# CONTRIBUTION OF ASSETS, GROUP MANAGEMENT, BENEFITS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT TO THE SUCCESS OF MAPHEPHETHE RURAL WOMEN'S GROUPS.

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# ABSTRACT

Women play a major role in development especially with the increasing numbers of female headed households in Africa. Today more than ever, the poor, the majority of whom are women, face the challenge of creating new survival mechanisms within their communities. One of these mechanisms that the rural women of Maphephethe, (like their counter parts in other parts of Africa) have created is the formation of welfare groups which undertake various activities for income generation. This is to enable the women to meet their basic needs. However success of these groups depends on various factors such as access to assets. Women by virtue of their gender lack access to assets and they operate within structures of inequality which discriminate and deny them equal opportunities to participate in development.

Maphephethe is located in the rural KwaZulu-Natal midlands, in the Ndwedwe district. The area like many parts of rural KwaZulu-Natal is characterised by poor social and physical infrastructure. The purpose of this study was to investigate the contribution of assets, group management, constraints, benefits and community support to the success of Maphephethe women's groups. The study therefore looked at how the groups functioned, the constraints faced, the benefits derived from group participation and the way the community perceived these groups. All these factors were looked at in relation to success. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were used for this study. These were observation, focus groups, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques, de Wet Schutte P-Index, semi-structured interviews and in-depth interviews with key informants who were leaders of the groups.

The study found that successful groups were of mixed gender, accessed more assets, undertook more activities and functioned better. These groups also had higher education levels than those which were less successful and were also perceived more favourably by the outsiders. Education and asset access were crucial factors to the success of women's groups. The members of successful groups were more committed, had a higher sense of belonging and realised more income from their groups. This study summed up crucial factors for success of women's groups as access to assets, diversified activities, high education levels, good management, committed members, community support,

networking, and realisation of incomes by group members. The ability of the rural women's groups to participate effectively in their development activities is constrained by illiteracy (which results to poor management) and other factors such as lack of capital and information. In view of the constraints, it is recommended that development agencies create links with these groups to understand the effects of their collective action in the area. There is a dire need for capital to improve the women's activities, training of all the group members on issues ranging from group dynamics, basic education and skills. Literacy training could be combined with income generating activities. Development efforts need to begin by taking full stock of women's perceived claims, goals, motivations, constraints and resources they identify in their context.

## DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my wonderful children Matthew Mungai and Edwin Mungai who always give me hope and fill my life with joy; to my husband Peter Njuho for his love, unwavering support and encouragement; my mother Hannah and my sisters for their constant support; my supervisor Maryann Green for the many opportunities she has afforded me during my academic career; and to all the women of Africa for forever doing their best in their quest to earn a livelihood for their families.

# DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research study is my original work and has not been submitted for any other degree. However, where use has been made of other people's work, this has been duly acknowledged in the text.

Signed: _____      25/10/2006
　　　　　Esther Mungai                                  Date

As the research supervisor, I agree/disagree to submission of this thesis for examination.

Supervisor: _____      25/10/06
　　　　　Professor JM Green                            Date

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| ABET | Adult Basic Education and Training |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| FAO | Food Agricultural Organisation |
| FG | Focus Group |
| GAD | Gender And Development |
| GIS | Geographic Information Systems |
| IFPRI | International Food Policy Research Institute |
| KARI | Kenya Agricultural Research Institute |
| KIDS | KwaZulu-Natal Income Dynamics Study |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisations |
| NLC | National Land Committee |
| PIR | Poverty and Inequality Report |
| PRA | Participatory Rural Appraisal |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Fund |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| WB | World Bank |
| WEF | Women Empowerment Framework |
| WID | Women In Development |
| WG | Women's Groups |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |
| SPSS | Statistical Program for Social Sciences |

# CHAPTER ONE
# THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

## 1.1 Introduction to the research problem

Rural women form the backbone of rural economies and play an important role in poverty alleviation and income generation activities (Claridge, Frank & Molt, 1999:7). In their quest to make a difference within their communities, women have formed groups, which are henceforth referred to as Women's Groups (WG) to address their common concerns. Rural women consider themselves as resources and active agents of their own destiny rather than as passive recipients of handouts (Sanjugta & Schech, 2003:3). They may have realised that there is strength in numbers and that by working together they could climb to greater heights which none could achieve as an individual. However, little recognition if any has been given to these groups by society despite the fact that they serve as a powerful tool for women's empowerment. Goldwin and Winters (1994:35) reinforce this point further by saying that although women are generally recognised as an integral part of the process of development, there has not been enough data to enlighten policy makers as to the particular role and function of women in development. Wright (1995:1) also argues that only nominal attention is being paid to qualitative investigations which could ascertain women's needs and interests especially in energy usage. On the same note, Butler (1987:134) indicates that even where the importance of rural women is recognised, programmes for their betterment are not easily designed and implemented. Thus a serious attack on poverty cannot succeed if it does not respond to the needs of and constraints on the poor, a majority of whom are women (Kehler, 2004: 4). The fact that women have formed groups to try and solve their common problems is an indicator that their needs are far from being met. Therefore the study of these groups (their assets, structure, management and functioning), their constraints and factors that contribute to their success is crucial in order to boost their role within the development process.

Research indicates that women are disproportionately represented among the world's poor (Reddock, 2000:37). As a result such quotes as "poverty has a woman's face" are used to highlight feminization of poverty. According to Sanjugta & Schech (2003:4), this not only refers to the increasing numbers of women in poverty but also the links between the social and economic subordination of women. It is quite obvious that, while women as a whole are discriminated against, the impact of poverty and underdevelopment is most strongly felt by the rural, uneducated, very poor and disadvantaged women (FAO, 2004:3). Formation of

groups is an indicator that they have similar experiences and have together to try and address their plight. As a group they try anything that can earn them money and as a result they set up income generating activities. One can therefore argue that feminisation of poverty may have led to feminisation of survival strategies one of which is formation of groups. Thus, programs aiming to help women's groups may need to take into account the fact that women often represent the poorest, most exploited and most marginalised sector of society. Rural development policies for example, may need to emphasize broad access to services and support the small scale agricultural producers by ensuring availability to land, credit facilities, appropriate markets, training and support (James, 1995: 39).

In other parts of Africa, for example Kenya, traditional women's groups have been effective catalysts for grassroots development activities especially when collaborating with knowledgeable non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and focusing on appropriate technology (Kamar, 1999: 3). A good example is Kalimani women's group, which through an organised project, built a new pipeline and pumping system that brought water up the hill from the river to the village. The time saved by not fetching water is well spent with the children, gardening and on income generating activities (Kamar, 1999:5). This women's group collaborated with Rehema (a Kenya-based non-governmental organisation). Thus it can be said that consultation and partnerships may be key factors for success in development. It is only through organising themselves that women can exercise any pressure to change the local and external causes of their problems. One can therefore say that self-organisation in the form of women's groups is a necessary pre-condition if women are going to improve their own situation.

According to Summerfield (1997:23), rural African women are the most marginalised and the most disempowered sector in KwaZulu-Natal province. The author emphasizes the need for effective remuneration, recognition and support of agricultural producers who are primarily rural women. Therefore programs need to be developed by the relevant government departments, NGOs and commercial businesses to ensure that rural women producers receive adequate recognition and remuneration for their activities. Leonard & Seed (1995:127) observed that sustainable human development accelerates when women are able to increase their incomes in environments which foster their own welfare and that of their families. It is important for rural women to be given time, space and opportunities to develop their own understanding of development.

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This study focused on Maphephethe Women's groups, located in rural KwaZulu-Natal midlands. The area was chosen due to its rural set up, its proximity to the University of Kwazulu-Natal and most of all reliance on the good rapport established between the Department of Community Resources and Maphephethe residents. The area has poor social and physical infrastructure. Maphephethe location has two distinct areas which have been classified as the lowlands and the uplands. The latter has rough terrains and inadequate social amenities in comparison with the lowlands. The women in both areas have come together and formed groups which mainly do gardening, crafting, beadwork, sewing and to some extent chicken rearing as a means of livelihood. However, their main activity is gardening. There are a total of 21 women's groups. The women commonly refer to themselves as women's groups although as found out at the time of the study there were eight groups with few men in them (the average men in the groups was one). However, the women clarified that the men in the groups only joined them about five years ago and the groups are still commonly referred to as women's groups by both the women and the entire Maphephethe residents. This study has therefore proceeded to refer to them as such. The women's groups need to be encouraged because they are mainly in the production of food and the management of resources. As James (1995:1) states; a discussion of sustainable development is incomplete without the inclusion of the role of women.

## 1.2 Importance of this study

In South Africa, women's groups as a vehicle for enhancing development need to be explored. There is need to have a proper understanding of how and why women organise themselves informally into groups and how these groups benefit the women. Understanding women's groups priorities would form a basis for planning support activities. Thus it is important to study the way these groups operate in their contexts (assets, management and functioning), to know what drives them (benefits) despite the constraints they face. It is also important to know how these women's groups are perceived by the communities in which the groups are located. This is because community support is one of the factors that is crucial to the success of women's groups as identified by Maliwichi (1998: 80). It is also important to know the factors contributing to group success. This is because if groups have to contribute to women's welfare, they need to be run successfully. Awareness of the constraining factors to the success of women's groups is crucial for determination of appropriate development interventions.

In rural areas, some women's tasks are often performed collectively. Thus enterprises created around group activities have been found to be a viable means of enabling poor women to improve their lives (Qaim, 2000:45). Besides, the groups enable those (women) for whom decisions have always been made, to plan, decide and act for themselves. Group action allows individuals to pool their resources both financial and human. World Bank Report (2005:3) has further outlined that to assist significant numbers of poor people, particularly women, formation of groups is essential. The same report upholds that groups make it possible to reach the women who have neither the self-confidence nor skills to carry on meaningful economic activity of their own. In addition to this, groups also make it easier to offer skills especially to those women who might not otherwise acquire them. Besides, groups are often more open to receiving technical and managerial assistance and the cost of delivering this assistance is significantly lower than that of assisting an equal number of individual clients.

However, much as group formation advantages have been praised by many authors, this is not to say that group operations are an easy process, only that it is essential. Operating and managing the group for these women is not easy given that these are women from rural areas with very limited education levels. Thus most rural women's groups are faced with group functioning problems. As identified by Stringfellow, Coulter, Hussain and Mckoe (1997:36), these groups do not always work very well together. Other than group functioning problems, rural women's groups also face other constraints like lack of capital, lack of information and skills (to operate their projects) and lack of markets amongst other constraints. Some of the constraints that women's groups face such as lack of capital can be attributed to their gender. According to Mutava and Mutanyata (1998:12) rural women do not have property of their own which they can use as collateral to get loans from commercial banking institutions. These constraints hinder the growth and success of women's groups' activities. This is further confirmed by Longernecker, Moore and Petty (1997:46) who carried several studies in India which revealed that women's groups projects fail because of poor management (which they attributed to illiteracy), lack of business and marketing skills and lack of capital. Maliwichi (1998:80) outlines the factors crucial to the success of women's groups as community support, good management, participation of group members, regulations and guidelines to group norms, proper training of group members in group enterprises and group dynamics.

However despite these constraints women still work together in groups and they reap various benefits. The activities they undertake as a group can earn them some form of income (Snyder, 1995:67). As Rogers (2001:28) states the poor have a tendency to notice even the least amount of income in their lives. According to Shaffer (1998:213) group activities increase the feeling of belonging and lessen the level of isolation and alienation for the women. The members rely on one another in times of need. The groups thus act as safety nets for the vulnerable women in the rural areas.

## 1.3 Statement of the problem

This study investigates the contribution of assets, group management, benefits and community support to the success of Maphephethe rural women's groups. It looks at how the groups operate, the constraints that they face, the purpose these groups serve in the women's lives, and the way the community perceives them. A comparison is done between successful and less successful groups to find out contributing factors to success.

## 1.4 Hypothesis and the sub-problems

Hypothesis: Well run women's groups, with access to more assets, higher education levels have members who are more committed, experience a higher sense of belonging and higher incomes. They also have community support. These factors contribute greatly to their success.

Subproblem 1: What are the structures, asset base (available and accessed), functioning and management of women's groups in relation to group success?

Subproblem 2: What type of constraints are faced by the women's groups in relation to asset access, functioning, and group success?

Subproblem 3: How do women benefit from group participation?

Subproblem 4: What are the outsiders' perceptions of the women's groups in relation to asset access, group functioning, benefits realised and group success?

Subproblem 5: What characterises successful and less successful groups of Maphephethe?

## 1.5 Conceptual framework

The need for all to participate in development-oriented programs, particularly women has been universally recognised and well established (Osunde & Omoruyi, 1999:81). In view of their numerical strength, women can serve as a vehicle for transforming the rural areas. Rural development can hardly be successfully attained without the active involvement and participation of women (Sotshongaye & Moller, 2000:119). However for women to be actively involved in development programs, their gender roles have to be taken into account. Women's workload, cultural problems, lack of time, tiredness and ill health are critical factors militating against their active participation in development programs (Oxenham, Diallo, Katahoire, Mwangi, Sallo, 2001:28).

According to Kehler (2004:3), in South Africa, there is a rising incidence of single breadwinner families headed by women. Snyder (1995: 250), for example indicates traditionally conservative national statistics cite growing rates of single women-headed households with the increasing rates of poverty in Africa. The economic responsibility for the family thus seems to be shifting from men to women (Sanjugta & Schech, 2003:12). This renders the popular phrase that "women supplement the family income" invalid. Rural women are confronted in particular by the problem that their husbands are no longer able or willing to fulfill their obligations towards the family, and the women increasingly have to earn money not only to feed their children, but also to finance their education (Giovarelli, 2004:67). For these women being in a group is quite beneficial. The women organise themselves into groups and start an income generating project. The establishment of savings and loans schemes in groups is of central importance. The women's main aim is, therefore to raise income and thereby improve their material situation (Hartwig, 2000:32) On the other hand, Geran, (1996:34) argues that for many women, one reason for organising themselves into groups is to work together in the fields, because much of this work still has to be done manually. The joint farming of fields in a group enables larger areas to be cultivated not to mention that it is easier to cope with peak workloads and saves women's time, which they put to other uses. These and other benefits of women being in groups were explored in this study.

Sustainable development has been defined as "development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising those of the future generation to meet their own" (Goldin & Winters, 1994:1). This and other definitions of sustainable development found in the literature underline the intergenerational responsibilities placed on the earth's inhabitants.

It takes into account the balancing of social (people), economic and the environmental aspects of development (Department For International Development (DFID), 2002:4). One cannot discuss sustainable development without touching on sustainable livelihoods. According to Masika & Joekes (1996:80), the concept of sustainable livelihoods is more useful in understanding the realities of life facing the poor. "A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable if it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base" (DFID, 2002:1).

Sustainable development has to start at the grass roots level, thus community based organisations (CBO) play a major role in its implementation (Gender And Development fact sheets, 2001:1). Grass roots women's groups have the potential for organising and utilizing scarce community based resources. According to Food and Agricultural Report (FAO, 2004:2), on sustainable food security, rural women are the "silent majority" of the world's poor. The report further explains that rural women produce up to 80% of food in developing countries, yet they have title to only a fraction of farmland, and access to just 10% of credit and 5% of extension advice. Thus the report argues that the cycle of food insecurity and poverty will be broken when all rural people have the means to generate income to buy food or resources to produce in order to satisfy their needs. One strategy to achieve this is through grass roots women's groups. The group would provide the economies of scale in accessing resources, markets and technology. As has been evidenced by other research done on community women's groups collective organisation of women helps their members to reach greater achievements. Bukh (1979::154) gives an example of a successful women's group project where a clinic with a maternity wing was built.

In South Africa, women who reside in the rural areas make up to 53.1% of the total population of the country (National Land Committee, 2000a as cited by Bob, 2002: 19). In KwaZulu-Natal, 56.7% (4 871 000) of the total population and 54% of women reside in the rural areas (Bob, 2002:20). These women, who are the principle producers of food, depend on agriculture for their livelihood and their food. They produce food for sale (cash) and consumption (subsistence). This is further supported by Kehler (2004:3) who argues that in rural South Africa, more than half of rural households are headed by women, who together with the children make up the poorest of the poor. Women are faced by constraints such as

lack of access and control of vital resources, especially natural resources such as land and water. These two are vital for agricultural production and sustainability.

Environment is an important aspect of sustainable development (DFID, 2002:3). In rural areas where majority of women use firewood as fuel, there is a likelihood that firewood consumption outpaces the regenerative capacity of their forests (FAO, 2004:4). The poor are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and lack access to clean affordable energy services (Chambers, 1990: 59). Women's groups should be given a priority in being helped to strengthen their capacity to care for the environment at the community level in order to help them build sustainable livelihoods. Strategies and interventions are therefore needed that promote energy as an engine for equitable economic growth and sustainable development.

On the other hand, it is important that since most women in the rural areas depend on land for their livelihood (farming), care should be taken of the environment. Production systems that increase productivity while reducing pollution and resource degradation should be undertaken (Tarfa, 1999: 128). A good example is the use of organic manure instead of fertilizers. Farmers in the rural areas (who are mostly women) need education and training by agricultural extension officers on the best way to protect their environment to ensure that the natural resource base remains productive for the future generations. The aim would be to ensure that the present and future generations have equal access to the total capital of natural and human resources (Tarfa, 1999: 131). A study undertaken by the World Bank (1989:56) showed that limited sources of employment in rural areas may push women to overexploit the few natural resources at their disposal. This would be more harmful to women since they are the subsistence farmers. "They therefore face the challenge of maintaining sustainable livelihood for themselves, their families and their communities, as their resource base of fuel, water and food becomes increasingly depleted" (FAO, 2004:5). Therefore one of the major objectives that women's groups should consider is care for the environment. It is of paramount importance for the agricultural extension officers to offer soil conservation training to these women's groups. Failure to this would lead to severe environmental problems such as deforestation and soil erosion.

Rural women's participation in agricultural production and the multiple roles that they play in ensuring household and community survival in poor rural communities are well documented

(Bob, 2002: 16). In some rural areas, these common experiences of women have brought them together. They have formed groups which have despite their constraints are bearing fruits in terms of increased food production, increased visibility as women farmers and women's empowerment (Kamar, 1999: 3).

According to a study that was undertaken in the Ekuthuleni Land Redistribution Project, land is a major constraint for rural women in South Africa (Bob, 2002:24). Findings indicate that land resources are critical for rural women and households generally, despite the fact that ownership arrangements often restrict women's access and control of these vital resources. Other constraints mentioned were access to water, provision of services and facilities, financial limitations, environmental degradation and poor infrastructural development (Bob, 2002: 26). Women's realities in South Africa are still determined by race, class and gender-based access to resources and opportunities (Kehler, 2004:2). Thus poor black women's access to resources, opportunities and education, as well as their access to growth and wealth of the country is severely limited. Black rural women are the ones faced with an even greater lack of access to resources and prosperity and therefore live under immense poverty (Kehler, 2004:3). Thus, proper understanding by the government, NGOs and other development partners of the above mentioned constraints faced by women and women's groups would lead to implementation of appropriate development interventions.

## 1.6 Study limits:

The 13 groups in this study were chosen because they met the criteria of being rural women's groups with projects. They were also willing to participate in the study. Therefore, it is not known whether these groups differ from others that were not studied in rural Maphephethe. The study is therefore not generalisable. Initially the main focus of the study was the ten uplands groups. However when asked to identify any successful groups amongst themselves, for comparison, they pointed out the three groups from the lowlands. The study did not find out about the other eight groups from the same area (lowlands) due to time and financial constraints. PRA techniques were used with full understanding that there is willingness to trade accuracy for participation. This would lead to attainment of mutual benefits.

## 1.7 Clarification of the research terms:

It is important to clarify the research terms used in this study.

**Rural women:** The common feature that is used in this research is that they are permanent dwellers in rural areas and are not engaged in regular waged employment. The research has taken into account that rural women are not a homogenous group, "but differ according to features such as age, economic class and position in the life cycle"(May, 2000:27)

**Women's groups**: In this study, women's groups refer to groups of women with some few men in them who have come together to improve their condition by undertaking various activities. The researcher maintained the term women's groups as the groups were generally referred to as such by both the members themselves and the study area community as a whole.

**Gender constraints:** refers to the limitation and obstacles that are imposed on women as a result of the gender relations they experience. Gender relations refer to the social relationships between men and women (Andersen, 1997:35).

**Empowerment**: Refers to one's "actual and perceived ability to determine the course of one's life and community" (Evans, 1992:140). However in this study, empowerment refers to any comment(s) that were made during the interviews having to do with increased confidence or ability to speak for oneself.

**Project**: According Rubin (1995:13), project refers to development activities. In this study, project refers to any activity undertaken by the groups for the members' welfare

**Welfare**: In this study, the term welfare refers to a complex reflection of food security, self confidence, income, feeling of belonging, respect from the community and good will.

**Assets:** Refers to the five core asset categories identified by DFID (2002:24). Human (health, skills and knowledge, ability to labour), physical (community infrastructure like roads, bridges, community hall), social (relationships of trust, friends, clubs, churches,), natural (rivers, land, vegetation), financial (stockvels, remittances, social grants)

**Asset availability**: In this study, asset availability refers to assets/resources that were found in the environments within which the groups were located.

**Assets accessed**: In this study, assets accessed refers to those assets used by the groups. It was noted that access depended on the distance a certain asset was from the groups, income and gender relations.

**Group success**: Successful groups in this study were groups that had met all or at least five of the following criteria derived from Maliwichi (1998:80) and Tuckman (2004:3) model of effective group functioning.

1. Increased membership since group formation
2. Had a constitution
3. Followed their constitution
4. Adequate meeting attendance
5. Kept records and minutes
6. Had officials/committee in place
7. Had committed members (Groups rated themselves in commitment to their groups)
8. Networked with other groups in the area or with external organisations/groups
9. Perceived themselves positively
10. Outsiders' perceptions of the groups were positive

**1.8 Study assumptions**

It was assumed that the groups would be willing to participate in this study and that they would have the required amount of time to give the discussion undivided attention. It was also assumed that they would not be distracted by the writing activity, which could detract from the spontaneity of the discussion. The members who attended the group discussions were assumed to be representative of the whole group and that they gave a true picture of the groups' operations. It was also assumed that the translations from Zulu language to English language captured the true meaning of the women's groups' discussions.

**1.9 Organisation of the thesis**

Chapter one describes the problem under investigation, the hypothesis, sub-problems, conceptual framework, study limitations and assumptions. It is also in this chapter that clarification of terms used in this study has been done. Theoretical framework underpinning

this study has been discussed in chapter two while literature that has been reviewed in relation to the study is presented in chapter three. Description of the area of study and sample characteristics is presented in chapter four. Chapter five describes the research design and methodology and is followed by the research results and discussion in chapter six. Chapter seven presents conclusions, recommendations and implications for further research.

# CHAPTER TWO
## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Introduction

Development is a process which enables human beings to realise their potential, build self-confidence and lead lives of dignity and fulfilment. It is a process of self reliance, growth, achieved through the participation of people acting in their own interests and under their own control (De Beer & Swanepoel, 1998:23). Its first objective must be to end poverty, provide productive employment and satisfy the basic needs of all the people (Report of the South Commission, 1990: 13 as cited by Snyder, 1995: 9). However there is evidence that women have not always benefitted from changes introduced in the name of development and indeed that their position in comparison to men has sometimes deteriorated. It is in this context (of discussion) that this study has been based. Women have always had a raw deal in development by virtue of their gender. Theories on gender and development have been reviewed in order to get a brief history on how women's issues in development have unfolded. This study thus has used Women In Development (WID) and Gender And Development (GAD) approaches. The former is an approach to development that focuses on women and their specific situation as a separate group. The latter on the other hand addresses the specific roles, responsibilities of women and men in development efforts and it also recognises the fact that women and men have different needs and interests (Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) report, 1998:2). The two approaches have been chosen since they relate well to this study which has focused on women's groups. Women especially in developing countries have formed groups to address their own needs and concerns. The approaches state that women are not given the same attention in terms of resources as compared to men (Mosse, 1993:153 Sotshongaye & Moller, 2000:127). In short women's projects remain marginal to the mainstream of development efforts. Strategies for rural women's empowerment must seek to overcome these constraints.

Meena (2004:3), points out that policy makers and planners in Africa have failed to address the socially structured subordination of women despite the lip service paid to elimination of gender inequality. In brief, plans and policies have not been "gender responsive". This means that they have not recognised existing imbalances and have not taken into account gender roles which men and women play. Women are therefore constrained in participating

effectively in the development process because their subordinate position in society is ignored in development planning and policy making while their concrete needs are equally ignored (Mosse, 1993: 154). This is reflected in the manner in which resources are allocated and utilised (Meena, 2004: 2)

In working with women and women's groups, NGO's and governments would have to take an integrated approach that addresses women's practical and strategic needs and aim to empower women to be active participants in their own development through accumulating savings, acquiring management, leadership and practical skills, implementing employment and income generating programmes and engaging in environmental protection and regeneration activities (Kehler, 2004:5). Organisation building is the key to achieving this aim. Therefore the growth of women's groups, which is the foci of women's activities need to be fostered.

Reviewed literature has emphasised the importance of gender analysis in every development effort. Achieving the goals of development is not possible without considering the role of women. Studies have shown that societies with greater gender discrimination tend to experience more poverty than societies with greater gender equality (Sotshongaye & Moller, 2000: 118). Projects typically target "the poor", "poor communities", "vulnerable groups", and "poor households", not men and women separately. But poverty has different consequences for men and women reflecting differences in control over resources and income (Mosse, 1993: 154). Treating communities and households as single units can overestimate women's well being since community and household distribution often favours men. It is therefore important to disaggregate poverty effects by gender (Gender Action, 2002: 9).

## 2.2 What is gender?

Gender is a social-cultural construct that refers to the roles, responsibilities, characteristics, attitudes and beliefs about men and women (Morrel, 1998:24). According to Chafetz (1999:5) gender relations are social relations, referring to the ways in which social categories of men and women, male and female, relate over the whole range social organisation. Their roles are defined, supported and reinforced by societal structures and institutions. These roles are learned and change over time and vary within and between cultures (KARI report, 1998:4). Factors such as education, technology, economics and sudden crises like war and famine cause gender roles to change. In contrast to the socially moulded "gender", the biological sex of an individual cannot be modified. Gender thus is an organising principle of society that

affects men and women in all activities and relationships and consequently influences the outcomes of the development interventions. Development actions that governments, NGOs and other development agencies take need to be gender sensitive. This means bearing in mind the general position of males and females in a specific development context. This is the only way that they may be in a position to seek the common good of both genders. Considering the context under which the women's groups operate is thus crucial.

## 2.2.1 Importance of gender aspect in development

Visvanathan, Duggan, Nisonoff and Wiegersma (1997:76) point out that because notions of gender roles and activities have such a strong ideological content, policy often reflects normative or prescriptive versions of female and male roles rather than activities actually practised by women and men. It is thus essential to understand the precise nature of what women and men do and their real contribution to production and reproduction if development policy is to cease being biased against women. As development has proceeded in Third World countries, the impact on men and women has been different. There has been substantial evidence that women have consistently lost out in the process (Meena, 2004:5, Kabeer, 2000:87, Reddock, 2000:29 Visvanathan *et al*, 1997:79, Mosse, 1993:155). Two examples of gender blindness in development are discussed below.

## 2.2.2 The Green Revolution

Green Revolution refers to a movement that led to increase in food production stemming from the irrigation, use of fertilizers, use of pesticides and improved strains of wheat, rice, maize and other cereals in the 1960s.This increased the crop yields in India, Pakistan, Mexico and other underdeveloped countries. The effect of the Green Revolution in India led to the increases in women's workloads in spite of its increased or rises in aggregate household income. Reddock (2000: 30) further analyses this example and concludes that "consideration should be given to the increases in women's workloads and to the fact that women often fail to receive an equitable share of the extra income earned, even though their labour is often central to achieving higher levels of productivity.

## 2.2.3 The Gambia irrigated rice production

An attempt was made in the 1970s to introduce irrigated rice production in an area in Gambia where, traditionally, men had farmed groundnuts as a cash crop with the aid of family labour. Women on the other hand had cultivated rice for household consumption on unirrigated

wetland. The irrigation project was unsuccessful largely because the planners failed to understand the specific dynamics of gender relations within the local household–based farming system (Pearson, 1992:306). An initial assumption was that men were the rice growers with full control over the necessary resources. They were therefore offered incentive packages like cheap credit, inputs and assured markets. But it was women who grew rice for household consumption and exchange within a complex set of rights and obligations. All access to inputs had therefore to be mediated through their husbands, and women became notably reluctant to participate in their planned role as family labour. Literature reveals that husbands had to pay their wives for the work that the women did do on the irrigated rice fields (Tarfa, 1999: 63). The planners assumed that women's labour was "free". Secondly they assumed that women's labour had no existing productive use and therefore was available for intensive application to irrigated rice production.

## 2.2.4 Lessons learnt from the above examples

The lesson learnt from the Green Revolution (India) is that the new or the so called improved technologies must consider the intra-household divisions of labour, income and access to land in order to assess possible impacts. In the Gambian case, it is illustrated that women are not necessarily the passive victims of circumstances with no possibility of resisting. By refusing to make their labour available at no cost and to the convenience of the male farmers involved in irrigated rice production, the Gambian women demonstrated their determination to defend their existing gender position as separate producers, albeit with various obligations as well as rights within the household. Moreover, both examples demonstrate that since in households men and women have differential access to resources, it cannot be assumed that increasing household production and incomes will necessarily improve the living standards of all members. This is a mistake that development agents often make.

## 2.3 Women, gender and development

Midgley (1995: 122) argues that in view of institutionalised discrimination against women, it is not surprising that women have long been neglected in development. Development policies, plans and projects have conventionally been designed to serve the interests of men, and have seldom recognised the existence of women let alone their special needs and insights. The patriarchal structures, which exist in many cultures especially in Africa, Midgley (1995:124) notes, have been reinforced by development strategies. This omission not only neglects women, but also has contributed to a deterioration of their living standards. This may be one

of the reasons why some women have come together to form groups in order to address some of the common problems that they face based on their gender. A good example is one cited by Bock and Wilcke (2000: 29) where in Mali, rural women organised themselves into groups which took joint liability for the loans advanced to them by village savings and credit banks. The women combine into solidarity groups and repay the credit weekly via a simple procedure. As a result, this access to financial services has yielded significant improvements in income and food security. The disadvantaged position of women in many societies and communities today is a major manifestation of distorted development or as Shiva (1989:34) puts it "maldevelopment".

## 2.3.1 Approaches to gender issues in development (Welfare approach)

Mosse (1993:151) has reviewed various approaches, which emerged over the years to address the gender issues in development. The first approach, which she calls the Welfare approach, views women as passive recipients of special development programmes designed to address their needs as mothers and homemakers. The establishment of the ministry of Social Welfare in many developing countries is evidence of this. It is here where women's programmes are established to promote domestic activities and child welfare activities to address their needs. It can be seen here that women are perceived in terms of motherhood and child rearing roles. It is assumed that women are only passive recipients of development. Mosse (1993:153) argues that welfare programmes remain very popular as a way of reaching women, though they make very little contribution, if any to creating independence and self-reliance. It can therefore be argued that since this approach does not question the status quo in terms of values, economic status, particularly unequal access to and control over resources, they are preferred by governments and agencies who are anxious about upholding cultural and social values.

## 2.3.2 The Equity approach

This approach seeks to enhance the status of women and foster greater equality with men through access to employment, equal pay and greater opportunities. This policy approach to women and development that grew out of concern for equality has been characterised by Mosse (1993: 155) as recognising that "women are active participants in the development process". The author emphasises that through their productive and reproductive roles, women provide a critical, if unacknowledged, contribution to economic growth. Three important elements of this approach can be noticed here. First, there is recognition of the economic

value of women's paid and unpaid work. Secondly, there is the recognition of the way much development had affected women adversely and thirdly there is the argument that the pursuit of equality, in the market place and in the home will remedy these problems. It is here that the equity approach has come up for criticism, both as rather top-down approach and as a reflection of the First World feminist pre-occupation with equality. The approach has therefore not gained favour within developing countries since it is viewed as threatening and an inappropriate import of Western feminist ideas. This, coupled with patriarchal practices in developing countries could be used as a reason why women's and women's group contribution to development has not been acknowledged.

### 2.3.3 Anti-poverty approach

This third approach seeks to foster productive self-employment among low-income women. It took as its starting point poverty rather than subordination as the source of inequality between women and men, and set out to improve the incomes of poor women (Mosse, 1993:156; Reddock, 2000:35). The focus is on income generation for women through better access to productive resources such as land and credit. This could be said to be the basis for women's groups. They start these income generating activities with the hope of increasing their incomes. Income generating projects for poor women have proliferated and become one of the most common forms of development activity. However there have been criticisms of these projects due to the fact that they take little account of the fact that women are already overburdened with work. It would also be difficulty for women to save in cases where they do not have control over the family budget. On the other hand freedom of movement for many women is restricted, not to mention that the capacity of the informal sector to generate employment and growth is limited (Mosse, 1993:157). On the whole, women's income generating projects are seldom treated as seriously as those for men. They therefore remain marginal to the mainstream of development efforts. Strategies for rural women's empowerment must seek to overcome these constraints. However on a positive note, women's income generating projects may also offer a possibility of empowering them. A good example is one drawn from Oxfam project in Bangladesh, which despite experiencing the above discussed problems, managed to lead to other social changes such as change of inheritance laws (USAID, 1998:4). This demonstrates that income-generating projects can have important long-term effects, particularly when generated and managed by the women concerned.

## 2.3.4 The efficiency approach

The reasoning behind this approach according to research is that women make up the greater part of the poorest of the poor. Thus, helping them can make a major contribution to the relief of poverty. The approach seeks to enhance the involvement of women in development on the grounds that women are a useful productive resource for economic growth. It therefore encourages the participation of women in development because of the positive contribution they can make to development (Midgley, 1995:123). Moser's (1993:158) account of this approach explains that it has implications for women not only as producers, but also increasingly as community managers. Research indicates that women are more reliable than men in repaying loans (Bock & Wilcke, 2000: 30). Mosse (1993:159) supports this point further by stating that a development project whether a subsistence food growing project in Africa or a "food for work" scheme in India is more likely to be successful if women are fully involved. The reason is that according to Hartwig (2000: 33) women and women's groups are motivated and reliable. In the words of Moller and Sotshongaye (2000:118) assisting women pays "development dividends" Thus development agents may use already existing women's groups who have defined their own objectives. As research has shown, outside resources will be much more effectively used if a group is itself fully mobilised and invested and if it can define its own agendas for which additional resources must be obtained (Summerfield, 1997:89).

## 2.3.5 The empowerment approach

This is also known as Gender and Development approach to women in development. It has been articulated by women themselves. It looks at all aspects of women's lives and all the work that women do, namely; productive and reproductive, private and public and rejects any attempt to undervalue family and household maintenance work (Mosse, 1993: 161). Empowerment is associated with a bottom up rather than a top down approach to development. It sees the goals of development for women in terms of self-reliance and internal strength. It contends that the position of women can only improve when women become self-reliant and exercise full control over decisions that affect their lives (Reddock 2000: 31). To achieve this objective, women must mobilise through a bottom up strategy of campaigning and organising. Many local women's groups have adopted this approach. As Mosse (1993:162) suggests these groups have used various strategies to further their aims but of these, organising and social action have been the most popular. A good example that Moser gives is that of women's groups in Bombay, India where they have organised effectively to

improve housing conditions. The most successful women's groups have been those that have mobilised around specific needs, in health and employment for example and have gone on to work on longer-term issues. However these women's groups cannot do it without the help and advice from development agencies. The women's groups would need to form an umbrella organisation (which would act as a forum) to advance their needs and concerns as women.

## 2.3.6 Women Empowerment Framework (WEF)

The notion of women's empowerment can be understood by the use of WEF. This is a dynamic tool used to mainstream gender through out UNICEF's program planning process (UNICEF, 2003:5). The core of WEF is its argument that women's development can be viewed in terms of five levels of equality of which empowerment is an essential element at each level. These levels are summarised in table 2.1 in the following page.

Evidence gathered from the literature points to the fact that most development projects are stuck at the welfare and access levels. Women especially in developing countries of the Third World are yet to fully be conscientised and take full participation as equal partners in development of their communities. The women have however recognised that lack of resources (Access level) is a major barrier to their growth. It is in response to this handicap that they come together to form groups that have started income generating projects. It is through group participation in these income-generating projects (economic empowerment) that other forms of empowerment stem.

One of the major strategies or interventions that governments, NGOs and other development agencies should take is to start/adopt grassroots projects that recognise the role of women's groups. They should support projects concerned with advocacy, democratisation and political action. This is because the basis of the problem is unequal gender power relations, which is a characteristic of a male dominated society (KARI, 1998:8).

**Table 2.1: Women Empowerment Framework (UNICEF: 2003)**

| Level of equality | Explanation |
|---|---|
| Welfare | Addresses only the basic needs of women, without recognising or attempting to solve the underlying structural causes which necessitate provision of welfare services. At this point women are merely passive beneficiaries of welfare because they are perceived as poor, vulnerable and having special needs |
| Access | This level is seen as essential for women in order to make meaningful progress. This involves equality of access to resources, such as educational opportunities, land and credit. The path to empowerment is initiated when women recognise lack of access to resources as a barrier to their growth and overall well being and take action to redress this. |
| Conscientisation | Argues that for women to take appropriate action to close the gender gap or gender inequalities there must be recognition that their problems stem from inherent structural and institutional discrimination. They must also recognise the role they often play in reinforcing the system that restricts their growth. |
| Participation | Pertains to the point where women are making decisions alongside men equally. To reach this level, however, mobilisation is necessary. By organising themselves and then working collectively, women will be empowered to gain increased representation which will lead to increased empowerment and ultimately greater control. |
| Control | This is the ultimate level of equality and empowerment. Here the balance of power between men and women is equal and neither party has dominance over the other. At this stage in the empowerment framework, women are able to make decisions over their lives and the lives of their children and play an active role in the development process. Further the contributions of women are fully recognised and rewarded. |

Looking at the discussed approaches to development, one can conclude that the approach most development agencies adopt to address women's issues is the anti-poverty approach. They thus start income generating projects for women; start savings/investments and production women's groups, training women in technical and small-scale business skills to meet their basic needs. However, this is like top dressing a deeper underlying problem of unequal gender power relations. It is important to recognise that unless the root causes of women's subordination are addressed and their own stated needs prioritised, development

projects and programmes involving women will not lead to significant and lasting improvements in their lives. The position of women can only improve when women can become self-reliant and exercise full control over decisions that affect their lives. To achieve these women must mobilise through a bottom up strategy of organising themselves at grassroots level. Short-term strategies of groups seek to increase women's ownership of economic productive activities through self-employment and women's co-operatives and increase the productive capacity of women who derive their livelihood from agriculture (Visvanathan *et al*, 1999:134; Morrell, 1998:90; Shiva, 1988:26). However this has been questioned by Hartwig (2000: 33) who argues that women have an extra burden to bear due to their activities within the group, which is hardly proportional to the material profit obtained. Successful women's co-operatives reward individual members for greater productivity as evidenced by USAID's Farmer to Farmer program in West Africa (USAID, 1998:12). This program mobilized women to form groups which undertook groundnut growing in community gardens. Individual members with high yields were greatly remunerated for greater productivity. This had significant impacts on the women's household. This is also consistent with Muthui's (1998:197),study which concluded that much as women preferred working in groups, productivity and motivation was higher when individual efforts were disaggregated and rewarded proportionally rather than being lumped together and lost as a group effort.

## 2.4 A comparison between Women In Development (WID) and Gender And Development (GAD).

Women in development approach seeks to integrate women into the development process. On the other hand Gender and Development seeks to empower women and men in order to transform unequal power relations between women and men (KARI report, 1998:6).

### 2.4.1 The WID and GAD focus

By seeking to integrate women into the development process, WID is concerned with increasing women's income and productivity. They therefore increase women's ability to look after the household. WID assumed that women were a separate and homogenous category of the society. The approach does not address gender discrimination. Development agencies that subscribe to this approach start or fund women's groups income generating projects or train women in feminine trade skills for example sewing. In South Africa there are quite a number

of women's groups who have been trained in these kinds of skills (Rural Women's Movement, 2003:9).

Contrary to WID's focus, GAD challenges the targeting of women in isolation from the rest of the community. It therefore seeks to empower both women and men in order to transform unequal relations between women and men. It attempts to empower the disadvantaged thereby creating a more equitable society in the process of development. GAD uses gender relations rather than "women" as a category of analysis and views men as potential supporters of women (Mosse, 1993:161). A study done in Bangladesh indicates that community groups made up of men and women are more successful in terms of goal achievement than women only groups.

### 2.4.2 Needs and concerns addressed by WID and GAD

WID addresses immediate and material needs which Kabeer (2000:95) refers to as practical gender needs while GAD addresses strategic long term needs that are related to changing women's position in society. WID proponents identified lack of access to resources as being the key factor to women's subordination. It therefore gives primacy to women's productive labour and integration in to economy to improve their status. This was at the expense of the welfare concerns of women. The approach aimed at the better definition of the situation of women in society and at their full participation in and benefits from development processes on their terms (Kabeer, 2000:96).

GAD approach maintains that both men and women create and maintain society and shape the division of labour. However they benefit and suffer unequally (Visvanathan *et al*, 1997:51). Therefore greater focus should be placed on women because they have been more disadvantaged. Women and men are socialised differently and often function in different spheres of the community, although there is interdependence. As a result they have different priorities and perspectives. Because of gender roles, men can constrain or expand women's options. GAD acknowledges the functions and strengths of each member of society and community, enabling allocation of position and resources accordingly. The approach also contends that development affects men and women differently, and women and men will have a different impact on projects. Both must therefore be involved in identifying problems and solutions if the interests of the community as a whole are to be furthered. As has been

mentioned earlier, this could be the reason why a mixed group was doing better in the Bangladesh study than the all women's group.

### 2.4.3 Goals and types of projects for WID and GAD

WID aims at more efficient and effective development. The goal of GAD is equitable sustainable development with men and women sharing decision-making roles and power. Projects identified address short-term needs determined by men and women to improve their condition. Identified projects also address men's and women's longer term needs and interests (KARI, 1998:3).

On the other hand, the type of projects associated with WID are mostly donor financed women specific projects whose overall impact on the improvement of women's economic status and the integration of women's issues into the development process has been quite diffuse with limited impact (Visvanathan *et al*, 1997:52). The projects are undertaken outside the national planning process of countries. For most projects, financial sustainability and capacity to grow or expand are not adequately considered. These types of projects could be said to be based on Swanepoel's (1992/1997) needs based approach to community development, which according to Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:4) increases dependence and maintains poverty. On the contrary projects should be based on assets that the community or a group has. Asset based approach to development builds on strengths and other assets that the group or a community has. It is relationship driven. This is important because in the end development is about relationships between people and institutions. WID types of projects fail to look at the assets that the women have and those that they have access to. As a result projects die as soon as funding is cut off. Donor agencies supporting the women's groups should build on the confidence and the capacity of the group to address its own issues. In addition to this, the difference between donor priorities and those of women reduce the impact of WID projects. Development literature has emphasised that the target group (prime beneficiaries of the project) are the most important stakeholders of development projects. They should be fully involved in the project cycle (Rubin, 1995:18). Thus the interests of the women's groups should have the highest priority in practice as well as intent.

## 2.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed the theoretical underpinning of this study. Gender as an organising principle of society affects men and women in all activities and relationships and consequently influences outcomes of development interventions. It is therefore important to take into consideration the importance of gender aspect in development. Two examples of gender blindness were discussed in this chapter which indicated the outcomes of development interventions that fail to take men and women roles in society into consideration.

Two approaches to gender issues in development have been discussed in this chapter. Women In Development approach (WID), seeks to increase women's income and productivity. It thus addresses immediate and material needs of women. It aims at more efficient and effective development. On the other hand Gender and Development approach takes into consideration all aspects of women's lives and contends that women's position can only improve when women become self reliant and exercise full control over decisions that affect their lives. GAD seeks to empower both women and men in order to transform unequal power relations between women and men. The approach addresses strategic long term needs that are related to changing women's position in society. Empowerment of women according to GAD is said to be one of the strategies for reducing rural poverty and thus it may be one of the strategic objectives of any government that is serious in trying to alleviate rural poverty. Women's power is therefore crucial in poverty reduction campaigns.

The following chapter has reviewed literature in relation to women and the role that they play in rural development. The constraints faced by these women are also discussed. Organising themselves into groups as a way of coping with their needs, and the benefits derived from group participation have been explored.

# CHAPTER THREE
# REVIEW OF LITERATURE

## 3.1. Introduction

In this chapter the role that rural women play in rural development especially in household food production has been explored. Most authors have agreed that women especially in rural areas play a vital role in development. In their quest to earn a livelihood, women face various constraints ranging from lack of access to crucial resources such as land, credit, extension and training. Women also lack time because of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. With their primary roles as mothers, wives and care givers, women are left with little time to participate effectively in the development process.

Women have taken various initiatives in order to overcome some of these constraints. A number have organised themselves into groups with income generating activities; to improve their social and economic situation. Reviewed literature indicates that women derive various benefits from these groups. They become empowered in a variety of ways. Other than gaining economic benefits however small, they gain self-confidence and decision making abilities. Women who join these groups become part of a process in which they can make conscious and responsible choices - they become empowered. Empowerment of women is crucial to the development process in Africa (Carr, Chen, Jhabvala, 1996: 68). National problems of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, low productivity and unemployment are directly linked with the denial of rights and opportunities to women. Thus a key to poverty alleviation and empowerment of women is understanding the sources of women's lack of power (USAID report, 1998:4).

Other than economic activities that women's groups undertake, they also offer mutual assistance in emergency situations and most of all they offer a place where individual women may realise their potential. This study argues that these women groups' initiatives need to be supported by donors, government and non-governmental organisations. They should be seen as a target group for specific development cooperation. Women's groups may be an ideal way of translating into practice the concepts of many development experts concerning self-help groups.

There are various barriers to the effective organisation in women's groups. A low level of literacy has made it difficult for women to run their groups effectively. Lack of assets, lack of

growth, group disputes and ill health of group members are other barriers discussed in this chapter. Crucial factors to the success of women's groups are access to assets, proper management (minute taking, record keeping, adherence to their constitution), networking, commitment to group activities and community support. These factors have been discussed in this chapter.

## 3.2 Gender and rural development in South Africa

Bob (2002:16) argues that no programme that focuses on livelihoods and food security can ignore the contributions and needs of the rural women. Rural women's participation in agricultural production and the multiple roles that they play in ensuring household and community survival in poor rural communities are well documented. It is also widely accepted that in rural South Africa more than half of rural households are headed by women who, together with children, make up the poorest of the poor. Female-headed households are over represented among the poor, they tend to have fewer adults of working age, female unemployment rates are higher, tend to be more heavily reliant on remittance and state transfer income (pensions and grants) than male headed households (Gelb, 2003:36: Carter & May, 2000:568, May, 2000:24 Donian & Humphreys, 1998:8). Therefore understanding the relationship between women and poverty is paramount to the development, targeting and evaluation of poverty programmes.

Dercons and Krishnan (1999:2) indicate that poverty in South Africa is geographically concentrated, with the largest share of the poor (72%) residing in the rural areas. The 1993 Project for Statistics on Living Standards and Development (PSLSD) survey identified rural Africans living in KwaZulu-Natal as the most severely deprived grouping (Carter & May, 2000:7). The study showed that households in rural locations in the province have experienced a considerable increase in the incidence of poverty in the intervening 5 years. Poverty has been defined by May (2000:5) as "generally characterised by the inability of individuals, households or entire communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living". At the same time it was revealed that these households were headed by women, were larger, had dependency burdens, high illiteracy and low education attainment levels (Carter & May, 2000:24). Taking this information into account, the design of well targeted poverty alleviation strategies is of utmost importance. Women may be asked about their own understanding of development to make sure that development programmes meet the need of those targeted and those who need it most. As

Sotshongaye and Moller (2000:118) emphasise, there is a good chance that rural women would escape poverty if they were permitted to participate fully in the development process, including being party to decisions about what development interventions should occur and how needs will be satisfied. The already existing women's groups could be used to offer literacy classes hand in hand with income generating projects.

According to Poverty and Inequality Report (PIR) (2004:5), there is a very strong correlation between level of education and standard of living. In South Africa, the report indicates, the poverty rate of people with no education is 69%, compared with 54% for people with primary education, 24% for those with secondary education and 3% for those with tertiary education. Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) does not receive the proportion of funding reflected by the level of need and the expenditure per student has been lowest in the provinces with the highest incidence of poverty. This calls for reprioritising of expenditures given the emphasis that has been put on adult basic education and training. Heward and Bunwaree (1999: 28) discuss the importance of redefining the educational requirements of adult women. Educational programmes aimed at these women should go beyond literacy programmes and include knowledge of soil fertility, water use, animal husbandry, forest product use, food storage, nutrition, health and marketing.

The pervasiveness of patriarchal values rooted in traditional and cultural practices results in undervaluing of women's work and experiences as well as a neglect of women's needs. They have limited access and control of vital resources, especially natural resources such as land and water that are necessary for agricultural production and sustainability (Bob, 2002:16: Shafer, 1998:2120).

In relation to the above point, Bembridge (1986:78) in his classification of the characteristics of "progressive" small scale farmers claims that the best farmers are male heads of households and that women are less productive than men. No explanation of this phenomenon is given. Most significant of all is the fact that there is no holistic account of the extent to which rural development, associated with the system of apartheid and the homelands policy, has affected rural women in South Africa (Murphy, 1990:23). Various authors in their research have indicated that severe structural problems are experienced in rural areas. Some of these include overcrowding and landlessness, migrant labour, lack of access to resources (land and capital) and markets, social institutions and practices (the system of tribal authority,

the importance of cattle as wealth and the destruction of the pre-colonial African peasantry) and the lack of synchronisation in regional investment (Bob, 2002:22, Heward & Bunwaree, 1999:28, James, 1995:46, Murphy, 1990:34).

Presenting the profile of rural South Africa, The National Land Committee (NLC, 2000a) showed that a significant proportion of the total population (45.8%) resided in rural areas but the rural areas contained 72% of those members of the total population who were poor. The poverty rate (the proportion of people falling below the poverty line: R400) for rural areas was 71%. The poverty gap (the annual amount needed to uplift the poor to the poverty line: it measures the poverty depth) was about R28 billion in 1995 and 76% of this was accounted for by the rural areas. Poverty was not confined to any one race group, but was concentrated among blacks, particularly Africans: 61% of Africans and 38% of coloureds were poor, compared with 5% of Indians and 1% of whites. The persistence of poverty in the rural areas, DFID (2002:22) note, can be attributed in part to lack of complementary assets and services resulting in "poverty of opportunity" where individuals are unable to take full advantage of the few assets that they do have access to.

## 3.3 Gender constraints faced by women's groups in the rural areas.

Women generally face various constraints by virtue of their gender. These have an effect on their economic productivity. These gender constraints are divided into two namely; structural and gender specific constraints.

### 3.3.1 Structural constraints

These are constraints associated by the patriarchal nature of the society in which they are located (Kiondo, 199:19). These constraints are revealed in women's differential access to resources as compared to men (Kabeer, 2000:362). In the rural areas these resources pertain to land (used for agricultural production), capital (loan) and extension advice (information and training). According to Murphy (1995:20), access to resources appears to be different for men and women. In most developing countries both men and women farmers do not have access to adequate resources (FAO, 2004:3). However women's access is even more constrained as a result of cultural, traditional and sociological factors. Accurate information about men's and women's relative access to, and control over resources is crucial in development.

### 3.3.2 Access to land

Ownership of land encourages farmers to invest time and resources in long term improvements and facilitates access to agricultural support services. Inheritance and land tenure practices limits women's ownership and use of land. In South Africa, land in the rural areas is allocated by the tribal authorities to the male head of household (Shaffer, 1998:2124). Bembridge (1986:9) reports that in principle, a "married kraal head is entitled to a residential site, arable fields-one for each wife-grazing rights on common pasture…" Although Verhagen (1987:34) claims that there is no sex discrimination in the distribution of land, the only way women can gain access to land is through their relationship with men. Murphy (1990:25) argues that there is no tribal law stating that women cannot have access to land in their own right. This is a negotiable issue with the tribal authorities (all male), and depends on the extent to which the woman can persuade the tribal authorities to grant her land rights. Further research indicates that where women are allocated the land it is normally in marginal areas where the soils are infertile and infrastructure is very poor (Bob, 2002:22). Land is thus a major constraint facing women in their quest to improve their livelihoods because without proof of ownership, no money lending institution can provide credit to these women. This leads to the next constraint discussed below.

### 3.3.3 Women's access to credit.

Human Science Research Council (HSRC) report (2004:24) revealed that women especially in the rural areas have very limited incomes and they put these to family use. This means that very little money remains to be invested in income generating activities. According to Rijn (1986:78), commercial banks and other private moneylenders generally do not meet the needs of the poor who are generally women. This is because the policy of these conventional sources of credit is based on low risk lending, which usually limits the borrowers to financially privileged groups, who have the collateral security required for such loans. They are therefore less inclined to lend to poorer women because without property and land rights, they lack collateral. At the same time women in the rural areas work at odd jobs to earn a living. These types of jobs do not offer pay slips, since they are offered seasonally or temporarily. Thus even if rural women may claim to work, they have no pay slips as evidence of their income and so they fail yet another formal banking requirement (Carter & May, 2000:570). Access to financial services according to Bock and Wilke (2000:29) can yield significant improvements in income and food security.

This implies that rural development projects must be geared to improving the financial position of female small farmers and in areas where land is the limiting factor; an important component of rural development should be the provision of land and land rights. Formation of groups by these rural women is a local initiative that has made it a bit easier to access loans from credit institutions (Bock & Wilcke, 2000:30). They use their group savings as a form of collateral. However local initiatives for establishing non-conventional sources of credit to alleviate poverty in the rural areas need to be established. This could be in form of peoples' banks or community banks established at the village level. A good example is the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which was established to finance the rural poor (Rijn, 1986:22). Financing should be integrated into a coherent framework of development, dealing both with village groups and with individuals, and linked to training, technical assistance, inputs, supply and marketing (Donian & Humphries, 1998:8). It is therefore of importance for any development organisation to consider the importance in setting up rural credit projects, of reaching the right clientele, while also taking into account women's status regarding land rights.

### 3.3.4 Access to extension and training.

Most women in rural areas derive their livelihood through farming (FAO, 2004:5). Extension programmes inform farmers about new technologies and procedures. Few extension services are targeted at rural women, few of the world's extension agents are women and most of the extension services focus on commercial rather than subsistence crops- the primary concern for women (FAO, 2004:6). A study of 46 countries in Africa has shown that although three quarters of Africa's agricultural workers are female, only 5% of the trained agricultural advisors are women (Murphy, 1990:26; James, 1995:28; Geran, 1996:45). The extension services are also biased in favour of the progressive or commercial male farmers. On this same note Akeroyd (1991:90) suggests that it is essential for women officers to provide extension services, since in many areas in Africa, cultural constraints on male-female interaction may prevent women from benefiting from existing provision. It is also important to note that women and men have different agricultural practices. Thus it is necessary to recognise the differences between women and men's roles in agricultural production where men undertake cash crop growing and rearing of big livestock while women rear small livestock (like chickens) and grow vegetables (James, 1995:34; KARI report, 1998:65).

Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) report (1998:23) affirms that among the causes of low technology adoption is lack of integrating gender in technology development and dissemination. Udoh (1995: 11) gives an overview of African women's plight in the development in Africa and contends that when and if women are listened to, society benefits immensely. He captures the essence of how learning from and listening to women can improve productivity in all sectors of development. Thus there is need to formulate extension policies that are paramount in overcoming the constraints that limit women's contributions.

Thus Agricultural research institutes need to take their clients' needs into account in the technology development process. One of their policies would be to involve their clients more, putting emphasis on women because they contribute 80% of the labour to food production and 50% to cash crop production (Anon, undated). This requires taking into account gender issues in all phases of technology development and dissemination. It makes sense to incorporate women's needs since they are the ones who perform the work. Programmes must be tailored to the unique needs of women. One solution might be shorter condensed training classes and comprehensive workshops offered in groups (women's groups) with childcare provided. If women could gather in a convenient manner to improve skills, it would have a ripple effect on the entire community. However it is vitally important that the training interfere as little as possible with the women's family responsibilities and instead enhance her overall value to the family (Udoh, 1995: 18).

In most agricultural development projects the household is the target unit. Anon (undated) however indicates that the household is not a uniform decision making unit with undifferentiated labour, resources and incentives. In reality, the household is a complex interaction of women, men and children who may share, complement, differ or conflict each other in their need for or interest in a certain improved technology. Women and men have differences in their crop preferences. Research that was done in Kathian in Machakos district Kenya (KARI report, 1998:54) indicated that men preferred growing bananas while women chose pawpaws. Men chose bananas because they sold them and fetched more money immediately. Women preferred pawpaws because they were a regular source of income throughout the year. Thus in order to improve the adoption of new technologies and make research and extension more efficient, effective and equitable, gender issues need to be addressed. The roles and responsibilities of men and women should be differentiated in, for example, land use, access to and control over resources and benefits, decision-making and

needs and interests. A technology development approach that considers gender can lead to different research and extension priorities and approaches (Leonard & Seed, 1995:125).

Timing of meetings, field days and demonstrations and identifying the right participants based on gender roles is important in extension (Kiondo, 1999:25). Women who are main producers in food as mentioned earlier in this chapter, have less mobility, greater time constraints than men. This can limit women's participation in meetings. Thus extension activities should take place in seasons and times when women are less busy (Gender Action, undated:4). Besides it would be far more efficient to offer these services to groups. Women's groups in rural areas should thus be utilised in this way. It can therefore be said that when gender roles and responsibilities are considered in research and extension, appropriate technologies will be developed that increase the chance of adoption. Barriers to men's and women's participation can be identified and possible solutions found.

### 3.3.5 Gender specific constraints that women face

These are constraints faced by women by virtue of their gender roles (Morrel, 1998:76). These constraints make it difficult for women to undertake their current roles and responsibilities more easily or efficiently (KARI, 1998:3). The domestic environment especially for many African women is very stressful. Women invest a lot of their productive energies in processing and cooking food. The time wasted in looking for firewood and water, as well as processing food to make it ready for cooking, could be saved if water and firewood were within reach and cooking stoves were improved. Kammen, 1993; Karekezi,& Ranja, 1997 as quoted by Green, (2002:62) argue that women with better cooking facilities were more likely to become involved in development projects and were more proactive in enhancing their living conditions. Evidence from the literature indicates that the grinding stone which is still in use in many parts of Africa for processing millet, the main traditional staple food, consumes a lot of women's labour time. However, where the grinding mill is introduced, it is not making a significant impact because some women have to spend long hours walking and even longer hours waiting for their turn.

### 3.3.6 Child care

The care of children remains essentially a woman's role. Yet, according to Meena (2004: 5) in the traditional African setting, the care of the young ones was a collective responsibility. However this has been altered due to various socio-economic changes that have taken place in

the continent. Lack of community support in caring and rearing of children has made it difficult for women to contribute effectively to promoting sustainable growth. Women have to perform their daily tasks with babies on their backs. This affects their labour output (Reddock, 2000:40). There is therefore need to provide support services for these women in their quest for the reproduction of the human species. Measures need to be put in place recognising and giving value to reproductive tasks such as child bearing, rearing and caring, caring for the sick and the domestic chores needed for the maintenance and reproduction of human capital. Besides as Kabeer (2000:34) argued, these innumerable reproductive activities carried out by women within the household sector are of critical importance for society's survival, growth and development. The same author lays emphasis on the importance of establishing a database on what women currently are doing in household production as an essential step in planning development projects and designing policies.

Most writers have agreed that women especially in the rural areas play a vital role in development. Yet despite these studies substantiating the importance of women and the apparent recognition of this by planners and researchers, similar problems for women continue to be "discovered", similar assumptions are made especially for women farmers, similar demands are articulated by women, and similar recommendations are made. The reiteration of women's importance has become almost ritualistic.

## 3.4 Benefits of group organising

In light of the above constraints that women in general face by virtue of their gender, some women have realised that coming together in groups would go along way in easing some of them. As Buvinic (1995:3) reaffirms "an organised group has numerous advantages as it allows women to mobilise human, financial and material resources; rationalise their productive activity; reduce risks and costs associated with credit; develop their self confidence and become more autonomous, determining by themselves their needs and priorities; and initiate change to improve their social and economic situations". Groups also represent members' interests before government. These benefits are discussed below.

### 3.4.1 Social capital

Social capital refers in part to the networks that people belong to. The thinking is that the poor are able to use these networks both to avoid falling behind and to get ahead. DFID (2002:19) defines social capital as the social resources upon which people draw in the pursuit of their

livelihood objectives. Social capital involves the networks and connectedness that increase people's trust and ability to work together and expand their access to wider institutions, such as political or civic bodies. Social capital can be developed through membership of groups, which often entails adherence to mutually agreed or commonly accepted rules, norms and sanctions. Relationships of trust, reciprocity and exchanges that facilitate cooperation reduce transaction costs and may provide the basis for informal safety nets amongst the poor. Social capital may be particularly important as a "resource of the last resort" for the poor and vulnerable. According to DFID (2002:22), social capital provides a buffer that helps the poor cope with shocks (such as death in the family). It acts as informal safety net to ensure survival during periods of intense insecurity and compensate for a lack of other types of capital (for example shared labour groups compensating for limited human capital within the household). In addition to the above, social capital can make a particularly important contribution to people's sense of well being through identity, honour and belonging.

One measure of the networks according to an IFPRI report on South Africa (2004:6) at the household level is the extent to which household members participate in various types of associations such as financial and social groups within the community. Women's groups have both of these aspects. According Rural Women's Movement (2003:5), most women especially in the rural areas work together in solidarity groups in order to meet their personal, family and community needs. They help each other in times of need, they save together in small merry-go-round (rotating) clubs. The trust and management skills that they build up over the years in these grassroots groups make them key players in efforts to overcome poverty. Such groups may or may not be formally recognised by governments, but they are critical to human survival (IFPRI, 2004:7).

A study carried out in 2000 by IFPRI, the school of development studies at the University of Natal, South Africa and the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the United States, showed that a doubling of KwaZulu-Natal's household membership in groups increases income by almost 10%. This is about one third of the gain that doubling education would have produced in 1998. The study concluded that social capital may prove to be an important asset in escaping poverty in contemporary South Africa (IFPRI, 2004:8). Attempts should therefore be made to strengthen social capital through for example improving the internal functioning of groups (capacity building in leadership and management), injection of resources and extend external links of local groups.

### 3.4.2 Empowerment

Various authors have defined the notion of empowerment in various ways (Ndinda, 2004:18). In regard to development theory the notion of empowerment has often been used with regard to women and gender issues. Terms such as participation, consultation and partnership are used to denote the importance of adopting an approach that respects people's abilities to identify and express their own needs and priorities. Albertyn (2000:2) views empowerment as a long term process whose goals are to strengthen women in leadership and decision making, increase women's access to and control over economic resources, eliminate laws that discriminate against women, increase access to education for women and girls, increase women's access to information and children and improve women's self esteem and sense of personal power. In addition to this definition, Rappaport (1987) (as cited by McWhirter, 1991:223) defines empowerment as a "means of addressing the problems of powerless populations and for mediating the role powerlessness plays in creating and perpetuating social problems…a psychological transformation which requires the development of a new self concept". The same author lays emphasis on empowerment as a process by which people, organisations or groups who are powerless become aware of the power dynamics at work in their life contexts. They then develop the skills and the capacity for gaining some reasonable control over their lives. Much literature has been written on women's empowerment. James (1995:156) states that one of the effects of women's group formation is empowerment. The group serves as a source of pride for the women. The experiences that women gain by working in their groups help them with other types of work. Such confidence in their own leadership, organisation and decision making capabilities gained through participation represents empowerment and a stronger desire for action. These are the building blocks for community development (Swanepoel, 1997:34).

### 3.4.3 Income generating activities

Income generation for women coupled with good infrastructure may be viewed as a starting point for women's empowerment. Carr *et al* (1996:178) argue that by making a contribution to the family income, women begin to gain power to make decisions within the family. With the ability to earn income, women gain the means for survival and self-reliance. The experience of earning income through group activities may encourage women to think of new ways to earn money. Although many of the women may be engaged in activities that they have always performed in some way (such as gardening and raising chickens), there is a likelihood that they may get concerned with ensuring that the output of eggs, milk, vegetables

and fruits are enough for sale and not just for consumption. Research that was carried out amongst women's groups in Bangladesh indicated that women's increased income has resulted in more and better food, better clothing and the ability to send their children to school. They also reported that their assets have increased since they joined the group (Verhagen, 1987:54). This would not have been possible if the money was not in their hands.

In her discussion on the expenditure patterns of households in South Africa, Posel (1997:55) found that households headed by women spend more income on the nutritional needs of children than male headed households. Further discussion revealed that if consumption patterns in male-headed households were to mirror those in female-headed households, the incidence of malnutrition in South Africa would fall by at least 12%. Studies done in other developing countries indicate that women's income is more tied up with collective needs of the family (James, 1995:122). Such evidence is telling. An income in the hands of a woman has a bigger multiplier effect in terms of greater benefits to child health and family welfare and education than the same income in the hands of a man. A woman's income can thus be said to go further towards household survival and human capital investment than men's. This means raising their incomes and supporting their self initiated projects amounts to accelerating poverty alleviation and the quality of life of their families more rapidly than doing the same for men. A World Bank Report (1998), entitled "Enhancing women's participation in economic development" starts with the premise that economic development is best served when scarce public resources are invested where they yield the highest social and economic returns. It shows, on the basis of worldwide studies that it has carried out that such returns on the whole are greater for women than for men (Barry, 2000:199). This serves to reiterate the argument that women's groups can play a vital part in the success of any type of development project.

### 3.4.4 Increased income

According to research done by Akeroyd (1991:69) on women's groups in Bangladesh and India increases in income have been accompanied by increases in savings. While women have always acknowledged the need to save money, few have the resources to put into savings. Savings act as "safety nets" for women during times of slow business and illness (USAID, 1998:3). Many women work in occupations that are seasonal and savings assist these families through times of low income. Hartwig (2000:33) disagrees with this argument and citing her personal experiences with women's groups in Cameroon, she states that the genuinely

measurable "economic" success of women's groups aimed at satisfying immediate needs appears questionable. The additional income which the women can achieve, individually, she says, from income generating group activities is small. However, the women themselves place great importance on even the smallest profits (Qaim, 2000:45). The essential point is that they acquire access to finance through the group and can use them with independent responsibility and self-determination no matter whether these funds are saved or received as credit. This strengthens their position in relation to their husbands.

Catherine (1998:54) in a Malawi case study reveals that women have been able to pool their savings as a means of acquiring credit for productive purposes. They have pooled their labour to undertake tasks such as starting nurseries, which would have been difficult to do on an individual basis. Emphasising the importance of women's groups in technology transfer, Qaim (2000:44), in his research, indicates that the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) conducts on-farm trials with women's groups. The same author states that these women are likely to spread the technology better than men. On the same note the women's groups have acted as collateral for individual women's loans who would otherwise have been denied access to credit because of their lack of ownership of land, property and other assets (Kiondo, 1999:22). The women's group makes this happen in two ways; through offering the group as a mutual guarantee and through using the group savings at its disposal to offer collateral.

### 3.4.5 Training

According to Carr *et al* (1996:59), for some women learning in groups can be empowering in itself and easier to initiate through a traditional skill. Such learning can be liberating because it provides women with opportunities to work with their peers and get out of their houses. On the other hand, women in these groups are taught how to read and write which is also empowering as evidenced by research done in Bangladesh. According to the words of Carr *et al* (1996:61) "it is in these group meetings that women learn about health, sanitation and acquire relevant literacy skills". These are all important components of development which when offered in groups save time and money. Interviewed, the women stated that their single most significant achievement in the group activities had been learning to write their own names instead of having to use their thumbprints as a signature. Hartwig (2000:28) gives examples of women's groups from Northwestern province of Cameroon that had received training workshops. After learning in groups, women who had never attended public events

were soon speaking at microphones. This is summarised in the words of these women: *"today it is easier for us to stand at a meeting and to express our opinion, even if men are present. Formerly we were afraid to say anything, but through these training workshops, our advisors have demonstrated how to do it in our own meetings. Today we speak freely and without inhibitions. Consequently at other meetings we are able to do the same things that we have practised doing in our own group meetings"* (Hartwig, 2000: 33). Women everywhere point to a specific moment in their lives when they became empowered. They agree that it was often when they were able to speak in public (Carr *et al*, 1996:60: USAID, 1998:5).

Taking the above discussion further one can deduce that women need more than income to improve the quality of life of their families and communities. Training for group participation and solidarity (for good leadership and management) can have a transforming effect when it is combined with access to productivity enhancing resources. Research done by Carr *et al* (1996:60) and Kiondo, (1999:24) has shown that assistance to women's groups was most effective when started with income and then became multifaceted. However creating income must have a very high priority when assistance to poor women begins. Technical skills must be supplemented with opportunities to increase group solidarity and personal confidence. The objective of practical skills development training courses would be to help women in the group make better and more efficient use of the resources that they already have; to identify and tap unused or under-utilised local resources and to improve women's technical ability to implement income generating activities.

### 3.4.6 Access to services
Research that was carried out in Western Zambia by Geran (2003:40) on the effect of group membership on rural women's access to services indicate that access of group members to services increased in their areas. Visits from the extension services had increased since the women formed their groups. This service according to the researcher was rare before group formation. This is further affirmed by Qaim (2000:45) who in his study of women's groups in Kenyan agriculture found out that extension services to the women increased after they organised themselves into groups. Other studies that have been done in Malawi, Cameroon and Tunisia attests to the importance of women's groups in providing the economies of scale in accessing resources, markets and technology (Catherine, 1998:52:, Hartwig, 2000:32, Hahn, 2003:50). Thus with group formation women are able to access or overcome some of the constraints that they face in development.

### 3.4.7 Other linkages

Maas (1991:3) in his evaluation of women's experiences in their group projects in Coast Province, of Kenya indicated that participation of group members on the management committees boosts their management skills and thus their confidence. Implementing a group project, from which other members of the village profit raises their standing within the village community. At the same time, this reinforces their self-confidence and their self-esteem (Hahn, 2003:51, Hartwig, 2000:33, Qaim, 2000:45)

In addition to the above, women's groups give rural women, who have otherwise hardly any potential to organise themselves, an opportunity to enjoy a space of their own. They can use the forum offered by the group to articulate their problems and needs. Being in a group enables them to practise how to put forward their interests and their own viewpoint at a different level. By exchanging views on specific problems they begin to ask about and to discuss the structural causes for women being disadvantaged (USAID, 2003:9).

### 3.5 Barriers to effective organisation of women's groups

Literature on the experiences of women's groups all over the world has shown that there are certain barriers to effective and functioning of women's groups. Much as the benefits of organising are very worthwhile for women, and organising is clearly necessary for women's economic and social empowerment, the process is not an easy one and many difficulties are encountered along the way. These according to Carr *et al* (1996: 194) relate to the weak position from which women are starting and to the opposition encountered from those who are likely to lose power and control through women's organising activities.

### 3.5.1 Fear.

One of the most powerful barriers to organising is that of fear. Women have been brought up to fear their men, their employers and their communities. They live in constant fear of losing their livelihoods, of starvation, of losing their children to illness and of being thrown out of their houses. Women attending group meetings often have to account for their movements to their male heads of households (Kamar, 1999:8). Traditional attitudes towards women, which result in a lack of mobility, a lack of value of women's worth and a position of deference to male opinions, compound this problem (USAID, 2003:5).

### 3.5.2 Lack of knowledge and skills

A low level of literacy among women has often made it difficult for them to take on full responsibility for the management of their own groups. Longernecker *et al* (1997:36) pointed out that women's projects fail due to inadequate literacy, business management, marketing and production skills. To improve the internal functioning of groups, leadership and management training need to be given to the members of these groups on a regular basis. Thus any development agencies geared to helping women's groups as argued elsewhere in this chapter, would have to introduce literacy training or adopt other strategies (for example encouraging younger better educated women to join groups) to overcome this obstacle.

### 3.5.3 Lack of assets

As discussed earlier in this paper one of the major constraints that women face is lack of resources or access to productive resources like land and credit. As DFID (2002:5) illustrates, there is a strong inter-relationship amongst all the five types of assets; namely natural, financial, social, physical and human. Women's groups can be classified under the social category. Women especially in developing countries are hindered by the prevailing cultural practices and the types of structures and processes that transform assets into livelihood outcomes. Assets combine in a multitude of different ways to generate positive livelihood outcomes. Poverty analyses have shown that people's ability to escape from poverty is critically dependent upon their access to assets. As discussed previously in this paper, women lack access and control of vital resources like land and credit. The women also lack training on how to manage their groups and improve on their production and marketing skills. These are important assets which hinder women from effective organising.

### 3.5.4 Lack of time

Women have multiple burdens and so group activities may serve as a constraint on their time (Catherine, 1998:53). The time constraint for many women caused by their multiple burdens can mean that they are unable to react directly to politically controlled market incentives. Sector reformers must be aware of the bottlenecks and they must find solutions to them. The shortages of time can for instance be countered by improved water supply and health services, by technologies that ease the workload and by better transport facilities (Bock & Wilcke, 2000:29).

### 3.5.5 Group disputes

Disputes amongst group members are a major constraint that may hinder growth of many income generating projects. As demonstrated by Stringfellow *et al* (1997:39) projects operated by groups are usually faced by group disputes. This is further backed by Osunde and Omuroyi (1999) who argue that these disputes are more common amongst rural women's groups due to higher levels of illiteracy. On the other hand group leaders who are perceived by their group members as less transparent in their operations create a lot of mistrust which constraints group functioning. This is further confirmed by Jyosvold *et al* (2004:230) who identified group dispute problems among in generating projects in India.

### 3.5.6 Lack of growth

According to Dawson and Jeans (1997:78), women's income generating projects experience lack of growth as one of their constraints. The projects studied by these authors revealed that they were stagnant or more frequently declining. This they attributed to crowding of income generating projects in the same location. Lack of growth may lead to the group members feeling that their expectations are not being fulfilled (for example profit making, community recognition) and this may result to them dropping out of the project (Longernecker *et al*, 1997:148).

### 3.5.7 Ill health

Ill health as indicated by Mutava and Mutanyata (1998:2) is a barrier to effective organising of rural women's groups. This is because the members are usually the old, ill and disadvantaged members of the community. The physical demands of women's work and poor health services in the rural areas compound this situation. UNAIDS (2003:1) has also pointed out that in addition to the multiple burdens carried out by women, they (especially the elderly) are also finding themselves having to take up greater responsibilities for care (women's traditional role) of family members infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. The report adds that when women become the family's care giver, they may ignore their own health needs. Moreover, women may reduce their active participation in productive activities because their duties as care givers interfere with work outside the home.

## 3.6 Successful groups

According to Mutuku (2001:145), women's groups are more likely to be successful if the members are literate. He argues that illiteracy places serious constraints especially on the income generating project's success. Catherine (1998:52) adds that successful women's groups are well run and the members have a higher sense of belonging to their groups. On the same note Tuckman and Jensen (2004:3) states that ineffective groups are characterised by poor meeting attendance, members dropping out, mistrust, group disputes, do not have officials in place and do not keep records. Successful groups experience growth, the members are more committed and they network with other groups and institutions as found by Maliwichi (1998:80).

## 3.7 Summary

Chapter three has provided background information to build on what other researchers have discovered concerning the current research topic. The argument presented in this chapter is that a major component of any development programme must be the improvement of the social and economic position of women. In addition to their many domestic duties, women generally act as unpaid family workers in household food and livestock production. They thus play a major role both in agricultural and non-agricultural production. From the literature women form the majority of the rural population and are the most disadvantaged. They should mobilise themselves to form advocacy groups and also to participate in a variety of income generating activities. However prevailing prescriptions for economic growth have missed out on the vast potential for creating wealth that these poor women represent.

Group participation as discussed in this chapter empowers women. The women become self-confident and gain capacity to question and learn. They also enhance their capacity to take action. In terms of the larger community, they gain in increased resources, raised awareness and expectations; organisational growth, learning and accountability. Research that has been discussed indicates a link between women's increased confidence and their active participation in the life of the community.

Groups act as collateral for poor women and thus enable them to acquire loans and start small income generating projects. In addition to this the group provides the economies of scale in accessing resources, markets and technology. As has been evidenced by other research done on women's groups in other African countries (Malawi, Kenya, Cameroon, Tunisia and South

Africa), collective organisation of women helps their members to attain greater achievements. The groups have the potential for the empowerment of rural women.

Women in general face various constraints in their everyday quest to earn a livelihood. There are many studies discussed in this chapter relating to problems and constraints that women face but not much has been written on how to assist them. Despite the recognised facts and considerable grounds for development rhetoric about gender, women are still restricted in their roles as farmers by unequal rights and unequal access to resources. These constraints are both structural and gender specific. Unless these constraints are addressed, any development efforts would be counter productive. Thus development efforts need to begin by taking full stock of women's perceived claims, goals, motivations, constraints and the resources they identify in their context.

So in order for women's groups to become successful, they have to have access to resources such as land, finance, extension services and training. Training would equip the women with the necessary skills and knowledge required for proper group functioning and production of quality products from their group projects. This is because as discussed in this chapter, low levels of literacy have made it difficult for them to take on full responsibility for the management of their own groups. Other resources that ease women's daily activities (such as electricity) would free them to undertake productive activities. Easing these constraints would provide an enabling environment for the success of women's groups.

The following chapter has described the area of study and the study respondents.

# CHAPTER FOUR
# DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA AND SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

## 4.1 Description of Maphephethe area

This study was carried out in rural Maphephethe. The community of Maphephethe is situated approximately 60km west of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal province of the Republic of South Africa. It falls within the Ndwedwe magisterial district and it is under the leadership of Chief Frank Gwala. This area is characterised by hills and as a result Maphephethe is said to be located in the "Valley of a Thousand Hills". To the south of this community is the Inanda dam and the Umgeni river, to the West is the Mqeku river. The northeast boundary is formed by the diagonal line of the plateaux Engonweni, eGoqweni and Pisweni. The eastern boundary concides with the Matata plateau. Eight wards make up the region. These are; Emagangeni, Bhekuk'phiwa, Ngaikwini, Vutha, Mbozama, Amatata, Mqeku and Nkangala. The altitude of the study area rises from less than 200 meters on the edge of Inanda dam to over 600m on the plateaux (Johnson *et al* as cited by Green and Erskine, 1998:2). See figure 3.1 for the aerial map of Maphephethe

A Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map obtained from the Department of Local Government and Housing, Pietermaritzburg indicated that there were an estimated 2 000 households in Maphephete each with an average of 10 people (Green, Wilson and Cawood, 2001:22). This brings the estimated population of Maphephete to 20 000 people. According to a survey carried out in the uplands by Ndokweni and Green (2003:14), as much as 64.1% of the households surveyed were headed by men, while 35.9% were headed by females. The same study indicated that the average education level of the head of households was grade 3 while 48.1% of heads of households had never been to school. This reflects low levels of education and a dire need for adult basic education and training for the area residents.
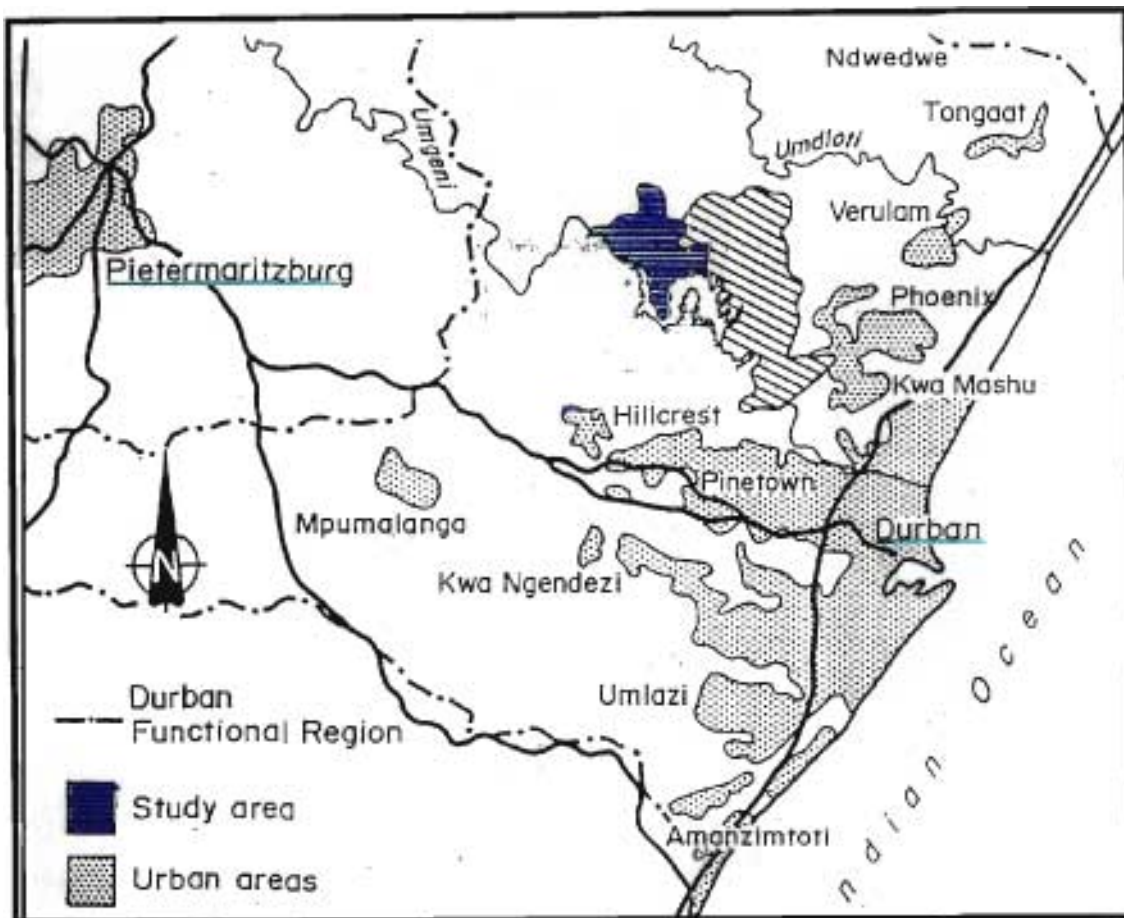
Figure 4.1: Map showing Maphephethe area (marked in blue) (Department of Local Government and Housing, 2000)

Within Maphephethe two distinctive areas are identified. These areas are commonly referred to as the uplands and the lowlands. These two areas are joined by one main access route and one fairly inaccessible route. Taxis, private cars, buses and delivery trucks all use these roads providing transport and other services to the local inhabitants. There is a good bridge used to cross Inanda dam to gain access to Maphephethe. There is also a fairly good road connecting Maphephethe via Inanda to Durban. The uplands and the lowlands areas have different geographic and socio-economic characteristics. The uplands has a rougher terrain in comparison to the lowlands. In the lowlands the inland access roads are better kept and there is also the presence of solar energy and electricity. However as one drives along the road in the uplands, this is virtually absent.

According to Green and Erskine (1998:8), Maphephete has a summer rainfall. High intensity thunderstorms occur mainly between October and March and a low incidence of hailstorms.

Temperature and humidity levels are fairly high throughout the year. The area is close to the coast and thus it is affected by sea breezes which blow in a north-easterly direction. Johnson, Mander and Murphy (1991 as cited by Green & Erskine, 1998:9)) note that because of the topography of the area, there are considerable differences in microclimates.

According to an uplands survey data collected by Ndokweni & Green (2003:10), close to 50% of households in Maphephethe rely on social grants for survival and very few people are employed. Sixty five per cent of the people surveyed reported receiving no salaried income. Only 34.4% of households surveyed had members who earned a salary. Income generating activities in this area are few. There are a number of shops selling a wide range of lower order consumer goods. People also keep goats, cattle, pigs and chicken which they sell in times of financial need. Crops and fruit trees are grown mostly for consumption purposes. The ones mostly grown in order of popularity according to the survey stated above are; maize (85.5%) followed by beans (40.5%), cabbage (21.4%), groundnuts, amadumbe, pumpkin, peaches, guava and spinach.

Green and Wilson (2000:18) found significant differences between the uplands and the lowlands of Maphephethe. The people of the uplands grew more types of crops, thus showing a greater agricultural diversity than the lowlands. The researchers found that the median number of types of crops for the uplands was four compared to one for the lowlands. They noted that this may be because the uplands (at the time of their study) had less access to shops and other facilities than the lowlands, and such subsistence farming was more common. However this does not explain why the lowlands currently has more community gardens (11) than the uplands (10).

The people of Maphephethe also earn some income from selling products such as dried crops, sewing, craftwork and carpentry. They have formed communal groups where they do gardening. Approximately 50% of the households surveyed in the uplands by Ndokweni and Green (2003:25) have at least one member involved in community gardens. According to the survey there were on average eight people (households) who work in each garden, indicating that community gardens support many households. The average time it takes for households to reach the community gardens of which they are members is 26.05 minutes. These community garden groups also act as a source of social capital for the members.

Households in Maphephethe mostly use wood as their main source of fuel, followed by paraffin, gas and charcoal respectively. Candles are used by 85% of households for lighting followed by paraffin (Ndokweni & Green, 2003: 11). Other sources of energy in this area are dung, coal, car battery, dry battery and to a limited extent photovoltaic panels. However there was a significant difference between the uplands and the lowlands in terms of the use of wood for cooking. According to Green & Wilson (2000:13), the uplands used significantly more wood for cooking than the lowlands. There was a greater diversification of energy sources used in the lowlands than in the uplands. This was attributed to the closer proximity of the shops in the lowlands. It was noted that at the time of the research (2000), nobody was connected to the grid electricity in the uplands and observation indicates that this situation remains the same.

Households in Maphephethe gather water from the nearby streams/dams or/and communal taps. There are three communal taps and three water tanks in the uplands. The average distance it takes a household to fetch water from a stream or a dam is 42.33 minutes whereas collecting water from communal taps takes an average of 5.95 minutes (Ndokweni & Green, 2003: 6). This is an indication that water access to households would save a lot of time especially for women who mostly undertake this task. In stark contrast to the uplands, most households in the lowlands have individual water taps. According to Green and Wilson (2000:5), the lowlands also had 17 communal taps at the time they undertook their study.

The social infrastructure of Maphephethe is characterised by a courthouse which serves as a community hall for meetings, court and a permanent clinic. All these are located in the lowlands. It is also in the lowlands where a Training Centre is located. This is where community members come for any form of training offered by government departments or NGO volunteers. There are two mobile clinics which serve the uplands twice a month. These are normally stationed near Mceku primary school at the community clinic building. Those in need of medical services outside of the days that these mobile clinics operate have to go to the full time clinic in the lowlands. There are three matric level high schools in the lowlands, one junior high school in the uplands, a number of primary schools and a few crèches. There are a total of 14 primary schools, ten of which are in the lowlands and four in the uplands. There are also at least 3 solar pay phones which are all located in the lowlands. The upland community relies on the use of cell-phones. However at the time Ndokweni and Green (2003:18) carried out their uplands research, 81.7% of the respondents did not own cell

phones and only 18.3% owned at least one. The cell-phone service providers are limited in that its only MTN that is operational in the area. However most areas in this location are non-receptive to the service provider (they are out of range). There are at least three churches of different denominations in each of the two areas. There are four shops and several spaza shops in the uplands where community members carry out their economic activities. This is in great contrast to the lowlands which according to observation has 10 shops, eight general dealers and several spaza shops. This may have an influence on lowland groups' activities.

## 4.2 Characteristics of the uplands group members

There were a total of 10 women's groups in uplands Maphephethe. These groups had been in existence for more than ten years. The average number of members in the groups was 16. The largest group had 28 members and the lowest had four members. Out of the ten groups, five had only women members, while the other five had some males. However this was only discovered by the researcher at the time of the interviews, but the women in these groups pointed out that the men in their groups joined about five years ago and were generally inactive. During the time of the research, no man attended the group interviews. The groups reiterated that they as well as their community normally referred to them as women's groups in spite of male presence in the groups. Table 4.1 below shows the uplands groups, their gender and the number of group members.

**Table 4.1: Women's groups of uplands Maphephethe at the time of the study (2005) (n=10).**

| Name of the group | Gender composition | Number of group members |
|---|---|---|
| Inkanyezi | Mixed gendered | 28 |
| Lindokuhle | Women-only | 22 |
| Siyajabula | Mixed-gendered | 21 |
| Siyazama | Mixed gendered | 20 |
| Siphamandla | Women-only | 16 |
| Thathani | Women-only | 15 |
| Sizathina | Mixed gendered | 14 |
| Siphesihle | Women-only | 12 |
| Nkululekweni | Women-only | 11 |
| Bhekokuhle | Mixed-gendered | 4 |
| Total | Women-Only=5 Mixed gendered=5 | 163 |

According to data collected by Chingondole (2004), the average age of the women in the groups was 51 years. The youngest member in these groups was 24 years while the oldest was 83. Majority of the women in these groups were grandmothers who had taken over the responsibility of bringing up their grand children. This had come as a result of the death of the children's parent/s. The grandmothers also acted as child minders for their daughters/sons who had migrated to bigger towns in search of jobs to secure their livelihoods.

The uplands groups were characterised by low education levels. Forty four percent of the members had no formal education while 25% had less than grade seven education. The average education levels for the upland groups was grade three. According to Chingondole (2004), 72% of the group members were married. However despite the high number of married members, more than 60% of them headed their households. This is an indicator that even though a household may have the physical presence of a man, the women had taken over the role of a household head. They provided for their families, a role traditionally perceived as that of a man of the household.

The means of livelihood for the group members was limited. Other than gardening both in their groups and in their own individual gardens, some groups also undertook beadwork/crafting, brick making and sewing to generate income. Some were also members of stokvels (rotating credit groups). However a sizable percentage (29%) relied on old age pensions for survival. Remittances were limited. Only 7.6% of the sample reported receiving some form of remittance at the time of the study, 2.5% had waged employment while the others had no formal employment (Chingondole, 2004). This could be attributed to the low education levels that characterised the group members.

### 4.3 Characteristics of the lowlands group members

There were a total of eleven groups in the lowlands. However only three were studied for the sole purpose of comparison between successful and less successful groups of Maphephethe. The three lowlands groups were identified by all the uplands groups as the only successful groups of Maphephethe. The uplands groups did not perceive any groups from their location as successful and thus the researcher had to result to study the three identified by the uplands in order to find out what it was about these groups that was different from the uplands groups. According to the uplands members, the three lowlands groups were considered as successful on the basis of good management, and vegetable production which had yielded income and

food security to the members. They were also perceived to be well organised. The lowlands groups also perceived themselves as successful due to their good and sound management as well as the benefits that they had received from the group participation. Table 4.2 shows the names of these groups, their gender and the number of members.

**Table 4.2 Women's groups of the lowlands Maphephethe at the time of the study (2005) (n=3)**

| Name of the group | Gender composition | Number of group members |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Phaphamani | Mixed-gendered | 36 |
| Sibonokuhle | Mixed-gendered | 29 |
| Fundukuzenzela | Mixed-gendered | 17 |
| Total | Mixed gendered=3 | 82 |

The average number of members in these groups was 27, which was more than the uplands whose average membership was 16. The groups in this area had also been in existence for more than ten years. A sizable majority (30%) of group members belonged to other groups in the area and were also members of stokvels. The groups had male members who were quite active in the activities and running of these groups. Despite their presence, the groups still identified themselves as women's groups, a term maintained in this study. Phaphamani group had two males, Fundukuzenela three and Sibonokuhle three.

The average age of the members was 55 years. The youngest member was 21 years while the oldest was 65. Most people in the sample (67.5%) were married, 22.5% were widowed while 10% were single. Like their counterparts in the uplands, these group members were characterised by low education levels. The average education level of the lowland groups was grade six. In total, it can be deduced that Maphephethe area is in dire need of adult basic education. Majority of the group members were unemployed (92.5), while 7.5% derived their livelihoods through running small businesses like spaza shops. A higher number of group members relied on remittances (47.5%), 35% were on pensions while 7.5% received child grants. In comparison with the uplands groups, it is evident that a higher percentage (47.5%) of lowlands group members received remittances than the uplands (7.6%). This also applies to the old age pensions whereby a higher percentage was found in the lowlands (35%) than in the uplands (29%). This could be attributed to a number of factors ranging from the presence

of older people in the lowlands to easy access to information for the lowlands members due to a better infrastructure.

Table 4.3 gives a gives a summary of important comparisons between the lowlands (identified successful groups) and the uplands (less successful groups) locations. As the table indicates the major differences in average education levels, the percentage of people who received remittances and old age pensions and availability of crucial assets may have affected the way the groups operated. This is further discussed in chapter six.

**Table 4.3 Summary of important comparisons between the less successful and successful groups of Maphephethe (2005)**

| Average | Less successful | Successful |
|---|---|---|
| Size of membership | 16 | 27 |
| Average age | 51 | 55 |
| Average education (grade) levels | Grade 3 | Grade 6 |
| Percentage of married members | 72% | 67.5% |
| Percentage of members who received remittances | 7.6% | 47.5% |
| Percentage of members on old-age pensions | 29% | 35% |
| Assets: Number of Shops | 4 | 10 |
| Permanent clinic | 0 | 1 |
| Water taps | 3 | 17 |
| Electricity and solar | None | Yes |
| Courthouse | None | 1 |
| Training centre | None | 1 |
| Public phones | None | 3 |
| Schools: Creches | None | Several |
| Primary | 4 | 10 |
| Matric level | None | 3 |

## 4.4 Summary

The description of the study area and the sample characteristics forms part of a wider investigation into the functioning, management, assets availability and access, constraints and benefits of successful and less successful women's groups. From the description it is evident that the two distinct locations (uplands and the lowlands) that form the study area had different sets of resources that may have impacted the way the groups were organised and the constraints that they faced. The next chapter describes the research design and methodology used to collect data for this study.

# CHAPTER FIVE
# METHODOLOGY

## 5.1 Research design

This study aimed at investigating the influences on the success of Maphephethe rural women's groups. The study aimed to explore whether successful groups were different in terms of functioning, assets accessed, constraints faced, benefits acquired from member participation and whether community's perception was different from that of the less successful groups. A comparison was therefore needed between successful and less successful groups of the area. It was necessary to identify contributing factors to the success of women's groups since as outlined in the reviewed literature; women's groups play a major role in the provision of livelihoods for many women in developing countries. Finding out why some groups were doing better than others would yield results that would be shared with the less successful groups.

Thirteen groups were studied; the study initially aimed to study 10 groups (all in the uplands), but these 10 groups (from the uplands) did not identify any successful groups amongst themselves. Instead, they identified three successful groups from the lowlands. In order to identify differences between groups identified as successful and less successful, the study needed a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. De Vos (1998:15) identifies qualitative research methodologies as dealing with data that are principally verbal, and quantitative research methodologies as dealing with data that are principally numerical. Bickman and Rog (1998:17) are of the opinion that multiple tools of data collection are needed, cutting across qualitative and quantitative boundaries to research a topic thoroughly and provide results that can be used. Qualitative and quantitative research strategies were therefore followed in this study. These were observation, PRA (data both qualitative and quantitative), focus group discussions, de Wet Schutte P-Index (which yielded both quantitative and qualitative data), semi-structured interviews and in-depth interviews with key informants who were the leaders of the groups.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1994: 174) the purpose of a qualitative study is to "accumulate sufficient knowledge to lead to understanding of a phenomenon". This is further backed by Silverman (2000:24) who states that the aim of qualitative research is to describe in detail what is happening in a group, in a community or in a conversation. It focuses on naturally occurring ordinary events in a natural setting. The data is therefore collected in close

proximity to specific situation. The emphasis is on a specific case, a focused and bounded phenomenon embedded in its context.

Malterud (2001:483) states that qualitative research is used in the exploration of meanings of social phenomena as experienced by individuals themselves, in their natural context. Maykut & Morehouse (1994: 21) point out that the goal of qualitative research is to discover patterns that emerge after close observation, careful documentation and thoughtful analysis of the research topic. Therefore what was discovered by this qualitative research were not sweeping generalizations but contextual findings. An understanding of experience from the perspectives of the Maphephethe women participants selected for the study.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:281), "a case study is an intensive investigation of a single unit". A strong advantage of a case study method is its ability to deal with contextual conditions. Besides the reality of many social phenomena is that phenomenon and context are indeed not precisely distinguishable (Bickman & Rog, 1998: 237). Thus in order to understand the case studies, their contexts was described in detail in chapter four. This helped to conceptualize the contexts in which these women's groups were embedded. As Maykut and Morehouse (1994:45) indicate "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding people's experience in context". The natural setting is the place where the researcher is most likely to discover, or uncover, what is to be known about the phenomena of interest. This is because personal meaning is tied to context. Thus the contexts in which the women's groups studied are embedded has been thoroughly described. The groups were studied in their own natural setting; in Maphephethe, which is a rural area of KwaZulu-Natal.

The process of measurement is central to quantitative research because it provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships. Numerical data were utilized to obtain information about the members of the groups. Individual measurements on self ratings (commitment, benefits) were taken which were then converted into group averages. Quantitative techniques produce data that are structured in form of numbers or that can be immediately be transported into numbers (Hunt, 1986: 25). Duelli (2001:144) states that qualitative data can sometimes be handled in such a way as to produce quantitative data. In gaining, analyzing and interpreting quantitative data, the researcher remained detached and objective. Analysis of results was therefore more objective. This is consistent with Duelli's (2001:141) argument that objectivity and numbers

are features often associated with quantitative research. On the other hand, the use of quantitative methodologies provided more comparative data. Statistical analysis was done to identify differences between groups. This is supported by Miles and Huberman (1994:40) who point out that quantitative research is about quantifying relationships between variables. Relationship between variables is expressed using effect statistics such as relative frequencies or differences between means.

## 5.2 Sample selection

Maphephethe community was chosen with the use of convenience purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a strategy in which particular settings, persons or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be obtained as well from other sources (Strauss &Corbin, 1990: 87; Kvale, 1996: 198; Sarantakos, 1998:72). The area was chosen due to its rural set up, its proximity to the University of KwaZulu-Natal and most of all the reliance on the existing good rapport between the Department of Community Resources and Maphephethe residents. The purpose was not to generalize to a larger population but to gain a deeper understanding of the women's groups' operations; to determine the influences on the success of Maphephethe rural women's groups. The study aimed to explore whether successful groups were different in terms of the way they functioned, assets accessed, constraints faced, benefits acquired from member participation and whether community's perception was different from that of less successful groups.

A total of thirteen women's groups were studied. Initially the study was to focus on only the ten uplands groups. However when these groups were asked to identify any successful groups amongst themselves, they indicated that they did not perceive any as successful. Their perception of success was based on high vegetable production, realisation of income and good management. Based on these perceptions, they only pointed out three groups as successful from the lowlands. Thus the three groups from the lowlands were studied due to the fact that they had been identified by the uplands groups as the only successful groups of Maphephethe. To further ascertain whether these groups were successful, the researcher, used indicators of successful groups outlined by Maliwichi (1998:80) and Tuckman and Jensen (2004:3). In order for groups to be successful they had to meet all or at least five of these indicators derived from these authors.

These are outlined below.

1) Increased membership since group formation

2) Had a constitution

3) Followed their constitution

4) Adequate meeting attendance (groups rated themselves)

5) Kept records and minutes

6) Had officials/committee in place

7) Had committed members (groups rated themselves in commitment)

8) Networked with other groups

9) Perceived themselves positively

10) Outsiders'/community perceptions of the groups were positive

Forty community members (they did not belong to the studied groups) from both uplands and lowlands (twenty from each location) were conveniently sampled to fill in the semi-structured questionnaire to find out their perceptions of the women's groups. This is because community support is one of the indicators of group success as outlined in the reviewed literature (Maliwichi, 1998:80: Tuckman & Jensen, 2004:3). A convenient sample or available sample refers to a sample which has been collected in the easiest way, making use of volunteers and participants who were available at that point in time (Maisel & Persell, 1996:6; Coolican, 1999:39). This sample of participants was mostly drawn from community water taps, homes located along the road, from the spaza shops and people walking along the road, at that particular moment. The researcher could not use a random sample because selecting people randomly in rural communities is quite difficult as population is seldom known.

The two locations (as discussed in chapter four) where the groups in the study were located were distinct. This was marked by both geographical and infrastructural differences as described in chapter four. The average number of members in the 13 groups chosen was 19. Mixed gendered groups were eight while women-only groups were five. The discovery of men in the groups was a surprise for the researcher but the women clarified that the men joined their groups about five years ago. On the other hand they as well as their community identified them as women's groups. The average number of men in these groups was one, further justifying the continuous use of the term women's groups. The unit of study was the individual group. Through quantitative analysis, the 13 different groups (ten in the uplands and three identified as successful from the lowlands) indicated differences within (amongst

groups in one location) and between groups in the two locations. This was also reinforced by the identification of infrastructural and other influences under which the groups operated. This followed Strauss and Corbin's (1990:88) argument that qualitative information is needed in research because the influences of the local context are not stripped away but are taken into account.

The researcher set out to build a sample that included people or settings selected with a different goal in mind. That was gaining deep understanding of women's experiences in groups, their motivation to participate, the benefits that they gained through group participation, the assets that they accessed and the specific constraints that they faced in their contexts. The total number of participants in the study was 165 (105 from the uplands and 60 from the lowlands). This translated to about 67% of the total population (245 members) of group members.

## 5.3 Data collection methods

A combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques was applied in this study. These were: observation, focus group discussions, Participatory Rural Appraisal (data both qualitative and quantitative), de Wet Schutte P-Index (which yielded both quantitative and qualitative data), semi-structured interviews and in-depth interviews with key informants who were the leaders of the groups. In depth interviews were conducted to verify the focus group discussion data with the members.

### 5.3.1 Observation

When observation is used, data are collected by recognising and noting people's behaviour, objects and occurrences (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:97). The researcher observed and noted how the group members interacted during the interviews, the terrain of the area and types of physical, social, financial and natural assets. Observation had the major advantage of the researcher not having to rely on the willingness and ability of respondents to report data accurately.

### 5.3.2 Focus groups

Focus group is a general term given to a research interview conducted with a group (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:127). The purpose of holding group discussions was to bring several different perspectives into context, to understand the women's experiences and their

perceptions about their groups through a process that was open and emergent. On the other hand using the dynamics of group interaction to gain information and insights was better than that gained through individual interviews. In essence, the group discussion was an opportunity to observe the women discuss the topic under study. The women had an opportunity to listen to each other's contributions, which may have sparked new insights or helped them develop their ideas more clearly. They may have come to new understanding through their interactions with others in the group. Participants qualified their responses and identified important contingencies associated with their answers. Through the focus group discussion a very rich body of data expressed in the respondents' own words and context was collected. Figure 4.1 below is an example of one of the focus groups discussions held for the study.



**Figure 5.1: Focus group discussion in one of the gardens in the lowlands**

Group discussions comprised of 8-10 people. Bigger groups were divided into two. There were a total of 16 focus groups conducted by the researcher. Uplands groups formed 12 focus groups while lowlands groups made four. It was noted that all the male members in the lowlands groups (identified as the successful groups of Maphephethe) participated in the group discussions. None of the male members of the uplands groups attended the group discussions. Participants of the groups were recruited on a willing basis. An initial contact with the chairpersons of the individual groups was made to invite participation. During this initial contact the importance of participation was emphasized. In addition to this, time and place of the group session was given. The focus groups were carried out in venues where the women's groups usually met. This was in their communal gardens. This was a familiar

surrounding for the participants and as Sarantakos (1998: 57) states "focus groups held in familiar areas are more likely to be perceived as attractive"

The content of discussion followed a list of open ended questionnaires based on the sub-problems of the study. This consisted of two parts. Section A was used to collect demographic information of each respondent relating to aspects such as age, education level, marital status and source of income. Section B was used for obtaining qualitative data. These open ended questions served as the discussion guide (See appendix A for discussion guide). These were pre-tested on Kusasa LaMaphephetha women's group (had one man in the group, but also identified itself as a women's group) which hailed from the lowlands of Maphephethe and were not included in the study. Pre-testing provided an opportunity to determine whether the wording of the questions was appropriate, determined whether the questions elicited discussion and identified questions that were not understood easily. In addition to this, pre-testing of the open ended questionnaires allowed the researcher to find out whether the translation from English to Zulu was accurate. This gave a prediction in advance as to the way the respondents would interpret and respond to the questions. Adjustments to the questions then followed appropriately.

### 5.3.3 Participatory Rural Appraisal

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques were carried out within the focus groups. Using PRA the researcher worked with each group to identify resources, benefits, and constraints facing the groups. Therefore women took the leadership role and their active participation, guaranteed insightful first hand information. Through PRA, the women in the focus groups set out their own priorities, defined and articulated their own problems. As Chambers (1994: 438), puts it "PRA raises awareness in people of their own abilities and resources, which can be used to mobilize for social action". Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999: 237) call this empowerment. Empowerment at the individual level may help the women to start seeing themselves as being able to make a difference and being worthy of voicing opinions.

The PRA techniques that were applied were mapping and voting using beans. Through mapping, assets got listed. The participants also indicated whether they accessed these assets or not. Access to assets depended on how far away these assets were located. The researcher put this information in table form (see table 6.4) to show how many groups (successful and

less successful) accessed a certain asset. This made it easier for the researcher to compare successful and less successful groups in terms of the number of assets accessed by each group.

The members rated themselves in terms of self perception, commitment to their groups, and on the various benefits they obtained from participating in their groups. Such measure (in a specific setting for particular sample of individuals) is possible according to Zimmerman (1995:596), but must be connected to the experience of the research participants as they express their perceptions and contextually ground them in their life experiences. Zimmerman (1995:597) is also of the opinion that although this approach may limit generalisability to other persons or contexts; it is valuable for group specific assessment. Each member of the group picked a certain number of beans (out of 10) from a container indicating to what extent they felt committed to the groups. The same procedure was followed and the members were requested to indicate the extent to which they had benefitted from their groups in terms of food security, income, respect in the community, sense of belonging, self confidence and reliance on one another. These were benefits that the members themselves had suggested. The average for each group was then calculated. Group averages that were less than four were rated as low, those that were between 5-6 were rated as average while those that were 7-10 were rated as high. This was followed by discussion based on the results. Thus this PRA technique yielded both qualitative and quantitative data.

### 5.3.4 The Priority Index (P-Index)

One of the techniques used within the focus groups was the Priority Index (P-Index). This was used to prioritize the needs of the groups. The success of this technique is attributable to its simplicity, its ability to reveal the actual needs of a community or group and the reliability of the information it elicits regardless of whether respondents are literate or illiterate (De Wet, 1993:2). The respondents' opinions were all measured with equal validity by using a measuring instrument known as a Schutte Scale which also allowed for rank ordering without having to weigh items against each other. This scale permitted members to indicate by moving the indicator against the pressure of an elastic band between the pointer frame how important or unimportant he/she thought the item in question was for the people of the group. Through this technique, the groups' needs were prioritized and ranked in order of importance. This enabled the researcher to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data. According to De Wet (1993:5), experience has shown that the P-Index is capable of reflecting, in a transparent

and accountable fashion, the reality within a community or a group. The P-Index conflates respondents' perception of the importance of a need with their current level of satisfaction vis-à-vis that need. As a result of this technique, a need which respondents regarded as very important while at the same time being quite satisfied with the current state of affairs, occupied a lower position on the P-Index than one sharing the same level of importance while being regarded as highly unsatisfactory. The groups were asked what services or facilities they felt they needed for them to function better, and why they felt that way. The groups thus generated their own items and their own reasons why they regarded them as important or unimportant (See appendix I).
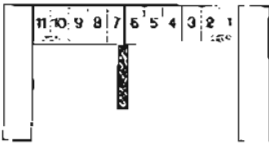


Side facing the interviewer                    Side facing the respondent
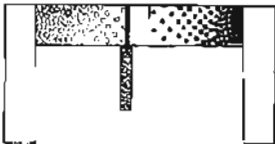
**Figure 5.2: Example of the Schutte Scale**

The importance of each item listed was assessed by means of the Schutte Scale (see fig 5.2). However, before the administration of the scale, a practice was run by the assisting researchers. Taking each item (for example lack of capital) at a time that the groups mentioned, each member was asked to indicate on the Schutte scale how important or unimportant he/she thought the item in question was for the people of the group. On the flip chart where the items had been listed, under the heading "importance" the figure represented at the back of the Schutte Scale by each member's response was written down. This process was repeated until the measurement of "importance" was obtained and entered on the appropriate sheet for each of the items generated by the group. The same procedure was followed to obtain a measure of "satisfaction" of each item and figures recorded. However, respondents were asked to indicate the level of satisfaction with the "situation as it is at the moment". The greater the level of satisfaction with the current state of affairs, the deeper into the green spots (to the right on the Schutte Scale) the indicator was moved. The less satisfied the respondents were, the deeper into the white spots (to the left on the Schutte Scale) the indicator went.

### 5.3.5 Semi-structured interviews

In order to determine the outsiders' perceptions of women's groups (from non-group members within the community), a semi-structured questionnaire was designed (please see appendix C). Determining outsiders' perceptions is important since community support is one of the indicators of successful groups as outlined by Maliwichi (1998:81). Semi-structured interviews were administered to the individual respondents by the research assistants. According to Struwig and Stead (2001:6), instruments of data collection are administered to individuals when the individual's (not the group's) responses are required. Hayes (2001:121) is of the opinion that semi-structured interviews offer the opportunity to the participants to answer and also for the researcher to have freedom in a way in which he/she asks the question. Data was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

### 5.4 Validity and reliability

In order to enhance validity and reliability of this study the following measures were taken.

### 5.4.1 Extensive note taking

To enhance validity and reliability, there was extensive note taking by three core researchers. There was also a helper who interpreted the Zulu language and the researcher was the observer. The observer wrote down aspects that the note takers would not capture such as facial expressions, body posture, mood and any other observations that contributed greater perspective. Babbie and Mouton (2001:275) emphasize, "Extensive note taking is an important aspect of enhancing the validity and reliability of qualitative research". In addition to this, some time was set aside immediately after the focus group to go through the notes. The notes were presented to the focus groups at the end of the session so that they were certain that their opinions were correctly noted. By doing this the content and the process of the session was reconstructed in a more reliable way. A tape recording of each focus group discussion was made to capture all comments of the members. This was considered an important reference method with which to verify the notes taken. These procedures follow Krueger's (1994:6) guidelines for the presentation of focus groups. However some of the tapes were not very clear due to background noise present during the taping.

## 5.4.2 Audit trail

The use of audit trail was used to enhance validity and reliability. This means that any theoretical ideas, notes, raw data and interpretations were discussed with the researcher and the research assistants. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985 as cited by Maykut & Morehouse 1995:84) an audit trail contributes to the trustworthiness of the research outcomes. The use of multiple data collection methods mentioned earlier also enhanced validity. Malterud (2001:487) emphasizes that the aim is to increase the understanding of a complex phenomenon, not criteria based validation, in which agreement among different sources confirms validity. Methodological triangulation according to Miles and Huberman (1994: 93) looks for convergent evidence from different sources. Convergence of a major theme or a pattern in the data from interviews, observations and PRA lend strong credibility to the findings. Triangulation reduced the risk of systematic distortions that are inherent in the use of only one method because "no single method is completely free from all possible validity threats (Bickman & Rog 1998:246). Thus triangulation lends additional confidence to the study results.

## 5.4.3 Member checks

Member checks were run to enhance the credibility of this research study. Lincoln and Guba (1985:147) use this term to refer to the process of asking research participants "to tell you whether you have accurately described their experience, whether you as a researcher have produced a recognizable reality in their view". The women's groups in this study were revisited in order to correct any misinterpretations that may have occurred. This also served as an opportunity to provide any additional voluntary information. In addition to this, the length of time (an average of seven hours) that the researcher and the research assistants spent with the interviewees allowed for prolonged engagement with them. This time frame allowed them to establish rapport with the interviewees and to foster a climate of trust.

## 5.5 Data analysis

The process of qualitative data analysis takes many forms, but it is a procedure that involves examining the meaning of peoples' words and actions (Bickman & Rog, 1998:89). Data analysis was conducted by means of content analysis. Content analysis refers to the contextual investigation of the verbal data through means of inference of data by identifying categories and themes that best represent the data (Shauhnessy & Zechmesiter, 1997:173; Silverman, 2000:59). In order to do content analysis the tape recordings of the focus groups were

transcribed. According to Hayes (2000:203) using such transcripts is a method with which to record the conversations for analysis purposes. The notes that had been taken by the assistant researchers were also consulted. Thus qualitative research findings were inductively derived from the data that was collected. Themes and patterns were identified from this data and then coded. Where the words were similar or carried the same meaning, the researcher exercised judgment and put them together into one category. The goal of coding was to "fracture" the data and rearrange it into categories that facilitated comparison between aspects in the same category and between categories. Comparison was made of the successful and less successful groups. Malterud (2001:487) recommends that quantification of phenomena or categories can be done to gain an overview of qualitative material. This is also supported by Bickman and Rog (1998:94) who argue that many of the conclusions of qualitative studies have an implicit quantitative component. As a result any claim that a particular phenomenon is typical or prevalent in the setting or population studied is an inherently quantitative claim, and requires some quantitative support. Thus some of the qualitative responses were quantified in this study. Themes and concepts are discussed in the results chapter of this study.

Quantitative data (that was derived from semi-structured interviews, self ratings in commitment and benefits) was analyzed using SPSS 11.5 (computer software). Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:42) indicate that quantitative researchers collect data in form of numbers and use statistical types of data analysis. Pearson Chi-Square test of independence was done to compare whether there was association between two variables such as average education level and minute taking in group meetings. The alpha level was set at .05. By convention if $p < .05$ the difference is said to be "statistically significant". This means that if there was no true difference, the probability of seeing a difference at least as big as the one the researcher saw by chance alone is less than 5%. Roughly speaking, $p < .05$, meant that the probability was less than 5% that the observed difference was due to chance alone. When using a small sample, the Chi-square test tends to be less sensitive in detecting any difference. Instead this study used a more sensitive test such as the likelihood ratio as recommended by Agresti and Finlay (1999:582).

The P-Index was obtained by subtracting the mean of each items' satisfaction measurements from the mean of its importance measurement. Comparison was done of the priority level of each item with all the others. The greater the P-Index, the higher the priority of the item. The items were then ranked in order of priority for every group. If the need was raised by all the

groups, all the reasons suggested were included in the list of reasons, and the sum of all individual measurements for an item was divided by the number of respondents.

## 5.6 Summary

Chapter five outlined the research design and the methodology used to collect data from the women's groups. Data collection techniques used and the way the data was analysed have also been outlined. Justification of the research techniques used as well as ways in which validity and reliability was enhanced has been explained. The next chapter will discuss the results of the data that was collected.

# CHAPTER SIX
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the influences on the success of Maphephethe rural women's groups. The study aimed to explore whether successful groups were different in terms of functioning, assets accessed, constraints faced, benefits acquired from member participation and whether community's perception was different from that of the less successful groups. Success of the groups was measured using indicators of successful groups derived from Maliwichi (1998:80) and Tuckman and Jensen (2004:3). These were; increased members, had and followed a constitution, adequate meeting attendance, kept records and minutes, had officials in place, networked, their level of commitment was high (self rated), the perception of themselves and that of outsiders was positive.

Thus, the following four sub-problems form the main areas investigated by this study. These sub-problems are;

1) What is the structure, assets available and accessed, functioning and management of successful women's groups?

2) What types of constraints are faced by women's groups in relation to assets accessed, group functioning and group success?

3) How do women benefit from group participation?

4) What are the outsiders' perceptions of women's groups in relation to assets accessed, group functioning, benefits realised and group success?

5) What characterises successful and less successful groups of Maphephethe?

This chapter discusses the results obtained through the utilisation of a number of data collection techniques namely; observation, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews with the key informants of the groups, semi-structured interviews with the outsider community, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and de Wet Schutte P-Index. There were a total of 13 groups studied. These groups fell in one area but as discussed in chapter 3, this area had two distinct locations marked by social-infrastructural differences. All ten groups in the uplands were studied and three (the only ones identified by the uplands groups as successful) out of 11 groups in the lowlands. A general description of the groups was investigated and thereafter the successful and less successful groups of Maphephethe were compared. To avoid a biased

outcome of the results in gender analysis (since all the lowland groups were of mixed gender), further analysis was done using upland groups alone. This determined to what extent success of these groups was attributed to geographical, infrastructural, gender and organisational factors. The groups' data analysis follows sub-problems systematically.

Group success was determined by following a checklist that was drawn up by the researcher based on indicators of successful groups that were drawn from Maliwichi (1998:80) and Tuckman and Jensen (2004:3). The groups were also asked to rate themselves in various aspects using beans and an average of their ratings was taken. These aspects were commitment, meeting attendance and their own perception of success. For every indicator that a group had met, a numerical value of 1 was awarded and thereafter all the values were added together. The maximum numerical value a group could score was ten. Maliwichi's (1998:81) recommendation was followed whereby groups that scored five points and above were categorised as successful while those that fell below a total of five points were categorised as less successful. As a result five of the studied groups could be said to be successful while eight were less successful. The indicators included are outlined in table 6.1 below. Groups 1-10 were located in the uplands while groups 11-13 were in the lowlands of Maphephethe.

**Table 6.1 Indicators of success in upland (G1-G10) and lowland (G11-G13) groups in Maphephethe (2005) (n=13)**

| Indicators | G 1 | G 2 | G 3 | G 4 | G 5 | G 6 | G 7 | G 8 | G 9 | G10 | G11 | G12 | G13 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Increased members | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Constitution | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Followed constitution | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Meeting attendance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Kept records and minutes | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Had officials | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Commitment | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Networked | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Self-perception | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Outsiders' perceptions | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total out of 10 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 8 |

## 6.1 General description of Maphephethe groups

In order to understand the groups a short history of the groups was sought through the use of focus group discussions. The discussions revealed that the earliest group was formed in 1984

and the youngest group was formed in 1998. Twelve of the 13 groups had been in existence for more than ten years. Despite these groups being in existence for that long, they continued to decrease in membership. This is evidenced by 11 groups which had decreased membership and only two successful groups from the lowlands saw an increase in their members. Decline in membership was attributed to members dropping out due to group disputes, old age, illness and failure to experience growth. *"There are people who had joined this group with the aim of realising change 'overnight'. They wanted income, not knowing that this takes time"* [a response from an upland focus group member: F.G 1]. Increase in group membership is an indicator of successful groups as identified by Maliwichi (1998:81).

The groups in the study were built on the principle of collective action to respond to the very varied challenges faced by the women individually. A higher number of groups (4) were formed in 1992. This according to the participants (from all the groups) was the period that hunger and malnutrition had been quite prevalent in the area and the women decided to do something about it. They therefore took it upon themselves to change the situation and as a result they started gardening groups. Some groups also undertook other types of activities (crafting, beadwork, sewing, candle making and chicken rearing) to diversify their income. However, the women did not break away from their traditional gender roles in their choice of group activities. They were undertaking the above mentioned activities for food provision and for income. However the major aim of the groups was food for household consumption and emphasis was laid on the fact that they only sold the surplus when there was a good harvest. The average number of activities carried out by the groups was two.

The women perceived themselves as the ones responsible for food provision to their families. On her discussion on GAD, Mosse (1993:162) states that men and women have socially constructed gender roles based on rules and norms assigning them economic, social and political roles and responsibilities. It is the women's role to provide food for the household according to Osunde and Omuroyi (1999:82). They are therefore expected to help fight against hunger. Participation in a number of activities such as food production was perceived as a matter of custom by the women. *"In our culture we as women are the ones who determine and influence what is eaten by our members of the family. So it is our responsibility to do something about food provision"* [response running through all the 16 focus groups]. Nussbaum (2000:23) is of the opinion that sometimes the gendered roles are a matter of custom, but other times they are supported by law. Women's participation in group activities

is further discussed by Basiwalo and Baartjie (2001:111) who argue that participation in group activities is of vital interest to women throughout the developing world. Women they argue, participate in those activities that they feel will bring benefits to them, and at the same time do not take them far from their homes. This is because "their gender roles require women to perform lioness's share of household preparation, cleaning and childcare work; work which in rural settings involves carrying water and finding firewood or other fuel" (Visvanathan *et al*, 1997:103).

Data revealed that group formation was initially a women's only initiative and the women indicated that men joined their groups about "five years ago". As a result the groups with some men in them still retain the title of "women's groups". Early 1990's was also the period that the Department of Agriculture (DOA) intensified its extension activities into this area. In order to benefit from these activities the women's groups were advised to formalise their groups by writing up a constitution. They did heed this advice as evidenced by all 11 groups having a group constitution. However, out of this number, seven groups did not write the constitution themselves, instead they copied other groups' constitutions. This could partly explain why these same groups had a group constitution but did not follow it. Having and following a group constitution has been outlined as an indicator of group success by Tuckman and Jensen (2004:3). All successful groups (lowlands groups and two uplands groups) had and followed their constitutions.

### 6.1.1: Size and composition of the groups

The average number of members in the groups was 19 (see table 6.2). Eight groups were of mixed gender (five from the uplands and three from the lowlands). However, the average number of men in these groups was quite low (1), while the average number of women was 18, thus justifying the continuous use of the terms women's groups throughout the study. On the other hand, as pointed out by the women in the study, the men in the groups only joined about five years ago and the groups are still generally referred to as women's groups by the community. This is consistent with other studies done in rural Ghana by Tarfa (1999:67) where an investigation into Hausa women's groups in Kano State revealed presence of men in these groups even though they are commonly referred to as women's groups.

**Table 6.2: Size and composition of groups at the time of the study (2005) (n=13)**

|  | Mean |
|---|---|
| Number of women in the groups | 17.62 |
| Number of men in the groups | 1.23 |
| Current Average number of members | 18.85 |
| Number of women-only groups | 5 |

## 6.1.2: Groups' demographics

The average age of the members in the groups was 52 years with a sizable percentage (69%) of the group members' ages between 51 and 60 years. This is further supported by other studies done on rural women's groups by World Bank (1989:54), Masika and Joekes (1996:24) indicating that women who are likely to form groups are those who are older, have low literacy levels and are unemployed. The groups in this study were characterised by low education levels as evidenced by the average education levels of groups which was grade 3.7. This information is further substantiated in table 6.3. The average education levels for the uplands groups was grade three while that of the lowlands was grade six. Uplands data further revealed that the two successful groups' average education levels were slightly higher (see table 6.3) in comparison with the eight less successful groups. It is thus concluded that successful groups had slightly higher education levels than the less successful ones.

From individual data (n=165) there was a higher percentage of members (35%) of successful (lowland) groups who were on pension in comparison to the uplands (29%). This could be attributed to the average age of the group members in the lowlands being higher (55yrs) than the uplands (51yrs) or because the members had easier access to information than the uplands or their higher average education levels. Within the uplands groups, the two successful groups had a higher percentage (15%) of their members on pension in comparison with the less successful ones of the same location (7%). A higher percentage of the successful (lowland) group members received remittances (47.5%) than the upland group members (7.6%).

Successful groups (both uplands and lowlands) were mixed gendered groups. However, as reported by the groups there was a difference in the way the groups perceived their male members. The lowlands male members were perceived as active while those from the uplands were perceived as passive. At the time of the study (2005), no male member was present during the group interviews in the uplands. For the lowlands the male members were present and participated in the group discussions.

## Table 6.3: Summary information of the groups (n=13)

| Each group (Uplands) | Membership NO. | Men + Women | Average age of group | Average group education (grade) levels | Activities | No. of assets available for the groups | No. of assets accessed by groups | Group performance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inkanyezi | 28 | 4 men+ 24 women | 53 | 4 | Gardening, sewing, crafting, candle making | 32 | 23 | Successful |
| Lindokuhle | 22 | 22 women | 45 | 2 | Gardening | 32 | 20 | Less successful |
| Siyajabula | 21 | 1man+20 women | 48 | 7 | Sewing, crafting gardening and candle making | 31 | 24 | Successful |
| Siyazama | 20 | 2 men +18 women | 51 | 3 | Gardening | 31 | 20 | Less successful |
| Siphamandla | 16 | 16 women | 51 | 4 | Gardening and candle making | 32 | 20 | Less successful |
| Thathani | 15 | 15 women | 53 | 3 | Gardening and sewing | 31 | 20 | Less successful |
| Sizathina | 14 | 2men+ 12 women | 46 | 4 | Gardening and chicken rearing | 31 | 24 | Less successful |
| Siphesihle | 12 | 12 women | 56 | 2 | Gardening and crafting | 31 | 21 | Less successful |
| Nkululekweni | 11 | 11 women | 45 | 1 | Gardening and beadwork | 31 | 18 | Less successful |
| Bekhokuhle | 4 | 1+3women | 60 | 2 | Gardening | 31 | 22 | Less successful |
| **Lowlands**: Phaphamani | 36 | 2 men+ 34 women | 57 | 5 | Gardening, candle making and beadwork | 39 | 34 | Successful |
| Sbonokuhle | 29 | 1man+ 28 women | 57 | 6 | Beadwork, sewing, Gardening and candle making | 39 | 36 | Successful |
| Fundukuzezela | 17 | 3 men+ 14 women | 51 | 6 | Gardening, sewing, chicken rearing | 39 | 36 | Successful |

Successful groups had a slightly higher group membership, higher education levels, had a higher percentage of their members who received remittances and pensions, accessed a slightly higher number of assets and were generally mixed gendered groups. However with the uplands groups the male members were generally reported to be passive while those of the lowlands were active. This is consistent with Muthui's (1998:192) findings of successful rural women's groups where presence of active men in these groups was linked to extensive networking and access to resources. These were found to be crucial to group success.

## 6.2 The structure, assets available and accessed, functioning and management of women's groups.

The distinct locations within which the groups operated provided assets. These assets were grouped into five categories (namely: Physical, financial, natural, social and human) following the DFID's livelihood framework. Table 6.3 has outlined summarised information of the groups in the study. It is evident the lowland groups that had been pointed out as successful by the uplands groups accessed more assets than the uplands groups. This section has looked at assets that were available and accessed by the groups and the structure, functioning and management of women's groups. The section has also examined whether groups that accessed more assets functioned better than those which accessed fewer assets. Did more assets and better functioning contribute to the success of the groups? Success of the groups was measured using the indicators outlined in table 6.1 (Maliwichi, 1998:80, Tuckman & Jensen, 2004:3).

### 6.2.1: Types of assets available to the groups

Mapping as a PRA technique was used to find out what assets were available to the groups in the community (see appendix I). The five asset categories derived from the DFID sustainable livelihoods framework (that is physical, social, natural, human and financial) were explained to the groups and thereafter the groups were requested to classify what they had mapped as their assets. Any places where human interaction took place like schools and churches were perceived as social assets and thus have been classified as such in this study. However some assets like community hall and schools were perceived both as social assets and physical assets and thus have been counted twice in the total number of assets because their utility was mentioned. Other assets like stokvels were also interpreted as both social and financial assets and thus have been put in the two categories. Table 5.4 has an analysis of the assets identified by the groups under the five asset categories.

## Table 6.4: Asset available and accessed by groups

| Asset type | Identification | Availability Uplands | Availability lowlands | Access uplands (Successful: 2) | Access uplands (Unsuccessful: 8) | Access lowlands (successful) | % Accessed unsuccessful | % Accessed Successful |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social | Schools | *10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| | Permanent clinic | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 60 |
| | Crèches | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 60 |
| | Mobile clinic | 10 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 100 | 40 |
| | Churches | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| | Community groups | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| | Courthouse | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 60 |
| | Community hall | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 60 |
| | Stokvels | 10 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 38 | 100 |
| | Trust & goodwill of the community | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| Natural | Trees/grass/reeds | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| | Domestic animals | 10 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 100 | 40 |
| | Land | 10 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Rivers | 10 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 38 | 100 |
| | Water | 10 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 13 | 100 |
| Financial | Businesses owned by individuals | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| | Pensions and grants | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| | Stokvels | 10 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 25 | 100 |
| | Beadworks/crops/craftworks | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| Human | People(men, women and children; their skills and knowledge) | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| | Businessmen | 10 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 13 | 100 |
| | Chief/Induna | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| | Teachers/nurses/pastors | 10 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 100 |
| Physical | Water taps | 10 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 13 | 100 |
| | Houses | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| | Bridge | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| | Solar | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 40 |
| | Electricity | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 60 |
| | Roads | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| | Public phones | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 100 | 60 |
| | Water tanks | 10 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 38 | 40 |
| | Dam | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 60 |
| | Taxis/ buses | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| | Shopping centres | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| | Tools/equipment | 10 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 100 |
| | Schools | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 100 | 100 |
| | Sports ground/field | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 60 |
| | Community hall | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 60 |
| Institutions, structures | Department of agriculture | 10 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Department of social welfare | 10 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Farmers' associations | 10 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 60 |

* no of groups

The table indicates the number of groups where a specific asset was both available and accessible in relation to success category in both the uplands and the lowlands. It is evident from the table that availability of certain assets did not necessarily mean that the groups accessed them. Accessing assets depended on the distance where that asset was located. Accessed assets were greater for the successful (accessed 84% of assets available to them) than the less successful groups (66%). The successful groups (5) seemed to access a slightly higher percentage of their assets than the less successful groups (8).

Successful groups in the uplands accessed water which was crucial to their gardening. Their gardens were located either close to the rivers, water taps or water tanks. They also accessed other assets (like gardening implements, had access to the teachers in the community and were members of stokvels) that the less successful groups did not access (see table 6.4). According to FAO (2004:4) the current thinking on poverty reduction is based on market economic principles in which access to assets is the basis for developing sustainable livelihoods for poor families. DFID's (2002:7) sustainable livelihoods framework views people as operating in a context of vulnerability. Within this context, the women's groups can be said to have access to certain assets or poverty reducing factors. The framework identified five core asset categories upon which livelihoods were built namely: human assets, natural assets, financial assets, physical assets and social assets which are present in this study. Based on this framework, DFID argues that people require a range of assets in order to achieve the positive livelihood outcomes that they seek. However, as this study has revealed, availability and access to these categories of assets differed between successful and less successful groups. According to Maluccio, Haddad and May (1999:10) an important component of South African antipoverty policy focuses on the provision and accumulation of a wide range of assets to those previously disadvantaged by apartheid, along with reforms intended to provide opportunities to use these assets.

### 6.2.2: Specific assets available and their role in group functioning and output.

There were some assets in the two locations in the study that may have contributed to the way that these groups functioned. As the study has revealed the lowlands (all successful) were well endowed with assets that were crucial to the welfare of the groups. The lowland groups all had crèches available and accessible to them which was not the case for the upland groups. In their

mapping exercise the upland groups did not note a single crèche. It was in these crèches that the group members left their children when need arose. Through observation, it was noted that the group members of the uplands had their children/grandchildren with them during meetings. This was uncommon for the lowland groups. Crèches served as a place where young children were left as the mother/care givers went about other activities. Absence of crèches for the uplands groups may have had an impact on the erratic meeting attendance or commitment to group meetings evidenced in the uplands. This is further reiterated by Reddock (2000:31) who argues that child care being essentially a women's role, affects their labour output because the women have to perform their daily tasks with babies on their backs. Crèches can be classified as a practical gender need because it is related to the women's care giving role. As defined by KARI report (1998:7), practical gender needs are needs of women and men related to their existing roles in society. Simply put it is what people need to do their current jobs more easily or efficiently. Thus, Nussbaum (2000:167) suggests that it is necessary to have care giving facilities in both rural and urban areas in order to enable women to participate in productive activities. Why the upland groups could not make their own arrangements to start up crèches was not investigated but it could be attributed to lack of initiative or ignorance about the benefits of having crèches in their area. These attributions according to Swanepoel (1997:26) serve as obstacles to community development.

A permanent clinic was situated in the lowlands. The upland groups (both successful and less successful) in need of medical attention had to travel long distances (between 3-7km) to come to this clinic, otherwise they had to wait for the days that the mobile clinic came to their area. This facility may make a difference in the participants meeting attendance (meeting attendance was an indicator of successful groups). As one member of the group said *"whenever I or my children are sick, we take traditional herbs while we wait for the mobile clinic to come. Sometimes these herbs do not work and that is the time we have to walk to the main clinic. At the clinic we take time to see the doctor since we find long queues. Sometimes we come home without being treated."*[a response from an upland focus group member of a less successful group: FG 5]. It is a common understanding that the most important asset of any country is the health of its people (Loots and Sadie, 1999:40). Literature has emphasised the importance of rural infrastructure, including rural health centres where community members would get primary health care. Absence of a

permanent clinic thus affects human capital negatively and as DFID (2002:23) declares "human capital is required in order to make use of any of the other types of assets. Health clinics also serve practical gender needs as emphasised by Lootie and Sadie (1999:41) because they contribute to making women's lives easier by helping them to perform their traditional roles and responsibilities better. The World Health Organisation Report (2004:4) adds to this point further by arguing that although it may appear that women and men have common needs with regard to the provision of clinics, women have a particular interest in these because of their disproportionate responsibility for social reproduction. It is therefore important to have medical care for women and children at times and places that are convenient.

The lowland groups were advantaged with other important assets such as a courthouse and a community hall. These are important assets in any community because these are places where meetings (community) are held (Swanepoel, 1997:48). The courthouse symbolises power and prominence in many African rural villages (Harper, 1998:34). In Maphephethe the courthouse served as a place to welcome important visitors to the village. In addition to this, the courthouse also served as trading place especially during pension days. This was where the lowland groups brought in their products for sale to the recipients of social grants. The successful groups from the uplands did not access this asset.

On the other hand, though all the groups indicated that stokvels were available, fewer upland groups (two successful and three less successful) accessed this important form of social/financial capital. The reason given by the groups was that they did not have money to join the stockvels. *"We are very much aware of the benefits of the stockvels, but to be a member requires money which we do not have"* [a response from an uplands focus group member: F.G 4]. All successful groups (three from the lowlands and two from the uplands) accessed stockvels. The results revealed that groups which accessed more assets undertook more activities. This is further emphasised by DFID (2002: 20) discussion document which indicates that "those with more assets tend to have a greater range of options and an ability to switch between multiple strategies to secure their livelihoods". These could account for the reasons as to why the successful groups' self rating in income increase was higher than the less successful groups.

All the groups felt that land was available to them. However, none of the groups indicated that it was easily accessible to them. This may have contributed to the statement that small plots of land were one of their constraints. Land could only be accessed through the chief or through the male head of the family as culture stipulated. This was clearly emphasised by the groups during discussions. *"Land here does not belong to women. It is very rare for a woman to be given land, unless you have a man, be it your husband, or son to pass it on or ask it on your behalf. Whenever we need land we have to go through a long process: we have to identify somebody to talk to the chief on our behalf"* [response running through all the focus groups]. This confirms what most authors say about women; that by virtue of their gender women do not have access to productive resources like land (Giovarelli, 2004:178, Nussbaum, 2000:28, Cagatay, 1998:16). Land was very important for the groups because they derived all or part of their livelihood (gardening was the main purpose of the groups) from it. This resource has a direct relationship with other types of assets. Human health (human capital) depends on food (mostly derived from gardening in these groups). The anti-poverty approach to women in development focuses on income generation for women through better access to productive resources such as land and credit. This means that if women have secure access to land, they may also be well endowed with financial capital, as they are able to use the land not only for direct productive activities but also as collateral for loans (Mugerwa, 2001:12 DFID, 2000:32, Cagatay, 1998:14). However women lacked access and control over productive resources in Maphephethe like in most of sub-Saharan African countries. This is despite that in South Africa, the government has a stated policy commitment to the material, social and political empowerment of poor and landless women through land reform and rural development programmes. However, in practice these programmes do not reflect the gender sensitive policy guidelines stipulated by the government (Loots and Sadie, 1999:42).

As discussed in chapter four, the group participants' sources of income were limited. They relied on social grants. As table 5.4 shows, pensions and grants were accessed by the groups. This together with the money they made after selling some of their crops, craft work and from the stokvels were what they categorised as their financial assets. Successful groups all accessed these assets. Financial assets denote the financial resources that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives (DFID, 2002:3). Most authors of rural development discuss land accessibility and

financial accessibility together. This is because lack of collateral (land) for women in the rural areas disadvantages them from accessing credit to improve production (Meena, 2004:6). Financial assets are an important building block that enables people to adopt different livelihood strategies. However as discussed earlier it was amongst the least available asset in the area. This confirms DFID's (2002:4) argument that finance is mostly the least available asset to the poor and it is indeed because the poor lack financial capital that other types of capital become so important to them.

Water which was a natural resource was indicated as available by all the groups. However this resource was only accessed by three groups of the uplands, two of which were successful groups. The other seven groups felt that the river, water taps and water tanks were quite far from them. This took a toll on their time. Water issues had a bearing on crop production especially in winter when the river's flow declined drastically. From the group discussions the women indicated that *"we have to carry water using cans for a long distance especially in winter. We are old and this makes us very tired. If the crops are not watered they get very dry and they wilt. This is very demoralising"* [a response from an upland focus group member: F.G 8]. Less successful groups experienced water problems which hampered their production and also made demands on their time which they could have put into other productive activities. Fetching water for domestic use and subsistence farming is a prescribed women's role as indicated by KARI Report (1998:3).

Human capital represents the skills, experience, education levels, knowledge, ability to labour and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives (DFID, 2002:12). The groups in the study were characterised by low education levels. However these education levels were different for successful and less successful groups. The results revealed a pattern where groups with slightly higher education levels (human capital) accessed more of the other types of assets. Unsuccessful groups (eight uplands groups) had lower average education levels in comparison with the successful ones from the same location (see table 6.3). It was also noted that all successful groups indicated having access to the teachers, pastors and nurses in their community (see table 6.4). Human capital is important because without it one cannot make use of all the other types of assets (Oxenham, *et al* 2001:38). Later discussion of this chapter reveals that groups with higher levels of education were better

run and were more successful than the other groups. As many studies indicate, lack of education is a core dimension of poverty and thus overcoming this would have to be prioritised if the groups have to achieve their livelihood objectives. This is further supported by World Bank studies (2005:6) whose main objective for supporting Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) in Africa is poverty reduction. This is because literacy and basic education are key skills in helping the poor extract themselves from the conditions causing poverty. These studies have confirmed that ABET succeeds better than most other forms of education in reaching women. As is now well recognised, to improve the basic education status of women is a pre-requisite for achieving the development goals of Sub-Saharan African countries in key areas such as enhancing agricultural productivity, improving health and nutrition status of the family, and reducing fertility (Rogers, 2001:30). This is in agreement with the efficiency approach to women in development which states that women hold the key to productive and dynamic society (Mosse, 1993:158). Thus, the women's groups in this study could greatly benefit from Adult Basic Education courses.

Lack of physical assets like solar and grid electricity may have had a negative effect on the upland groups. All the lowland groups mapped electricity as available and accessible to them while this asset was neither available nor therefore accessed by the upland groups (both successful and less successful). In the uplands group discussions, the members emphasised that they had to set time aside to fetch firewood for cooking. This as indicated by the groups was time consuming and greatly affected their attendance at group meetings. *"We have to fetch firewood everyday and this takes time. This affects our attendance to group meetings. When we attend the meetings, we can't stay for long because we always have to think of fetching firewood and water"* [a response running through all the less successful groups: F.G 1-F.G.11]. Solar (PV) panels were available to all the groups in the lowlands, but only accessed by two out of three groups. Even though three out of ten upland groups indicated that this asset was available, none of the groups accessed it. The groups emphasised the collective nature of their activities. They indicated that if any member had access to solar/electricity, and a group need arose they could just request the member for use of the said facility. The group members could then compensate the member in kind. DFID (2002:10) argues that without adequate access to services such as water and energy, human health deteriorates and long periods are spent undertaking activities

such as collection of water and fuel wood. This is consistent with WID's focus on initiatives such as development of better appropriate technologies that would lighten women's workload. Fetching water and firewood is a socially constructed gender role.

The opportunity costs associated with poor infrastructure can preclude education, access to health services and income generation. DFID (2002:11) therefore argues that, that is the reason why the livelihoods approach focuses on helping to provide access to appropriate infrastructure that enables poor people to achieve their livelihood objectives. In addition to this line of thought, proper infrastructure not only opens up an area for outside investors thus creating jobs for the locals, but also the locals are more likely to be better informed about opportunities (Kiondo, 1999:24). This could explain why the lowland groups (better infrastructure), at the time of the study had had at least one invitation to attend training. The lowlands as mentioned earlier had public phones, good roads, a hall and a courthouse to their advantage. Access to information can thus be said to be hindered by lack of these types of assets for the upland groups. This observation is consistent with Machethe (2004:20) emphasis on the importance of investing in the South African rural economy in terms of physical and institutional infrastructure such as roads which he found was inadequate and needed to be urgently addressed by government. Thus one can conclude that physical assets are crucial in constructing livelihoods.

Public phones were not available in the uplands. They relied on their cell phones which were considered expensive as indicated by eight groups (less successful groups). However even with the cell-phones it was only MTN service provider that had a network available. Access to information for these groups was thus hindered. This could partly explain why all the groups in the uplands did not network and could also account for the reason why the less successful groups had not had an invitation to attend any form of training. The women felt isolated from the rest of the area residents as picked up from the various comments made during group discussions *"We are isolated here, we hardly know what is going on beyond our area: we only learn about important meetings after they have already taken place"* [member of a less successful group: F.G:6]. Infrastructure such as roads and telephones are key to the integration of remote areas where many of the poor live as identified by Tarfa (1999:78) in his studies of women's groups in Nigeria.

Tools and equipments though indicated as available by all the groups were only accessed by the two successful uplands groups. All the less successful groups indicated that lack of access to these tools had an impact on production of crops and sewing. *"We have to borrow gardening tools from our neighbours and if one is using them they cannot lend us: so they are not always available when we need them. This delays our harrowing of the garden and we do not always plant on time"* [member of a less successful group: F.G:9]. This is a similar complaint from other farmers in the Umbumbulu area of KwaZulu-Natal as found by Ndokweni (2002:42)

Successful groups (both uplands and lowlands) were mixed gendered, had slightly higher membership numbers, the members were older and a higher percentage received pensions, had higher education levels, accessed more assets, and reported undertaking more activities (three to four activities). The less successful groups had slightly lower membership size, lower education levels, accessed fewer assets and tended to undertake one to two activities.

### 6.2.3: Groups' structure, management and functioning

The study investigated the contribution of assets, group management, constraints, benefits and community support to the success of Maphephethe rural women's groups. This section explores the structure management and functioning of the uplands groups (successful and less successful) and those that they pointed out to be the successful groups (lowlands) of Maphephethe to find out whether there were differences in the way that these groups operated. The study revealed that all Maphephethe groups were run by office bearers who were elected by group members. Twelve of the thirteen groups in Maphephethe had officials/committee. Having a committee in place was an indicator of successful group (see table 6.1). The method that all these groups used to elect their committee members was voting by show of hands. According to Tuckman and Jensen (2004:3) the way a group makes decisions has a lot of influence on how people feel about the group. It can also determine how well the group members support the decision. The office bearers remained in office for three years in eight groups and two years in four groups. However, despite this stipulation, the office bearers were only rotated by four successful groups (three from the lowlands and one from the uplands). The less successful groups cited confidence in the current

office bearers, illiteracy and fear of taking responsibility as the reasons for non-rotation of office bearers (focus group responses: F.G 1-F.G 11).

Almost all the groups (11) in Maphephethe had a constitution. However six (all less successful) of those who had it did not follow it. The reason most cited by the groups for not following the constitution was that they did not write it themselves. Successful groups (both from the uplands and the lowlands) reported following their own constitutions. "*We all participated in writing our own constitution, we cannot afford not to follow rules that we laid down because then our group will no longer run*" [Group leaders responses of members of successful groups. Derived from semi-structured interviews]. The importance of a group constitution cannot be overemphasised. Constitution acts a guide to all that a group does. It outlines the purpose and objectives of the groups. It is in the constitution that rules governing the group are stipulated (Tuckman & Jensen, 2004:5). Not following the constitution could account for the group disputes that were more prevalent in the less successful groups of the upland groups.

To be a member of these groups, one had to pay a membership fee which was either a once off payment or was renewable annually. Once off payment seemed to be the prominent type of membership fee amongst eight less successful groups. Differences were noted (see table 6.5: significant correlation P=0.000) between successful (two from the uplands and three from the lowlands) and less successful groups where the latter followed the once off mode of payment while the successful groups renewed their membership fee annually, indicating that the two groups were run differently.

**Table 6.5: Group success rating and type of membership fee paid at the time of study (2005) (n=13)**

| | | | Type of membership fee | | Total |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | Renewed annually | Once off payment | |
| Group success rating | Successful | Count | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| | Less successful | Count | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| | | % of Total | 38.5 | 61.5 | 100 |

($\chi^2$ test p=0.000)

## 6.2.4 Meetings

Nine out of 13 groups met weekly in their gardens. The meetings held by these groups were characterised by poor attendance, lack of punctuality, arguments and repetitions. The meetings were poorly planned and they failed to follow formal procedures. Asked to rate themselves (using beans) in terms of meeting attendance, all the groups except one (successful group from the uplands) rated themselves poorly. Group averages that fell below four out of ten were rated as poor. Meetings where members not only attended but also participated was an indicator of group success as indicated by Tuckman and Jensen (2004:3). However less successful groups of the uplands did not take minutes because of illiteracy. The chi square test reflected a significant correlation (P=0.003) between group success and minute taking (see appendix G: table 10). Catherine (1998:54) indicates that illiteracy is a block to effective management and record keeping. However Osunde and Omoruyi (1999:81) argue that this is a very common problem in the rural areas especially in Africa. The same authors add that not taking minutes results in arguments and repetitions in the groups' next meeting since they do not have any record of what was discussed in the last meeting. This was also a common complaint amongst the less successful uplands groups. *"We always argue in our meetings. Nobody seems to remember what was agreed in our last meeting. We don't seem to agree"* [Group leaders' responses of members of less successful groups. Derived from semi-structured interviews]. Data revealed a difference between successful and less successful groups in that the former did not cite arguments as one of their characteristics of their meetings (see appendix G: table 11).

## 6.2.5: Networking with other groups

Groups in upland Maphephethe (successful and less successful) were self-isolated. This is evidenced by all the ten groups who indicated that they did not network with other groups. Reasons given by the groups were lack of time (as cited by nine groups) and the belief that they faced similar challenges with other groups in the area and thus did not believe they could learn anything from one another. The groups did not mention any kind of networking between themselves and other outside organisations like government departments or NGOs. According to Cagatay (1998:8) women's responsibilities for reproductive labour limit the range of other (productive) activities they can undertake, thus women are less mobile than men because of the reproductive/caring labour activities. This is more so in areas where there is absence of technology to make the women's work easier.

Successful groups (lowlands) reported networking amongst themselves and also with department of Social Welfare. This was one of the indicators of successful groups as outlined by Maliwichi (1998:81). By networking, the groups reported having learnt various ways of operating their activities. The Department of Social Welfare has in the past invited them for some training in group management and has also financed them to fence their gardens.

From the above discussion, it can be summarised that group members from successful and less successful groups had different characteristics. Successful groups' members were slightly older; a higher percentage of them received pensions and remittances and had higher average education levels. Successful groups had higher membership, were also of mixed gender and accessed more assets. Groups which accessed more assets had higher education levels and undertook more activities. The chi square test reflected a significant correlation (P=0.000) between assets accessed and average education levels of groups as well as assets accessed and the number of group activities undertaken by the members (see appendix G: table 1 and 2). The groups from the successful category were also run differently. They renewed their membership annually, followed their constitution and took minutes of their meetings. The successful groups of the lowlands also networked with other groups. Absence of these factors for the less successful upland groups could have contributed to the groups being less successful. This is consistent with Mutuku (2001:143), Qaim (2000:45), Maliwichi (1998:81) and Longernecker *et al* (1997:56) arguments that women's groups are more likely to be successful if the members are literate, if the groups keep record and minutes, have and follow their constitution, network and they have access to assets.

## 6.3: Gender analysis in relation to management and functioning of groups

Analysis was conducted to find out whether women-only groups functioned and accessed assets any differently from mixed gendered groups. However, it was noted that the results could have been skewed by the fact that all the lowland groups were of mixed gender and so an analysis of upland groups alone has also been reported.

Women-only groups (5 groups) were found in the upland location only, while all the lowland groups in the sample were of mixed gender. The women-only and mixed gendered groups were

characteristically different in terms of a number of factors. Women only groups had lower average education levels (Average grade 2.4) than groups of mixed gender (average grade 4.6). Further analysis of uplands data revealed similar results where average education levels of mixed-gendered groups was slightly higher (average grade 3.4) than for women-only groups. This was further confirmed by the women in the discussion whereby they gave illiteracy as the reason why they did not rotate their office bearers. As retorted by a member of one of the groups *"we only have two people who can read and write in this group; all the others can neither read nor write; that's why we keep those in office year after year"* [a response from an upland focus group member: F.G 4]. Amongst the uplands groups, only one mixed gendered group attributed illiteracy to non-rotation of office bearers. This is consistent with other studies which indicate that literacy levels are lower for women than for men (Oxenham *et al*, 2002:23). Further support is given by Osunde and Omoruyi (1999:86) who argue that it is in the rural areas that the rate of illiteracy among women is particularly high, yet it is here that the success of development oriented programmes depends largely on women.

Groups of mixed gender carried out more activities than women-only groups. This was further confirmed by a chi square test which showed a significant correlation (P=0.000: see appendix G table 4) between gender (women-only and mixed gendered) and the number of group activities. This could be explained by the number of assets accessed by each group. From table 6.6 it is evident that mixed groups accessed more (80%) of the assets available in comparison with women-only groups (63%). The upland analysis alone still revealed a difference in assets accessed between the two gendered groups. The mixed groups accessed slightly more assets (72%) than women-only groups (63%). Calculations were done using table 6.3 where a groups' (e.g. successful groups vs less successful groups: women-only vs mixed gendered) total accessed assets were divided by the total number of assets available for those specific groups and then multiplied by a 100.

**Table 6.6: Percentage of assets accessed by gendered groups at the time of the study (2005) n (13)**

| Location | Gender | Percentage of assets accessed |
|---|---|---|
| **Uplands** | Mixed | 72 |
| | Women-only | 63 |
| **Both Uplands and Lowlands** | Mixed | 80 |

Asset access may be a limiting factor to the number of different activities carried out by the groups as discussed earlier. All the groups that undertook four activities were of mixed gender while three of women-only groups (uplands) undertook two activities. Upland analysis alone showed that the only groups which undertook four activities were two mixed-gendered groups. It can therefore be concluded that groups of mixed gender accessed more assets which may have enabled them to undertake (diversify) more activities. This is supported by Cagatay (1998:12) who argues that women access fewer assets than men by virtue of their gender. In Southern Africa, Ntseane (2004:2) argues, that access to financial services is gender biased because vast majority of women have no collateral which they can use to access loans from the banks. Poor women need an enabling environment to exercise their agency, their own solutions and creativity. One way of doing this is through making available critical resources such as credit and training.

A pattern emerged where all the women only groups reported lacking agendas for their meetings and not following the constitution unlike the mixed groups where all (two from the uplands and three from the lowlands) followed their constitution. Having and following a constitution was one of the indicators of group success as outlined on table 6.1 derived from Maliwichi (1998:80, Tuckman & Jensen, 2004:3). These groups operated under difficult circumstances. They were in the uplands area where as discussed earlier had no access to electricity, tapped water, crèches and solar energy. These are essential assets that play a significant role in women's lives to ease their burden and free them to undertake other types of work (Nassbaum, 2000:39). Lack of these assets for the women could account the higher prevalence of poor commitment and why all the women-only groups did not network. This is consistent with other studies done elsewhere in Africa where groups with access to labour saving technologies were found to network more than those without access to these resources (World Bank Report, 1989:60). Further supportive studies have been conducted by Osunde and Omoruyi (1999:82), who in their assessment of the factors mitigating

against the active participation of rural women in development oriented programmes in Nigeria found that 66% of them cited lack of time as the major reason due to excess workloads.

Women-only and mixed gendered groups functioned differently. This could be attributed to the low education levels that characterised women-only groups. They did not rotate office bearers due to a shortage of literate women in the group, did not follow their constitution and did not network with other groups. Women-only groups accessed fewer assets and also carried out fewer activities than mixed-gendered groups.

## 6.4: Group success rating in relation to assets and gender

Based on the criteria that were used to rate groups in relation to group success (see table 6.1), there seemed to be differences amongst groups accessing different numbers of assets. All the lowland groups (pointed out by the uplands groups as the successful groups) and two from the uplands met most of the criteria for successful groups (see table 6.1) while eight uplands groups performed dismally. Success for these groups could be attributed to the groups being mixed-gendered groups, having and accessing more assets than the less successful groups, having higher average education levels, higher number of their members being on pension, more of their members receiving remittances and networking with other groups. In addition to the factors already mentioned, successful groups (two from the uplands and three from the lowlands) were better organised as evidenced by having and following of a constitution. The chi square test showed a significant correlation (P=0.003: see appendix G: table 8) between group success and following of constitution. All the women-only groups fell in the less successful category as indicated on table 6.7. The women-only groups faced disadvantages ranging from lower education levels which made their running of the groups harder (already discussed). Mutuku (2001:145) argues that illiteracy places serious constraints on income generating project success and it is that the problem is more prevalent in women-only groups' projects. The women-only groups accessed fewer assets and undertook fewer activities (see table 6.3). They undertook culturally stereotyped women's activities and as stated by Mutava and Mutanyata (1991:110) these types of projects are not viable, yet women still engage in them. Barry (2000:198) supports this further by saying that "the poorest enterprises especially those run by women tend to be concentrated in saturated markets". The women in the focus groups mentioned that when they had a good yield they lacked a market since they all produced the same types of crops and so the

market (in their community) became saturated. "Everybody *grows all the same crops here; so we end up not having anybody to sell to; we cannot afford to go further out of here to sell our crops; we are limited by transport fees*": [common responses running through all the focus groups].

**Table 6.7: Gender composition of groups and success rating at the time of study (2005) (n=13)**

| | | | Success rating | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Successful | Less successful | |
| Gender type of the group | Women only | Count | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| | Men and women | Count | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| | | % within Gender type of the group | 62.5 | 37.5 | 100 |

($\chi^2$ test p=0.009)

Two of the five successful groups were mixed gendered groups from the uplands who subscribed to the annual membership fee (already discussed). Annual membership fee may have promoted commitment and participation in the group activities, hence contributing to the success. This is consistent with studies carried out in south Asia by Carr *et al* (1996:56) which revealed that rural group members show commitment to their groups through various ways one of which is yearly membership renewal.

Reflecting on the structure, assets availability and access, functioning and management of successful groups, it was evident from the results that these groups had access to more assets, had higher education levels and were well organised. Location which determines the types of assets available is important. However, women-only groups accessed fewer of the assets available to them in comparison to the mixed groups of the same area. This may have limited them in the number of activities they undertook to earn a livelihood. Their education levels were lower than those of mixed groups and thus they were missing out on specific aspects of management which are important (like following a constitution, minute taking). Operating under such difficult circumstances thus made it difficult for the groups to operate effectively. In summary of the first sub-problem, it can be concluded that mixed gendered groups had higher average education levels, accessed more of their assets, undertook more activities, functioned well and as a result, met the criteria for successful groups.

## 6.5: Constraints faced by the women's groups

Groups mentioned various constraints that they faced in pursuit of their livelihoods. Data was collected using a focus group discussion. The researcher grouped the mentioned constraints into two categories: Namely those related to the group functioning and those related to the projects that the women undertook. The former constraints are discussed first followed by the latter constraints which have been referred to as structural constraints by Kabeer (2000:108) since they are revealed in women's differential access to resources as compared to men. The groups being located in rural areas faced infrastructural, credit and management issues amongst other constraints. This study agrees with other studies done elsewhere on constraints faced by rural women's groups. Good examples are studies done by Murphy (1995: 54), Strinfellow *et al* (1997:36) and Qaim, (2000:45)

## 6.5.1: Constraints related to group functioning

There were three major constraints that the groups mentioned in relation to group functioning: absence from meetings, mistrust amongst group members and group disputes. This is further supported by Stringfellow *et al* (1997:35) who argue that groups do not always work well together despite the assumption by NGOs and governments that once a group has been assisted in establishing itself, it will often blossom into a coherent group. This is further emphasised by Jyosvold *et al* (2004:230) who indicated that most groups fail due to group disputes. The said authors, in their study of groups in India identified group disputes as a major problem among the groups they studied.

However, the constraints were less prevalent amongst successful groups. This could be attributed to the adherence to their constitutions which guided all their undertakings. In the focus group discussions, many members of the less successful upland groups reported not having had a share in making the rules that their committees tried to enforce. Their constitutions were copied from other groups because they wanted to be registered with the Department of Agriculture and thus the group leaders rushed to meet the condition without consulting the group members. As Biaga (1996:25) states "to minimise disputes in a group, the members should have a share in making the rules and have a say in the way the group will work together towards a common goal". Group

leaders discussions revealed that groups were run in a transparent manner in that members were allowed to attend executive committee meetings.

Lack of commitment was emphasised as a major problem by both group leaders and the members of less successful groups as indicated by various sentiments expressed by some members. *"Sometimes when we call for meetings, members hardly attend: only a few turn up. When we discuss and agree on issues with the few, the others upon hearing this, vow not to support our decisions: This brings a lot of disputes amongst group members"* [response from group leaders of less successful groups: derived from semi-structured interviews]. A chi square test indicated a significant relationship (P=0.034: see appendix G table: 16) between group success and self rating in commitment. Successful groups (from both the lowlands and the uplands) rated themselves as having average to high commitment to their groups. The higher prevalence of group functioning constraints could also account for the lower sense of belonging that was reported by the less successful upland groups whereas the successful groups reported a greater sense of belonging (see discussion on benefits). This is in line with Maliwichi's (1998:82) discussion on groups where she indicates that members of groups which are well run have a higher sense of belonging to the group. Ineffective groups, Tuckman and Jensen (2004:5) add are characterised by poor meeting attendance, members dropping out, lower sense of belonging, mistrust and disputes. Table 6.8 below outlines major constraints faced by groups at the time of the study.

**Table 6.8: Major constraints faced by groups at the time of the study (2005) (n=13)**

| Type of constraints | Number of groups |
|---|---|
| Functioning: Absence from meetings | 11 |
| Mistrust | 10 |
| Group disputes | 9 |
| Lack of commitment | 8 |
| Projects: Lack of capital | 13 |
| Lack of information/skills | 13 |
| Crop destruction by Pests | 13 |
| Insufficient land | 12 |
| Lack of market | 12 |

### 6.5.2: Constraints related to the projects

Constraints related to group projects ranged from lack of capital to lack of markets for groups' products as outlined on table 6.8. These needs were further prioritised by the groups. Thirty-one percent of the groups ranked capital as their first priority need. Table 6.9 below was derived using the point system. A need that was ranked as a first priority was awarded 5 points, second ranking 4 points third ranking 3 points fourth ranking 2 points and fifth ranking 1 point. A specific needs ranking was further multiplied by the number of groups accordingly. Further evidence was seen through the use of de Wet Schutte P-index (please refer to 5.3.4) whereby the greater the P-Index the higher the priority of the item, thus the needs have been ranked in order of priority. It is evident from the table that the two types of ranking have yielded almost similar results, providing greater assurance as to the validity of the rankings.

**Table 6.9: Needs ranking by the groups (2005) (n=13)**

| Needs | Number of points | Average Priority-Index |
|---|---|---|
| Capital | 45 | 7.4 |
| Information and skills | 44 | 7.3 |
| Pests control | 36 | 6.8 |
| Fencing | 31 | 6.7 |
| Water | 12 | 6.6 |
| Land | 9 | 6.5 |
| Market | 8 | 6.4 |

### 6.5.2.1 Lack of Capital

The groups indicated they needed financial capital to buy farm inputs like fertilisers, seeds and implements like forks, spades and watering cans. None of the groups had ever applied for a loan before because they claimed that they did not know the procedures to be followed. *"We have not applied for any kind of loan because we do not know how to go about it. If someone can explain to us about what is required, then we can try"* [responses from all the focus groups]. They argued that financial capital would not only enable them to better their products but also to diversify their activities. Lack of capital was a major problem that was mentioned by all the thirteen groups. It was also the need that was ranked first by most groups. However there was a difference in ranking between the two distinct areas in this study. While capital was ranked first by the successful groups (lowlands) the uplands groups ranked it second. In the focus group discussion,

the women indicated that without money, they could not buy seeds, and other inputs, thus hampering their production. This finding is further backed by a study that was done by Ndokweni (2002:43) where the farmers indicated that in order for them to be successful they needed more funding. On the same note, Nieuwoudt and Groenewald (2003:105-118) identified lack of access to credit as one of the major factors hampering the acquisition of inputs for the development of small scale farmers in Umbumbulu area of KwaZulu-Natal. Mugerwa (2001:24) in his discussion on "Empowering Low-Income women" indicated that lack of capital hampers women's groups production. One of the major activities of women in the rural areas is subsistence agriculture. Women farmers, due to lack of collateral and limited scale of enterprises have long been disadvantaged in accessing credit and loans. As discussed by Kabeer (2000:101), lack of capital is a gender specific constraint. The FAO report (2003), supports this point by stating that though both women and men in developing countries do not have adequate resources, women's access is further constrained by cultural, traditional and sociological factors. UNICEF (1990:15) also identified lack of access to financial resources as a constraining factor in women's economic activities. Further emphasis was laid by Fraser, Monde and Averbeck (2003:173) in a study conducted in South Africa where lack of finance featured as a constraint to growth of women's projects.

### 6.5.2.2 Lack of information and skills

The groups reported that they needed training on group self management, product improvement (especially on beadwork and other forms of craft), new farming techniques, marketing and book-keeping. They especially emphasised the need for an agricultural officer who would visit them often *"We have not seen the agricultural officer here for a very long time. She used to visit often when we formed our group, but not any more: yet we need her"* [responses running through all the focus groups]. Lack of information and skills was ranked second by all groups. The groups indicated that they lacked information that was necessary for production. In their discussion, the women indicated that they needed information on how to manage themselves well, how to control pests (which was a major problem) that destroyed their crops, techniques of production, training on book-keeping, record keeping, taking of minutes and constitution writing amongst others. *"We lack knowledge on how to grow healthy crops; we really need to change our gardening techniques in order to increase our yields. Our low level of skills has led to low*

*production. We need training on how to improve our products, how to market them and how to keep our books.* " [Responses derived from all the focus groups]. According to the efficiency approach to women and development, if women are healthy and knowledgeable, if they have greater access to knowledge, skills and credit they will be more economically productive (Mosse, 1993:159). FAO (2004:4) also is of the opinion that access to extension and training informs farmers about new technologies. In the area of this study, although all the groups indicated the availability of the extension services, none of these groups had accessed these services. This is contrary to what most literature says in that formation of groups increases access to various rural services to group members (Geran, 1996:82). In other countries for example Zambia, out of 39 women's groups interviewed, 67% said that visits from extension agents had increased since forming their groups. However, in Maphephethe, the government departments that offer these services (Department of Agriculture and Department of Social Services) had not been in touch with the groups for the last couple of years at the time of the study. This seems to be common in rural KwaZulu-Natal as Bates and Sokhela (2003:114) found out the same constraint affecting Umbumbulu farmers who complained of inadequate extension services.

A study conducted in 26 countries of Africa revealed that although three quarters of agricultural workers are female, only 5% of the trained advisors are women. One of the recommendations offered by Akeroyd (1991:146), to boost extension visits to women's activities is to train more women officers to provide extension services. However, as revealed in this study, this does not seem to work since the extension officer at the time of the study was female and still did not visit the groups. The importance of extension services to rural communities is further affirmed by Machethe (2004:15) who contends that adequate access to these services significantly increases both productivity and production especially in the areas of farming. International experience has however shown that extension services should go hand in hand with finance and marketing services for higher productivity to be achieved. This reinforces the importance of capital as discussed in 6.7.2.1

### 6.5.2.3 Pests

Controlling pests was the third ranked need. Pests were a major hazard to the groups since the groups said "they contributed to hunger". *"The pests eat our crops and sometimes we harvest*

*very little. We have used all the methods of control that we know like applying ash, but these methods no longer work*" [common responses in all the focus groups]. This emphasises the dire need of appropriate information on how to control the pests.

### 6.5.2.4 Fencing

Lack of, very weak or low fences as a need ranked number four, also contributed to low yields since the livestock destroyed the crops in the groups' gardens. Fencing was one of the major problems mentioned by the groups. It was prioritised as the first need by most upland groups and 3<sup>rd</sup> by lowland groups. According to the focus group discussions, inadequate fencing (too low, or too weak), or no fencing at all rendered the crops vulnerable to theft and destruction by livestock. This lowered production and the women felt demoralised. This finding is similar to other findings from a study done in KwaZulu-Natal by Ndokweni (2002:56), where the farmer's group participants stated that in order to be successful they needed to fence their pieces of land.

### 6.5.2.5 Water

Water was a major problem for the less successful groups of the uplands. The river, water taps and water tanks were far and the women complained that they were old. (See table 6.3 for mean group ages.), yet they had to carry water using cans up to the gardens in order to water their crops. Groups that accessed more assets did not cite water as a project constraint. A chi square test reflected a significant correlation (P=0.004: see appendix G table 14) between the number of assets accessed and water as a project constraint. This is not surprising given that all the successful groups accessed more assets and indicated having access to either tap, tank or river water. Referring to table 6.4, it is evident that although the groups in the uplands had water tanks, these were only accessible to five groups. The other five groups indicated that the water tanks were quite far from their homes and from the garden plots. The rivers were also far (about 2km-3km away). Inaccessibility of water affects production. This is also the conclusion reached by Nieuwoudt and Groenewald (2003:110) who indicate that water being a natural resource base, forms the ultimate support of economic activity especially in farming. According to Loots and Sadie (1999:41), lack of basic services such as water supply is a key symptom of poverty and underdevelopment. In addition to this, the need for running water is a specific need of women as it relates to their reproductive responsibilities. Lack of nearby sources of water as a constraint

was reported by almost all the women-only groups. Water is a gender specific constraint according to Morrel (1998:34) because this constraint is faced by women by virtue of their gender. It is women who are primarily responsible for the collection of water because it is part of their gender role.

## 6.5.2.6 Land

The land in which the groups did their gardening was not only small but also infertile. The members felt they needed bigger land in order to plant different types of crops. *"Our plots are small and the soil is poor. We can only plant one type of crop on this plot of land. We need bigger plots of land in order to plant different types of crops"* [responses running through all the focus groups]. Access to additional land was a desire expressed by 12 groups. The women perceived land as very important to their livelihoods. *"We rely on these plots for food to feed our families. This is also our way of earning a living here"* [common comments in all the focus groups]. This is consistent with Kabeer's (2000:103) opinion on women and land that "women see access to land as central to their role in social reproduction and the domestic economy". Women's demand for land centres on securing a place to live, providing fuel and thatch and supplementing food for household consumption and social reproduction.

Though all the groups in this study indicated that land was available, it was noted that none of the groups indicated that it was easily accessible since they only accessed it through the chief. However, expressions on this issue was different for mixed and women-only groups where the former felt that having men in their groups was advantageous because they (the men) normally negotiated land from the chief on the group's behalf. Reluctance to allow women access to land in their own right according to Kabeer (200:104) is intimately tied up with maintaining patriarchal inheritance rules and rights. This is in agreement with Mugerwa's (2001:24) conclusion that women's access and control over productive resources remains lacking in most sub-Saharan African countries which follow patriarchal rules. On the same note, Murphy (1990:34) argues that in South Africa, accessibility of land by women is a negotiable issue with the tribal authorities who are all male. However as discussed in section 2.5.1, where women are allocated the land, it is normally in marginal areas where the soils are infertile and infrastructure is very poor. From observation, the soil seemed infertile and access to the garden plots was

difficult especially during the wet season. Lack of access to land therefore remained a major constraint for the women in their quest to earn a livelihood. Without land ownership they cannot be lent money by formal financial institutions and without access to credit/lack of capital, they cannot improve their production. It is therefore necessary that all legal barriers to women participation in land reform be removed in order for them to have a fair and equitable benefit in land. This includes a reform of marriage, inheritance and customary law which contains obstacles to women's rights in land. This calls for increased political will and resources to remove these persisting gender inequalities with access to and control over natural resources and related services. Thus in addition to access to land, the women need access to credit (for inputs) and extension services.

### 6.5.2.7 Market

Markets for the groups' products was mentioned by the groups. The women needed a place to display/sell their products. At times they take their products to Durban, but the women complained that they sell them at very low prices in order to attract customers which leads to conflict with other traders. *"We need a place to sell/display our products so that people will know where to come and buy. When we take our beadwork to Durban we face very stiff competition. We sell our products at very low prices in order to attract customers. This leads to conflict with other traders; it's a hostile selling environment"* [responses running through all the focus groups except F.G 4]. Lack of market and marketing skills were other constraints faced by the groups. This agrees with other findings which indicate that poor market infrastructure, information and facilities are major problems especially for low-income women who have tended to be marginalised by distant and poor market facilities (Mugerwa, 2001: 2). As pointed out by Cagatay (1998:15) market information remains restricted to literate as well as more urban based traders. Giovarelli (2004:68) discusses this point further by arguing that because of the persistent low levels of literacy among rural and low income women, information regarding farming and particularly food security does not readily reach women farmers. Besides, most of the information packaging and dissemination channels are unsuitable for them. The women in this study needed access to relevant market information and skills that would enable them to make meaningful enterprise selection. Ntseane (2005:3) agrees with this line of reasoning and states that there is a lack of market information in the rural areas of South Africa, and also lack of

means to effectively disseminate information. The rural women's groups need market information to survive in a very competitive marketing environment. The rank-ordered P-Indices with the concomitant reasons given by the groups can be found in appendix I.

### 6.5.2.8 Other constraints

Unreliable transport seemed to be more common in the uplands. From observation, the road infrastructure in the lowlands was better than that of the uplands. The places where the garden plots were located for the uplands groups were far away from the main road and they were quite inaccessible especially in the rainy season. This concurs with another study done by Bates & Sokhela (2003:110) in Umbumbulu area of KwaZulu-Natal where the farmers complained of poor condition of roads leading to their fields. The women also indicated that the transport fee was expensive and at times it was unaffordable for them. Thus they sold food crops amongst themselves in order limit transport costs. Writing on market access for small scale farmers in South Africa, Makhura and Mokoena (2003:138), state that most small scale farmers do not have their own means of transport and are dependent on taxis and neighbours. The importance of good road infrastructure is further emphasised by Bock and Wilcke (2000:30) who point out that the transport sector in many sub-Sahara African countries needs reform. The results of a study that they carried out in rural Mali, showed that women spend almost three times as long with transport activities and carry around four times as many loads from one place to another than men in the villages. The study recommends that sub-Sahara African countries need to reform the transport sector taking village traffic links into account and ensure access for women to transport facilities at reasonable prices. This means improving rural infrastructure and road maintenance by the relevant local government institutions. However Makhura and Mokoena (2003:140) conclude that despite government initiatives to improve the quality and quantity of infrastructure in the rural areas of South Africa, through programmes such as Community Based Public Works Program, Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme, and Poverty Relief and Infrastructure Investment fund, the impact on the lives of many rural people has been limited.

### 6.6: Constraints in relation to assets accessed, gender and success

An analysis was conducted to find out whether successful groups had the same or different constraints and whether these constraints differed by gender composition of the groups. Analysis

was also conducted to find out whether needs ranking differed between successful and less successful groups and also by gender composition of the groups. The findings are reported below.

### 6.6.1: Constraints in relation to assets accessed by groups

Group functioning constraints seemed more severe amongst the less successful groups of the uplands. Mistrust and disputes amongst group members were reported by all eight less successful groups. Successful groups (they are the ones that accessed more assets) did not cite group disputes as a constraint. Lack of/inadequate fencing and water seemed to be the two most important constraints amongst the less successful groups (they accessed fewer assets). That explains why fencing was ranked as the first priority need by the less successful uplands groups while the successful groups ranked this need 3$^{rd}$ on their list.

### 6.6.2: Constraints related to groups in terms of gender

There were no notable differences in absence from meetings between the two gendered groups. However the study revealed that mistrust and groups disputes were major themes identified in all the women-only groups. Amongst the uplands groups four out of five mixed gendered groups complained of these same problems. It was noted that absence from meetings, mistrust and group disputes could be attributed more to group characteristics and assets accessed rather than gender composition of the group. Lack of commitment was found to be prevalent in women-only groups where they reported this constraint in comparison to three mixed gendered groups.

There were common problems reported by all the groups regardless of their gender, namely: Lack of capital, lack of information/skills and pests. However fencing was a problem experienced by all the women-only groups while only half of the mixed gendered groups experienced it (three from the uplands and one from the lowlands). Women-only groups thus ranked this as their first need while groups of mixed gender in the same location (uplands) ranked this need in the third position. This is consistent with GAD's (approach to women in development) argument that men and women have different experiences because of their gender roles and different access to resources. They are thus bound to have different development needs. Water problems were prevalent in four women-only groups.

### 6.6.3: Constraints and success of groups

Results revealed that out of eight less successful groups, seven cited group disputes, seven mistrust and six absence from meetings as constraining their groups' functioning. An equally large number of groups cited fencing (eight) and water (six) as project constraints.

All the successful groups (two from uplands and three from the lowlands) rated themselves as either having average or high commitment to their groups, while none of the less successful category rated themselves as having high levels of commitment to the group (see table 6.10). According to Baswalo and Baartjies (2001:90) groups that face functioning constraints do not do well. Longernecker *et al* (1997:110) also argue that women's groups fail due to poor management, lack of business and marketing skills and lack of capital. Barriers to better functioning of groups have been summed up by Maliwichi (1998:79) as illiteracy, lack of skills, bad social, financial and physical infrastructure. These hinder growth of women's group projects. All the less successful groups in the study faced these constraints. Gender and development literature indicates that women's earnings are limited by lack of literacy, vocational and business skills and capital.

**Table 6.10: Group self rating in commitment at the time of the study (2005) (n=13)**

| | | | Group success rating | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Successful | Less successful | |
| Self rating in commitment to the group | low commitment | Count | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| | average commitment | Count | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| | high commitment | Count | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | | Count | 5 | 8 | 13 |
| | | % of Total | 38.5 | 61.5 | 100 |

($\chi^2$ test p=0.034)

In summary, the study found that group functioning constraints seemed to be more severe amongst the less successful upland groups. Groups which accessed fewer assets experienced disputes, mistrust, and lacked commitment. However this also had a gender dimension in that women-only groups all experienced these constraints. Similarly constraints related to projects such as water and fencing were also experienced by groups with access to fewer assets. Successful and less successful groups also ranked their priorities differently. It is not a surprise

then that the less successful groups were those that accessed fewer assets, experienced group disputes, mistrust and rated themselves low in commitment. Their project constraints (water and fencing) can be said to be more immediate (lower level).

## 6.7: Benefits to group members

This section looked at factors that motivated women to stay in their groups despite the constraints already discussed. It has looked at how the groups benefitted the women from their own perspective. It has also explored whether group differences in terms of assets accessed and gender composition were contributory factors to the way the groups rated themselves in terms of benefits. Self rating was measured using beans where each member of the group was asked to pick a certain number of beans out of 10 to indicate how much she/he had benefitted from her/his group. The higher the number of beans the more benefits the participant realised from the groups. The researcher then calculated the average for every group. An average that was below 5 was regarded as low/little change, while group averages between 5-6 were regarded as having experienced average change. Those averages between 7-10 were said to have gained a lot from their groups.

The groups' participants cited various ways in which they benefitted from their groups. These benefits kept them motivated in their own groups. It is evident from the table 6.11 that it was not really the income earned that made the women remain in their groups, but it was the food security as cited by 12 out of the 13 groups. Emphasis was laid on this by the group participants that being in the groups had enabled them to feed their families. Group interaction had enabled 10 of the groups to gain self confidence. Nine groups indicated that the surrounding community had come to respect them as a result of their initiatives. High reliance on one another in times of need was cited as a benefit by eight groups while the same number of groups revealed that there had been little change in income as a result of the group. A sizable number of groups (seven) indicated having a greater sense of belonging to their groups.

**Table 6.11: Self ratings of benefits received through the groups at the time of the study (2005) (n=13)**

| Benefits | Self-rating (mode) | Number of groups |
|---|---|---|
| Food security | Average change | 12 |
| Increase in self confidence | Average | 10 |
| Respect from the community | Average change | 9 |
| Reliance on one another | High reliance | 8 |
| Income | Little change | 8 |
| Sense of belonging | High | 7 |

## 6.7.1: Food security

All the groups (successful and less successful) indicated having experienced a positive change in food security. This is an indicator that the groups played a major role in women's household food security. However it was noted that the groups which accessed more assets rated themselves as having experienced a greater change in food security in their households as a result of their group activities. One of the reasons why these women formed groups was to address a food insecurity problem that was prevalent in the area. This problem resulted in malnutrition especially with the children. The women took it upon themselves to change the situation. The women organised themselves into groups to address this common problem and seek a collective solution. This, Carr *et al* (1996:45) refer to as empowerment. This accounts for why food security as a purpose of the groups was mentioned by virtually all the groups. As the results revealed, the purpose has been achieved. Literature upholds the role of women in fighting the current food crisis. According to Mugerwa (2001:5), subsistence agriculture still dominates the working lives of more than half of the world's women. Nussbaum (2000:3) further points that women in Africa produce 78% of the continent's food with very limited access to production resources, land included. Giovarelli (2004:12), in his discussion on rural women states that for many decades, the women of Africa with very poor technologies have largely contributed to the sustenance of the continent and their contribution to survival in most African governments is key and cannot be underestimated. According to James (1995:69), a study carried out in India found that food security of member households improved after participation in groups. The lesson that was learnt from this study is that there is value in using groups as a conduit for achieving food security.

### 6.7.2 Increase in self confidence

Self confidence resulting from group interaction and group activities was reported by successful and less successful groups. All successful groups rated themselves as average while five less successful groups also did so. The groups defined self confidence in terms of being able to mobilise, express themselves, articulate their needs and initiate change to improve their social and economic situations. *"We had to realise the situation we were in; then we had to decide what we had to do about it; we could not just sit and suffer when we could do something"* [common response in all the focus group discussions]. The women-only groups had another angle of self confidence. They indicated that they felt that their self confidence had been boosted by the knowledge that they can lead and manage their groups without having men in their groups. *"We are the way you see us here: there is no man/men in this group; yet we have been able to manage ourselves; we still have our problems; but we sort those amongst ourselves"* [a women-only group comment: F.G 5]. The committee members emphasised that the groups had given them a forum in which to practice leadership. *"This group has made me realise that I have leadership skills; and that I can talk in front of people. I feel good about this; now I feel that I can lead anywhere"* [committee member of a successful group: F.G 13]. This is consistent with Carr *et al* (1996:193) argument that women lose fear and gain confidence when they come together in solidarity.

Sharing of knowledge which is done in these groups was perceived as self-affirming. The group was perceived as an important forum (which they did not have before) for sharing information amongst group members. The groups' participants indicated that they learnt a lot from each other about a variety of topics. *"We teach each other skills like making mats and brooms, knitting, sewing, cooking and preserving different types of food. Learning new things makes us feel good about ourselves"* [response running through all the focus groups]. This was done informally during group activities and at their meetings. This is in line with a study that was done in Western Zambia by Geran (1996:4) on the effect of group formation on the rural women's welfare. The women reported having felt vulnerable while on their own and recovered self confidence when they came together in their groups. *"When I come to these meetings, I have people to talk to who can understand me. We share our problems and help each other with advice on how to handle problems related to our marriages or children"* [response running through all the focus groups].

### 6.7.3 Respect from the community

Less successful groups felt that there had been an average change in terms of respect from the community as a result of their group initiatives. Successful groups' (from both the uplands and the lowlands) members felt that the community members respected them highly for their initiatives. *"The community members have seen what our group has achieved. They do not have to travel far distances to buy vegetables. They just come to our garden and we sell to them"* [response common in the focus group discussions of all the successful groups: F.G 12-16]. This is consistent with studies done by Hartwig (2000:32) and Qaim (2000:45) which revealed that implementing a group project from which other members of the village profit raises their standing within the village community. As a result this reinforces their self confidence and their self esteem, a benefit already discussed on 6.9.2.

### 6.7.4 Reliance on one another

The groups seemed very important in times of need whereby both successful and less successful groups indicated that they relied greatly on one another in those times. The reliance according to the women came at times when labour was especially needed. This was during weddings, funerals and weeding and harvesting times. These according to the women were the times that being in a group was really valued. *"Looking out for one another is important for us. The group comes in handy especially during funerals, weddings, during planting, weeding and harvesting times. This is when we pool labour and other resources together to help those members in need; one cannot manage on her own"* [responses common in all the focus groups]. This is confirmed by Hartwig (2000:33) who contends that other than economic activities that women's groups undertake, they also offer mutual assistance in emergency situations. This discussion is taken further by DFID's (2002:24) argument that social capital enables the poor to avoid falling behind since it ensures survival during periods of intense insecurity. The groups act as social resources, informal safety nets upon which the women draw especially in difficult times.

### 6.7.5 Increased income

Positive income changes as a result of group activities were reported by the groups. However this was significantly different (P=0.012: see appendix G table 18) for successful and less successful groups as shown on table 6.12. Positive income change may be a contributory factor to success of

the groups. Out of the 10 groups in the uplands, seven less successful groups reported having experienced little change in income while two successful ones felt a lot of change had taken place in terms of income as a result of their group activities (see table 6.12). The differences in the ratings could be related to the characteristics of the groups (better organised, more assets accessed). This agrees with other studies done on women's groups who undertake income generating projects. Bukh (1979:142) is of the opinion that women's group activities lead to more income for the women which leads to increases in savings. Though Qaim (2000:46) disagrees with the notion of more incomes and savings, she indicates that women do acquire small income from the group activities, which they value given that there are very limited economic activities in the rural areas.

**Table 6:12: Self rating in income changes and group success at the time of the study (2005) (n=13)**

| | | | Group success rating | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Successful | Less successful | |
| Self rating in income changes as a result of group | Little change | Count | 1 | 7 | 8 |
| | More change | Count | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Total | | Count | 5 | 8 | 13 |
| | | % of Total | 38.5 | 61.5 | 100 |

($\chi^2$ test p=0.012)

Asked how they spent this income, the groups reported that they spent it in household activities like buying fuel, clothing, on counter medications and transport fares. *"I use money I get from these group activities to meet other household needs"* [responses common in all the focus groups]. However most groups emphasised that it was not hard cash as per se, but the amount that they saved by growing their own food for household consumption. This agrees with other studies done in South Africa by Narayan and Pritchett, (1997:75) who found large, positive and significant impacts of women's group membership on household welfare. According to a collaborative study done by University of Natal, South Africa, University of Wisconsin-Madison in the U.S.A and IFPRI (2000:3), doubling KwaZulu-Natal's household membership in groups increases income by almost 10%.

### 6.7.6 Sense of belonging

All group participants felt a sense of belonging to their groups. However this was rated differently by the groups as shown in table 6.13. Successful groups rated themselves highly while the less successful ones rated themselves as average. It was noted that these groups were the ones with access to more assets and were better organised. The groups served as a place where women felt at home; they felt accepted and understood (Masika & Joekes, 1996:90). This is further affirmed by a study carried out by USAID (2003:6), which concluded that women's groups give rural women, who have hardly any potential to organise themselves, an opportunity to enjoy a space of their own. Besides as DFID (2002:16) puts it "social capital can make a particularly important contribution to people's sense of well being through identity, honour and belonging.

**Table 6.13: Self rating in sense of belonging and group success at the time of the study (2005) (n=13)**

| | | | Group success | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Successful | Less successful | |
| Self rating; sense of belonging | Average | Count | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| | High | Count | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| | | % of Total | 38.5 | 61.5 | 100 |

($\chi^2$ test p =0.003)

### 6.8: Gender and self rating in income

Income rating revealed differences (see table 6.14) between the two gendered groups. All the women's only groups reported that they had experienced little positive change in income since they joined the group in comparison with the mixed groups who indicated having experienced more positive change in income. Data from the uplands alone indicated similar results where three (amongst these were two successful groups) out of five mixed gendered groups reported having experienced more positive change in income since joining their groups. It was also noted that groups which carried out more than three activities from both locations rated themselves higher in income changes. This corresponds with an earlier finding (already discussed) where mixed gendered groups were the ones who carried out more activities than women-only groups which had an average of two activities.

**Table 6.14: Gender composition of groups and self rating in income changes at the time of the study (2005) (n=13)**

| | | | Self rating in income | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Little change | More change | |
| Gender type of the group | Women only | Count | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| | Men and women | Count | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| | | % of total | 37.5 | 62.5 | 100 |

($\chi^2$ test p=0.009)

However these groups accessed more assets than women-only groups. This works to the latter's disadvantage. Assets are crucial to group functioning according to Dawson and Jean (1997:168). In their study which they carried out in India, lack of assets stifled the growth of women's groups and as a result members felt that their expectations were not being fulfilled. This led to decreased memberships in these groups.

A tendency was noted whereby women-only groups rated themselves as average in self-confidence and sense of belonging. Most mixed-gendered groups rated themselves as having a higher sense of belonging. Women-only groups reported that they relied heavily (high reliance) on one another in times of need as opposed to half (four out of eight groups) of the mixed gendered groups. As literature indicates this is one of the major reasons why women form groups; they act as a means of support especially in times of need, they are a safety net for their members in a world where they feel isolated and marginalised (Giovarelli, 2004:70). Through the South African Participatory Poverty Assessment, May *et al* (2000:569 citing May 1998a), confirm that the theme of isolation or exclusion is viewed as an important component and determinant of poverty in contemporary South Africa.

In summary, group participation benefitted the members in many ways the major one being food security. Groups which reported more positive changes in terms of income also accessed more assets and as a result undertook more activities. The group members in this category also reported a greater sense of belonging and felt that the other community members respected them more for their initiatives. These were in the successful category. From a gender perspective women-only

groups accessed fewer assets, undertook fewer activities, reported experiencing little change in income, and did not feel a greater sense of belonging although they relied heavily on one another. Maliwichi (1998:80), stated that women's groups which perform better are well managed, experience growth (as a result members feel rewarded by being in the groups), participation of members is good and have community and other forms of support.

### 6.9: Outsiders' perceptions

To ascertain how the outsiders perceived groups in the two locations, the researcher used a semi-structured questionnaire (see appendix C). This questionnaire was administered to a convenient sample of community members in each location. Sixty three percent (25) of the 40 outsiders interviewed about their perceptions of groups in the study were women. In comparison with other known community/group projects, block-making seemed to be known by more people (15%) than other community/ group projects. Other than the block-making group, the only groups to be mentioned were the community gardens that participated in this study (see table 6.15). The respondents' failure to include other organisations (for example church organisations and burial societies) may be attributed to the narrow way in which community groups were defined. The respondents indicated that their understanding of a community group was in relation to tangible activities that were carried out on a regular basis. Examples were bead-making, sewing and gardening activities.

**Table 6.15: Community groups known by outsider respondents at the time of the study (2005) (n=40)**

| Name of organisation | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Block-making | 15 |
| Inkanyezi | 12 |
| Siyazama | 12 |
| Siyajabula | 13 |
| Sbonokuhle | 10 |
| Siphamandla | 7 |
| Thathani | 8 |
| Sizathina | 8 |
| Phaphamani | 5 |
| Fundukuzezela | 5 |
| No known organisation | 5 |

Membership of groups seemed to be valued since 60% of those interviewed belonged to a community group. Reasons given by those who did not belong to any community groups ranged from lack of time (cited by 20%), perception that the groups undertook only women's activities (13%) while others perceived them as not beneficial (7%). Maphephethe groups were mostly known for gardening. This was cited by 78% of the respondents.

Groups were perceived as being beneficial to their participants by the outsiders. This was evidenced by an overwhelming 93% of the respondents. Food availability was cited by 70% of the respondents as the most important way in which the members had benefitted from these groups (see table 6.16). *"People who belong to these groups have a constant supply of vegetables; they sell to us and even when we have no money we take on credit. They are doing a good job for our village because we no longer have to travel to the markets to buy vegetables"* [response from members of the community: semi-structured interview]. This is consistent with Mugerwa's (2001:4) opinion that women's projects not only benefit the women at an individual level but also at community level. The community benefits through the supply of affordable locally-produced products. This benefits not only members but also the community because prices are affordable and costs of travelling to the market that is often far, are reduced.

**Table 6.16: Reasons provided by outsiders to support their views on group benefits at the time of study (2005) (n=40)**

| Reason | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Food availability | 28 | 70 |
| Income | 10 | 25 |
| Not applicable | 2 | 5 |

The study revealed that successful groups were more favourably perceived by the outsiders than the less successful groups (see table 6.17). The former were perceived as growing while the latter were perceived as stagnant. This is consistent with Maliwichi's (1998:81) indicators of successful groups where she has outlined that positive perceptions of groups by the outsider community is an indicator of group success. Seven groups from the uplands were perceived as stagnant by the respondents. The three that were perceived as growing (from the same location) were mixed

gendered and two were in the successful category group. Groups perceived favourably by the outsiders were said to be growing since they had diversified their activities. *"These groups started with a very small garden where they only produced spinach and cabbages. Now they are producing other vegetables like carrots and beetroot and also carrying out other activities like sewing"* [response from a community member: semi-structured interview].

**Table 6.17: Outsiders' perceptions of groups and group success at the time of the study (n=40)**

| | | | Group success | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Successful | Less successful | Total |
| Outsiders' perceptions of groups | Growing | Count | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| | Stagnant | Count | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| Total | | Count | 5 | 8 | 13 |
| | | % of Total | 38.5 | 61.5 | 100 |

($\chi^2$ test p =0.000)

The mixed groups seemed to be favoured by more people. Given a choice to join mixed groups or women's only groups, 75% of the respondents would choose mixed groups. These groups were perceived as growing and better organised by 68% of the respondents: see table 6.18). This corresponds with the already outlined findings where mixed gendered groups followed their constitution, kept minutes and hence had fewer group functioning problems. All the groups which accessed more assets were perceived as growing while those which accessed fewer were perceived by the outsiders as stagnant. As psychologists argue, perceptions can be based on expectancies resulting from past experience (Zimbardo & Philip 1990:201). Men in society are normally perceived as able, strong and ones who make a difference. Men are also perceived to have attributes required for the public domain such as rationality, logic and problem solving (Julien & Majake, 2005:74). Therefore any success is likely to be attributed to their presence in the groups.

**Table 6:18: Outsiders' perceptions of groups in relation to gender at the time of the study (n=40)**

| | | | Outsiders' perceptions of groups | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Growing | Stagnant | |
| Gender type of the group | Women only | Count | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| | Men and women | Count | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| Total | | Count | 5 | 8 | 13 |
| | | % of Total | 38.5 | 61.5 | 100 |

($\chi^2$ test p=0.009)

Though the study did not find any major differences between gendered groups' self-perception on growth, it was noted in the group discussions that the women valued "how far they had come" and what they got out of being in their groups. However, all the groups that were in the successful category perceived themselves as growing.

## 6.10: Groups' self perception and group success

Data on self perception was collected by use of participatory tool. For each group, members were required to pick a number of beans (out of ten) from a container to indicate how he/she perceived the group. An explanation was given by the assistant researchers that more beans picked indicated that the participant perceived his/her group as growing. Fewer beans picked indicated that the participant perceived his/her group as stagnant. The researcher then got the average of the groups. The researcher categorised group averages less than five as stagnant while those above five were categorised as growing. Evidence indicated that all the groups that were in the successful category perceived themselves as growing while only three out of eight groups in the less successful category perceived themselves as so (see table 6.19). Positive self perception was an indicator of success as argued by Maliwichi (1998:82). Successful groups thus tended to perceive themselves more positively than the less successful ones.

**Table 6:19: Group self perception and group success at the time of the study (2005) (n=13)**

| | | | Group success | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Successful | Less successful | |
| Group self perception of growth/success | Growing | Count | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| | Stagnant | Count | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Total | | Count | 5 | 8 | 13 |
| | | % of Total | 38.5 | 61.5 | 100 |

($\chi^2$ test p =0.009)

Data on perceptions revealed that successful groups not only perceived themselves as growing but the outsiders also perceived them as so. Groups with access to more assets were perceived more favourably by the outsiders than those groups which accessed fewer assets.

## 6.11 Group success

As discussed at the beginning of this section, success ratings of groups were derived from various indicators (see table 6.1.). The study has revealed that there were certain aspects that enabled groups to be successful. It was not a coincidence that successful groups were the groups with more assets which they accessed and undertook more activities. They were the groups that had higher levels of literacy, they took minutes of their meetings, they had a group constitution which they followed, they networked with other groups, they renewed their membership annually and were more committed. This supports a study conducted in Malawi by Maliwichi (1998:78) within five women's income generating projects. Her study revealed that groups needed good infrastructure, adequate level of literacy, good leadership, participation of all group members in decision making and group activities, regulations and guidelines to group norms, training of all group members in group dynamics and business management, proper selection of group enterprises and a stable market for their commodities. In Maphephethe, the groups that rated themselves highly in commitment were in the successful category. Successful groups reported greater income and rated themselves highly in terms of a sense of belonging. On the other hand, the groups that were perceived more favourably by the outsiders were in the successful category. These groups were also mixed gendered groups. This finding is in agreement with GAD approach to development which views men as potential supporters of women. This may also be seen in light of World Bank's (2005:12) argument that poverty reduction programmes are likely to be successful if men and women are equally integrated in these programmes. Thus any

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development actions undertaken should bear in mind the general position of males and females and seek to address the situation for common good of both.

## 6.12 Summary of the Results

This study investigated the contribution of assets, group management, constraints, benefits and community support to the success of Maphephethe rural women's groups. The study explored whether successful groups were different in terms of functioning, assets accessed constraints faced, benefits acquired from group participation and the way the community perceived the groups. It is evident from the discussion that there were key differences between successful and less successful groups of Maphephethe in terms of accessed assets, functioning, types of constraints, intensity of benefits and the way that the outsider community perceived them. There were also differences in the way the two groups perceived themselves. Less successful groups were characterised by members with lower educational levels. More than half (five groups) of these groups were women-only groups. Low literacy levels which affected their management and proper functioning and lack of fencing and access to water were more prevalent in these groups. These affected the way that they operated which was detrimental to their success. Women-only groups accessed fewer assets, and undertook fewer activities. On the other hand all the women-only groups did not follow their constitutions and never rotated their office bearers. This may have contributed to group functioning constraints reported by these groups. Successful groups were of mixed gender, and accessed more assets which may have enabled them to undertake more activities. These can be perceived as double advantages. They organised themselves better, they had a constitution which they followed, they rotated their office bearers, they networked, they were more committed, had long term types of constraints and rated themselves highly in terms of benefits derived from group membership. The rural women will therefore need to be educated as a means of helping them develop their rich potential and maximise their contributions to the welfare of their households and to rural development efforts in general. This discussion has therefore led to the conclusion that successful women's groups of Maphephethe were characterised by higher literacy levels, were of mixed gender, had access to more resources, were well run, and not only perceived themselves favourably but the outsiders perceived them as so. They reported greater income, higher levels of commitment to the group and a higher sense of belonging to their groups. Table 6.20 below highlights factors that may have contributed to

success of groups. These are factors identified during the study as well as those outlined on table 6.1. As discussed in this chapter, these factors have been supported by the reviewed literature.

**Table 6.20 Major differences between successful and less successful women's groups of Maphephethe**

| Successful groups: Enabling factors | Less successful groups: Disabling factors |
|---|---|
| More assets and more accessed | Few assets and less accessed |
| Undertook more activities | Fewer activities |
| Mixed gendered | Women-only |
| Higher education levels | Low education levels |
| Were better organised | Less well organised |
| Networked with other groups | Did not network with other groups |
| Members more committed | Members less committed |
| Avoided group functioning constraints | Had group functioning constraints |
| Had long term needs | Had more immediate needs |
| Realised greater incomes | Realised lesser incomes |
| Members had greater sense of belonging | Members had less sense of belonging |
| Perceived favourably by the community | Perceived less favourably by the community |

The following chapter presents the summary of the results, researcher's conclusions and recommendations based on the conclusions of the study. Implications for further research have also been presented.

# CHAPTER SEVEN
## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women form groups to address their common problems. Literature consulted in this study has shown that rural women's involvement in group activities is pervasive throughout the third world. Throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America, women in the rural areas form groups to carry out a development activity. They thus contribute greatly to the informal economies of many developing countries through food and crop production. However by virtue of their gender they face various handles. They need basic literacy skills, training and capital amongst other resources to be able to successfully conduct and participate in these activities.

The purpose of this study was to explore the contribution of assets, group management, constraints, benefits and community support to the success of Maphephethe rural women's groups. The study therefore investigated the structure, asset availability and access, functioning and management of women's groups. The types of constraints that the women's groups faced were also identified as well as the benefits that women derived from group participation. Perceptions of the community towards the women's groups were also explored. All these factors were investigated in relation to group success.

Data was collected using focus groups, PRA, in-depth interviews, de Wet Schutte P-Index, observation and semi-structured questionnaires. The latter were used to collect data to find out about the outsiders' perceptions of the women's groups. Qualitative data was reduced to themes and categories with the aid of a coding procedure. Coding made it possible to retrieve all text relevant to a single topic. Quantitative data was analysed using Chi-Square tests.

Data relating to structure, asset availability, and access, functioning and management of women's groups established that successful and less successful groups in the study area were organised differently. Groups which accessed more assets were the same groups with higher average education levels, were mixed gendered groups, were well run and undertook more activities. It was noted that women-only groups still accessed fewer assets than the mixed gendered groups within the uplands. The mixed gendered groups were also well run. In terms of success then, its

not a surprise that the women-only groups with their low education levels (which hindered their organising and management), being in a location where there were fewer assets available which they could hardly access undertook fewer activities and as a result could not meet the requirements of a successful group.

The second sub-problem explored the types of constraints that women's groups faced. The results revealed that women's groups faced various types of constraints. These were divided into two: The ones that touched on group functioning and management (absence from meetings, mistrust, group disputes and lack of commitment) and those that related to their various projects that they undertook (lack of capital, lack of information and skills, pests, fencing, water, lack of market, inadequate plots of land). The results illustrated major differences. Constraints were more prevalent amongst the less successful upland groups. Data revealed that mistrust and group disputes were the two major group functioning constraints that were different for successful and less successful groups. The latter groups experienced these thus constraining their functioning. In relation to assets, groups which accessed fewer assets were the ones which cited lack of commitment and mistrust as constraints. In addition to these, other major constraints experienced by the less successful groups were fencing and water. Ranking of needs varied between successful and less successful groups in that the latter ranked fencing as their first priority while this need was ranked a mere third by successful groups. The constraints also took a gender dimension in that the number of groups who reported having experienced group functioning problems was highest amongst the women-only groups. Ranking also varied by gender in that women-only groups' first priority was immediate (fencing), while that of a mixed-gendered groups was capital (from both uplands and lowlands). Groups' that were in the less successful category, experienced absence from meetings, mistrust, group disputes, fencing and water.

The third sub-problem identified the benefits derived from group participation despite all the constraints that they faced in their quest to earn a livelihood. The women cited various ways in which the groups benefitted them. In their own perspective, they had experienced increased food security, they had increased self confidence, they felt that the community respected them more, they could count on one another, saved money by growing their own food and they had gained some sense of belonging. Mixed gendered groups reported having experienced more change in

income. This could be attributed to the diversified number of activities they undertook in comparison with the women-only groups. The same groups also accessed more assets and rated themselves higher in terms of self confidence and sense of belonging. It was also noted that groups that rated themselves as having experienced more changes in income were the successful groups. Groups that rated themselves as having a higher sense of belonging were also successful groups. Thus it can be concluded that successful groups experienced positive income changes and their members felt greater sense of belonging to the group.

The fourth sub-problem assessed the perceptions of the outsiders towards the women's groups. The women's groups were known by the outsiders (community) for their gardening since the outsiders buy some of the groups' products. They were also perceived as beneficial to the members. However, mixed gendered groups (accessed more assets) were more favourably perceived in that they were seen as growing and better organised while women-only groups were perceived as stagnant. Groups that were in the successful category were the same that were perceived favourably by the outsiders. In addition to this, successful groups perceived themselves as growing. Thus it can be concluded that successful groups accessed more assets, were of mixed gender, were not only perceived favourably by the community members but also perceived themselves as so.

## 7.1 Conclusions

The hypothesis of this study that stated that groups which are well run, have access to assets are in a better position to tackle constraints and thus able to realise benefits for their members was accepted. The groups which were well run adhered to the constitution, took minutes, kept records and thus had fewer group functioning constraints because they had a mechanism in place in form of an utilised constitution.

The study concluded that groups which had higher average education levels functioned well. This may have enabled successful groups to run their groups well. Lower average education levels may have hindered proper functioning of less successful groups. Instead their meetings were characterised by arguments and repetitions since they did not take minutes and did not follow their group constitutions. Access to assets was crucial to group success. Water which was used to

irrigate the gardens was not accessed by the less successful groups. This could have resulted to poor yields and realisation of greater incomes. Less successful groups did not rate themselves as having realised greater incomes from their activities. Successful groups accessed more assets which may have enabled them to diversify their activities (they undertook more activities) than those who accessed fewer assets. The groups that accessed fewer assets lacked commitment, experienced mistrust and disputes. These were mainly women-only groups. The presence of older men especially in the lowlands groups (where men were reported to be quite active) may have played a crucial role in the group success. They commanded respect in their both in their groups and in the community at large.

The study also concluded that though the constraints relating to projects were similar for both successful and less successful groups, there were certain ones (like water and fencing) that were more specific to the less successful groups and as result the ranking of needs between to these two group categories differed.

This study has also come to a conclusion that the groups served a specific purpose in the lives of their participants. Gardening which was the sole purpose of these groups enabled the women to feed their families in their households. The income realised by the groups through the sale of surplus food crops, beads and other form of crafts was used for buying of school uniforms, medications and on taxi fares. Thus it has been concluded these groups contributed to the household welfare.

Successful groups were generally mixed gendered groups which reported experiencing more income from gardening and greater sense of belonging. Groups with more assets rated themselves higher in self-confidence and sense of belonging. They not only perceived themselves positively, but the outsiders also did so. This study has thus concluded that women's groups can do well if their members have higher literacy level, they are well managed, access adequate and crucial assets, realise some form of income for their members and have community support.

## 7.2 Recommendations for the groups

Following the conclusions made from the study, some recommendations for improvement can be made. Since illiteracy seems to be a major reason why minutes are not taken in meetings (thus resulting to arguments and repetitions), the groups can be advised to request some help from some of the teachers in their neighbouring areas to come and assist them write minutes especially whenever they have crucial meetings. On the other hand, the members of the groups argued that meeting every week was time consuming, (and most times they have no agenda for the meetings) it would be recommended that the group members come together and agree on the suitable number of times they would like to meet per month. However meeting once a month is recommended. Some groups which argued that they did not adhere to their constitution because they did not write it, should (after being trained on how to write a group constitution) come together and participate in the writing of their constitution. After writing it, they should then make sure that they follow it. The groups should also not lose focus of why they are in their groups. They should thus try and solve their group disputes in order for the groups to achieve their common goals.

One of the benefits that women derive from their groups is assisting each other with child-care especially in times of need. Since there were no crèches in the upland location, this study recommends that these women make their own arrangements for child-care. They can take turns to mind the children of group members in their homes.

It is recommended that the groups be encouraged to network amongst themselves, to learn lessons from others and especially from successful groups. The groups in the two areas need to coordinate their activities for example, buying of inputs, harvesting and transport so that they can benefit from better economies of scale. They can also be advised to grow common crops that have good demand and value in the local market.

## 7.3 Public and private policy recommendations

The role that the women's groups play in the livelihoods of the poor cannot be over-emphasized. Therefore these groups need to be strengthened through the following ways.

Group leadership needs to be developed. Developing leadership to best meet the needs of the group will enable group leaders to effectively respond to community members' needs and create productive groups. Leadership and management training is also needed to improve the internal functioning of groups in order to learn how to handle conflicts and misunderstandings within the groups. This not only applies to the group leaders but also to the members who need ongoing training in problem solving, communication, negotiation and conflict resolution. This would create cohesive groups with common vision and articulated plan. Besides, training in constitution writing would enable the women to rotate office bearers in the long run, thus benefit in acquiring leadership and organisational skills which as of now are only concentrated in a few

NGO's and other organisations can help these groups to develop systems for external consultation (external links) with other groups/organisations. Elite women can also be encouraged to establish links with these rural women's groups. Formation of partnerships would help the women's groups in areas such as developing competitive and marketable products and also being linked directly to potential buyers of their produce.

Good infrastructure is the key to the integration of remote areas where the poor live. Without adequate access to services such as water and energy, women's time is spent on non-productive activities such as collection of water and fuel. An adequate provision of these services especially in the upland location would ease women's burden. In turn they would use this time on other productive activities. It would also free the women to have more time to attend training and networking with other groups. There is need for provision of public telephones in the upland location to enhance passing on of information. There is also need for other cell-phone (currently it is only MTN) companies to service the area so that the people can get easier access to information.

Provision of good road networks especially in the uplands (less successful groups) would not only enable the community members to move between major towns, markets and their rural area more easily, but also be better informed about opportunities. Improved infrastructure would enhance trading activities and thus diversify livelihoods. It would also encourage small businesses to enter the market, thus contributing to job creation. In addition to this, it would

facilitate the transportation of goods to the market. The government should however make sure that the provision of infrastructure takes place in a manner that enhances job opportunities for unemployed women in this area.

The extension officer assigned to the area needs to visit the groups more often to offer the much needed services given it would save money and time to offer these services to these already formed groups.

The groups desperately need financial capital which is the least available form of asset to them. There is need to look into developing effective tailored financial services for them. Increasing access to financial services including overcoming barriers associated with their lack of collateral, either by providing some sort of umbrella guarantee or by identifying mechanisms that enable their existing assets to act as collateral. Group lending approaches such as Grameen Bank system may be considered.

Capacity building is important for the achievement of positive livelihood outcomes. Without knowledge and skills it becomes difficult to make best use (effective use) of resources. Establishment of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is necessary in Maphephethe. However this should focus on the relevant areas of need (relevant knowledge and skills as defined by these rural women's groups themselves; areas they feel they are particularly lacking) for example minute taking, record keeping, production and marketing skills, pest control, soil conservation and others. Therefore any program of learning designed to help these women's groups to achieve their goals will need to be tailor-made for their felt needs. To make literacy programmes effective, they should be learnt through the other skills and activities which make up the daily work and lives of the women participants. This will enable them to see the relationship between their group activities and the literacy programmes. It is through training that the groups would produce competitive and marketable products. Thus literacy programs in this area are not only morally right, but economically necessary.

The research institutes need to sterilise and analyse the soil and find out (the untapped wealth of the soil) which other types of crops can do well in the area. Sterilising the soil would result to

avoiding soil borne pests which are a hazard to the area. They need to teach these women's groups various biological pest and disease control methods. They could use a plot for a pilot phase in research which could also serve as a training ground for the rest of the group members. Identification of best common crops for each area (lowlands and the uplands) coupled with training the women's groups would enable them to become efficient producers with good volumes of high quality. This would lead to an improvement of crop quality and quantity.

The government should look into reforming the laws so that women and men have equal opportunities and benefits. The reality is that women do not own and have no control over land in which they do their farming/gardening and this limits their long-term planning.

## 7.4 Recommendations for the improvement of this study

The study could have involved all the groups in the lowland location to ensure a more reliable comparison of all the groups. The researcher could have interviewed the men in the mixed gendered groups in order to determine their role in these groups. This could have given a clearer picture of the groups' operations from a gender perspective. The study could also have interviewed the extension officer operating in the area to have more in-depth information about the agricultural potential of the area.

The group members' perceptions and interpretations of assets (even after the researchers' explanations) were assumed to be correct. The groups' placements of assets which they felt were both social and financial (e.g. stokvels), or social and physical (community hall) was accepted. For the improvement of this study, GIS maps of both locations could have been analysed in order to get a more accurate listing of the community assets.

## 7.5 Implications for further study

It is necessary to carry out further studies to establish whether the groups which were in the successful category (mixed-gendered groups) were successful even before the men joined these groups. It is also necessary to carry out further study of women-only groups in the lowlands and compare with the women-only groups in the uplands to find out whether their performance would vary. The results would then confirm whether its gender variable or differences in assets accessed that is mainly contributory to the group success.

There is need to carry out an evaluation of the groups after they undergo some form of training in constitution writing, record keeping, minute taking and conflict management to find out whether there will be an improvement in group functioning. An evaluation also needs to be done after the groups receive some capital and skills training to determine whether their products have improved, whether the group members experience increased yields, whether there are markets for these crops and whether incomes increase after training.

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# APPENDIX A

Focus groups discussion guiding questions

1 Name………………………………

2 Age in years………………………

3. Gender…………………………….

4. Marital status……………………..

5. Education level……………………

6. Source of income…………………

## SECTION B

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDING QUESTIONS

**NAME OF THE GROUP:**

**LOCATION:**

**TYPE OF GROUP: MIXED** (MEN AND WOMEN): **WOMEN ONLY**

1) When was this group formed

   How many members were you when you started?

   How many are you now?

   What are the possible causes of the decrease/increase of the members?

2) What is the purpose of this group?

3) What activities (projects) does this group undertake?

4) What products do you produce?

5) Where do you market these products?

   How do you price them?

6) Where do you get money to run these projects?

7) Have you ever applied for a loan? Y/N

   If no why?

   If yes, where did you apply to?

   How much was granted?

   What conditions were you given by the loaning institution?

What did you use the money for?

   If it was granted how did you use the money?

   If it was turned down what reasons did the loaning institution give you?

8) Are any members of this group aware of any training centres relating to your project (s)? Y/N

   If Yes: Please state the/these training centres

9) Has this group ever received an invitation to attend any form of training? Y/N

   If Yes: When and where:

10) Are you aware of any agricultural officers who work in this area? Y/N

   How many are they?

   Who are they?

   How helpful are they?

11) Have any agricultural officers ever come to visit you to talk about farming? Y/N

   If Yes: When was the last time you were visited?

   And the time before that?

12) How much land do you use for your crop cultivation?

   How did you acquire this land?

   How productive is this land?

13) What resources/assets do you have at your disposal? (Mapping exercise)

Physical resources:

Natural resources

Financial resources

Social resources

Human resources

14) In which ways have these community assets contributed to the welfare of your group?

15) What constraints do you as a group face in day today running of your project/s in relation to;

      a)   Group functioning?

      b)   Group project (s)?

             Lack of credit: Lack of information/training, Lack of market: Water, Small plots, low production, group disputes, lack of trust

16) Have you tried networking with other groups in this area which have similar projects? Y/N

If Yes: What are your experiences?

If No: Why?


17) How often does this group meet in a month?

What time of the day do you schedule your meetings?

What do you discuss in these meetings?

What is the quality of these meetings?

Any special meetings within the month? Y/N

If Yes, which ones?

18) Who is eligible to join this group?

19) How long do office bearers remain in office?

Do you have a constitution? Y/N

Do you follow the constitution? Y/N

Do you take minutes in your meetings? Y/N

If No: Why?

20) Do you keep records? Y/N

If Yes: what kind of records do you keep?

      Who keeps them?

If No: Why don't you keep records?

21) How are your office bearers elected?

Does this work for you as a group?

Do you rotate office bearers? Y/N

If Yes: Why?

If No: Why?

22) How committed are the members to this group? (Self rating)

23) In what ways has your life changed (benefits) since joining this group in terms of income: (self rating)

Food security: (self rating)

Status/respect in the community: (self rating)

Empowerment/self confidence: (Self rating)

Sense of belonging: (self rating)

24) To what extent do the members of this group rely on each other in times of need? (Self rating )

# APPENDIX B

Guiding questions for group leaders for verification of group discussions with the members

**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR GROUP LEADERS (OFFICE BEARERS)**

**NAME OF THE GROUP:**

**LOCATION:**

**TYPE OF GROUP: MIXED: WOMEN ONLY**

**Management and functioning of groups**

1) Do members of the executive committee ever get paid for their services to the group? Y/N

2) Does the executive committee present a record of its financial transactions to its members in the meetings? Y/N

3) Does someone who is trusted by the members of the group check financial records? Y/N

4) Can members attend Executive committee meetings even if they are not members of the committee? Y/N

If they do attend, are they allowed to vote on management decisions? Y/N

5) How many times do you meet in a month?

6) What rules do you have (if any) for the use of group funds?

7) What is the group policy on giving credit to its participants?

# APPENDIX C

**Semi-structured questions administered randomly to individual community members in the area to assess outsider perception of women's groups in Maphephethe.**

**Semi-structured questions administered randomly to community members in the area to assess outsider perception of women's group in Maphephethe.**

**Gender: A) Male B) Female**

**Age: A) 18-25 B) 26-35 C) 36-50 D) Over 50**

1) Do you know any two community organisations or clubs in this area? Y/N.

   Are you a member of any one of them?

   If No: Are there any reasons why you do not belong to any community organisations in this area?

2) Is your wife/husband a member of any community group? Y/N

3) Are you aware of the existence of any women's groups in this area? Y/N.

   If yes: Briefly name them and explain what they do?

4) In your view, are women's groups beneficial to the participants? Please elaborate your response

5) In your opinion, are these groups growing or are stagnant? Please elaborate your answer

6) If you were to join any of these groups which one would you prefer and why?

# APPENDIX D

Maphephethe group names and their meanings

Maphephethe Women's groups and their meanings

| Group name | Meaning |
| --- | --- |
| Siyajabula | We are happy |
| Thathani | Seize the opportunity |
| Nkululekweni | Place of freedom |
| Bekhokuhle | Look for the good |
| Sizathina | Help us |
| Siphesihle | Nice gift |
| Siyazama | We are trying |
| Siphamandla | Give us power |
| Inkanyezi | Shining star |
| Lindokuhle | Good expectation |
| Phaphamani | Wake up |
| Fundukuzezela | Learn to do it by yourself |
| Sibonokuhle | We realised the goodness of a group |

## APPENDIX E

Summary of Maphephethe assets

| Asset Type | Sub-Classification of Asset | Identification of asset by focus group | Group 1 | | Group 2 | | Group 3 | | Group 4 | | Group 5 | | G6 | | Group 7 | | Group 8 | | Group 9 | | Group 10 | | Group 11 | | Group 12 | | Group 13 | | Total No. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Availability | Access | Availability | Access | Availability | Access | Availability | Access | Availability | Access | Avail | Access | Availability | Access | Availability | Access | Availability | Access | Availability | Access | Availability | Access | Availability | Access | Availability | Access |
| Social | | Schools | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| | | Permanent clinic | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 5 | 3 |
| | | Crèches | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 5 | 3 |
| | | Mobile clinic | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 10 | 10 |
| | | Churches | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| | | Community groups | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| | | Courthouse | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3 | 3 |
| | | Community hall | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3 | 3 |
| | | Sports... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 8 |
| | | Trees and grassveld of the commons | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| Natural | | Trees and Grassveld | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| | | Animals Donated | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 2 |
| | | Land | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 6 |
| | | Rivers | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| | | Water | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 6 |
| Financial | | Businesses owned by individuals | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| | | Pensions & grant | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| | | Savings Clubs/stokvel | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 7 |
| | | Stokvels, Crops, Chickens, Credit | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| Human | | People(men, women and children) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 15 | 13 |
| | | Pensioners | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 9 |
| | | Chief/Indunas | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| | | Teachers, nurses, doctors | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 7 |
| Infrastructure | | Water taps | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 6 |
| | | Houses | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| | | Bridges | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| | | Solar | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 6 | 2 |
| | | electricity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3 | 2 |
| | | roads | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| | | public phones | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3 | 2 |
| | | Water tanks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 10 | 6 |
| Physical | Facilities | Dam | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3 | 3 |
| | | Public transport(taxis and buses) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| | | Shopping centres | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| | | Technology/... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 5 |
| | | Schools | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 13 |
| | | Sports grounds (field) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 7 | 5 |
| | | Community Hall | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 7 | 3 |
| | | Department of Agriculture | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 0 |
| | | Department of Social Welfare | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 13 | 0 |
| | Institutions and Structures | Farmers' Association | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 15 | 3 |

# APPENDIX F

An example of the "common" Maphephethe women's group constitution

**An example of the "common" Maphephethe women's group constitution**

(N.B: This is a direct translation from Zulu to English)

A list of the following office holders, members' names and their ID numbers was provided to the researcher but for the sake of maintaining privacy, they have not been revealed.

Chairperson:

Vice chairperson:

Secretary:

Vice secretary:

Treasurer:

Number of members:   16

The organisation was named Thathani (seize the opportunity) because the community was facing hunger. The aim was to start planting crops in community gardens so that we could eat and become healthy.

## Objectives

We want see ourselves living the same as other big organisations in future.

## Rules

- The joining fee of a new member who did not cut the grass or weeds to prepare for ploughing is R30.
- A sick person should report that on paper.
- Late comers to a meeting should pay R5.
- An interested person who wants to join the organisation but does not have the joining fee can pay in instalments.

## Selection of committee

The members of a committee are selected by raising hands.

## How should a member behave?

- When a member wants to speak, he or she should raise a hand with respect.

- If a member misses more than three meetings, she or he is called to discuss the issue with other members. If the members of the organisation do not succeed to solve the issue, they ask the executive committee to discuss it. If the member admits that she or he is guilty he or she has to pay a fine of R5.

## Our needs

- We would like to have a strong fence around our garden. We also need a gate for our garden.
- We would like to have watering cans, grass cutters, garden folks, boots and money to buy things that we need (e.g., seeds, hand-hoes, chickens and to buy material for crafts). We have a market to sell our products but we need a car to transport our crops to the market and our roads are not good.

Appendix G

Significant Chi-square tests between Maphephethe groups

# SIGNIFICANT CHI-SQUARE TESTS

## Table 1. Accessibility of asset and Education levels of groups

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 319.000(a) | 12 | .000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 427.185 | 12 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 90.825 | 1 | .000 |

## Table 2. Accessed assets and number of group activities

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 957.000(a) | 36 | .000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 875.462 | 36 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .039 | 1 | .844 |

## Table 3. Education levels and number of group activities

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 98.924(a) | 3 | .000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 128.236 | 3 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 92.417 | 1 | .000 |

## Table 4. Gender composition and number of group activities

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 82.722(a) | 3 | .000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 103.902 | 3 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 19.276 | 1 | .000 |

## Table 5. Gender of group and following of the constitution

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 6.964(a) | 2 | .031 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 8.947 | 2 | .011 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .405 | 1 | .524 |

**Table 6. Gender of group/rotation of office bearers**

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 5.078(b) | 1 | .024 | | |
| Continuity Correction(a) | 2.781 | 1 | .095 | | |
| Likelihood Ratio | 6.738 | 1 | .009 | | |
| Fisher's Exact Test | | | | .075 | .044 |

**Table 7. Education levels of groups and gender of groups**

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 100.850(b) | 1 | .000 | | |
| Continuity Correction(a) | 98.413 | 1 | .000 | | |
| Likelihood Ratio | 136.602 | 1 | .000 | | |
| Fisher's Exact Test | | | | .000 | .000 |

**Table 8. Group success and following of the constitution**

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 9.379(a) | 2 | .009 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 11.582 | 2 | .003 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 7.151 | 1 | .007 |

**Table 9. Group success and type of membership fee**

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 13.000(b) | 1 | .000 | | |
| Continuity Correction(a) | 9.118 | 1 | .003 | | |
| Likelihood Ratio | 17.323 | 1 | .000 | | |
| Fisher's Exact Test | | | | .001 | .001 |

**Table 10. Group success and minute taking**

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 9.479(a) | 2 | .009 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 11.917 | 2 | .003 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 7.273 | 1 | .007 |

**Table 11. Group success and arguments and repetitions**

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 9.479(a) | 2 | .009 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 11.917 | 2 | .003 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 2.841 | 1 | .092 |

**Table 12. Gender and group success**

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 5.078(b) | 1 | .024 |  |  |
| Continuity Correction(a) | 2.781 | 1 | .095 |  |  |
| Likelihood Ratio | 6.738 | 1 | .009 |  |  |
| Fisher's Exact Test |  |  |  | .075 | .044 |

**Table 13. Percentage of assets accessed and group disputes**

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 9.088(a) | 3 | .028 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 10.642 | 3 | .014 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 4.898 | 1 | .027 |

**Table 14. Percentage of assets accessed and water as project constraint**

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 10.183(a) | 3 | .017 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 13.504 | 3 | .004 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 5.419 | 1 | .020 |

**Table 15. Gender of group and commitment**

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 5.078(b) | 1 | .024 |  |  |
| Continuity Correction(a) | 2.781 | 1 | .095 |  |  |
| Likelihood Ratio | 6.738 | 1 | .009 |  |  |
| Fisher's Exact Test |  |  |  | .075 | .044 |

**Table 16. Self rating in commitment and group success**

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 5.078(a) | 2 | .079 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 6.738 | 2 | .034 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 4.505 | 1 | .034 |

**Table 17. Gender and self rating in income**

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 5.078(b) | 1 | .024 |  |  |
| Continuity Correction(a) | 2.781 | 1 | .095 |  |  |
| Likelihood Ratio | 6.738 | 1 | .009 |  |  |
| Fisher's Exact Test |  |  |  | .075 | .044 |

**Table 18. Group success and self rating in income**

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 5.923(b) | 1 | .015 |  |  |
| Continuity Correction(a) | 3.415 | 1 | .065 |  |  |
| Likelihood Ratio | 6.291 | 1 | .012 |  |  |
| Fisher's Exact Test |  |  |  | .032 | .032 |

**Table 19. Sense of belonging and group success**

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 6.964(b) | 1 | .008 |  |  |
| Continuity Correction(a) | 4.273 | 1 | .039 |  |  |
| Likelihood Ratio | 8.947 | 1 | .003 |  |  |
| Fisher's Exact Test |  |  |  | .021 | .016 |

**Table 20. Gender and outsiders' perceptions**

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 5.078(b) | 1 | .024 |  |  |
| Continuity Correction(a) | 2.781 | 1 | .095 |  |  |
| Likelihood Ratio | 6.738 | 1 | .009 |  |  |
| Fisher's Exact Test |  |  |  | .075 | .044 |

**Table 21. Group self perception and group success**

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 5.078(b) | 1 | .024 |  |  |
| Continuity Correction(a) | 2.781 | 1 | .095 |  |  |
| Likelihood Ratio | 6.738 | 1 | .009 |  |  |
| Fisher's Exact Test |  |  |  | .075 | .044 |

**Table 22. Outsiders' perceptions of groups and group success**

|  | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 13.000(b) | 1 | .000 |  |  |
| Continuity Correction(a) | 9.118 | 1 | .003 |  |  |
| Likelihood Ratio | 17.323 | 1 | .000 |  |  |
| Fisher's Exact Test |  |  |  | .001 | .001 |

# APPENDIX H

Rank ordered P-Indices

A table showing rank ordered P-Indices averaged for all the Maphephethe groups

| Item | P-index |
|------|---------|
| Financial capital | 7.4 |
| Information and skill | 7.3 |
| Pests | 6.8 |
| Fencing | 6.7 |
| Water | 6.6 |
| Land | 6.5 |
| Market | 6.4 |
| Alien plants invasion | 6.3 |
| Transport | 5.8 |
| Mediator | 5.2 |
| Additional members | 4.2 |

### 1. Financial capital                                      P=7.4

We need money to buy farm inputs like fertilisers, seeds and implements like forks, spades, and watering cans. We need to buy materials for sewing, machines threads and patterns. We need to buy candle wax in bulk so that we can produce more. Financial capital will enable us to better our products and also diversify activities.

### 2. Information and skills                                      P=7.3

We lack knowledge on how to grow healthy crops. We need new gardening methods and techniques. We need to know which other crops fit our soil type. We also need to know how to manage ourselves properly. Our low level of skills has led to low quality products. We need training on how to improve our products, how to market them and how to keep our books. We need a training centre here where we can get information easily, a place where courses are offered. We need to learn other skills that can earn us income. We need an agricultural extension officer who will visit us often.

### 3. Pests control                                          P= 6.8

Pests eat our crops and we end up harvesting very little. These pests contribute to hunger. They beat our purpose and yet we do not know the best way to control them. We need somebody to teach us how to control them.

### 4. Fencing                                                P=6.7

The gardens are not fenced or have a very weak and low fence. Our gardens lack a gate. The livestock come and eat our crops. As a result we harvest very little. This makes us feel very demoralised. Weak fencing/no fencing has also led to crop thefts.

### 5. Water                                                  P= 6.6

The river, water taps and water tanks are far. We have to carry water with cans for a long distance especially in winter. We are old and this makes us very tired. If the crops are not watered they get very dry and they wilt. In winter we grow very few crops. The river dries up; it's a hunger season for us. There is no water in our homes. We have to fetch from the taps/ rivers which are very far and this takes time. This eats into our time which we could put to other activities. This affects our attendance to group meetings. When we attend these meetings we can't stay for long because we always have to think of fetching water and firewood.

### 6. Land                                                   P=6.5

Our plots are small and the soil is poor. We can only plant one type of crop on the plot. We need bigger plots in order to plant different types of crops. Bigger plots will enable us to demarcate proper boundaries for each member. This will minimise border disputes. One member can have additional plot next to his/her home where we can built a bigger chicken run to keep more indigenous chickens.

### 7. Market                                                 P=6.4

We need a place to sell/display our products so that people will know where to come and buy. When we take our beadworks/craftworks to Durban we face a very stiff competition. We compete for very few customers. We sell our products at very low prices in order to attract customers. Our prices are not fixed. This leads to conflict with other traders; it's a hostile selling environment. There is low demand for our

crop in the community since everybody grows the same crops. The people who buy our products have very little income/ very low levels of savings. There is general poverty here and when community members can't afford to buy food, we normally give them.

## 8. Alien plants invasion                                    P=6.3

Alien plants invade our gardens especially in summer. They are hard to control. They compete for soil nutrients with our planted crops. This leads to low yields. These alien plants add to our labour since we have to keep cultivating the land in order to remove them.

## 9. Transport                                               P=5.8

We lack reliable transport to get our products to their potential consumers. We struggle to get taxis/buses especially when we come back late from Durban. Taxi/bus fares are also a bit high for us.

## 10. Mediator                                               P=5.2

We have arguments/personal differences in our groups. We do not seem to come to an agreement in our meetings. Some people in the group do not trust others. There is a lot of animosity amongst us. Some members do not want to leave their plots even when they are not tending to them any more. Some members do not adhere to group rules any more. The group leaders are not helping us in any way.

## 11. Additional members                                     P=4.2

Our group has very few members. As a result we don't have officials. This makes it hard to organise anything. Nobody represents us during club meetings. Our voices are not heard.

# APPENDIX I

An example of mapped assets

An example of mapped assets done by one of the groups from uplands Maphephethe