

**THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES
ON WOMEN IN THE RURAL AREAS OF
POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Mahlola Michael Tauatsoala, declare that the mini-dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master of Development in development studies has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other University; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

Tauatsoala M.M



Date:

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to both my beloved parents, my late father, Nare Solomon Tauatsoala, who has unfortunately not been able to witness the academic achievements of his son; and my mother, Nakedi Caroline Tauatsoala, for giving birth to me. My mother has always been the source of hope and inspiration to me, particularly with the courage and strength of heading the family as a single parent after the passing on of my father. I commend her for her unreserved love and support during my study life.

I further wish to dedicate this work to my sisters, Tlou Betty Moraba, Kgabo Regina Molokoane Mabjala Sarina Khoza, Modjadji Cyncrit Masenya and Choene Tiny Tauatsoala, and my brother, Lerapo John Tauatsoala, who is not in the right state of health to realise this achievement.

It would be a huge omission on my part not to dedicate this work to my beautiful wife, Pontso Elizabeth Tauatsoala, who has been ailing due to ill-health at the time I completed this work. Neither can I forget to dedicate this work to my lovely children, Thabile Charity, Thulane Prince, Itumeleng Shirly, Lucky and Nakedi, as they all supported me during my studies. There were times when I thought of quitting my studies, but I have to confess that they were always on my side to motivate and encourage me. It is clear that if it were not for their positive attitude, I would really not have made it to this level, and for that reason, I would like to thank them for their continued unwavering support.

God bless you all.

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ABSTRACT

The introduction and establishment of co-operatives by the State was for purposes of fighting and alleviating poverty through creating jobs, particularly in the rural areas, which were mostly neglected by the previous apartheid State. In order to deal with these social ills and malady, the new democratic government introduced co-operatives to mitigate these challenges. These good intentions are often countered by lack of commitment by State officials and reluctance from other institutions to assist co-operatives to be catalysts in fighting poverty and unemployment in South Africa, despite their noble intentions. In other developed countries, co-operatives are given serious attention, not only because they are catalysts in poverty alleviation, but because they can make huge economic interventions with regard to economic growth and economic development.

The intention of this study was to make an assessment of whether or not agricultural co-operatives have any economic impact on women in the rural areas of Polokwane Municipality, since their inception as entities for local economic development. The study also assesses whether or not the State supports these entities in a variety of forms. For this purpose, four co-operatives have been used as a Case Study, namely, Mashashane Agricultural Co-operative at Ga-Mashashane; Phegelelo Agricultural Co-operative at Ga-Thaba village; Mothiba Agricultural Co-operative at Ga-Mothiba; and Itireleng Agricultural Co-operative at Matamanyane village in Moletjie.

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The 1994 democratic breakthrough ushered in a number of opportunities even for the formerly marginalized and disadvantaged, with the attempt to redress the disparities of the past. That notwithstanding, women in most rural setups, such as the Polokwane Municipal area still, face serious human challenges like poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment.

The history of South Africa has always presented serious inequalities on the basis of race and gender. According to the document entitled “Co-operative Strategy for SA” (2003:5), South Africa has a historically grown dual co-operative sector consisting of established co-operatives that are mainly operating in agriculture, which are still controlled by the White minority, and emerging co-operatives in a variety of economic and social sectors whose members are from the majority of the population, that is, women. A democratic South Africa opened a new context in which people can build a true culture and practice of co-operatives as a different way of organizing economy and society on values and principles that have been part of the international co-operative movement for many years (ANC *Umxabulo* No.18:1). The document further states that the values and principles of co-operatives provide the basis and strategic guidelines through which communities can approach the building of a progressive co-operative sector. It is clear, therefore, that the previous government policies towards co-operative development need not be pursued to privilege a minority against the rest of the population. To illustrate its commitment to equality, the democratic government has since developed policies, pieces of legislation and programmes to empower the poor, particularly women, youth and people with disabilities.

Most of the programmes that the government initiates are aimed at fighting poverty and creating jobs. Women in the impoverished rural areas are the section of the population facing many of these social ills, which are characterized by underdevelopment and backwardness in most of the rural areas of South Africa. The Co-operatives Act No. 14 of 2005 states that the government is committed to providing a supportive legal

environment to enable cooperatives to develop and flourish, and to facilitate the provision of targeted support for emerging co-operatives, particularly those owned by women and Black people.

Most of the women provide a very significant source of labour for cash crop production; cultivation of food for household consumption; raising of market livestock; collection of firewood and water; and the performance of household routines, like the cooking of food. Women are usually exposed to strenuous jobs such as weeding and transplanting, but production and profit are controlled by men. However, women can make a meaningful contribution to the economy if they could participate in cooperatives and if proper guidance is provided in running these entities.

This study focuses on four co-operatives from four rural villages in the Polokwane Municipal area, namely: Mashashane Agricultural Co-operative; Phegelelo Agricultural Co-operative at Ga-Thaba; Mothiba Agricultural Co-operative; and Itireleng Co-operative at Matamanyane village in Moletjie.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The government has initiated several agricultural co-operatives for purposes of poverty alleviation and job creation in the rural areas. Most of these projects are, however, unsustainable and fail to achieve their intended objectives. The appalling state of women in the rural areas due to unemployment has been left unattended to, despite the many opportunities that the 1994 democratic breakthrough has brought about.

The researcher wished to undertake an investigative study on the economic impact of agricultural co-operatives on women in the rural areas of the Polokwane Municipality, that is, whether these cooperatives have assisted to empower women and improve their wellbeing by addressing poverty, unemployment, skills deficiency, raising of livelihoods and changing their lives for the better. The researcher further wished to investigate whether women, particularly in the rural areas, have enjoyed benefits from the co-operatives, thereby positively improving their economic situation since their participation therein. The researcher further wanted to examine the operations of the co-operatives and the level of involvement by the State and communities for the improvement of

peoples' lives, particularly women in the rural areas. Finally, the researcher wanted to also investigate the nature of the involvement of women in the co-operatives. According to the *Policy Document on Cooperatives in Limpopo* (2004:3), the initial study of the co-operatives that exists to date, shows as yet undeveloped sector can play a major role in poverty alleviation and job creation, as espoused by the objectives of the co-operatives.

1.3. MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

There are several factors that motivated the researcher to embark on this study. Despite the researcher's interest in the study, he was a member of a rural community and observed continuing trends of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and underdevelopment among women, most of whom head households. Most of those who do not necessarily head households do so on behalf of their husbands who work in urban areas as migrant labourers. Most of these women also practise subsistence farming. This sector of the population, in which backwardness and underdevelopment are prevalent, is well placed to undertake the important task of agricultural cooperatives.

The co-operative movement in South Africa was always skewed in nature and could not allow Black people, particularly those in the deep rural areas, to participate in the mainstream economy. The origins of the White agricultural co-operatives were associated with the Afrikaner nationalist movement (A Co-operative Development Strategy for SA, 2003:15). While both emerging and established co-operatives in South Africa share the same foundation, identity and common bond of their members, their economic importance, historical past, origin of membership, objectives and political orientation are extremely different. Practically, no any other country in the world has a co-operative movement as dualistic as that of South Africa (A Co-operative Development Strategy for SA).

There should be a deliberate move by structures of government at all levels to ensure that women in rural areas are empowered to be able to carry out their tasks of managing co-operatives diligently and effectively. According to Todaro (2000:172), women make up a substantial number of the world's poor. If we compared the lives of the inhabitants of the poorest communities across the developing world, we would discover that, virtually everywhere, women and children experience the harshest

deprivation. They are more likely to be poor and malnourished and less likely to receive medical services, clean water, sanitation and other benefits.

Todaro (2000:170) again says that the most valid generalizations about the poor are that they are disproportionately located in rural areas, primarily engaged in agriculture and associated activities, more likely to be women and children than adult males, and often concentrated among minority ethnic groups and indigenous people. About two-thirds of the very poor scratch out their livelihoods from subsistence agriculture as small farmers or low-paid farm workers. In addition, women have less access to education, formal sector employment, social security and government employment programmes. These facts combine to ensure that poor women's financial resources are meagre and unstable as compared to those of men.

The history of the co-operative movement in South Africa can thus not be separated from the historical apartheid planning and organization of the society and economy. The very word "co-operative" was appropriated by various racist regimes to fund and establish institutions geared towards the needs of the Afrikaner communities in the rural areas, particularly for agriculture and other related business (Discussion Document of the National Co-operative Association of South Africa 2003:2). A democratic South Africa implies that government policies towards co-operative development should not be pursued to privilege a minority over the rest of the population. It further denotes that government policies should recognize that, for a long time, the majority of the people have been involved in various co-operative forms and associations in both rural and urban settlements. During the apartheid era up until 1994, Black people in South Africa were prohibited from the mainstream agriculture by being denied loan facilities and other benefits through discriminative laws, hence the present state of poverty in the Black communities, particularly in the rural areas. To stress on the impact of these discriminatory laws, Schrire (1992:333) says that loan facilities at preferential rates were available to White farmers and co-operatives, control boards and statutory institutions in the White agricultural sector, which were not offered to Black people.

Operating as they have to, in a capitalist-dominated market environment, and in communities beset by huge problems of underdevelopment, progressive co-operatives

face daunting challenges. This study further suggests that women in rural areas could be drawn into these progressive formations (co-operatives) and be trained in the relevant skills, since they are already involved in traditional agricultural activities. Co-operatives will, in this regard, be a vehicle to alleviate poverty, decrease unemployment levels, enhance skills development and raise the economic and social status of women in the rural areas.

1.4. AIM OF STUDY

The aim of the study is to investigate the economic impact of agricultural co-operatives on women.

1.5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study focus more on the improvement of the plight of women in rural areas and include the following:

- To examine the operations of agricultural cooperatives in the Polokwane Municipality and the role played by women;
- To study the experiences of women in agricultural cooperatives - the benefits they enjoy and the costs they incur;
- To assess the impact agricultural cooperatives have on women socially, economically, culturally and politically; and
- To recommend strategies for developing agricultural cooperatives for women development and empowerment.

1.6. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.6.1. Cooperative

Co-operatives, as defined by Birchall (2000:54), is a voluntary association of persons who have agreed to work together on a continuous basis to pursue their common interests and who, for that purpose, form an economic organisation that is jointly controlled and whose costs, benefits and risks are equitably shared among the membership. These movements are an embodiment of democracy.

This is also defined by the Cooperatives Act No. 14 of 2005 as an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic and social

needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise that is organized and operated on cooperative principles.

According to the International Co-operative Alliance document on Revision of Co-operative Principles and the Role of Co-operatives in the 21st Century (1995:5), a co-operative society is an association of persons who have voluntarily joined together to achieve a common end through the formation of a democratically-controlled organization, making equitable contributions to the capital required and accepting a fair share of the risks and benefits of the undertaking in which the members actively participate. Briefly, this means that a co-operative is a group of persons who have united voluntarily to meet common economic and social needs through a jointly-owned enterprise.

1.6.2. Poverty

Poverty, as a factor characterizing the women in the rural areas, is defined by the SACP's Policy Discussion Document (2005:3) as a more descriptive term – referring to a range of indicators (which are, nonetheless, real enough), including income, social exclusion, and vulnerability. Households often (and appropriately) measure poverty. This can also be used to define a section of the population that does not have access to resources physical, financial etc, which makes them to be vulnerable. Rural poverty, according to Van Zyl (1996:19), is explained by backwardness of tradition (smallholder agriculture).

1.6.3. Economic development

According to Brundtland (1987:42), sustainable development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. According to Todaro (2000:14), economic development is defined in terms of reduction or elimination of poverty, inequality, and unemployment within the context of a growing economy.

1.7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study will be beneficial to the policy makers in addressing some of the deficiencies such as lack of support of agricultural cooperatives by both public and

private sector institutions. The study's findings will also assist women in the rural areas on poverty alleviation, unemployment, and illiteracy. Furthermore, this hopes to encourage women with various skills to develop their own communities and have sustainable livelihoods, and most importantly, to provide knowledge to most women in rural areas about co-operatives in general and agricultural co-operatives in particular. The study also provides recommendations to the relevant bodies on cooperatives. Finally, the study's findings will also serve as reference to fellow students embarking on studies in agricultural cooperatives.

1.8. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How have agricultural cooperatives operated?
- What is the nature of participation of women in the agricultural cooperatives?
- To what extent have women been empowered in agricultural cooperatives?
- What are the real challenges affecting women empowerment in agricultural cooperatives?
- What economic benefits have women obtained from agricultural co-operatives?

1.9. CONCLUSION

This chapter highlights the orientation to the study on the economic impact of agricultural co-operatives on women in the rural areas of the Polokwane Municipality. The aim of the study, which was to explore the failures and/or constraints faced by agricultural co-operatives, was clearly spelt out. The four agricultural co-operatives were chosen as the case study, namely, Mashashane Agricultural Co-operative; Phegelelo Agricultural Co-operative at Ga-Thaba, Mothiba Agricultural Co-operative; and Itireleng Co-operative at Matamanyane village in Moletjie.

Despite efforts taken by both the government and the private sector to alleviate poverty, these endeavours are faced with enormous challenges such as, economic sustainability, skills development, acute poverty levels among women in rural areas, high illiteracy levels and high rate of unemployment of women in the areas under study. These challenges, faced by agricultural co-operatives, served as a strong motivation for the researcher to conduct this study.

With recommendations provided in this study, the researcher is optimistic that both the government and private sector would improve support mechanisms and methods of intervention in the running of agricultural co-operatives, with an attempt to alleviate poverty and unemployment among women in rural areas. Finally, the researcher also formulated research questions that would help in unearthing frustrations and realities that agricultural co-operatives have to contend with.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to review literature relating to the research problem of the study. The chapter also aims to review the existing scholarship or available body of knowledge to see how other scholars have carried out the research and the study on agricultural co-operatives (Mouton, 2003:87). The purpose of the chapter is to establish how other countries and/or communities dealt and still continue to deal with agricultural co-operatives. The study also investigates strategies that other people in other parts of the world employed in addressing social ills and maladies such as poverty, unemployment, skills deficiency and illiteracy through agricultural co-operatives.

An assessment is also made of the extent to which agricultural co-operatives have made a positive impact on the lives of the women in the rural areas in the jurisdiction of the Polokwane Municipality.

2.2. POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Land restitution and land reform must be much more aligned with the co-operative enterprise approach. In the South African context, it will continually be imperative that any development endeavour be women biased, given the patriarchal history in which women were deliberately marginalized, despite them being in the majority. To this end, the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) document titled "A Co-operative Development Strategy for South Africa" (2003:25) states that poverty among Black people is caused and characterized by insufficient access to resources (land, capita, infrastructure) and the poor availability of services (education, health, housing). A large part of the Black population in South Africa consists of farm workers, who carry out some subsistence agriculture merely as a side activity.

While it is the responsibility of the State to look after its citizens and resources, the State produce like food, in line with food security, will never be enough for everybody. It is in this regard that the State has the obligation to support communities in food production

for purposes of sustainable livelihoods. This could be done by encouraging those involved in agricultural co-operatives by providing necessary training and development programmes, for increased and additional production. According to *Agricultural Digest* (1997:15), the policy process identified household food security as a matter of availability, accessibility and utilization. The document states again that in terms of availability, agriculture has a role to play in assisting deficit producers to increase birth, subsistence and surplus production. This could be achieved by broadening success by those farmers to credit, extension, research and training. The document further states that food accessibility refers to the ability to obtain sufficient food at all times, either through production for own consumption or the exchange mechanisms. Here, agriculture has a facilitative and supportive role to play in terms of improving income levels, implementing an agricultural entrepreneurial development programme, promotion of post harvest storage technology and food processing, as well as the improvement of distribution systems. Finally, the document states that food utilization refers to the final use of food by individuals at household level. This can be addressed by educating people on hygiene, nutrition, food preservation, as well as food choices and combination.

With agriculture becoming more commercialized, the roles of women and thus their economic status will change for the better. Cultural and social barriers to women's integration into agricultural programmes remain strong because in many countries, women's income is perceived as a threat to men's authority (Todaro et al., 2003:438). This is the reason why the present government is committed to reversing the situation in an attempt to "push back the frontiers of poverty" as President Thabo Mbeki said in his Freedom Day Celebrations Speech (2003). The new government has developed the concept of agricultural cooperatives for purposes of women development, empowerment and improvement in the production of livelihoods.

The main purpose of the establishment of co-operatives of any form is to uplift the living conditions of the majority of the people who are poverty stricken. For this reason, it is the State's obligation to support these initiatives by the people. According to *Umrabolo* No.18, a discussion document on the National Co-operative Movement of SA (NCSA) (2003:1), a democratic South Africa implies that policies can create and support

conditions in which the energies, resources and skills of the majority of the people can be mobilized and harnessed. The document also states that the old apartheid government policies are reviewed to open the way for a new cooperative policy and legislation where all types of cooperative policies and legislation based on internationally accepted principles of co-operatives can emerge and develop. The document further states that the current state of cooperative development reflects limitations of the real history of South Africa. Most of the cooperatives in South Africa are what co-operatives in Europe and North America were more than hundred years ago. They mirror the broader problem of under development that affects the majority of the people because of the country's history.

Limpopo Provincial Policy on Cooperatives (2003:2) states the following as the objectives of the co-operatives:

- The co-operatives must ensure business skilling of the members;
- They must be a vehicle for members to provide their own means of living;
- They must create absorption of the unemployed;
- They must enhance wealth creation in the community;
- They must create a vehicle for exporting;
- They must be a vehicle for beneficiation of raw materials;
- They must be a market for each other and acquire a market for their products;
- They must provide a career-path for its members;
- They must be a source of support for emerging entrepreneurs in various sectors; and
- Co-operatives can be used by SMMEs to increase their bargaining power.

It is imperative to state that most African countries, including South Africa, regarded agricultural co-operatives as a side issue. This was regardless of the efforts the communities in the rural areas made to produce food for their families on a subsistence basis. Most of the Black people in the rural areas had to see to finish in terms of food production without any support from government, despite their high levels of poverty. To this end, the document on Co-operative Development Strategy for SA (2003:24)

states that the government acknowledges the specific potential of co-operatives, as enterprises inspired by solidarity, to respond to their members' needs and ensure Blacks' participation in the economy, especially women, rural co-operative enterprises, persons with disabilities in self employment and the unemployed youth seeking self-employment. The document further states that the government considers introducing support measures for the activities of co-operatives that meet specific social and public policy outcomes, such as the development of activities benefiting disadvantaged groups or regions. It also states that special consideration should be given to the promotion of cooperatives to increase the participation of women in the cooperative movement at all levels, particularly at management and leadership level. These measures are considered, in the main, for purposes of uplifting the standard of co-operatives in order to be self-sufficient and sustainable.

On development potential of co-operatives in South Africa, the Document on Co-operative Development Strategy (2003:24) says that the government, in its co-operative development policy, acknowledges that a genuine, autonomous and economically viable co-operative movement and its membership have vast development potential to do the following:

- Create and develop income generating activities and sustainable decent employment;
- Develop human resources capacities and acknowledge values, advantages and benefits of the co-operative movement through education and training;
- Development their business potential, including entrepreneurial and managerial capacities;
- Strengthen their competitiveness as well as gain access to markets and to institutional finance;
- Increase savings and investment;
- Improve social and economic wellbeing, taking into account the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination,;
- Contribute to sustainable human development;
- Establish and expand a viable and dynamic distinctive sector of the

economy which responds to the social and economic needs of the community; and

- Contribute to broad based economic empowerment.

According to A Co-operative Development Strategy for SA (2003:26), agricultural co-operatives, like other forms of co-operatives, have different ways of promoting and creating employment, such as the following:

- Co-operative as a common workplace: Co-operative members work together in a joint production unit that has been formed, thereby creating an organized self-employment. Typical examples are collective agricultural co-operatives and small industrial cooperatives;
- Co-operatives as employers: In the case of client owned co-operatives that employ salaried staff who are not necessarily co-operative members;
- Co-operatives promoting or enabling self-employment: This is when client own co-operatives strengthen the economic viability of member businesses or household. A typical example is an agricultural marketing and supply co-operative that supply independent cash crop farmers with essential pre-and post-production services;
- Co-operatives inducing wage employment in institutions or companies that exist because co-operatives exist, this includes government co-operative departments, co-operative training institutions and co-operative audit companies; and
- Spill-over effects: like other businesses, co-operatives create jobs in those enterprises with which they maintain commercial relations.

The main purpose of the establishment of the agricultural co-operatives should be food production and equitable distribution amongst members. It is for this reason that women form an important component of society for the pursuit of this noble goal of food production. Africa Recovery, a United Nations Publication (1998:1), says that African women's fundamental contributions within their households, food production systems and national economics are increasingly acknowledged, within Africa and by the international community. This is due, in no small part, to African women's own

energetic efforts to organise, articulate their concerns and make their voices heard.

The Policy on Co-operatives in Limpopo Province (2003:12) states that the views of ILO on policy framework and the role of government are, firstly, that co-operatives should be treated in accordance with national law and practice on terms no less favourable than those accorded to other forms of enterprises and social organizations.

Governments should introduce support measures, where appropriate, for the activities of co-operatives that meet specific social and public policy outcomes, such as employment promotion and development of activities benefiting the advantaged groups or regions. Such measures could include, among others, and in so far as possible, tax benefits, loans, grants, access to public works, programmes and special procurement provisions. Through co-operative businesses, subsistence farmers should be exempted from paying VAT as their commercial counterparts have this privilege. Secondly, special considerations should be given to increasing women's participation in the co-operative movement at all levels, particularly at management and leadership levels.

The Policy on Co-operatives in Limpopo Province (2003:13) also states that the government should promote the important role of co-operatives in transforming what are often referred to as marginal survival activities (sometimes referred to as "informal economy") into legally protected work, fully integrated into mainstream economy. It states further that the government should facilitate access of co-operatives to support services in order to strengthen them. The State also has an obligation to support co-operatives to be viable business entities and for them to have the capacity to create employment and income. Finally, for the promotion of co-operative movement, the government should encourage conditions favouring the development of technical, commercial and financial linkages among all forms of co-operatives so as to facilitate an exchange of experience and sharing of risks and benefits.

The regulatory framework defines the role and position of co-operatives in society. The economic level of any society is determined by the relationship between the State and the co-operative entities. This will provide rules for the formation and functioning of co-operatives and also spells out the rights and obligations of members. The framework is

based on international standards as the UN guidelines on co-operatives of 2001, ILO Recommendations and ICA statements, National co-operative legislation, subsidiary legislation, by-laws and internal regulations.

2.3. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF CO- OPERATIVES

According to Section 32 of the South African Co-operative Act No. 14 of 2005, the affairs of a co-operative must be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of such number of persons as the constitution of the co-operative permits. The Act further states that the Board of Directors must exercise the powers and perform the duties of the co-operative subject to the Act and the constitution of the co-operative.

While Administration of co-operatives is the sole responsibility of individual co-operatives, the State should assist these entities in order to continue growing the economy and create employment for members to be viable and sustainable. Co-operative Development Strategy for SA (2003:48) states that the enhancement of technical qualifications, competence and capacities of private technical support service providers including Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs), in turn require the organization of training courses for personnel of the institutions and individuals that intend to provide technical services to co-operatives, and training-of-trainers courses on fundamental issues of co-operative organization and management based on MATCOM and other ILO material.

2.4. INTRODUCTION TO POLICY, REGULATORY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

According to A Co-operative Development Strategy for SA (2003:28), the co-operative development policy was drafted shortly after the adoption of the new ILO recommendation no. 93 by the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation 20 June 2002, with the delegation of the Republic of South Africa being one of the major driving forces in the process of formulating the new Labour Standard. Since 1994, the government has been supporting the growth of co-operatives, especially among the historically disadvantaged South Africans, as a strategy to alleviate poverty and create jobs. This was a means by government to address injustices and disparities created by the White minority regime. It should, however, be

noted that before the 1994 democratic breakthrough, there were two quite distinct types of co-operatives in South Africa. According to *A Co-operative Development Strategy for SA* (2003:15), there were government supported agricultural co-operatives on the one hand, which helped White farmers market their produce and sourced their equipment and other farming needs, while, on the other hand, there were co-operatives formed by Black South Africans that were often in marginalized rural areas to help them address their basic needs. The latter were left to fend for themselves without any government support. To ensure its commitment to co-operatives, the South African government also passed the Co-operative Act No. 14 of 2005, laying the foundation for a more active and supportive environment for co-operatives. This Act clearly defines the registration procedure of the co-operatives and the role of government as a facilitator in promoting co-operatives, and it also ensures that co-operative principles are observed.

According to the document entitled *A Co-operative Development Strategy for SA* (2003:33), macro-economic policies as well as measures such as trade liberalization, deregulation, commercialization and restructuring of State enterprises and public services will have an impact on co-operatives; in some instances creating opportunities and in others posing challenges for co-operatives.

2.5. CO-OPERATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

Co-operatives are initiatives that have been taken up by ordinary members of the community in an attempt to counter social maladies such as poverty and unemployment. These attempts will be meaningless without some support from the State to ensure that these entities are sustainable and consequently self sufficient. *A Co-operative Development Strategy for SA* (2004:19) says that the government has established agencies solely to support small businesses and co-operatives. It states that the provision of support services, such as business advisory services and access to loans linkages, are the responsibility of accredited institutions including organizations supporting co-operatives. Technical support services shall be extended by a cost effective support service system, which will do the following:

- a) Make use of existing support service providers, for example, NGOs, trade unions, employer organizations, private companies, government offices,

- parastatal agencies, development programmes and projects;
- b) Assume the technical expertise to develop training manuals, management systems, audit procedures, etc, to design intervention strategy at the grassroots, level, in order to select, supervise and evaluate service providers and to train the personnel of the selected service providers; and
 - c) Manage a co-operative development fund that has the purpose of cost sharing the expenditures incurred by co-operatives to obtain services from service providers or provided by accredited service providers. The document also indicates that the government will promote a co-operatives education, and training in public education, training and society at large. With regard to financial support, the document says, the government will open up existing loan schemes for small and medium enterprises such as KHULA, the Industrial Development Co-operation (IDC), the National Empowerment Fund (NEF), the Land Bank and Umsobomvu Youth Fund (UYF) to co-operative enterprises. The government will facilitate an autonomous system of finance for co-operatives including savings and credit, banking, and insurance co-operatives within the context of broad based economic empowerment.

Based on other policy alignment and other agreements, including the Financial Sector Summit and the Growth Development Strategy, the government will support new forms of financial institutions within the co-operative movement in order to ensure greater access to financial services, especially for the poor. According to Limpopo Provincial Policy on Co-operatives (2003:2), the Department of Economic Development Environment and Tourism (DEDET) has the mandate to promote and support the use of co-operative structures, principles and business practices to strengthen and enhance the province's economy and society. In caring out this mandate, as outlined in the document mentioned above, the same department, i.e., DEDET, has further given this responsibility to Limpopo Business Support Agency (LIBSA) to take care of the co-operatives in the province.

The policy also states the following objectives to fulfil this mandate:

- To establish a body that will co-ordinate and support development of co-operatives;

- To promote and support development of new co-operatives;
- To support and resuscitate existing co-operatives;
- To improve and strengthen relations between the co-operative sector and government;
- To identify and pursue opportunities for economic growth, development and diversification of the co-operative sector;
- To develop resource material for fund about co-operatives; and
- To support recommendations from ILO on co-operatives and the responsibility of governments of the 20th June 2002, Geneva Resolutions No. 23(a).

It is imperative for all stakeholders of development to play a meaningful role in the establishment and management of co-operatives, especially by both government and private sector organizations. According to the SACP's policy discussion document (2005:14-15), all government departments and all spheres of government, building and sustaining a co-operative movement, must enjoy strategic equal emphasis. The government and parastatals must direct funding towards the progressive co-operative sector. Start-up funding, poverty alleviation funds, research development and the State assistance with marketing are all possible and necessary.

2.6. CO-OPERATIVE CHANGE AND RESTRUCTURING

According to Borgen (2000:1), in his discussion document on co-operative change, co-operatives have an inefficient governance structure, and they are kept alive by the support from the third party (i.e., the State). He says greater awareness of this limitation has led to a strong preference for market mechanisms over internal governance structures. He continues to state that the co-operative form is based on logic than is captured by the image of rationality that seems to be prevalent in many current studies of the co-operative form. There is a call for a more coherent theory of the competitiveness of the co-operative form. According to him (Borgen,2000:2), further states that co-operatives should be more active in propagating efficient business methods and introducing restrictions on those co-operative practices that inhibit the efficiency and effectiveness. He argues further that co-operatives lack professional boards, they are played by ambiguous goal structures, they lack decisional efficiency,

they have collective capital at the company hand, they lack resource mobility and are dominated by agents rather than the principals. He states three reasons for this, namely, the long distances between members and their business activities; prices to members do not reflect proper product values; and that members are alienated from the co-operatives by losing control of the downstream vertically integrated co-operatives.

Borgen (2000:2) further argues that a more comprehensive view of the co-operative form is required in order to understand its potential and advantages. A richer theory of co-operatives must leave the under-socialized conception of man that dominates agency theory and transaction cost economics perspectives tend to be biased towards emphasizing the weaknesses of the co-operative form. To more systematic analysis is called for which also explores the benefits of the co-operative form. The discussion paper suggested the solidarity, based loyalty that deserves a prominent position in a revised theory of co-operative organisations. The co-operative values and principles, as revised and stated by ICA, aim at promoting loyalty founded on culturally based group strategy and member solidarity. In his view, the competitive edge of the co-operative organizational form is captured in these two bases of loyalty.

Nik et al (2006:1), in his article, points out that the influence of globalization on the structure and behaviour of co-operatives after globalization, examines the synergic change of co-operative after globalization; and pictures the future of co-operatives in interaction with economical cultural, political, and social conditions. He says the result of globalization is a synergic effect which can either be a positive synergy or a negative synergy. According to Borgen (2002:3), students of agricultural co-operatives are confronted with a diverse body of theoretical and methodological frameworks. The purpose of the paper was to evaluate the usefulness and shortcomings of agency theory as a framework for analyzing the future of Norwegian agricultural co-operatives. In this respect, agency theory seems to be incomplete and its explanatory power is low.

The article further states that the Norwegian agricultural co-operative movement benefits from a collectively oriented cultural heritage. The co-operative form has fitted well into the overall socio-economic structure of Norwegian Agriculture. Under these circumstances, little room has been left for the agency problems to develop and imprint

the operations of Norwegian agricultural co-operatives. Borgen et al (2002:13) further says that changes in the cooperative organization structure can be traced more distinctively at the organizational level. For decades, the corporatist governance structure of the Norwegian agriculture has substantially influenced activities and structure of the co-operatives. A close interplay has developed between the significant actors in the domestic environment and the co-operatives. The agricultural co-operatives were given the mandate to implement the national agricultural policy. To date, the organizational structure of Norwegian co-operatives is new in a state of rapid transition. Change in member value can be traced in the form of changes in membership strategies, values and mentality. The more alike the members, the less likely that agency problem unfold in co-operatives. Borgen et al also indicates that what today characterizes the body of members of many co-operatives, however, is increasing diversity and intergenerational value differences. The new generation of farmers differs from their parental generation in many respects. They are more likely to be influenced by modern trends within technology, consumer patterns, etc. In future, members will probably identify more with their specific type of production and close colleagues in the same niche than with the co-operative organisation as such.

According to Richards et al., (1998:1), co-operatives in North America are consolidating at an increasing rate and for a variety of reasons. While many co-operatives merge with others or are acquired to achieve greater economies of scale, several fail due to changes in the external economy, which make them redundant. Often that redundancy is reflected in a heightened sense of member dissatisfaction. He says that many argue that such dissatisfaction is likely to arise in co-operatives as a result of principal agent problems.

Hart (1987:1), on the other hand, states that the farm credit system is a major participant in extending credit to and brokering losses from the agricultural sector during the current agricultural process. He further says that assistance to the system should be accompanied by organizational and structural changes that address the fundamental reasons for its vulnerability. He states conditions suggest three basic choices, namely, preservation of the system in recognizable form, decentralization to the district level and a shift towards a whole solving function.

According to the publication by the Canadian Co-operatives Secretariat named *The Co-operative Option: Agricultural Fit for the Public Policy In Agriculture* (2002:1-2) the agricultural and agri-food is today characterised by the increasing global competition, rapid technological and market change along with increased environmental and financial requirements. The publication further states that one of the major challenges is to engage farmers to successfully compete in this new environment and capture new opportunities. According to this publication, the co-operative approach can be an effective tool for the continued future success and prosperity of farmers. It continues to state that one of the unique attributes of the co-operative structures is that it provides a systematic way for producers to come together to pursue common interests.

2.7. EMPLOYMENT CREATION

On the contribution of community cooperatives, Gordon (2002:295) says that the origins of the Scottish social economy lies in the “Highlands Problem”, arising from the processes of depopulation of the Highlands and Islands as a result of the clearances, the need for local employment opportunities, the exploitation of Scotland, a British colony, the cultural dimension, and the profound importance of the land questions. He further says that the initiative has been very successful on a number of different levels; it created new jobs, services and enterprises; very importantly, it built asset bases and revenue income to underpin development; it changed people’s lives, was genuinely bottom up, raised consciousness, reinforced the mutual cooperation tradition of the area, and inspired people elsewhere to do similar things. It claims a degree of radicalism and the achievement of some significant social change.

According to Chouinard et al (2002:79), the community is able to influence the orientation of its development in terms of the larger needs of the community by taking charge of destiny and influencing the rules that will preside over its socio-economic development. The case of the Acadie-Bathurst Forestry Workers Co-operative demonstrates clearly the importance of the mobilization of the community to act collectively to create and maintain jobs in rural communities. Moreover, this demonstrates that co-operative models can be a successful alternative to private enterprises if access to the resources is secured.

According to the document entitled *Africa Recovery* (1998:8), analysis of women's employment in Africa is constrained by unreliable-data, as well as by problems in defining what contributes to economic activity for women, particularly in the agricultural and informal sectors. Ongoing economic crises and the gulf between job creation and the growth in the number of job-seekers have worsened the employment situation for women and men alike. The document further states that women face greater vulnerabilities in the labour market because of their relative lack of education and training, the tendency to channel women into certain occupations, and the continuous heavy burdens of unpaid domestic work, child-bearing and child-care, which restrict the time and energy for income-earning activities. The publication further states that the UNDP states that women are two-thirds less likely than men to get waged employment, while only 3 out of 10 women in the labour force in sub-Saharan Africa are paid employees. In 1990, 5 percent of the female labour force worked in industry, 30 percent in services, 23 percent in sales, and only 6 per cent in professional, technical, administrative or managerial positions.

2.8. AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES AND SOCIAL ECONOMY

In support of the notion of co-operatives as an ideal phenomenon for women participation in the mainstream economy, the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mandisi Mphahlwa his speech in parliament, "Co-operatives, the way forward," said that the challenge is to grow this concept in the country, integrate it into existing mainstream economic activities and use co-operatives as a means to tackle some of the challenges that are facing the country. The minister further said in support of employment creation, that a co-operative is a democratic member-owned and member-controlled enterprise that encourages self-reliance and sustainable job creation, mainly in agriculture (*City Press Business*, March 20 2005:6).

Co-operatives of any kind should always strike a balance between economic and social components or aspects as they are social entities and should be managed to improve the economic standing of the society. More often, what is being overemphasised is the economic aspect at the expense of the social aspect. According to Levy (2000:129), high level of economic activity tends to increase the distance between the association

and the enterprise aspect of the co-operative, and it is conversely hampered by a state of high economic involvement and risk, as in the case with production – mainly agricultural co-operatives under stringent market competition.

According to Gordon (2002:97-109), in the sense of bottom-up community economic initiatives, the following are key characteristics of social enterprises:

- They have their origin in local communities, and usually arise out of adversity, often with the sense of having been abandoned by most traditional structures of capital state and society;
- They seek to satisfy both commercial and social aims, thereby meeting local community and social needs;
- They attempt to “empower” local communities and gain greater community influence and control over the local economy;
- They are not-for-profit organisations;
- They aim to retain more of the benefits of their efforts in the locality and their assets are held in trust for the benefit of their local community;
- They encourage the participation of their members on an equal and cooperative basis; and
- They promote mutual co-operation between social enterprises and with other organisations in the social economy.

Gordon further says that the community co-operatives of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland are not only part of the social economy, but have a very important originating, and instrumental, stage in the development of much of the modern social economy in the UK.

In his study, Ray (1998:137) states that the purpose of his study was to develop a better understanding of the economic efficiency of local farm supply and grain marketing co-operatives. The study provides information on (1) the type of efficiency that limit the performance of co-operative; (2) the potential for efficiency gains by capturing unrealized economics of scale or diversification, and the firm level and geographic factors that are associated with the efficiency of co-operatives.

According to Fulton et al., (1996:1), joint ventures and strategic alliance agreement together represent an opportunity for local co-operatives to take advantage of size economics while maintaining their individual identities. Phillips (1994:1) came up with an article that attempted to develop on the basis of the contemporary economic theory of the firm, but with adaptation to the co-operative structure- a realistic, workable, and reasonably complete theory of the economic nature of the co-operative association. According to him, this theoretical framework involves (1) the economic structure of the co-operative associations, (2) the economic relationship among the participating units; and (3) the conditions necessary for profit maximization in the co-operating firms.

According to Peterson (1992), the role and limitations of co-operatives are derived using an approach based on investment cash-flows and net present value. Co-operatives are viewed as an option for member investment as well as an option for member patronage. The investment approach yields results similar to the traditional paradigms that focus on patronage. In addition, the approach makes more implicit the impact of member investment co-operative existence, valuation, performance measurement strategy options. Fulton et al., (1992:1), in their abstract, provided statistical evidence of the economic importance of co-operatives and anecdotal evidence from interviews that demonstrates the value of co-operatives in contributing to the social well-being of residents and in maintaining the sense of community. The study also posits a number of theoretical models that can be used to examine the role of co-operatives in communities. According to the findings of this study, co-operatives play a critical role in ensuring the continued social and economic existence of many communities, particularly smaller-communities facing rural decline.

According to Wikipedia, member economic participation is one of the defining features of co-operative societies, and constitutes the third Rochdale Principle in the International Co-operative Association's (ICA's) statement on the co-operative identity. According to ICA, co-operatives are enterprises in which members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their enterprises.

Africa Recovery (1998:6) states that women provide the backbone of the rural economy

in many of the sub-Saharan Africa. It states that about 80% of the economically active-female labour force is employed in agriculture and women comprise about 47% of the total agricultural labour force. It states further that food production is the major activity of rural women and their responsibilities and labour inputs often exceed those of men in most areas in Africa. Women also provide much of the labour for men's cultivation of export-crops, from which women derive little direct benefit. The paper further indicates that the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) found, in a survey of nine African countries in 1996, that women's contribution to production of food crops ranges from 30 per cent in Sudan to 80 percent in the Republic of Congo, with estimates for other countries tending towards the higher end of the scale. According to the paper, women have also taken advantage of new opportunities to produce vegetables for urban markets on fringe land using highly labour-intensive practices. Where social practices of female seclusion prevent them from working outside the home, as in parts of Nigeria and Ethiopia, they engage in food processing and trade with the assistance of young girls. The paper finally states that women are the backbone of Africa's rural economy, accounting for 70 percent of food production.

2.9. MANAGEMENT AND DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF CO-OPERATIVES

It is always imperative for the co-operatives, through their leadership and management, to educate their members on issues pertinent to economic trends and financial management, since this will go a long way in sustaining them in alleviating poverty and unemployment. The co-operative movement traditionally has a personal, long-lasting character centred on a humanistic economy. This is supported by Brown (2000:113), who says that, co-operatives have yet to re-evaluate leadership and management trends, and internalize democracy and information. He further indicates that, co-operatives are not playing any role in educating on social and human costs of present trends in the economy. Without a social motivation from within, co-operatives have been unable to challenge the corporate culture of the globalization process.

According to SA Co-operatives Act No. 14 of 2005 section 32, the affairs of a co-operative must be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of such number of directors as the constitution of the co-operative permits. It further states that the Board of Directors must exercise the powers and perform the duties of the co-operative

subject to this Act and constitution of the co-operative. The section finally states that the Board of Directors must be elected for a period as may be set out in the constitution of the co-operative, which period may not be more than four years.

In the discussion paper entitled, the National Co-operative Association of South Africa (NCASA), *Umrabolo* No. 18 (2003:2) states that the organisation (NCASA) believes in the values of self-help, self-responsibility, self-management, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. It outlines the values that shaped international co-operative movement for many years. One of the principles that guide members of NCASA is democratic control. According to this principle co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner. Wikipedia states that members contribute equitably to and democratically control the capital of their co-operative. At least, part of the capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. This enshrines democratic control over the co-operative and how its capital is used.

According to Gray et al., (1991:1), organisational charts of membership structures can be useful tools for monitoring member control when they accurately depict a concept of control. Their paper develops the concept “member control” by placing it within co-operative principles and democratic theory. It is from this perspective that members control their organisation when, through a democratic process of decision making, they are able to keep the co-operative a co-operative, a condition they call containment. They further state that with this conceptual development, a containment mention of member control charting is developed.

Anderson (1987:1) asks what the impact is of democratic control on co-operative decision making. He suggests, in his study, that democratic control does not guarantee optimal decisions for the co-operative. He says that substantial decisions result from simply majority rule, the activity of co-operative interests to the detriment of the co-operative firm, and management pursuing its interests at the expense of the

membership. Azzam et al (1991:1), in their study, indicate that management practices that are board responsibilities are not contributing to the speed of adjustment in reaching the desired financial performance, which is the responsibility of the board of directors. But the management, when independently pursuing management's responsibility or when working with that board on shared responsibility, does contribute to the speed of adjustment toward the desired financial goal.

According to Cook (1994:1), Mintsburg's managerial working role model is used to explore the ways role and behaviour of the general manager of a user-oriented firm differ from those of the manager of an Investor-owned Firm (IOF). It is argued that in the roles of conflict resolution, resource allocation, information spokesperson, and leadership, the challenges of a user-oriented manager are not only significantly different but often more difficult. The study concludes that managers who are comfortable with complexity; technical operation people-oriented resource allocation; multi stakeholders communication, and with strong coalition building skills are most successful in user-oriented organisation.

Gios (2002:3-12), in his abstract, states that at present, agricultural cooperatives, like all co-operatives, are faced with many challenges. They are questioned about their organisational and management framework, their relations with local communities and with the market. He says that in Italy, there is an ongoing debate relating to how co-operatives at large should or are supposed to evolve in the context in which the market pressure seem to overcome the traditional characteristics of the co-operative movement (mutuality, solidarity, the one head one vote" principle and so on). He further states that by taking into account the long-rooted experience of agricultural co-operatives in the country of Trento, the authors intend to analyze the main economic, organisational and legal problems affecting those co-operatives. On examining these problems, the article also intends to bring about some proposals and recommendations for the future development of agricultural co-operatives.

2.10. COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF CO-OPERATIVES

Much of the current research on agricultural co-operatives is biased towards weaknesses of the cooperative organization form. The literature says very little about

strengths and advantages of the co-operative form, and what is necessary to develop the form's uniqueness into a sustainable competitive advantage, (Rokholt et al., 2000:149-156). They argue that for co-operatives to remain viable and competitive, advantages of these entities must be clearly manifested. They further say that there is a lack of systematic theorizing in the cooperative form. They say, typically, the weaknesses of the co-operative form, are compared to the strengths of the investor owned firms. Their point is that the co-operative form is based on a logic that is different from that captured by the image of rationality, seemingly prevalent in many studies of co-operatives. Their study argues that a more comprehensive view of the co-operative form is required in order to understand its potential and advantages. A richer theory of co-operatives must leave the under-socialized conception of man that dominates agency theory and transactions cost economics and include the significance of loyalty and solidarity relations as important aspects.

The study suggests some core components that should be included in such a theory. It says that co-operative organizational form is a structural consequence of a distinct strategy that reflects the problems goals, situations and thinking of the founders. The study identifies two distinct strategies for co-operatives as follows:

Strategy A: to separate the member organization from the business organization. This seeks to eliminate the perceived weakness to efficient business performance imposed by the demands from the member organization. The member organization is frequently perceived as a hindrance to necessary organizational innovation; and

Strategy B: to develop the member organization into a competitive advantage. The member organization is viewed as a facilitator for increasing competitive strength and fostering new innovation.

At the outset, it becomes clear that co-operatives are implicitly based on Strategy B that the member organization and the business organization mutually support each other. The study further argues that it is analogous to say that the co-operative form links vertical integration and horizontal integration. The former is represented by the

business strategy. The two types of integration constitute a whole. The core success criterion from the member's perspective is to enable them to play the role as integrators in the vertical production distribution chain. It is obviously not a straight forward task to get many people differing in their situation, experiences, attitudes and outlooks, to organise and voluntarily delegate authority to a collective body. According to the study, it is even more challenging to develop commitment and enforce compliance and loyalty. According to Røkholt et al., (2000:9), the comparative organizational form is the structural consequence of a consequence of a distinct strategy that reflects the problems, goals, situations, and thinking of the founders.

Moyano-Estrada et al., (2001:40-41) say the Condominiums represent an associative experience that allow them to evaluate the capacity of the family-based agriculture to adapt itself to the demands of capitalist development without experiencing social disintegration or losing its singular nature. This phenomenon, they say, is very important in a country like Brazil, where family forms of production have never held an important place politically, except in occasional campaign speeches and electoral promises. The condominiums must be analyzed as both a reaction of the pig producers to the process of social exclusion provoked by the conservative modernization of Brazilian agriculture, as well as a specific alternative to the macro co-operative models which were consolidated in the framework of that process and that eventually suffered a loss of legitimacy in the eyes of the small farmers. The importance of this cooperative model must be seen in relation to the fact that it is not being used by sectors that are excluded or on the road to extinction, but rather by the most advanced sectors of pig production in Brazil, thus representing nearly 45 percent of all slaughtered pigs in the country, a sector that is wholly integrated into the large agribusiness complexes.

The study further indicates that the expansion of condominiums to the sectors of Brazilian agriculture manifests the potential of those flexible forms of cooperation to respond to the demands by small farmer. Their functionality transactions the strict sphere of agriculture to become a model of reference that encourages collective projects for development in the rural society in general.

According to a report by the United States Department of Agriculture (2002:4), on

agricultural co-operatives, a consolidation of firms at the processing, wholesale and retail levels of the food marketing system was unabated in the 21st century. Market influence and bargaining strength of even the largest cooperatives are limited as a consequence. Food retailers flex their market muscle by imposing co-ordination mechanisms that demand strict discipline and conformity from suppliers. Food processor exerts greater control over distribution channels by integrating back into the production of raw materials through a variety of ownership and contractual arrangements. The document further argues that such arrangements rob producers of decision-making authority and market choices. The document further argues that poultry industry, like the integration in the hog and other industries and the pervasiveness of contract farming, leads to what one panel participant called the chickenization of US agriculture.

2.11. CHALLENGES FACING CO-OPERATIVES

Agricultural co-operatives, like other forms of co-operatives, face serious and enormous challenges, ranging from the public perceptions about them, their capacity to improve the people's lives, their management, support from the State, access to land, access to financial resources education and training of members of the co-operatives, growth, etc. The chapter, however, focuses on challenges pertaining to production, access to land and education and training, as outlined below.

2.11.1. Agricultural Production

According to Gjoberg et al., (1999:1), agricultural producers face significant price risk. They state that, for some products, farmers may hedge. This risk is well-functioning future markets. For several products, however, no such risk-management instrument is readily available. They suggest that farmers reduce price risk by organizing co-operatives wherein members diversify by creating "accounting" portfolios. The approach is illustrated with data from the Dutch flower market, and some practical problems connected to such a co-operative in agriculture are addressed.

According to the publication about South Africa on Agriculture (2006:1-4), the most important factor limiting agricultural production is the availability of rain. Rainfall is distributed unevenly across the country, with almost 50% of water being used for

agricultural purposes. The document argues that primary agriculture contributes about 2,6% to the Gross Domestic Products (GDP) of South Africa and almost 9% of employment. The document further states that, in general, the prices of agricultural products increased by 13% from 2000 to 2001. Prices of field crops rose by 6%.

To this end, briefing Paper No.1 on Agricultural Policy Development process (1997:11-12) captures drought, hail, fire, snow, crop disease, livestock and infection aspects as sources of disaster. The paper indicates further that a committee responsible for Disaster Management will firstly examine existing disaster-management policies, assess the cost of such policies, determine whether they are achieving objectives, and identify deficiencies in the following areas:

- early warning and monitoring;
- mitigation policies and programmes that are direct and indirect (including impact of existing drought policy on production of no drought resistant crops);
- government incentives and disincentives to good management;
- types of prerequisites for government support for mitigation, relief and recovery;
- nutritional and income support;
- co-ordination with other departments at national, provincial, local government levels; and
- regional and international co-operation.

Secondly, the committee will set out principles for government support for the mitigation, relief and recovery from agricultural disasters including the following:

- support for prevention;
- support for reduction of impact;
- identification of disaster conditions;
- identification of recipients for support;
- early warning and monitoring of the disaster conditions and the government programmes;
- support for research;
- support for incomes and nutritional status;

- support (on farm and off-farm) production;
- ensuring the co-ordination of short-term measures and long-term policy; and
- support for the integration of the managerial, economic and environmental sustainability of farming.

Thirdly, the committee will identify critical areas in legislation and/or policy where changes are required. Fourthly, the committee will present a strategy for disaster managements and proposals for implementation, including cost of such programmes and persons who will pay the costs (National or Provincial Government, levies on exports, etc).

2.11.2. Access to Land

According to Africa Recovery (1998:6), the major constraint in any farming activity is access to land. Across Africa, agricultural intensification, population growth and economic change have led to substantive shifts from common property systems of tenure towards more centralized resources control. According to the document, women and children lost out in the process, where land reform schemes have been introduced. They often have displaced complex systems of land use and tenure in which women had certain rights in common law and local practices, if not in legislation.

New land titles usually have been registered in the name of a male household head regardless of women's economic contribution to the household their customary rights or the increasing number of female-headed households. The publication further relates that as a result of "women in development" and NGO activities, some women have been granted land to start communal gardens from which they generate income. When these gardens are visibly remunerative, women's continued access rights become vulnerable and subject to encroachment by male land owners. The publication says that in other parts of northern Ghana, land that woman have carefully tended has been taken away, leaving them with less fertile and more distant plots. The low income and increased uncertainties as well as risks that women face in their production-activities, compounded by the lack of access to land, is pushing many of them out of traditional agriculture.

2.11.3 Education and Training

According to *Africa Recovery* (1998:9-10), lack of access to formal education and training, has been identified as a key barrier to women's employment and advancement in society. It is stated in this publication that in Africa, female illiteracy rates were over 60 percent in 1996; compared to 41 percent for men. Certain countries have extremely high rates, such as Burkina Faso at 91, 1 percent, Sierra Leone at 88,7 percent, Chad at 82,1 percent and Guinea at 86,6 percent. Literacy classes for women appear to have limited impact, whereas programmes linked to income generating activities have been most successful. The publication further says that, in many countries, parents still prefer to send boys to school, seeing little need for education for girls. In addition, factors such as adolescent pregnancy, early marriage and girl's greater burden of household labour act as obstacles to their schooling.

While most girls do not go beyond primary education, school curricular have not been guided by this reality and their content is not geared to helping girls to acquire basic life skills. The curriculum is also suffused with gender biases and lead girls into stereotypical feminine jobs such as teaching, nursing a clerical work. Very few women are found in scientific or technical education where they could develop better skills to secure better paying jobs. The publication says further that there have been improvements in the net enrolment of girls at primary levels, but disparities persist in comparison to enrolment of boys. Female enrolment numbers decrease as girls move up the education ladder. Exceptionally in Southern Africa, the out migration of men has led to a variety of different pattern of gender representation in the education system. According to this publication, a woman's education beyond primary school is a reliable route to economic empowerment and long-term change in the status quo, as well as a determinant of a family's health and nutrition.

According to the document on United States Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Co-operatives in the 21st Century (2002:17 & 29), two themes permeate strategies for co-operatives to succeed in the 21st century. The first is that greater investment is needed in the people who make up co-operatives. Members, directors, managers and advisors must receive the training required to deal with 21st century issues otherwise they will

neither completely understand the options available nor have the ability to analyse them and make sound business decisions. The second is that an emphasis must be placed on pragmatism and profitability. Co-operatives are businesses and in the years ahead they must focus on solving business problems and providing value to their members, if they do not, members will stop patronizing them and they will just fade away. The document further states that co-operatives have a tradition of educating their membership, leadership and staff in both the principles of co-operation and sound business practices. However, in recent years, national and regional programmes have been de-emphasised to redirect resources to meeting short term profitability goals. Educating employees and young members is an important part of leadership development. Some co-operatives do well in this area, sending employees to the Graduate Institute of Co-operative Leadership held annually at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

According to the publication, training is critically important for directors. They must have the ability to learn and the time to be trained in areas in which they lack experience and expertise. Increasingly complex financial issues and business arrangements of co-operatives require directors to have substantial knowledge and/or experience in related business matters. Co-operatives must create opportunities for directors to gain knowledge in areas in which they lack understanding. The document states that directors especially need to understand their role in the co-operatives. Too many directors want to become involved in the day-to-day decision making, the realm of the hired management.

It is thus imperative to note that directors need to learn more about their responsibility in setting up policy and overseeing the manager, and not interfering with the manager's handling of routine operations. More attention is also needed to help directors understand co-operative finance and related business issues, so they can decipher complex financial reports, contracts and proposals. Continued structural change in the co-operatives, also impose demands on directors to effectively assess various strategic options. Directors must learn how to evaluate restructuring proposals to determine whether a new organizational framework is necessary and, if so, how it should be designed and operated. In addition, co-operatives must also evaluate their own

commitment to education to improve the skills their leaders will need to realize the potential of their organizations.

One of the most important aspects that need attention is skills training in areas such as processing and marketing. These are very critical areas in any agricultural co-operative to ensure, its growth and sustainability. This is supported by Ruben (2000:177), who states that profit from what agriculturist produces is made by processing and marketing. He further states that business has to be big in order to succeed in these two activities especially where it has to be big and powerful food chains.

2.12. CO-OPERATIVES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

According to Gertler (2001:4), co-operatives may be appropriately suited to promote environmentally and socially advanced forms of sustainable development. As organizations that are operating in market contacts, co-operatives can implement sustainable resource management only if there are ways to capture some of the value preserved or created. He states that co-operatives tend to be over represented in sectors and contexts that role out the kinds of easy relationships to environmental management. Co-operatives are concentrated in renewable resource-based sectors such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. Strong representation in natural resource-based sectors imply that co-operatives have a particular need to implement sustainable practices, but structural conditions may make it different to defray the necessary investments. Co-operative are usually active in areas in sectors with how rates of return in capital.

Examples in this regard include banking services for the working class people, housing for moderate-income families and processing basic commodities that offer little opportunity for product differentiation. He further states that co-operatives have often come into existence due to the fact that small scale producers need protection from more powerful players in the market place. Other co-operatives have been developing where conventional firms perceive high risk and how returns given market structure or the character of the particular resources involved.

These co-operatives may survive because they take on roles that are of minor interest

to others. Certain co-operatives have been established in reaction and response to acute ecological and social crises. Gertler further states that sustainable development is a strategic option for all co-operatives. This obviously includes co-operatives that hope to access organic, fair trade and other kinds of international solidarity markets. It also applies to co-operatives that sell into traditional or conventional commodity markets, or that provide impute and socially just goods and services, which are closely related dimensions of the co-operative advantage. He also says that this is the arena in which co-operatives, in particular, can reap important dividends in terms of synergies and complementarities.

For co-operatives to be successful in marketing their co-operative advantage, the leadership of these businesses will be required to educate and empower consumers. This must include clear explanations concerning the co-operative difference and a new orientation towards sharing information about the conditions of production and the parameters of quality. According to Gertler, processing, packaging and deceptive advertising could not have come at the right time as many people now lack rudimentary and essential knowledge concerning the origins and preparation of basic foodstuffs. Co-operatives can, in this regard, take a lead role in re-skilling consumers. He says this is a strategy that a few co-operatives or private firms will be willing to emulate in part because they have more incentives to keep consumers in a state of semi-literacy when it comes to reading the various components of quality, value and cost.

Gertler further states that co-operatives have strong ties to local communities and regions so that members and staff benefit from sustainable practices as workers, residents and household members. Co-operatives are rooted capital with strong ties to local communities and regions. This is clear evidence that cooperatives can, in various ways, benefit many people in various ways.

2.13. THE IMPACT OF CO-OPERATIVES ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN

According to Global Employment Trends for Women, a publication of the International Labour Organisation (2009:12), co-operatives are very powerful vehicles of social inclusion and political and economic empowerment for women, regardless of the type of

co-operatives or sector they belong to. The publication also states that as group-based enterprises, co-operatives bring to their members the benefits of joining forces with others. Apart from being able to access economies of scale as providers of services or as consumers, participating in a co-operative as a member, elected leader or manager also brings with it enhanced status and voice. The publication further states that in Africa, women are known to produce up to 80% of the food, but when it comes to agricultural inputs and services the share going to women is meagre as they receive only 7% of agricultural extension services, less than 10% of the credit offered to small scale farmers while they own only 1% of the land. In this context, women are often found concentrated in subsistence agriculture and unpaid farm work, and excluded from lucrative agricultural opportunities such as crop production.

According to Global Employment Trends for Women (2009:3), women's lack of access to finance, due to factors such as collateral, complicated administrative procedures unsuitable loan sizes or interest rates, is one of the major aspects affecting and limiting the investment and productive capacity of women workers as well as their ability to finance other basic and strategic needs. Only 3% of the women in Kenya has access to the formal financial sector as opposed to approximately 44% of men. Most of the communities are responding to these constraints by setting up financial co-operatives composed of women. In Tanzania, women's Savings and Credit Co-operatives (SACCO) membership grew with 36% in 2008. According to the publication, President Kikwete encouraged the newly launched Women's Bank to work with SACCOs to ensure that rural women are reached out across the country.

This document further states that, in Kenya, new loan products are being designed by co-operative financial institutions, from Co-operative Bank to microfinance providers such as Universal Traders SACCO, which provide a variety of loan products targeting women and suitable for large scale enterprises as well as smaller ventures with loan sizes from 5000-500 000 KSH.

According to the International Labour Organisation's publication, Global Employment Trends for Women (2009:1), the past few years of economic crisis, African Financial and Agricultural Co-operatives have been negatively impacted by the crisis. Compared

to other forms of enterprises, however, co-operatives worldwide are showing resilience. This resilience can be attributed to the nature of co-operative model itself, namely, its democratic governance, the importance of safeguarding core values and the fact that decisions are driven by members rather than profit, which in times of crisis becomes the most important. The publication further states that co-operatives have a role to play by paving the way towards recovery that is socially and economically sound and sustainable. The ILO's Global Employment Trends (2009:6) states that it is unsurprising that co-operatives have been clearly identified as an innovative strategy to implement the Global Jobs Pact (GJP) in Africa. According to this publication, the following are among the promising practices of co-operatives:

- Wamunyu FCS Ltd and Masii Ltd Joint Marketing, which is a COOP^{AFRCA} funded project in Kenya to support ten small uneconomic co-operatives and dairy farming focused self groups in the Machakos district to federate with the view to strengthening their position in the dairy value chain.
- Project Level Capacity Building for Women Co-operative Entrepreneurship in the Kingdom of Swaziland, which is funded jointly by AGFUND & DFID-COOP^{AFRCA}, which was launched in June 2008. In a country where 66% of the population is living below poverty line, partly as a result of unemployment (40% of the labour force), and exacerbated by an extremely high prevalence of HIV and AIDS infection (38% of the adult population), and where women are more affected than men by all three problems, co-operatives can address all these dimensions in the fight against poverty by providing opportunity, employment and security. The project aims at creating viable and sustainable co-operative organisations capable of creating economic empowerment of women, job opportunities and a reduction of violence against women, especially in rural areas.

At the international level, ILO Resolution No. 193 on the promotion of Co-operatives explicitly states that “special consideration should be given to increasing women’s participation in the co-operative movement at all levels, particularly leadership levels and that national policies should promote gender equality in co-operatives and in their work.

According to Mwelukiwa Joshua Sizya, in his paper presented at the United Nations during the Observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (2001:1), as is typical of most of the colonial African countries, co-operatives have formed a major part of the development strategies aimed at the majorities of the rural communities. He stated that there was an understanding that co-operatives provided a model for pooling resources of people of limited means to achieve commonly identified development needs of the respective people. He states that Tanzanian Co-operatives constituted part of the variables in the political philosophy and development policies which have guided the development path of the country. According to him, this has had very substantial impact on the growth and development of the co-operatives movement with important implications on the potential contributions of co-operatives on poverty reduction. Sizya further states that Agricultural Marketing Co-operatives have emerged as a critical rural development institution in Tanzania. Co-operatives have been the kingpins of development intervention aiming to alleviate poverty of the small holder farmers spread out in the rural areas of Tanzania. He states that the colonial governments promoted the formation of agricultural marketing co-operatives for cash crops such as coffee, cotton and tobacco. The Nationalist post colonial government saw co-operatives as a vehicle which could be harnessed to spread the benefits of development to a wide section of the Tanzanian population. This was to be done by combining the energies of the farming community and the workers to feed, cloth, house and educate themselves and their children and generally better their economic and social lives. Sizya believes that it was the heavy government involvement and manipulation that eroded the poverty reduction potential of co-operatives. He finally states that the promotion of genuine member participation and control in co-operatives is the major means that will resurrect the capacity to contribute to poverty reduction.

Di Falco et al., (2007:1), on the other hand, state that co-operatives in the Southern regions of Italy process farmers, harvests of durum wheat into bread, label it and sell it locally. They state that in this relatively marginalised region of Italy, co-operatives enable farmers to capture more of the value of the final product and reduce marketing costs. According to them, in all marginalised regions of the world where a co-operative structure would enable farmers to gain revenue and reduce marketing costs, and consumer demand is localised, promoting co-operatives might also generate a positive

externality of maintaining variety diversity. They further state that variety diversity also improves yield performance through genetic processes, it may also contribute to sustaining regional yield levels. Their findings led to two general hypotheses, that:

- Buying local can support diversification at the regional level to the extent that production conditions and/or consumer tastes continue to be heterogeneous.
- Even where consumer is less localised but the tastes of distant consumers remain heterogeneous, given that product differentiation also reflects variety diversification, markets can support the maintenance of diversity.

According to FAO Corporate Document Repository, co-operatives in the dairy sector in Kenya, have recently experienced drastic change in business environment from a monopoly to liberalised markets, where they compete with the private sector. The traditional operating methods learnt during the regulated environment are no longer sufficient for successful competition. The document further stresses that in order for co-operatives to improve the fit of organisational culture to the liberalised markets, seeds of change are required. These include the following recommendations:

- Change into customer oriented culture
- Improve financial reporting
- Reform tax laws
- Computerise
- Recruit more qualified managers
- Improve business training of managers

According to Deere et al., (1995:175), land tenacity in the Cuban Agriculture has experienced three pronounced changes since the beginning of the revolution in January 1959. The first agrarian reform law was enacted in May of that year. It proscribed latifundia (described as estates larger than 405 hectares), and initially distributed some land and encouraged the development of co-operatives on large estates. Most of these co-operatives had, however, been converted into state farms by 1962. Deere et al., further state that the second agrarian Reform Law enacted in 1963. Expropriated the land of most farmers with more than 67 hectares. The State then became the owner

and manager of vast majority of Cuba's agricultural land. The process lasted exactly thirty years, until the creation of the Basic Units of Co-operative Production (UBPC) in October 1993.

According to Deere et al., (1995: 231), field research conducted in three different Cuban municipalities, show that peasant households (in regions characterised by sugarcane mixed cropping and livestock production) generate the highest income levels in the agricultural sector. Moreover, private sector incomes were considerably higher than those of households of State farm wage workers. They state further that the relatively high incomes earned by members of Agricultural Production and Marketing Co-operatives are indicative of the higher profitability of Cuba's Co-operatives as compared to the State farmers.

According to NiMble Business Solutions' publication on Facilitation of Growth Through Systems (2005:1), co-operatives are the best mechanism to address market and supply chain failures in agricultural commodities. The publication states that co-operatives provide economies of scale to influence and intervene in the supply chain of agricultural commodities for better remuneration thereby creating wealth. Ethiopian Co-operatives were formed with the aim of eliminating exploitation by market intermediaries. The State intervened with study on supply chain analysis and market mechanisms. At producers level, the interventions were made with education on co-operative principles and awareness, while at procurement levels interventions were by establishing warehouses based on economically viable logistic models. At the marketing level, the State tied up the co-operatives with the buyer, thus eliminating the middlemen and thereby lowering transaction costs, resulting in better prices. Benefits in this regard were both social and economical in that higher prices resulted in higher living standards of members and thrust on education by exposure led to scientific farming practices and the creation of a need for education coupled with jobs for the unemployed youths in procurement grading transportation, etc.

Co-operatives in South Africa, like in other parts of the world, can be very powerful vehicles of social inclusion and political and economic empowerment for women, regardless of the type of co-operatives or sector they belong to. This can happen

provided there is adequate State and community support in various areas of need such as education and training, and the skilling of members and well as re-skilling of consumers. For co-operatives to succeed, they should gradually be given support until they are completely self sufficient and self reliant as it happened in other parts of the world, like the new generation co-operatives in Italy, where cooperatives are not reliant and dependent on the State.

2.14. CONCLUSION

In the light of what has been discussed above, it is succinctly clear that South Africa is not the only country in the world experiencing challenges of improving the people's lives through agricultural co-operatives. Most of the challenges highlighted in this chapter include management and control, that is, leadership in agricultural co-operatives as fully fledged business entities, lack of strategies for employment opportunities, lack of government support, lack of access to land, lack of education and training and limited food production due to uneven distribution of rainfall.

It should, however, be stated that that the new democratic government has developed a comprehensive co-operative policy and concomitant legislation with the intention of improving people's lives. The Department of Economic Development Environment and Tourism has been entrusted with the responsibility of helping communities establish agricultural co-operatives, particularly in the rural areas, but the role of municipalities, both local and district, is not clearly defined. Municipalities as government structures closest to the people would be ideal in caring out this mandate.

It is thus clear that for South Africa to succeed in co-operative development she should take cue from the new generation co-operatives that are successful in South America Europe, Cuba, Asia and other African countries such as Kenya and Tanzania.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology the researcher has employed in conducting the study. The scope of the chapter covered research design, area of study, population, sampling methods, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. This is a qualitative study where the researcher used four agricultural co-operatives from four rural villages in the Polokwane Municipal area, namely, Mashashane Agricultural Co-operative, Phegelelo Agricultural Co-operative at Ga-Thaba, Mothiba Agricultural Co-operative and Itireleng Co-operative at Matamanyane village in Moletjie. Purposive sampling study was used to draw the sample of the study. The researcher further used non-scheduled structured interviews for the collection of data.

In this chapter, a particular attention was focused on the following aspects, as highlighted by Mouton (2001:123):

- Provision of an explanation as to which definition of variables were chosen and the grounds on which they were based;
- An explanation of the sampling design, sampling techniques employed and the criteria used in the choice of the sample size;
- Giving full account and details of the data collection process as well as gaining access to the subjects, data collection techniques and procedures used;
- Describing procedures employed for capturing and editing data to minimize error;
- Discussion of ethical issues considered when conducting the study;
- An account was also made for the selection of data analysis procedures and the actual procedures used; and
- Discussion on the quality of data collected by highlighting shortcomings, limitations and gaps in the data.

3.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This highlights the methodology that the researcher followed when the study was conducted. Leedy (1993:121) defines research methodology as way of employing certain approaches to extract facts that can be utilized to solve a given problem. It should be pointed out at the outset that there are two well-known and recognizable approaches of research (De Vos et al., 1998:249). The study used a qualitative research method as it is more of a social research. This is also because the study is primarily about increasing human understanding on the concept of agricultural co-operatives and most importantly, their impact on women.

The study was not grounded on any theory and intended to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme. In that case, words and sentences were used to record and qualify information (Bless 2000:38), that was also an evaluation research or programme evaluation of which the purpose was to evaluate the impact of social intervention through co-operatives (Babbie, 1994:238). The results of the study cannot be quantifiable because this is a qualitative study. The study was centred on observation, interviewing and documentary analysis. According to Bouma et al (1995:206), qualitative research is any social science research that produces results that are not obtained by statistical procedures or other methods of quantification. Creswell (1994:2) also defines qualitative approach as an enquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words reporting detailed views and informants conducted in a natural setup. Finally, Neuman (1997:329) also identifies characteristics of qualitative approach as follows: it follows a more nonlinear and cyclical path; it constructs social reality and cultural meaning; it emphasizes authenticity; values are explicit; it is situationally constrained; it investigates few cases; data are in the form of words from documents; it deals more with observations and transcripts; it analyses themes and the researcher is fully involved through interaction with the informants throughout the research process.

According to Fraenkel et al (1996:442), quantitative research investigates the quality of relationships, situations or materials. Neuman (1997:14), on the other hand, states that the focus of research is on variables and reliability is the key feature. Unlike qualitative approach where data are analysed by identifying themes, quantitative data analysis is done through statistical procedures.

The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches in this study as it was relevant to the aim of the study. The aim of the study was to investigate, understand describe as well as to assess the impact of agricultural co-operatives on women in the rural areas of the Polokwane Municipality. The researcher wanted to personally have an interaction with the informants throughout the research process for purposes of ensuring authenticity of the results and findings. Without predicting the behaviour of the participants or informants, the researcher allowed the flow of information to take place naturally.

3.2.1. Research Design

Mouton (2001:55) defines research design as a plan or blue print of how a researcher intends to conduct a research to achieve his/her research goals or objectives, while Bless et al (1995:63) define it as a programme that guides a researcher in collecting, analyzing and interpreting observed facts. Research design can further be defined as a detailed plan that shows all the steps on how the scientific inquiry into the research problem will be conducted.

It has already been indicated above that the study used the qualitative research method. Research design of the study was exploratory in nature, using primary data, which have been collected from the communities and agricultural co-operatives in particular.

Both qualitative quantitative research designs were used in the study. The qualitative method was imperative for obtaining a detailed understanding of the dynamics of women's participation in co-operatives, (their role in terms of ownership, management, membership, division of labour and derived benefits). Quantitative method was used to obtain frequencies of certain important variables used in the study and to plot graphs, which could present issues more effectively. The data were not numerical since, the study is mainly qualitative in nature, hence the use of contextual and evaluative statements. Some limited quantitative analysis was, however, used to describe some of the characteristics of the study variables. The study is exploratory because it examines new interest on the impact of co-operatives on women's economic status (Babbie,

1994:84). The researcher has clearly chosen an outcome evaluation research design which aims to answer the question of whether an intervention (programme, therapy, policy or strategy) has been successful or effective (Mouton, 2001:160). He further says that the main aim of product or outcome evaluation studies is to establish whether the intended (and unintended) outcomes of the programme have materialized. This would include immediate or short-term outcomes, as well as long-term outcomes (or the so-called “impact” of the programme).

The researcher chose an outcome evaluation design because he wanted to have an in-depth understanding of the impact of the programme and intervention mechanisms the government came up with to uplift the standard of living of the people in the rural areas. The researcher chose four of the agricultural co-operatives in the Polokwane Municipality to cover a bigger scope of the municipality.

3.2.2. Area of Study

The area of study is the entire rural villages of the Polokwane Municipality where the agricultural cooperatives have been established and are Polokwane Municipal area, namely, Mashashane Agricultural Co-operative in the north western side of Polokwane, Phegelelo Agricultural Co-operative at Ga-Thaba in the south eastern side of Polokwane, Mothiba Agricultural Co-operative in the eastern side of Polokwane and Itireleng Co-operative at Matamanyane village in Moletjie situated in the north eastern side of Polokwane. These areas are generally characterized by poverty, unemployment and illiteracy. Most of the women in these areas depend on government’s social grants but also practice agriculture on a subsistence scale. Most of the people in those areas, like in other rural set-ups in the country and beyond, are in the survivalist economy, which makes it extremely difficult for them to participate in economic activities, not to mention, the payment of some services provided. The community members, particularly women, feel seriously alienated and prejudiced since they cannot even express themselves freely because of unemployment, illiteracy and poverty. It is in these areas as in most of the rural areas that effects of patriarchy are evident.

3.2.3. Population

Rosouw and Rosenthal (1996:411) define population as the universe of elements from which sample elements are drawn, or the universe of elements to which generalizations can be made. Mouton (1998:134) defines population as individuals, groups or institutions, events or all potential participants who possess specific characteristics or attributes in which a researcher is interested, that is, the aggregation of elements from which the sample is selected. Leedy (1993:207) considered the following as some of the characteristics of population:

- Population may be generally homogeneous, that is, separate units may be similar in observable characteristics;
- Population may consist of definite strata each of which is distinctly different, but the units within the stratum are as homogeneous as possible;
- Population may contain definite strata with differing characteristics and each stratum has a proportionate ratio in terms of numbers of members to every other strata; and
- Population may consist of clusters whose cluster characteristics are similar yet whose unit characteristics are as heterogeneous as possible.

The characteristics of the population in the study were all women from the rural parts of the Polokwane Municipality, who were participating in the agricultural co-operatives affected by realities of unemployment and poverty as well as officials from various stakeholders. The total population size was 196, comprising 176 members (58 men and 118 women) from the four identified agricultural co-operatives in the Polokwane Municipal areas and 20 officials from stakeholder organizations.

3.2.4. Sampling Method

Bless et al., (2000:83) define a sampling theory as a technical accounting device to rationalize the collection of information, to choose in an appropriate manner the restricted set of objects, persons, events and so forth from which the actual information will be drawn. Babbie (1994:188) defines sampling as a portion of informants taken from the larger population. Leedy (1993:200) identified two main categories of sampling, namely, probability and non probability sampling methods. He states that in probability sampling method, the researcher can specify in advance that each segment of the population will be represented in the sample, while in non-probability sampling

method there is no way of forecasting estimating or even guaranteeing that the segment in the population will be represented in the sample.

The researcher used non-probability purposive sampling method as it is based on the judgement of the researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample, (Bless et al., 2000:92). The choice of women was based on their common characteristics regarding their low level of literacy or education, low income levels, high poverty levels, unemployment status and the disadvantaged background from which they all came. The officials from other stakeholders, who also form part of the population of the study, were included on the basis of their specialized knowledge on co-operatives. Bless et al., (2000:92) further state that a sample is chosen on the basis of what the researcher considers to be typical units. The researcher chose the purposive sampling method because the method clearly resonates with the purpose of the study, which was to make an assessment of the economic impact agricultural co-operatives have on women in the rural areas.

The researcher interviewed in total 40 people including 20 members from the four identified agricultural co-operatives to provide knowledge and understanding pertaining to the operations of the co-operatives. It should be noted that the researcher interviewed 20 members of the four co-operatives because some of these entities were no longer operational thus difficult to find most members of the co-operatives under study. The researcher had a sample of 40 people comprising 16 women and 4 men from four co-operatives, namely, Mashashane Agricultural Co-operative, Phegelelo Agricultural Co-operative at Ga-Thaba, Mothiba Agricultural Co-operative and Itireleng Co-operative at Matamanyane village in Moletjie; and 20 officials from the stakeholder organizations, that is, 5 officials from each interviewed from the stakeholders, which included the Department of Agriculture, Department of Economic Development Environment and Tourism, the Polokwane Municipality and Limpopo Business Support Agency (LIBSA). These officials were selected based on their hands-on experience with co-operatives as well as their in-depth knowledge of the principles and policies governing these enterprises. The strategy was to select units that were judged to be the most common in the population under investigation (Bless et al, 2000:92). The researcher further chose other people from the stakeholders such as the officials from

the Department of Economic Development Environment and Tourism, LIBSA, Polokwane Municipality as well as community leaders outside of the co-operatives.

3.2.5. Data Collection Methods

Leedy (1993:121) views data as a communicating linkage between Ultimate Truth and the inquiring mind of the researcher, primary data (those that are respectively, nearer to and further from the total truth), and data whose value depends on screening them for their admissibility. Mouton (2001:104) states that data may be gathered by a variety of data collection methods corresponding with data sources. Mouton (2001:99) further classifies the data sources as follows: observation that involves systematic observation under controlled experimental or laboratory conditions; self reporting that involves personal and group face-to-face interviewing; archival/documentary sources that involves historical documents diaries, letters, speeches, literary texts, narratives, official memoranda, business plans, annual reports, medical records, etc.; and physical sources that involve blood samples, cell tissue, chemical compounds, materials, etc.

Finally, Mouton (2001:105) classifies data collection methods as follows: observation, interviewing, testing, selecting and analyzing texts. Bless et al (1995:106) also state that there are four methods or ways of gathering information from participants and are named as follows: non scheduled unstructured interviews; non scheduled structured interviews; scheduled structured interviews; and self administered questionnaires.

This study used non-scheduled structured interviews and questionnaires. According to Bless et al., (1995:107), non-scheduled structured should have the following as characteristics: a need for more specific and detailed information to address a researcher's goal; questions to be answered by the participants or interviewees should be fixed; questions to be answered by all the interviewees should be structured; preparation of questions on issues to be investigated before the interviews; a researcher can influence and judge questions that he/she regards as appropriate interviews for a given situation; and the method is used to obtain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the problem under investigation. The two methods were determined by the fact that data would purely be primary, which means that information was to be gathered by the researcher himself without depending on the already existing

information. The data collection method will unfold with a thorough data collection procedure as outlined in the next paragraph.

3.2.6. Data collection procedure

In order to conduct the process of data collection, the researcher wrote letters to the relevant stakeholders, the Departments of Agriculture, Economic Development Environment and Tourism, the Polokwane Municipality and Limpopo Business Support Agency for permission of their officials to participate in the process of data collection, but also to conduct the study in the four identified agricultural co-operatives. The researcher clearly stated the reason for the study, namely, for research study purposes. Upon being granted permission for the process, the researcher then physically contacted all the possible interviewees to arrange for the date, time and place of the interviews.

3.2.6.1 Observation

Bless et al., (2003:105) define this as a seemingly straightforward technique and say must be pursued in a systematic way, following scientific rules if useable and quantifiable data are to be obtained. The researcher used simple or non-participant observation of the real conditions the women in the area under study were faced with over the years. This was because the researcher grew up in the area and witnessed the plight of the women over the years. It was on the basis of those conditions firstly physically observed, that provided a key source of information (Mouton, 2001). The researcher chose to use this method mainly because of his personal experiences especially that his mother was among the many women who in his home village made ends meet with their dependence on subsistence agriculture for their survival. According to Babbie (50:1994), the final step in the traditional model of science involves actual observation and making measurements of what is seen.

3.2.6.2 Interviews

Leedy (1993:192) states that the interview, as a data-gathering technique, is frequently misunderstood. Bless et al., (2000:104) state that there is a need for more specific and detailed information which can facilitate comparison of reactions of different participants. In this case the interviewer has a much more precise goal and the types of questions to

be asked by all participants are fixed. The most structured way of obtaining information from respondents is by employing scheduled structured interview, which the researcher will use, (Bless et al., 2000:105). The authors further argue that interview involves direct personal contact with the participant who is asked to answer questions relating to the research problem. The researcher agreed with the participants on the date, time and venue of the interview session.

The researcher interviewed some key members of the co-operatives under study for more information. The researchers used straight forward closed and open-ended questions. The researcher agreed with the participants on the medium of instruction to be used. The researcher preferred to use both English and Northern Sotho, particularly for those participants who could not express themselves in English. The researcher also asked for permission from the participants to use the tape recorder to save time, but also to be able to collect the correct data. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality of the process to allow them to express themselves freely during the interview session. The researcher encouraged relaxed, free and professional mood during the interview to allow for objectivity of the results.

Data were collected through observation, interviews and questionnaires as indicated below. The researcher ensured that each interview took less than 50 minutes, as stated by De Vos (2002:302) that an interview should not take more than 1 hour as that will be too exhausting. Individuals were sampled and interacted with about their life conditions since their involvement in co-operatives. The enquiry was based on the observation that was alluded to in the previous paragraph. Mouton (2001:197) emphasizes that the responses of the respondents are used as data required for the study. Interviews are frequently used in exploratory research because they are the most direct method of obtaining qualitative data from respondents. The type of interview helped to clarify concepts and problems and allowed for a list of possible answers and solutions which facilitated the construction of a more highly structured interview (Bless et al., 2000:107).

The researcher also used key sources of collecting information on the study such as relevant literature and officials from the departments of Economic Development and

Agriculture in Limpopo Province. The other key sectors to provide data on co-operatives specifically important for this study were the Polokwane Municipality and Limpopo Business Support Agency.

3.2.7. Methods of Data Analysis

Data analysis can be defined as how one observes and formulates one's analytical conclusions on the basis of the collected data (Babbie, 1989:278). On the other hand, Mouton (2001:108) also states that analysis involves breaking up data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships. He further states that the aim of the analysis is to understand the various constitutive elements of one's data through the inspection of the relationships between concepts, constructs or variables and to ascertain whether there are any patterns or trends that can be identified or isolated to establish themes in the data. The researcher interpreted data that were collected for purposes of being able to draw conclusions that reflected on the research problem. Mouton (2001:138) further states that the process of data analysis takes many different forms depending upon the nature of the data itself.

The researcher in this study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. A computer was also used to analyze data in a descriptive way, which resulted in tables and figures being formulated. Leedy (1993:185) states that the descriptive survey method, sometimes called the normative survey method, is employed to process the data that came to the researcher through observation. This gives explanation as to how to refine the questions focusing on central themes. Data, through observation, interviews and documents from various institutions, were gathered. The point for this was to integrate themes and concepts into a theory that offered a precise and detailed interpretation of the research areas. This was the point at which interpretation of the data could be shared, which then completed the process of analysis.

3.3. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Mouton (2001:238) states that the ethics of science concerns what is right and what is wrong in the conduct of research. He states further that scientific research is a form of human conduct, it follows that such conduct has to conform to generally acceptable

norms and values. As in any sphere of human life, certain kinds of conduct are morally acceptable, whereas others are not. Bless et al., (2000:100) state that throughout the process of data collection the problem of persuading participants to co-operate with the researcher is a permanent feature. This is because lack of co-operation leads to non-response, incompletely filled-out questionnaires and unreliable results. As lack of co-operation can be disastrous in a research project, participants have the right to refuse to participate. Briefly, ethics serve as the basis for the researcher's conduct and how he/she relates with others. The researcher adhered to ethical principles; something which assisted to get as much reliable information as possible. The following aspects of ethics, as espoused by Babbie (1994:48), were considered:

3.3.1. Voluntary participation

Some people find it difficult to disclose their personal information to strangers. Bless et al (2000:100) argue that social research usually invades the person's privacy. Participation in research should be voluntary and people can refuse to divulge certain information about themselves. The right to privacy demands that direct consent must be obtained from the participants in the study. To get full co-operation of the participants, the researcher explained at the outset that the purpose of the study was purely academic. The researcher also dispelled concerns that the information may be used to prejudice them. On the contrary, the information provided may lead to positive and more general social benefits.

3.3.2. No harm to respondents

To get full co-operation of the participants, the researcher assured participants that their voluntary participation did not necessarily mean erosion of their right to privacy and that there would not be any revelation of information that would endanger their work and home life. Leedy (1993:128) argues that no individual should be asked to co-operate in any research that may result in a sense of self-denigration, embarrassment, or a violation of ethical or moral standard or principles. The researcher was very cautious with the choice of questions so that they do not compromise on the participants' self-esteem and self-confidence.

3.3.3. Deception

The researcher told the respondents at the outset that the study would not benefit them as it was for academic purposes. Respondents were not promised anything nor lured to come and participate in the study as they would get incentives or benefits. There were no lies and false promises were used to encourage them to participate in the research study. By outlining the purpose of the study at the outset, helped to obtain more faithful and objective answers about their situations.

3.3.4. Anonymity and confidentiality

The researcher encouraged the respondents to provide accurate responses without any fear of victimization. To confirm that the respondents remained anonymous, the researcher replaced their names on the interview schedule with identification numbers (Bless et al., 2000:100). The researcher also assured the respondents of their right of privacy and that the information given would be treated with confidence and the data would only be used for the intended purpose, study exercise. That was again to encourage respondents to feel free to give honest and complete information.

3.3.5. Analysis and reporting

The researcher promised the respondents that the results of the study would be available to them and that the findings of the study would be based on honesty and fairness. The researcher would not use the study for his own benefit at the expense of the respondents. This assurance assisted to establish the relationship of trust between the two parties. The researcher displayed a high level of professionalism.

3.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The nature of the study conducted was exploratory in nature and the researcher employed a non probability purposive sampling method, which would make it difficult for the results to be generalized. Some of the shortcomings in the study included the following:

- Some respondents, despite agreement with the researcher, could not disclose full information on the questions in the interview schedule given their socio-economic situation;
- Most of the respondents also exaggerated their plight with expectations that they would benefit individually from co-operatives;

- Most of the key personnel in some stakeholder entities could not be secured despite having made appointments for such meetings due to busy work schedules; and
- Unavailability of some of the key documents was also a serious shortcoming as most such documents were identified as key for possible sources of the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the major findings made in the study. Based on the method of data collection as described in Chapter 3, namely, non-scheduled structured interviews, the researcher collected data and analyzed them. Two different methods were used during data analysis, namely, qualitative, that is, thematic and quantitative, that is, descriptive. Data collected were first categorized into themes, which were derived from research questions, and later on, the descriptive data analysis method was used to analyze data, in which case frequency tables were used. Data were described in terms of the following:

- Current situation or status with regard to the functionality of the respective co-operatives;
- Economic situation or status of women in the co-operatives compared to before they joined the co-operatives; and
- Analysis and interpretation of findings on the following aspects:
 - the nature of support from the State and the community if any.
 - comments on the quality of support services from the State.
 - profile of respondents vis-à-vis the nature of intervention; and
- Strategic issues that emerged from the study.

4.2. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS: MEMBERS OF CO-OPERATIVES

The researcher interviewed in total 20 respondents, who were directly involved in co-operative development, as well as 20 officials from various departments. The major objective of this section was to present personal information of the respondents, namely, gender, age, marital status, family size, qualifications and employment status.

4.2.1. The aim of the researcher in asking this question was to enquire about the gender of the respondents

Table 1.1: Gender of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	4	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Female	16	80.0	80.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The table above indicates that the highest percentage, that is, 80% of the respondents, who were members of the co-operatives, were female while only 20% were male. This is presumably because women are more often remaining home while their husbands work in the cities and towns as migrant labourers. From this variant, it can be deduced that women are more committed to the success of the co-operatives as they hope that they might turn out to be very successful enterprises, particularly because they are a sector in the society hard hit by poverty and unemployment.

4.2.2. Age of the respondents

The aim of this question was for the researcher to establish age ranges of the respondents.

Table 1.2: Age of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21-30 yrs	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	41-50yrs	2	10.0	10.0	15.0
	50yrs and above	16	80.0	80.0	95.0
	95	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 provided above, indicates that the age ranges of the respondents were from between 21 and 30 to above 50 years. The table further shows that the highest percentage, i.e., 80% of the respondents were above 50 years, 10% were between 41 and 50 years of age and 5% were aged between 21 and 30 years. From the presented data, it is evident that the majority of the participants in the co-operatives were elderly people. This is also evidence that most of these women have extensive experience on conventional agriculture, which will need to be improved through intensive training programmes by the State. Clearly the elderly people show a lot of commitment

because they have families to look after, unlike young people who do not have any responsibilities. This is really not good for profitability and sustainability for these entities because once the elderly people do not have anyone to pass their knowledge to, co-operatives will definitely not be sustainable. There needs to be plans to in place to recruit and encourage young people to take part in co-operative development as they will be trained on sustainable development of co-operatives as well as ways of making them business entities that will be profitable.

4.2.3. Marital Status

The purpose of this question was for the researcher to enquire about the marital status of the respondents.

Figure 1.1: Marital status of respondents

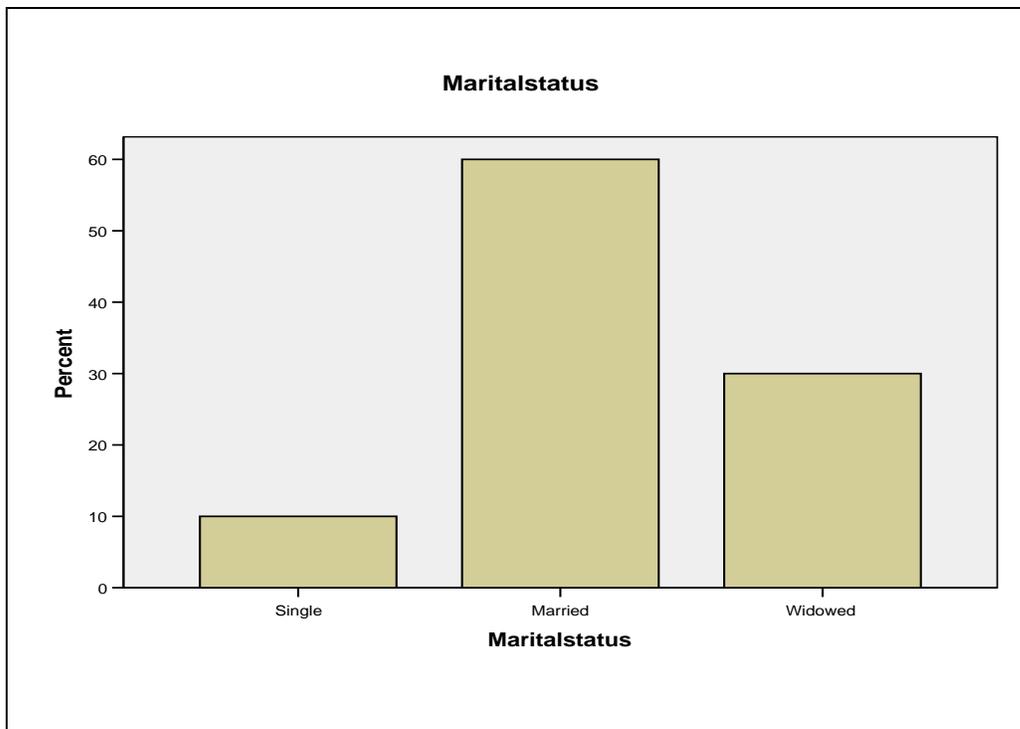


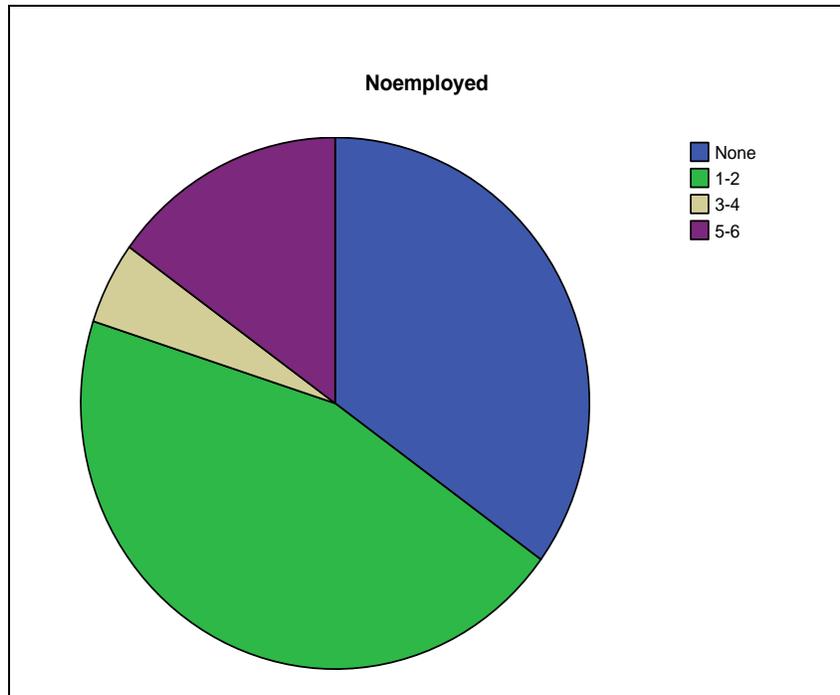
Figure 1.1 provided above shows that 60% of the respondents were married, 30% were widowed while 10% were single. This also confirms the assertion that most of the women involved in the co-operatives were doing this with the hope of complementing their husbands' salaries. From the interviews with the respondents, it was clear that they were all committed to their course regardless of their marital status. This also has

no direct bearing on the respondents' performance in co-operatives.

4.2.4. Number of family members employed

The purpose of asking this question was for the researcher to find out from the respondents how many of their family members were employed.

Figure 1.2: Number of Family Members Employed



Data presented in Figure 1.2 provided above depict that 45% of the respondents had 1-2 members of their families employed, 35% had no members of their families employed, 15% had 5-6 members of their families employed and 5% had 3-4 members employed. This shows the level of desperation as 35% of the respondents had no single member of their families working. This also depicts the high level of unemployment among the people in the rural areas.

4.2.5. Duration of stay in the area.

The aim of the researcher with this question was to establish from the respondents how long they stayed in the area.

Table 1.3: Duration of stay in the area

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-25 yrs	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	25-30 yrs	1	5.0	5.0	10.0
	30-35 yrs	3	15.0	15.0	25.0
	35 yrs and above	15	75.0	75.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

According to the table above, 75% of the respondents had stayed in the area for more than 35 years, 15% of the respondents had stayed in the area for the duration of between 30 and 35 years, 5% stayed in the area for the duration of between 20 and 25 years and the final 5% stayed in the area for the duration of between 25 and 30 years. It then becomes clear with respect to this variant that most of the participants in co-operatives under study were for a long time exposed to the harsh conditions of poverty before they participated in co-operatives, presumably with the hope that they would be relieved of the poverty situation they were living under. The duration of stay in the area did not have any direct bearing on the performance of respondents in co-operatives.

4.2.6. Formal Education

Through this question, the researcher wanted to find out from the respondents whether they were exposed to formal education.

Table 1.4: Exposure to formal education

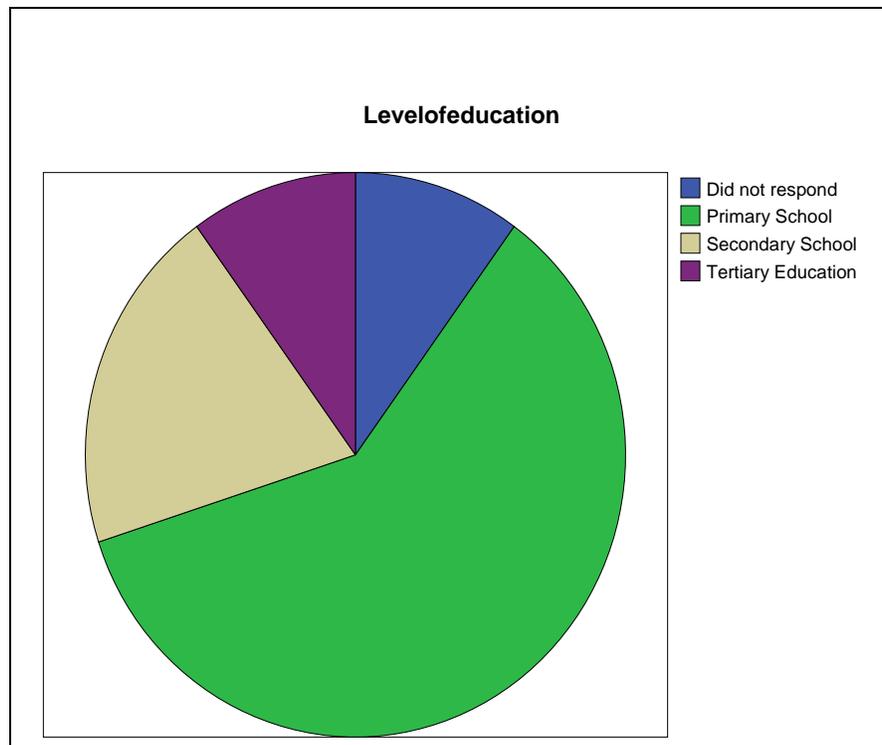
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	17	85.0	85.0	85.0
	No	3	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The table above depicts that 85%, the highest percentage, of respondents underwent formal education, while only 15% of the respondents never received any formal education. This clearly shows that the majority of the members of the co-operatives can both write and read and are thus trainable on a variety of skills in co-operative development. This is evidenced by Mashashane Co-operative, which, on average, operates well and has revenue collection.

4.2.7. Highest Qualifications

The purpose of asking this question was for the researcher to find out about the highest qualifications of the respondents.

Figure 1.3: Highest Qualifications of Respondents

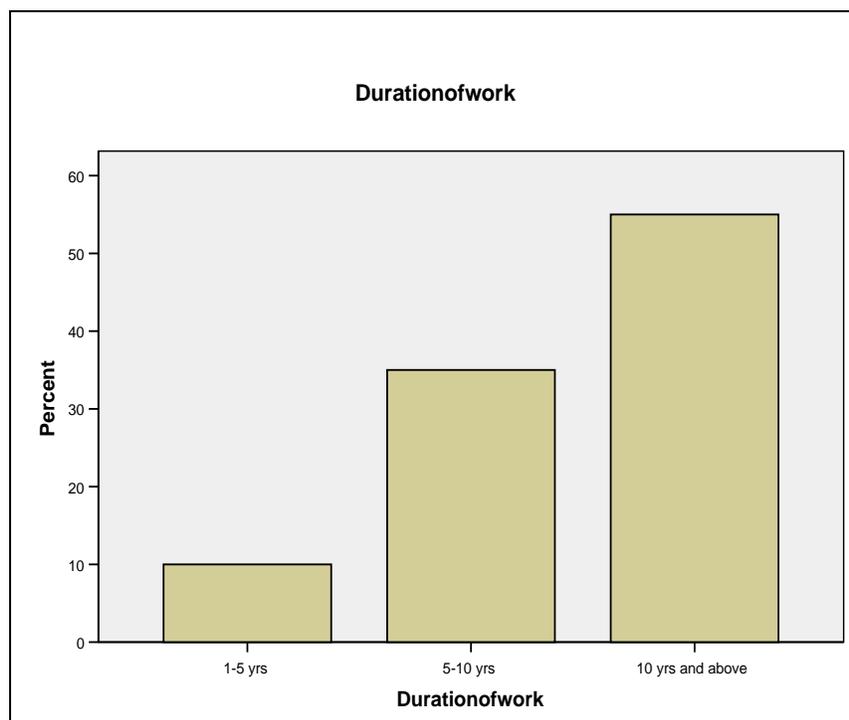


The figure provided above, indicates that the highest percentage, i.e., 60% of the respondents only received primary education, 20% of the respondents received secondary education and only 10% of the respondents managed to receive tertiary education, while the other 10% did not receive any education at all. The majority of the respondents received basic education and this gives hope that if properly trained in this area, co-operatives can indeed be catalysts for human and economic development in communities.

4.2.8. Duration of work in co-operatives

The aim of the researcher with this question was to enquire from the respondents how long they were in the co-operative enterprise.

Figure 1.4: Duration of Work of Members in Co-operatives



According to Figure 1.4 above, the highest percentage of respondents, that is, 55% had participated in the co-operatives for the period of above 10 years; 35% of the respondents had participated in the co-operatives for the period of between 5 and 10 years; while 10% of the respondent had been in the co-operative business for the period between 1 and 5 years. The majority of respondents were in co-operatives for a long time and, if well trained, they would make an enormous contribution given their experience and their long service in the environment.

4.2.9. Analysis of profile of respondents

The data collected on the profile of respondents have shown that the highest percentage, i.e., 80% of the respondents was women (cf. Table 1.1). Most of these women (i.e., 60%) were married (cf. Figure 1.1) and 80% of them were above 50 years of age (cf. Table 1.2). Thirty-five percent (35%) of the respondents live in abject poverty as they had no members of the family employed (cf. Figure 1.2), while 75% of the respondents stayed in the village for 35 years and above (cf. Table 1.3). The highest percentage, that is, 85% of the respondents, received formal education (cf. Figure 1.3)

of which 60% only obtained primary school education (cf. Table 1.4). 55% of the respondents had been in the co-operatives for ten years (cf. Figure 1.4), showing the level of commitment and experience in co-operative development in the agricultural sector.

4.3. PROJECT DETAILS

The purpose of this section was for the researcher to source information from the respondents about the project, including earnings, employment details, economic situation of respondents, family size, when the co-operative started, market of the co-operative, etc.

4.3.1. Employment Details

Through this question, the researcher wanted to find out from respondents whether they were ever formerly employed.

Table 1.5: Formal employment of respondents

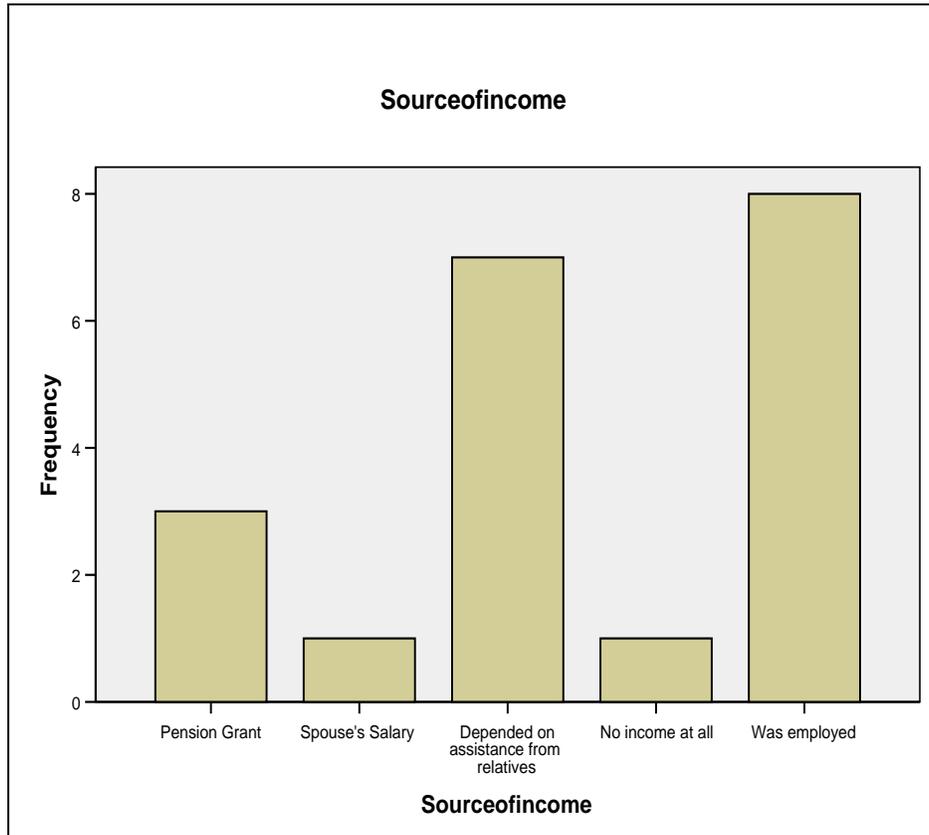
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	8	40.0	40.0	40.0
	No	12	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.5 provided above shows that the 60% of respondents had never been formally employed, while 40% of the respondents had been formally employed. The scenario painted by responses on this variant suggests that most of the women in the rural areas have never been formerly employed and their participation in the co-operatives was presumably with the hope that this would indeed be an employment opportunity for them.

4.3.2. The source of income before joining the co-operative

The researcher wanted to find out from the respondents what their source of income was before they could join the co-operatives.

Figure 1.5: Source of income



From Figure 1.5 above, it is clear that prior to joining co-operatives, 8 or 40% of the respondents received employment salary for a living, 7 or 35% of the respondents depended on assistance from relatives, 3 or 15% received pension grants, 1 or 5% depended on their spouses' salaries, whereas the other 5% received no income at all. It is evident from the data collected that a larger percentage, 60%, of the respondents and women in particular, are dependent either on incentives or handouts from either government or relatives despite them being members of the co-operatives. It is clear that these people were hopeful that at some stage the situation would improve, hence their persistence to continue participating in the co-operatives.

4.3.3. Earnings from co-operatives

The researcher asked this question to enquire from respondents whether they received any earnings from their co-operatives.

Table 1.6: Earnings from Co-operatives

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	7	35.0	35.0	35.0
	No	13	65.0	65.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.6 provided above, indicates that 65% of the respondents receive no earnings from their co-operatives, while the other 35% of the respondents received earnings from the respondents. It is evident from the table that the majority of the people in those structures were confident that their situations would improve despite the fact that they did not receive any earnings. This situation did not deter them nor dampen their spirits.

4.3.3. Frequency of earnings

The researcher wanted to find out from the respondents that received earnings from their co-operatives, how frequent they received them.

Figure 1.6: Frequency of Earnings of Members

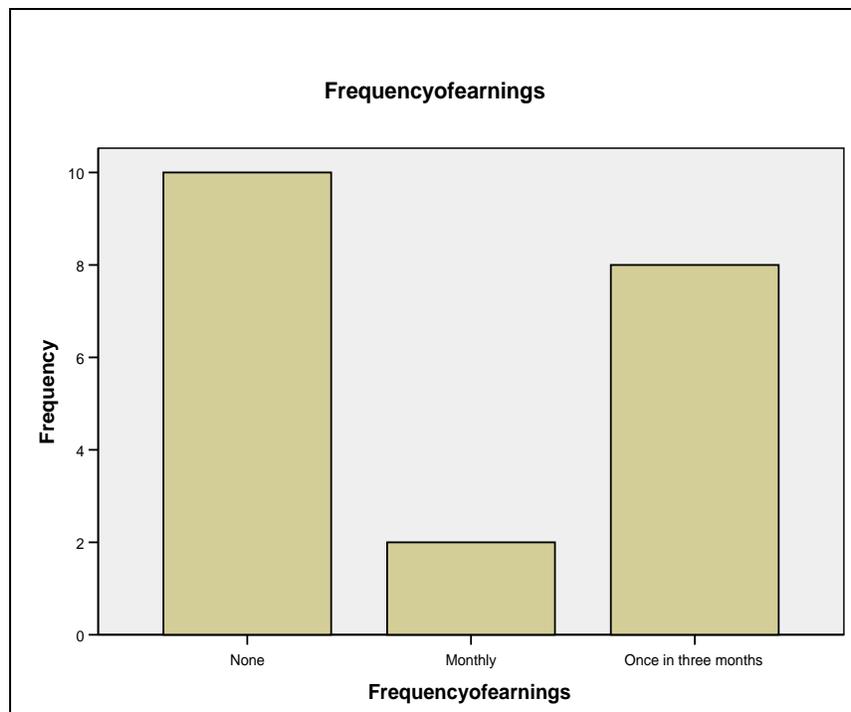
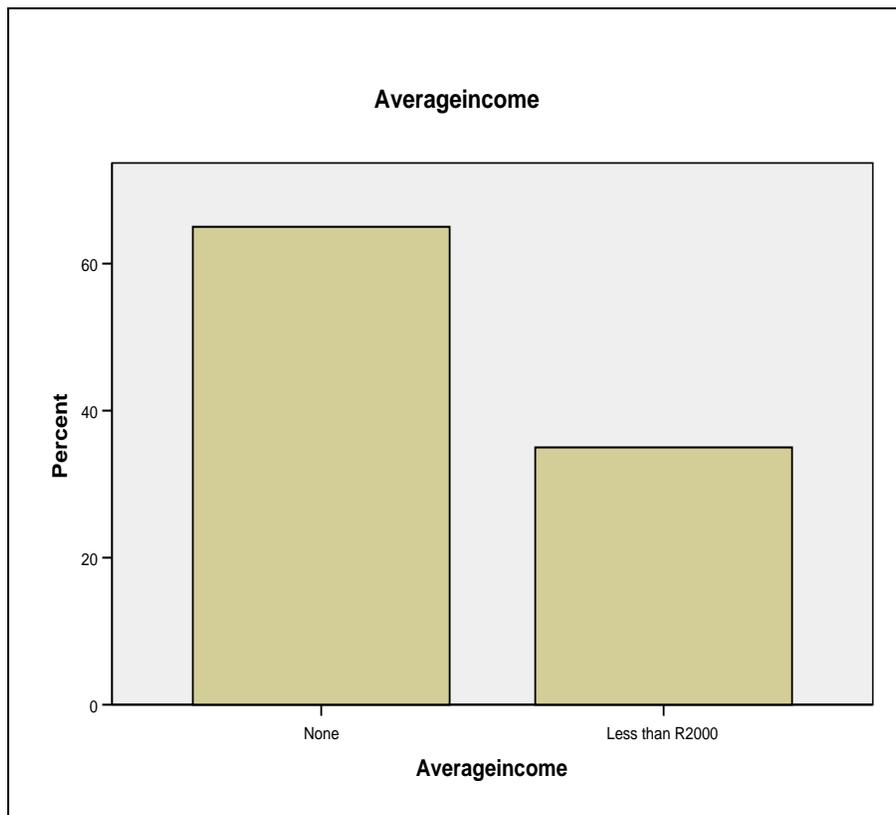


Figure 1.6 provided above indicates that 10 of the respondents, that is, 50%, did not receive earnings from the co-operatives; 8 of the respondents, that is, 40%, received earnings once in three months, in the co-operatives; and only 2 of the respondents, that is, 10%, indicated that they received monthly earnings. It is clear, in this instance, that the situation differs from co-operative to co-operative.

4.3.4. Ranges of earnings received

The aim of asking this question was for the researcher to establish from the respondents about the ranges of the earnings they received from their co-operatives.

Figure 1.7: Ranges of Earnings Received



According to Figure 1.7 above, 13 or 65% of the respondents received no earnings but, 7 or 35% of those who received them, indicated that they received less than R2000.00 monthly. This is further proof that the co-operatives under study had challenges of both revenue collection and management.

4.3.5. Improvement of members' economic situation

The researcher wanted to find out from the respondents whether there was any improvement in their economic situation since they started to participate in co-operatives.

Table 1.7: Improvement on economic situation

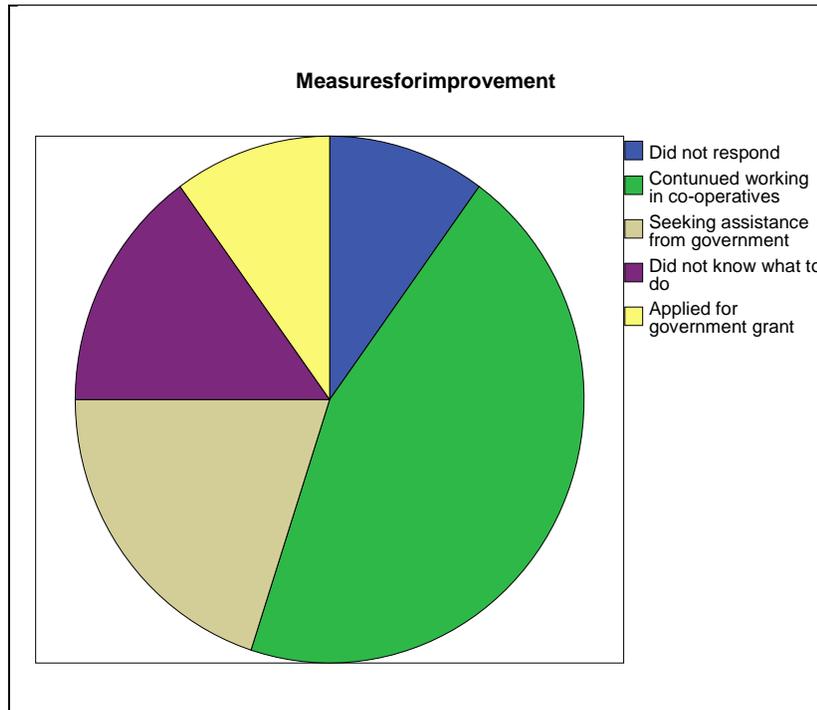
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	2	10.0	10.0	10.0
	No	18	90.0	90.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

In Table 1.7 provided above, shows that a large percentage, 90%, of respondents indicated that there was no improvement in their economic situation while only 10% of the respondents felt that there was improvement in their economic situation. This is further evidence that the co-operative entities that were established for alleviating poverty and creating job opportunities did not live up to the objectives for which they were established. This is further confirmation that the entities do not have the basic revenue collection skills to motivate them to work even harder.

4.3.6. Measures taken to improve the situation

The researcher wanted to find out from the respondents what measures they took to improve the situation.

Figure 1.8: Measures to Improve the Economic Situations

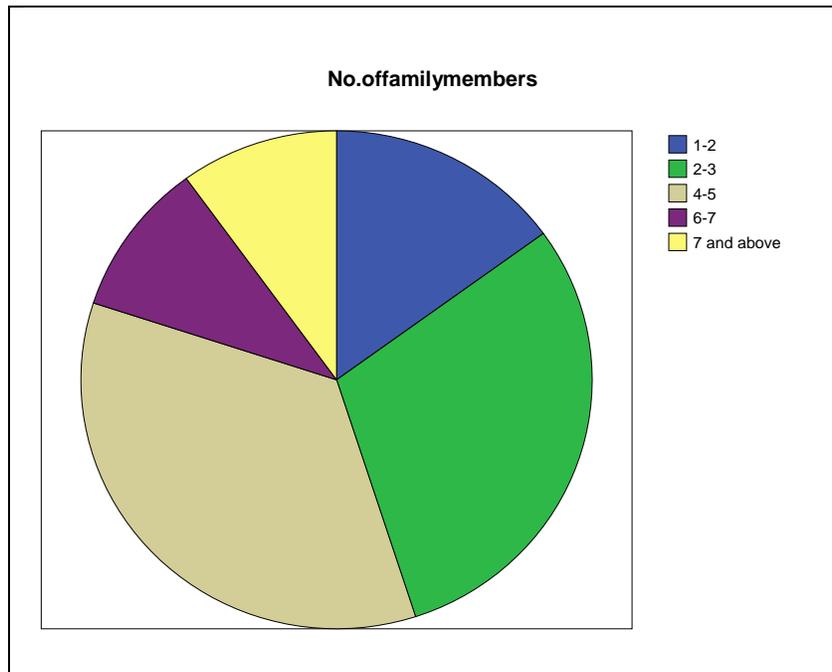


According to Figure 1.8 provided above, 10% of the respondents did not respond to this question as they saw no improvement of their lives; but 45% of the respondents indicated that they continued to participate in the co-operatives presumably with the hope that things would change for the better; 20% of the respondents said they asked for assistance from the State, 15% said that they did not know what to do about the situation; and 10% did not respond as their situation had improved. It is clear that most of the participants in co-operatives were hopeful that the co-operatives would one day improve their economic situation, hence their continued participation in them despite not benefiting anything from them.

4.3.7. Family Size

Through this question, the researcher wanted to find out on the size of the families of the respondents.

Figure 1.9: Family Size



The figure provided above depicts that 7 or 35% of the respondents had 4-5 family members; 6 or 30% of the respondents had 2-3 family members; 3 or 15% of the respondents had 1-2 family members of the family; 2 or 10% of the respondents had two 6-7 members; and another 2 or 10% had more than seven family members.

4.3.8. Commencement year of the project

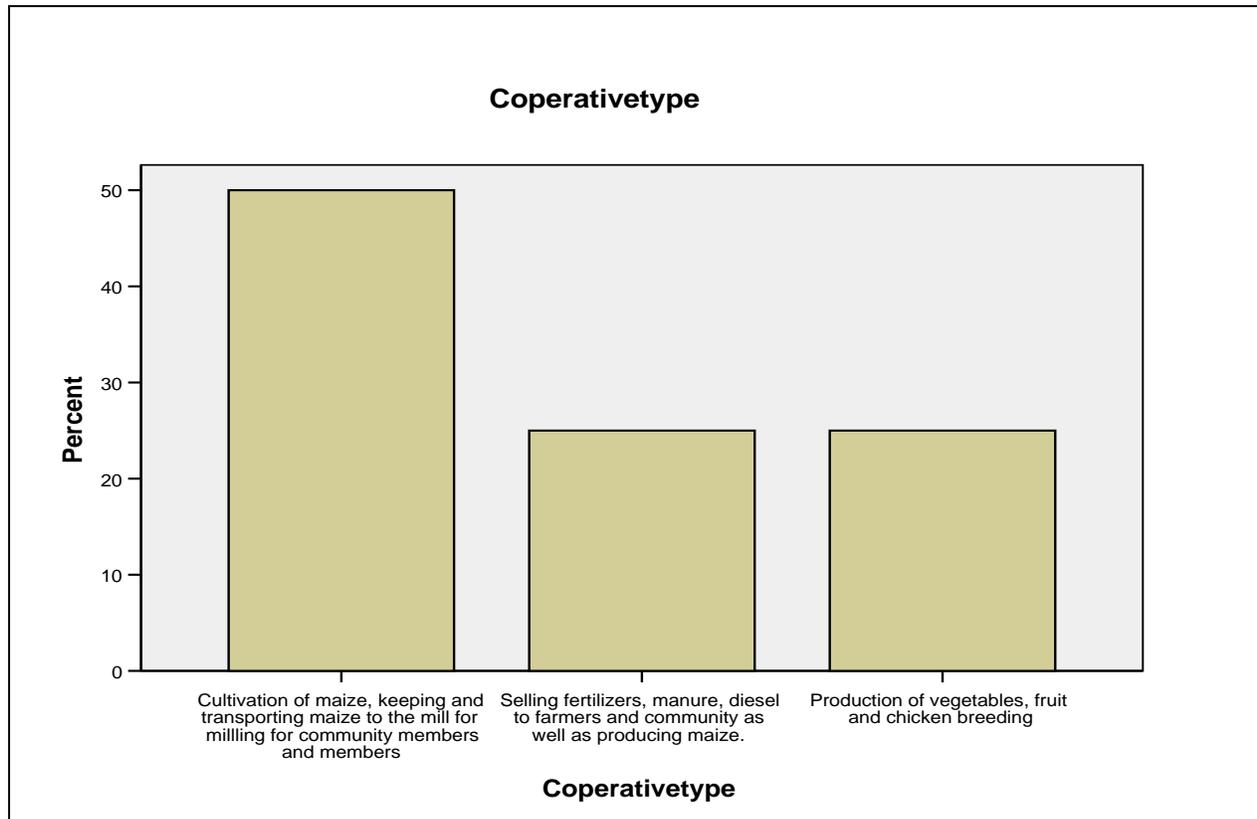
The researcher wanted to establish from the respondents in which year the co-operative started.

In responding to this question, it was evident that each co-operative was formed in a specific year. 5 or 25% of the respondents indicated that their co-operative started in 1990, 5 or 25% indicated that theirs started in 1996, 5 or 25% indicated that theirs started in 1998, and the final 5 or 25% of the respondents indicated that theirs started in 2000. It is unfortunate to learn from this table that the co-operatives under study are between 8 and 18 years in existence but are still not making an impact in the members' lives.

4.3.9. Type of Agricultural co-operative

The researcher intended to establish from the respondents the type of agricultural co-operative they were involved in.

Figure 1.10: Type of Agricultural Co-operative



According to the figure provided above, 10 or 50% of the respondents indicated that their co-operative specialized in maize production, keeping and transporting such to the mill for processing, 5 or 25% providing petrol and diesel to farmers, services producing maize and transporting it to the mill for processing, selling agricultural products such as fertilizers and manure as well as diesel, and the last 5 or 25% of the respondents produced vegetables and fruit as well as chicken breeding. The picture painted by this response is that the majority of the co-operatives under study specialize in maize production. It should be emphasized that the co-operatives would perhaps be doing well if they did something different from maize production but also having started on a small scale, as they would stimulate revenue. A conclusion can be made that two of the co-operatives that only produced maize, did not break even in terms of revenue collection,

hence had no revenue collection. The other co-operative that provides petrol and diesel and transporting maize to the mill for processing did well. This success can presumably be attributed to good planning and management. The last co-operative that produces vegetables and fruit but also does chicken breeding, did fairly well because there was revenue collection. There is nothing wrong with co-operatives specializing in maize production, but that should be accompanied by planning. The co-operatives should be supported in respect of physical and financial resources for them to thrive well. The other contributory factor is that members use conventional farming methods which are not productive while they also depend on rain for the irrigation of their crops. This clearly indicates that members of co-operatives should be trained on a variety of skills for them to be able to break even and collect revenue.

4.3.10. Market for the co-operative

With this question the researcher wanted to find out from the respondents whether there was any reliable market secured for the co-operatives.

Table 1.8: Market for the co-operative

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	18	90.0	90.0	90.0
	No	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

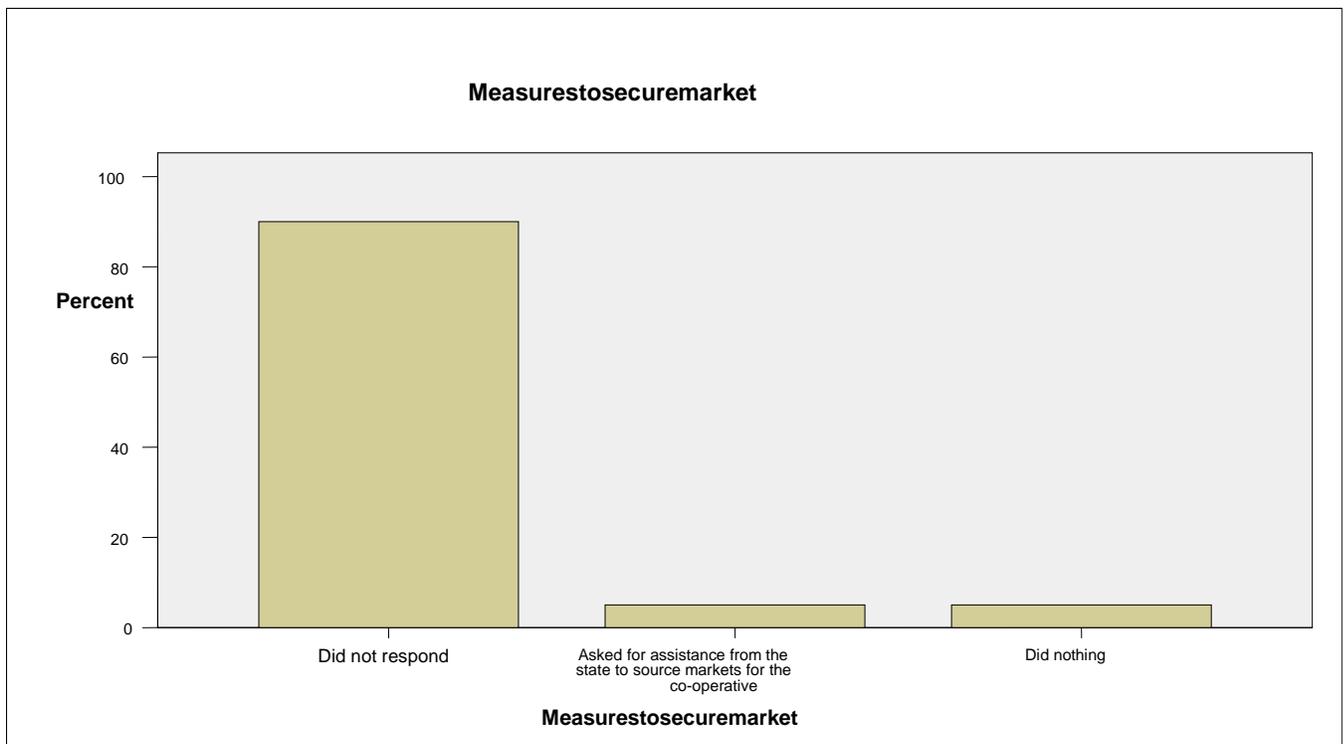
According to the table provided above, 90% of the respondents indicated that their co-operatives had a reliable market, while only 10% of the respondents indicated that their co-operative had no reliable market. This figure is further indicative of the fact that most co-operative structures already secured reliable markets for their products presumably because maize is always on demand as a stable product in the country. The fact that 90% of the members said that they secured the market for their co-operatives, does not necessarily translate in the co-operatives doing well financially. Two of the co-operatives, namely, Phegelelo and Mothiba, did not have storage for their crops, in case of good harvests, while they were also discouraged by the lack of rain after they cultivation. They depended mainly on other people who brought their maize harvests to

them for storage and transportation to the mill for processing. Clearly, this did not have any economic impact on their lives. Some of the members pulled back as they were discouraged by lack of revenue for them to make a living. As most of the members, particularly women never worked before, they thought that would finally be an employment opportunity and thus mitigate poverty, which was, unfortunately, not the case. Members of the Mothiba Co-operative indicated that most of their products and items they sold, got stolen due to lack of security.

4.3.11. Measures taken for co-operatives without reliable markets

The researcher wanted to discover from the respondents what measures they took to secure reliable markets for their products.

Figure 1.11: Measures taken by co-operatives without reliable market.

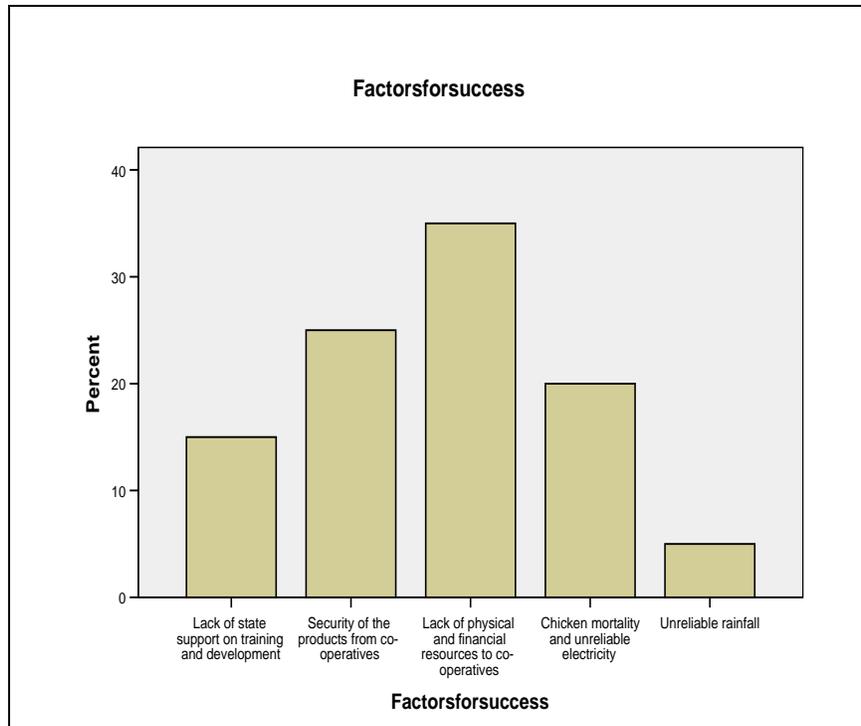


According to the figure above, 18 or 90% of the respondents did not respond to the question as their co-operatives had reliable markets, while 1 or 5% of the respondents indicated that that they requested the State to assist them secure reliable markets, and the other 1 or 5% indicated that they did nothing, presumably because they had no idea of what they could do about the situation.

4.3.12. Factors determining successes and failures of the co-operatives.

The researcher asked this question to enquire from the respondents what factors determined their successes or failures in the co-operatives.

Figure 1.12: Factors determining successes or failures of co-operatives.



The figure above depicts that 7 or 35% of the respondents cited lack of physical and financial resources as a determining factor for success, 5 or 25% mentioned lack of security for their products as a determining factor, 4 or 20% of the respondents mentioned chicken mortality and unreliable electricity as factors hindering their success 3 or 15% mentioned lack of State support on training and development as a determining factor and 1 or 5% cited unreliable rainfall as a factor hindering the success of co-operatives. All the factors mentioned by the respondents from the four co-operatives were very key to the total success of the co-operatives under study. Physical resources such as buildings, equipments/implements, water, seeds, and fertilizers were not supplied by the government. There was no involvement by the State in any form to ensure success of these entities.

4.3.13. Outline of the Co-operative Structure

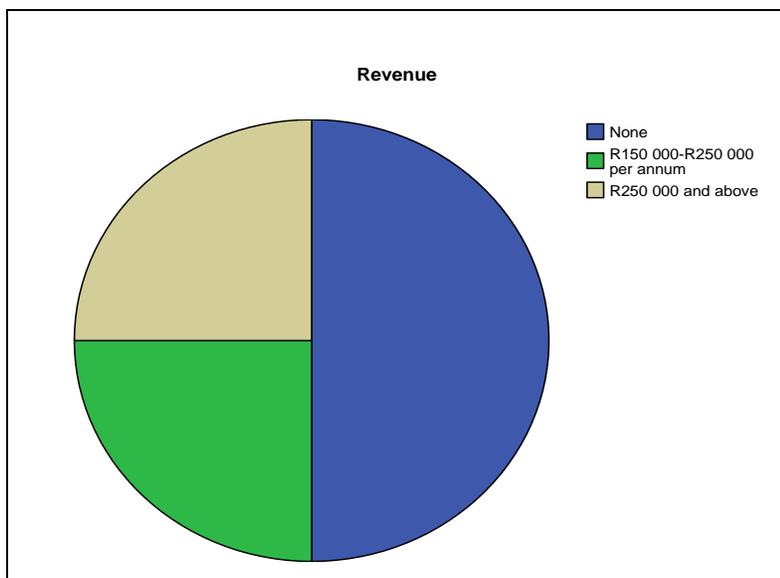
The aim of the researcher with this question was to find out from the respondents how the co-operatives were structured.

In response to this question, 25% of the respondents indicated that its co-operative had 27 members and the executive committee of 9 members comprising Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Treasurer and four Additional Members. The second 25% of the respondents indicated that its co-operative had 100 members in total, with an executive committee of 7 members comprising Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Treasurer and two Additional Members and a Board of Trustees of 6 members and two (2) employees. The third 25% of the respondents indicated that its co-operative had 40 members, nine of whom were members of the executive committee. Most of the members of the co-operatives interviewed were also in the leadership echelons of the co-operative structures and this could be used to the advantage of their co-operatives.

4.3.14. Annual turnover of the co-operative

The researcher wanted to find out from the respondents whether their co-operative had any annual turnover.

Figure 1.13: Annual Turnover of Co-operatives



The above figure reflects that 50% of the respondents indicated that its co-operative had no income or annual turnover, while 25% of the respondents indicated that their co-operative had an annual turnover of R1 300 000, and the last 25% of the respondents indicated that its co-operative had an annual turnover of R200 000. It is clear that co-operatives that do not collect revenue are those that produce maize and this is despite the fact that this is the main crop consumed by most of the South Africans through maize meal.

4.3.15. Number of members in the co-operative.

With this question, the researcher wanted to know the total number of members in the respective co-operatives. As they responded to this question, 25% of the co-operatives under study had between 10 and 20 members, the second 25% of the co-operatives had between 20 and 30 members, the third 25% had between 30 and 40 members while the other 25% of the co-operatives had above 40 members.

4.3.16. Gender composition in the co-operatives

The researched wanted to find to from the respondents what the gender composition was in their co-operative. It became clear that the co-operatives under study were composed of a higher percentage of women, that is, 67% as compared to 33% of men in the co-operatives. The gender composition in all the four co-operatives was as follows:

- Mashashanne-60 females and 40 males;
- Phegelelo-27 females and 13 males;
- Mothiba-21 females and 4 males; and
- Itireleng-10 females and 1 male.

4.3.17. Female owners of co-operatives

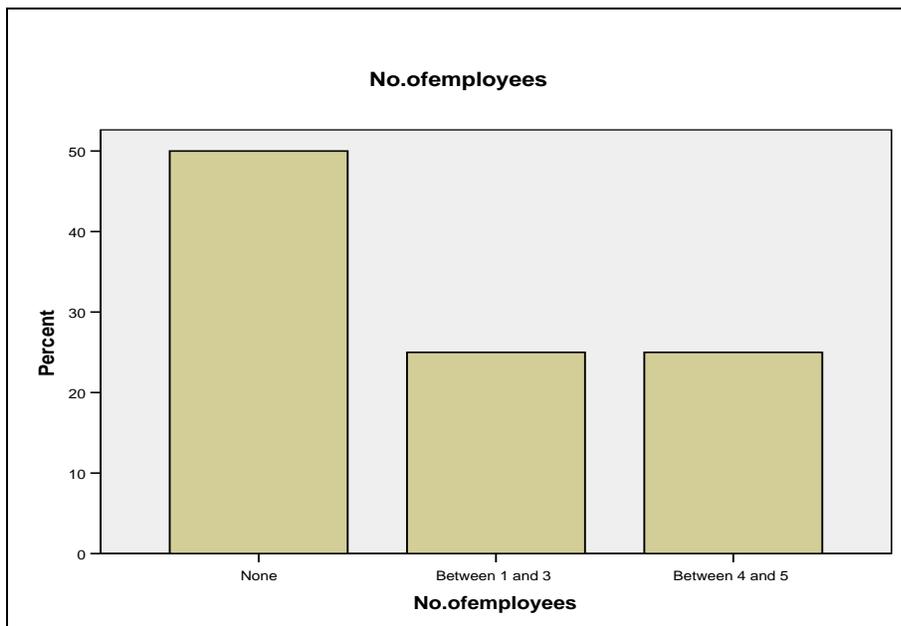
Through this question the researcher wanted to discover from the respondents how many female owners the co-operatives had. The data gathered from the respondents indicated that the cumulative percentage of all female owners in all the co-operatives under study made up 118 or 67.04%, while male owners were only 58 (32.96%). This is

a very clear indication that women in this sector should be empowered and that the State should also develop programmes aimed at the development of women in the co-operative sector and specifically in the agricultural sector.

4.3.18. Number of employees in the co-operatives

The researcher wanted to know how many people each co-operative employed.

Figure 1.14: Number of Employees in each Co-operative



In the interaction with the respondents, it emerged that 10 or 50% of the respondents indicated that their co-operatives did not have the employee component, while 5 or 25% of the respondents indicated that their co-operative employed between 1 and 3 employees and the final 5 or 25% of the respondents indicated that their co-operative employed between 4 and 5 people. This situation can presumably be attributed to the fact that some co-operatives do not have a financial capacity and ability to generate revenue.

4.3.19. Gender composition of the employee component

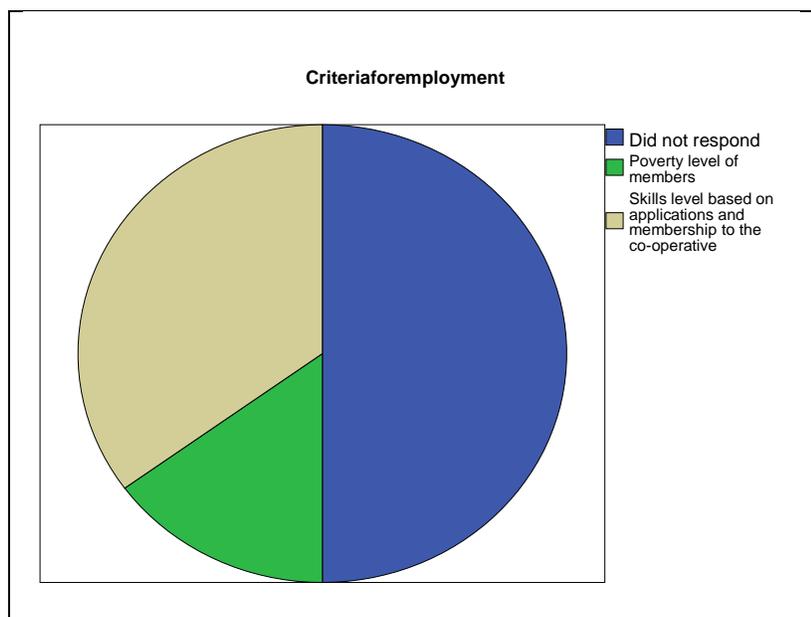
The aim of the researcher with this question was to enquire from the respondents what the gender composition of the employees was in the co-operatives. Despite the lower number of employees in co-operatives, the respondents indicated that a higher

percentage, that is, 4 or 66.7% of the employees was made up of female while the male component made up 2 or 33.3%.

4.3.20. Factors determining employment in the co-operatives

The question was intended to enquire from the respondents what factor determined who should be employed in the co-operatives.

Figure 1.15: Factors Determining Employment in the Co-operatives



The figure above shows that 10 or 50% of the respondents did not respond to this question as they did not have employees, however, 7 or 35% of the respondents indicated skills level based on applications were used as the criteria for employment where as 3 or 15% of the respondents indicated that poverty was the major determining factor. This shows how critical skills deficiency is to sustainability of co-operatives. This means that the State should have officials monitor the performance of these entities to be able to detect skills shortage. If skills shortage in co-operatives is addressed, this will invariably be mitigating poverty as co-operatives will generate revenue for members.

4.3.21. Board of Directors/Trustees

The aim of the question was to establish from the respondents whether their co-

operatives had the Board of Directors/Trustees.

Table 1.9: Board of Directors/Trustees

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	10	50.0	50.0	50.0
	No	10	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

According to the table above, 50% of the respondents indicated that they had Boards of Directors/Trustees in their respective co-operatives, while the other 50% of the respondents indicated that they did not have Boards of Directors/Trustees in their co-operatives.

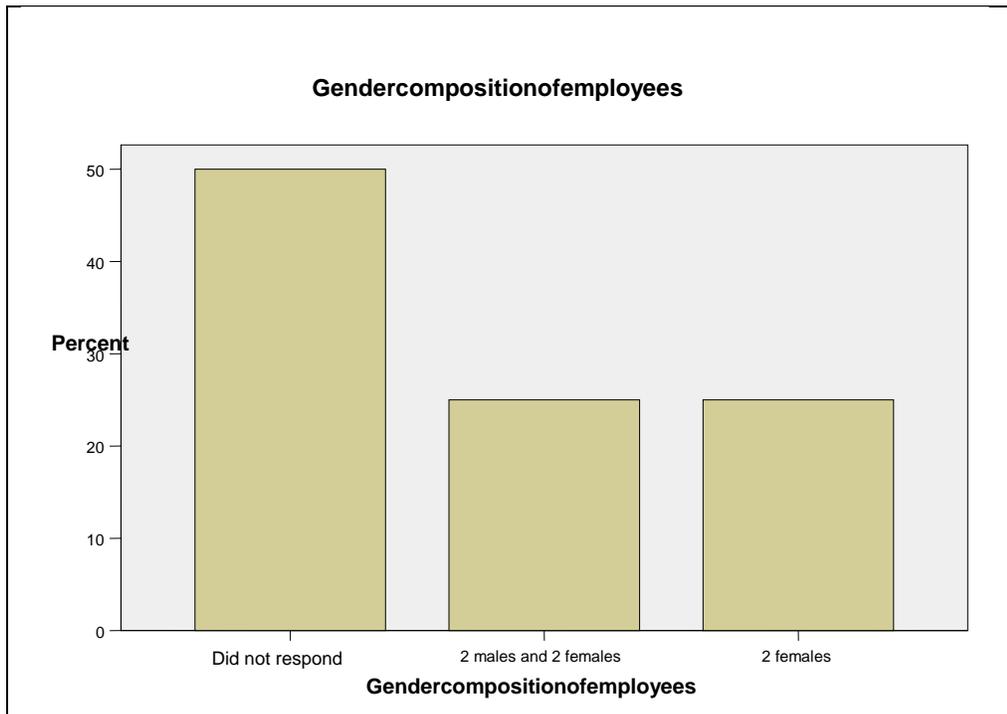
4.3.22. Number of Members of Boards of Directors/Trustees

The purpose of the question was to find out from the respondents, particularly those who indicated that they had Boards of Directors/Trustees in their respective co-operatives, how many members their boards had. In responding to this question, 50% of the respondents indicated that their co-operatives had between 5 and 7 members each. It is also shown that 50% of the co-operatives had no Boards of Directors/Trustees. The scenario painted by this variant is that the two co-operatives that have Boards of Directors/Trustees, namely, Itireleng and Mashashane Co-operatives, are able to generate revenue while those that do not have boards, that is, Phegelelo and Mothiba Co-operatives, have no revenue. This is proof that boards bring the element of leadership and some level of responsibility and commitment to members of the co-operatives. It is, however, not a given that the boards should not just be established as a token without training as this may not have any effects on the state of co-operatives. It is thus imperative to have training programmes in place for these structures because more often members of the boards tend to meddle with operations and administration of the co-operatives, thereby causing disharmony between members and boards. Training, in this regard, becomes central for the boards' functions and those of the members and employees, if any, to be clearly delineated to avoid confusion but to also retain sanity and cohesion in co-operatives.

4.3.23. Gender Composition of the Boards of Directors/Trustees

The aim of the question was for the researcher to establish from the respondents the gender composition of the Boards of Directors/Trustees in co-operatives where such exist.

Figure 1.16: Gender Composition of Boards of Directors/Trustees

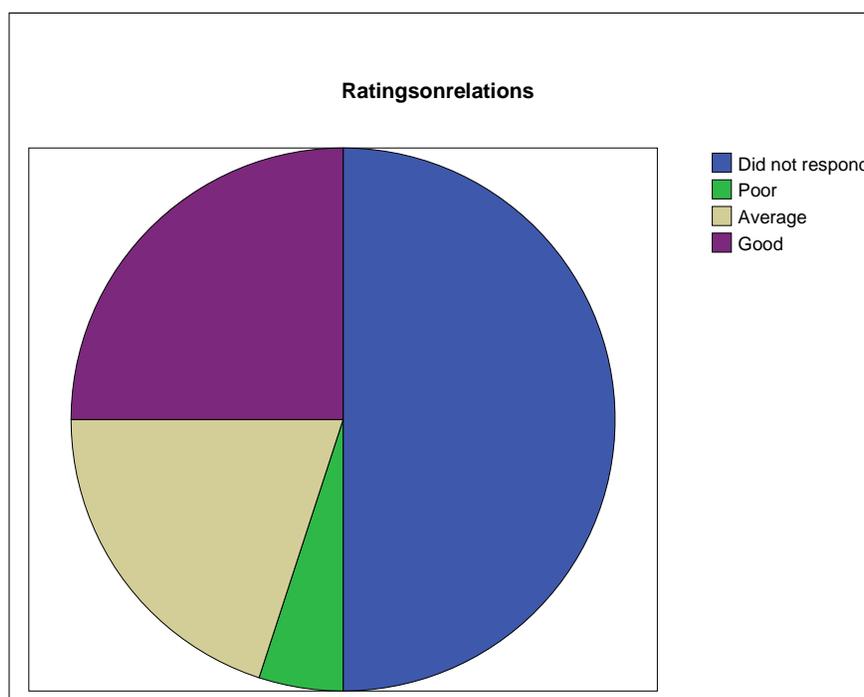


In Figure 1.16 above, 50% of the respondents indicated that they did not have Boards of Directors while 50% indicated that they had 4 female members and 3 male members in their boards. This denotes that women in the Boards of Directors/Trustees constituted 57.1% of the total members in the co-operatives under study, whereas men constituted 42.9% thereof. This seems to be a fair representation of women given the high number of women members in the co-operative structures in all the co-operatives under study.

4.3.24. Relationship between Board and members of the co-operatives.

Through this question, the researcher wanted to enquire from the respondents how their relationship was with their Boards of Directors.

Figure 1.17: Relationship between Members of the Co-operative and Boards



According to Figure 1.17 above, 10 or 50% of the respondents did not respond to this question as there were no boards in their co-operatives, 5 or 25% indicated that their relationship with Boards of Directors/Trustees was good, 4 or 20% of the respondents indicated that their relationship with the board was average and 1 or 5% indicated that the relationship with the board was poor. It is important to have this good relationship between members of the boards and those of the co-operatives harnessed to ensure productivity in the co-operatives.

4.3.25. Number of female managers in the co-operatives

The question was intended to enquire from the respondents how many female managers their co-operatives had. In responding to the question, 50% of the respondents indicated that their co-operatives had between 3 and 5 female managers, and 50% of the respondents indicated that their co-operatives had no managers at all. This also shows that co-operatives with management structures perform far better than those without. This is confirmed by the two fairly successful co-operatives, namely, Mashashane and Itireleng, which are able to generate income, while the other two, namely, Phegelelo and Mothiba, which do not have any revenue. It is also imperative to have members of the management undergo training on a variety of skills for them to be

able to manage effectively.

4.3.26. Role of Management in Co-operatives

The researcher wanted to establish from the respondents whether management plays its meaningful role in the development of co-operatives.

Table 1.10: Role of Management in Co-operatives

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10	50.0	50.0	50.0
Yes	10	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.10 provided above shows that the 50% of the respondents indicated that its management played its meaningful role in the development of co-operatives; and 50 of the respondents did not respond to this question as they did not have management in their co-operatives. This is, however, a very important variant because the members of the boards should themselves know what their roles and responsibilities are so as to avoid them meddling even in issues that are not necessarily falling within their scope.

4.3.27. Reasons for management not to play its meaningful role

The researcher wanted to find out what the reasons were for the management not to play its meaningful role in co-operative development.

Table 1.11: Reasons for management not to play its role

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20	100.0	100.0	100.0

No respondent answered the question as 50% did not have management whereas the 50% that had management said that it played its meaningful role.

4.3.28. Rating of women participation in co-operatives

Through this question, the researcher wanted to establish from respondents how they would rate women participation in the co-operatives.

Figure 1.18: Rating of Women Participation in Co-operatives

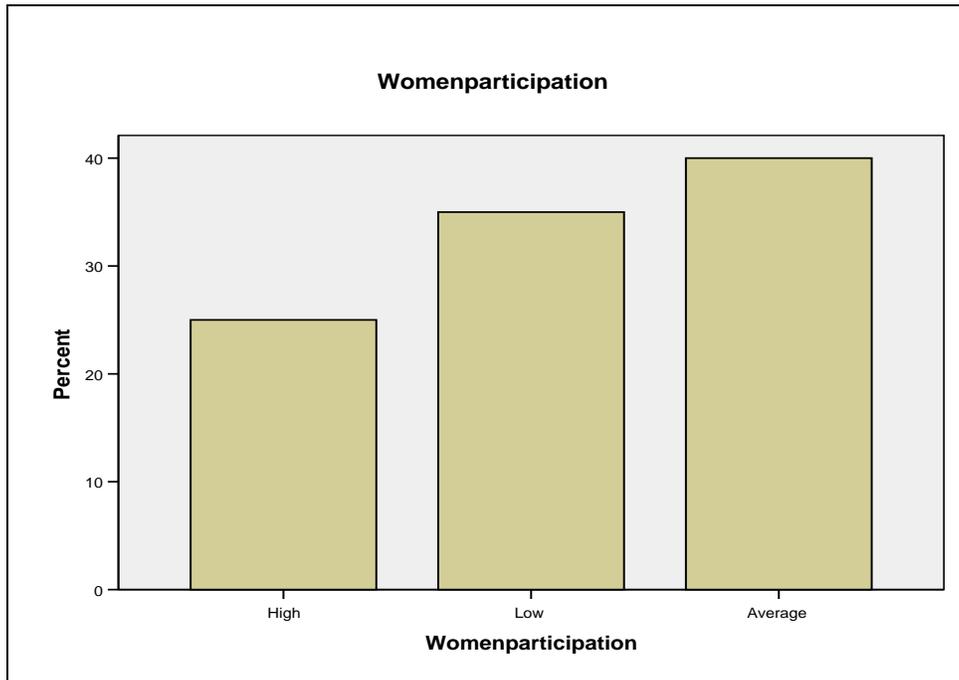
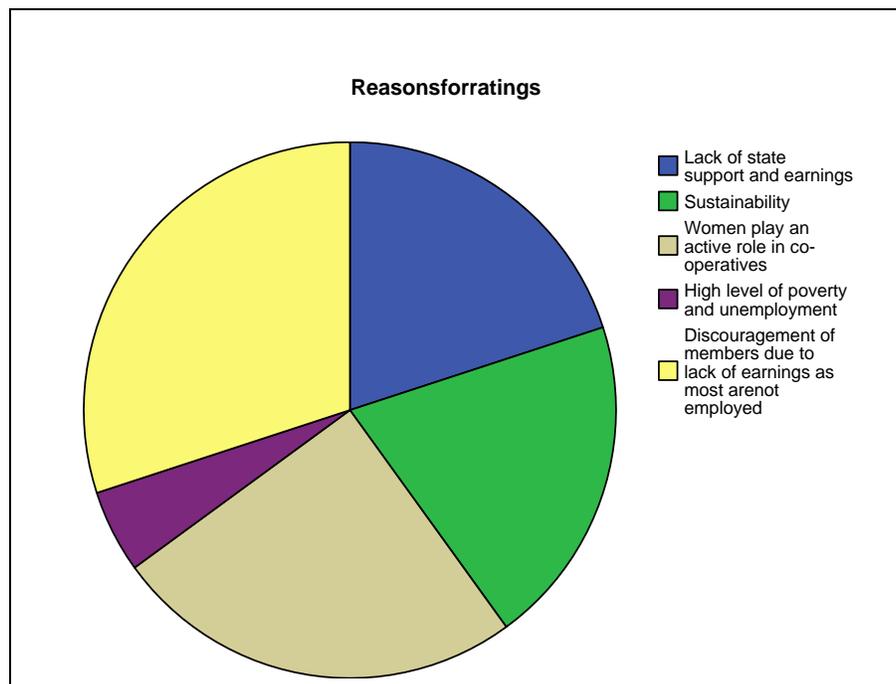


Figure 1.18 above shows that the higher percentage, that is, 8 or 40% of the respondents indicated that women participation in co-operatives was average; Seven (7) or 35% of the respondents indicated that women participation in the co-operatives was high; and 5 or 25% of the respondents said that women participation was low.

4.3.29. Reasons for the Respondents' Choice in 4.3.28

The aim of asking this question was for the researcher to establish reasons for the respondents to choose high, low and average women participation in co-operatives.

Figure 1.19: Reasons Provided by Respondents



According to Figure 1.19 above, 6 or 30% of the respondents indicated that some women were discouraged because they received no earnings from co-operatives as they had thought co-operatives would be an employment opportunity and that did not turn out to be, 5 or 25% of the respondents indicated that women play an active role in co-operatives, 4 or 20% of the respondents cited lack of support from the State as a reason for average women participation in co-operatives, another 4 or 20% of the respondents cited sustainability of co-operatives as a reason for high women participation in co-operatives, 1 or 5% of the respondents indicated that high poverty levels and unemployment were reasons for high participation of women in co-operatives. Lack of revenue in the co-operatives is clearly a deterrent for participation in the co-operatives. Given the high rate of unemployment and poverty in the rural areas, especially among women, the State should intervene in key areas such as skills training and providing resources (both physical and financial) for sustainability and profitability of these structures. There should be starter packs for these structures and continuous monitoring until they become fully fledged businesses or firms that will indeed become centres of employment and poverty alleviation.

4.3.30. Roles and responsibilities of members of co-operatives

The researcher wanted to know whether all members of the co-operatives had roles and responsibilities.

Table 1.12: Roles and responsibilities of members of co-operatives

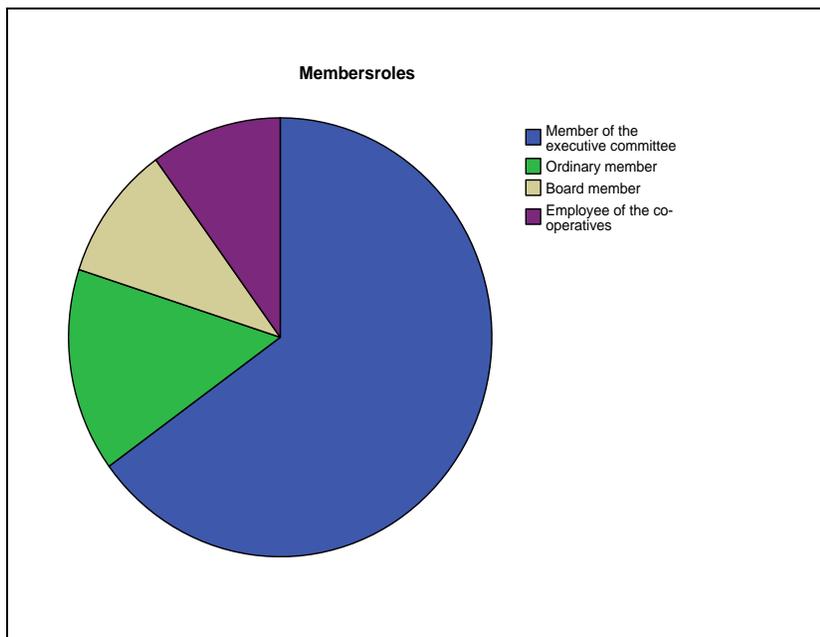
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	20	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 1.12 provided above shows that 100% of the respondents indicated that members of the co-operatives had clearly defined roles and responsibilities in the co-operatives.

4.3.31. Positions of members in the co-operatives

The question was intended to enquire from the respondents what their positions were in the co-operatives.

Figure 1.20: Positions of Members in Co-operatives



According to Figure 1.20 above, 13 or 65% of the respondents were members of the Executive Committees of their respective co-operatives, 3 or 15% of the respondents

were ordinary members of the co-operatives, 2 or 10% were board members, whereas the other 2 or 10% of the respondents were employees in the co-operatives.

4.3.32. Training

The aim of the question was for the researcher to enquire from the respondents whether there was any State involvement with regard to training of members of the co-operatives.

Table 1.13: Training of members of co-operatives

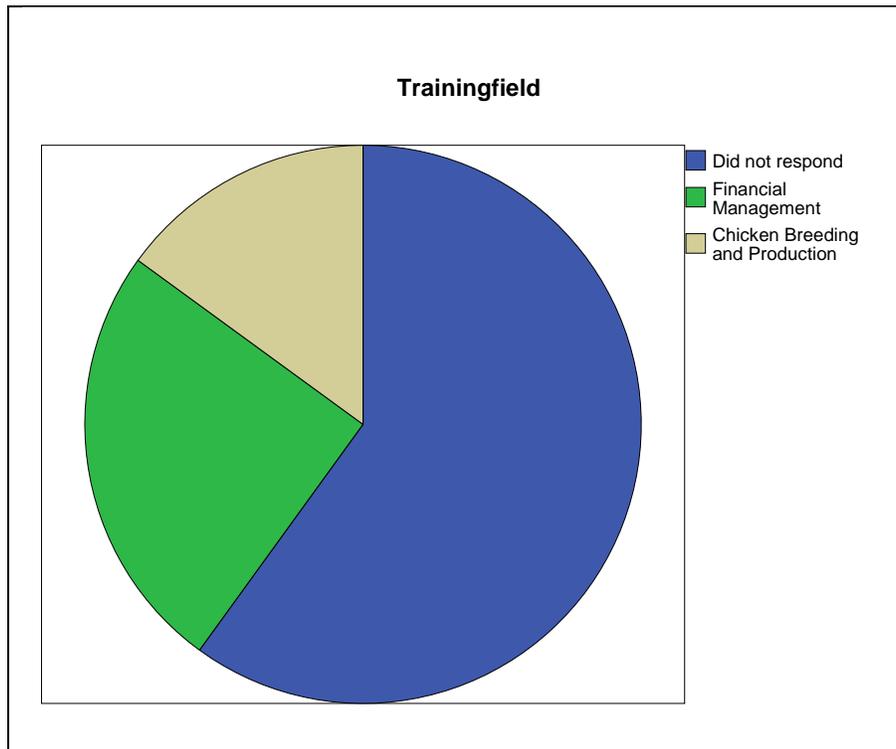
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	12	40.0	60.0	60.0
	No	8	60.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 1.13 above, a higher percentage, that is, 60% of the respondents indicated that the State got involved in the training of members of co-operatives, while 40% of the respondents indicated that the State was never involved in the training of members of co-operatives. This is a very key area for the involvement of the State as co-operatives cannot run properly without intensive training programmes for the members of the co-operatives for them to be able to not only sustain themselves but to be profitable structures for their members and the communities they seek to serve.

4.3.33. Field/area of Training offered

Through this question, the researcher wanted to find out from respondents, particularly those who indicated that the State offered training in question 4.3.33, to indicate the field or area of training that was offered.

Figure 1.21: Field/area of Training Offered



According to Figure 1.21 above, 8 or 60% of the respondents did not respond to this question as they never received any training. However, 5 or 25% of the respondents indicated that they received training on financial management, but 3 or 15% of the respondents indicated that they received training on chicken breeding production skills. Clearly, members of the co-operatives have not had sufficient training, given the history of the co-operatives in the country. It is a well-known fact that these structures in the Black community never received equal attention as was the case with the White co-operatives in the past due to political reasons. There should undoubtedly be concerted efforts by the State to ensure that there is a deliberate empowerment programmes to ensure that co-operatives become catalysts for poverty relief and unemployment but very importantly production houses of basic livelihoods. This noble objective cannot be realized unless the State intervenes with measures as suggested above.

4.3.34. Satisfaction levels on training by the State

With this question the researcher wanted to find out whether the respondents were satisfied with the level of training they received from the State.

Table 1.14: Satisfaction level on training by the State

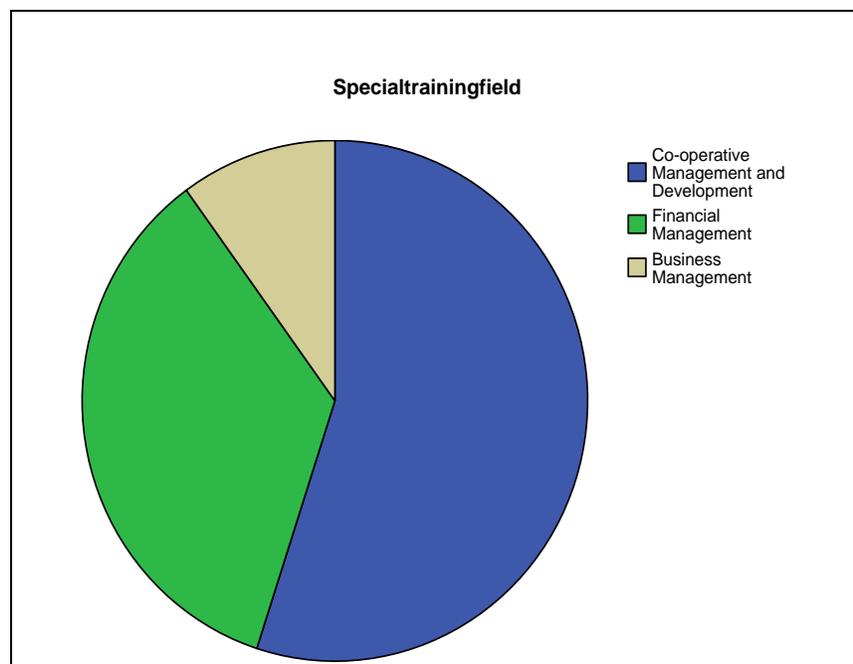
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	6	30.0	30.0	30.0
	No	14	70.0	70.0	100.0
Total		20	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 1.14 above, it is clear that the highest number of respondents, 70% were not satisfied with the level of training the State offered to them, while 30% of the respondents were satisfied with the level of training offered to them. The level of dissatisfaction in this variant depicts the need for additional intervention by the State in respect of developing intensive training programmes for the co-operatives

4.3.35. Special Training Needs

The question was intended to enquire from the respondents what special training needs they had or which areas or fields of skills training they would like the State to consider.

Figure 1.22: Special Training Needs for Co-operative Members



According to Figure 1.22 above, shows that 11 or 55% of the respondents indicated that they wished to be trained on Co-operative Management and Development, 7 or 35% needed to be trained on financial management and 2 or 10% needed training on business management. The State, with the help of its technical staff, should be involved as well in the area of training needs assessment and also assist in the identification of gaps with regard to training needs for members of the co-operatives.

4.3.36. Analysis of Project Details

The agricultural co-operatives under study were found to be faced with enormous challenges that include the inability to collect revenue, thereby making earnings for the members to uplift their economic standard and most importantly to encourage them to work even harder to continue to produce food, especially against the backdrop of world food crisis. The poverty levels that forced members of the communities join co-operatives, could clearly not improve their lot during their participation in these structures. This further saw members being unable to afford basic necessities such as food, clothing and education of their children.

The data collected show that 60% of the respondents had never been formally employed (cf. Table 1.5), which is clearly an indication of the high levels of poverty among the members of the community. 35% of the respondents depended on relatives for a living before they joined the co-operatives (cf. Figure 1.5). Of the co-operatives researched, 50% were able to make earnings for members (cf. Table 1.6) although only 35% of the respondents indicated that they received income in the form of earnings. It is clear from data gathered that 35% of the members only received earnings from co-operatives (cf. Figure 1.6) only when there was profit and they received less than R2000 as earnings (cf. Figure 1.7). There was no improvement in the lives of members ever since they joined co-operatives, as confirmed by 90% of the respondents (cf. Table 1.7). As a measure to improve their situation, 45% of the members resolved to continue to participate in their co-operatives presumably with the hope that things would change for the better (cf. Figure 8). Of the respondents interviewed, 35% had families of 4 to 5 members (cf. Figure 9).

Data gathered indicate that co-operatives under study were over five (5) years in

existence. A higher percentage, that is, 50%, produce maize and transport such to the mills for safekeeping and milling but do the same for the community, (cf. Figure 1.10). The co-operatives had only one type of market (milling company) and this was confirmed by 90% of the respondents (cf. Table 1.8), 5% indicated that they asked for assistance from the State while the 5% did nothing to improve the situation (cf. Figure 1.11). Lack of physical and financial resources was found to be the major determinant for success of the co-operatives as this point was emphasized by 35% of the respondents (cf. Figure 1.12).

The co-operatives under study had their different structures given the number of their members. Regarding annual turn over, 50% of the co-operatives had the annual turn over while the other 50% had none (cf. Figure 13.). The data collected showed that the co-operatives had varying numbers of members ranging from 11 to 100 members. Women constituted 64% of the membership of the co-operatives. Percentage of women owners of co-operatives was found to be at 64.14% compared to 35.86 male owners. Of the co-operatives under study had 50% had employees of between 2 and 4 employees (cf. Figure 1.14), and despite this lower number of employees women constituted 66.67% of the employees. Data further indicated that 35% indicated that employees were appointed on the basis of applications and skills (cf. Figure 1.15). Half of the co-operatives under study, that is 50%, was found to be having Boards of Directors/Trustees while the other half had none (cf. Table 1.9) and the 50% that had the boards had members of between 5 and 7. The percentage of the women in the boards was 57.1%, whereas the male composition was 42.9% (cf. Figure 1.16). On relationship, 25% indicated that its relationship with the boards was good (cf. Figure 1.17) and that management played its role (cf. Table 1.10).

All the respondents (i.e., 100%) have roles in the co-operatives and could not respond to the question (cf. Table 1.11). Woman participation was rated average by 35% of the respondents (Figure 1.18), due to being discouraged by lack of earnings as expressed by 30% of the respondents (cf. Figure 1.19). All members of the co-operatives had clearly defined roles and responsibilities (cf. Table 1.12). Data gathered indicated that 65% of the respondents was members of the executive committees of their respective co-operatives (cf. Figure 1.20). Data show that 60% of the respondents was never

trained by the State (cf. Table 1.13). Twenty-five percent (25%) obtained training on financial management (cf. Figure 1.21). Fifty-five percent (55%) of the respondents wanted special training on Co-operative Management and Development (cf. Figure 1.22). A higher percentage, that is, 70%, of the respondents was not satisfied with the level of training by the State (cf. Table 1.14).

4.4. THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES ON WOMEN

4.4.1. School going children

Through this question, the researcher wanted to know from the respondents whether they had any school going children.

Table 1.15: School going children

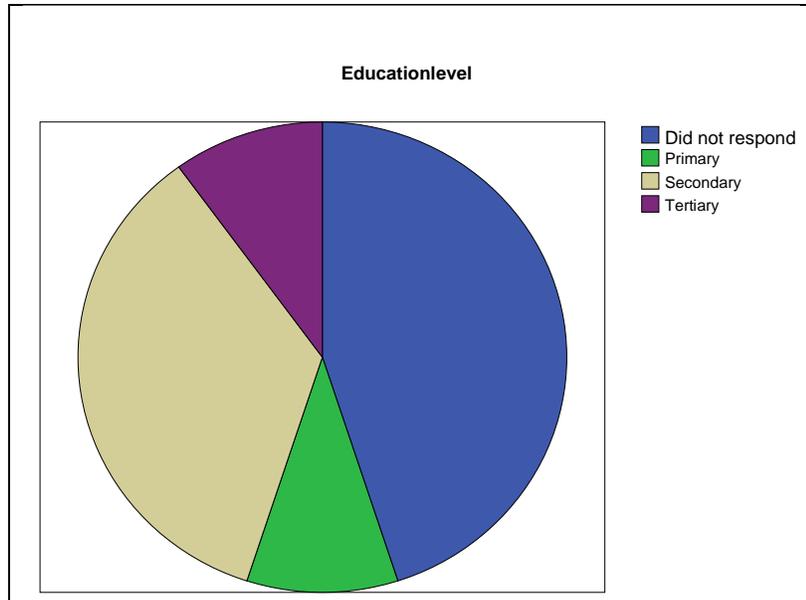
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	11	55.0	55.0	55.0
	No	9	45.0	45.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The table above shows that 55% of the respondents indicated that it had school going children, while 45% of the respondents indicated that it did not have school children.

4.4.2. Education level of the respondent's children

The question was intended to enquire from the respondents at what level of education their children were.

Figure 1.23: Education Level of the Respondent's Children

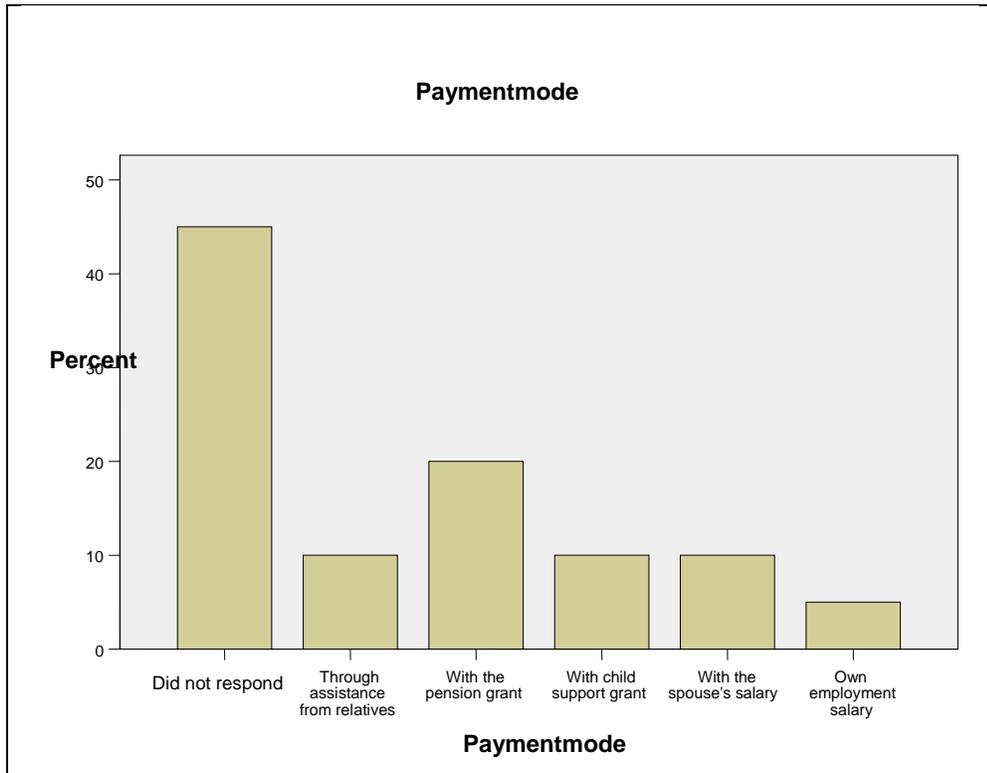


According to Figure 1.23 above, 9 (45%) of the respondents did not respond to this question because they did not have school going children. However, 7 (35%) of the respondent's children were in the Secondary School Phase, the other 2 (10%) of the respondent's children were in the Primary School Phase and the other 2 (10%) of the respondent's children were at tertiary level.

4.4.3. Payment of the children's tuition fees

The purpose of this question was for the researcher to establish from the respondents how they paid for their children's tuition fees.

Figure 1.24: Payment of Children's Tuition Fees



According to Figure 1.24 above, 9 (45%) of the respondents did not respond to this question as they had no children going to school, but 4 (20%) of the respondents used their Pension grants towards the payment of their children's tuition, 2 (10%) get assistance from relatives for their children's education, 2 (10%) paid their children's education fees from Child Support Grant from the State, another 2 (10%) of the paid their children's fees from their spouses' salaries and 1 (5%) of the respondents pay his/her children's tuition fees from his/her employment salaries.

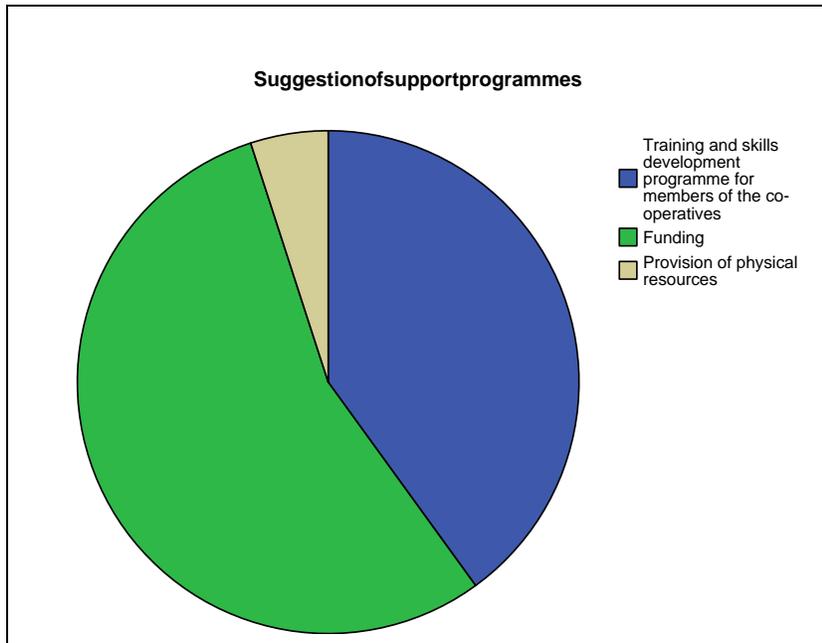
4.4.4. Rating of State Support

The researcher wanted to enquire from the respondents how they rated the State's support to co-operatives. In the interview conducted, 16 (80%), indicated that the State support to co-operatives was poor and 4 (20%) of the respondents indicated that the State support was good.

4.4.5. State Support Programmes

The aim of the question was for the researcher to get from the respondent's opinions the type of State support programmes they would suggest for co-operative development.

Figure 1.26: State Support Programmes



According to Figure 1.26 above, 11 (55%) of the respondents felt that the State should provide funding support to co-operatives, 8 (40%) felt that the State should offer training support to members of co-operatives and 1 (5%) felt that the State should offer physical resources to co-operatives.

4.4.6. Community Support

The aim of the question was for the researcher to establish from the respondents whether their co-operatives were getting any support from the community. The support received from the community in all the four co-operatives was supposed to translate into co-operatives generating revenue as most of the community members would be bringing their maize harvests to them for transportation and storage to the mills. The community members would also be contributing to revenue by buying other products from the co-operatives, but surprisingly, two co-operatives have no revenue base at all despite the community support.

Table 1.16: Community Support

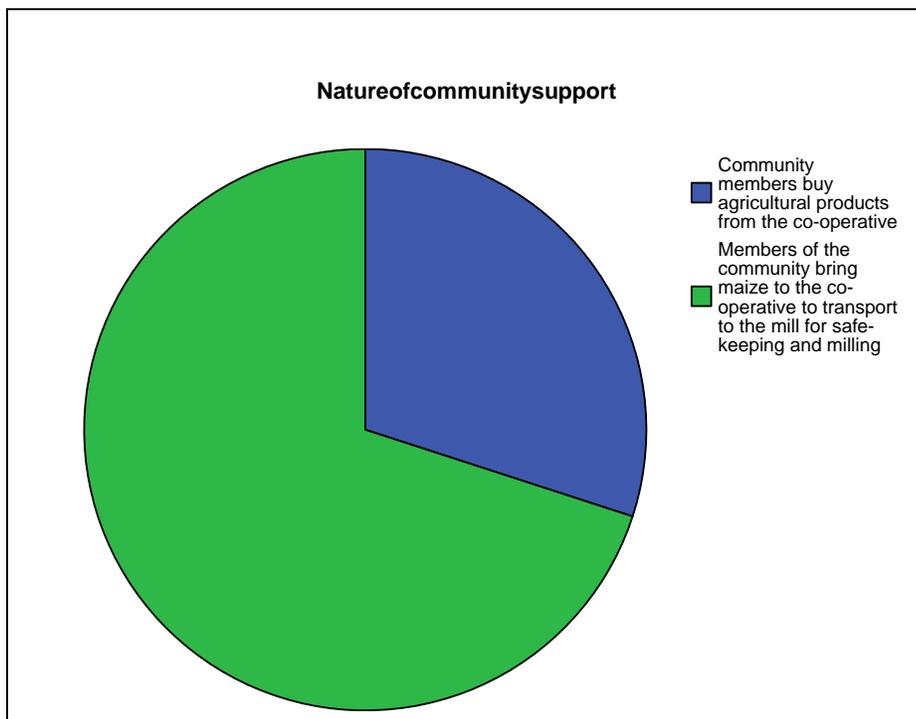
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	16	80.0	80.0	80.0
	No	4	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The table above shows that 80% of the respondents indicated that its co-operatives got support from the community, while 20% of the respondents indicated that its co-operatives got no support from the community.

4.4.7. Nature of Community Support

The purpose of this question was for the researcher to establish from respondents what the nature of support their co-operatives received from the community.

Figure 1.27: Nature of Community Support



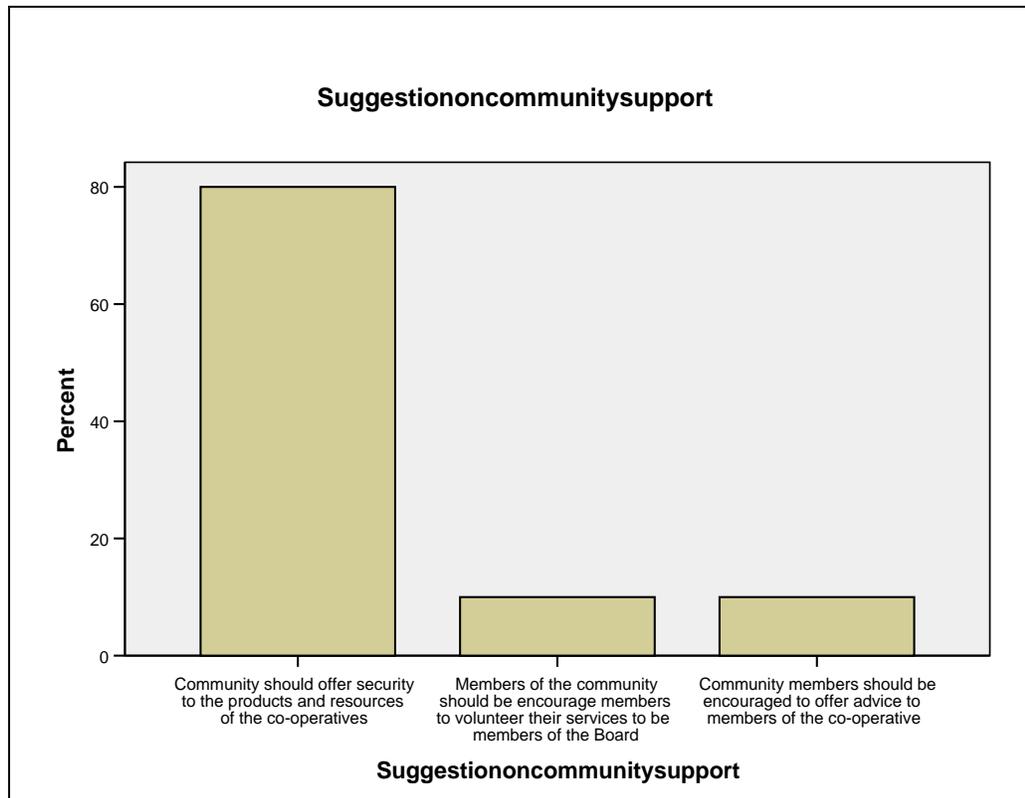
According to Figure 1.27 above, 14 (70%) of the respondents indicated that community members brought their bags of maize to the co-operatives to be transported to the mill for storage and milling and 6 (30%) of the respondents indicated that community

members bought agricultural products from their co-operatives. Clearly, this was supposed to form a good revenue base, but it can be deduced that there is poor or no management in the co-operatives under study, which thus calls for the State intervention.

4.4.8. Suggestions on the nature of support from the community

Through this question, the researcher wanted to establish from the respondents what their suggestions would be regarding community support

Figure 1.28: Suggestions on the Nature of Support from the Community



According to Figure 1.28 above, 16 or 80% of the respondents suggested that the community should offer security to the products and resources of the co-operatives, while 2 or 10% suggested that members of the community should be encouraged to offer their services as members of the board and the other 2 or 10% suggested that members of the community should be encouraged to offer advice to the members of the co-operative.

4.4.9. Women Empowerment

With this question, the researcher wanted to find out from respondents whether they were satisfied with progress made on women empowerment.

Table 1.17: Women Empowerment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	5	25.0	25.0	25.0
	No	15	75.0	75.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

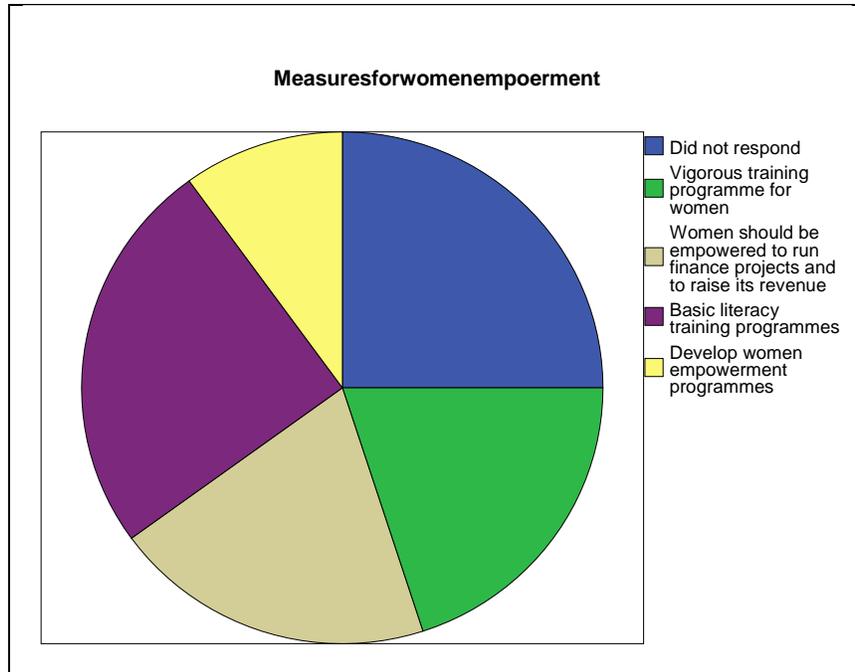
Table 1.17 above shows that the highest percentage, i.e., 75% of respondents indicated that they were not satisfied with progress made on women empowerment, while 25% expressed their satisfaction. The State has not done much in respect of empowering women in the agricultural sector in the rural areas.

Some women indicated how excited they were when they first joined the agricultural sector through the co-operatives because they thought they would one day see their entities being very progressive but successful businesses because of the support they would get from the State. Even those whose co-operatives collected revenue expressed their frustration on the lack of State support with regard to empowerment programmes. There was no training workshop that was targeting this aspect and this was a serious concern to them.

4.4.9. Measures to be taken towards women empowerment

The aim of asking this question was for the researcher to establish from the respondents which measures they thought should be taken to empower women in co-operatives.

Figure 1.29: Measures for Women Empowerment



According to Figure 1.29 above, 5 or 25% of the respondents did not respond to this question as they were satisfied with women empowerment programmes in place by the State. The other 5 or 25% of the respondents indicated that basic literacy programme was central for women empowerment, 4 or 20% indicated that training on leadership and management skills would be appropriate for women empowerment, 4 or 20% indicated that women should be empowered to run finance projects and to raise revenue for them and 10% indicated that women empowerment programmes should be developed.

4.4.10. Analysis of economic impact of agricultural co-operatives on women

Data gathered indicate that 55% of the respondents still had school going children (cf. Table 1.15) and 35% of them had their children at the secondary phase (cf. Figure 1.23). Some respondents, that is, 20% used their pension funds towards their children's tuition fees (cf. Figure 1.24). Most of the respondents, i.e., 80%, rated State support as poor. At least 55% of the respondents suggested that the State should provide funding

or financial support to all co-operatives (cf. Figure 1.26).

A higher percentage, that is, 70%, of the respondents community members brought bags of maize to the co-operatives to be transported to the mills for storage and milling (cf. Figure 1.27). A high number of respondents, i.e., 80%, suggested that community should offer security support to both products and resources of the co-operatives (cf. Figure 1.28). A higher percentage of respondents, 75%, was not satisfied with progress made on women empowerment (cf. Table 1.17). At least, 25% of the respondents stressed that literacy training programmes should be put in place by the State for women empowerment (cf. Figure 1.29).

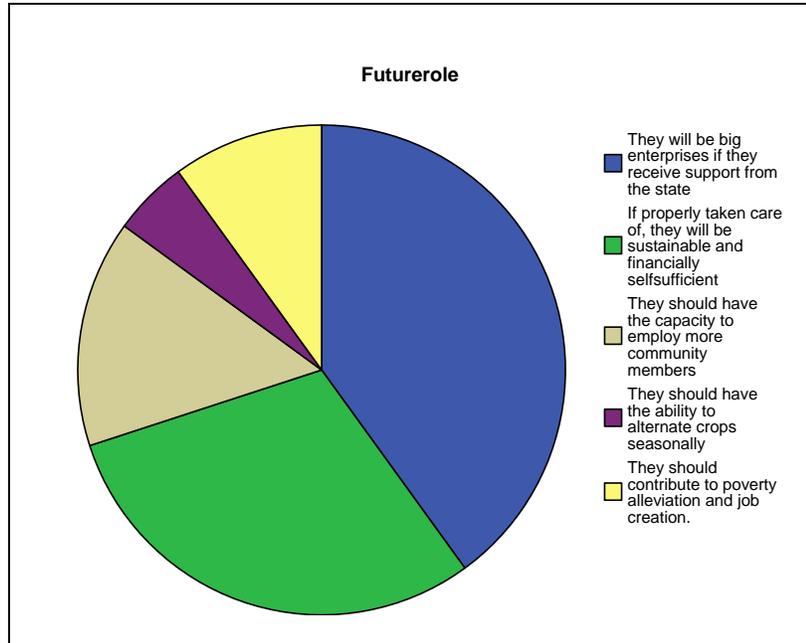
From the data gathered, it is clear that, generally, the co-operatives do not make any economic impact in the lives of their members. There are several factors that can be attributed to this situation, such as lack of leadership and management in co-operatives; lack of physical and financial resources; lack of skills among members; and lack of State support.

4.5. FUTURE STRATEGIES FOR CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

4.5.1. The Future of Co-operatives

The researcher wanted to know from the respondents how they saw the future of their co-operatives in the next five years.

Figure 1.30: Future of Co-operatives



According to Figure 1.30 above, 8 or 40% of the respondents indicated that they wanted their co-operatives to be big enterprises provided they got financial assistance, 6 or 30% indicated that if co-operatives were properly taken care of, they would be sustainable and financially self-sufficient; 2 or 10% indicated that they wanted their co-operatives to contribute to poverty alleviation and job creation; while 2 or 10% of the respondents indicated that their co-operatives should have the ability to cultivate other seasonal crops and 1 or 5% indicated that they should have the ability to alternate crops seasonally. The respondents' suggestions are genuine and achievable provided the state is committed to providing support to these entities.

4.5.2. Changes in Co-operative Development

Through this question the researcher wanted to find out from respondents what changes they would like to see effected in future with regard to co-operative development.

Figure 1.31: Changes in Co-operative Development

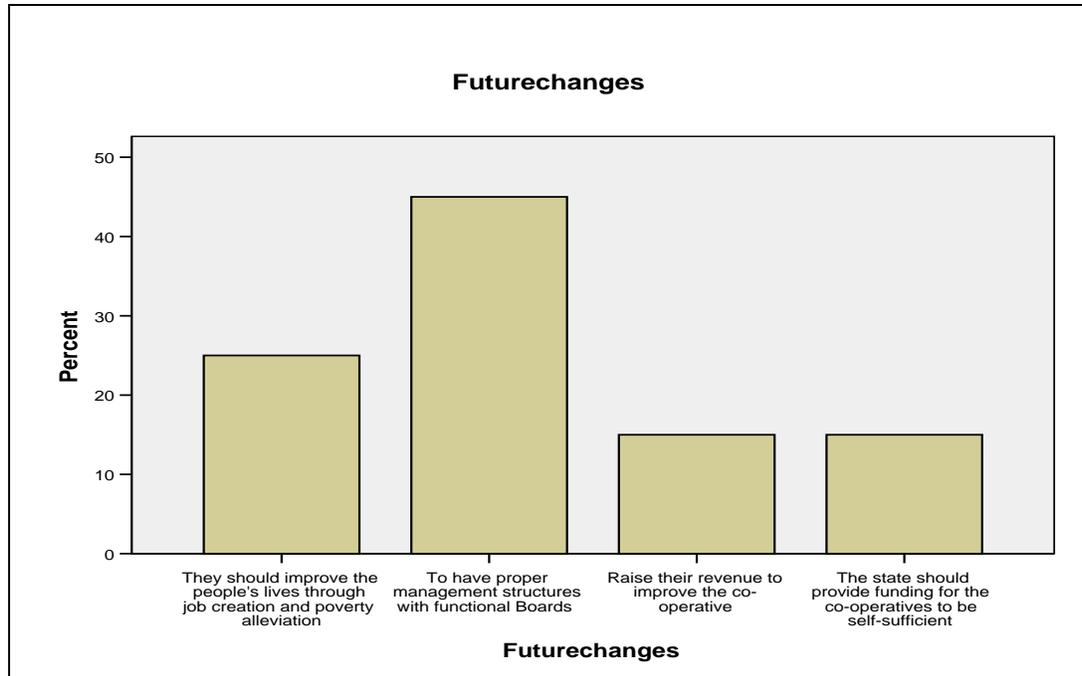
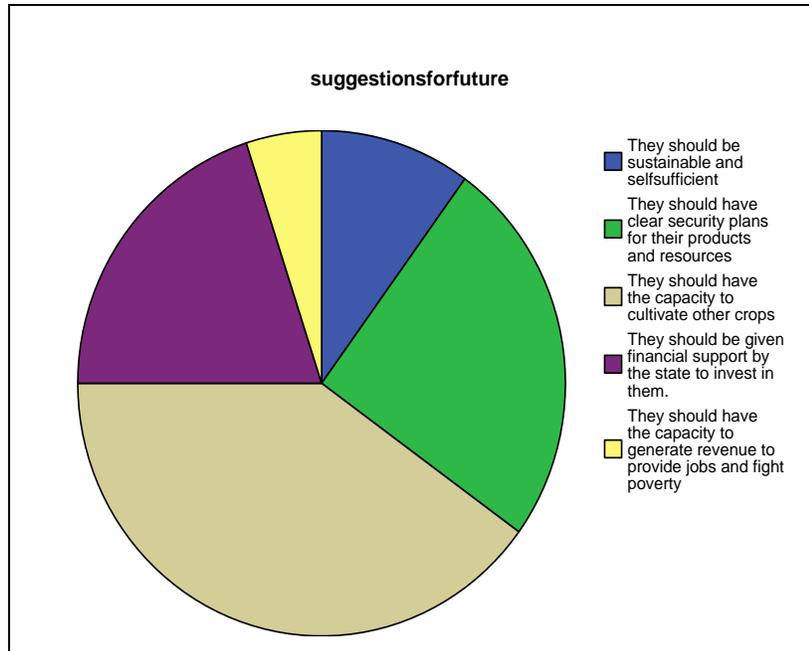


Figure 1.31 above shows that 9 or 45% of the respondents would like to see co-operatives having proper management structures and functional Boards of Directors/Trustees, 5 or 25% would want to see co-operatives having funds to improve the people's lives through job creation and poverty alleviation programmes, 3 or 15% wanted to see co-operatives raising their revenue to improve the condition of the members and the last 3 or 15% wanted the State to provide funding to the co-operatives to be self-sufficient.

4.5.3. Suggestions for the Future of Co-operatives

With this question, the researcher wanted to find out what suggestions respondents had for the future of co-operatives.

Figure 1.32: Suggestions for the Future of Co-operatives



According to Figure 1.32 above, 8 or 40% of the respondents indicated that the co-operatives should have the capacity to grow other seasonal crops, sustainability and self-sufficiency as key for the future of co-operatives, 5 or 25% suggested that there should be clear security plans for their products and resources, 4 or 20% of the respondents suggested that co-operatives should be given financial support by the State as investment, 2 or 10% of the respondents suggested that co-operatives should be sustainable and self-sufficient and 1 or 5% suggested that co-operatives should have the capacity and ability to generate revenue.

4.5.4. Analysis on future strategies for co-operative development

On the basis of data gathered in this section, 40% of the respondents indicated that they wanted their co-operatives to be big enterprises provided they were given financial assistance (cf. Figure 1.30), while 45% of the respondents would like to see co-operatives having proper management structures and functional Boards of Directors/Trustees (cf. Figure 1.31) and 40% of the respondents indicated that the co-operatives should have the capacity to grow other seasonal crops (cf. Figure 1.32).

These should be the three areas of focus for the future of the co-operatives to enhance food security and Local Economic Development. This poses serious challenges to the State as all the suggestions raised by the respondents for their co-operatives to succeed in combating poverty and thus create employment. Agricultural co-operatives can be the ideal firms and catalysts for development as well as progressive agents of change, if the State supports them.

4.6. INTERVIEW WITH STATE OFFICIALS

4.6.1. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The purpose of this section was to gather information about the State officials in relation to co-operative development.

4.6.1. Gender Composition

Table 2.1: Gender Composition

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	10	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Female	10	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 2.1 above, 50% of the respondents was male while 50% of the respondents was female.

4.6.2. Work Stations of Respondents

Data gathered indicate that 25% of the respondents worked at the Polokwane Municipality and Capricorn District Municipality, 20% worked at Limpopo Business Support Agency (LIBSA), 20% worked at the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET), another 20% worked in the Office of the Premier, while 15% worked at the Department of Agriculture.

4.6.3. Positions Held by Respondents

During the interview, 30% of the respondents were Co-operative Promotions officers, the other 30% were Local Economic Development (LED) Coordinators, 20% were Community Development Workers (CDWs), 15% was in management and 5% were

Business Development Strategists.

4.6.4. Duration in the Workplace

A higher percentage of respondents, that is, 70% had been at its respective workplaces for the duration of between 3 and 4 years, 15% had been at the workplace for the duration of between 4 and 5 years, and 15% of the respondents had been at its workplaces for more than 5 years.

4.6.5. Roles and Responsibilities of Respondents

Data collected showed that 45% of the respondents coordinated co-operatives in the district, 30% was responsible for support and development of co-operatives, 20% was responsible for advising communities on co-operative management and development, the registration of co-operatives, 5% was responsible for registration of co-operatives.

4.6.6. Number of years in the job

A higher percentage, 70%, of the respondents was found to have been in their jobs between 2 and 3 years, 15% had been in their jobs for the duration between 3 and 4 years, 10% of the respondents indicated that it had been in their present jobs for the duration of above 5 years, while 5% of the respondents had been in its present positions for the duration of between 4 and 5 years.

4.6.7. Reasons for their institutions or departments to support co-operative development

The highest percentage of respondents, i.e., 90%, indicated that it was a mandate from Limpopo Provincial Government to promote co-operative development to fight poverty and unemployment, 10% of the respondents indicated that it was done on the basis of enhancing social and local economic development.

4.6.8. Policies and guidelines for establishing co-operatives.

All, that is, 100% of the respondents indicated that their institutions/departments had policies and guidelines for the establishment of co-operatives.

4.6.9. Criteria followed to establish co-operatives

At least 45% of the respondents pointed out that its institution/department used National and Provincial Policies on Co-operatives, another 30.76% indicated that it used the Department of Trade and Industry's Strategy on Co-operatives, 25% indicated that they used strategy document by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), 20% indicated that voluntarism was used as a criterion for establishing co-operatives and 10% indicated that the constitution of co-operatives was used to establish co-operatives

4.6.10. Analysis of profile of respondents

According to the data collected regarding the profile of officials, 50% was male and 50% was female, of whom 25% was working for Polokwane Local and Capricorn District Municipalities, 20% worked at Limpopo Business Support Agency (LIBSA), 20% worked at the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET), another 20% worked in the Office of the Premier, while 15% worked at the Department of Agriculture. A higher percentage of the respondents, i.e., 35, were Co-operative Promotion Officers. Data collected showed that 70% of the total respondents had been in their present jobs for a period of between 3 and 4 years. Data also showed that 45% of the respondents coordinated co-operatives in districts. A higher number of respondents had been in their present positions for a period between 3 and 4 years.

Data collected indicated that the 90% of the respondents' reasons for their departments/institutions to support co-operatives was to fight poverty and joblessness. All respondents, that is, 100%, said that their departments/institutions had policies and guidelines. A further 45% of the officials said that their departments/institutions used National and Provincial Policies on co-operatives.

4.6.2. SUPPORT TO CO-OPERATIVES

In this section, the researcher's aim was to establish from the State officials about the nature of support received by co-operatives from the State to ensure economic growth in rural areas through agriculture. In his interaction with State officials, the researcher established the following:

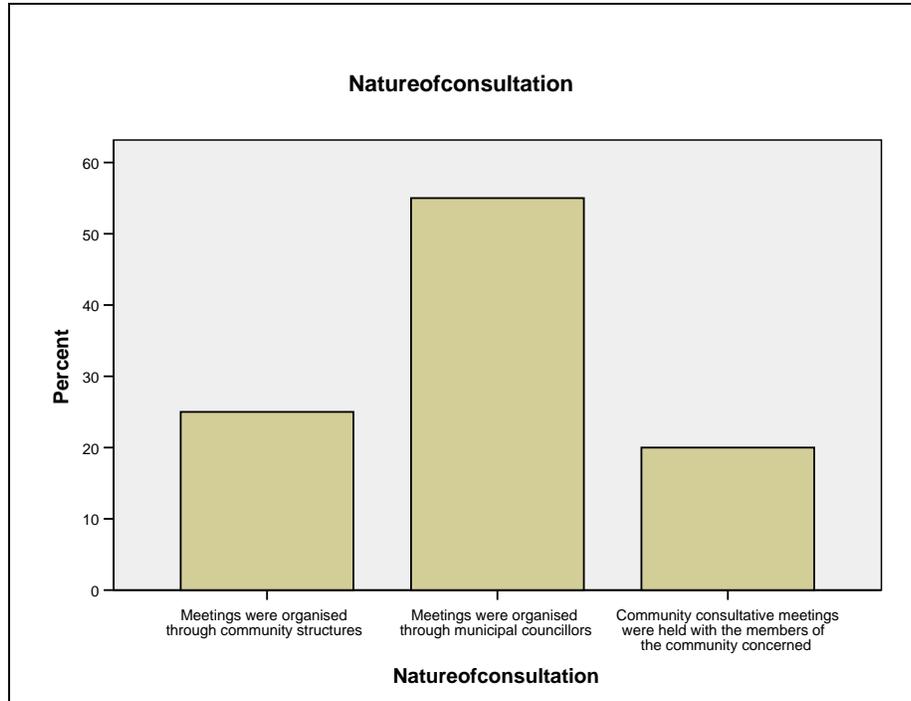
4.6.10. Consultation with Communities

All (i.e., 100%) of the respondents indicated that there was consultation with the

community when co-operatives were established.

4.6.11. Nature of Consultation

Figure 2.1: Nature of Consultation



According to Figure 2.1 above, 55% of the respondents indicated that consultation was done through meetings organized by councillors meetings, 25% indicated that consultation was done by meetings held with communities concerned.

4.6.12. Consultation with Traditional Authority

Table 2.2: Consultation with Traditional Authority

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	18	90.0	90.0	90.0
	No	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

According to the table above, 90% of the respondents indicated that there was consultation with the traditional authority before the establishment of the co-operatives, while 10 % indicated that there was no consultation with traditional authorities.

4.6.13. The Nature of Consultation with Traditional Authority
Figure 2.2: The Nature of Consultation with Traditional Authority

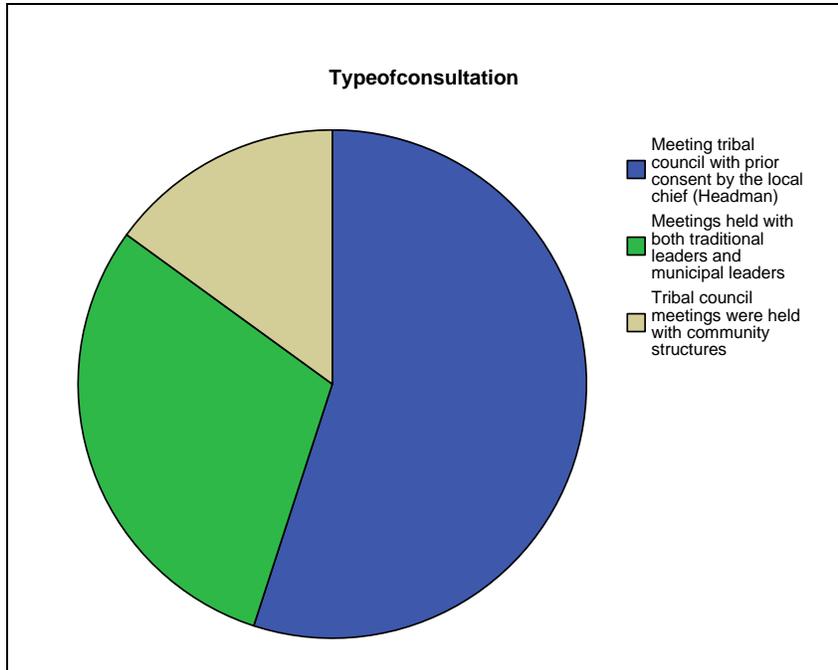


Figure 2.2 above shows that 55% of the respondents indicated that the consultation was done with the communities, with prior consent by the local headman and tribal council; 30% of the respondents indicated that meetings were held with traditional authorities and municipal councils separately before meeting the communities; and 15% indicated that meetings were held with community structures in the communities before meeting with prospective or would-be members.

4.6.14. Involvement of Community in the Choice of the Co-operative Type

The aim of the question was for the researcher to find out from the respondents how members of the co-operative were involved in the choice of the cooperative type.

Figure 2.3: Community Involvement in the Choice of Co-operative Type

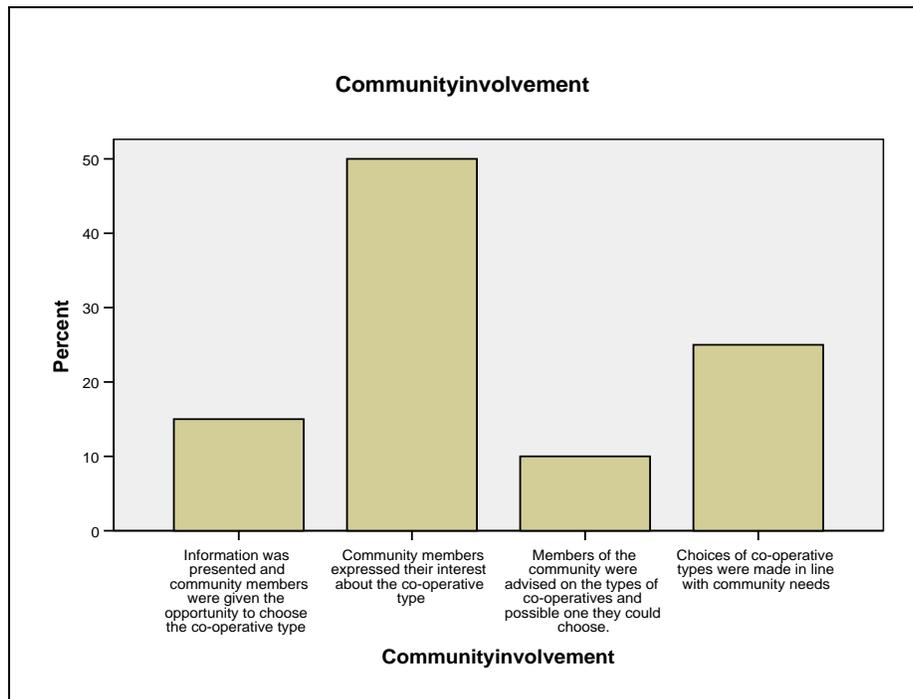


Figure 2.3 above, shows that 50% of the respondents indicated that community members expressed their interests with regard to co-operative type of their choice, 25% of the co-operatives were established in line with community needs, 15% indicated that all information was presented and community members were given the opportunity to choose the co-operative type and 10% indicated that co-operative members were guided on the types of co-operatives to choose.

4.6.15. Rating of women participation in co-operatives

Of the officials interviewed, 8 (40%) of the officials rated women participation high, the other 25% rated women participation low, 20% rated women participation very high and 15% rated women participation average.

4.6.16. Reasons for ratings in question 4.6.15.

Figure 2.4: Reasons for Ratings

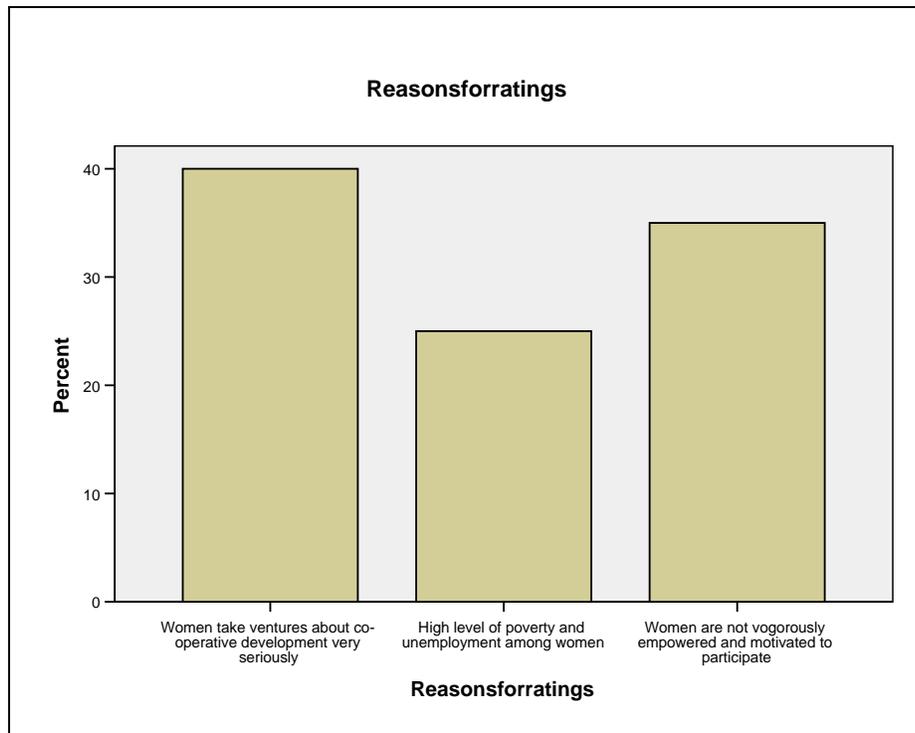
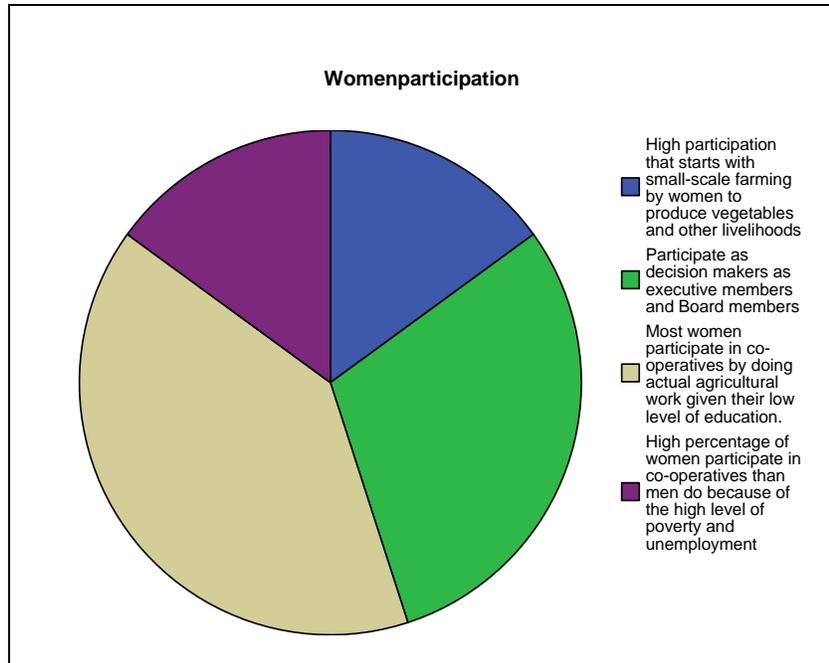


Figure 2.4 above shows that 40% of the respondents felt that women take ventures about co-operative development very seriously; 35% felt that women are not adequately empowered and motivated to participate in co-operatives; and 25% felt that high level of poverty among women motivated them to take part in co-operatives.

4.6.17. Nature of women participation in co-operatives

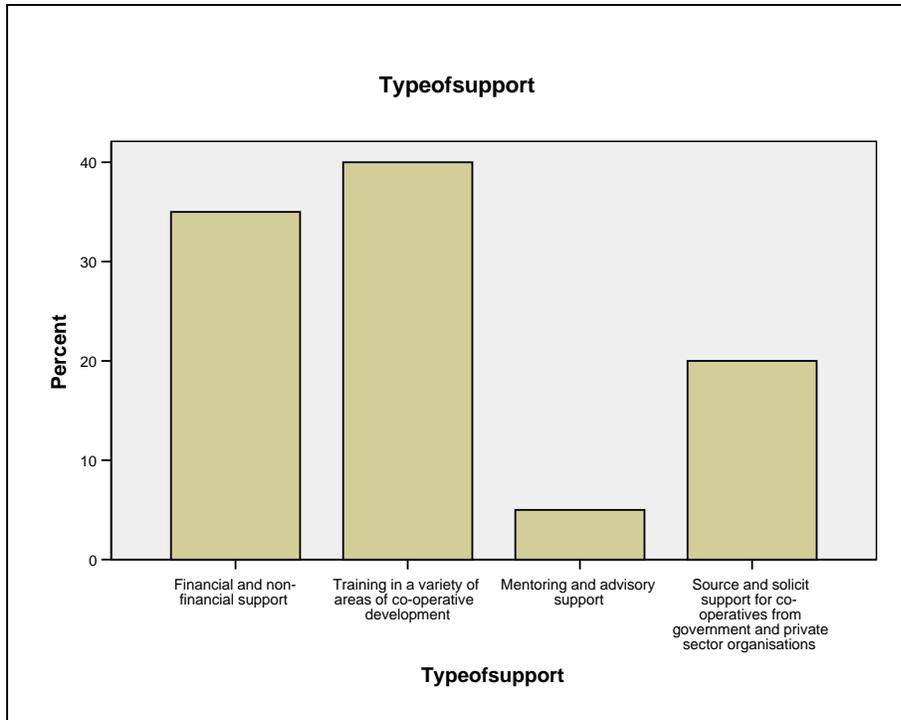
Figure 2.5: Nature of Women Participation



In Figure 2.5 above, 40% of the respondents said that they were ordinary members, who performed actual agricultural work in the fields; 30% indicated that some participated as decision makers by virtue of them being members of the executive committees and members of the boards; 15% of the women had high participation that started with small-scale farming to produce vegetables and other livelihoods; and the other 15% of women participated in co-operatives more than men do because of the high level of poverty and unemployment.

4.6.18. Suggestions on the type of state support

Figure 2.6: Type of State Support



According to Figure 2.6 above, 40% indicated that their department/institution offered training and development support to members of the co-operatives; 35% of the respondents said their department/institution assisted co-operatives with financial and non-financial support, in terms of facilitating networking opportunities, to source funding for the co-operatives; 20% said that their department/institution sourced and solicited support for co-operatives from government and private sector organizations; and 05% indicated that their department/institution offered mentoring and guidance to the members of the co-operatives.

4.6.19. Respondents' opinions on whether or not state support was sufficient

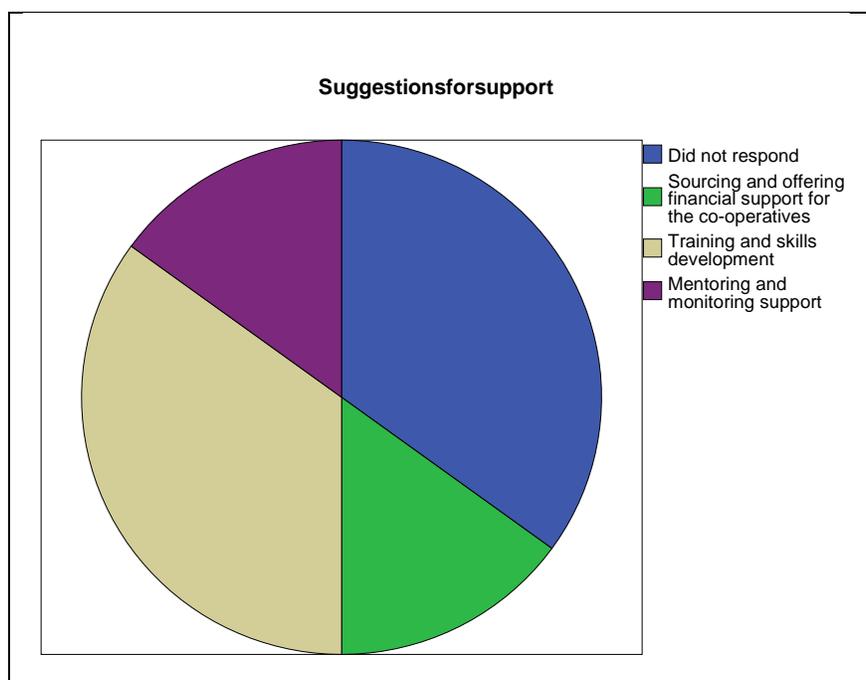
Table 2.3: Respondents' opinions on whether or not the states support was sufficient

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	7	35.0	35.0	35.0
No	13	65.0	65.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 2.3 above shows that 35% that of the respondents indicated that there was support for co-operatives, whereas 65% indicated that there was no support for the co-operatives.

4.6.20. Suggestions for support on co-operatives

Figure 2.8: Suggestions for the State Support



According to Figure 2.7 above, 35% of the respondents did not respond to this question as they were satisfied with State support, another 35% of the respondents suggested that the State should offer training and development skills to members of co-operatives for them to be sustainable, 15% of the respondents suggested that the State should source and offer financial support to the co-operatives and 15% suggested that the State should offer mentoring and monitoring support to co-operatives.

4.6.21. Strategies for Co-operative Development

Of the officials interviewed, 16 (80%) indicated that their departments/institutions had strategies for co-operative development, while 4 (20%) indicated that their departments/institutions did not have strategies on co-operative development.

4.6.22. Description of the strategy

Figure 2.8: Description of the Strategy

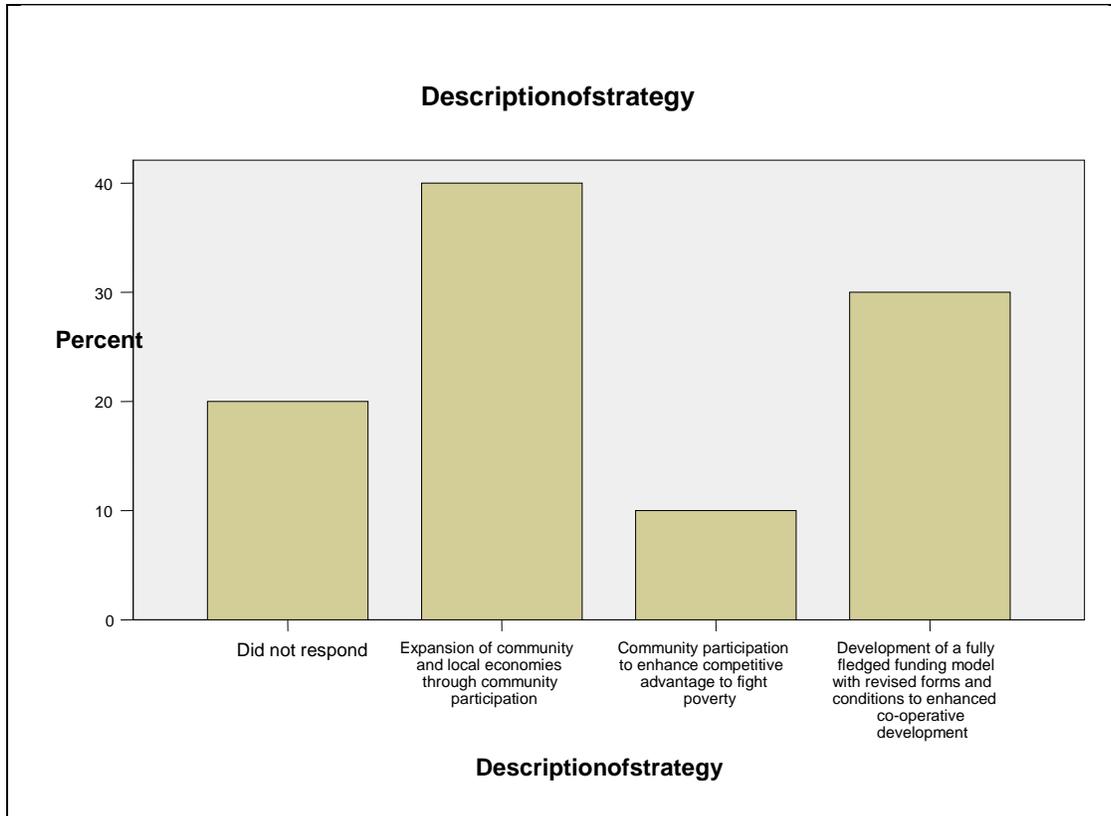


Figure 2.8 above shows that 20% of the respondents did not respond to the question as they said there was no strategy. However, 40% of the respondents indicated their strategy was about the expansion of community and local economies through community participation; 30% indicated that their strategy was about the development of a fully fledged funding model with revised terms and conditions to enhance co-operative development; and 10% indicated that their strategy was about community participation to enhance competitive advantage in fighting poverty.

4.6.23. The extent of strategy implementation

Figure 2.9: The Extent of Strategy Implementation

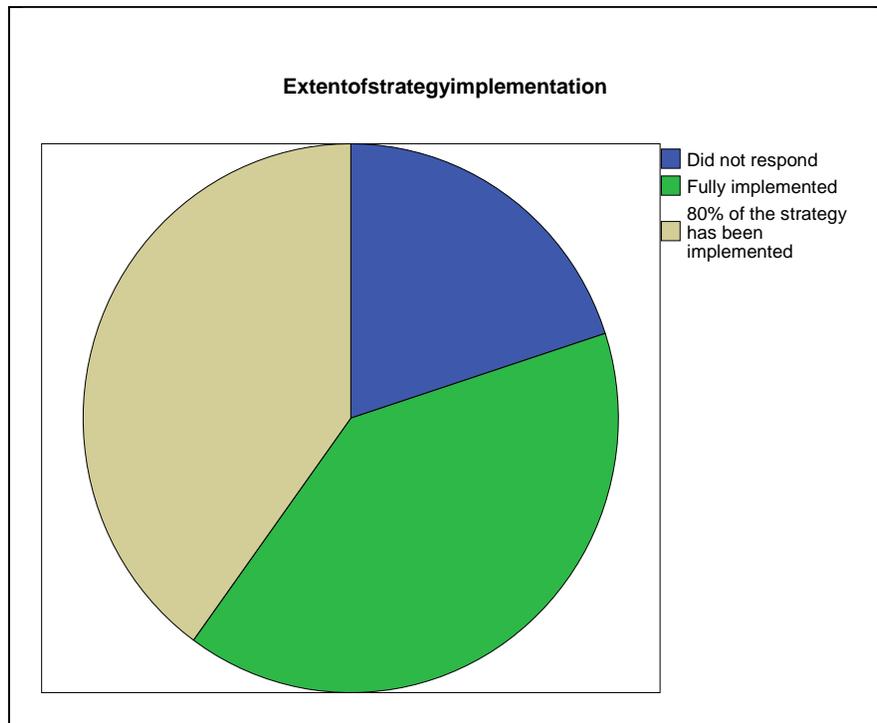


Figure 2.9 above again indicates that 20% of the respondents did not respond to this follow-up question as their institutions/departments did not have strategies for co-operative development; 40% indicated that the strategy was fully implemented, that is, 100%; and the other 40% indicated that 80% of the strategy was implemented.

4.6.24. Community Support

The highest percentage of respondents, 18 (90%) indicated that co-operatives got community support, whereas 2 (10%) indicated that co-operatives did not receive community support.

4.6.25. The Nature of Community Support

Figure 2.10: Nature of Community Support

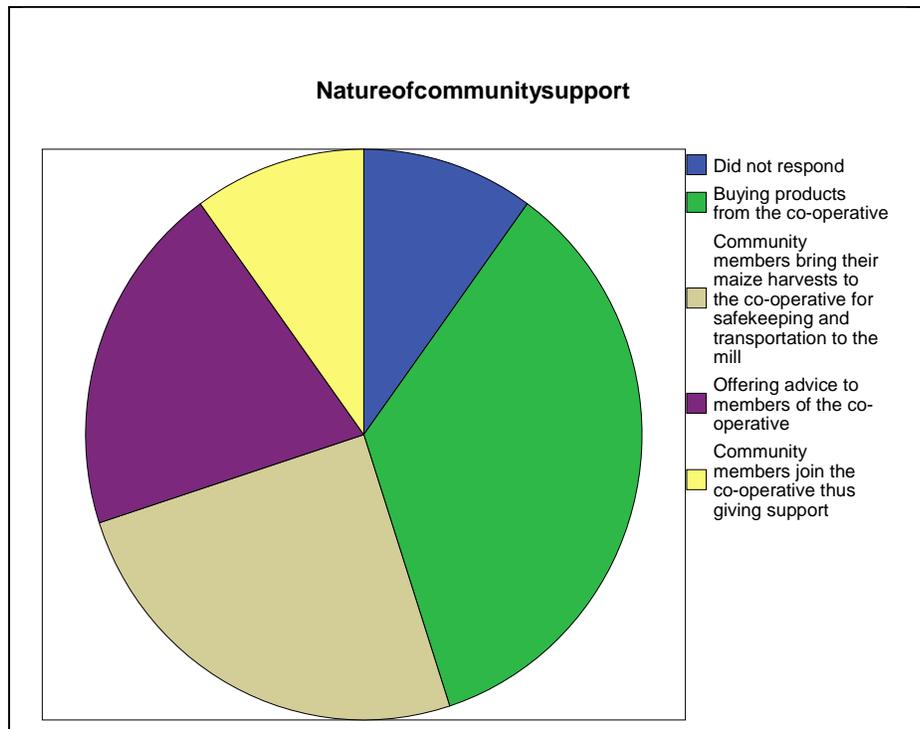


Figure 2.10 above depicts that 10% of the respondents did not respond to this follow-up question as they felt there was no community support to the co-operatives, but 35% of the respondents indicated that members of the community bought agricultural items and products from the co-operative. Twenty-five percent (25%) indicated that community members brought maize harvest to the co-operatives for safekeeping and transportation to the mill for finishing and 10% indicated that community leaders encouraged members of the community to participate in the co-operatives and that was viewed as support.

4.6.26. Respondents' Suggestions on Community Support

The aim of the researcher with regard to this question was to discover from the respondents what their suggestions were regarding community support to co-operatives.

Figure 2.11: Respondents' Suggestions on Community Support

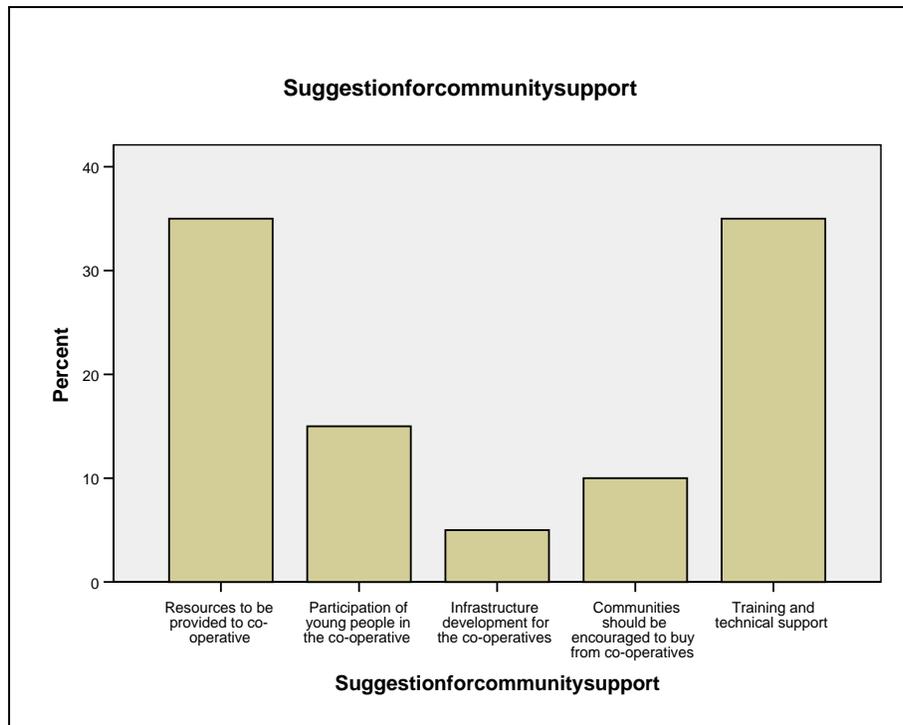


Figure 2.11 above shows that 35% of the respondents suggested provision of resources to co-operatives; 35% suggested training and technical support to co-operatives; 15% suggested participation of young people in co-operatives; 10% suggested that communities should be encouraged to buy products from the co-operatives; and 5% suggested infrastructural development for co-operatives.

4.6.27. Analysis of data

According to data collected on this section, 100% of the respondents indicated that there was consultation with communities when co-operatives were established and 55% of the respondents said that consultation was in the form of meetings organised by municipal councillors (cf. Figure 2.1). A high percentage of 90% of the respondents agreed that there was consultation with traditional authority (cf. Table 2.1), of which 55% said was done with prior consent of by the local traditional leadership (i.e., headman) (cf. Figure 2.2).

According to the data, 50% of the respondents indicated that community members expressed interest with regard to the choice of the co-operative type of their choice (cf. Figure 2.3). At least, 40% of the respondents rated women participation high as 40% felt that women took ventures about co-operatives very seriously (cf. Fig. 2.4). The data collected show that 40% of the respondents were ordinary members of the co-operatives doing actual agricultural work in the co-operatives (cf. Figure 2.5).

Regarding the nature of support to co-operatives, 40% of the respondents indicated that its department/institution offered training and development support to co-operatives (cf. Figure 2.6). A higher percentage, i.e., 65% of the respondents indicated that there was State support (cf. Table 2.2), while 35% of the respondents suggested that the state should offer training and development skills to members of the co-operatives (cf. Figure 2.7).

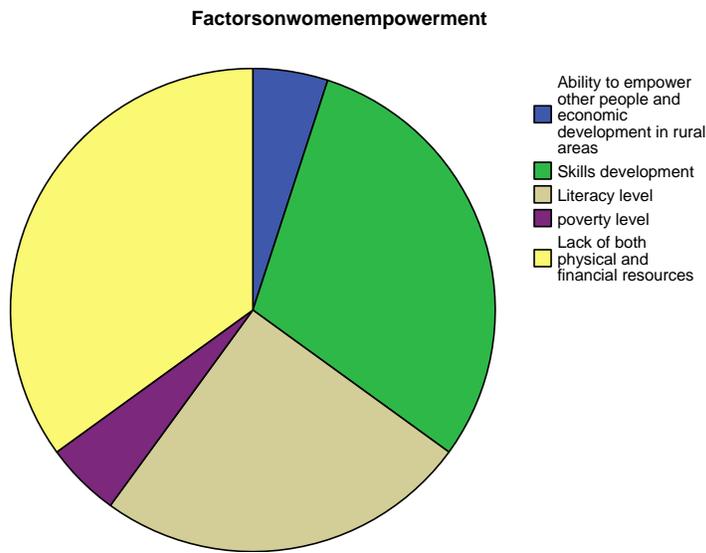
On strategies for co-operative development, a high percentage, that is, 80% of the respondents, indicated that its department/institution had strategies for co-operative development (cf. Table 2.3), and 40% further indicated that its strategy was about the expansion of community and local economies (cf. Figure 8), which 40% said was fully implemented while the other 40 also indicated that was 80% implemented (cf. Figure 2.9).

On community support, 90% of the respondents indicated that co-operatives received community support. On the nature of community support, at least 35% of the respondents indicated that the community brought bags of maize to the co-operatives for them to be transported to the mills for storage and safekeeping (cf. Figure 2.10). Thirty-five percent (35%) of the respondents suggested that the community should provide resources such as land and water for co-operatives to sustain themselves, but what was also striking is that 15% suggested the participation of young people in the co-operatives (cf. Figure 2.11).

4.6.3. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES ON WOMEN

4.6.27. Factors Determining the Extent of Women Empowerment

Figure 2.12: Factors Determining the Extent of Women Empowerment



According to Figure 2.12 above, 35% of the respondents mentioned lack of both physical and financial resources, 30% mentioned skills development as a determinant for women empowerment, 25% mentioned literacy levels of members of the co-operative as a determinant, 5% mentioned ability of the co-operatives to empower people and economic development in the rural areas as a determining factor and the last 5% and mentioned poverty levels as a determinant.

4.6.28. Economic Benefits

The researcher wanted to establish from respondents whether there was any economic benefit for members of the co-operatives.

Figurer 2.13: Economic Benefits for Members

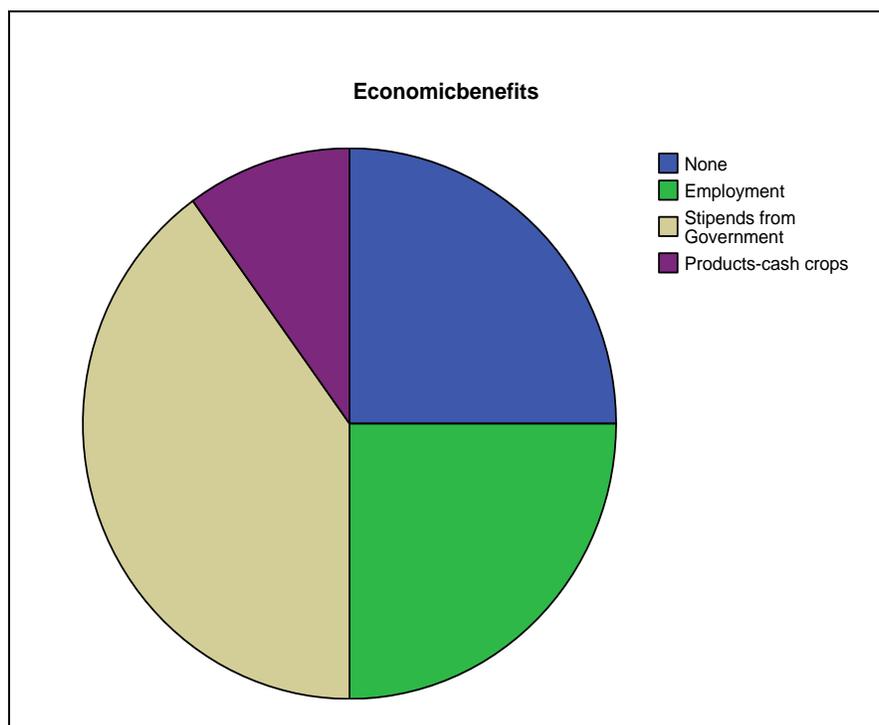


Figure 2.13 above shows that 40% of the respondents indicated that it received stipends from the State, 25% indicated that there were no economic benefits for participating in the co-operatives, 25% indicated that they benefited through employment, and 10% indicated that its co-operative produced cash crops and members got such as livelihoods.

4.6.29. Meaningful contribution to economic development of members

The researcher wanted to know from the respondents whether, in their opinions, agricultural co-operatives made any meaningful contribution to the economic development of their members and the community in general.

Table 2.4: Meaningful Contribution to Economic Development

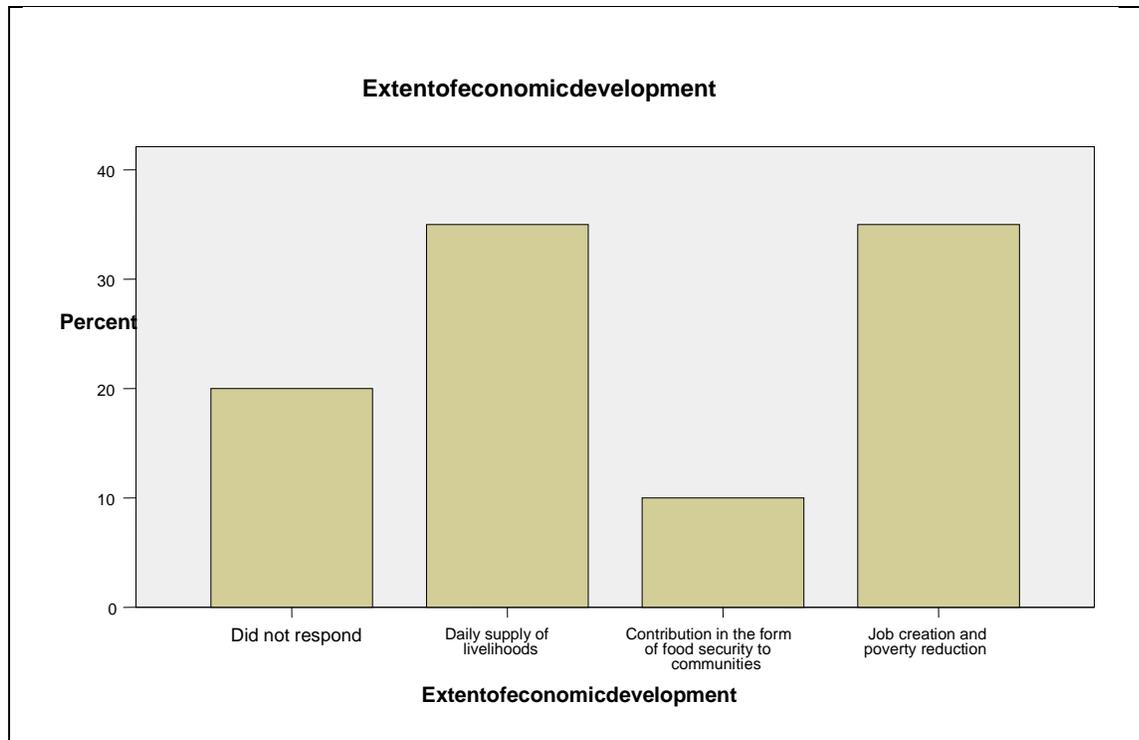
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	15	75.0	75.0	75.0
	No	5	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 2.4 above, 75% of the respondents indicated that agricultural co-

operatives made a meaningful contribution to economic development of members and 25% said that co-operatives made no meaningful contribution to economic development of members.

4.6.30. The Extent of Economic Impact on Members of the Co-operatives

Figure 2.14: The Extent of Economic Development



According to Figure 2.14 above, 20% of the respondents did not respond to this follow-up question, but 35% said that there was daily supply of livelihoods and this reduced the poverty levels. Thirty-five percent said that co-operatives contributed to job creation in the community and 10% felt that co-operatives contributed to food security in the local community.

4.6. 31. Improvement and enhancement of the financial status of co-operatives

Figure 2.15: Improvement and Enhancement of the Financial Status of the Co-operatives

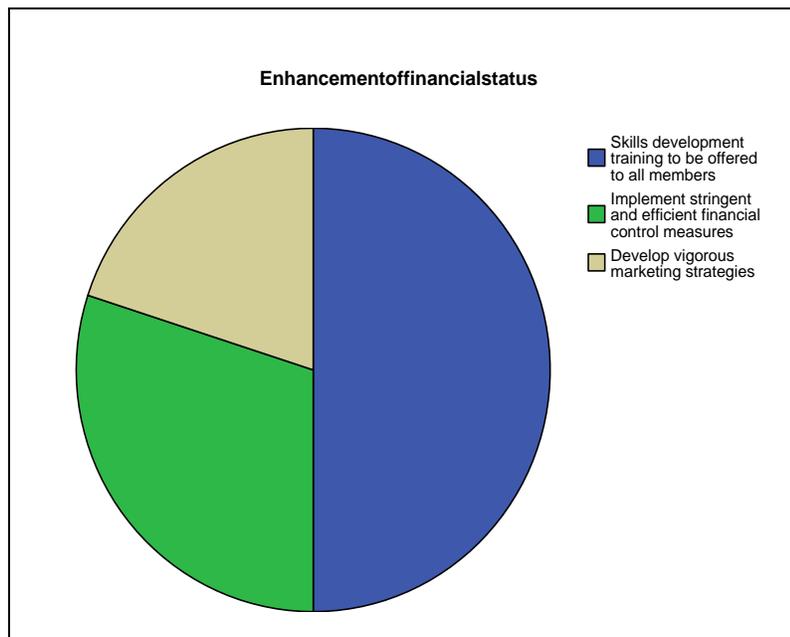
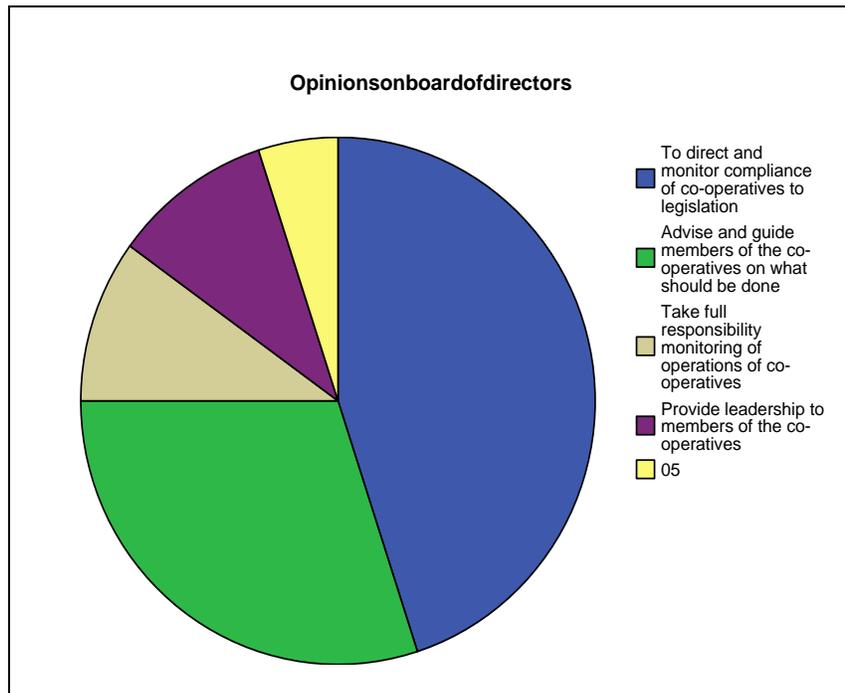


Figure 2.15 above shows that 50% of the respondents mentioned skills development and training as being central to the improvement and enhancement of the financial status of co-operatives; 30% mentioned application and implementation of stringent financial control measures; and 20% mentioned the development of vigorous marketing strategies.

4.6.32. Board of Directors/Trustees

The researcher wanted to know from respondents what they thought was the role of the Boards of Directors/Trustees.

Figure 2.16: Opinions on the Roles of Board of Directors/Trustees



According to Figure 2.16 above, 45% of the respondents thought that the role of the board was to direct and monitor compliance of co-operatives to legislation; 30% believed it was to advise and guide members of the co-operatives on what they should do; 10% thought that the role of the board was to take full responsibility on operations of co-operatives; and the other 10% thought that the role of the Board of Directors/Trustees was to provide leadership.

4.6.33. Knowledge of role by the Board of Directors/Trustees

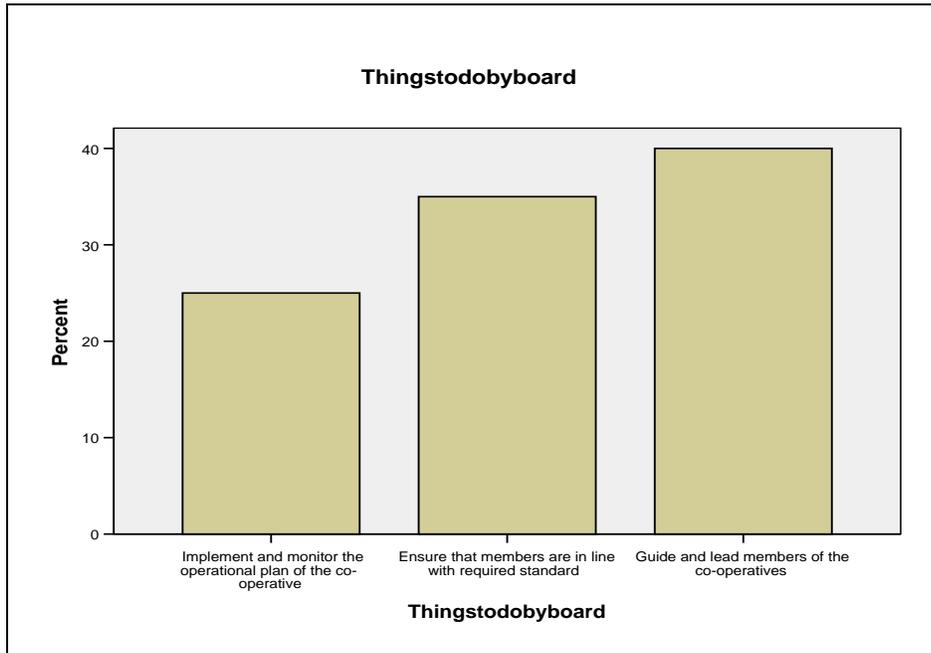
Table 2.6: Knowledge of role by Board Members

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	10	50.0	50.0	50.0
No	10	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 2.6 above, 50% of the respondents thought that the Board of Directors/Trustees did not know its role and 50% thought that the Board of Directors/Trustees knew its role.

4.6.34. What the Board of Directors/Trustees should do to play a meaningful role

Figure 2.17: Suggestions on Roles of Members of Boards of Directors/Trustees



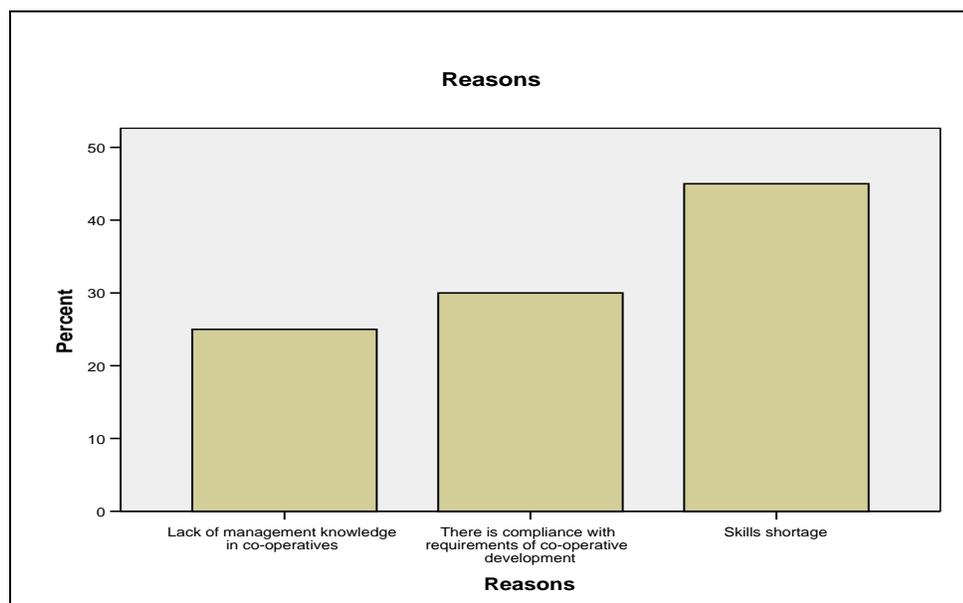
According to Figure 2.17 above, 40% of the respondents felt that the board should guide and lead members of the co-operatives; 35% felt that the board should ensure that members of the co-operatives are in line with the required standards; and 25% of the respondents felt that the board should implement and monitor the operational plan of co-operatives.

4.6.35. Rating of Management in Co-operatives

The highest percentage of respondents, that is, 15 (75%), rated management in co-operatives poor; 3 or 15% rated management in co-operatives average; and 2 (10%) rated management in co-operatives good.

4.6.36. Reasons for Ratings by Respondents

Figure 2.18: Reasons for Ratings by Respondents



According to Figure 2.18 above, 45% of the respondents cited skills shortage on the part of management; 30% said that management was compliant with the requirements of co-operative development; and 25% cited lack of knowledge by management and lack of capacity building to management.

4.6.37 Training and Development

In the interview with State officials, 14 (70%) of them indicated that their departments/institutions offered training to members of the co-operatives under study, while 30% indicated that their departments/institutions never offered any training to members of the co-operatives.

4.6.38. Area of training offered to members of the co-operatives

Figure 2.19: Area/field of Training Offered to Members of Co-operatives

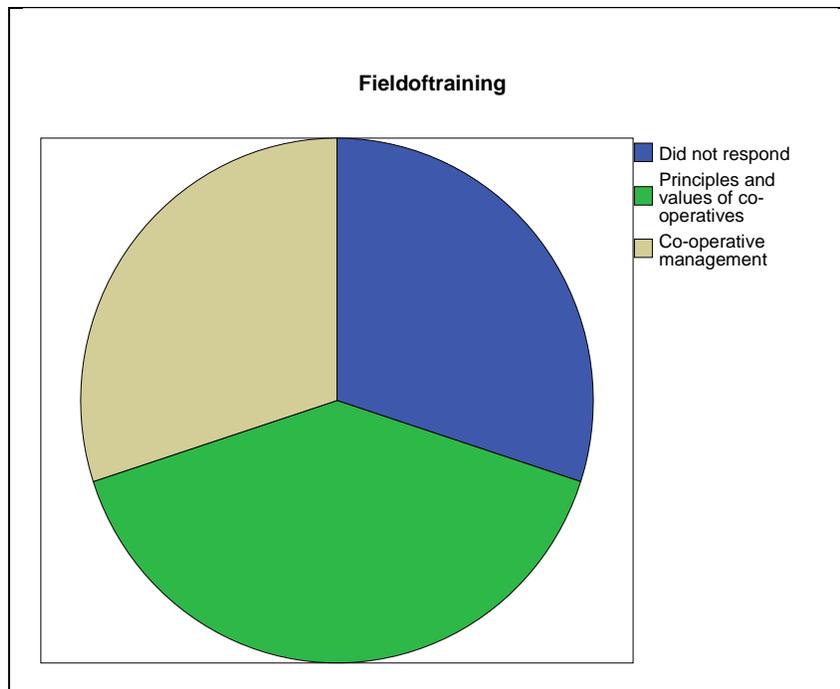


Figure 2.19 above shows that 30% of the respondents did not respond to the follow-up question as they never underwent any training. However, 40% of the respondents indicated that members were trained on principles and values of co-operatives, whereas 30% indicated that members were trained on co-operative management.

4.6.39. Suggestions on the aspects for further training

The researcher wanted to find out from the respondents what their suggestions were regarding aspects to be considered for further training for members of the co-operatives.

Figure 2.20: Suggestions on Aspects for Further Training

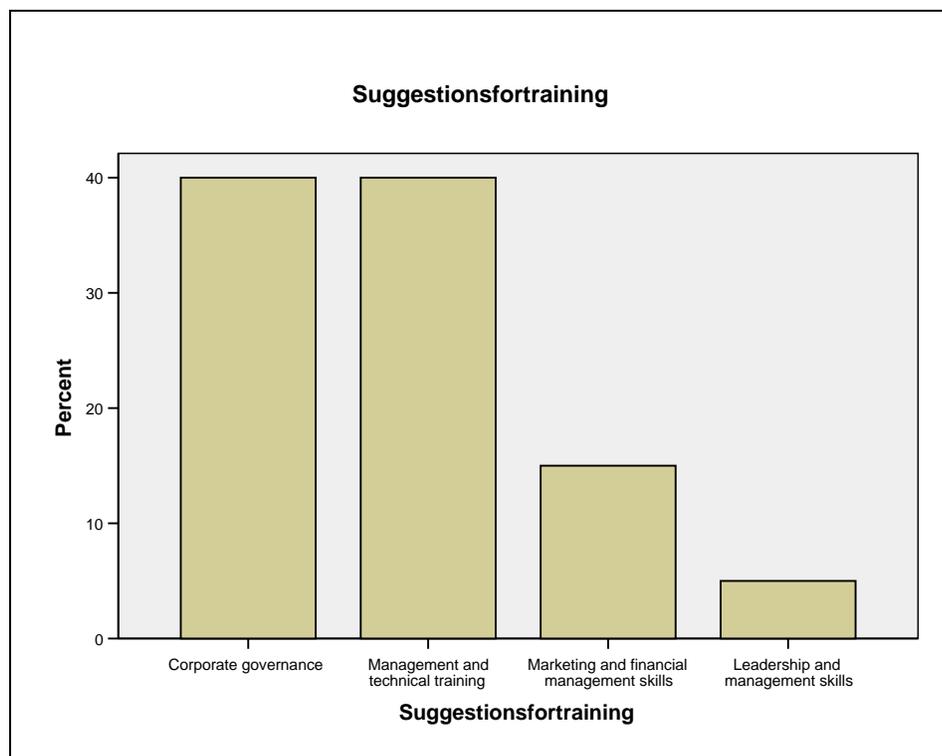


Figure 2.20 above shows that 40% of the respondents suggested corporate governance; another 40% suggested management and technical training; 15% mentioned marketing and financial management; and 5% mentioned skills in leadership and management as important.

4.6.40. Analysis of data

According to data collected in this section, 35% of the respondents mentioned lack of physical and financial resources as a major challenge for co-operative development (cf. Figure 2.12). On economic benefits for members of the co-operatives, 40% of the respondents said that members received stipends from the State (cf. Figure 2.13). A higher percentage, that is, 75%, of the respondents indicated that agricultural co-operatives were making a meaningful contribution to economic development to members of their members (cf. Table 2.4).

According to the data regarding the nature of the economic contribution to members of co-operatives, 35% of the respondents said that there was daily supply of livelihoods

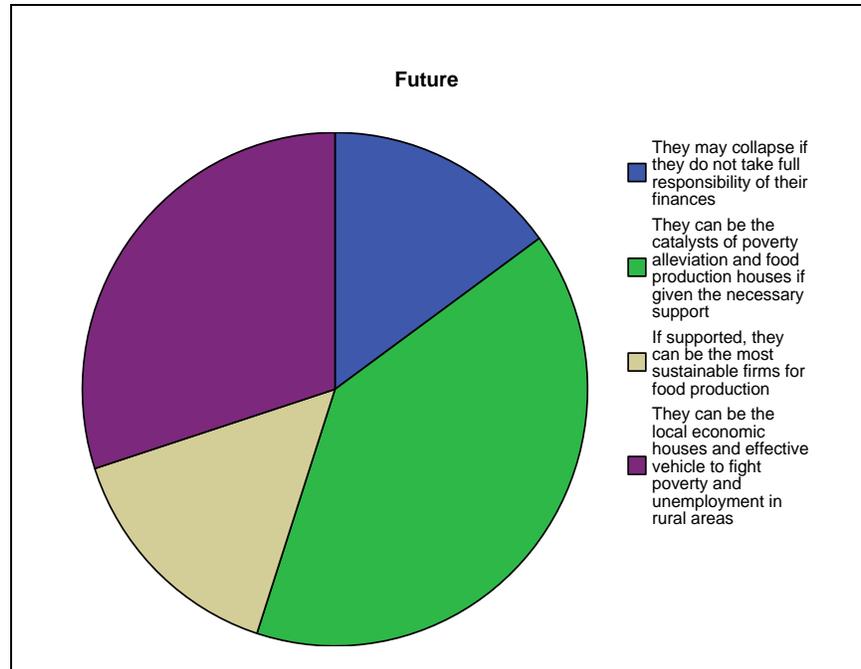
and the other 35% indicated that there was job creation due to co-operatives (cf. Figure 2.15). A high percentage of the respondents mentioned skills development and training as central but critical to the improvement and enhancement of the financial status of co-operatives (cf. Figure 2.16). On the roles and responsibilities of Boards of Directors/Trustees, at least 40% of the respondents indicated that the boards should direct and monitor compliance of co-operatives to legislation (cf. Figure 2.17).

On whether the boards knew what was expected of them, 50% felt that the boards knew their mandate, while 50% felt that the boards did not know what was expected of them (cf. Table 2.5). On what the boards should do, 45% said that the boards should guide and lead members of the co-operatives (cf. Figure 2.18). A higher percentage, i.e., 75%, rated management as poor and 40% cited skills shortage on management as a reason for the rating. A higher percentage, i.e., 70%, indicated that its departments/institutions offered training to members of co-operatives, and, at least, 30% indicated that training was offered on principles and values of co-operatives (cf. Figure 2.19). Finally, 40% of the respondents suggested that training should focus on corporate governance and the other 40% suggested management and technical training (cf. Figure 2.20).

4.6.4. SECTION D: FUTURE OF CO-OPERATIVES

4.6.40. Role of co-operatives in the next five years

Figure 2.21: Role of Co-operatives in the Next Five Years

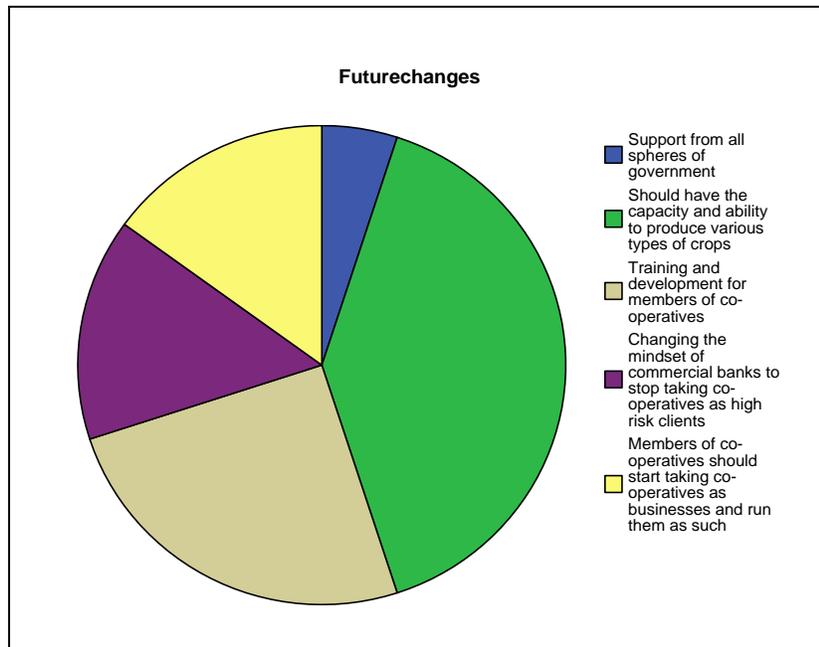


According to Figure 2.21 above, 40% of the respondents felt that agricultural co-operatives can be the catalysts in poverty alleviation and food production if well taken care of; 30% felt that agricultural co-operatives could be the economic houses and indeed a vehicle for poverty alleviation and employment creation; 15% felt that agricultural co-operatives could collapse if the state of affairs did not change with regard to State support, and if members did also not take full responsibility of finances but depended on handouts; and 15% felt that, if supported, co-operatives could be the most sustainable firms for food production.

4.6.41. Future changes to be effected

The researcher wanted to know from the respondents what future changes would they like to see affected for improvement of agricultural co-operatives.

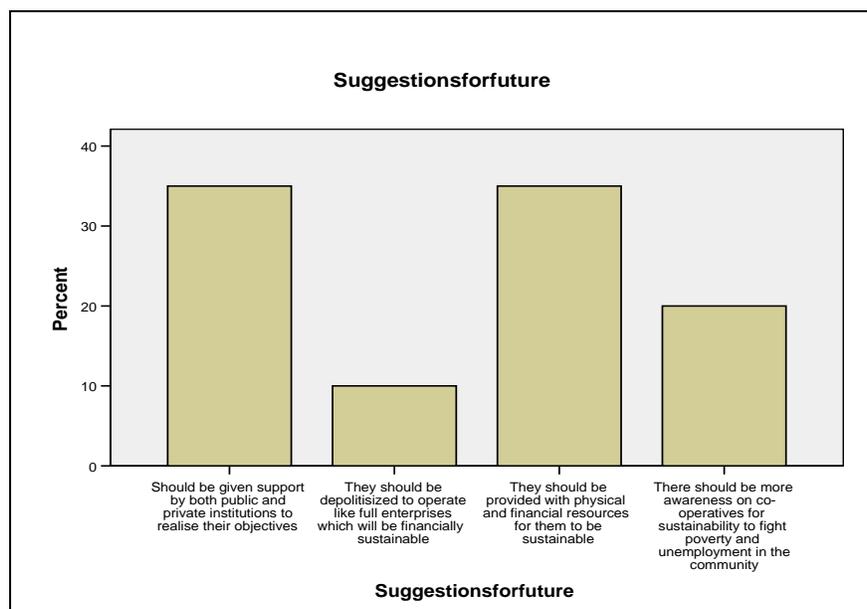
Figure 2.22: Future Changes to be Effected on Co-operatives



According to Figure 2.22, 40% of the respondents indicated that co-operatives should have the ability and capacity to produce a variety of food stuffs including cash crops; 25% indicated that training and development were central to the sustainability of co-operatives; 15% indicated that there should be a change of the mindset and attitudes of commercial banks towards co-operatives as they are regarded as high-risk clients; and another 15% indicated that members of co-operatives should take ownership of these entities and run them as enterprises.

4.6.42. Suggestions for the future

Figure 2.23: Suggestions for the Future



According to Figure 2.23 above, 35% of the respondents stated that co-operatives should be provided with physical and financial resources for them to be sustainable; 35% stated that co-operatives should be given support by both public and private sectors to achieve their objective of alleviating poverty and job creation; 20% indicated that there should be more awareness on co-operative development; and 10% suggested that co-operatives should be depoliticized and be run like enterprises.

4.6.43. Data Analysis

According to data collected in this section, 40% of the respondents indicated that agricultural co-operatives could be the catalysts in poverty alleviation and food production if well managed and taken care of (cf. Figure 2.21). Of importance is that 40% of the respondents felt that co-operatives should have the ability to produce a variety of other food stuffs including cash crops (cf. Figure 2.22). At least, 35% of the respondents suggested that co-operatives should be provided with physical and financial resources (cf. Figure 2.23).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the last chapter of the study on the assessment of economic impact of agricultural co-operatives on women in the rural areas of the Polokwane Municipality. The principal objective of the study was to evaluate whether or not agricultural co-operatives improved the lives of women economically. The study looked at the following aspects: firstly, whether there was any economic impact that agricultural co-operatives made in the lives of women in the rural areas of the Polokwane Municipality; secondly, whether agricultural co-operatives received any form of support from the State and communities where they were established; and, lastly, whether there were any future plans for the sustainability of co-operatives. In the main, the purpose of the study was to determine whether agricultural co-operatives benefited members and immediate communities economically.

In the section below, the researcher makes a summary of the key findings of this study and then provides a synthesis of major findings in relation to the research problem. Finally, the researcher concludes by providing recommendations on how the co-operatives could be used as catalysts for poverty alleviation and unemployment in South Africa.

5.2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The major findings of the study the researcher has found are the following:

- It was striking to discover that most of the participants in all the agricultural co-operatives under study were elderly women, most of whom had joined the schemes with the intention of alleviating poverty, only to find themselves even worse off as the structures did not have any financial benefits for them, thus not ameliorating their economic situation;
- The level of education in the four co-operatives has been found to be very low, particularly in Phegelelo, Mothiba and Itireleng Co-operatives, and this is a contributory factor to the growth and development of the enterprises. From among members of the board and management of the Mashashane Agricultural

Co-operative, there were others who had professional qualifications and could thus be able to lead in those respective areas. This was the reason for that co-operative to perform fairly better than the rest;

- In all the four co-operatives, members were found to have been in the enterprises for more than 10 years, but that did not necessarily translate into that contributing to the economic growth of their entities and members, because their experience was not very relevant as very conventional methods of farming were used. Otherwise, Phegelelo and Mothiba would surpass the rest of the co-operatives with more older people than those in the Mashashane and Itireleng co-operatives;
- It was also found out that skills shortage was a general deficiency in all the co-operatives under study, and this is the area in which the State should be investing in, given the state of food shortage across the world;
- It is worth noting that '*women empowerment*' is a very popular concept in the South African political circles. However, the State does not seem to be taking a deliberate action to empower women in the agricultural sector so as to uplift the economic levels of women, who happen to be in the majority in the agricultural co-operatives under study. It is clear that if these co-operatives were for some period incubated, guided and strictly monitored, they would be able to achieve the goals for which they were developed, viz., poverty alleviation.
- It was pathetic to realize that most of the women who participated in the co-operatives were very desperate for employment and their participation gave them the hope that they would finally drive poverty away as they saw this as an employment opportunity. To some, this was finally seen as a relief from the terrible conditions under which they lived; hence the excitement at the introduction of the co-operatives. This can also be seen as a reason why they (i.e., some of the members) still persist to take part in the co-operatives despite the reality that co-operatives do not generate any revenue for them.
- The level of desperation among women was evident, with some members at one co-operative being content with a bundle of cash crops to take home for their family members. This indicates the level of hope and optimism among members that one day things would improve in the co-operatives. One question that

comes to mind is how members of the co-operatives afford school fees and tuition for their children's education when they do not receive anything from the co-operatives, which they thought would improve their economic situation. For that reason, some, especially from the Phegelelo and Mothiba co-operatives, depend on assistance from family members; others depend on pension grants; while others use Child Support grants to survive, as well as for paying for their children's tuition and school fees.

- Members of these co-operatives do not really see any benefit and value for participating in co-operatives. This is also the reason why, according to the data collected, 80% of the respondents rated State support as poor. They felt that the State does not do what they thought it ought to do; like providing physical and financial resources, as well as offering training to members of the co-operatives.
- Another disappointing fact was that there was no deliberate empowerment programmes directed to women and this could deter other members from participating. A conclusion that can be drawn from the data gathered is that, while the State came up with good intentions of establishing co-operatives to fight against poverty and create employment, particularly in rural areas, there were major challenges, such as low levels of literacy, skills shortage, lack of resources and lack of women empowerment programmes by the State.
- Agricultural co-operatives are best suited for rural areas given land availability and high levels of poverty and unemployment. The other reason is that people in rural areas are used to practising conventional agriculture, which denotes that there is passion for this sector from the people in the rural areas.

The following are some of the variations identified in each of the four co-operatives under study:

- Of the four co-operatives researched, it was discovered that only one, namely, the Mashashane Agricultural Co-operative, was able to generate revenue. Itireleng Agricultural co-operative could do this very marginally, while the other two, namely, Phegelelo and Mothiba, could not. This was cause for serious concern as the prime objective of initiating co-operatives was to fight poverty and create employment for the destitute, such as women, particularly in the rural

areas. For this objective to be realized, there needs to be State intervention and support for the co-operatives by providing physical and financial resources in the form of start-up funding, but, very importantly, to also offer training to members;

- Of the four agricultural co-operatives under study, it was further discovered that there were no clearly-defined programmes geared towards women empowerment in the agricultural sector. One striking similarity is that all the co-operatives had no economic benefits for members as they had never received intensive training on agricultural matters. This is the reason why some of the co-operatives, namely, Mashashane and Phegelelo, opted for selling other things that were not necessarily related to agriculture at all. This, they did out of desperation for revenue but should be commended as that was creative for the co-operatives to sustain themselves; although this did not bear any fruit for Mothiba due to lack of security and a dedicated person to sell the commodities.
- The Mashashane Co-operative was the only one that was self-sufficient. It had employees who get paid on a monthly basis and its success can be attributed to the real support the co-operative receives from the community by buying most of the products from it.
- The Itireleng agricultural co-operative also receives support from the community, although its economic impact on women and members is very minimal due to poor management, hence its members on average receive their stipends in every three months.
- Phegelelo and Mothiba agricultural co-operatives received community support, however, the support did not necessarily translate into them getting revenue and members clearly do not see any value of participating in co-operatives.
- Most members of the co-operatives under study did not receive formal education, which was a serious challenge as training was offered in English only and there were no measures taken to improve the situation;
- The State's involvement and support to agricultural co-operatives is very minimal as, since their inception or establishment, members were not properly oriented but were rather to, on their own, navigate their way through to success. This was evidenced by lack of knowledge on basic agricultural practices as all the co-operatives under study still practice traditional farming in which maize is the main

crop produced;

- Of the four agricultural co-operatives under study, two co-operatives do not have Boards of Directors/Trustees and clear management structures as they were not accordingly advised;
- The State has established agricultural co-operatives in most rural establishments as a platform for job creation and poverty alleviation, but they lack State support as most of these structures were established with no start-up funding from the State; and
- Most members of the co-operatives never received any training on co-operative development and management of co-operatives and other relevant skills, and for those who did, it was only once. However, they were expected to develop and manage these structures in a sustainable manner;

Challenges identified in the management of the co-operatives were as follows:

- Lack of youth participation in co-operative development as most young people see agriculture as backwardness and not as a feature of life, and this will have far reaching implications as the society will not have farmers to produce livelihoods and food;
- The State, through Departments of Agriculture and Economic Development, Office of the Premier in the province, local and district municipalities, as well as the Limpopo Business and Support Agency (LIBSA), have not done much in terms of providing support to these structures to become the catalysts of poverty reduction because there was no sign of commitment. This is evidenced by the fact that only one or two officials were responsible for the coordination of co-operatives, which made it difficult for the officials to visit the sites of the co-operatives, given their number; and
- Lack of support from the State was the cause for despondence among most of the members of the co-operatives and they felt their economic situation was becoming even worse off given that they had to, at times, use their own last resources to ensure that the co-operatives did not collapse. To this end, they did not see the co-operatives improving their lot, which was what they thought would happen.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings made, the researcher recommends that:

- There be a programme developed by the State, including government departments, State agencies and municipalities, to motivate and encourage the youth to pursue agricultural studies to ensure not only that sustainability is secured but to also mitigate challenges of food shortage;
- The State should develop clear support plans for co-operatives that will include the provision of both financial and physical resources, and soliciting support in the form of networks for co-operatives to be able to source financial assistance from financial institutions;
- The State should develop a vigorous development and training programme for members of the co-operatives to ensure that that these structures are run in a professional way but like enterprises. This will further ensure that there is economic development and growth, thereby contributing to the improvement of socio-economic conditions of both the members of the co-operatives and the society;
- The State should marshal and direct resources towards rural development and investment in agriculture so as to motivate even the young people to take part in this important sector;
- Members of the co-operatives are to be taught basic and contemporary methods of agriculture to ensure increased quality food production. This will also help in the introduction of system of crop rotation so that no season passes without production. The State should thus develop a programme for women empowerment, particularly in the co-operative business in rural areas;
- Members should also ensure that reliable markets are secured for the products from the co-operatives. This can be achieved through members being taught intensive marketing strategies to be able to secure markets on their own without depending on the State to do that on their behalf;
- The State should ensure that all the co-operatives constitute Boards of Directors/Trustees to monitor compliance and provide leadership to these entities;

- Co-operatives should provide a model for pooling resources of people of limited means to achieve commonly identified development of the respective people.
- Co-operatives should constitute part of the variables in the political philosophy and development policies that should guide development of the country.
- Agricultural co-operatives should be viewed as a critical development institution.
- Government should see agricultural co-operatives as a vehicle to be harnessed for spreading benefits of development to a wider section of the country.
- The promotion of genuine member participation and controlling co-operatives is the major means to resurrect the capacity to contribute to poverty reduction.
- For co-operatives to improve, the fit of organisational culture to the liberalised markets, seeds of change such as the following are required:
 - Change into customer oriented culture,
 - Improve financial reporting,
 - Reform tax laws,
 - Computerise,
 - Recruit more qualified managers,
 - Improve business framing of managers.
- Co-operatives have a role to play by paving the way towards recovery, that is, socially and economically sound and sustainable.
- The State should further ensure that financial institutions give consideration to the co-operatives regarding financial assistance, for them to be financially viable; and
- For the success of co-operative development in the country, the State should develop clear programmes that will seek to address all the challenges as outlined by the members of the co-operatives. If properly taken care of and closely monitored, co-operatives can be powerful enterprises to fight poverty and create employment, thereby creating wealth. With challenges of international economic recession and food shortage, agricultural co-operatives become an ideal weapon for mitigating these social challenges.

- The State should provide comprehensive support for the creation and development of co-operatives, to ensure that farmers have access to adequate information as well as expertise on the co-operative form of organisations;
 - This could be achieved by supporting a network of professional business management and co-operative expertise
 - Examination of government funding abroad provides some indications of government options to fund such initiatives. The aim of such initiatives is to provide support for the development of new co-operatives and improve the operations of the new ones.
- The State should support strategies that help the co-operatives obtain adequate capitalisation to successfully compete.
- Co-operatives should be supported to achieve economies of scale to improve farmers' ability to utilise advanced technologies or specialised services.
- Co-operative members should be helped to capture new market opportunities.

5.4. CONCLUSION

From the data gathered and the subsequent findings, it is clear that the establishment of agricultural co-operatives has not done much in terms of poverty alleviation and job creation as espoused in the Co-operative Policy. The majority of women, particularly in the rural areas, are still languishing in poverty and unemployment despite the fact the government has initiated several agricultural co-operatives with good intentions. Some of these projects are, however, unsustainable and fail to achieve their intended objective of addressing poverty, unemployment, skills development, raising livelihoods and changing people's lives for the better. The shameful and appalling economic state of women in rural areas has been left unattended, despite the many good policies that the government produced since its inception in 1994. These good policies are, however, clearly not accompanied by clear implementation plan and monitoring strategy.

The other major and daunting challenge that the study was able to identify is the lack of State support to the co-operatives in various forms. It is clear that co-operatives, if well supported and their progress properly monitored, can be catalysts for poverty alleviation and job creation.

It has been established in the study that the State has established the co-operatives with very good intentions but the objectives for which they were established may not be realized because of insufficient State support. Therefore, it behoves the State to offer support to co-operatives with regard to start-up funding, provision of seeds, manure, water, buildings, soliciting financial assistance from financial institutions the banks and provision of training support to members of co-operatives.

The State should also assist the agricultural co-operative sector to develop farming plans that will see them alternating crops by way of migrating from conventional to modern farming practices. This will not only help with massive food production but will also go a long way in mitigating food crisis that continues to hit the world today. This will also ensure that this industry becomes not only the catalyst in poverty alleviation and job creation but also in food production in the most sustainable way.

As stated in the findings, participants in the co-operatives who most of whom joined the schemes with the sole intention of alleviating poverty, found themselves worse off as the co-operatives did not change their situation for the better. Skill deficiency in all the co-operatives under study was a common denominator. The State should be seen to invest in the co-operatives given food shortage all over the world. While the State's initiative to establish the co-operatives was a progressive move given the high levels of poverty and unemployment particularly among women in the rural areas, it was militated against by challenges such as skills shortage, lack of resources and insufficient women empowerment programmes by the State.

It is heartening that in some countries such as Scotland, the initiative of establishing co-operatives was successful at different levels including, creating jobs, building revenue to underpin development and changed the people's lives (Gordon:2002:295). Fulton et al (1992:1) also state that co-operatives play a critical role in ensuring the continued social and economic existence of many communities facing rural decline. According to Global Employment Trends for Women, a publication of the International Labour Organisation (2009:12) co-operatives are very powerful vehicles of social inclusion and political and economic empowerment for women regardless of the type of co-operative or sector they belong to. Sizya (2001:1) the Nationalist Post colonial Government saw co-operatives as a vehicle which could be harnessed to spread the benefits of development to a wide of the Tanzanian population. According to Deere et al (1995:231) the relatively high incomes earned by members of the agricultural production and marketing co-operatives are indicative of the high profitability of Cuba's co-operatives as compared to the State farmers.

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Appendix A

Enquiries: Tauatsoala
Cell : 082 886 3294

P.O.Box 3068
POLOKWANE
0700
17 January 2008

Dear Respondent

RESEARCH ON THE EVALUATION OF THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES ON WOMEN IN THE RURAL AREAS

The undersigned is undertaking a research study as part of the Masters Degree in Development Studies at the University of Limpopo. The purpose of the interview schedule is to assess the above-mentioned to find out whether it has achieved its intended purpose.

Your positive and active participation in this regard will assist in achievement of the intended goal of this study. Feel free and relax to share as much information as you possibly. It should as well be noted that you have the right to choose not to participate in the study. You are also guaranteed anonymity and no part of the information provided will be published without the your consent as a respondent. There are no right or wrong answers to the responses that you will provide to the questions posed.

Your willingness to participate in this study is highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully


MM TAUATSOALA

Appendix B

Enquiries: MM Tauatsoala
Cell : 082 886 3294

P.O. Box 3068
POLOKWANE
0700
17 January 2008

The Municipal Manager
Polokwane Municipality
P.O. Box 111
POLOKWANE
0700

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY RESEARCH IN THE AREAS OF THE MUNICIPALITY

The above matter bears reference.

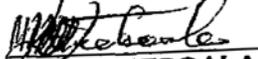
This serves as a request for permission to conduct a research study in the areas around the municipality. I am a student at the University of Limpopo doing a Masters Degree in Development Studies. The topic of my study is: **THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES ON WOMEN IN THE RURAL AREAS OF POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY**. Participants in the study include officials in the municipality as well as women in the four co-operatives within the municipality, namely, Mashashane Agricultural Co-operative, Phegelelo Agricultural Co-operative at Ga-Thaba, Mothiba Agricultural Co-operative and Itireleng Co-operative at Matamanyane village in Moletjie.

The research study is scheduled to commence from the 18/02/2008 to 31/03/2008. The research is purely for study purposes and the researcher ensures guarantee to all participants that the information gathered will not be used against the municipality. To this end, a request is also made for the interviews to be conducted to some of the officials in your institution. Findings and recommendations of the study may be made available to the municipality should such be requested.

For any further enquiries please do not hesitate to contact the researcher at the number provided above.

Hoping this request will be given deserved consideration.

Yours Faithfully


MM TAUATSOALA

Appendix C

Enquiries : MM Tauatsoala
Cell : 082 886 3294

P.O. Box 3068
POLOKWANE
0700
17 January 2008

The Manager
Department of Agriculture Limpopo Province
POLOKWANE
0700

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY RESEARCH ON AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES IN THE AREAS OF POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY

The above matter bears reference.

This serves as a request for permission to conduct a research study on agricultural co-operatives which were kick started by your department in the areas around Polokwane Municipality. I am a student at the University of Limpopo doing a Masters Degree in Development Studies. The topic of my study is: **THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES ON WOMEN IN THE RURAL AREAS OF POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY.** Participants in the study include officials in the department as well as women in the four co-operatives around Polokwane Municipality, namely, Mashashane Agricultural Co-operative, Phegelelo Agricultural Co-operative at Ga-Thaba, Mothiba Agricultural Co-operative and Itireleng Co-operative at Matamanyane village in Moletjie.

The research study is scheduled to commence from the 18/02/2008 to 31/03/2008. The research is purely for study purposes and the researcher ensures guarantee to all participants that the information gathered will not be used against the department. To this end, a request is also made for the interviews to be conducted to some of the officials in your department. Findings and recommendations of the study may be made available to the department should such be requested.

For any further enquiries please do not hesitate to contact the researcher at the number provided above.

Hoping this request will be given deserved consideration.

Yours Faithfully


MM TAUATSOALA

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

STUDY ON THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES ON WOMEN IN THE RURAL AREAS OF POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MEMBERS OF IDENTIFIED CO-OPERATIVES

The interview schedule aims to evaluate the economic impact of agricultural co-operatives on women in the rural areas of Polokwane Municipality. The information provided will be for study purposes and will be treated with confidentiality. Participants are urged to provide answers that are honest and correct for the study to achieve its intended goal. Participants are further urged to provide information about their actual personal situation. The researcher thanks participants for voluntarily taking part in the study exercise.

Personal Details of the researcher are as follows:

Master's Degree in Development Studies student

Student Number: 200522959

Name: Tauatsoala MM

Contact Number: 082 886 3294

General Instructions

To complete the questionnaire, please use either a black or blue pen. The questions should be answered by making a mark in the appropriate space as will be instructed. Where necessary, also write additional comments in the spaces provided. Every block to be marked is represented by a number.

Section A: Profile of Respondents

1. Gender:

Male	1
Female	2

2. Age:

Below 20 yrs	1
21-30 yrs	2
31-40 yrs	3
41-50 yrs	4
Above 50 yrs	5

3. Marital status:

Single	1
Married	2
Divorced	3
Separated	4
Widowed	5

4. How many members of your family are presently employed?

5. How long have you been staying in the area? _____

6. Have you ever received any formal education?

Yes	1
No	2

7. If the answer to 6 is yes, up to what level did you receive your education?

Primary School	1
Secondary School	2
Tertiary Education	3

8. How long have you been working in the co-operative?

Section B: Project Details

9. Have you ever been formally employed?

Yes	1
No	2

10. If the answer to 9 is 'no', what was the source of income before you joined the co-operative?

11. Do you receive any earnings from the co-operative?

Yes	1
No	2

12. If the answer to 11 is yes, how regularly do you receive earnings?

Weekly	1
Fortnightly	2
Monthly	3
When there is money	4

13. Indicate the average income you receive from the co-operative.

Less than R2000	1
Between R2000 and R5000	2
Between R5000 and R7000	3
Above R7000	4

14. Has your economic situation improved since you joined the co-operative?

Yes	1
No	2

15. If the answer to 14 is 'no', what have you done to improve the situation?

16. How many members does your family have? _____

17. When did the project start?

18. What type of agricultural co-operative is this? (What does the co-operative produce?)

19. Has the project been able to secure any stable market for its products?

Yes	1
No	2

20. If the answer to 19 is 'no', what measures are taken to ensure that a stable market is secured?

21. What factors determine your success or failure to secure a market for your products?

22. Give a brief outline of the co-operative structure.

23. What is the annual turnover of the project?

24. How many members does the project have?

25. What is the gender composition of the members of the co-operative?

26. How many of the female members are owners of the co-operative?

27. How many employees does the co-operative have?

28. What is the gender composition of the employees of the co-operative?

29. What criteria are used for determining who should be employed in the co-operative?

30. Does the co-operative have a board of directors?

Yes	1
No	2

31. How many members does the board of the co-operative have?

32. How many women are members of the board of directors?

33. How would you rate the level of co-operation between the board of directors and members of the co-operative?

Poor	1
Average	2
Good	3
Excellent	4

34. How many women form part of the management component of the co-operative?

35. In your opinion, does management play its meaningful role in the development of the co-operative?

Yes	1
No	2

36. If the answer to 35 is 'no', what in your opinion should be done to improve the situation?

37. How would you rate women participation in the co-operative?

High	1
Low	2
Average	3
Very low	4

38. What would you say are the reasons for your answer in 35?

39. Do all members of the co-operative have their various roles and responsibilities in the project?

Yes	1
No	2

40. What is your role in the co-operative?

41. Was the state involved in the training of the members of the co-operative?

Yes	1
No	2

42. If the answer to 41 is 'yes', in which areas were members of the co-operative trained?

43. Are you satisfied with the level of training offered to members of the co-operative?

Yes	1
No	2

44. If the answer to 43 is 'no', what special training would you suggest members of the co-operatives should undergo?

Section C: Economic Impact of Agricultural Co-operatives on women

45. Do you have any school-going children?

Yes	1
No	2

46. If the answer to 45 is 'yes', at what level are they?

Primary	1
secondary	2
Tertiary	3

47. How do you pay for your children's education?

48. How would you rate state support to the co-operative?

Poor	1
Average	2
Good	3
Excellent	4

49. Which state support programmes would you suggest for co-operative development?

50. Does the project get support from the community?

Yes	1
No	2

51. If the answer to 50 is 'yes', what is the nature of community support to the co-operative?

52. In your opinion what should the state do to assist your co-operative?

53. Are you satisfied with the progress made on women empowerment?

Yes	1
No	2

54. If the answer to 53 is 'no', what do you suggest should be done to empower women in co-operatives?

Section D: Future Strategies for Co-operative Development

55. How do you see the role of co-operatives in the next five years?

56. What changes would you like to see effected in future?

57. What suggestions do you have for the future of the co-operatives?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix E

Enquiries : MM Tauatsoala
Cell : 082 886 3294

P.O. Box 3068
POLOKWANE
0700
17 January 2008

The Manager
Limpopo Business Support Agency
POLOKWANE
0700

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY RESEARCH ON AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES IN THE AREAS OF POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY

The above matter bears reference.

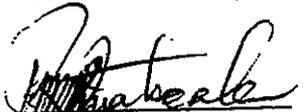
This serves as a request for permission to conduct a research study on agricultural co-operatives, which your agency support, in the areas around Polokwane Municipality. I am a student at the University of Limpopo, doing a Masters Degree in Development Studies. The topic of my study is: **THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES ON WOMEN IN THE RURAL AREAS OF POLOKWANE MUNICIPALITY**. Participants in the study include officials in the agency as well as women in the four co-operatives within the Polokwane Municipality, namely, Mashashane Agricultural Co-operative, Phegelelo Agricultural Co-operative at Ga-Thaba, Mothiba Agricultural Co-operative and Itireleng Co-operative at Matamanyane village in Moletjie.

The research study is scheduled to commence from the 18/02/2008 to 31/03/2008. The research is purely for study purposes and the researcher ensures guarantee to all participants that the information gathered will not be used against the agency. To this end, a request is also made for the interviews to be conducted to some of the officials in your institution. Findings and recommendations of the study may be made available to the agency should such be requested.

For any further enquiries please do not hesitate to contact the researcher at the number provided above.

Hoping this request will be given deserved consideration.

Yours Faithfully


MM TAUATSOALA

APPENDIX F:

STUDY ON THE EVALUATION OF ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES ON WOMEN OF THE RURAL AREAS

Interview schedule for officials dealing with agricultural co-operatives in Polokwane Municipality, Department of Economic Development Environment and Tourism, Department of Agriculture and Limpopo Business Support Agency.

Case no.

The aim of the interview schedule is to assess the economic impact of the agricultural co-operatives on women in the rural areas. The information provided will be for study purposes and will be treated with confidentiality. Participants are urged to provide answers that are honest and correct for the study to achieve its intended goal. Participants are further urged to provide information about their actual personal situation. The researcher thanks participants for voluntarily taking part in the study exercise.

Participation is voluntary and the researcher thanks participants in advance for choosing to participate in the study.

Personal Details of the researcher are as follows:

Masters Degree in Development Studies student

Student Number: 200522959

Name: Tauatsoala MM

Contact number: 082 886 3294

General Instructions

To complete the questionnaire, please use either a black or blue pen. The questions should be answered by making a mark in the appropriate space as will be instructed. Where necessary, also write additional comments in the spaces provided. Every block to be marked is represented by a number.

Section A: Profile of Respondents

1. Gender

Male	1
Female	2

2. Where do you work?

3. What position do you hold?

4. How long have you been working here?

5. What is your role with respect to co-operatives?

6. How long have you been working on co-operatives with communities?

7. What informed your department's/institution's/municipality's decision to promote co-operative development?

8. Are there any policies and/or guidelines for the establishment of co-operatives?

Yes	1
No	2

9. If the answer to 8 is 'yes', which criteria were followed in the establishment of the agricultural co-operatives?

Section B: Support to co-operatives

10. Was there consultation with the community during the process of establishing co-operatives?

Yes	1
No	2

11. If the answer to 9 is 'yes', describe the nature of consultation done with the community?

12. Was there consultation with the traditional authority?

Yes	1
No	2

13. If the answer to 11 is 'yes', describe the nature of consultation.

14. How is the community involved in the choice of the co-operative type?

15. How would you rate the participation of women in the co-operatives?

High	1
Low	2
Average	3
Very low	4
Very high	5

16. What is the reason for your answer in 14?

17. What is the nature of participation of women in the agricultural co-operatives?

18. What type of support does your department/institution/municipality give to the co-operatives to ensure their sustainability?

19. In your opinion is the support your department/institution/municipality offering to the co-operatives sufficient to sustain them?

Yes	1
No	2

20. If the answer to 18 is 'no', what do you suggest your department/institution/municipality should do for co-operatives to get sufficient support?

21. Does your department/institution/municipality have a strategy for co-operative development?

Yes	1
No	2

22. If the answer to 20 is 'yes', describe the strategy.

23. If the answer to 21 is 'yes', to what extent has the strategy been implemented?

24. In your opinion, do the co-operatives get any support from the community?

Yes	1
No	2

25. If your answer to 23 is 'yes', what is the nature of support the co-operatives get?

26. What type of support would you suggest should be given to agricultural co-operatives?

Section C: Economic Impact of agricultural co-operatives to women

27. What factors determine the extent to which women are empowered or not empowered?

28. What economic benefits do women obtain from agricultural co-operatives?

29. In your opinion, do agricultural co-operatives make any meaningful contribution to economic development of their members and the community in general?

Yes	1
No	2

30. If the answer to 28 is 'yes', to what extent is that economic development?

31. In your opinion what should the co-operatives do to improve and enhance their financial status?

32. What do you think the role of the board of directors should be?

33. Do you think the board of directors, of the co-operatives, knows its role?

Yes	1
No	2

34. If your answer to 32 is yes, what do you think the board of directors should do to play its meaningful role?

35. How would you rate management in these co-operatives?

Poor	1
Average	2
Good	3
Excellent	4

36. What are the reasons for your choice in (34)

37. Were members of the co-operatives offered any training by your department/institution/municipality?

Yes	1
No	2

38. If the answer to 36 is 'yes', which areas were members of the co-operatives trained on?

39. Which aspects would you suggest members of the co-operatives should further be trained on?

Section D: Future of the Co-operatives

40. How do you see the role of co-operatives in the next five years?

41. What changes would you like to see effected in future?

42. What suggestions do you have for the future of the co-operatives?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION