to store the generators that were supplied by the government. Other government initiatives included the construction of water pipes from the river into the farms. All these were hailed as positive intervention measures by the government. However, the issue of expensive electricity was a concern highlighted by many of the women farmers interviewed. Some believed pre-paid electricity was the only thing that could save them from the misery they were finding themselves in.

Despite the challenges that the Nwanedi women farmers highlighted, many of the women appreciated the fact that they were proud owners of their farms. In addition, they were determined to achieve the goals they had set for themselves. If these women farmers were not given this platform to make the people aware of their plight as women farmers, one would not have known that there was a group such as this, that exists on this side of South Africa and that they also have a story to tell the world.

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## APPENDICES

### Addendum 1: Interviews Conducted

**Interview number 1** Interviewee: **Mrs Maria**

**Mr Tshamano:** My name is Humbulani Tshamano. Tshamano is my surname. I am a PhD student and a lecturer at the University of Venda. Would you mind telling me who you are?

**Mrs Maria:** I am Maria. A resident of Folovhodwe I farm here at Tshikhudini village. This place is called Tshikhudini, but the area where my farm is located is called Travenna. I am a farmer and an owner of the farm. The farm is 25 hectares.

**Mr Tshamano:** 25 hectares?

**Mrs Maria:** I applied for it in 2004 and I am still working on it. I am presently using 7 hectares. I am still struggling to plough the whole farm; I am experiencing some financial challenges. I am struggling to de-bush the rest as we are doing it manually, without machinery. There is labour, electricity, equipment, everything I had to hire. As a result, do you see those butternuts? They need transport to the depot. Now I am supposed to hire a truck to the depot. From the depot I have to hire it again to take them to Farmwise market, some to Woolworth and Checkers. When we include packaging and people who cut them, everything needs money. This hinders the growth of our business. We are working hard but of the profit; sometimes when you take your butternuts to the market, they are found to be too small and are bought at a lower price. For example, instead of selling them at R4.00 each they end up at R2.80. This means that I am left without a profit because the R2.80 will pay for transport, labour and electricity. As I speak now the electricity statement says I owe R11 600.00. So, electricity is so expensive that even when you think of extending the hectares, so that next year you plough more land you are unable to because you do not have enough money.

**Mr Tshamano:** Which means there is too much you need to do, and in the end, you are left with little money you can count as your profit. The cash that remains is no longer

visible because there is too much to take care of, like transport, the price of the product at the market, pay for labour as well as paying for electricity.

**Mrs Maria:** You see. It means that you will be counting electricity expenditure for three months until harvest time. It is estimated at five to six thousand rand per month. When you see this month's electricity bill being over R11 000, 00, it is because I was unable to pay last month and now it has doubled. Now you will see that for three months you will be paying electricity for your plants to grow, then there are workers tending the plants for three months, excluding the temporary ones, seasonal employees who must be paid for three months, then chemicals to take care of insects and plant diseases, then fertilizers for three months on your butternuts, then paying for the seeds because as they are prepared for you, it's your responsibility to pay for them as a farmer. It is the responsibility of the farmer, that is, the three months expenditure before we add harvesting, which then includes transport, packaging and extra labour. These things made the farmer, when she/he arrives at the market and find the prices low, feel bad, as it means that there'll be three months' money for electricity, labour, transport, packaging; everything combined shows that the farmer remains with nothing. That is why we are not progressing. We are working, and we want to work but it's difficult.

**Mr Tshamano:** I see that you are working. I moved around some farms and saw the way people are working. Yesterday we were talking about the temperatures that were at 44 degrees Celsius, but people don't stop working. They kept working despite the scorching sun.

**Mrs Maria:** And you see, when the sun is that hot, it burns the butternuts and affects them. Butternuts will experience sunburn and develop two colours, and at the market they will refuse them whereas I am not the one responsible for that.

**Mr Tshamano:** Is there anything you can do?

**Mrs Maria:** There's nothing I can do because I do not have a shed here on my farm. How will I prevent the sun from burning my butternuts? It means that if the market refuses to take them, it is my loss. It would mean that I will struggle to plant next time because of the loss I'd have incurred. This happened last year when there was overproduction of

butternuts and we were told that they were no longer going to consider ours, they got rotten here on my farm.

**Mr Tshamano:** Which means you do not charge prices for some of the products you produce here?

**Mrs Maria:** No, prices come from those we are doing business with us and if they feel they no longer need them, they have the powers to say they no longer need them. As a farmer what would you do?

**Mr Tshamano:** It's a waste.

**Mrs Maria:** It's a waste. It means a farmer is the one to feel the pain instead of the customer. We have a big challenge.

**Mr Tshamano:** It is indeed a serious challenge.

**Mrs Maria:** Even with tomatoes they tell us how much it should be, for example, Tiger Brands will provide me with two hectares of seeds, at a cost of R15 000.00 per hectare, which means they will take their money from the first tomatoes you harvest, grade one, whereas I have laboured to buy insecticides, manure, labour and electricity for three to four months. After deducting their money, Tiger Brands will then tell me they are going to pay R1200, 00 per ton. One ton equals to 44 crates. If you divide 1200 by 44 it means one crate sells for R28, 00. As someone who relies on Tiger Brand for seeds because I do not have money to buy seeds, I am forced to sell one crate to Tiger Brands for R28, 00. If tomatoes become red, there is nowhere I can take them to, you see. Tiger Brands tells you it will take your crate for R27, 00 and there is nothing you can do because there is no other market you can take your tomatoes to. You are forced to accept the offer because there is nowhere to take your red tomatoes to.

**Mr Tshamano:** Because Tiger Brands needs red tomatoes.

**Mrs Maria:** We have a challenge regarding a market, electricity and labour.

**Mr Tshamano:** Tell me: how can this market problem be resolved?

**Mrs Maria:** For us to find a market, we need to produce quality products then we can appeal to good markets. I am saying that because there are markets that are difficult for one to enter, like the one for vegetables, such as baby germs, baby marrows, etc. The market for these has a lot of profit and the life cycle of these vegetable is very small. If I plant pet pens on the 1<sup>st</sup> of this month I will harvest them on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month. It's unlike tomatoes that need three months while I am paying for electricity with nothing to gain. I, on the other hand, will just be paying. With petti pen, what I like about them is that when the month ends, when you go to pay for electricity and labour, the products pay for them because they'd be beginning to get ripe. Now we are having a challenge with plough them because we do not have a shed for baby vegetables. You can see how hot it is; it means that if I cut them, I would not have a place to store them; then they will become lifeless, and they do not need lifeless plants at the market. Its flower should be intact here at the back for them to accept them. This scorching heat prevents us from ploughing them because we do not have cool houses to store them after cutting them. We would cut them in the morning and in the afternoon and put them in the cold storage, where it is cool. Maybe you cut them again the following day and take them to the pack house. Now that we do not have all that means it would be difficult for us to plough them, thereby making it difficult for us to grow them as farmers. Even if you plough them, there is no transport to take them to the pack house. Pack houses can only be found in places like Tshakhuma, as they are still planning to build one around Nwanedi. But here at the farm for us to be seen competing with others, with quality petti pens and baby merrows, how can we do it when, after harvesting them, one has to put them under a tree, with all these winds blowing sand on them, making them change their colour to brown, thereby, making them unattractive. They need to be taken from the farm straight to where they are supposed to go.

**Mr Tshamano:** What if there was a storage place nearby and trucks for transport?

**Mrs Maria:** Things like butternuts, after being cut from the farm, would go straight to the cold storage. Things like baby vegetables after being cut from the farm, would also go to the storage and then be delivered when they are too many; maybe after cutting them for



two or three days, and get them delivered in tons to where they are graded and packaged. This is what can promote us as farmers.

**Mr Tshamano:** This means there are more challenges that warrant greater intervention by other stakeholders who can assist with all that is lacking. Because when I see this water business that was done here, it shows that if it was a government project, the government would be getting involved.

**Mrs Maria:** But the problem with these is that the government had hired a contractor and you find that all what was done on my farm might have cost R500 00.00 and when you go and check when these people are working, and ask them if the pipe that they are fitting from the river to the farm is big enough to water the whole farm, given the size of my farm, they simply say they are following the map as they do things according to the map, but when they go to test the pipes no water comes out of them.

**Mr Tshamano:** Is there no water?

**Mrs Maria:** The water does not reach here. It only reaches the main line at the krans, but they are not fitted with drips. Here, where the drips are, they were testing water from the krans getting into the drips to water the plant, but there is no pressure. When they start the machine the electricity trips because the machine is too small; they did not check the sizes of the farms and the distance. They treated all the farms equally. Someone with a 5, 10- or 25-hectare farm and the distance of the farm to the river were treated equally using the same -size pipe. They are trying but they are failing. That side they want me to apply for stronger electricity, so that their small motor can work at high pressure. I cannot afford this electricity when I am struggling with the smaller one of 25 kw and their machine needs the expensive electricity of 50kw. So, we are still having a challenge here, as the contractors are not working the way we expected them to do. If a farmer was given a voucher of the same amount and went to find someone who knows the job, it would be fine.

**Mr Tshamano:** Maybe they were also given vouchers and they can only buy such equipment.

**Mrs Maria:** It was going to correct perceptions that contractors buy smaller pipes instead of the big ones to gain more profit. He is making a profit with the money which was supposed to be helping me. The government is showing us that it wants to assist by giving out more money to help, but the contractor is getting more profit while my project is not progressing. As you can see, this farm is 25 hectares and the pipes which were fitted only are for 15 hectares; what about the remaining hectares?

**Mr Tshamano:** The whole 10 hectares? What are you expected to do with them?

**Mrs Maria:** It means it is my responsibility to struggle again with the remainder whereas the government had given out R50 000.00, can it be too small to finish the job on one farm? It was supposed to have finished everything because there are some with 3, 4 and 5 hectares, where is the balance of the money going?

**Mr Tshamano:** It was supposed to have been subsidizing the ones with bigger farms.

**Mrs Maria:** The R500 000.00 when you look at it you will realise that it is enough to cover the entire plot. We still have challenges; do you see that fence? We have used tree branches to fix it. Even if I am a hard-working farmer, how can you expect quality when I am still facing challenges of cattle that get into my farm from every corner? See those maize plants they were eaten by cattle that jumped over the fence. This means that when they say a farmer should be assisted, they need to also look at every aspect of it. It means a farmer should be given money, enough money to produce quality and that his/her produce should be harvested properly because quality when you do not have enough labour is compromised. And where am I going to find petty cash as there is nowhere to find it?

**Mr Tshamano:** Instead of harvesting your butternuts in one week, you end up spending the month harvesting them. The sun will burn them, thereby compromising their quality.

**Mrs Maria:** If you have 20 people and put them here, they can do this job in two or three days. They can finish one hectare in one day. But because of shortage of money you end up using three, five or six people, you see. And that is not good.

**Mr Tshamano:** Tell me what I am seeing here seems like there is something we can talk about, which you can call a success story. I see you as a woman who applied for a farm and got it, something unusual if you think of our history. This is something new because even applying for a stand, as a woman, you would not get it. Was it an easy journey for you to go through?

**Mrs Maria:** It was not easy at all; it was not easy. It means things were happening here. Maybe what assisted me in getting this farm, there are many women who are still applying even now but it is difficult for their applications to get approved. When they said there must be some new stands, it is a new residential place here, when they did land claims, when they started allowing people to stay, I was one of those who came looking for a stand with my husband. My husband works in Johannesburg. When I was at the said stand, I was working on my brother's farm. He had a farm, my brother. That is my background. It encouraged me to apply for my own farm while working at my brother's. He is a teacher here at Dzimauli Secondary School. While working at my brother's, his trust was on me as his mother's daughter (sister) especially during tomato harvest period. When the truck arrived, he would be still at school and the workers would be cutting the tomatoes and loading them on the trucks. This meant that the truck owner had to leave money with me or the bakkie owner leave his money with me, so that I take the cash to the bank and deposit it. This was to let the truck driver leave on time, instead of waiting for my brother who would knock off late. Then I worked with my brother, helping him, especially on the side of finance and when people were removing the weeds. My responsibility was to see to it that the weeds were properly removed because when there is no one looking, they easily leave bushy weeds.

While working there I realised that my brother was working for the government but also able to make extra income because when the truck left, I always found myself holding R50 000.00 or R70 000.00. I realised that because I am not working and I did not go far with my schooling like he did, because of the challenges I had at home that made it difficult for me to further my studies, and I was just sitting at other peoples' homes, not working, I did not go to school and finish my studies, which meant this job was not for my brother who was working for the government but it is the work I had to do in order to make quick

cash. We ploughed in January and in May we began to get some cash. This meant we were able to do a lot of money after three months. This meant that I myself needed to plan and get a farm of my own because every day I got hold of a lot of money that was not mine. My brother just thanked me as a daughter of his mother (sister). This encouraged me to apply for mine. Before I applied, I rented someone's farm and started doing practicals on it. I specialised in maize, unfortunately I left my schoolbag at home, I was going to show you some photos. Then I started farming while assisting my brother on the other side. When things started going well where I hired the farm, I said goodbye to my brother and advised him to find another manager who will assist him on his farm because I wanted to do my own thing.

While working on the borrowed farm, I had some challenges, but I was able to plough it successfully and started selling my produce and bought a bakkie. The owner of the farm became jealousy and increased the rent. I was then given two or one year, depending on how he and his family planned, as there were relatives who wanted to use the same farm and that encouraged me to look for my own farm. As I was staying in a village that had a civic organisation, I happened to be serving as secretary of the local civic organisation. I then had a chance to apply for my own farm. As people working at a civic organisation are not paid, I applied for a farm and then realised that I would have my own farm. I carried on working on the borrowed farm, as you can see that this one is too far away from the water; about 1.8 kilometres from here to the river and I did not have money to buy pipes to bring water here. I also did not have money for electricity as the generator does not have enough pressure to bring water from the river up to here. To work this far needs plenty of water and the workers also experienced some hardships. I wanted to use drips as my system of irrigation. You cannot use drips without a powerful generator from the river. I then carried on working on the farm I had hired, while budgeting so that I can relocate later to this new farm when the time permits. The trouble came when the owner decided to forcefully take away his farm. When I was planning to relocate to my new farm, while still planning to erect a fence, the farm owner took over his farm. When he took it, he ploughed down my drips, all plants and pipes; I was left with nothing.

**Mr Tshamano:** Why? Was he fighting you?

**Mrs Maria:** He was indicating that I should pay double the rent, which was in the middle of the year and at the end of the year, which wasn't the contract we had agreed upon. I also told him that he must allow the term of the contract to come to an end, so that we can sign a new one, which will be talking about me paying double the rent. He did not agree on this, and as the owner he took a decision. The matter was laid to rest, after that I no longer considered myself as a farmer. This is because I was failing to get pipes that could take water to my crops, I was also failing to get money for the fence, money to pay my employees was difficult to secure, and I was also unable to pay for electricity, as this place requires too much electricity. I then took a loan from Standard Bank and took a R150 000 loan from the structure called Techno Serve under the Women Development Division. It was then that I was able to apply for electricity which cost me R23 000. Although I did not manage to do everything I wanted to do, as R150 000 was not enough, I managed to buy pipes, seeds, manure, fence. I did all I could manage and had to remember that whatever I did I must produce, as the money needed to be paid back because it was a loan.

**Mr Tshamano:** The loan had to be paid back, indeed.

**Mrs Maria:** I went to Vanecia Mine to apply for another loan and they gave me R100 000. Because I had made a quotation of things, I needed the money for, they paid the money to the suppliers and they delivered all the things that were paid for and the balance was used for paying my employees, electricity and I added some drips, as they were not enough. That is why you see me in this kind of a situation, I am operating through loans.

**Mr Tshamano:** Yes, and this is the money that must be paid back.

**Mrs Maria:** I am paying it back slowly because you should understand that when you apply for electricity, there is a waiting period; they work based on the list they have, as I was not the only one who applied for it. I took the loan in January and as you apply for the transformer from Eskom there is a four-month waiting period. Time is moving was moving as I was waiting for the transformer and the loan was generating interest.

Some people who took those loans just like me went and start with the production as they did not experience the same challenges as me. I only managed to get electricity on 5<sup>th</sup>

June that year. As a result, I ended up planting tomatoes in winter and everything that can be planted in winter it took longer to grow. This simply means when Tiger Brands want their tomatoes, and mine would not be ready, as they were planted way behind time. My tomatoes were ready for market in October and the market had already closed in September which meant I had tomatoes without a market. I experienced a loss in one hectare and there was another loss in the other hectares, but I was able to sell a little from the other hectares as some tomatoes were getting rotten due to lack of a market.

I also planted peri-peri which was not in good condition and as a result after taking it to Johannesburg market the only money I received was R75. This was a huge loss and remember that I still have two loans to pay back. Things has been difficult, and I still have a stress because of that all these bad experiences.

**Mr Tshamano:** It appears as if the challenges you are experiencing are far too many.

**Mrs Maria:** Yes, my challenges are too many, but I believe that I have learned a lot from these challenges. I believe in the saying that says perseverance is the mother of success. The biggest lesson of them all is that I will never in a million years plant tomatoes in winter. I have come to appreciate the importance of timing, knowing when exactly to plant what kind of crop. Those are some of the things I have learned from all these challenges and experiences. I must say that I have realised that with this kind of a job I have a potential to change my life for the better and I love this job, as I have chosen it myself. I believe that if I can be supported when it comes to electricity, labour, transport to and from the market, I will definitely do better. I don't believe that the government must do everything for me but if it can subsidise me in this work, I would grow to be a massive producer. I started farming when I was still young, but I am now over 35; that is why you may have seen on the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) board.

The government should be able to support us as farmers because, apart from creating jobs for others, we are producing food to fight hunger and food insecurity. My desire is that I would want to see all this land being utilised, but I can't do that because of all these challenges that I am not getting support to deal with.

**Mr Tshamano:** I also believe that organisations and government structures should be encouraged to provide the necessary support to your farming initiatives. If they can come and see what you are doing, they might be able to come up with ideas of dealing with all or some of the challenges that you as farmers are experiencing.

**Mrs Maria:** for example, there are institutions like the university that can assist us as farmers in many ways. These institutions can teach us different and better ways of doing what we do as farmers and this could assist us. Again, sometimes we find that some of the butternuts that we produce for market purposes, such as the small and medium sizes, are not being sold on the market, as they prefer extra-large and large sizes. The university can assist us with knowledge of how to can process these butternuts to make certain products from them. This will minimise our losses and promote maximum use of our products for the benefit of our people, who will be able to enjoy a range of products from us as farmers.

**Mr Tshamano:** These are some of the things that I saw when I was doing my rounds on the White owned farms. White farmers apparently generate profit from everything they produce, even on what we refer to as rejects; they can still be used for something and as such generate income, instead of being thrown away. White farmers have the advantage of having the knowledge, skills and contacts and networks that they use for marketing purposes, and that is why they can sell everything, including products that are no longer in good condition. As for black farmers, they throw away things that are rejected by marketplaces and this leads to losses and low-income generation. White farmers are better off because they have equipment like they have their own tractors, which means they can work the land anytime they want, as opposed to many black farmers who must wait for the government to get someone's tractor to finish working somewhere and then it comes to their land. This makes production slow and difficult to time, which may result in losses. Knowledge and skills on crop protection are also something that needs to be taken seriously, especially amongst black farmers and the university can provide education and training in this regard.

**Mrs Maria:** I planted butternuts and maize; that is why you can see that there is maize meal there. After I harvested on the maize, I changed the crop and planted okra on the very same place where I had planted maize meal, and I normally do crop rotation.

**Mr Tshamano:** people who study the soil or who do soil sciences know very well that when you are done with cultivating butternuts, which type of cash crop you can cultivate, that can generate money quickly, for you maybe in one or two months. This process makes it easier for the farmer to embark on a long-term crop like butternut or maize meal which takes three months. I would encourage you to also consider producing cash crops so that some of the challenges with money can be alleviated.

**Mrs Maria:** I agree with you on that, I believe that if a farmer can have this kind of knowledge, coupled with equipment like having your own tractor, things can improve. This is because even if you have this knowledge, if you lack your own tractor, you will still have a challenge because currently we rely on government tractors and those that we hire ourselves. This becomes a problem, as government tractors only come to service us at their own time and these ones that we hire ourselves will have a lot of people using it, which makes it difficult for one to get the services on time. As a result, there are delays in production and once you delay production you will have a problem when it comes to marketing your products or your products will not grow adequately.

**Mr Tshamano:** you would have failed dismally if the tractor delays to service you by a month or two.

**Mrs Maria:** Yes, because the market, like I said, will be very difficult. Another thing is that some of the crops that we produce, we have contacts with our markets and if you don't deliver on time, you would have disappointed your clients and they will not be happy. Government tractors are helping us, of course, but we have a problem with timing. A farmer should have his/her own farm for effective production and not only a tractor but other equipment necessary for agricultural production, too.

Another challenge is that we fail to even attend a single workshop which is very important in terms of providing us as farmers knowledge and skills especially workshops that takes long because when you are attending workshops your produce back on the farm is not



being properly attended to. This is because in most cases workers work well when the farm owner is present and when they get tired in your absence, they just sit down and the work that they normally do in two days in your presence will take five days in your absence, and these things badly affect your production. To avoid this kind of situation, in most cases I opt not to attend the workshops, because it won't help me gain the knowledge and skills but when I come back, I find all my crops dead. It's a dilemma because for me to produce well and quality produce, I should attend workshops.

**Mr Tshamano:** It appears to me that farming needs a farmer to be hands-on and to be observant.

**Mrs Maria:** It also means a farmer should not leave the farm. Even the hired foreman works well in the presence of the farmer because he/she is a human being too; if I leave the farm, he/she is tempted to be lazy or misbehave.

**Mr Tshamano:** I heard someone saying in the absence of the farmer workers sometimes use water instead of chemicals to spray the crops for insects. Sometimes this is also done by close relatives who know very well that they benefit from this farm. And in most cases workers use water to spray because they want to steal the chemicals.

**Mrs Maria:** These things are done by people who are short-sighted, people who cannot see outside the boundaries of their villages. I am saying this because if the farmers are not producing, even people who are doing these evil deeds will go hungry because they will lack food and employment and they do not realise that.

**Mr Tshamano:** Indeed, if we don't see ahead of us, we will be killing the future of this country.

**Mrs Maria:** Farmers should be able to see what is happening in our country; for instance, we get potatoes from other countries while we have farmers in the country, but we fail to produce our own food. These farmers who are buying potatoes from other countries and bring them to us are getting all the necessary support from their government and employees.

**Mr Tshamano:** Now tell me, you are busy working on the farm and I you said your husband is working in Gauteng Province; does he fully support you on what you are doing?

**Mrs Maria:** Do you mean full support in terms of ideas?

**Mr Tshamano:** I mean all kinds of support. Whatever kind of support you need from him; it could be in the form of money, ideas, equipment or just encouragement.

**Mrs Maria:** Yes, he supports me. At first, as people's minds are not alike, he didn't realise that this is a business but now he is very supportive, and he encourages me. Before he could not understand this thing as a business. He used to say to me, I am always pumping money into these things that you are doing, but I do not see what good is coming out of it; maybe it'd better if you come with me to Johannesburg and work at my *spaza* shop. I then told him that his idea was not good, but I am glad that he now realises that, and he is supportive of my farming initiatives. He witnessed a big truck leaving this farm full of butternuts from this farm and that is when he started to consider farming as a business.

**Mr Tshamano:** I asked that question because sometimes you see people experiencing difficulties because people who are close to them, who must be supporting them, are criticising their initiatives. Farming business needs money, now you see sometimes when you use money on this land, your husband might say you are wasting the money, which I gave you for specific purposes, not what you are doing, and this can bring stress and complicate people's relationships.

**Mrs Maria:** It is true: we used to fight, when there was no food because I thought if I could take this money meant for food and buy Ammonium Sulphate manure, maybe my Okra will be in good condition. Yes, these are things that we used to fight about because my dreams are to see this farming business growing and I find myself diverting money that is meant for something else to farming.

**Mr Tshamano:** I asked that question because I can see that this initiative needs money and if I was your husband, I was going to resign from work as I have accumulated much money in terms of my pension. This was going to give me access to a large sum I and

was going to invest a big portion of it on this farm. I believe that if you can somehow get to R1 million you can do wonders on this farm.

**Mrs Maria:** I can buy drips, I can do debussing and a fence for this farm, buy manure and the chemicals needed; I could even get my own tractor and a truck to take my produce to the market. That money can solve all my problems on this farm and not just increase production but also improve the quality.

**Mr Tshamano:** If that could happen you would have been generating a lot of profit from this farm.

**Mrs Maria:** I would have been a millionaire by now.

**Mr Tshamano:** I agree because we are talking about a 25 hectares farm; it is big. Not many people have access to land of this size.

**Mrs Maria:** You see if both my husband and I were assisting each other here, one would be able to attend workshops and attend meetings outside the farm and the other would be making sure that all things go well on the farm. I once told him that if he could be here, use his money and take five hectares and produce mixed baby vegetables, such as germ squash, baby marrows, petty pens and brinjal, we were going to make a lot of money together; all these vegetables are cash crops, they make money quickly.

**Mr Tshamano:** My father was retrenched from work in 1989 and he stayed in Johannesburg up until he came home in 2002. He started working on the land he had, and he was doing well. One day he said to me if I knew that Venda is like this, I would have been a millionaire. I asked him what he meant, and he said, I would have come home while I still had some money and bought a big portion of land and be a farmer, I did not know that farming could be this beneficial.

**Mrs Maria:** What I know is that in Venda we are rich because of the types of soil that is very fertile. You choose what you want to do because even cattle rearing is very productive, or you can specialise in milk production; the choices are far too many. Some are specialising in rearing goats. My husband is showing interest because sometimes he does talk of resigning and coming home to join me in farming, but the challenge is that he

has another wife and the other woman is not into farming. So, I hear him saying the other wife will say if I resign and come to work with you on the farm she will suffer with the children because she is not into farming. I told my husband that in farming you can make enough money to can support all of us, including her and her children.

**Mr Tshamano:** The way people see things will always be different.

**Mrs Maria:** But if my husband could see what I see, our situation was going to improve very quickly.

**Mr Tshamano:** I was looking at this soil, it is different from the other soils that are clayey and sandy. But this one is very fertile. Here you can produce almost anything successfully.

**Mrs Maria:** You were going to come here and find that there is Nesane two or another new professor of agriculture. Meaning I would be coming to teach others who are producing. I must say that farming has changed my life for the better and I always encourage others who want to start farming to do so.

**Mr Tshamano:** What makes me happy is that things have changed in a way that even women are applying for land for farming purposes and they are getting it. It was difficult in the past even for a man to get land for farming purposes. I am happy about this new development.

**Mrs Maria:** I still remember when I first applied for the land at the traditional authorities. I was told that my husband is not a farmer and I said the land is for me. The chief asked me when I started farming and that is where pictures of farming which I have been taking came in handy. The chief sent a person to the land I was farming just to confirm what I was showing him on the pictures, and the person found that I was busy farming and the land was given to me because of that. Women are disadvantaged because they can do a lot but because they lack resources, it becomes difficult. Some women are abused by their husbands: they make some money but because they are married, the money goes to the husband and indeed families are different but, in most cases, women are stressed due to these challenges. Men often think that if women can have all the resources, they will start disrespecting their husbands or men in general and, as such, they deny women

opportunities to gain access to resources that can improve their lives. They believe that when women are busy working when they come back at home, they will complain of being tired and other duties they must fulfil, giving sexual pleasures to their husband, will be neglected. Now all the women working hard, and I am also glad that even the chiefs are acknowledging that by providing those who are working hard with to land to plough.

**Mr Tshamano:** I believe that everything is possible. One day I will come here and find all this land worked on or unsterilized. I will do everything in my power to adopt this area if possible. All the assistance that I may be able to mobilise I will send it here, so that people like yourself could access some assistance to alleviate some of your challenges. I feel strongly that indeed if you can get assistance you can achieve a lot in your farming activities. In an area like this one, there should be a space reserved for building a town that which will also have a marketplace, so that you would not have to take your produce to the Johannesburg market. A place like this one, with people who are farming, should have a market of its own.

**Mrs Maria:** As a farmer I have the desire to acquire certificates that will allow me to export my products, so that my products can be enjoyed in other countries, while I generate more profit. It is difficult because to get the so-called global certificate, I must have a nice place, clean and functional toilets, where people will be able to wash and maintain cleanness all the time. There must also be a proper fence, and everything must be of a good standard. But because I don't have money, I cannot have that certificate, but one day things will improve.

**Mr Tshamano:** I believe in the saying that if people are working together, they will be successful, as they will be assisting each other to achieve their individual and collective goals. As an individual who comes from the university, I will try to help, so that people like you could be assisted in every possible way. This will also raise awareness about people and the work that you are doing as farmers.

**Mrs Maria:** It will be great if the university can also provide us with knowledge and skills, especially in areas that we are lacking. However, I must say that it is sometimes frustrating to have a knowledge and skills that you cannot put in practice due to lack of resources.

When they teach us how to store chemicals properly, both the storeroom and the chemicals must be available, so that one can practice these things. This is because if when you go back to the farm and find that indeed you have those chemicals they were talking about, but you don't have the store room to can store them properly, it means you will be using chemicals which cannot work properly due to storage challenges and this may in turn affects your production negatively. There is also the fact that we know that we need to store our products after harvesting in the shed, so that they don't get sun burn. But this knowledge cannot be put into practice as we don't have sheds and our products are turned down at the market because they are sunburnt. It is difficult.

**Mrs Tshamano:** What I mean is that there are people who don't know you and what you are doing so it is also important to raise this awareness about women who are farming so that other people might be interested in helping if they know what is going on here. One old man once shared a joke, although to him it was not a joke but a true story. He said that he invited some gentleman from Johannesburg to Venda and they agreed to travel with him to Venda. When he reached Tshakhuma he showed them a banana tree and they were so shocked because all they knew was a banana, but they did not know where it comes from. Again, he said that he showed these gentlemen a cow they were wondering what a cow was as they did not know it. What I am trying to say is that sometimes people may react differently if they were to know about this place.

**Mrs Maria:** It is just like these people who loan money to farmers; they don't even have a clue of what farming as a business is all about. I am saying this because they don't seem to understand that here in farming, there are months when you do not generate any income at all, as opposed to a person who is working at the shop or in other places who get paid monthly. If they knew this business, they were not going to expect farmers to pay back the loan before they even harvested their produce. What is painful is that these loans will be generating interest while you are working your land up until you harvest three months later, yet the interest would be mounting.

**Mr Tshamano:** Some of the things that made White farmers successful in this business was the type of loans which they were given. The apartheid and colonial governments used to give White farmers loans that would include all the equipment they needed for

working their farms, including seeds, fences and tractors. What is interesting is that they were expected to pay back the loan after 20 years. This was done so that when they started paying back the loan, they would have made more than enough profit. Therefore, white farmers are successful in this business.

**Mrs Maria:** As for us black farmers, who are women, we get loans based on the assets that we have, meaning that the more assets you have, the bigger the loan you can qualify for and if you don't have assets, it means that you cannot get a loan. Then, tell me, how are we going to succeed? It is hard because if the loan that you need for this land is R500 000, for instance, you find that they tell you that you only qualify for R52 000.

**Mr Tshamano:** What is painful is that people like yourself are not producing for themselves because if you were producing for yourself and your family, you would have been cultivating a small portion of land.

**Mrs Maria:** *Maanda ngau pfana* is an institution formed by women farmers of this area; it assists us in information sharing and knowledge on how to produce better. What we are discussing is that we should balance our crops because all of us being 60 in number plant butternut at the same time, we are going to float the market and some of our farmers will experience a loss in the market, so we agreed that we will plant different crops so as to adjust to market demand and avoid unnecessary losses. We also conduct some workshops especially for new people who want to enter into the farming business and provide them with the dos and don'ts in farming.

**Mr Tshamano:** My understanding is that institutions like universities should involve themselves in initiatives like these because they have students who are well vested in agricultural knowledge and skills. Students could take a butternut to the laboratory and analyse it, which may lead to new information that can be beneficial to farmers. There are students who are studying to be dieticians who can also provide useful information to farmers like yourself. These students sit with this knowledge and take it to their employers and when they get employment, yet they fail to use this knowledge and skills to develop their communities.

**Mrs Maria:** You see now, on my side I will talk about the crop called Petti Pens as it is the crop that I love and enjoy producing. A person will come and ask me what this crop is, and I will tell the person what it is, hey it is enjoyed or eaten, and what benefits does a person get by eating this crop. This is the information I should share with the consumers and I enjoy doing these things. Many people do not want to eat things they lack information about, especially on what they do to their body when they eat them.

**Mr Tshamano:** The other day I entered Mrs Mulaudzi's farm and I found her harvesting Brinjoro and I did not know what it was and how it is eaten. It looked nice, but I lacked information on what it is and how to enjoy it and what it does to the body after one has consumed it.

**Mrs Maria:** Bronjoro is food; it falls within the baby vegetable category. Now there is another crop that we are planting called Bush Berry and these are things that many people know little about. As a farmer I must be able to tell consumers or people about all my crops and the benefits they will get when they use them, and I believe the university can play a significant role in educating us as farmers about these crops.

**Mr Tshamano:** I agree with you; this is the knowledge that scholars who are in farming education and research can share with farmers. We will try to make this place known to people. The university must be involved in this initiative.

**Mrs Maria:** Farmers must be educated and trained on how to farm better. The knowledge of a farmer should not be limited to manure and seeds; they must be in a position to know everything there is to know about what they produce and again, the university can play a larger role in this regard.

**Mr Tshamano:** I believe that if you were getting enough farming education, you were not going to buy seeds from anyone, but you would make a nursery of your own. White farmers have nurseries for their own farms.

**Mrs Maria:** I don't think making a nursery could be that complicated. If we are to get this education, we were going to form groups and build these nurseries for our farms.



**Mr Tshamano:** When you buy seeds, you will find that they are expensive as the person who is running the business will also be looking to get a profit on his/her business.

**Mrs Maria:** Another thing that is painful in this farming business, especially in this area, is that there are no young people who are farming; it is mostly old people. Young people are not engaging in farming and formal education is not the only way to succeed in life; even farming can make young people rich and I think this is the education that must be channelled to young people. I started farming at a very young age. It would be great if someone who is young and successful through farming can share his experiences with young people.

**Mr Tshamano:** Let me tell you that despite all your challenges, you will succeed in this venture because of your dedication and nothing is impossible. Thank you very much Mrs Maria for your time. If I find that there are things that I still need to be assisted with later, I will come back. Enjoy the rest of your day.

**Interview number 2** Interviewee: **Mrs Mutshekwa**

**Mrs Mutshekwa:** After that letter was approved the government gave us 5 hectares. They call it a lease. We realized that it was a jungle, so we started getting down with chopping the trees in order to make the place ready for farming. We were fortunate because there was a caterpillar that was about to open a line from Tshikondeni to Musina; so, it was requested to assist indeed the man helped. When he arrived, he also started to open a piece. While that process was unfolding, we started ploughing here on that mountain. The following year we extended our fields, and every year we did the same until we reached a place where that person is standing. By then I was not a farmer; I was just a woman whose work was to look after family duties. The owner is my husband. It came to a point a woman had to engage in agricultural farming. I then told my husband that I wished to have my own piece of land because there were rumours that women will be given sponsorships and must enter some competitions; so, for one to participate in those initiatives, one should have a piece of land. So, because my husband had already gone to the tribal offices, he also thought of accompanying me there. We went there with a letter to Chief John. He advised me to take 5 hectares, and then a lease of 5 hectares will be left with me. So, the chief also wrote a letter and officially I was given 5 hectares in 2006.

Even that 5 hectares they had gave me it was a jungle, and then I thought what will I do with it? Honestly, I started sowing tomatoes on 2 hectares. While I was busy with tomatoes on that two hectares, the women competition people were talking about arrived and I decided to enter. So, I got recognized as a female farmer. I didn't know anything about it, I felt uplifted and I even won it. That encouraged me to plough. I got distracted when I wanted to go only to realize my husband was tired of farming. So, he had a son who was willing to carry on his legacy and I decided not to stand in his way I let him carry on. But I had no drips, pipes, so I had to take this one to use it. My victory in the 2006 competition was helpful because the government decided to provide us with drips and I was able to return those drips I had to where I had got them and I really thank God for that; so I carried on with the drips that were provided on my 2 hectares. My husband bought me a main line and the engine that I needed to pump water from the river nearby,

and even now I am still using it. Although I am ploughing, I have some shortage; I don't have money because all those years, when I was ploughing, all the money was going to my husband's account. I depended on him. When I was in need of something, he would go buy it or sometimes give me the money to buy it. That is when I began to stand up, so we came to a point where we as women started to think about forming an organization to initiate our co-operative, that we would be able to invest in, so that when we wanted to do something, we could share the money and buy the necessary equipment, like drips, and pipes. Indeed, the organization was formed; every member was obliged to pay R 220.00 monthly because we don't have any income. The other challenge was that of a tractor because I had to find it if I wanted to sow and I also had to pay for it; for instance, if intended to open a furrow and all those things. I also lacked the money to pay the workers that is when I went to my husband to seek help. He promised that he will bring his workers to come and assist on my farm and I will just have to supervise them as I always did on his farm. He also said that if I needed any help they would come and help as they normally did, or any kind of work such as spraying.

It is then that I started to grow as businesswoman. However, challenges persist. For instance, money is a problem that hinders my progress. I haven't reached a stage where I can own a car; the ones that are here belong to my husband. That is why I got a driver's license in order to use it around for business purposes. I am short of drips on the hill; I only have drips that can accommodate three hectares meaning there are 2 hectares is left, and it also doesn't have a main line. Last year I was faced with by a crop disease and it destroyed all my crops. This year I did sow, and a similar situation transpired; so, I went to borrow the seeds from Tiger Brands, but I haven't finished paying for the seeds. The crop disease made me lack the money to pay the balance that was unpaid, 12 000 Rands and the balance that was due the following year when I was ploughing. I also went to borrow money from NTK, hoping to pay the tractors, and for buying manure, paying workers, crop medicine. They gave me 100 000 Rands, so I was able to buy everything I needed and I'm hoping to get a profit, so that I can repay the debt, even if I fail to settle it this year, I will do so next year. I was hit by a crop disease. Those people came here to photograph the tomatoes and currently I am penniless, and yet I have to pay the WBD; at the Tiger Brands there is 12 000 Rands that is due. I decided to change crops; that is

why now I am focusing on butternut, Chinese veggies got affected by a disease and I didn't get any money. All the money became exhausted because it was spent on the seeds. I even borrowed 10 000 Rands from my husband to pay the workers. I also went to my husband's friend to borrow 5 000 Rands to service a machine. These are all my debts right now and now I don't even know what the Heavenly God has placed before me this year. But I feel thankful because I have serviced the machines, and even those butternuts that were dying will pick up.

**Mr Tshamano:** Ok, it sounds like a very long journey. So, tell me, does that farm the one that is on top of the hill belong to you? Is it yours forever?

**Mrs. Mutshekwa:** The one that is on top of the hill belongs to me, all of it, because we initiated an organization as per agreement with the women called *Maanda nga u pfana*, this name came to a point where it gained popularity, until it reached the superior, the former president of the Republic of South Africa Mr Jacob Zuma. He believed that the women must be sponsored. We have seen that the sponsors are doing their level best because they have constructed houses to store the machines inside. They have also installed pipes; what is left is for us to be given the keys to open the machines and to be taught how to use them.

**Mr Tshamano:** While we are still at it, were your pipes tested?

**Mrs Mutshekwa:** Yes, they were tested and what is left is for us to be given the keys which I know nothing about maybe they are waiting to do so simultaneously.

**Mr Tshamano:** Tell me what you have just said, what problems do you think are responsible for slowing down the progress of female farmers.

**Mrs Mutshekwa:** We as female farmers I think we lack the necessary resources for farming. We don't have tractors and store houses, a place where we can store our products in; we also lack our own transport, for instances, if we want to send our products to Johannesburg it is very difficult. We depend on hired vehicles to transport our goods. That is the current situation faced by female farmers. Another problem is electricity which is expensive. Now as I am speaking, I have just received a statement indicating that I am owing 6 000 Rands of which I don't even have.

**Mr Tshamano:** What is very boring is that the electricity must be there before harvesting, and the price keeps rising; so, yes, it is a problem. Tell me, you have mentioned the issue of leases. Isn't that you own this land for ever or have they lent you the land for a certain period?

**Mrs. Mutshekwa:** The one for lease is the one for my husband, firstly from years back, he had to renew every year and on top of that he had to pay tax, but during the land claims he eventually stopped doing that. I once enquired when and where to renew, and to pay tax. The response was that we will be told when and where depending on the last payment made. I also asked what will happen if the bill comes back being very high and the farm is no longer in the hands of the original owner and he is nowhere to be found. They said If I can pay a little, I can continue ploughing and they will not give it to someone else, and I said I will hear from them because I thought that I can be able to do that. The one for lease they haven't talked about. Because ever since he applied for it in 1991 and also converted the land from a forest to a farm in order to start ploughing, he renews it every year. This one is mine; I own it because if it wasn't mine, the government would not give us anything.

**Mr Tshamano:** I envy you for that because in the past it was very difficult to get land, even if you were a man. It really shows that things are changing, because women are now able to get land; it shows that there is great change. I can sense it when we are talking that the family is behind you because your husband is very supportive, and he is the one who started this whole thing. There were too many occasions where you indicated that your husband was the one who often came to your rescue whenever you needed help. It clearly demonstrates that you have great support.

**Mrs. Mutshekwa:** Then yes, but now support is very hard to find.

**Mr Tshamano:** Why is that the case now?

**Mrs. Mutshekwa:** Because my husband is no longer working and he's been sick for more than six (6) years now.

**Mr Tshamano:** It looks like he's been sick for ages?

**Mrs. Mutshekwa:** It's been long enough, now I have no support from him; I am both the father and mother of the family. It is like I have given birth to a disabled child because my husband is paralyzed, he is crippled in such a way that he can't even walk.

**Mr Tshamano:** Do you encourage your children to engage in farming, and most importantly are you managing to take them to school and supporting them?

**Mrs. Mutshekwa:** It is I have three boys. The third one is the one ploughed this plot as he indicated that he wishes to do farming. I said to him if you wish to do farming you can use your father's farm. That is why he has ploughed so many things and he even went to school but failed matric and did that after we ran out of money. After that he decided to go to Gauteng to seek for a job, but he was unsuccessful. So, his brother decided to return. Those two who are in Gauteng do not want to do farming anymore.

**Mr Tshamano:** That is why you should be encouraging your children because a time will come when you will get exhausted. You will be a recipient of the old age grant. When a person reaches sixty (60), he/she is no longer allowed to work you see?

**Mrs. Mutshekwa:** Now I should no longer be working; I deserve to be a supervisor.

**Mr Tshamano:** Children must be encouraged to see farming as a business, that if an entrepreneur reaches a certain age, someone has to take over the business and tell them that farming is not a difficult job. Now because he doesn't have grade 12, he can go to Vhembe TVET College to learn things related to farming. Do you encourage him? He doesn't have to just go there to learn something else; he must learn things related to farming? Those who resent farming, I tell you, if he can start ploughing, he will be able to afford everything he wishes for. They will envy him. That is why they must be encouraged because this thing is a business, if you can get land you are wealthy.

**Mrs. Mutshekwa:** If you obtain land, you are wealthy. I tell my child that if you want some money there is no way to get it, if you continue playing with mud. The rewards that you will get come later. You cannot get good things because you did not go to school. We tried to push you while your father was still working for a white person, earning 80-Rands ages ago, that is why he started to do farming.

**Mr Tshamano:** It clearly shows that even this young man didn't see their father working, so now this young man needs encouragement from you. You know when they say someone has succeeded, they talk of someone who has ploughed and harvested. Encouraging children; it uplifts the family business, and you must move on with your life and sustain the family with this business, because those who have initiated it but cannot do it anymore. The fact of the matter is that this thing has to be instilled in the child's mind. He/she will be motivated. I really thank your granny; it shows that there is great development. I am leaving but not for good. I will always come here; I think there would be great change; we will encourage each other. I believe that people must be given knowledge, so that it will pave the way for prosperity. You said you didn't go to school but what you are doing is far better than those who have gone to school. I really thank you for giving me this time to talk with you. Our relationship does not end today we will keep in touch.

**Mrs. Mutshekwa:** I thank you, too.

**Interview number 3** Interviewee: **Mrs Hangwani**

**Mr Tshamano:** You started farming in 2000, which is why you started to see development. Tell me when you got this farm, you went as a woman to get a plot from the chief, did they ask where your husband was?

**Mrs Hangwani:** No, it never belonged to my husband, I went to the chief when my husband was in Pretoria and told the chief that I wanted to work, and he understood. The letter that shows that the farm is mine is in the house.

**Mr Tshamano:** I am asking because I know that it was difficult for women to own land even for residential purposes. We know that large pieces of land like 20 hectares were even more difficult for women. It is a good thing that now women can approach the chiefs

for 20 hectares, and it is granted. It shows that things are changing. Are there any challenges that you come across, things like water and other things?

**Mrs Hangwani:** I don't really have challenges with water because I stay next to a dam. But now the water in the dam is very low. Last year we did not receive good rains, so we might have water shortage this year. We cannot farm without water.

**Mr Tshamano:** Are the vans that you use for transporting your produce enough or do you think you need a big truck?

**Mrs Hangwani:** My harvest requires a big truck because I produce 7 hectares of tomatoes. The vans cannot transport everything. Therefore, I hire a truck to transport my harvest. With small vans it takes many trips and it is costly and the vans wear out quickly.

**Mr Tshamano:** What can be done to alleviate the situation? I think even the market is too far away from you.

**Mrs Hangwani:** If there was a market close by or a pack house, I think our produce would sell fast because the pack house would be close, and our produce would be packaged while still fresh. Sometimes you transport your produce and maybe take them to Musina, and you are told that they can only leave the next day, and by the time they get to the market, customers are not happy with your produce.

**Mr Tshamano:** I heard that even the sun causes damage to butternuts.

**Mrs Hangwani:** The sun burns them a lot and they change their colour and become yellow. We cannot sell the yellow ones because they are damaged. That is another challenge we are facing because of the market that is far away.

**Mr Tshamano:** If only you have a shed, so that when your harvest could be stored, instead of putting them on the floor until there is enough to make a load. The produce would remain fresh; you would also harvest before time and your produce would not be burned by the sun, as they would be safe in the shed.

**Mrs Hangwani:** That is another reason our produce command the lowest price. A bag of butternuts which was supposed to sell for R50 is sold for R35 because the quality is



compromised because of lack of a storage plea, and the distance to the market. I went to the market in Johannesburg once and I witnessed that by the time the produce arrives at the market, the quality has deteriorated because of the long journey.

**Mr Tshamano:** I can see that there are challenges here and there.

**Mrs Hangwani:** Some sponsors give little money and you find that the money is not enough, to sustain 1 hectare including ploughing, manure, seeds and pesticide, you need about R100 000.

**Mr Tshamano:** I am happy that people know their trade, the other person I spoke to also mentioned that 1 hectare requires R100 000

**Mrs Hangwani:** If I can maintain a hectare properly, I can harvest between 60 and 70 tons. Because of these challenges it is difficult to even get 30 tons. You find that manure is not enough, and we don't get pesticides on time. When we apply for grants it takes a long time to process them and release the money and the crops do not wait for money. As a result, the crops grow without the pesticides and manure and the harvest is limited. By the time the money is available, the damage has already been done.

**Mr Tshamano:** Are sponsors able to give you large amounts of money, which are enough for 20 hectares which requires R2 000 000, so that you can cultivate it properly.

**Mrs Hangwani:** No, they don't give large amounts of money; their limit is R300 000

**Mr Tshamano:** What makes them to loan you such a small amount of money?

**Mrs Hangwani:** They say that it is their limit.

**Mr Tshamano:** Is that applicable to everyone?

**Mrs Hangwani:** We don't know where it all began but here, they started with R200 000 and this year they increased it to R300 000

**Mr Tshamano:** Who sets the price when you go to the market?

**Mrs Hangwani:** Oh! the price is exorbitant if we were taking our produce to the market ourselves because at the market a 10kg bag of butternuts sell for R50-R60, but those who take our produce to the market are cheating us because they accept R45 instead and when we get the money it is no longer the R45. They will tell you that some were spoiled, and they got less money. That is a setback, last year the government intervened in the matter and it helped because they had to stick to the agreement. They claim that a 10kg commanded R15 and if that is the case, what will be the profit. Sometimes it takes a month to get the money. Takinson are the ones who promote our produce.

**Mr Tshamano:** Those people who are assisting so much should be monitored to check how they relate with people. They are benefiting somehow. It becomes problematic when they gain by cheating farmers/producers. How are the loan repayments? What is the interest rate?

**Mrs Hangwani:** Oh, they are very high because when you pay back R200 000 the total payments is R400 000 and if you are late there are penalties.

**Mr Tshamano:** What is the term for repayment of the loan if you take it?

**Mrs Hangwani:** It is 2 years but those who got it this year we were told that we should pay back in 1 and half years.

**Mr Tshamano:** I mean paying it back, say you were to take a loan now, when do you start paying it back?

**Mrs Hangwani:** Oh, when I start harvesting, they come and check when the harvest will start

**Mr Tshamano:** What if you suffer a loss?

**Mrs Hangwani:** They note it, but they still add interest. We had asked them why they add interest because we did not harvest anything

**Mr Tshamano:** If only they charged interest when you harvest, so that you can pay off the loan.

**Mrs Hangwani:** They charge interest.

Mr Tshamano: Has farming brought any changes in your family?

**Mrs Hangwani:** I can say it is going well because I am able to pay my children's school fees and I am still able to buy food and anything I want; so, we are trying.

**Mr Tshamano:** Since it is a business it should not be from hand to mouth only, like subsistence farming. Every farmer should have their own tools, so that business can run smoothly.

**Mrs Hangwani:** It is important to have a truck, for me to transport all the butternuts I get paid R4 400, that's all my profit. I must take them to be weighed and that is extra cost and some of my profit goes to hiring trucks. At the end of the day, the transport challenge is taking all my profit.

**Mr Tshamano:** What if you sacrifice and buy yourself a truck?

**Mrs Hangwani:** I am planning to get myself a tractor. I am thinking of going to Johannesburg on the farms where I can get a good tractor which can last me for a long time. It is very expensive for me to plough the whole field. In the end all the profit goes to paying for the tractor.

**Mr Tshamano:** I am happy to see the fruits of a woman's hands; it is really pleasing. I suppose even your husband imagines that he should have come home sooner.

**Mrs Hangwani:** It is difficult to work with my husband; it slows down the business. I was teaching other women that they should be independent and refrain from collaborating with their spouses. He is the father of my children, but everyone should conduct their own business. You might think you are working very hard and the trucks are carrying away your produce, only to find that there are loses that you were not aware of. This is a challenge people encounter. Imagine your child has completed school but you don't have university fees. Many women fail to see that, but some are becoming aware.

**Mr Tshamano:** Yes, it can become problematic because we want development. What I have enjoyed about my visit here is that on most farms' women are hands on. Doesn't it

create conflicts in the family when the man sees the women being successful? Doesn't the man feel threatened that he will be tossed aside maybe because he no longer earns more than or as much as his wife?

**Mrs Hangwani:** I always advise women that they should not be too proud to earn more than their husbands. They should always respect their husbands. Having money does not make me a man, I will always be a woman even though I earn more than him; life will always be enjoyable.

**Mr Tshamano:** Nowadays you find that husbands don't want their wives to succeed because they are afraid the wife will want to be the head of the family. You find that success becomes a stumbling block. Apparently, once a woman has money, she becomes haughty.

**Mrs Hangwani:** Maybe some women do, but I try to advise other women on how to live peacefully, even when the wife earns more than her husband.

**Mr Tshamano:** I thought I should investigate because another challenge is that as women become successful endless problems develop. As I was doing my research someone said that another reason why women who are in politics are single is that, they are politicians and they have money, so they don't value men. I just wanted to find out if that is the case here on the farms.

**Mrs Hangwani:** We don't like or encourage that. We have respect for our husbands because we are here because of their love and understanding as well as their encouragement.

**Mr Tshamano:** Thank you, I benefited a lot from our conversation. I am especially grateful for your time and for lending me an ear. This is not goodbye. I will come back and visit because this place has become my home.

**Interview number 4** Interviewee: **Mrs Florah**

**Mr Tshamano:** Good morning

**Mrs Florah:** Good morning to you too

**Mr Tshamano:** I am Humbulani Tshamano, a lecturer from the University of Venda and I am a PhD student at the same university. I came here after I heard that some women are ploughing on the farm. I then decided to come here to see what you are doing. If possible, I will write it down that women are busy ploughing and then I will send it to rightful places so that maybe they will do something about it. I would humbly request you to introduce yourself.

**Mrs Florah:** Thank you. I am Florah. I reside at Nwanedi Travel, yes you came here and found us as workers, the ever-hard-working workers who do not sit down. Today I am sitting here with you, I feels like lagging. I am a hard-working farmer with a bunch of certificates that I have won, to show that indeed I am an experienced farmer. I practise farming on a farm that I own. The plot I got it from the royal family. There are a lot of things that I need; you can see that when I harvest, I place my products under the tree, when you were coming in, I was chasing some cows away. There is no fence here; I wish I had a fence with a safe in order to demonstrate that I am a hardworking female person. There are few of us in here. When it comes to the issue of water it is a big problem when it comes to payment, manure, pesticides and even when we get sponsors from the government. We also experience some shortages. What I am urgently looking for is a fence and a shed for the protection of my produce from cows. I would wish to be assisted in all those. We are women and, we attend all the workshops. We pay tax to the government and the royal council. I thank you Mr Tshamano for giving me the opportunity to introduce myself.

**Mr Tshamano:** I also thank you for clarifying me. So, tell me the history of farming here.

**Mrs Florah:** This thing of farming is natural, I was born and raised in Nzhelele, where we used to carry buckets of manure on the head to those who had farms in exchange of vegetables, on weekends we used to go to work for tomatoes for eating at home. When I

was born, I realized that I had no other call but to work on a farm and also to own a farm because I resented selling someone's products, I wanted to sell what I have produced.

**Mr Tshamano:** Does this farm belong to you?

**Mrs Florah:** It belongs to me and my husband. I am saying this because my husband and I are one through marriage, so I was given an opportunity by my husband to manage it.

**Mr Tshamano:** Tell me how is it going? Does your husband intervene on the farm or does he isolate himself or does he have his own farm?

**Mrs Florah:** My husband is busy with cows; he left this plot in my hands but when I am not there, I ask him to look after the farm and he does exactly as I ask him.

**Mr Tshamano:** No; it clearly shows that this is Mrs Margret hands that have done this work, and, I admire what you are doing, it shows that this farm and you are going somewhere. It really shows that you are working hard indeed. Tell me, you have mentioned too many things that you need on the farm, but you never mentioned electricity. How is it?

**Mrs Florah:** Electricity is very expensive I have never utilized it on these farms. I use a generator because it was estimated that to get electricity it would cost me R100 000.00 because the nearby farm also doesn't have electricity. That is why I don't have it; I am still using the generator.

**Mr Tshamano:** Is the issue of generator working well for you?

**Mrs Florah:** Yes, it is working well.

**Mr Tshamano:** When you compare yourself with those who are using electricity, who saves more between the two of you?

**Mrs Florah:** Someone who is using electricity saves more; however, when I heard about the problems of those who are using electricity, I found it hard to comprehend what exactly is the truth. Those who are using electricity are also weeping about the electricity bill because it sometimes shows 17 000-20 000 Rands and they don't understand because

they cannot see the amount of electricity being used. I think it can be better if people can use pre-paid electricity so that they can be able to see how they used it.

**Mr Tshamano:** Ever since I started visiting the different farms, I have heard that people are complaining about the electricity because per month they pay about 6 000 Rands. I think the pre-paid electricity would be better. Because if it can take three months to harvest the produce, it means it would be possible to use 18 000 Rands or more for electricity, where would the profit be generated from, it means that there will be no profit at all. Tell me I heard that the cool storage and pack-house might be constructed. How far true is that?

**Mrs Florah:** No, pack-house that I am aware of is being constructed.

**Mr Tshamano:** Does it look like, it might help?

**Mrs Florah:** Yes, it would but on the farm, it must come with a shed. As a result, we have to harvest the produce and pack it under the shade so that it can go in numbers. It makes it easy not to carry small harvest to the packhouse, because the transport is very expensive, where it could increase expenditure.

**Mr Tshamano:** The houses, what are they for?

**Mrs Florah:** The houses, we keep the machines that were supplied by the government in them. When started they were constructed for the women, who were using the machines to water their crops, I was also given a good machine and is still there in the house. Those who were using electricity were also helped regarding to electricity on their farm.

**Mr Tshamano:** Actually, the reasons for my visit was to investigate how are you working here. Since I arrived, I have noticed that the women are very busy. The things that I can assist with are those concerning empowering women, especially with skills and knowledge because as higher education institution we assist with education. The University of Venda also has a School of Agriculture which can be helpful in teaching you about agriculture. Tell me; are any of your children showing any interest in farming?

**Mrs Florah:** They do have a desire to do farming, because they often come here to work with my nephews. We always work together in here, doing different things related to farming.

**Mr Tshamano:** It's good to encourage children to do farming, so that when you retire, they will carry your legacy forward. As they are still in school, they will bring new ideas to move the family business forward. We don't want to see this farm being abandoned because there is no one who can take it forward.

**Mrs Florah:** These children are doing a good job because they train us. For instance, we now know that there is expenditure and income. We learnt everything at a workshop. Now I know that if I sow the whole plot, I will get how many tons and how much profit. And I now know that if I harvest so much, I will get so much profit.

**Mr Tshamano:** I am glad to hear that you are a competent farmer. The main objective is to make sure productivity intensifies the business. How is the organization going?

**Mrs Florah:** Do you mean the women's organizations?

**Mr Tshamano:** Yes

**Mrs Florah:** I think it is going well because when other women see that someone is struggling, they go to her to encourage her, give support and help as much as they can to make sure we prosper together as farmers. We are working very well because we comfort each other, help each other in financial management.

**Mr Tshamano:** Tell me, there is this issue of loans that people; how is it going? Doesn't it have high interest rates?

**Mrs Florah:** On the issue of loans there is WDB that a lot of women use, and they are very helpful. I am saying this because they check the months of sowing and the month of harvesting and only expect you to start paying the debts then. The loan has low interests for farmers because they also consider the days of payment and if we haven't finished paying the money at the expected time, they allow us to continue paying during the next production cycle. Is just that we sow different things at the same time. We can also service the loan when it is closed, just to get out of debt. Therefore, we always encourage each



other as female farmers. If you haven't worked well the WDB will come here to photograph the disaster so that they can present it to their seniors. This helps to explain why we are not paying. WDB is working very well because I haven't experienced problems with them.

**Mr Tshamano:** It makes me glad to hear that the issue of loans is progressing very well, if you can be given a second chance with no pressure to continue after you have had a difficult period, it sounds reasonable.

**Mrs Florah:** This very loan is very good because they sometimes visit our farms to monitor the progress on the farm. This is to check how the money is being used. Because they don't give the money directly to us or the bank rather, they allow us to make quotations for the materials we need at stores like NTK. WDB pays the money to NTK and NTK will deliver the goods and WDB only gives us the money to pay the workers

**Mr Tshamano:** I think I have no further questions. If anything else arises, Mrs Florah, this is my home; I will come back. I will always come here, and I would be very happy to see the University helping farmers here. I will tell them that there is a place that is in dire need of help. But I can't say they will do this and that. Thank you, Mrs Florah.

**Interview number 5** Interviewee: **Mrs Sanna**

**Mr Tshamano:** Good morning granny

**Mrs Sanna:** Good morning to you too

**Mr Tshamano:** I am Humbulani Tshamano, a lecturer at the University of Venda and I am also a PhD candidate at the very same institution. After I have heard that people are working on farms in this area, I then decided to come and see for myself. The main purpose of this visit is to get to understand your challenges. I therefore humbly ask you to introduce yourself and share with me everything what you are doing on this farm.

**Mrs Sanna:** I am Sanna, I am a farmer here at Nwanedi I have a plot at Travenna. I am ploughing on a plot of 10 hectares. From this plot I only use a small portion. The rest is virgin land due to the lack of the necessary resources. I do not have resources such as drips, pipes and electricity. I am presently using an engine. I therefore fail to water a large portion of land with the engine. Hence, currently I am only using 5 hectares. With a process of irrigation each worker is given his or her shift to do the watering. I plough tomatoes, maize, butternuts, and Indian and Chinese vegetables.

**Mr Tshamano:** When and where did you start with farming?

**Mrs Sanna:** I am a resident of Matangari village; I started farming in 1982. I used to borrow tools for irrigation from other people. It even reached a stage where I asked for a plot and, I was given 2 hectares of land. The 2 hectares that I was given was not a single piece of land. I got a hectare at Matangari and another at Mbahela. The main problem that I was confronted with at the village of Matangari was scarcity of water. We used to be without on water our farms at the same time, due to the scarcity of water. We were compelled to give each other opportunities to do the watering. Those who lived on the mountainous areas had an advantage with irrigation water. Those of us who live in low areas struggled with water. But because I like farming, I then decided to abandon my farm and went to seek a large piece of land where I will be able to use a borehole water to irrigate my crops. In 2010 I started farming at Nwanedi.

**Mr Tshamano:** Does the farm that you are currently using belong to you?

**Mrs Sanna:** This one initially belonged to me, I hired 4 hectares from someone else. And then I went to the royal house and asked for land and I was given 10 hectares.

**Mr Tshamano:** Wasn't it difficult for you as an old female person to get the land at the royal house. Didn't the chief make it difficult for you?

**Mrs Sanna:** No, the chiefs around here are not that difficult and even the land is not that expensive, like at Tshivhase. In 2010 I went to the royal house to the chief with 300 Rands to get a piece of 10 hectares and again I paid 700 Rands to another piece of land. It shows that I got it for 1000 Rands. Moreover, these days land is very hard to find because there are too many people engaging in farming, but if you are looking for a plot you can get it.

**Mr Tshamano:** Tell me, do you get support from home, your husband? Is he supportive and are you getting along?

**Mrs Sanna:** I am an independent parent; the support comes from children who assist me here on the farms sometimes. Even now there is someone that I have sent. He might show up any time. My children often come here, especially when the schools are closed, to assist with irrigation, cleaning, fertilising the soil and harvesting.

**Mr Tshamano:** Among your children do you see any of them who can take over on your farm when you retire, or will the land be given to someone else?

**Mrs Sanna:** There are two who I believe have a desire to do farming.

**Mr Tshamano:** Yes, children must be encouraged because these days land is big business. Currently, isn't it the chief sometimes raises the tax or may be problematic?

**Mrs Sanna:** No, we are operating on the Chief's soil who doesn't give us any problem. It is just that one must go and humble oneself before the chief to be given land and PTY and after that you become the owner. The tax on the farm is 100 Rand per annum. Mine is 10 hectares but I pay 100 Rands per annum also. There is no way that the chief will say if you don't humble yourself before me, I will take away the land; there is no such. Our chief is very supportive, and he wishes to see this village prospering and we are under the chieftaincy of Chief Manenzhe.

**Mr Tshamano:** Tell me, what are the difficulties that you experience within your farm. I mean things that are hindering the progress on your farm.

**Mrs Sanna:** Yes, if you have the desire to be a farmer but don't have capital, it is a big problem. Now, we have maize and butternuts but watering them is a serious challenge and it really hinders growth because we don't have the necessary equipment because of financial problems. And now we are using an engine to do the watering and it doesn't have power and we do not have electricity and, we do not have the money to apply for electricity. In other places, we use the furrow irrigation method and in others we use the drip method, which is not strong enough to cover a large area. If I let 25 litres of diesel in it the engine runs from 6 to 6 and it covers a large area. But the 25 litres when used in the furrow irrigation method covers 1 hectare per day. Irrigation is very expensive because we don't have all necessary equipment because of poverty. As farmers, we like to sow tomatoes, but the seeds are very expensive; 1-hectare costs 15000 Rands, and I am talking about seeds only, so it is a big challenge.

You find that you don't have enough drips and filters, so being without filters makes it difficult for drips to release water. So, we have many challenges, so it slows our progress as farmers. I've been ploughing since in 2010 I would have found another place, but I am still on the place where I started.

**Mrs Tshamano:** On the issue of loans, did you ever try to seek it? How is it going? Or are people not getting it?

**Mrs Sanna:** Yes, people do get it. I did apply for a loan at WDB Investment Holdings and got it. I was working on that 4 hectares that I hired. I used the money from the loan to buy a second-hand engine and pipes that stretch from the river to the farm. I also bought drips that can cover 3 hectares and expensive ones that can last for a long period, while for the other 2 hectares I use the cheap ones, because they're cheaper. Another thing, I was obliged to pay the workers, buy diesel, manure, pipes, drips and an engine. The loan was very helpful. I started sowing, but I failed to buy enough seeds. I was given some seeds by Tiger Brands. I started sowing and supplied Tiger Brands, but my produce started to go as expected. When I harvest Tiger Brands charged me the money for seeds, as per our agreement. During harvesting, I needed a lot of workers and even the money from

loan was finished, so I had to use money from my own pocket. If I have used my own seeds and not those from Tiger Brands, I would have done well in terms of profit but the loan from WDB was very helpful and it took me to a better and higher level.

**Mr Tshamano:** How did you do regarding tractors?

**Mrs Sanna:** The government sometimes dispatches tractors to plough for us. It is just that they do it at their own time, which for us is disappointing. Although I have an old tractor that I also use, right now it is not working because it is old. Since last year I assisted by government tractors. So, sometimes they give us those tractors to plough for us.

**Mr Tshamano:** If you don't have a tractor in commercial farming, production will be slow.

**Mrs Sanna:** It affects the running of the business if you don't have tractor for instance, if you have planned to sow tomatoes on 15 hectares land and the government has already planned their own ploughing date, it becomes a problem.

**Mr Tshamano:** Wasn't the market affected by the late arrival of government tractors?

**Mrs Sanna:** My production on the farm were affected because some of the things were not sowed on their time because the government have sent tractors to plough very late.

**Mr Tshamano:** What do you think if you can get it can be helpful for you?

**Mrs Sanna:** The infrastructure that will allow unlimited flow of water will help a lot as water is one of the biggest challenges for me. Again, drips are a serious challenge and if I can get enough for my 10 hectares, I think I will be able to plough more and rip more profit.

**Mr Tshamano:** If you might have drips that can accommodate 5 hectares it may be enough because you have 10 hectares, because you are not used to sow the whole plot simultaneously, you sow the other half of plot and come the following year, you used the other part it makes the soil not to get tired too early.

**Mrs Sanna:** Because now the money that I borrowed from the WDB is finished that it is why I was unable to buy the pipes that can supply within my hectare. Because the journey from the river is very long, that is why I bought those drips that can last for a year (mapumpus)

**Mr Tshamano:** The problem that I foresee, is the drought because nowadays rains are very scarce, and it will make those rivers water levels to decrease and this problem of water is for the government. I really thank you for this conversation. There were things I managed to grab if ever things go well during this research I may able to meet people who may offer help, I think. Maybe my visit here will usher in a new way of planning. What pleases me is that the people that I am meeting are really sharing the same stories. There are many problems confronting farmers.

**Mrs Sanna:** Tomatoes are dominant crops here and now if you are a new farmer, buying seeds that can cover 5 hectares is very difficult. This is because one-hectare costs 15000 Rand, and that excludes manure and the insecticides, payment of workers and the water to irrigate the plants. The budget for the whole thing, including everything needed on the farm is about 100 000 Rands. And, if we include workers and other things like pesticides, seeds for 5 hectares for a three-month period, it will cost about 500 000-half of a million Rands.

**Mr Tshamano:** Tell me, if someone arrived with three to five tractors to hire, do you think people will hire it?

**Mrs Sanna:** There were some tractors that were offered to plough for us, free of charge and there were some that we were promised, I hear one hectare will cost 400 Rands. But I am doubtful about that because it has not worked on my farm. If you plough a dazzler it is 900 Rands, the rigger is also 900 Rands and is about 3000 Rands for one hectare. You see it is unaffordable. The land is available is just that we don't have the necessary equipment. We would prosper if we were in that position, if we could get any help we would go far because you can see that people are very serious about farming, working under conditions of sunlight is a good example to indicate the degree of seriousness.

**Mr Tshamano:** I sincerely thank you granny. If there is anything that I would like to know related to farming, I will give myself time to come, this is my home.

**Mrs Sanna:** Thank you too for coming.

**Interview number 6** Interviewee: **Mrs Joyce**

**Mr Tshamano:** Good afternoon; you are speaking to Humbulani Tshamano who is a lecturer at the University of Venda. I am also a PhD candidate at the same university. I came here because I heard there are women who own farms in this area, who are working on their farms and you are one of them. I would like to find out who you are and when the passion for farming started. What have been your experiences and what do you think can be done to address challenges you are facing, if there are any?

**Mrs Joyce:** My name is Joyce. I was born in 1972. I grew-up here in Folovhodwe, I used to see people farming when I was growing up and this sharpened my passion and interest in farming, even though my parents were not farmers. I started farming in 2010. I got a farm from someone and we agreed that I would use the farm and pay R18 000 per year. I saved about R317 000 from my previous businesses, but I only used about 9 hectares. During harvesting the rains came and washed away everything. This meant that I didn't generate any income but suffered a loss. In the years 2013/14 I applied for a loan for R18 000 and I ploughed one hectare, but it was affected by plant diseases and I was unable to repay the loan. As a result, I was blacklisted.

Despite these challenges I didn't give up. I have cultivated 2 hectares now. I have a 15 hectares plot. I was a part of a women in development program and they will install pipes for me, but I am struggling with debushing these other hectares. If I continue farming, I will be able to pay back the loan that I took from Burnets. If there is help available, it would be appreciated. I believe I am not the first one to be blacklisted; there are many people who have been blacklisted with larger loans.

**Mr Tshamano:** What are you cultivating currently on your farm?

**Mrs Joyce:** Currently am I cultivating tomatoes and okra. I also have green vegetables, tomatoes, too. I am now harvesting *marungudane* (wild berries) but because it brings little profit, I must carry on farming in order to repay my loan. I currently have two employees working for me and they need to be paid, so that they can carry on working.

**Mr Tshamano:** What other challenges do you face that make your harvest how? What are the other problems, besides what you have already mentioned?

**Mrs Joyce:** Too much sun, like today, can damage crops. It is not good for tomatoes. Sometimes workers are not faithful, especially when the owner is not around. There are instances where I am away attending training or looking for funding. In most cases workers do not do what you have instructed them to do on time. My presence on the farm is important but I can't be available all the time. You find that the pesticides are not sometimes administered correctly. Sometimes the workers put too much on some plants and too little on some and the plants get some diseases, while some get sunburn. It is also problematic when I don't have all the equipment to use in the farm, if I had I would be always in the farm. A farmer's duty is to wake-up and go to the farm with enough money and equipment to run the farm. People who visit my farm should always find me here. We attend week-long workshops, which leave the employees on the farm doing as they please and when you come back with the knowledge and skills that you acquired in the workshop, you find the crops dead on the farm. I am hardly on the farm because employees must be paid. I also need to buy manure, diesel for the engine so that it can pump water for irrigation. I also need to improvise to get the money to do all these things.

**Mr Tshamano:** It is obvious that there are some challenges, but things will get better with time.

**Mrs Joyce:** I have another farm besides these fifteen hectares which I was given by Mr Manenzhe. Mr Manenzhe sold me a farm cheaply because one-hectare costs R10.00. When you start off you pay R700.00, even a woman can afford that. Mr Manenzhe is very kind; he gave us documents from the government and everything is in order, the farm becomes you for real.



**Interview number 7** Interviewee: **Mrs Dorcus**

**Mr Tshamano:** Good morning madam, I am a lecturer at the University of Venda. I am also a PhD candidate at the same university. I came here because I heard that there are some women who have farms here, who are working on their farms and I came to see how things are going? Can you please tell me who you are?

**Mrs Dorcus:** I am Dorcus.

**Mr Tshamano:** I am pleased to meet you, where do you come from?

**Mrs Dorcus:** I was born right here near the Nwanedi river in Folovhodwe. When I got married, I moved to Khomele, from there I stayed at Biaba Nzhelele because I wanted to be near schools for my children. I came here to work.

**Mr Tshamano:** Because you know the benefits you had left there, what is your occupation?

**Mrs Dorcus:** I am a farmer

**Mr Tshamano:** Does this farm belong to you?

**Mrs Dorcus:** The farm is mine.

**Mr Tshamano:** How did you acquire the farm?

**Mrs Dorcus:** When I was younger, I was farming at Khomela on a 1-hectare plot. Upon realising that the farm I was cultivating was small, I moved back to Folovhodwe. My mother gave me her small piece of land which is near the river. When I was farming in 1999 my uncle gave me his whole farm. In 2000 there were heavy floods and they washed away everything. I then did not have a place to cultivate, so I asked for a hectare from one man and he gave it to me. I planted maize; that's how I came here. As I was working, I was told that the farms must be applied for afresh. My husband is a sheriff and it was said that those attached to the sheriff and their spouses do not qualify for those farms. The person who lent me the farm said I could cultivate it because the farm didn't belong to him; it belonged to Lukas Mukwevho. It turned out that Lukas Mukwevho is my uncle

and I didn't know at the time. When he came one day, he said "you are my relative; take this farm, I already have another one". The person I had hired the farm from said he had applied for another farm. Lukas then said, "uncle, you and your wife (me and my husband) can take this farm. I can see your wife loves farming". Lukas wrote a letter to Makwarela Land Affairs offices and the farm was then registered in my husband's name. I now have a farm. My husband was doing it for me that is how I got this farm.

**Mr Tshamano:** Since 1998 how are things here on the farm?

**Mrs Dorcus:** Everything is going well. It's just that if you start farming and you are starting from scratch it is difficult to make a profit. Well, I started from scratch, so I had to work hard just to survive. But if you start farming and you have a well thought out plan then you can make a lot of money.

**Mr Tshamano:** How many hectares is this farm?

**Mrs Dorcus:** It is 10

**Mr Tshamano:** How do you cultivate it? Do you cultivate all of it at once or do you cultivate one half and leave the other?

**Mrs Dorcus:** I like to cultivate all of it but sometimes it is not possible. I sometimes cultivate five (5) hectares, sometimes six (6) hectares. But last year I managed to cultivate the whole ten (10) hectares. This year I cultivated seven (7) hectares.

**Mr Tshamano:** I heard some farmers encouraging others that one should not cultivate the whole farm at once. They advise that one should only cultivate half of it, while the other half rests, so that the soil rests and produces better harvest next time.

**Mrs Dorcus:** It is true; they are right.

**Mr Tshamano:** Tell me, do you get support from your family? Does your husband and children support you?

**Mrs Dorcus:** When I am working it is just me. My husband supports me in times of need. Sometimes I ask him to buy me some manure when I don't have the money. The children

also support me sometimes on the farm during school vacation. I remember when my son who is a sheriff in town realised that I didn't have a car anymore, he sent me a bakkie to carry my goods.

**Mr Tshamano:** I saw a truck pulling out from the farm. Where is the truck from?

**Mrs Dorcus:** The truck is from my farm, but it is not mine. I hired it to transport the butternuts to the tomato scale where they will be weighed and graded.

**Mr Tshamano:** It is good to see that there is progress. What would make your life and farming better? What do you think is hampering your progress?

**Mrs Dorcus:** The main problem is that I don't have drips. I am currently using drips that are very old; some are 6 years and some seven (7) years old. It is problematic because someone needs to stand there and knock them all the time, as sometimes the water does not come out. This means one cannot work. Even if I were to get someone to give me some manure (compost) and pesticides, the compost would not be absorbed in the soil because the drips are not getting enough water to the soil.

**Mr Tshamano:** Is it not too expensive to fill the truck to capacity?

**Mrs Dorcus:** It is quite expensive

**Mr Tshamano:** Even if you had a truck you would have to put diesel. Do you have a plan or are you just going to let the farm become bushy after you retire?

**Mrs Dorcus:** Since I have a passion for farming, I may tell myself that I will do this till I die. But I encourage my children to join farming. Maybe one of them will take an interest in farming, so that when I am gone someone can continue farming. One can make a good living from farming.

**Mr Tshamano:** Land is wealth. So, these days it is possible for a woman to apply for land and get it.

**Mrs Dorcus:** The chief here is giving land. All these farms you see belong to women. They all went to the chief to ask for farms and he gave them. The chief knows that if he gives the land for farming to someone, that person will work hard and not disappoint him.

**Mr Tshamano:** I am saying this because in the past it was difficult for a woman to get land without a man's consent. We are grateful to see that things are changing for the better. What do you think can be done to help you?

**Mrs Dorcus:** I think the drips are problematic, yet they are very important. My son gave me a car, but the drips are still giving me problems.

**Mr Tshamano:** Someone told me that you can apply for a loan. How does it work? Can you secure a loan and buy the drips that are problematic in your farming activities?

**Mrs Dorcus:** Loans are indeed available. They first check whether you are credit worthy. My name was blacklisted by the transport business way back. This means that I cannot get a loan because my credit record is not good. Loans are secured only by people who have clean traceable credit records.

**Mr Tshamano:** I am happy to see that you are working hard, and you are determined to succeed in this business.

**Mrs Dorcus:** I am passionate about farming.

**Mr Tshamano:** It is something you started while you were young. A child's dream should be nurtured because it sticks as they grow up. What is the water situation here?

**Mrs Dorcus:** We have enough water. I draw water from the river using electricity and the river is close to the farm.

**Mr Tshamano:** My interest was to find out how you are farming; your working conditions. Does the land belong to you, so that one can have a good idea of the situation? Since I come from the University maybe some people will understand and try to investigate, and maybe they may help. My wish is to adopt this place for community engagement purposes. Thank you so much for sharing your views with me.

**Interview number 8** Interviewee: **Mrs Nancy**

**Mr Tshamano:** Good afternoon granny.

**Mrs Nancy:** Good afternoon to you too.

**Mr Tshamano:** My name is Humbulani Tshamano, I come from the University of Venda, I am a lecturer and pursuing my doctoral studies there. Please introduce yourself, I would like to know who I am talking to.

**Mrs. Nancy:** I am Nancy. I live in Musina Municipality. My farm size is 15 hectares. I started farming in 2008. The main challenges we face on the farms are the different plant diseases. This affects our tomato harvests; As a result, this year we had fewer tomatoes. We use Tiger Brands and we were unable to meet the target; we had a shortage because of these diseases. We ended up planting butternuts, which was helpful because the harvest was good.

Another challenge is that a customer can call and request so many bags of butternuts but not come to collect them. They end up getting spoiled and become spoiled. We also experience a challenge regarding power supply; electricity is very expensive for us. You find that you did not use a lot of electricity but when you receive the statement it is too high. Sometimes the statement is low, and you end up not knowing what is going on.

We did not get help initially. But the help came later, we are using old drips and sometimes we spend all the income on employees because sometimes we need many people to assist us. We also need money because the equipment that we are using is very old and electricity is very expensive.

**Mr Tshamano:** Which electricity is it? Is it the pre-paid or the estimated kind?

**Mrs Nancy:** It is the estimated kind. I remember last month people inquired from Eskom and they said something, but I forgot what they said regarding that. Sometimes they take meter readings but sometimes they just use estimates. This is unfair especially if their estimations are too high, while you did not use much electricity. But the more serious problem is equipment, which is old, we do not have drips.

**Mr Tshamano:** When you spoke to people from Eskom, did they indicate if the pre-paid option is possible?

**Mrs Nancy:** People tried the prepaid electricity. I think prepaid is not good for now because we are using old drips, the prepaid option works well with the new drips. For example, if I need to irrigate for two hours per block the crops will get water at the same time and this is not possible with old drips.

**Mr Tshamano:** I just thought prepaid might come in handy because if you have not used any electricity, then you won't have to pay. I am saying this because you indicated that your current challenge is that even when you have not used any, the estimated bill for electricity still comes. Estimations work like that because they look at your previous month's statement and estimate the current month. This disadvantages you because you pay for the electricity that you did not use. So, with the prepaid option when you did not use electricity you do not pay. It is pay as you use.

You also indicated that you have a problem with transport. You said you do not have reliable transport to take your produce to the market. This affects productivity because now the produce is burning in the sun because you do not have a shed to protect them from the sun. You also indicated that you have a problem with insects. How are you dealing with these challenges?

**Mrs Nancy:** We use pesticides but if it rains there are no insects. Transport problems arise when someone says they are coming to collect, and they do not come as promised because the produce will be ready and packaged for collection. This results in the butternuts getting sunburnt as we do not have a shed to store them. If no one says they will come, we take the produce to the Johannesburg market ourselves.

**Mr Tshamano:** Where did you get your passion for farming?

**Mrs Nancy:** I got married here in Venda, but I am from Botswana. My husband was a farmer. I also come from the royal family and they do a lot of farming there.

**Mr Tshamano:** It means that your husband supports you?

**Mrs Nancy:** Yes, my husband is very supportive. My child is also very helpful. He is the one doing much of the farming. Sometimes he de-bushes and ploughs the fields and buys diesel with his money and uses a tractor to plough my farm.

**Mr Tshamano:** This means that this farm has a bright future. But is 15 hectares enough?

**Mrs Nancy:** No, it is not.

**Mr Tshamano:** Do you only farm butternuts?

**Mrs Nancy:** I am planting butternuts and watermelons

**Mr Tshamano:** Are they both selling well?

**Mrs Nancy:** Yes.

**Mr Tshamano:** What do you farm the most here?

**Mrs Nancy:** Tomatoes.

**Mr Tshamano:** Do you do crop rotation?

**Mrs Nancy:** Yes

**Mr Tshamano:** What would you like to be helped with if someone were to help?

**Mrs Nancy:** Drips

**Mr Tshamano:** Is there anything along the lines of empowerment, like planting methods, balancing the books, so that you can calculate your profit?

**Mrs Nancy:** We have that kind of assistance although we are getting old. There are people from Department of Agriculture and others who are offering that support. They also monitor if we are doing it correctly. They correct us if we are wrong. We are also sent for different kinds of training on bookkeeping and budgeting.

**Mr Tshamano:** That is what I wanted to hear. Since I am attached to the University, maybe there is something we can do to help. I cannot promise you money because we usually offer help in the form of knowledge. I can only assure you that this is not my first

and last visit here. I will also go to Gauteng Province where there are organisations which work with women in rural areas. I would like to hear the kind of people they work with and also to see if they could work with you, too. Thank you so much for your time.



**Interview number 9** Interviewee: **Mrs Gladys**

**Mr Tshamano:** You are speaking to Humbulani Tshamano, I am a lecturer at the University of Venda, and I am also a PhD student there. May you please introduce yourself.

**Mrs Gladys:** I am Gladys.

**Mr Tshamano:** Mrs Livhuwani, I heard you are farming; what do you farm?

**Mrs Gladys:** I am farming tomatoes, butternuts, peppers and cabbages.

**Mr Tshamano:** What is the size of your farm?

**Mrs Gladys:** It is 42 hectares.

**Mr Tshamano:** Wow. I think this is the biggest farm I have come across since I started doing these interviews. How did you obtain it?

**Mrs Gladys:** I won a farming competition in 2006. When I came back other farmers taught me how to write a letter to ask for land from the chief, who gave me 16 hectares and other hectare- an inheritance from my husband: together they make up 42 hectares.

**Mr Tshamano:** Are all these hectares in the same place?

**Mrs Gladys:** Yes, twenty-four hectares on this side and 18 hectares on the other side of the fence and one can use one entrance for both.

**Mr Tshamano:** It is the first time I come across a woman who owns that much land. That is why I was surprised because forty-two (42) hectares is big. Are you able to cultivate all of it?

**Mrs Gladys:** I am because Tiger Brands sponsors me with nineteen (19) hectares of seeds, I get the seeds for seventeen (17) hectares and on the rest, I cultivate butternuts and maize.

**Mr Tshamano:** You are clearly busy. Tell me, a long time ago it was very difficult for a woman to get land; it was even difficult for a woman to acquire residential land. You would

need to bring your husband to the chief; it was so difficult that if you were not married you would remain a child in your father's house. What has changed if you can now own so much land?

**Mrs Gladys:** I did gardening at school. I went to a rural and traditional school, where we used sticks to count. I also learned needlework. I was fond of planting vegetables like cabbages, spinach and Chinese cabbages. My mother had a very big farm, I was happy when she debused the place right before my eyes. It made me realise that women can also do these things because my father was in Gauteng looking for work. I remember my mother asking me why I seemed to be fond of planting things, and I told her I wanted to do farming as a career. It is a passion I have had for a while. I realised that it was possible. I was lucky to marry a businessman. I learned a lot from when as he was working. In 2005 I asked another man for a piece of land, not my husband. The man gave me 5 hectares and it flourished. In 2006 I did the same and it flourished again. The man then said to me that I should hold on to the land as I was doing a good job. Some farmers came to ask me to enter the competition because they always saw me working on the farm and they believed that I have perseverance. Although I was sceptical about it, I entered the competition. I thought I would fail but I won. I competed from the municipality level right to the national level and I always won 1<sup>st</sup> price, so you can see that my mother's encouragement played a big role.

**Mr Tshamano:** I always urge farmers that this not a job but a business, there should be continuity. It means you should encourage your children that this is a business, so that when you retire, they can continue because they will know it is their livelihood. It is good when children learn from their parents. You children should not lag.

**Mrs Gladys:** I am happy because my son is also into farming. He started driving a tractor when he was 13 years old. He does everything on the farm, so there is no need to hire extra hands. I see a passion for farming in him and when I retire, he will take over. I am pleased that he works on the farm full-time and he knocks off like everyone else. He also won 1<sup>st</sup> prizes in two competitions. This shows that he is talented.

**Mr Tshamano:** I believe you have come across some challenges. What do you see as a stumbling block that hinders you from achieving your goals?

**Mrs Gladys:** Electricity is the biggest challenge. If there is any help we can get, it should be related to electricity.

**Mr Tshamano:** Which electricity do you use?

**Mrs Gladys:** It is the three-phase transformer electricity.

**Mr Tshamano:** Is it the estimated one?

**Mrs Gladys:** Yes.

**Mr Tshamano:** How would the pre-paid electricity work?

**Mrs Gladys:** At the meeting we were told that pre-paid electricity would not be able to provide the water we need; we need the three-phase transformer on farms because it is more powerful.

**Mr Tshamano:** Can't the pre-paid do the job?

**Mrs Gladys:** I heard it can't; they said they would arrange it for us, but I can't remember exactly what they said in that meeting regarding the issue. I just heard that people should get machines that do not consume a lot of electricity and we don't know those machines.

**Mr Tshamano:** I keep asking about pre-paid because many farmers are worried that even when they did not use the electricity, they still get huge bills because the electricity is estimated according to your usage patterns. As a result, you end up paying for electricity you did not use.

**Mrs Gladys:** The thing is that most of us are illiterate. Whether I use the electricity or not there is a service fee of R3000. If I use it the bill can't be less than R15000. That is, we are illiterate. We still use those 250kv transformers which were used by the Boers, even though the machine we use require 45kv transformers. This means that the transformer that we use is too big and expensive to maintain and Eskom does not educate us on electricity usage. That is why our electricity bills are always high.

**Mr Tshamano:** Apart from electricity are there any other challenges?

**Mrs Gladys:** The other challenge is the market; the market is very difficult for us. We just sell to any person passing by the road. I would like the government or the university to connect us with some companies, so that we know who to contact after harvesting. We produce tomatoes but if we don't have foreigners who always buy from us, it does not work well for us. Sometimes we take them to Tiger Brands, but they don't always take them

**Mr Tshamano:** I hear you. Is there anything else?

**Mrs Gladys:** Even the drips; if I can be assisted with drips, I would be grateful, and I would be able to do better in farming.

**Mr Tshamano:** I am asking these questions because I realised that you are a hard worker. I can see that- coupled with hard work; if you were getting proper guidance and support the profit would do even better on your farms. I can't promise you any money, as the university doesn't offer any money. As a university, we offer sound advice because our speciality is knowledge. I am sure that I can arrange for suitably qualified people to come and offer some advice. There are organisations who assist women in rural areas. I can only promise to visit them. Most of them are based in Gauteng. I want to visit each one of them and ask them what their terms of operation are because they claim to work with women farmers and small businesses in rural areas. I can tell them that I have a group of women who are farming; that is why I am taking some photos. Is there anything you can assist them with?

Most people are complaining about the drips maybe some companies could raise funds to buy those drips. I will contact many organisations, so that if they can help, I can bring them here and see how they can assist. I can assure you that this is not the last time I am coming here; I will frequently visit this place to see how things are going. Thank you so much for speaking to me.

**Mrs Gladys:** Thank you

**Interview number 10** Interviewee: **Mrs Sylvia**

**Mr Tshamano:** Are we still on the same page?

**Mrs Sylvia:** Yes, we are, I was saying women are still being oppressed. It often starts off very well but halfway, he starts shunning his responsibilities. But when the money starts coming in, he turns on me; for example, we have a car and he says I should not touch it because it doesn't suit me. When times are hard, he says don't touch my car or anything that belongs to me. Those are the challenges women still face.

**Mr Tshamano:** Imagine if you have a farm and you work hard every day in the heat, but after you sell your produce at the market, when you get the money it goes to someone else's bank account, not yours and you are denied the money you have worked so hard for.

**Mrs Sylvia:** It starts off by being told the money must go to the husband's bank account if you are working together. From there you won't even know what happened to it. You can't even ask because if you do, you are asked whose property is it you are asking about. But we worked together; if it is a load to be taken, we are two people. It's a pity and it hurts; that is why women give up. It is because they are being abused. I worked with my husband for a long time; we had many tractors but when he retired, he started some tricks. He does not support his children to this very day; I must do everything. I struggle just to put food on the table at home, and so that the children can get all the necessary supplies for school. When I tell my husband about money, he asks whose money am I talking about. Despite us working together, today it has a single owner. It is a difficult situation; that is why some women commit suicide. I was even taken to some lawyers and told to vacate the farm. Fortunately, the lawyer was a woman. I asked her how she would feel if she and her husband bought a car, house or a farm and started together and suddenly there are boundaries on those things, and you have children you carried for 9 months. Then the lawyer, who was a white lady, just bowed her head. The lawyer said to my husband he was not honest with her and didn't tell her I'm his wife. My husband then said she should not be on the farm; because he wanted to use it for cattle and my eldest daughter is also farming there. The lawyer asked if he was taking the farm

from his daughter too and he said no. The lawyer then said if he was taking the farm from me, he should also take it from his daughter because he has children with me. I said the case should go to court, but the lawyer refused, and she settled it with my husband.

**Mr Tshamano:** I am asking because I know that often when a woman is working on a farm that belongs to her husband, he lays claim on the money she is making, and she is left with nothing to show for her hard work. All the women who enter competitions when working with their husbands do not see the prize money. Are the women fronting?

**Mrs Sylvia:** Women are fronting because they are not wise. The women who enter for competitions independently are well off. I have also been hurt badly. Once bitten, twice shy, I then asked the chief for my own farm. When my husband realised that I have my own farm, he said he wants to give me a piece of land, but he really hurt me.

**Mr Tshamano:** Is he giving you a piece of land from your farm or the old one?

**Mrs Sylvia:** From the old one.

**Mr Tshamano:** Is that because he wants to share the money on the new one, as well?

**Mrs Sylvia:** I think so. I had 5 cars, but I sold 4 and remained with 1 and the tractors. I sold them too because my husband is greedy and hides his property and I have no claim to it.

**Mr Tshamano:** I have heard that some women are fronting. Someone said to me that when the men realised that the government was empowering women and youth, they pulled back and fronted women, but it is the men benefiting from this not the women. If you are my father, you front me as youth, so that I go and get land but when I come back, I have to report to my father what I was given, and my father can then decide on it as he deems fit. This is the case even with women. They are allocated land, but they don't reap the benefits, their husbands do, from what I'm told.

**Mrs Sylvia:** I am happy that I am not the first person to point out the challenges that women are facing, fronting and benefiting nothing from it. The truth will always remain.

**Mr Tshamano:** It is important for people be honest when they are asked if the farm is theirs and who it is registered under. I am trying to visit different organisations which work with women in rural areas. The idea is that if there is any help, they can offer it in this area. It is also not good if men are benefiting while women are fronting. It would seem like I am also dishonest.

**Mrs Sylvia:** I have escaped slavery; I have 42 hectares of my own now.

**Mr Tshamano:** That is reasonable, even when one can strongly motivate why you should be assisted because you are working very hard and you are not fronting. We fear that you might bring your husband's bank account, so that if we have money that we can assist you with and it will be deposited into his account and we will find that at the end your status and the farm does not change for the better because the money went to someone else. That's what we fear. We are fighting for women emancipation; you should not be denied land on the basis of being a woman. This information is helpful. God willing things will change for the better. Thank you, for your time.

**Interview number 11** Interviewee: **Mrs Mavis**

**Mr Tshamano:** Good morning madam.

**Mrs Mavis:** Good morning.

**Mr Tshamano:** I came here because I heard that you are a great farmer. I decided to come to hear about it from the horse's mouth. What exactly are you doing and how are things going here?

**Mrs Mavis:** I am Mavis. I started farming in 1994 behind my house. I used to buy used clothes in Johannesburg and sell at pension pay points. But I stopped and my husband gave me five (5) hectares for farming purposes. In 2000 I started farming on 2-3 hectares using an engine for irrigation. In 2009 I was able to plough seven (7) hectares. I then established contacts with Tiger Brands, and we had an arrangement. We are working the land, but it is difficult to get the equipment. It is not easy to progress when you are using old equipment because you spend a lot of time just on watering 1 hectare because you must go around unclogging the drip, so that it waters well. My challenge is that I don't have a car to transport my produce to the market. If I had a truck and a tractor, I would only need to buy diesel but now I must hire everything, and it is very expensive. Although the government helped us with some drips and pipes and built storerooms to put the machines in, they did not do that for the whole farm.

**Mr Tshamano:** Where do you come from?

**Mrs. Mavis:** I come from Muswodi Dipeni. We fall under the Musina Municipality in terms of farming.

**Mr Tshamano:** How did you get your farm?

**Mrs Mavis:** I went to the chief and asked for land and he gave me 12 hectares. This was after I left my husband's farm.

**Mr Tshamano:** Who is the chief?



**Mrs Mavis:** It is chief John of Folovhodwe.

**Mr Tshamano:** I heard some farmers saying they got the land from Mr Manenzhe, so if I didn't ask, I wouldn't know whether you got it from Mr Manenzhe or Mr John because we don't know the borders. Was it difficult to get land from the chief, especially for you as a woman?

**Mrs Mavis:** This farm was given to my husband; he is the one who gave me 12 hectares. He gave it all to me for good because he is no longer using it.

**Mr Tshamano:** Is it still registered in your husband's name?

**Mrs Mavis:** Yes, it is.

**Mr Tshamano:** Are there any women who have gone to the chief to ask for land?

**Mrs Mavis:** Yes, women are still being given land by the chief, my husband and I also went to the chief to inform him that he is giving me the farm and he approved.

**Mr Tshamano:** Tell me, what are you farming currently?

**Mrs Mavis:** I am farming tomatoes, butternuts, okra and pumpkins.

**Mr Tshamano:** What is Okra?

**Mrs Mavis:** Okra is (*delele*) a green slimy African leafy vegetable.

**Mr Tshamano:** Which crop do you specialise in?

**Mrs Mavis:** I am focused on tomatoes because I have a contract with Tiger Brands.

**Mr Tshamano:** What do you think can be done to solve the problems you have regarding sheds, transport, and other problems related to farming?

**Mrs Mavis:** I think if one went to the Department of Trade and Industries (DTI), one would get assistance because I am told that they are very helpful.

**Mr Tshamano:** Have you ever approached DTI?

**Mrs Mavis:** We have, and we registered for the pipes and someone came to do an assessment of how many hectares we have and looked at our pipes. We were told we would be given pipes worth R600 000.00 each, but it has been 2 years and we have not heard anything.

**Mr Tshamano:** What information did you get when you followed it up?

**Mrs Mavis:** We did follow ups and we were told something about money, but I forgot exactly what it was, I don't want to lie.

**Mr Tshamano:** Are there any other service providers who come and offer help, since you have transport problems, don't you have someone who takes your produce to the market?

**Mrs Mavis:** There are some companies like Limpopo. The problem with it is that it does not come for small loads. Now there is someone who collects stock with his car. He gets his money after our produce has been sold at the market. He is the one we are working with now.

**Mr Tshamano:** Are there service providers who render services that leave you with no profit as a farmer?

**Mrs Mavis:** They are there. In 2014 we planted many butternuts. We harvested around 8<sup>th</sup> of December, we expected that by the 20 December we would get the money but didn't. In January 2015 we called to ask about the money because we were expecting it, but they were not forthcoming. Later we were told our produce were not bought and many other stories. We then called a meeting. When they came, they started explaining and making illustrations on the black board about transport, we told them we did not want to hear such stories, we just needed our money. They told us that transport cost about R21 000.00 which we thought was wrong.

**Mr Tshamano:** That is wrong because you were not told that the transport does not have nets and planks which will be purchased with your money. You were also not shown these things which were purchased with your money.

Please note that the main aim for me to be here is not to bring financial relief. But it is to come and listen to you. It is also because after I have heard the challenges you are facing, I will document them, then present them to the university in case there are people who are facing challenges in their jobs and there is something they can do to assist. Our mandate as a university is to empower people with knowledge, rather than money. However, that does not stop me from approaching people who can help if we agree.

**Mrs Mavis:** We are working very hard. But we're getting tired and we are running out of ideas. As you grow older, even the brain gets affected.

**Mr Tshamano:** One thing that worries me is that when I look around it is mostly elderly people who are farming. Do you encourage your children to try farming, so that they will take over the reins when you are no longer able to farm?

**Mrs Mavis:** I am working with my son. He is showing a great passion for farming. When I went to Botswana, he was left in charge

**Mr Tshamano:** Most farmers are almost sixty (60) years old and they need to retire in a few years and the children need to carry on with the business. It is good to hear that children are being encouraged in this regard.

Thank you so much for spending your valuable time talking to me granny, goodbye.

**Mrs Mavis:** Thank you for coming.

**Interview number 12** Interviewee: **Mrs Merriam**

**Mr Tshamano:** Good afternoon madam.

**Mrs Merriam:** Good afternoon.

**Mr Tshamano:** My name is Humbulani Tshamano and I am a lecturer at the University of Venda, and I am also a PhD student in this university. I am here because I heard that there are some elderly people who are farming in this area. I would ask you to introduce yourself and tell me when you started with farming.

**Mrs Merriam:** My name is Merriam. I come from Dzimauli. I came here to farm. I started in 2000. We asked the chief for a plot, and we were given 20 hectares and got down to business. We breed cattle and goats. We are busy farming. We farm tomatoes and butternuts and maize. We take our tomatoes to Tiger Brands because they help us when we need transport the tomatoes. We sell the butternuts locally, but sometimes we export them. We also export Okra. We sell our maize and also make enough for our own use.

**Mr Tshamano:** Where do you export your produce to?

**Mrs Merriam:** We take our tomatoes to Tiger Brand. The Okra goes to Johannesburg City Deep market.

**Mr Tshamano:** Where did your passion for farming and breeding come from?

**Mrs Merriam:** I used to farm when I was at home; my parents were farmers. That's where it all started. I used to sow things and sell but people used to take things on credit and not pay, so it was futile exercise. I figured it's better to farm. Farming is indeed viable because even maize meal is very expensive in the shops. If I sell maize, I sell some and keep some for my own use. We once entered for a competition for farming tomatoes. We process our tomatoes to make chili sauce and jam. We also export tomatoes to Mozambique, as there are some Mozambicans who buy tomatoes from us. People from

Durban also come and buy tomatoes from us. We believe that our farming is the cornerstone of the economy because the food industry is the biggest. If we don't farm people will starve. That's why I work hard as a farmer because it helps me and them.

**Mr Tshamano:** Do you make the jam here?

**Mrs Merriam:** Now we are unable to make jam here because we don't have the machinery. The University of Limpopo taught us how to make Jam. We just joined SAWENI, it trains us on how to make tomato the jam, tomato sauce, but we cannot make it because we don't have machinery and preservatives. The people who make tomato sauce buy tomatoes from us. These tomatoes are also used to make jam which we cannot make because we don't have the machinery.

**Mr Tshamano:** If it were possible to have a market close which was run by farmers in this area, it would be possible to make tomato jam, tomato sauce and other food stuffs.

**Mrs Merriam:** We would work hard; it would also help our unemployed youth who struggle to get jobs despite being educated. If we had such a market, we would be able to create employment for our young people.

**Mr Tshamano:** How did you get this farm?

**Mrs Merriam:** I asked for this farm from the chief.

**Mr Tshamano:** Which chief?

**Mrs Merriam:** Chief Rambuda of Madimbo. He said I should write a letter to the civic association and I did that. The civic association told me to take the letter to Rambuda in Dzimauli. I sent it there, he signed and said we should be shown where we can farm. The chief then showed us this plot we are using now. It was very bushy, and we had to work very hard for it to be like it is today.

**Mr Tshamano:** I used to pass here; it was bushy. So, you say you were given this plot in Dzimauli. What challenges have you come across that affect your profit that if they were removed your profit would increase?

**Mrs Merriam:** Electricity is the main problem. Electricity is very expensive. We pay about R5 000.00-R6 000.00 a month. It is as if we are working for electricity. If we had access to water which we don't have to pump using electricity, we would get very good profit.

**Mr Tshamano:** Which electricity do you use, is it the pre-paid or the one they estimate?

**Mrs Merriam:** It is not the pre-paid but the one of estimations.

**Mr Tshamano:** Would it help if it were the pre-paid one?

**Mrs Merriam:** I don't know because I have never used pre-paid electricity before.

**Mr Tshamano:** The advantage of pre-paid is that when you are not using the machines, it does not change. You can switch on when you want to irrigate and switch off when you are done. This means that you can manage your usage of electricity. That way you can estimate how much electricity you use, depending on how many times a week you irrigate. Have you ever considered pre-paid electricity?

**Mrs Merriam:** We haven't considered it.

**Mr Tshamano:** You should try it because all the farms I visited seem to have problems with electricity. Are there any other challenges you are facing?

**Mrs Merriam:** The tomato seeds are also very expensive because for 1 hectare it costs about R14 000. When it gets very hot the tomatoes do not develop satisfactorily, and sometimes they die or get diseases. Also, manure and pesticides are very expensive, but we try our best.

**Mr Tshamano:** What can be done to assist you?

**Mrs Merriam:** We need assistance with electricity. If that person were to come and help with electricity, we would be happy. Maybe also money to buy more; that would empower us.

**Mr Tshamano:** The challenge is that the electricity is administered by Eskom and they need to make a profit. I believe that it would help if you changed your electricity to pre-paid. That way you would know how much electricity you use per month. I think if you

used the electricity only for irrigation, you would not spend up to R6 000.00, like you are doing now.

With estimations, they just assume that if your farm paid R5 000.00 for electricity, then your bill will be plus and minus the same amount. They also assume that if Mr X has a farm in the same area that uses a certain amount of electricity, then the other farms in the same area will use the same amount of electricity. That is why the electricity bills for the farmers are usually similar. I also heard that even those who did not use machinery for certain period were getting bills for electricity.

I believe that you have given me enough information and I have seen for myself the energy and passion you have despite the heat. This is encouraging. If I present my findings to the higher powers that there are hardworking farmers, it might help. Maybe they can offer some help. Unfortunately, the university does not give money because it doesn't have it. It is an institution that gets money from the government. Instead, we give knowledge. How do institutions like Timbali and others help you?

**Mrs Merriam:** Their help is quite visible; especially Timbali. They teach us how to use manure; how to use pesticides; how to spray them; we find this knowledge and information very helpful. Since their arrival there have been positive changes.

**Mr Tshamano:** I am glad to hear that.

**Mrs Merriam:** We are also grateful for the pumps that Timbali gave us

**Mr Tshamano:** I heard some saying the sheds are small and after harvest, they don't know where to put the produce. They get damaged before going to the market, as a result. Some say transport is a problem because it delays the collection of their produce because it only comes when they have large loads. Do any of your children want to go into farming because both you and your husband are aging?

**Mrs Merriam:** Two of my children have shown interest in farming. When one comes, he helps the old man with the tractor. The girl wants to have her own farm.

**Mr Tshamano:** Thank you Mrs Merriam for giving me time to talk to you.

**Mrs Merriam:** Thank you for coming.

**Interview number 13** Interviewee: **Mrs Portia**

**Mr Tshamano:** Good morning madam.

**Mrs Portia:** Good morning to you too.

**Mr Tshamano** I am Humbulani Tshamano.

**Mrs Portia:** I am Mrs Portia.

**Mr Tshamano:** I am employed by the University of Venda as a lecturer and I am also a PhD student at the same university. I came here after hearing that grannies are working on the farms, and I decided to come here to ask you about the progress of the whole situation. When did you start your project and in what direction is your project going?

**Mrs Portia:** Honestly, I started working on a certain plot in Ziska in 1995. Since then I have had a desire to own my plot because I thought things could be much more prosperous. I then applied for a plot in Makwarela for which I paid two thousand Rand (R2 000.00). I then attended an interview that took place at Makwarela, and, I was fortunate enough because I got the plot. I then started to clear the bushes so that I could start farming, even though there was water, electricity wasn't there. I was utilizing an engine for pumping, but it came to a point where I decided to install electricity. Actually, I started working on this land in 2003. I registered it in 2007 under the company called Portia Farming. When I started farming, I started on a small portion. I started working on only three hectares and there were a lot of anthills. Coupled with lack of water, I was forced to go to seek financial assistance, in order to purchase drip irrigation equipment and pipes. Fortunately, I got finance and signed an agreement to pay five-hundred-rand on a monthly basis. But after the harvesting I paid the whole money back, which was fifty-seven thousand Rand. Then I went to Nedbank to borrow twenty-five thousand Rand which I used for manure and drips. The same year after harvesting I paid the entire money back and then went to ABSA bank to borrow thirty thousand Rand. Again, I re-paid it as I did at Nedbank. A year before last I got assistance from Venetia mine, where they gave



me hundred thousand Rand and again, I managed to repay all the money. This year I was assisted by WDB with a hundred thousand Rand I paid it back in one instalment.

**Mr Tshamano:** This project is generating a lot of money because you don't pay back the money you borrowed in instalments, but in cash. When you went for that interview at Makwarela to apply for a plot, where exactly where you applying at?

**Mrs Portia:** Currently it is called the Department of Rural Development but in olden days it was called the Department of Land Affairs.

**Mr Tshamano:** It means that you did not get this land through the chief?

**Mrs Portia:** No.

**Mr Tshamano:** It seems like all the farms that are here, except yours, came from the chiefs; namely, Manenzhe, Nefolovhodwe and Rambuda.

**Mrs Portia:** But the plot is now under the chief because of the land reform issue.

**Mr Tshamano:** What are you sowing?

**Mrs Portia:** I specialize in tomatoes, pumpkins, sweet melons, butternuts and peri-peri. Peri-peri (of the Serrano kind), Habanero and green, red and yellow papers. This year we were experienced crop diseases on the tomatoes, things that we were not used to as farmers. I decided very early to sow baby vegetables. I also grow baby marrow, baby jam and pet pants. This was when I realised that the previous dilemma had set me back. This issue of baby vegetables helped me a lot because it only takes four-to-five weeks to harvest, meaning that you can make quick cash. It is these baby vegetables that have brought a lot of prosperity to me as a farmer.

Now we have a problem of water; there is no water in the river, even in the dam. We are praying, as we speak. Yesterday, I phoned the Local Economic Development (LED) office and they told me that they are not taking any grant application now and advised me to come back in January to submit the application.

**Mr Tshamano:** It sounds like the problem of water is affecting everyone. This is because in many places water seems to be a big problem and people are thinking of stopping farming until the issue of water is resolved. How big is your plot/farm?

**Mrs Portia:** This one is Twenty-one hectares and the other one behind the mountain which I am busy cleaning in Croso is ten. On this one, I will continue growing tomatoes and on the other one I will concentrate on baby vegetables.

**Mr Tshamano:** What challenges are you experiencing on your farm?

**Mrs Portia:** I wanted to tell you about the machine for drying the products and processing them to become a final product. If I had that machine I would be very far today. My experience is that when I export my products to a country like Botswana, there are many repercussions. This is because sometimes the products are affected or spoiled along the way and this affects the price and profit. I remember when I made a quotation for the machine and I was told it is one million Rand. They promised to ask the people who made the machine, to design a smaller one, but to date I haven't obtained the quotation for the small one. The one for one million Rand is large in a such that it carries three tons at a go.

**Mr Tshamano:** If you could get that machine you could be a successful businesswoman and others were going to come to you and you would be able to generate more income.

**Mrs Portia:** Another challenge is transport. Profit diminishes due to transport because we are too far from the market and we don't have large trucks. This forces us to hire them and it is very expensive. Some truckers take our harvest to the market on time, but when they have to bring back our money it is a problem. You find that they do that at their time and the money that they bring is smaller than what we agreed on.

**Mr Tshamano:** So, you as a farmer you have workers that have families who at the end of the month are anticipating being paid. On the other hand, you have to pay electricity and on top of that you have to buy manure and more equipment. So is not good to be cheated in such a way.

**Mrs Portia:** That is why I don't want a middleman at all. I wish to have someone I know at the market a person, whom I will be able to talk with about the whole process, so that I can be always certain about the whole progress.

**Mr Tshamano:** I think that might assist. But you have some sort of organization as farmers, so you can put together the little you have to get a truck of your own; don't you think it can work?

**Mrs Portia:** I have another plot which is 48 hectares big that was bought by ELRAT for me. They wanted that plot to be divided in three co-operatives and for one tractor to operate in each plot. Then I told them that it won't be possible with one tractor because if it goes for servicing, it means the production will have to stop. This would create conflicts and confusion. Even the vehicles that serve as transport are a good idea but, it will lead to the same debate. I reckon it is better to sacrifice and buy one that you can own; one that you can maintain.

**Mr Tshamano:** If someone needs it, they have to hire it.

**Mrs Portia:** When I deliver to the market, I will charge them by load, and it will help the vehicle maintain itself because it will be making money. So, now we go to the market all the time.

**Mr Tshamano:** I hear that the ideas are very good to achieve many things, it is just that starting from scratch is a problem.

**Mrs Portia:** Right now, I am in trouble trying to find a cool storage, I have 200 000 Rand that I got from a small business. However, the money is too little to buy cool storage and two trailers, that it is a big challenge.

**Mr Tshamano:** Don't they let you to pay a deposit, so that you can pay back in small amounts? Because you will find that you don't have the money that can do all the work at the same time.

**Mrs Portia:** I will try to get in touch with those people who specialize in cold storage, so that I can get it, for me to be able to store my products in it and possible for me to compound with the new harvest that are due to market. The cool storage I have a small

rental one, but it costs 80 000 Rand. I don't like it, and the one that I like is the one that is constructed from the bottom to the roof.

**Mr Tshamano:** White people in this kind of business prosper because they start with all the necessary resources. I really thank you because I don't see too many things that you are complaining about. If I happen to need more information, I will come back because I know the place. My mission was to collect some information. As a University we don't have money that we can give to people. Rather what we do is to encourage people, to empower themselves through education and training, especially where we see that they are lacking.

**Mrs Portia:** Another thing that I wanted to say before I forget is that I wish we, as farmers, can receive a training on drying up vegetables for preservation. One day the University of Limpopo visited us, and they taught us how to dry up our vegetables, like to pour enzymes on our vegetables, so that the vegetables would stay green. They also taught us how to pour sulphur on bananas and mangoes, so that the two will always be in good shape. I like to go for such trainings, and I want my dried-up vegetables to be on sold. They also taught us how to dry our produce utilizing solar, so many things.

**Mr Tshamano:** After writing my presentation and documenting everything you are running short of; I intend to visit the Department of Agriculture. I believe you might get some help.

**Mrs Portia:** Maybe it will help because those scorched green papers and butternut can be modified or sent them for processing, in order to make soap, movate or maybe to sell them, you see.

**Mr Tshamano:** What I have noticed from white people is that they discard nothing. They make it a point that they conserve everything that they have.

**Mrs Portia:** I have also learnt those things. It really pains me to see unwanted products be given to pigs and where I stay pigs are cheap animals. So, if you say you are selling a pig for R600.00, people will laugh at you and tell you to eat it yourself.

**Mr Tshamano:** Thank you; I will try to tell those people of Thembani that I was here because they said they will not come again to provide training, and they also said that it was not their job because they obtained a sponsor. So, they asked me to come to Pretoria with the notion of discussing training. This is because they believe the University must assist with different kinds of training.

**Mrs Portia:** Another thing I humbly ask you to help us if possible, to get us trainers on our farms in computer literacy for a week; it might help because if we can understand how to use google, it might help because if we need anything from google, we can just google it and also it will also help us to use email. I would be grateful for that kind of training.

**Mr Tshamano:** I don't see any problem with that; it is just that on the issue of computer literacy they might say computer literacy will be conducted at the University.

**Mrs Portia:** I am also afraid that is what will happen because we were once told to go to Polokwane-LEDET, where transport and accommodation were our own responsibility. They only provided breakfast, lunch and computers and the training would be for a week. You see it won't be nice to leave a farm for a week. It is better if they come here where we are.

**Mr Tshamano:** I am happy because the people know what they want. I will try to get in touch with different people that I believe might be in a position to help you from where you are.

**Mrs Portia:** The person who is going to teach us must understand that the trainees are illiterate, so he or she must not be too fast and harsh when we fail to understand.

**Mr Tshamano:** But, if you can get two or three people who can understand quickly, I think they can teach others who are struggling; for instance, when cell phones started I thought it would be utilized by those who went to school, but I can see now my mother can use it and we are talking about someone around 70 years old. I will get in touch with you if I need further information. Thank you.

**Mrs Portia:** Thank you, too.

**Interview number 14** Interviewee: **Mrs Lena**

**Mr Tshamano:** My name is Humbulani Tshamano, I come from the University of Venda, where I am a lecturer and a PhD student. I heard that something great is happening here, and I thought I should come and witness it. Upon my arrival I saw some farms and women labouring hard. So, I thought let me inquire about this. What is your name?

**Mrs Lena:** My name is Mrs Lena.

**Mr Tshamano:** Nice to meet you. When did you start farming?

**Mrs Lena:** I started in 2009

**Mr Tshamano:** Was it an easy journey?

**Mrs Lena:** Before I started, I used to work at a butchery. One day there was a competition for women. I decided to go and check it out, and I liked it. That is how I started farming. I had saved some R25 000.00 in my bank account. I started with 1 hectare.

**Mr Tshamano:** Are you succeeding?

**Mrs Lena:** Pests bother me a lot, but I get something in the end. I got a R35 000.00 profit and I added another R10 000, which enabled me to cultivate two hectares of tomatoes. Then I saw a larger profit. I made R40 000 and then I decided to continue farming

**Mr Tshamano:** It seems like you were making a lot of money.

**Mrs Lena:** I ploughed again, but disaster struck; some boys stole a cable from the transformer, I don't know what a cable is for, but it caused a power outage on my farm. I reported the matter to Eskom, and they took their time to come and fix it. I had ploughed tomatoes, and it was very hot, and the tomatoes wilted. It was a huge loss, but I managed to harvest a little, I then carried on farming.

Some people from the loan's office came. Paying from your own pocket is difficult because we don't have much money. I took out a loan of R20 000.00 from them. I think it

was people from the Women Development Bank or something. I bought some manure, more drips and electricity with the money and I started paying well, I also had many workers, but I paid them. I started farming on 4 hectares and I had a good harvest. This made it possible for me to pay back the loan. I had done very well. I went back to the loan people and requested R300 000.00 loan and they gave it to me.

I decided to use half of the farm rather than the whole farm. My tomatoes seeds were affected by a disease, which attacked the leaves and the tomatoes did not develop. I had used R70 000 only from the loan I took and accepted that I failed for that year and waited for the next year. We had water problems and we had to take turns irrigating our vegetables and everything I had ploughed needs water constantly

**Mr Tshamano:** Especially when the plants are still small; they need a lot of water. What do you cultivate?

**Mrs Lena:** I cultivate tomatoes, butternuts, ochre, boxberries, brinjal and green beans.

**Mr Tshamano:** So, are you succeeding? Did the loans assist you?

**Mrs Lena:** That company really empowered us by giving us loans. I bought that Isuzu whilst working here. We worked well together; they used to come and check if we are making progress.

**Mr Tshamano:** How big is your farm?

**Mrs Lena:** We have two farms that we are sharing; one is 30 hectares and the other is 19 and half hectares, and I must say the soil here is very fertile because the farm was not overused.

**Mr Tshamano:** What other challenges are you experiencing besides the diseases you mentioned. What would you like to achieve in future if the profit is good?

**Mrs Lena:** The pipes that carry the water from the river are worn out; the drips are not enough because the farm is now bigger, and we need our own tractor. The government will help us by build a storage place and provide drips.

**Mr Tshamano:** If you get proper drips, can they work for a longer time? I think you should get the drips then it will boost your profit a bit. How is the transport system when you have to carry your produce to the market after harvesting?

**Mrs Lena:** There is a young man who stays around here who transports our produce to the market and it is running smoothly. Sometimes when we cultivate with our own seeds and sell, we usually run at a loss. For example, I only received R5 000.00 for a lot of butternuts. Another challenge is that the electricity we are using is very expensive; they just estimate the readings and sometimes they just charge R5 000 or even R15 000 and where do you get that kind of money if you are running at a loss?

**Mr Tshamano:** Can't you apply for a pre-paid electricity? This way you only pay for what you have used.

**Mrs Lena:** We have been trying for a while now and we hope that they will change it soon

**Mr Tshamano:** Sometimes Eskom drags its feet. I think the pre-paid electricity is cheaper because you only pay for consumption. It does not charge you when you are not using it.

**Mrs Lean:** This electricity is stifling us; we won't flourish.

**Mr Tshamano:** As a university, we assist people by giving them knowledge. We do not have money to offer you, we can only help you with knowledge. What areas do you think you still need to be trained on to enhance your farming skills and any other skills relating to business, as you are running a business?

**Mrs Lena:** The electricity is stifling us, it is so expensive, and we do not see the profit.

**Mr Tshamano:** Are any of your children interested in farming? I saw your son here on the farm. The challenge is that most farmers are elderly people and when they retire, there is no one to take over the farm. It is important to encourage your children to take interest in farming. Thank you for taking time to talk to me. I will come sometimes just to check on my beloved farmers. Thank you very much.



**Interview number 15** Interviewee: **Mrs Lilly**

**Mr Tshamano:** Good morning Lilly.

**Mrs Lilly:** Good morning.

**Mr Tshamano:** My name is Humbulani Tshamano, I am based at the University of Venda, I am both a lecturer and a PhD student at this university. I heard that adult women are working hard; they are exerting themselves; so, I thought I should come and bear witness. Please tell me your full names.

**Mrs Lilly:** My name is Lilly.

**Mr Tshamano:** Where do you come from?

**Mrs Lilly:** I come from Thohoyandou, I work on the farm and stay here during the week and go home during the weekends.

**Mr Tshamano:** Had I known that you are based in Thohoyandou, I would have come to you there because I am also from Thohoyandou. What are you farming?

**Mrs Lilly:** I farm so many things, but my biggest crop are tomatoes, I also farm butternuts, maize, Okra, different peppers like serrano, gem squash and goose berry.

**Mr Tshamano:** You are always busy, and you hardly rest. I am happy to hear about your crops. Which of these crops is the most challenging to grow?

**Mrs Lilly:** The most challenging one are tomatoes because from the day you plant them you need to constantly spray them because of diseases and pests

**Mr Tshamano:** How long do they take until harvest?

**Mrs Lilly:** After about three and half months they can be harvested

**Mr Tshamano:** Thank you. How did you secure this farm, as you are from Thohoyandou?

**Mrs Lilly:** I bought this farm from a certain old man who said he was tired of farming.

**Mr Tshamano:** Do you have the title deed?

**Mrs Lilly:** Yes, I do.

**Mr Tshamano:** Is it yours or does it belong to the family?

**Mrs Lilly:** It is my farm.

**Mr Tshamano:** Did you ever experience challenges? Remember a while ago it was not easy for a woman to own land.

**Mrs Lilly:** No, I never experienced challenges because we are now living in a democratic world.

**Mr Tshamano:** Do you get support from your family?

**Mrs Lilly:** Yes, I have immense support.

**Mr Tshamano:** Since you will not always be strong, and you are growing older, are any of your children interested in farming or will you also be forced to sell the farm when you retire?

**Mrs Lilly:** Only one of my children has shown some interest. He has some goats. However, he stays in Pretoria. He helps me a lot; he also encourages me to continue farming and once came and cultivated tomatoes here.

**Mr Tshamano:** It seems that he is ready to take over when you retire. What challenges are you facing here?

**Mrs Lilly:** There are many challenges; firstly, it is the infrastructure. As a small-scale farmer who is just starting off, I cannot plough the whole farm right up to that mountain. It is difficult to plough the whole farm because I do not have enough pipes and drips because these things are very expensive. As a result, I usually manage 5 hectares instead of the 28 that I have.

Ends abruptly - I think you need to round this off – a goodbye perhaps?

## Addendum No 2- Pictures Taken at the Nwanedi Farms







**Addendum No. 3- List of women farmers who participated in farming competitions (Women who participated in the study as respondents are indicated with an asterisk)**

**PARTICIPANTS SINCE THE COMPETION WAS INITIATED**

<b>Surname &amp; Initials</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Type of farming</b>	<b>Place</b>
Mukatuni Pauline	2000	finalist	National	Crops & Livestock/Cattle	Makhado
Ramabulana Fhathuwani	2001	finalist	Provincial	Layers	Thulamela
Maria Jordan Anna	2002	finalist	Provincial	Orchard/Macadamia	Makhado
Senoamadi Tendani	2003	finalist	Provincial	Orchard/Bananas	Makhado
Tshilande Margaret	2004	finalist	Provincial	Crops/Vegetables	Musina
*Malukuta Ndanganeni Annikie	2005	finalist	Provincial	Crops/Vegetables	Musina
*Mulaudzi Livhuwani Martha	2006	finalist	National	Crops/Vegetables	Musina
Ndou Ndivhanleni Selina	2007	finalist	Provincial	Crops/Vegetables	Musina
Silamolela Tshivheaho Magret	2008	finalist	Provincial	Crops/Vegetables	Musina
*Molaudzi Asnath	2009	1 <sup>st</sup> runner-up	Provincial	Crops/Vegetables	Musina
*Malukuta Annikie	2010	finalist	Provincial	Crops/Vegetables	Musina

Magwede Dakalo	2011	Finalist & overall winner	Provincial	Livestock	Makhado
*Mukwevho Magret	2012	1 <sup>st</sup> runner-up	Provincial	Crops/Vegetables	Musina
Denga Mashadu Dinah	2013	1 <sup>st</sup> runner-up	Provincial	Crop/Vegetables	Musina
Rambuda Mercy	2014	finalist	Provincial	Crop/Vegetables	Musina
*Malukuta Ndanganeni Annikie	2015	Finalist	Provincial/National	Crop/vegetable	Musina
*Tshisevhe Rosina	2016	Finalist	provincial	Crop/ vegetables	Musina
Madima Irene	2017	Overall winner	Provincial	Crops/Fruits	Makhado
Muleya Pertunia	2017	Winner	Provincial	Crops/Vegetables	Musina

All Musina participants were based in Nwanedi farms.