

**An investigation into the Socio-economic Impact of the Shortage of  
Domestic Energy Supply in Tshikunda Village of Limpopo Province,  
Vhembe District**

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

A study was conducted in the rural communities of Tshikunda village in Limpopo Province, with the aim of identifying types of energy resources used and the patterns of utilization of such energy sources. Surveys were conducted in village and semi-structured questionnaires were used to interview 30 randomly selected households in village. Data obtained in all surveyed villages showed that fuel wood is the main source of energy for cooking and heating while paraffin and candles are mainly used for lighting.

The study uses both quantitative and qualitative techniques for data collection and analysis. Qualitative techniques were mostly used in that they provide the researcher with an understanding of experiences and problems faced by communities who receive inadequate domestic energy supply. Random and purposive samplings were used for the selection of sample for the study. Both primary and secondary data were used for analysis in this study. Secondary data were obtained from government publication, research publication, and report. Primary data were obtained through personal observation, household's questionnaires.

Wood in these villages is very scarce and communities spend 5 to 6 hours per trip collecting fuel wood. Women using the load head method of carrying wood and occasionally wheelbarrows are the main source of labour used in collecting fuel wood. The paper concludes that there is a need to promote sustainable energy resources and technologies such as the use of improved wood and charcoal stoves. Furthermore, the paper recommends the promotion of solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, which have a potential of being adopted in the area. It is also argued that policies which enhance integrated rural development and promote sustainable energy utilization in rural communities need to be put in place and implemented.

The findings of the study show fuelwood use is prevalent, perhaps due to the limited ability to pay for electricity. There was a strong preference for grid electricity, but those

who have electricity complained about frequent power cuts. Small businesses, which were not electrified used batteries (hair cutting machines or public phones), LPG (fridges, stoves, welding), wood (cooking) and candles (lights). While electrified businesses use electricity for cooking, lights, fridge and welding, they also use candles (lights), generators (fridge) and LPG (cooking) during power cuts that occur regularly in the area.