



Towards Poverty Alleviation:-Women Empowerment through Participation in Agricultural Development. A Case Study of Nyangavi Ward 5 in Guruve District of Mashonaland Central Province

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Abstract

This research explores the contribution made by women towards poverty alleviation through agricultural development and in particular the study focuses on Guruve's Nyangavi Ward 5. The study explores different activities of agriculture being done by women in the case study area, ranging from crop to animal husbandry. Drawing analysis from fieldwork interviews, FGDs, participant observations and case study analysis the research established that despite facing many challenges women in Nyangavi were heavily involved in several agricultural development activities. Such activities contributed in the transformation and upliftment of their individual and household livelihoods. The study also observed that the level of agricultural production and their efforts to address deep seated societal poverty in Nyangavi ward were also affected by many issues which include lack of resources, lack of support from government and the rainfall pattern which sometimes cause mistiming on the part of the women farmers. As a result, most, if not all women in the Nyangavi Ward 5 have remained trapped in the poverty cycle and also remain marginalized – at the peripheries of mainstream economic development. The study concludes by offering policy interventionist strategies that might be harnessed by different stakeholders in improving the situation of women farmers in Nyangavi ward 5 areas in Guruve. The study also observed that women are critical agents of economic change and local development if they receive adequate empowerment as informed by the Nyangavi case study.

Keywords: Developments, Poverty alleviation, Women empowerment, Participation.

1. Background to the study

In most of the developing countries, agriculture is an important sector and a significant contributor to the gross domestic product (GDP) of the economy. Women contribute immensely in agricultural development and poverty alleviation worldwide. Damisa et al (2007) pointed out that various researches conducted on the contribution of women to agricultural development suggest that women contribution to farm work is as high as 60 to 90% of the total farm tasks performed. This study focuses on women's contribution towards poverty alleviation through agricultural development, using the Nyangavi Ward5 community in Guruve South District of Mashonaland Central Province as a case study.

History has it that woman were the producers of food in their households. Agriculture was practiced since the Iron Age and women have always been active participants in this

endeavour. They engaged in several agricultural activities in order to feed their families. They could gather seeds and berries from the bushes to curb poverty. The Paramus Post (2007:2) wrote,

It has come to light that female humans have been the chief engine in the unprecedentedly high level of human sociability. They were the inventors of the most useful tools. They shared equally in the provision of food for human societies. They almost certainly drove the human invention of language and they were the ones who created agriculture.

Thus, women have a long history in terms of their contribution to poverty alleviation through agricultural development. They grew crops like corn, wheat, beans and many others. For clothing they used animal skins and woven garments. Globally, women were and considered as non-players to economic growth. This gave birth to the Beijing conference held in China in 1995 which sought to deliberate on the issues affecting women and how they would be addressed. Some gender based policies have now helped bring women on board in mainstream developmental issues. Women can now own land although this is still confined to a few. Many countries now consider women as able bodied people who can work as well as their male counterparts.

India is one such country that has seen women contributing immensely to household food security but remain largely invisible. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)(2013) pg3, estimates that “women produce between 60 and 80% of the food in most developing countries and are responsible for half of the world’s food production”. Although the majority of the female workforce in India is engaged in agriculture, most women do not have access to land rights. “India has a predominantly agrarian economy. Seventy percent of her population is rural and 60% of households engage in agriculture as their main source of income, as observed by Rae (1997) in an article entitled *Role of women in Agriculture*. Similar studies in Nigeria indicate that women have successfully been involved in agricultural development. Accordingly, Olawoye, (1989) observed that, “Apart from contributing to home activities, women were more involved in farm activities than men. It has been reported that 80% of the work done on the farm in Nigeria, especially in food production, harvesting and processing are carried out mainly by women”, Even as to date, women in Nigeria grow different types of crops which include groundnuts, soybean, rice, cowpeas, maize, sorghum, and vegetables, while also rearing livestock such as pigs, goats, sheep and poultry, *inter alia*.

A study in Malawi found that women had no contact with extension agents and their participation in developmental activities was very limited (Hirschman and Vaughan, 1984). Besides the deficiency of extension programme to target women farmers, women’s participation is constrained by practices such as the expectation that women need husband’s approval for any legal transaction (Doss, 1999). This shows that besides the patriarchal society being experienced in Malawi on the agricultural development of women, they have still engaged in intensive agricultural activities even without the assistance of the extension officers.

Gurube district is well known with its red fertile soils. It falls in agro -ecological region 3, which is associated with abundant rains. These high rainfall patterns make it ideal for the practice of intensive agriculture. The women in Gurube have consistently played an important role in meeting the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) Number One which focuses on total eradication of poverty and hunger. However, their efforts can only be fully achieved and realized through hard work and collaboration with the relevant authorities. Women in Nyangavi Ward5 in Gurube work hard in their fields to produce food crops. These women are powerful catalysts for sustainable development as well as agents against poverty and hunger. The women folk in Gurube also struggle with deeply rooted poverty. They work hard to produce food for their families and when possible, surplus for sale. They do dry planting as well as irrigation on field crops as well as market gardening

projects. They are also engaged in animal husbandry activities which include fishery, poultry, piggery, goats, among others. Looking at face value their efforts seem not to yield any meaningful change in terms of poverty eradication. Notably the women in Guruve have also continued to receive technical support from AREX officers in their respective areas on how to do productive agriculture but still more has to be done. Comparing with women in other countries, the level of agriculture for Nyangavi women is not up to standard and support from Government and NGOs in the form of agricultural inputs is very minimal. This has resulted in poverty levels remaining high. Fertilizers, chemicals and the expertise from trained personnel have caused minimum yields throughout the seasons. One finds himself/herself using maize stored for consumption as seed, a situation which definitely leads to poor yields.

Some women still use traditional conservation farming methods like the use of very little cattle and organic manure on large portions of land which obviously do not match the demand. To the households with cattle and goats, they lack vaccines especially when they are needed most during the rainy season. Ticks and other pests multiply during this time. Although these women have accommodation, it is still far below good housing standards. Although their children can afford to go school, they only manage to send them to the poor nearby rural schools, with only a very small number affording boarding schools. Some of them can also not afford hospital fees when it comes to health issues.

2. Statement of the Problem

Despite the participation and contribution of women in agricultural development in Nyangavi Ward 5 in Guruve South, the women in this area have remained poor. Poverty has affected most of the households in the area, to the extent of having children not attending school, people having very substandard accommodation, people failing to have basic medical attention, failing to obtain basic balanced diet and many more. The eradication of poverty and hunger is the number one Millennium Development Goal which the African Union intended to achieve by 2015. This has proved to be an uphill task as many nations including Zimbabwe have failed to achieve this. Given such a backdrop, the purpose of the study is to therefore identify and establish the extent of the contribution by women towards poverty alleviation through agricultural development initiatives in Nyangavi Ward5, Guruve South district in Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe.

3. Research Questions

- What roles do women play on poverty alleviation through agricultural development in Guruve South?
- To what extent has agricultural development been used as a tool for poverty alleviation by women in Nyangavi Ward 5 Guruve South community?
- How effective is Guruve South women's contribution towards poverty alleviation?

4. Literature Review

4.1. Theoretical Framework

The theory guiding this study is the Women in Development theory (WID) Collins (2013) which has ideas linked to the effectiveness Approach (EA). Agriculture is economically important in most developing countries. The concept surrounding the WID approach are the inequalities women faced, and how societies fail to acknowledge the impact of women in economic development, especially women in the rural areas. The responsibility of getting food for the families lies on the women, (Onwubike, 1990). This shows how women contribute to poverty alleviation despite lack of resources and being looked down upon by the society.

This theory helps to analyze the plight of women, even in the study area in Guruve. Moser (1998:32) argues that:

Assets are vital in mitigating the poor's risks and vulnerability; similarly it is crucial to understand the asset mobilization and ownership strategies among the poor that calls for gendered division of labour analysis in order to understand the household power relations in relation to asset ownership.

The alleviation of poverty by women through agricultural development has been popularized the world over. This is even despite lack of support from the responsible authorities such as government ministries. In many African countries, gender discrimination runs deep at many levels, e.g. women manage every aspect of farm work but are not considered farmers. They toil in the fields, planting, sowing, weeding and harvesting but are not land owners in most cases.

As such gender inequality and marginalized access to the means of economic production has affected the role and agency of women in agricultural activities in most African countries such as is the case in Zimbabwe. This is even in spite of the fact that it is the women and the girl child who provide much of the labour force in numerous rural and agrarian economies in Zimbabwe.

4.2. Conceptual Framework

This study uses the concepts of *Intersectionality* and *poverty alleviation* in analyzing how women in the study area of Nyangavi have been involved in agricultural development activities. Such analytical concepts help in our understanding of the role and agency of women in agricultural developmental activities using the case study of Nyangavi Ward 5

In this study, Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) is to analyze how various women with different status, class and wealth in Nyangavi Ward 5 in Guruve have been able to utilize and engage in agricultural activities as a tool for poverty alleviation. Intersectionality approach (Ibid) is a critical feminist concept which has been used to denote how various aspects such as class, race, age, status, gender and other identity categories intersect. Though, the concept has been commonly used in analysing women of colour (black women), the concept have a rich analytical value in analysing how class, age, status and gender plays a role amongst Guruve South women in their quest to address poverty and underdevelopment in their areas, using various agricultural activities. Using the concept of Intersectionality as an analytical concept, I contend that there are variations amongst age groups, class, religion, culture, and status amongst the women in Guruve in Nyangavi Ward 5. Thus, I disaggregate the respondents along such interlinked clusters. The study also boldly asserts that poverty levels differ. In as much, as the conceptualisation of poverty is also varied, amongst different individuals and households.

Whilst also using the concept of Intersectionality in analysing the empirical data, I also put affront the claim that women in Guruve South are not a homogenous group but rather a heterogeneous group with different interest and the way how they also view life (world views) also differs. This concept therefore has some analytical value in analysing the study of Nyangavi Ward 5 in Guruve South. In this study I also use the concept of poverty alleviation as an analytical tool. Poverty alleviation is understood as the helping of the very poorest of the poor to achieve a better quality of life, Senior (2011:2) In using this concept, we are able to understand the role of women and their capacity to reduce if not eliminate poverty in the Nyangavi Ward 5 area using various agricultural activities.

Globally, regionally and locally most development interventions have at least focused on the aspect of women's participation in mainstream development. With some literature focusing mainly on the role of women in agricultural development activities especially in the post – fast track land reform programme. However, despite the focus on poverty alleviation most studies did not specifically address the issue of agency of women in agricultural developmental activities. Such a gap in literature and in empirical studies is very common in the Zimbabwean agrarian and development literature i.e., a gap which the study seeks to address. A careful reading of the literature on women's participation in agricultural and in development has also shown many analytical flaws. For example, studies done by UN agencies such as UNDP has focused much on quantifying poverty especially amongst the rural women. Yet, most studies have failed to address the qualitative aspects (i.e. non-measurable factors). In most cases, much literature has come up with good a statistical figure, which does not critically reflect or explain the situation of women in rural areas, especially the so –called rural poor. It is within such a context that this study is located.

However, there are some non – income and non- quantifiable measurements such as the quality of life which might also be helpful in measuring poverty. Such a flaw in the literature which neglects non- quantifiable aspects makes it difficult to really understand poverty and its various multiple dimensions in most rural communities. Though most literature has answered ontological questions (on what is poverty, i.e. (Chambers, 1983) in the book entitled *Putting the last first*. Some literature fails to analyze subjective questions such as (do people perceive poverty the same or similarly). As a result, it has become conceptually difficult to measure and analyze rural poverty. Furthermore, much of the literature on poverty have concluded that women wear a female face, not only in Zimbabwe but elsewhere in Africa and even beyond, in some other Third world countries. This feminization of poverty has led to the treating of women as the 'other' and as 'victims' of poverty. Such 'otherisation' of women in development processes has affected the agency and capacity of the women folk in exercising their rights as equal citizens to their male counterparts. In the same vein, most of the literature has also portrayed women as passive subjects of development processes. Yet, in some cases, women have success stories to tell about their active role in sustainable agricultural development as can be revealed by the Nyangavi case study in Guruve.

Although many Zimbabwean studies (Mkandawire (2005) in *Targeting and Universalism in Poverty Reduction* and (Mpfu, 2011) in *Some Perceptions on the poverty Question in Zimbabwe on women and development* have focused on the intersection between gender and access to resources and means of production. They failed to really explore the intersection between classes, age, status, religion level of education, level of vulnerability amongst these women. Such a glaring lack of sustained engagement of the concept of Intersectionality is very visible in most literature. But in the study of Guruve women, I take an Intersectionality approach in analyzing how different women have been able to tackle the issues of poverty in their respective households.

Generally women are viewed as invisible food producers and poverty alleviation agents. Studies show that the status of women is one factor that effects on mainstreaming women in developmental activities (Oppong and Abu, 1997). In Nigeria while men own all land, less than 20% of them engage in diverse economic and social developmental activities.

This shows that women are looked down upon in nearly every continent. Just like in the case study of Nyangavi, women do not own land although they are the ones who do all the family work on a daily basis. Fabiyi et al (2007) narrates the *Role of Women in the Agricultural Development* and their constraints, giving reference to a Case study of Gombe state in Nigeria. Women in this case study are said to be hard workers despite facing serious constraints like not owning land and failing to obtain bank loans to further finance their agricultural activities.

Poverty is a condition where people's needs for food, clothing and shelter are not being met. It is generally of two types, namely, absolute and relative. This study focuses on absolute poverty which dwells much on lack of basic survival needs. The aforesaid authors (Chambers, 1998 et al) have elaborated the successes made by women through agricultural development. Women in most cases referred to, managed to alleviate poverty through agricultural development, for example the women of Gombe state in Nigeria. The gap exists where the women in Nyangavi Ward 5 having done the same in agriculture production, they remain poor, owing to limited support from government in the form of resources and the expertise.

5. Research Design

In this research study, the researcher used a mixed method approach of quantitative and qualitative research. The descriptive research design was used as the study sought to explain a phenomenon by the use of both numeric and non-numeric data gathering tools. Merriam and Simpson (1984) noted that descriptive research design is concerned with those studies which describe the characteristics of a particular individual or a group. The central focus of descriptive research is to examine facts about people, their opinion and attitudes. The researcher gathered facts about how women are using agricultural activities to improve and raise their household incomes and overall standard of living. The researcher used interviews, focus group discussions and participatory observations in order to obtain information. Interviews were good in order to obtain information direct from the individuals being asked without distortion.

Data was both quantitative and qualitatively analyzed. The advantages of using the mixed method are that it becomes easy to describe and to report. This method can also help generalize, to a degree, qualitative data; can position research in a transformative framework. The study targeted a sample population of 32 respondents. Only two groups of 10 and one group of 12 respectively, were chosen in the total population of 3500 people.

Of the total sample, all were interviewed but some were reluctant to give information. This was due to lack of advocacy, they did not quite understand the purpose of the exercise and some went to the extent of saying the researcher was campaigning for the Member of Parliament post. Some were expecting to be rewarded with some form of cash or material things for providing the information, hence the resistance. Despite these small issues information was obtained, analyzed and the study went on very well.

5.1. Data Presentation and Analysis

Data collected from the field through various methods is presented and analyzed under this section mainly through a thematic presentation. For instance the thematic focus was how agriculture development influenced food production, household income, food security, as such, responses were grouped in specific thematic clusters. The researcher grouped, analyzed and categorized the responses along various thematic clusters.

Firstly on the question one which is, "Which agricultural activities are being done in Guruve Nyangavi Ward 5? This question produced almost the same answers from most of the people interviewed. Such frequency and similarity in responses simply shows how the communal people in Nyangavi were doing virtually the same agricultural activities. The table below shows the information in relation to the posed question:-

5.1.1. Which Agricultural activities are being done in Guruve's Nyangavi Ward 5?

CROP	INTERVIEWS RESPONDENTS
Beans	23
Groundnuts	15
Maize	32
Cotton	10
Tobacco	14
Soybeans	8
Sorghum	12

Table 5.1 Source: Author

So deducing from these responses the research established that the Nyangavi community was engaged in diversified cropping ranging from grains general agriculture, cash crop production and other agro – based crops. However, crops such as beans were the major crops that were mostly favoured by the community whilst others were mainly involved in cotton production. But some respondents argued that cotton production was labour and capital intensive.

Also given the fact that the prices of cotton were as low as 30 cents per kilograms – others therefore revealed that they were now considering opting for growing other more marketable crops such as tobacco. However, others who still grow tobacco attributed this to the fact they had been used to such a crop. As such it was difficult for them to just change overnight. Whilst others also claimed that they still relied on contract farming (i.e., through support from companies) such as COTTCO in cotton production. All the same most of the respondents revealed that the contract farming method was exploitative as it benefited the contractor more than the farmer.

On the other hand some respondents revealed that they preferred sorghum (small grains farming) mostly because of the fact that they are drought resistant. Therefore in case of poor rainfall/droughts such families will be guaranteed of enough food reserves (food security). Through the fieldwork it was also established that some households preferred maize production as they could have enough for consumption and sell the remaining to increase their income.

Some respondents also mentioned that in times of economic and health shocks (i.e. illness within a household) they would easily sell maize in order to get money to use to cater for medical expenses. Respondent A from Chipangura village in Ward 5 also indicated that she grows soybeans so as to get oil for household use. Whilst selling the remainder at the nearby township market. Respondent B from Chiwara village in Nyangavi Ward 5 also revealed that she prioritizes growing tobacco mainly as it was the only crop that was more rewarding in terms of payment. However, the same respondent noted that in the previous farming season, the crop was not paying

‘good money’. Respondent B said a kg was being bought at .5cents at Boka Tobacco Auction floors in Harare, which meant no profit was realized considering that transport also needed to be paid for.



Source: Picture taken by the Researcher during field work (2015).

Fig 5.1. The pictures shows the field of Anna Tembure of NW5 with groundnuts and maize

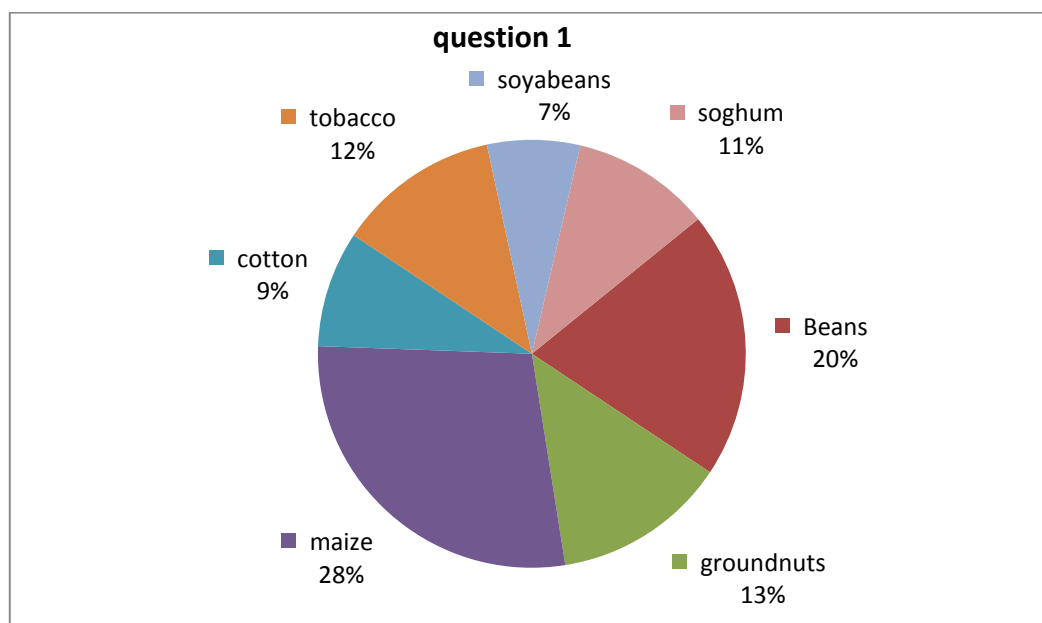


Fig 5.2

5.1.2. Most of the people including those from the Focus Group discussion (FGD), fig 5.2 above, show interest in the growing of maize. The reason for the higher number in maize production was due to the fact that it is the staple food. Every household requires maize for consumption. Beans, also is second in line. Most women growing beans expressed gratitude in the fact that it provides the protein required by the human body.

Women in the area grow a variety of beans which differ in maturity periods, type, color and even size. *Mitch gun* is a very small white variety which grows within a short period and is widely grown because it is easy to maintain. There are many varieties and some are long term and are many types. Beans are a very nutritious food which is good for both the young and the old. They

normally use manure in place of fertilizer as the issue of availability of inputs remains a nightmare in the area. Most of them just recycle the bean product for seed purposes.



Fig 5.3 Images of Groundnuts in Veronica Matekenya's Field (Source: Researcher, 2015).

Groundnuts are grown by a number of women but on a small scale basis. They grow quantities to sustain them in their households and little for sale because the crop demands a lot of attention and labour. Most interviewed respondents normally use groundnuts for consumption and for making peanut butter. The peanut butter is sometimes sold in order to realize some cash for household use. The peanut butter is sold in boarding schools, community and the nearest urban Mvurwi township.

It was established during the field work research that Tobacco is grown by a very small number of people in Nyangavi community. Although it's a cash crop, women say it is too demanding, thus, in terms of labour, maintenance and inputs. Cotton is also grown by very few households due to the demand in labour especially on weeding and picking the cotton lint. To those who grow the two crops (cotton and tobacco) they revealed that they get quite reasonable income from such crops.

Besides the above mentioned basic crops, there are some crops which the women in NW5 grow in order to sustain their families and sometimes get some for sale they grow potatoes, okra, millet and round nuts which in some cases are sold if, the production in that particular year is high. Most households grow these products for consumption. In Market gardening also they grow vegetables like rape covo, cabbages, tomatoes, onions, green beans and peas for consumption and some for sale.

5.2 Animal Husbandry

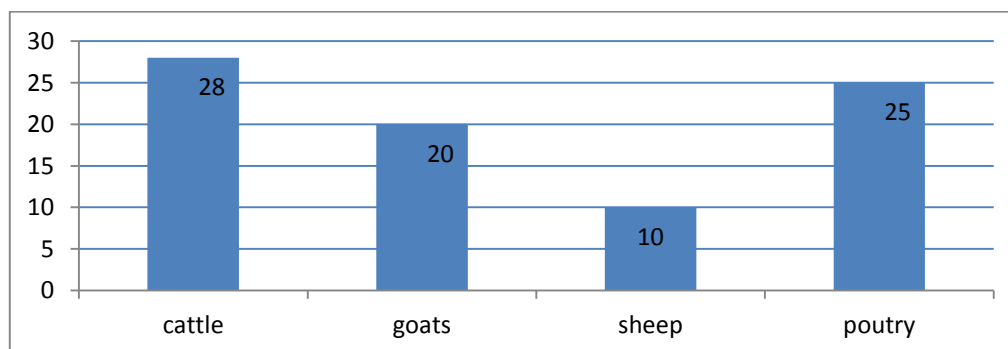


Fig 5.4 Source: Author (2015)

4.2.1. Most of the women in Nyangavi area do cattle farming. As indicated by the diagram, fig.5.4 of the total sample taken of thirty two people, 28 do cattle farming. The reasons vary according to

individuals. Some said they want cattle for beef, some said they use cattle for farming, using the ox drawn ploughs, some for milking and a very small number said cattle was a requirement in the everyday life of a human being. Some also said that they sell to butcheries so that they get cash to pay for their children's school fees.

Poultry also is very common in the area. This includes the hard "*mashona*" type or road runner, the broilers and layers. A very small number within the twenty five individuals grow broilers, fig 5.5 and layers but most of them grow the (mashona type/road runner chickens) pictured below, in fig 5.6 which is easy to grow and maintain. Goats are also common in most households although they said they are very difficult to look after especially during the rainy season when crops need to be maintained. Respondent C said, "I keep a small number of goats because they a troublesome animal to keep, they go around destroying the villagers' crops" Very limited number, ten out of the total sample of thirty two, are engaged in sheep keeping. This is not a common animal in the area and those who have the sheep brought them from the nearby commercial farms where they are done on a commercial basis.



Fig. 5.5



Fig. 5.6 Road runner chickens at Mrs Gora's homestead, nearby is a disused cart.

5.3 Question 2

What is your understanding of poverty?

The research findings observed and discovered that the respondents had different views, interpretations on how they perceived poverty. This stemmed from various issues ranging from their different world views (the way how they view and experienced life), level of education, spending patterns, spending priorities, status, aspirations, and religion.etc

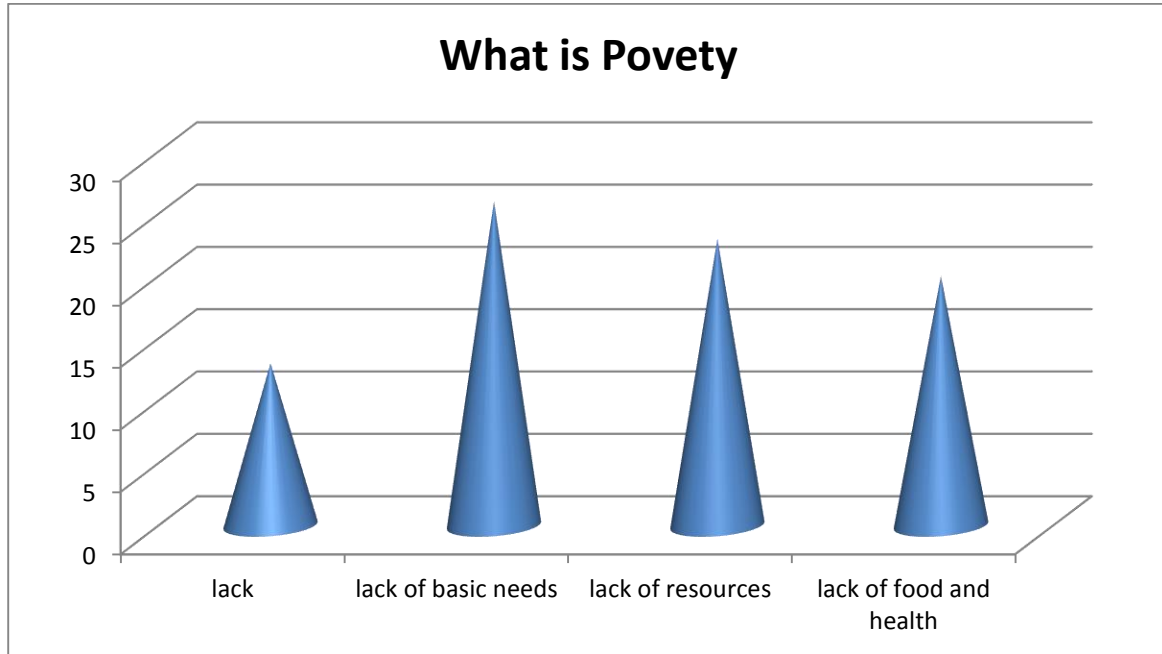


Fig 5.7

5.3.1. Asked on what they thought poverty was, women of Nyangavi area gave different Views on this aspect. The small section

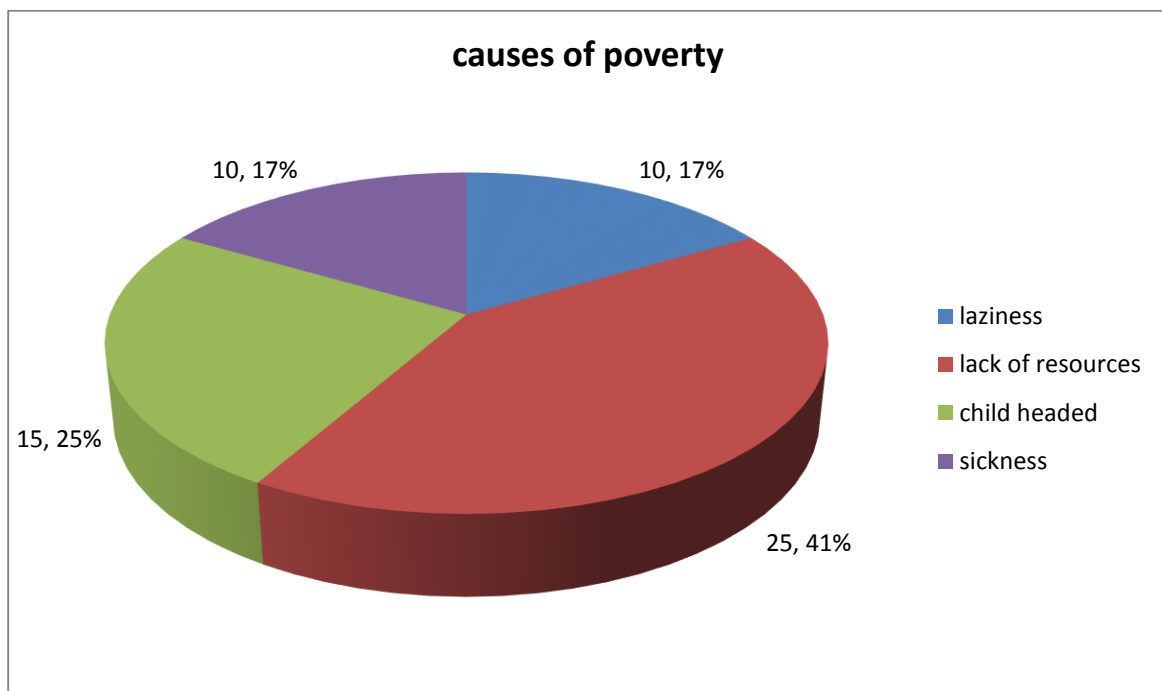


Fig. 5.8

said poverty is lack of something. If one lacks what he/she need means that he or she in poverty. 10% of Nyangavi women said that poverty was lack of food and health. If one does not have the required day to day food and if she or he is not health means poverty.

5.3.2. Some said lack of basic needs reflect poverty. Basic needs they were referring to include, water, food, health, clothing and any others. They said if one lacks one of the aforementioned, s/he or will be in poverty. They also said lack of resources for use in life including money, cattle, goats, chicken, and ploughs, proper housing all reflect poverty in households. These were their views of what poverty is and I think the reason for their thinking was based what they know and what they see in everyday life.

5.4 Question 3

What do you think are the causes of poverty?

5.4.1. The biggest number of the total women interviewed, which is 25, 41% indicated that poverty was caused by lack of resources, be it financial or material. They said their agricultural endeavours were being hindered by lack of say, fertilizers, seed, chemical, land, money to pay for labour and many other issues. They said they are not getting enough support in terms of government inputs and land allocation to new fertile farming areas like other women from other areas are doing. They bemoaned the lack of fertility of their soil saying it's now exhausted.

Thus it now required huge amounts of fertilizers, both Compound D for planting and Ammonium Nitrate (AN) for top dressing. Some also said they do not have the ox drawn ploughs and cultivators for land preparations. Some even reiterated the lack of farming expertise amongst themselves as the cause of poverty in their area.

5.4.2 Child headed families (CHF) or (child headed households (CHH) also were sighted as the other cause of poverty in the area. 15.25% of the total population was said to be child headed causes of poverty.

In most cases, both parents were said to be late and that automatically meant the siblings were fending for themselves. The research also revealed that depending on the age of the children, they cannot be able to fend for themselves especially when it comes to farming. Most of the deaths were said to be due to the HIV/AIDs pandemic which has spread across the globe. Still the surviving terminally ill ones could not be able to do field work on their own thereby making it difficult to fend for the families. Some respondents also claimed that they suffered high blood pressure, high blood sugar and all sorts of ailments which deter them from doing strenuous work in the fields.

5.4.3. The most interesting cause of poverty in NW5 the researcher was told is laziness. 10.17% of the total sample was said to be caused by laziness. Some women attributed poverty to laziness. They said some people are just lazy. They do not want to work hence the continued poverty cycle in their households. The researcher was informed that even if those women were assisted by others with manure (organic) and seed to plant, they would plant, but when it comes to weeding, they would just leave the fields like that with weeds. They jokingly said this type of farming was called '*sora beans*' farming.

5.5 Question 4

What are your sources of income?

5.5.1. Women of Ward 5 in Nyangavi indicated that they get their income from the sale of different types of their agricultural produce. They sell cattle, goats, sheep, and chicken, to supermarkets,

individuals, schools and organizations which surrounds them. Some are even sold at the agricultural show which they hold annually in the area at Shinje Growth point. After the area show they go to the district level and then provincial level in Bindura. There are people also from abattoirs in Harare who move around the area buying cattle. So they sell to those people although at a lower prices and which do not satisfy the farmers.

5.5.2. Crop produce and vegetables are sold locally in order to get cash. Supermarkets in the growth point pay cash on delivery of vegetables, which is quite a positive development. Maize, beans and sorghum are sold at the nearby Guruve Grain marketing board although the money from such sales takes some time to get paid.

5.6 Question 5

How do you spend your income?

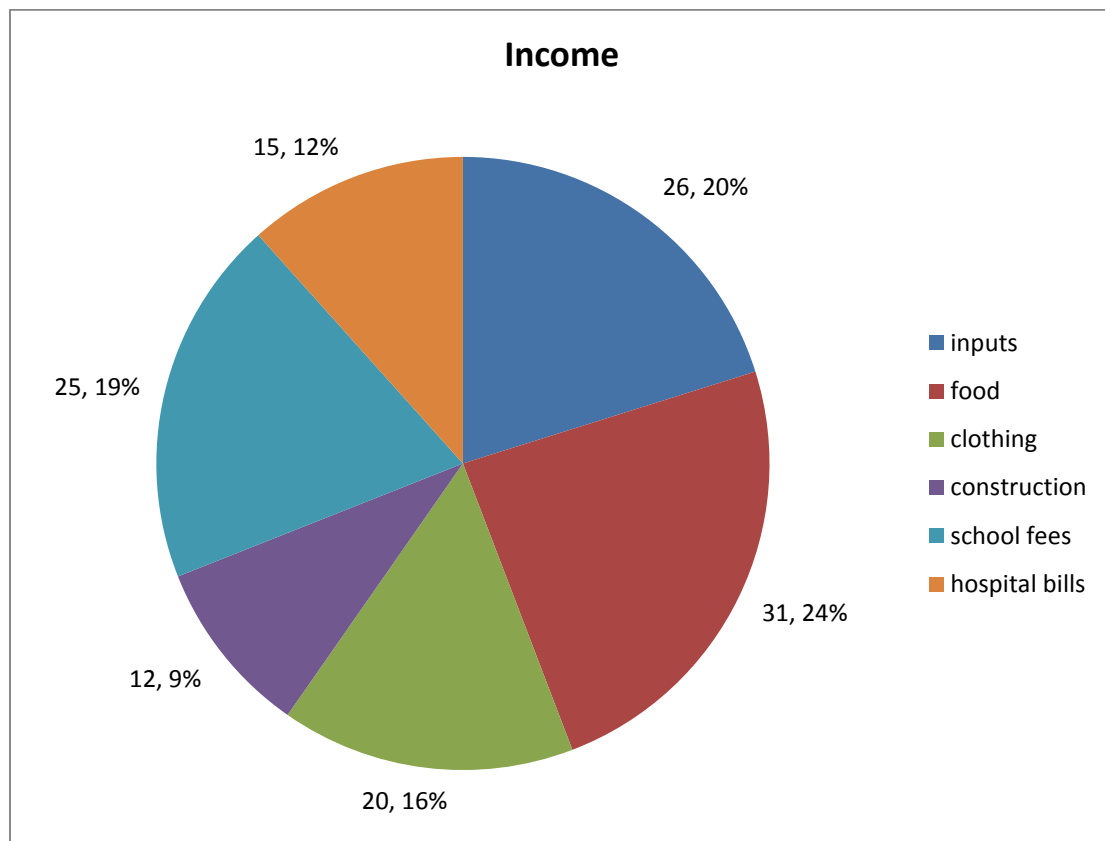


Fig 5.9

Women in the case study indicated different ideas pertaining to how they spend their income. 25.19% of the women said they pay for their children's school fees, be it day school or boarding. The majority, which is 31.24%, said they buy inputs for the next season and buy food and clothing for their families. There are a few like Mrs. Keresenzia Tembure who said they use the money for constructing better housing for their families. This figure was only 12.9% of the total sample taken. Fig 5.10 below shows a house which she built using the proceeds from farming. It's quite a big and nice house which one cannot imagine it is in the rural set up. She told the researcher that it is a seven roomed house. At the same time fig. 5.11 shows how bad some other women's accommodation is in the same area.



Fig 5.10 Mr. Tembure's homestead, See comments above for fig.



Fig 5.11 Mrs Musokeri's hut in Padzinoenda village

5.7. Question 6

What size is your family?

Most families had an average of seven people. This included the parents. Most of the interviewed women indicated that some of their children were now working in urban areas hence the reduction in family sizes. According to them, that absence of some family members were hindering development as they now had very limited labour force. The other section supported the idea saying it was good that they had children working in urban areas as they help out with resources like inputs when they

are needed. Some families were also child headed with both parents having passed away. Most of such families were in very sorry states, considering that there were no parents to look after the families. Most of them relied on handouts from the community.

5.8 Linking Theory to Findings

Using the concept of poverty alleviation it can be argued that the people in NW5 have managed to use various agricultural activities to pursue and realize their own personal, household and community development, whereas using the concept of Intersectionality, it was discovered that the women in NW5 viewed development differently. As such they used the income accrued from agricultural for development purposes as established by the research findings. Taking insights from the Women in Development (WID) theoretical approach adopted in the theoretical framework it can be argued that the women in NW5 were playing an increasingly significant role in economic spheres within their households. This breaking the myth that only man could provide economically. The research established that some men even go to nearby beer halls even during the cropping seasons – leaving behind women and children in the fields. Thus the research findings established that women were exercising their agency as equal partners in the economic development processes. This phenomenon was particularly common amongst the Female Headed Households (FHH) and even in those households where the men are working in the cities.

5.9 Other – Non Agricultural Activities

However, women in the study area do not rely on agricultural development alone as established by the research findings. They have other projects in the area which they practice in order to generate income. They do some other income generating projects like soap making, where they make soap for sale in the community around and at the nearby Nyangavi township. They also do tailoring whereby they make clothes and uniforms for school children for sale in the surrounding schools. The machines they use for sewing were donated by the former, local Member of Parliament who passed away, Honourable Mabharanga. There is also a small bakery at Matsvitsi town ship in the NW5 where women in the area do their baking and sale buns and bread to the surrounding local community and schools. Some have some tables at the Flea markets at Guruve centre where they sale their wares including what they sew at home and the home made soap. Some have also been involved in the ordering of second hand clothes from Mozambique for sale. This has been a very successful business venture to some who include Mrs Gumbo who started off as an informal trader. Through hard work and endurance, she is now a proud owner of ‘**Gumbo Investments**’, a big supermarket which sales an assortment of groceries.

The research established that women in Nyangavi were using various agricultural activities in spearheading both household and community development. Such activities contributed in enhancing local economic household development activities in Nyangavi.

6. Conclusion

- WOMEN IN Nyangavi area produce ----- crops, livestock.....
- Women in Nyangavi area do not have enough support from Agritex Extension officers and NGOs.
- Women in the area produce crops only once a year due to inavailability of irrigation equipment.
- Women in Nyangavi area have no land ownership and cannot access bank loans.

7. Recommendations

- The government of Zimbabwe must put in place mechanisms, through the provincial and district offices, to support women in agriculture, thus provide enough agricultural inputs and equipment in time to catch up with the rainy season.
- Agritex Extension officers must be readily available to assist women farmers with ideas and expertise on how to do productive agriculture. Community participation must also be encouraged to all workshops and field days done in the area.
- The government must introduce more irrigation schemes in the area so as to encourage community participation and to have all round season agricultural products in order to alleviate poverty and subsequent promotion of development and the ZimASSET.
- Since the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were operating in the area before, they must be mobilized through the rightful offices, to come back in the area so that they assist the women farmers with agricultural inputs and other resources needed for developmental initiatives or projects.
- Government must empower women by formulating policies that include women in developmental issues. Also by providing necessary support like the provision of bank loans for farming and agricultural equipment in order to compliment the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET).

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