

TRANSPORT FOR WOMEN-LED AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS IN THE CAPRICORN DISTRICT: A NECESSITY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

The Department of Agriculture as well as Roads and Transport provide support to initiating of agricultural projects. The difficulty though is that the departments withdraw this support at a critical time, thus providing enough reasons for the project to collapse. This paper assessed whether women received adequate support from Departments of Land Affairs and Agriculture as well as Roads and Transport. The study was undertaken because Agricultural development, in Africa is seen as a vital tool for combating poverty in many households. In this paper agricultural development is seen as one of the ways in which the Sustainable Goals 1 and 3 can be achieved, if and when local governance structures emphasize this need. Moreover, the researchers hope to show the link between transport and the possibilities of socio-economic development in the agricultural sector if and when transportation is facilitated. Furthermore, the need for gender equality and women's empowerment will be emphasized in agricultural activities, particularly labour. The study draws from two women-led projects namely, the Lahlapapadi Goat Project and Kwadikwaneng Nursery in the Capricorn District of Limpopo, South Africa. To realize this broader objective and its underlying tasks, the researchers adopted qualitative feminist methodologies. These employ in-depth interviews, focus group discussions in conjunction with visual techniques involving photography and videography.

Keywords: Transport, Women-Led, Agricultural Projects, Capricorn District, Social Change.

1. INTRODUCTION

Like most women in the world, women from Kwadikwang Nursery and Lahlapapadi Goat project in the Capricorn district Limpopo province, wake up every morning, hoping that each day may be the day on which their distress will end. An everyday

struggle against poverty and food insecurity does not seem to be a friendly path, especially in the now male dominated world such as the agricultural sector. In their relentless struggle against poverty, food insecurity and stereotypes that that women in rural areas are passive and uneducated about farming, women in the two projects started their own projects with an intention to create jobs that would not only benefit them but everyone in the community. This is mainly because they believed without their efforts their children would starve to death. Starting these projects was not merely for selfish gains, like others would have it, but these projects were developed and started with a vision and goal to help their community members during times of need and communal events. This in itself shows that women can be deemed as significant contributors in the development of their communities and that they possess the potential to transform their communities. Moreover, to these women, agricultural development is most important because they see it as a way towards job creation and poverty reduction in their households, through their direct involvement.

Globally, agricultural production is largely undertaken by women. Nevertheless, there are numerous challenges that come with being a woman farmer. For example, women within sub-Saharan regions largely do not own, and therefore have limited access to, land. It is as such not uncommon for women in rural areas to farm on their husband's land or to even "borrow" it from traditional authorities. The burden of agricultural productivity is further exasperated by the tendency of migration of their male counterparts to urban areas in pursuit of employment. This leaves women with the enormous task of being "responsible for 90 per cent of food processing activities, water and firewood collection" (Mwankusye, 1999:37). Regardless of these contributions in agriculture, the plight of women is still largely unaddressed by policymakers and relevant departments such as the department of land affairs and the department of

roads and transport. One area of their plight that needs to be considered is in transportation. This is because "transportation presents important mechanism to accessing markets, information and generating incomes within agricultural projects" (Mwankusye, 1999:38).

Generally, transportation plays a critical role in the movement of goods and services for production and consumption in society. Specifically, as it relates to women and their agricultural activities, transportation would greatly facilitate the running of their daily chores such as the fetching of firewood, water and the movement of crops and other agricultural goods (Mahapa, 2003; 2010). That notwithstanding, transportation often remains denied to women and this is mainly because of the ways in which policies are designed and planned. As a consequence, women are relegated to the usage of their very bodies as rudimentary forms of transport to meet their productive needs. Even when transportation programmes such as Intermediate Means of Transport (IMT) have been designed and implemented to assist men and women, women have often found themselves benefitting less than their male counterparts (Fernando & Potter, 2000; Mahapa & Mashiri, 2003). This is because beyond the mere provisions of transport, norms that sanction gender roles also play a part in the manner in which interventionist programmes are received and implemented.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was instituted within theories of Gender and Development to elaborate and explain women's experiences in agricultural development. This is one of the three dominant feminist theories designed to assist in the analysis of women related topics particularly in the areas of empowerment in "Third World countries". The other two are, Women in development (WID) and Women and development (WAD). These two theories are briefly discussed as a background towards the introduction of the Gender and Development (GAD) Approach. WID was largely developed in order to search for practical solutions for the failure of prevailing development concepts. It also owes its development to the growth of feminism which was based on systematic assessments of the roots of women's disadvantage in society (Jackson, 1992:90; Jackson & Jones, 1992:56). The rationale behind WID was that women could contribute substantially to development if not for their underutilization as a resource. On the other hand, WAD begins from the

position that "women have always been an integral part of the development process in global systems of exploitations and inequality" (Rathberger, 1990:499; Boellstorff, 1995:55). It thus contests that the issue of the "underrepresentation of women in economic, political and social structures can be determined by carefully designing intervention strategies rather than developing more fundamental shifts in social relations of gender" (Koczberski, 1999:90; Pillai *et al.*, 1995:12). Since this study seeks not only to look at the absence of women in development, but also to investigate the inequalities that have been instigated by socio-cultural norms, GAD is adopted as the principle theory.

GAD is different from WID and WAD because that it focuses less on the social concept of gender and more on the concept of sex. The focus of GAD is on the ways of "perceiving the problems of women in terms of their sex (their biological difference from men) rather than in terms of their gender (the social relationships between men and women)" (Parpart *et al.*, 2000:58). This is not to say that GAD does not recognize the importance of redistributing power in social relations. For example, the approach emphasizes that women ought to enjoy equal access to economic, social and political opportunities. However, GAD's adherents believe that relations between men and women would be transformed if all sexes had the same amount of power in decision making processes concerning their welfare and development. This would in turn facilitate the implementation of women's needs over and above their mere documentation as their ability to influence policy making and planning equaled their male counterparts. Women's empowerment is therefore an important aspect in development since it could lead to the improvement of women's access to developmental resources that are accessible to men. Ideas within the GAD approach are similar to those of liberal feminism "which argues that equality for women can be achieved through legal means and social reform" (Beasley, 2005:28).

Pillai *et al.* (1995:27) state that the GAD approach emphasizes direct challenges to the access of cultural, social and economic privileges that enable women to make equal social and economic profit out of the same resources. In this regard, the GAD approach is of relevance to this study as it speaks to the power dimensions that exist in labour accrued from the differences of being men or women. It is therefore fundamental to the investigation of how relations between men and women are based on the socio-culturally determined gender roles

ascribed to sexes. Beyond investigating the gender inequalities that exist between men and women, GAD will be of great assistance to understanding the causes of the misrepresentation of women as well as their misrecognition in labour. Following which, recommendations will be presented as to how to better incorporate women into transport and agricultural policy.

3. METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING

The study used a feminist methodology in order to understand the gendered power dimensions involved in the accessing of transport resources and the role women play in agricultural development. Feminist methodology is an approach to research that has been developed in response to the concerns by feminist scholars about the limitations of traditional methodology to capture the experiences of women and others who have been marginalized in academic research (Naples, 2003:1701). Additionally, feminist methodology according to O'Brien (2009:25) is "an approach concerned with collecting information, analysing data and conducting research that analyses traditional or patriarchal understandings of how knowledge is produced and subsequently accepted as legitimate by peers in the academy, policy formulation and the general public".

Since this casts gender as a tool or unit of analysis, as well as a step towards identifying the foundation of women's discrimination and oppression in the specific sectors of transport and agricultural development, the researcher adopted feminist qualitative research methodology which also belongs to a critical paradigm for the data collection exercise (Webb, 1993: 416). As such this methodology – in keeping with feminist tradition – includes subject interaction, non-hierarchical research relationships between researchers and respondents, emphasizes on the expression of feelings as well as the concern for values (Taylor & Rupp, 1991). The study also took an interactionist stance with the participants by deliberately endeavoring to understand their experiences as regards to their farming activities. To this effect, formal interaction tools aimed at collecting in-depth interviews and focus groups were used in order to understand how participants made meaning of their own experiences.

The sampling methodology was non-probabilistic and therefore purposive. This was on the basis that the researcher had prior knowledge of the population in question that enabled them to purposively target

those members of that population who most likely had valuable experiences pertaining to the research question (Babbie & Mutton, 2010:100). A total of 2 participants were engaged in in-depth interviews. At least 8 participants were involved in the focus group discussions (FGDs). In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants from the two projects. Lastly, a qualitative thematic analysis was carried out to analyse the data collected from the participants. Visual aids obtained through videography and photography was also compiled into the final report for illustration purposes.

4. GENDER AND AGRICULTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA

A study on "Employment Trends in Agriculture in South Africa" showed that women were the largest number of those employed on farms and in the non-farming informal sector (Statistics South Africa, 2000:19). Results also showed that the agricultural commercial sector is largely comprised and dominated by men, which presupposes that more women than men are engaged in subsistence farming with minimal profit (Census, 2010). In the Limpopo province, the gender employment gap was found to be the widest in the whole country in which 37 per cent of unemployed women were involved in subsistence farming compared to 12 per cent of unemployed men. Since South Africa is one of the poor countries in the world, agriculture is the most dominant activity. The agricultural sector contributes 70 per cent to the South African Economy (Census, 2010). The sector plays an important role in South Africa because of the opportunities for sustaining livelihoods through the employment it offers and the resultant linkages between agriculture and the rest of the community.

Within the SADC region, agricultural development planning, research and extension services have also overlooked the importance of improving small holder farming. This is because agricultural development is seen as incapable of making meaningful contributions to the economy and subsequently national development (Haynes, 2005). In spite of this attitude, women in the SADC region are the largest labour force group in the agricultural sector. For example, Malawian women make up to 70 per cent of agricultural work which includes planting, weeding, harvesting and processing food such that around 80 per cent of all food consumed at the household level in Malawi is produced by women (Haynes, 2005:17). This is perhaps the reason why Hames (2005:25) surmises that:

"given the vital role women play in agriculture, one of the necessary conditions to achieving sustainable development and improving food security in the region is the provision of sufficient attention and support to women farmers who form a majority of the farming production both as workers and food producers".

Still more, the efforts rural women make through their unpaid and burdensome endeavours are further challenged by time, mobility and energy constraints at the expense of their health, well-being and productivity (Doss & Sofa Team, 2011, Majake 2001, Ayoade, 2011). As such, contribution of women in agricultural and rural development should be improved and enhanced by implementing resolutions that relate to the specific problems they encounter as economic and social stakeholders for the fact that their integration into agricultural and rural development improves the efficiency and sustainability human development (Sweetman, 2004; Bock and Shortall, 2008). Similarly, the provision of transport mechanism should be emphasized more to assist female farmers in reaching their markets to sell produce would trickle down to sustainable developments in their projects.

5. THE ROLE OF TRANSPORT IN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Regardless of the challenges women face in agricultural development, one other structure necessary is transport. This is because "rural transport, infrastructure, and services are not only key components in rural development but are also an important ingredient in ensuring sustainable poverty reduction" (Button & Nijkamp, 1997:215). In addition, transport has long been a strategic factor in agriculture, rural development and social change dynamics (Button & Nijkamp, 1997). Transport acts as a bridge linking factories and industries with markets making it possible for finished products and industrial inputs to be available at the right time and place, in the required forms and quantities (Mashiri *et al.*, 2002; FAO, 2004; Chakwizira & Mashiri, 2009). Improving investment in rural road constructions and maintenance like some studies have suggested can have important and significant impacts on rural incomes and the quality of human lives which is one of the preconditions for development (Chakwizira, Nhemachena & Mashiri, 2010). Moreover, a study by Ajiboye & Afoloyan (2009) showed that inadequate provision of transport leads to an average waste of 25 per cent of total agricultural foodstuff produced.

When transport is made available in agricultural development economic growth is stimulated through increased accessibility, efficiency and effectiveness (Ajiboye & Afoloyan, 2009). This shows that the availability of transport facilities is a crucial and most critical determinant to development in poorer countries. The lack thereof has great impact on farmer's productive affordability and consumer's purchasing power which may affect the farmer's ability to make sustainable income. Thus, if and when transport services are infrequent, or of poor quality, farmers will be at a disadvantage when they attempt to sell their crops (Ajiboye & Afoloyan, 2009). If the journey to market is made on rough roads then some crops may get damaged which would also result in lower prices for the farmer (Ajiboye & Afoloyan, 2009). Transport is a way in which food processed and produced on a farm site can be moved to different homes through markets which is an important factor in agricultural productivity. The people's quality of life is enhanced; markets for agricultural produce are created and sustained; and new areas of economic focus between geographical and economic regions open up.

6. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GENDER INTEGRATION AND EQUALITY IN TRANSPORT

Research, in gender and development, shows that the availability of transport is very important for the agricultural development of rural communities (Chingozho, 2002:26). Summarily, studies demonstrate that transport is a key mechanism in reducing distances between farmers and markets (Mahapa, 2003; Mashinini *et al.*, 2009; Salon & Gulyani, 2009). Transport modes and infrastructure enable farmers to access markets for the selling of produce. In turn, farmers' socio-economic statuses improve which subsequently lead to improvements in the living standards of communities (Mahapa, 2003). Moreover, the transport investments and inputs have led to the improvement of living standards in rural areas although this might not be so for all communities in South Africa. Accessibility, proximity and location to transport resources have improved people's mobility's over the years (Mahapa, 2003; Mashinini *et al.*, 2009; Salon & Gulyani, 2009). Similarly, Mashiri and Mahapa (2002) argue that gender has not been integrated into the mainstream of either the infrastructure debate or the debate on rural transport services, particularly in rural areas. Recommendations about the integration of women into infrastructure debates and rural transport

suggest that allowing women to participate and share their perspectives in "the planning of transport needs and patterns would reduce the overall burden of transport (Ali-Nejadfard, 1999:202). Regardless of the developments in accessibility and transport, the development of transport infrastructure has for a long time been assumed to be gender neutral with both sexes benefitting equally from well-designed projects (Mashiri, 2005:16).

According to the World Bank (2007), development policies and institutions must ensure that all segments of society – including a fair representation of men and women – have a voice in decision making. This can be done either directly or through institutions that legitimize their interests and needs. Furthermore, the World Bank (2008:140) argues that "excluding women from full participation constraints the ability of the public sector policies and institutions to manage resources effectively because gender based exclusion compromises the prospects for a high quality of service delivery".

Perhaps these finding of the World Bank (2007) with regards to service delivery could be used to account for the findings of the Rural Transport Strategy for Limpopo (2008). The Results showed that walking which constitutes 82 per cent of all modes transportation is still by the far the most dominant mode of transport in Limpopo. Minibuses and buses which are a popular alternative account for only 6 and 9 per cent respectively (Limpopo Department of Roads and Transport, 2007). In the Capricorn District in particular, the use minibuses and buses accounts for about 10 per cent of all other modes of transport. These statistics reflect that strategies to broaden transportation alternatives are largely underperforming.

7. WOMEN AND ACCESS TO TRANSPORT RESOURCES IN AFRICA

Men and women all over the world, have different travel and transport needs due to their different socio-economic roles and activities (Fernando & Porter, 2002:2). Women and men also face different constraints in accessing, using and paying for transport services. According to Ellis (1997), the poor accessibility of transport in rural areas perpetuates a deprivation trap by denying communities access to their most basic needs. Issues of access and accessibility are important and need to be addressed in order to ensure that men and women have the "ability or ease of reaching various destinations or

places that offer opportunities for a desired activity" (Ellis, 1997:20). Access is different from accessibility in the sense that access speaks to the right and opportunities that one has to use or benefit from something. In this section access is discussed to make sense of the factors contributing the ability to use and benefit from transport resources for domestic responsibilities and agricultural labour. According to the World Bank (2010) transport plays a significant role in the amelioration or exacerbation of the life conditions of women particularly the poor and living in developing countries particularly to the extent that contextual differences are taken into account (World Bank, 2010:3). Thus the contexts of gender when considered in the transport sector ensure that transport is equitable, affordable and that it provides access to resources and opportunities required for development (Word Bank, 2010; Porter, 2002; Grieco, 2009). In addition, the use of gender analysis and gender planning could also promote the creation of interventions that are based on a full understanding of the sexual division of labour production as well as the socially sanctioned reproductive roles and responsibilities of males and females (Maramba and Bamberger, 2001:2).

Furthermore, a study by Oliver (1985) discovered that most public transport users in rural and urban areas are women; therefore, women are the most affected by the availability of public transportation services. This alludes to the qualitative aspects of transportation facilities which speak to not just the availability of transport but also the quality of that transport in terms of its different modes and their schedules. Often women's workloads and work schedules require them to make frequent trips to the city or even around the community itself for household and other familial tasks. And yet in spite of this, women's needs and issues are often assumed to be identical to men's (Hamilton & Jenkins, 2000) which ultimately results in a low level of awareness of women's travel needs. Improvements in transport infrastructure and transport services arising from greater awareness can, according to Booth *et al.* (2000), enable poor people to meet subsistence, economic and social needs more easily.

8. PATRIARCHY, CULTURAL IDEOLOGIES AND ITS EFFECTS ON WOMEN'S ACCESSIBILITY TO TRANSPORT

Reasons for gender relational patterns between men and women vary among societies. Women in traditional societies are largely tied down by cultural

ideologies of patriarchy which leave women with less personal freedom, fewer resources at their disposal as well as limited influence over decision-making processes that shape their societies and their own lives. This is in contrast to women living in modern societies where cultural definitions are less demanding. To this end, Mama (1994:10) states that "like any other forms of relations, gender relations are structured by ideologies and belief practices, property and resources access and ownership, legal codes and so on." Thus, understanding the relations between men and women is important to development practice since it assists in designing policies that are efficient and effective in empowering women, as well as providing for and addressing the different needs or roles of men and women in development. Moreover, in developing countries women have very limited access to transport services and technology which poses challenges on their access to health, education and other social facilities (Riverson & Walker, 2006:2).

Understanding and responding to women's transport needs is recognisably essential for reducing poverty because it is also cited as crucial to realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in particular, the goal to reduce poverty and hunger. According to Bentley (2004) women comprise the majority of the most marginalized, impoverished and least empowered sector of South Africa. Therefore, poverty is perceived to have a gender dimension which challenges the equal status of women in law and poses a threat to the realization of their equal human rights practice (Bentley, 2004:248). According to Teleman (2012), gender justice which is the realization of women's rights human rights and ending hunger are closely intertwined and interdependent goals. Solving the problems of hunger and poverty thus mean that the current global development model which is underwritten by gender inequality will have to be challenged (Teleman, 2012).

Women unlike men have far less access to higher value markets. As such, their produce may be sold on their behalf by men who then keep and control the income. In that regard, improvements in transport facilities could positively impact on women and men by promoting or encouraging changes to agricultural production such as a shift to cash crop production. A study by Jacana (2006) on the role of bicycles as a lever of empowerment for rural women showed that transport is essential to sustainable development. According to that study, limited access

to transport services greatly hinders economic and social development and contributes to poverty by denying women the exchange of information, social awareness and the subsequent promotion (Jacana, 2006:15). Jacana's (2006) study showed that the bicycle intervention in South Africa, Ghana and India was extremely successful in addressing gender inequality because it gave women more free time while allow them to alter their traditional roles in their communities.

9. INSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL MECHANISMS IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to Potgieter *et al.* (1999), transport plays a pivotal role in economic and social development in both urban and rural areas. This is so because transport facilitates the movement of goods and people over distances which allows for easier access to various facilities and services thereby promoting trade. Gradually, there is a marked improvement in people's living standards through better access to health, education, social services and various markets (Potgieter *et al.*, 1999). In spite of the importance of transport to socio-economic development, very little has been done in South Africa to assess the impact of transport policy on development, let alone the role of gender in transportation policy (Mitchell & Walters, 2011). To date women are not yet fully recognized as comprising the majority of public transport users. Information about the gender differences of the use of transport is still lacking suggesting that transport policies are either gender blind or gender neutral. Furthermore, developing an understanding of gender differences in transport needs, access and planning, are essential to identifying the differences in economic and socio-cultural roles and responsibilities between men and women (Potgieter *et al.*, 1999). As opposed to men, women in rural areas, take up roles such as care taking, preparations meals and managing their households (IFAD, 2000). More so, women in these areas take up duties as wage labourers, producers, and vegetable sellers, as well as engaging in small scale trading and enterprise (IFAD, 2000). Apart from these mentioned roles, women spend long hours fetching water and firewood. Therefore, an understanding of these differences enables a better appreciation of the different travel and transport needs of the either sexes (Bamberger, 2000; Sibanda, 2002; Mahapa, 2000; Grieco *et al.*, 2009; Porter, 2002).

Women, more than men, in South Africa spend considerable amounts of time traveling. And the

different tasks that commission their traveling require different modes of transport in order for them to be fulfilled. Transport is also important in order to complete daily agricultural activities and household duties. As such, the availability of transport can reduce the amount of time spent by women on household activities (Mitchell & Walters, 2011). For example, women in the less wealthy provinces of South Africa, such as the Eastern Cape and Limpopo, suffer great economic loss because of the lack of transport (Mahapa, 2003). This is because as a result of the remoteness of rural areas, they are neglected in terms of transportation thereby leaving them cut off from other areas. In addition, transport and its development is essential for women in rural areas because it has an impact on women accessing health services, educational facilities and employment as well as participating in key decision making forums (Potgieter *et al.*, 1999). Transport policy and policy practice in South Africa indicates that gender has not been seen as an important factor to be mainstreamed in transport policy and planning in relation to rural Africa (Potgieter *et al.*, 1999).

10. TRANSPORT POLICY AND PRACTICE IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE

One of the missions of the Department of Transport in the Limpopo Province is to "provide safe, sustainable and integrated transport infrastructure and services for the promotion of socio-economic development" (Department of Roads and Transport, 2007). Their vision also holds that the Department seeks to quantify transport infrastructure and services for all. Both the vision and mission these goals are important to this study because of their relevance to understanding the direction of development in the Limpopo province particularly in the rural setting. As already stated, this study in part aims to look at transport policies put in place to support women involved in agricultural production and how these policies aim to achieve that goal. Secondly, this study also aims to bring light to the issue of transport and its importance to the development of rural women's socio-economic status. The following section considers these research goals in the light of what is happening on the ground in the Limpopo province.

11. THE LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

On September 2008 Africon, which is now known as Aurecon South Africa (Pty) Ltd, was appointed by

the Limpopo Provincial Department of Roads and Transport to develop a Rural Transport strategy for the Province (Aurecon, 2010). This strategic framework for rural transport planning in the Limpopo province is based on the SADC Regional and National Rural Transport Perspective, which gives precedence to rural development issues (Aurecon, 2010). According to Aurecon (2010) the South African government, through its National Development Perspective, adopted the Millennium Development Goal (now known as the Sustainable Development Goals) recommendations of the United Nations for transportation. Out of the several recommendations, the ones deemed relevant to the subject matter of this study were as follows:

- To develop national and regional strategies to alleviate poverty should be in place by 2016.
- To enhance public investment in capacity building, resource mobilisation, and official developmental assistance.

Particular attention would relate to connectivity planning through multi-purpose service delivery centres and labour intensive road development projects:

- To ensure that poverty reduction strategies are transparent and inclusive of civil society, private sector and international partners.
- To launch of projects and programs in order to build experience at community level by building the capacity of local officials in transport planning and implementation.
- To facilitate Development Assistance to support Millennium Development Goals. That is, the Rural Transport Strategy is to be used as a motivator for the National Government to provide funding for rural transport projects.
- To support for scientific research and development to address needs of the poor such as health, agriculture, natural resource and environmental management.

Similarly, the growth and development strategy of Limpopo province identified transport as a tool that enables facilitation of economic growth through the movement of people and their goods and services. The argument being that is that the role of roads and transportation is evident in social and economic

activities. As such, through the transport policy, the Limpopo province hopes to "open markets to natural resources, agricultural products and manufactured goods which would support industries and challenge present delimitations brought about by the province's topography" (Aurecon, 2010:30). The Transport Policy White Paper of Limpopo identified the huge discrepancy between the access to opportunities in rural settings as opposed to access to similar opportunities in the nearest urban centres (White Paper on Provincial Transport, 1997). This discrepancy is noted as a challenge that poses threat not only to economic opportunities but also to education and other social services.

Part of the Limpopo White Paper on Provincial Transport (1997) policy is the Limpopo in Motion Strategy. The strategy is drawn from the national White Paper on National Transport Policy. On a provincial level the strategy commits itself to the following:

- To improve the general mobility of Limpopo people
- To improve passenger transport to learners, elders and disabled
- To promote accessible transport to support economic development and job creation

The objectives and aims of the Limpopo in Motion (2005) strategy show that the transport department maintains interest in bettering accessibility to transport for economic development and job creation. Indeed, this interest has been shown to

be a legitimate one in poverty reduction strategies elsewhere in this study. The objective of this policy though promising again pays little consideration towards understanding the different roles played by men and women in society. In that manner, the anticipated accomplishments of the policy remain may not resolve gender concerns. Both national and provincial policies show little interest into issues of equality and gender mainstreaming. Issues of equality and gender mainstreaming are important to policy since policy itself needs to avoid furthering the exclusion of some members of society. Although the policy promises to integrate learners, the elderly and disabled which are considered as vulnerable members of society, women are left out of this group. A policy that integrates women, or mainstreams gender, in development must not fail to recognize that transformation involves neither the assimilation of women into men's roles nor the maintenance of the dualism that exist between men and women. Rather, it must establish a new and positive form of development (Government Gazette, 2012).

12. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussions of the findings are done in accordance with the information given below:

One difficulty that arose during the focus group discussions was that in many of the instances, there were some participants who had more knowledge than others about the questions being asked. This sometimes led to an uneven participation amongst the participants. Since most of the participants had little or no educational levels, this impacted their knowledge and awareness on ways to

TABLE 1: Description of the sample.

| Age | Marital statuses | Educational level | Employment status | Number of years in farming |
|-----|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 39 | Married | Standard 1 | Unemployed | 5 |
| 45 | Married | None | Unemployed | 10 |
| 40 | Married | None | Unemployed | 10 |
| 41 | Married | None | Unemployed | 10 |
| 37 | Married | Matric | Unemployed | 5 |
| 35 | Single | Matric | Unemployed | 3 |
| 40 | Widowed | None | Unemployed | 10 |
| 42 | Widowed | Standard 1 | Unemployed | 10 |

Source: Authors

acquire information about their projects and their sustainability. Usually married participants described that most of their farming activities were controlled if not led by their husbands because they have more knowledge and power in livestock farming. Those in vegetable farming expressed that they did most of the work whilst their male counterparts were there to assist with the pruning and spraying of insecticides on their vegetation. Moreover, for married participants, since land was owned by their partners they often had to wait for instruction from their husbands. Younger (aged 30 to 35) only started farming as a result of no income and employment opportunities, hence did not feel they required much knowledge about farming. Young participants expressed that should there be a better opportunity for them except farming, they would be more than willing to leave their current source of income, which was at the time, vegetable and livestock farming.

12.1 Lack of Support from Department of Land Affairs and Agricultural Development

Knowledge dissemination coupled with appropriate support from relevant government departments are significant tools to growth and empowerment. Extension support in agricultural development is a much needed service because without it agricultural projects fail to be sustainable. Studies have not only revealed the significance of such support but more importantly the institutional loopholes which are often ignored by those responsible for providing those services. Hames (2005) discusses in detail that agricultural development planning, research and extension services have been overlooked particularly in smallholder farming, while smallholder farming itself is overlooked because policy planners and implementers believe that the sector is unable to make meaningful contribution. And yet, the majority of smallholder farmers, at least in SADC, are women. Nonetheless, women in both projects revealed that the department of agriculture was found wanting as far as their support for these projects was concerned. Below were their responses when asked whether they received any support from the department of agriculture:

"The Sekhukhune district gives seeds to their farmers on an annual basis but it could be because they are under the offices in Polokwane. One lady from there once came here and told us we are supposed to be getting seeds from the department of agriculture on an annual basis but they don't do that; if they have given us anything this year next year they won't give

us. Maybe it can go for as long as three years without them assisting us with anything."

Similarly, women in the second project highlighted the following:

"Yes, this project was funded by the Department of agriculture and then they were supposed to help us with the shade for the seedlings. They gave us plastic roofing, but when it fell, they stopped. So we had to buy our own shades. I think they have pulled out from us because I don't see their support anymore."

Results show that although participants received agricultural support from the Department of Agriculture, they were not satisfied with their provision. The departments according to the participant's views were more involved in the formative stages of the projects. But after the projects had grown, the department withdrew from the projects. Their lack of consistent support to these projects potentially threatened the viability of the projects. Their unavailability left the women in these projects feeling overwhelmed with their duties. This might explain the slow development of the projects. These conclusions were drawn due to the responses women in both projects gave during interviews, according to them the department of agriculture withdrew from them while they were still in need of their assistance. Unfortunately, because of the unavailability of the Department of Agriculture officials for interviews, conclusions about these matters can only be discussed and withdrawn from participant's perceptions.

Furthermore, the same question was asked to women in both projects about the department of roads and transport. They responded in the following way:

"No we have never met them; we've never worked with them..."

Again, women from both projects said that there was no support from the Department of Roads and Transport. Although the Department of Roads and Transport in the district has engaged in empowerment programmes through road construction in rural areas for women, the views of these women reveal that the Department of Roads And Transport has never been and is not involved in their projects. This could mean that the department is not aware of these projects or has no appropriate policy that deals with the incorporation farmers. Also, that the department has not yet considered the importance of empowering women in agricultural development

through supplying them with transport services. The department has not shown as much interest in small holder farming as it has in road construction. As GAD has proposed, addressing these issues may include calling for institutional transformation which is essential to the understanding of the mainstreaming of gender in policy. Also, incorporating gender and agricultural development in transport policy could be crucial to mobilizing government departments into the provision of support resources, knowledge and information to allow for greater empowerment through and with institutional change.

12.2 The Role of Transport and Knowledge Acquisition

During the discussion about transport and knowledge, the respondents had the following to say:

Participant 6 from Lahlapapdi:

"You see right now because there's no transport, we are unable to visit other cooperatives to gain knowledge, because when you go outside of your community you learn new things... you learn how to deal with your own problems by looking at what others did. But if I don't go anywhere, which is the first problem, you will never learn anything. So sometimes you have to take out your own money, and go to projects in Venda which has made big improvements and are better. So you take the knowledge and bring it home with you and going to Venda is not cheap."

Transport is important to farmers for information access which is essential to the building of knowledge for their own projects. Additionally, without transport, these women, spend large amounts of money in order to participate in agricultural programmes that could lead to their own edification. Furthermore, limited engagements with other women-led projects in the province or anywhere else in the country may discourage the development of their projects. Meeting other farmers may prevent such happenings as that may become a source of comfort. It may also facilitate the sharing of information as farmers express their difficulties as well as their skills and ideas with other farmers in the same field.

12.3 Getting There? A Challenge for Women

As argued by Bryceson (2003) in her definition of transport, moving from place to place is an important

element to the development of the projects identified in the study. A good farmer is one that is able to manipulate situations and use available resources for maximum profit. Farming is amongst the most volatile sources of income generation particularly due to environmental as well as economic factors. The market is a place to which a farmer is able to sell their produce or goods to consumers for reasonable prices. It is a place where goods are sold in order to accumulate profit which is in turn used to sustain their families. Furthermore, it is at the market place where the farmer is able to familiarize themselves with other farmers while making themselves known to others. Hence, it is as much a place for recognition and visibility as it is sphere of economic transactions through which contributions are made to the broader economy. The market therefore is crucial to a farmer's survival, recognition and socio-economic development. Granting farmers support services such as transport resources can improve the economic statuses of female farmers (Ajiboye & Afoloyan, 2009).

Participant 7 from Kwadikwaneng Nursery:

"The issue of transport is a serious one. Last time we had a meeting with other farmers and most of them were complaining about the lack of transport because others even fail to post their things because they do not have transport."

This statement says emphatically that failure to transport goods to the market may result in a total waste of agricultural produce. Afoloyan & Ajiboye (2009), emphasizing the same point, state that when transport services are infrequent or of poor quality farmers are at a disadvantage when they attempt to sell their crops because damaged crops do not fetch good prices. Women in both the projects argued that when they are unable to transport the goods to the market, they resolve to sell their products on their projects which are further away from the consumer. In other cases, they use wheelbarrows to transport the goods on the side of the road. In the end, women sell their goods at lower prices than usual which eats into their potential profits. Moreover, their views reflect that transport is a very crucial component in ensuring that their goods are sold to markets both near and far. What emerged from the interviews was this: because of the lack of transport, respondents end up having to spend large amounts of money on transportation alone which leaves them with little to take home. The profit accumulated is spent on the hired vehicle. The rest of it goes back into

recapitalising the business through the purchase of seeds and pesticides for their gardens, and food and treatment for their livestock.

12.4 Transport Reduces Labour within Women-Led Projects

Transport resources are also important in ensuring that labour is reduced. The number of times the farmer spends traveling between the farm and the market is reduced when there is appropriate transport. The advantage of this is that the farmer is able to make more profit from making frequent trips to the market. The use of wheelbarrows is labour intensive because the farmer carries the weight of goods while walking to the market place. When farmers were asked about the importance of transport, they said that transport is important to them for reducing labour since they do not have to take their wheelbarrows to markets. As already shown above, women carry heavy loads on their shoulders and in wheelbarrows on their way to markets. Such burdensome work is a threat not only to women's productivity but also their health. Appropriate transport can help reduce this burden very significantly.

When participants were asked about transportation in Kwadikwaneng, the wheelbarrow was mentioned as the second method of transportation after motor vehicles. The response was as follows:

Participant 8 from Kwadikwaneng:

"If you have a bakkie, you can fill it up with vegetables and then go and sell at the pension pay points. You will come back with good money, but if you don't have money then you will never make more than what you are making."

Participant 10 from Kwadikwaneng:

"Well, we just take them and sell them here in the project or we put them in a wheelbarrow and take them out on the streets. And when they are finished I can just come back again to fetch them."

Unlike the women in Kwadikwaneng Nursery project, the women in Lahlapapadi Goat Project, cannot sell their goats to other people except those who are in their communities. This has an implication on the ability to make 'good money' because often when they sell to their own community members, participants are forced to sell at a lesser price as most members in the community already own livestock.

The availability of transport is important to them it represents an opportunity to increase their income. It also occasions them with the opportunity to expand their markets to where 'good money' can be made. Transport is thus significant to incorporating women into sustainable auto-centred development. Allowing women to participate in decision making processes that have direct positive outcomes in terms of their income is essential to the developments of their own communities and families. Furthermore, the provision of transport is important for reducing the burden of loads and the number of trips made to the market to sell produce. Bigger loads of produce can be carried and transported to the markets when transport is available. Since transport serves as a bridge connecting farmers with agricultural and non-agricultural markets, investments in rural road constructions and maintenance can bring about important changes in the prospects of women-led projects (Chakwizira *et al.*, 2010).

Participant 7 from Lahlapapadi:

"The issue, of transport is a serious one, last time we had a meeting with other farmers and most of them were complaining about the lack of transport because others even fail to post their things because they do not have transport."

Women from both the projects in the study shared their frustrations as well as their concerns regarding the issue of transport. Their views reflected that transport is a very crucial component in ensuring that their goods are sent and sold to markets near and far. Furthermore, because of the lack of transport, they end up having to spend large amounts of money on transportation alone which leaves them with little to take home. These findings tally with those Creightley (1993) in his study on the role of Transport in Economic Development. It was found in that study that transport can lower the costs of inputs to the producer. This is, according the Creightley (1993), "important for agricultural as well as industrial production" because agricultural output can be increased by at least 40 per cent through better transport arrangements alone (Creightley, 1993).

Although the GAD approach argues that development should not only be concerned with the provision of services but should also challenge the subordination of women in households and societies, it is imperative to note that service provision could better the chances of women in development and decision

making processes. Providing services could impact positively on the empowerment of women and their communities. In the particular case of transportation, service provision for women in agriculture should be stressed until women's labour is recognized as a service provider to the communities and societies. The theory, in this instance, is essential to transport policy planning because subordination and oppression can be reduced when services are provided. Services allow women the space to stand and have an equal chance achieving empowerment and subsequently development.

13. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has shown that women from the selected projects receive inadequate support from the Department of Agriculture and even less support from the Department of Roads and Transport in their district. Participants expressed that they only received assistance from the department of agriculture in the formative stages of their projects. Further developments were made by themselves with little or no assistance from the departments. They reported losing livestock to diseases as well as spending their own money and other resources to compensate for interventions which were prior earmarked for departmental assistance. The sustainability of their projects is greatly threatened by such intermittent assistance. The Department of Transport was particularly found wanting in their support for farmers in general and women-led agricultural projects in particular. Their failure to support communities seems to be the result of a lack of policy geared particularly towards farmers within the district. More importantly, they also lack policy frameworks with specific emphasis on incorporating women into transport development. Without a gender sensitive policy, transportation in agricultural development will not adequately assist the plight of women in rural areas.

As far as the results in the study are concerned, there is a great need for the provision of transport resources and services for women-led agricultural projects. Encouraging the relevant departments to be involved in the development of these projects may yield greater results in ensuring that women continue successfully in the fight against hunger and poverty in the district. This involvement may include the provision of information about the availability of support services to farmers, and consultations in policy-making process that

culminate into transportation services that reduce the burden on women's labour in agricultural vocations. In cases where support is not available, it is highly recommended that policies that deal with incorporating farmers are formulated since agricultural production plays as an income generating activity in most of the rural communities in the district and province. The gender and development (GAD) approach or framework could be essential to ensure that gender is considered so that men and women are equally represented in agricultural development as far as the allocation of transport resources are concerned.

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