



ATTITUDE TOWARDS FARMING AND THE DEPENDENCY ASSOCIATED WITH ACCESS TO SOCIAL GRANTS: THE CASE OF NGQELE VILLAGE, NKKONKOB MUNICIPALITY, EASTERN CAPE

Freddy Ruzhani^{1*} and Abbyssinia Mushunje²

¹Department of Agricultural Economics and Development, Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences, P Bag 7001, Mutare, Zimbabwe.

²Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Fort Hare, Alice, RSA

Cite this article:

F. Ruzhani, A. Mushunje. (2022), Attitude Towards Farming and the Dependency Associated with Access to Social Grants: The Case of Ngqele Village, Nkonkobe Municipality, Eastern Cape. African Journal of Agriculture and Food Science 5(1), 29-43. DOI: 10.52589/AJAFS-AQUHVKMN

Manuscript History

Received: 10 Jan 2022

Accepted: 31 Jan 2022

Published: 22 Feb 2022

Copyright © 2022 The Author(s).

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0), which permits anyone to share, use, reproduce and redistribute in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

ABSTRACT: *Using data drawn from a sample of 50 households in Ngqele village, the paper investigated households' attitude towards farming as a livelihood source and the possibilities of the dependency syndrome associated with access to social grants. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data and a 5 point Likert scale was used to determine households' attitudes towards farming as a livelihood source. The results confirmed overdependence on state grants which is hindering livelihood improvement. 26% of the respondents had a positive attitude towards farming. On the other hand, 38% had a negative attitude while 36% had an average attitude towards farming. The growing underutilisation of arable land in Ngqele village can be attributed to households' ambitions and aspirations which are in favour of non-farm activities and also a relatively negative attitude towards farming. Direct and continuous support through the provision of technical and institutional support is required to sustain the level of interest in farming in this village. In addition, rural development should not only focus on land redistribution and farming but should also focus on employment creation outside the agricultural sector and the promotion of non-farm activities. Social grants should be linked to economic activities aimed at empowering households to take care of their livelihoods' needs sustainably. Socio-economic policies that avail credit to rural households and training are also required to instil entrepreneurial skills especially to the youths in Ngqele village.*

KEYWORDS: Rural Development, Dependency Syndrome, Social Grants, Likert Scale



INTRODUCTION

The rural world is believed by many scholars as an agricultural one where farming predominates and where land is the most critical resource (Rigg, 2006). The solution to rural poverty has, therefore, been centred on the invigoration of farming and the redistribution of land. Not only is farming seen as a core ingredient in the essential recipe for rural development, but this is also invariably framed in terms of smallholder agricultural production. It is acknowledged that land is an important livelihood asset and its ownership is necessary, but not always sufficient condition to improve livelihoods (DFID, 2002).

A disconnection between how some elites view farming and agriculture and how rural people view the occupation exists. The media and consumerism have to a greater extent changed the way rural people think about work, their children's futures and farming in general (Rigg, 2006). Farming is slowly becoming a low-status occupation and is now being avoided by many. This view has a marked generational component as it is younger people who most directly and eagerly wish to build futures away from farming (SMERU, 2004).

Rural livelihoods have been found to comprise two broad categories, that is, they are made up of a range of on-farm and non-farm activities. The majority of rural households are involved in some agricultural activities, although many obtain a large percentage of their income from non-farm activities and remittances (Davis, 2003). Income diversification into non-farm activities has come to be recognized among rural households. Non-farm activities imply a set of activities carried out in rural areas that are not agricultural (Barret, Reardon & Webb, 2001). The majority of rural households in South Africa depend largely on social assistance for their livelihoods.

According to Shepherd, Wadugodapitiya and Evans (2011), social assistance in the form of social grants is associated with the dependency syndrome – concerns about those receiving aid becoming mostly dependent on handouts thereby losing their ability to improve their lives through their own efforts. Social assistance programs are often criticized on the grounds that they create moral hazard – a situation where individuals who are insured change their behaviour in adverse ways in response to incentives offered by insurance (Shepherd *et al.*, 2011). It is commonly believed that social assistance undermines people's drive to come out of poverty through their own initiatives (Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme (RHVP), 2010). It is, therefore, assumed that social assistance will result in idleness and a permanent dependency on aid. Shepherd *et al.* (2011) however, acknowledges that much of the worry around social assistance and dependency in African countries is largely based on unverified evidence with little reference to empirical evidence.

Agricultural development is widely recognized in many countries of Africa as the best way to promote rural development as well as improve rural livelihoods. However, despite the rural economy being assumed to be naturally agricultural-based a large number of rural households derive most of their income from the non-farm sector (Barret *et al.*, 2001). Household income sources in rural areas according to Rigg (2006) are slowly shifting from farm to non-farm and livelihoods are becoming less centred on agriculture. Explanations for a high and increasing portion of non-farm income in rural areas have been sought with researchers giving varied reasons. In the case of Bangladesh, Nargis and Hossain (2006) found that a large portion could be explained by a rapid decrease in the land size of farm households as well as constraints, both production and marketing associated with subsistence agriculture.



The signs of livelihoods becoming delinked from farming can be easily recognized in the rural villages in Nkonkobe Municipality. Many households are either underutilizing their land or are not involved in any farming activities at all. This paper sought to provide possible explanations of the increasing shift from farming to other livelihood sources with a specific focus on whether farming is being generally regarded as a low-status occupation to be avoided and the possibilities of the “dependency syndrome” associated with access to government transfer payments.

Objectives

The main objective of this paper was to critically assess income sources of rural households with the view of analyzing whether agriculture is still a preferred income source among rural households through assessing households’ perceptions towards agriculture as an income source as well as investigating the possibilities of the “dependency syndrome” associated with access to social grants. Inspecting what individuals and households do in rural areas will help verify the presence of diversification as well as the possible existence of the dependency syndrome associated with access to social assistance. It will also help dismiss the assumption that rural people are all farmers and that rural development and an improvement in livelihoods should only be centred on agricultural development. By establishing the perceptions of households on farming and non-farm income sources, clear aspirations of the rural households in Nkonkobe Municipality will be established. The paper is expected to benefit policymakers on whether agricultural development is the way to go to improve livelihoods or perhaps the focus should shift to endowing poor people with other skills and move away from smallholder agricultural development perspective.

METHODOLOGY

Study Area

Nkonkobe municipality is a product of the amalgamation of the disestablished Alice, Fort Beaufort, Middledrift, Hogsback, Seymour and Victoria East. It is the second-largest local municipality covering 3 725 km² and has an average population density of 43 persons per km (0.43 persons per ha) (Ntsangani, 2010). The majority of the population (61%) resides in villages, 20% on farms and 19% are in urban areas (Ntsangani, 2010). The rural areas closer to the urban nodes are relatively more densely populated than the hinterlands whilst on the contrary, in the rural areas with low-density levels there are big parcels of land that are available. This municipality is characterized by underdevelopment which resulted from historic consequences of the country’s politics.

Ngqele village is situated a few kilometres from Alice, Nkonkobe municipality. It is the second village on the left on the way to King Williamstown from Alice. Like any other village in Nkonkobe municipality, this village is characterized by underdevelopment due to the consequences of the apartheid era (Ntsangani, 2010). There are no potential employment industries in this village except agriculture. People have land fractions suitable for agricultural practices that can enable them to feed themselves. In terms of rainfall, Nkonkobe municipality is a semi-arid region that experiences long dry spells with rainfall of only between 450 to 700mm per year in most areas (Van Averbek *et al.*, 1998).



Households own small pieces of land which range from 0.6 ha to 4.9 ha with an average size of 2.5 ha for cropping and the grazing lands are owned by the community (Phiri, 2009). According to Ntsangani (2010), the current situation is that the agricultural sector performs below the expected standard and thus it is an area that has potential for growth. Citrus is the major contributor to the economic development of the area and it employs workers on a permanent and seasonal basis. Agriculture is producing 30% of food needs even though there are arable lands that are left unutilized.

Sampling Procedure

In this study, the sampling frame was all households in Ngqele village and the unit of analysis was the entire household. The available sampling method was used since the respondents were scattered over a wide area and no complete list of the target population was available. Availability sampling is a non-probability sampling method that involves interviewing people at an arbitrary location until the required sample size is met (Bless *et al.*, 2006). The selection of respondents was based on households' willingness to participate in the research. The advantages of using this sampling method are that it does not require a complete list of the population, it is fast, inexpensive and easy to apply. Thus only households who were conveniently available were interviewed so as to obtain a large number of completed questionnaires quickly and economically.

The research survey targeted a suitable sample size of households in Ngqele village. A sample of 50 households was selected to participate in the research. Fifty households were selected because they were considered representative of the population under study. According to Bless *et al.*, (2006), a sample of at least 30 units will capture the characteristics of a population.

Data collection

The tool for data collection was a structured questionnaire whose main purpose was to determine the frequency of various responses and to find the relationship between responses to different questions. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected using the questionnaire. Data on household composition, sources of income, perceptions of on-farm and off-farm activities and other socio-economic characteristics were collected. The questionnaire consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended questions, in order to improve the quality of data collected. Open-ended questions gave respondents greater freedom of expression as respondents could have an opportunity to explain their answers, thus reducing bias due to limited response ranges.

The questionnaires were administered to the respondents by the interviewer to enable those who were illiterate to participate in the research and to overcome misinterpretation of words so that answers are clear. According to Bless *et al.*, (2006), an interviewer-administered interview is an important tool of data collection because it reduces the omission of difficult questions by respondents. In addition, it reduces the problem of word or question misinterpretation (misunderstandings) by respondents and can be administered to individuals who can neither read nor write. The presence of the interviewer also increases the quality of the responses as the interviewer can solicit more precise answers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2004). In other words, the use of interviewer-administered questionnaires ensures minimal loss of data when compared to the other methods.



The heads of the households for the families were chosen to be the main respondents on behalf of the household. In the absence of the household head, the spouse or any family member who was directly involved in the household activities and management was interviewed. The main respondent provided most of the information but was allowed to consult other household members where necessary. Xhosa speaking enumerators were trained to assist in data collection since the respondents were scattered over a wide area and the need for translating the questionnaire was necessary.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data since they present quantitative data in a manageable form. After collecting and gathering the data, it was captured and encoded in the form of spreadsheets in Microsoft Excel and exported to SPSS version 21 software. Tables (including cross-tabulation for bivariate analysis) were used in data analysis for this study. Cross tabulation is a type of bivariate analysis that involves testing whether a relationship or an association exists between two categorical variables to make sure that the direction of association is made obvious. Pearson Chi-square and correlation were also used on several variables to determine if a relationship existed and to ascertain the direction of the relationship if it existed. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the basic features of the sample households, income sources as well as in assessing their perceptions towards the farm and off-farm activities through simple summaries and measures of central tendency.

In order to determine households' attitudes towards farming as a livelihood choice, a 5-point Likert scale was used. This method is now one of the dominant methods in measuring people's attitudes, views and experiences (Taylor & Heath, 1996). The questionnaire contained ten attitude statements, concepts and ideas about farming as a livelihood source, to which the respondents reacted by indicating agreement or disagreement. These statements consisted of 5 positive and 5 negative questions. The respondents rated the statements based on scores ranging from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 5, where Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2 and Strongly Disagree = 1. The order of the ratings was reversed for negative statements in conformity with Ironkwe *et al.*, (2006). The scores of each question were then summed in order to come up with an overall score for each and every respondent which was used to categorize households' attitudes towards farming into five categories. These five are shown in table 1 below:

Table 1: Criteria used to determine households' attitude towards farming

Score Range	Attitude
10 – 17	Extremely unfavourable
18 – 25	Unfavourable
26 – 33	Average
34 – 41	Favourable
42 – 50	Extremely favourable



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Household Characteristics

A sample of 50 households were interviewed, 66% of which were male-headed while 34% were female-headed. Most heads of households were above 60 years (34%) and were married (54%). 20% of the respondents were single while the widowed and divorced were 14% and 12% respectively. Out of the 50 respondents, 44% had acquired at least a primary education while 8% had acquired tertiary education. Only 8% of these respondents had no formal education. The problem of household heads having not attended school is most likely to diminish quite significantly over the years as access to education has significantly improved in rural areas of South Africa. The data on household characteristics are summarized in table 2 below.

Table 2: Summary of household characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	33	66
Female	17	34
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	10	20
Married	27	54
Divorced	6	12
Widowed	7	14
<i>Age</i>		
21-30	3	6
31-40	7	14
41-50	10	20
51-60	13	26
Older than 60	17	34
<i>Level of education</i>		
No formal education	4	8
Grade 0-7	22	44
Grade 8-12	20	20
Tertiary education	4	8

Source: Survey data (2013)

Household head occupation

Table 3 summarizes the occupation of the interviewed household heads. The majority (66%) of the respondents were unemployed while only 10% of the respondents took farming as an occupation. 8% were formally employed while 12% regarded themselves as entrepreneurs with 4% of the respondents having retired from their former jobs. These findings suggest that there is a lack of employment opportunities in the area which limits the number of households to attain better livelihoods.

**Table 3: Household head Occupation**

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Farmer	5	10
Not employed	33	66
Entrepreneur	6	12
Employed	4	8
Retired	2	4

Source: Survey data 2013

Berkvens (1997) in his study in the communal areas of Mutoko, Zimbabwe observed that respondents were not comfortable with mentioning farming as their occupation because communal farming was not regarded as a job. It was valued as a residual kind of work with low and insecure returns. However, for this study, a few who relied mostly on farming were comfortable to state farming as their occupation.

Sources of income

The majority of households in Ngqele village relied on social transfers for their survival. Specifically, 46% of the households relied on social grants as their main source of income, 14% on employment, 16% on own businesses, 8% on farming, 10% on remittances and 6% on pensions. Most of the employed respondents were, however, employed in low paying sectors due to the lack of sufficient education required for better-paying jobs. Table 4 shows the main sources of income of households in Ngqele village.

Table 4: Household's main source of income

Main Source of Income	Frequency	Percentage
Farming	4	8
Own business	8	16
Employment	7	14
Remittances	5	10
Social Grants	23	46
Pensions	3	6

Source: Survey data 2013

Farming was among the least pursued income activity in the village and most households obtained their income from social grants. The majority of the respondents in this village relied on social grants as their main source of income with the dependence on social grants being so high to such an extent that the entire household in some instances could depend on a single child grant. 16% of the respondents obtained their main household income from informal businesses mainly street trading with mostly women involved in this income activity. Some households who have family members that migrated to major cities to seek employment depended on remittances from relatives residing in urban areas. Remittances, therefore, play a



crucial role in diminishing vulnerability, improving livelihoods as well as lessening poverty in rural areas.

The state of Agriculture in Ngqele Village

Despite rural households being assumed to be naturally agricultural-based and 58% of the interviewed households having access to arable land, only 41.4% at least utilized some of the lands for agricultural purposes and 58.6% did not utilize any of their arable lands for crop production. Furthermore, only 8% relied on farming as their main source of income. Agriculture is, therefore, not playing a very bigger role in rural livelihood improvement in this village as may be expected or anticipated by policymakers. As it stands, the land is not a constraint to livelihood development in Ngqele village since the available land is not being fully utilized and most of the arable land is left idle. The majority of households (55.9%) were engaged in subsistence farming with very little or no income generated from the sale of crops, livestock and animal products. This information is summarized in table 5 below:

Table 5: Summary on the state of agriculture in Ngqele village

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Livestock</i>		
Yes	26	52
No	24	48
<i>Access to arable land</i>		
Yes	29	58
No	21	42
<i>Engage in Crop Production</i>		
Yes	12	24
No	17	34
<i>Arable land used</i>		
All of it	4	8
Some of it	8	16
None	17	34
<i>Reason for farming</i>		
Home consumption only	19	38
Livestock sales only	11	22
Crop sales only	1	2
Both crop and livestock sales	3	6

Source: Survey data 2013

As mentioned by Rigg (2006) the rural world is believed by many scholars as an agricultural one where farming predominates and where land is the critical resource. This was found not to be the case in the study area. Bryceson and Jamal (1997) challenge the unwarranted assumption that the African continent's destiny is necessarily rooted in peasant agriculture. The findings of this study are in support of this idea as indeed farming was found not to be playing a huge role in improving livelihoods in this village. These findings are, however, in contradiction with a number of studies that have been done in most African rural areas where almost everyone's occupation was farming.



Respondents who did not utilize some of their arable lands and those who did not utilize any of their arable lands were asked to give reasons why they did not fully utilize their land. The most common responses were that they did not have enough labour and time since some of them were ill and for some, it was old age. Others claimed the climatic conditions were not very conducive for the crops they preferred to grow while others said the land had been neglected for years to the extent that trees and forests had developed because of the neglect. They indicated that it would require much effort and labour to restore their land into being cultivatable and also require sophisticated equipment which they do not have. A few, however, mentioned a lack of inputs such as seeds and fertilizers and for some, it was just a lack of interest.

The level of dependence on social grants in Ngqele village

According to Shepherd *et al.*, (2011) a common argument against social assistance is that it undermines people's self-sufficiency and motivation to climb out of poverty through their own efforts a phenomenon well known as the dependency syndrome. There is a possibility that beneficiaries will come to regard these transfers as an alternative means of meeting basic consumption needs and will lose motivation to secure their livelihoods through their own efforts. Although social grants are given to the most vulnerable in terms of age and disability, access to social grants can have negative effects on the behaviour of other economically active members of the household. This paper sought to verify if indeed recipient households are becoming reluctant to look for other alternatives because of access to social grants. The section looks at access to social grants in relation to income diversification and the decision to engage in crop production.

Access to social grants in relation to income diversification

As stated earlier, 46% of the respondents reported social grants as their main source of income. The total proportion of households who had access to social grants was 78% with only 22% who were not recipients of any form of social grants. A Pearson chi-square and correlation test were done to verify if a relationship existed between access to social grants and income diversification in the study area. The information is summarized in table 6 below.

Table 6: Relationship between access to social grants and income diversification

Variables	Chi-square	Correlation coefficient	P-value
<i>Access to social grants and income diversification</i>	0.069	-	0.793

Source: Survey data 2013

As shown in this table, a weak negative and insignificant correlation was obtained for the two variables implying that there was not enough evidence to prove that access to social grants had an effect on whether a household would rely on two or more sources of income. However, this can be attributed to the high number of social grants recipients (78%) in proportion to the non-recipients (22%). Had the proportion of households with access and households without access to social grants been approximately equal, the results of the test would most probably have been different.



Access to social grants in relation to the decision to engage in crop production

Economic theory suggests that people who receive regular cash transfers will be discouraged from seeking work or engaging in labour-intensive activities such as agriculture especially if the value of the transfer is close to the income that the recipient could expect to earn from, being employed, farming or other activities (RHVP, 2010). A Pearson chi-square and correlation were done on the variables access to social grants and whether a household engaged in crop production or not. Crop production is considered labour intensive, thus the study sought to understand whether households with access to social grants were reluctant to take part in labour-intensive activities. The results of the Pearson chi-square and correlation test are summarized in table 7 below.

Table 7: Relationship between access to social grants and the decision to engage in crop production

Variables	Chi-square	Correlation coefficient	P-Value
Access to social grants and the decision to engage in crop production	3.61 9	- 0.353	0.057**

**Correlation significant at 10%

Source: Survey data 2013

As shown in table 7 above, a moderate, negative and significant relationship was obtained for these two variables implying that there was enough evidence to prove that access to social grants had a significant influence on the decision of households to engage in crop production in the study area. With access to social grants, the likelihood of engaging in crop production is reduced as compared to when a household does not have access.

Only 27.78% of households with access to social grants engaged in crop production while the majority of the social grants recipients (72.22%) were not taking part in crop production. The opposite was true for non-grant recipients as most of them (63.64%) engaged in crop production while only 36.36% did not. There is, therefore, evidence to support the fact that the none and underutilization of arable land in the study area can indeed be attributed to access to social grants which has impacted negatively on the behaviour of the economically active members of households towards crop production. These results are in accordance with Manoma (1999)'s findings in Melani village Eastern Cape which found out that there was a decline in field agriculture and a concentration on smaller residential garden plots whose output was oriented to domestic production and gift-giving rather than commercial sale. Manoma concluded that there was a virtual collapse of agriculture and the subsequent dependence on non-agricultural incomes mostly social grants.

The results are also in accordance with Potts (2012)'s findings as she found out that both the Disability Grant and the State Old Age Pension grants were providing perverse incentives that were leading to a dependency on state aid. Potts further mentions that grants are falling into the hands of undeserving individuals and incentivizing recipients and recipient households to depend on the income from the grant, rather than to seek employment. She, however, argues that the Child Support Grant, while inevitably flawed, is ultimately serving its purpose and



removing societal barriers for children, such as access to education. This study, however, did not make a separate comparison on the different types of social grants.

Although a significant relationship between access to social grants and income diversification was not obtained, the results of this study confirm an overdependence on state grants in the study area which is hindering livelihood improvement. This hypothesis is supported by evidence from the Pearson chi-square and correlation test between access to social grants and the decision to engage in crop production (which was found to be significant at 10%) as well as the fact that as much as 46% of the sampled households relied on social grants as their main source of income.

Households' attitude towards farming and their occupational preference

In order to determine rural people's ambitions and aspirations, respondents were asked to choose irrespective of their current occupations what occupation they preferred most than others. The results obtained were startling as the majority (50%) preferred to be employed, 22% preferred both farming and non-farm activities, 20% preferred to be entrepreneurs while only 8% indicated a preference to be farmers.

Respondents were asked to give reasons for their preferred occupation. Most of the respondents who preferred being employed indicated that the income obtained is stable thus ensuring a chance for a better livelihood. They also believed that people who are employed are respected in society. It was thus their desire to be employed and gain respect in their village. Others, however, revealed that they preferred being employed only because they did not like farming as they considered it a low-status occupation with very slim returns yet requiring much labour. For others, it was, however, because of old age and illness that they decided to retire from farming.

With regards to the few who preferred farming, the common reasons were that they did not have the required skills to be employed or to rely on something else. They believed farming was the most secure source of cheap food and even if they would want to start their own informal businesses they did not have the capital to do so. Those who preferred to be entrepreneurs believed that with a lack of skills and education one would only qualify for low paying inferior jobs, as such it was better to be an entrepreneur and be your own boss by starting small with the hope of expanding in future. The reasons for those who preferred both farming and non-farm activities were more or less similar to the ones mentioned in the other categories. Table 8 below shows the proportion of the respondents with regards to the occupation they preferred.

Table 8: Occupational Preference

Preferred Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Farming	4	8
Employment	25	50
Entrepreneur	10	20
Both farming and non-farm activities	11	22

Source: Survey data 2,013



In general most people's ambitions are not in the agricultural sector and it is only when their ambitions are not fulfilled that they will have to rely on subsistence farming usually against their will. To a certain extent, this explains why most households in the study area were not engaging in crop production as most of them do not prefer farming. The results, however, contradict Mwamfupe (1998)'s findings in his study in Tanzania. According to his results, most people preferred both farming and non-farm activities (70%), with 25% preferring farming alone and only 5% preferring non-farm activities alone.

Household attitudes towards farming

Households share different perceptions with regards to farming as a livelihood choice. In general, a household may have a positive or negative attitude towards farming based on what they believe to be the benefits or disadvantages accruing from engaging in farming activities. Table 9 shows the different categories of respondents' attitudes towards farming.

Table 9: Respondents attitude towards farming

Attitude towards farming	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely unfavourable	5	10
Unfavourable	14	28
Average	18	36
Favourable	10	20
Extremely favourable	3	6

Source: Survey Data 2013

Analysis of the respondents' attitude revealed that as many as 26% can be considered as having a positive attitude towards farming as they had favourable (20%) and extremely favourable (6%) attitudes. On the other hand, 38% of the respondents can be considered as having a negative attitude towards farming as they had unfavourable (28%) and extremely unfavourable (10%) attitudes. 36% had average attitudes towards farming implying that they were neither negative nor positive towards farming as a livelihood choice. Some earlier research findings have reported negative trends elsewhere (for example; Russell, 1993). Abdullai, Gidado and Jibril (2010) found that mostly the respondents were positively inclined to farming in a study they conducted in Nigeria. However, all these studies had a special focus on the youth while this study was concerned with the entire household in order to find the possible reasons why there is a greater underutilization of arable land in Ngqele village.

Households' attitude in relation to engaging in crop production

Farming is believed to be one of the core activities that rural households engage in, in order to fulfil their food needs and to raise income for a better livelihood. However, farming in the study area was found not to be playing a huge role in households' livelihoods as it was found that most households were either not utilizing their land at all or in a few instances they were only utilizing some of the lands. In addition to looking at the ambitions and aspirations of the respondents to ascertain some of the possible reasons why households in this village do not fully engage in farming activities a Pearson chi-square and correlation test was performed for the variables households' attitude on farming and whether they engaged in crop production or not. The results are summarized in Table 10 below.



Table 10: Relationship between households' attitude on farming and the decision to engage in crop production

Variables	Chi-square	Correlation coefficient	P-value
Household attitude on farming and decision to engage in crop production	14.072	0.675	0.007***

***Correlation is significant an 0.01 level

Source: Survey data 2013

A strong positive correlation was obtained (p -value = 0.007) between these two variables. The correlation was statistically significant at 1%. The results imply that the more favourable a household's attitude towards farming the more likely they would take farming as a livelihood choice and engage in crop production. Enough evidence was, therefore, obtained to accept the hypothesis that farming is generally regarded as a low-status occupation compared to off-farm activities. The growing underutilization of arable land in Ngqele village can, therefore, be attributed to households' ambitions and aspirations which are in favour of non-farm activities and also a relatively negative attitude towards farming.

CONCLUSIONS

Many conclusions can be drawn based on the findings of this study. Firstly, despite several constraints, rural households rely on a series of activities for cash income. Social grants were the main source of income for most households in Ngqele village. Secondly, there is a high dependency on social grants as evidenced by a high proportion of households that relied on social grants as their main source of income and also the fact that social grant access was negatively related to participation in crop production. Thirdly, the land is not playing a major role in livelihood improvement due to low levels of land utilization. Lastly, households have a relatively negative attitude towards farming as a livelihood choice and this to a greater extent, explains the high levels of land underutilization in the village.

Policy Recommendations

To encourage household income diversification and improve livelihoods, education needs to be promoted in general. Socio-economic policies that avail credit to rural households and training which instils entrepreneurial skills especially to the youths should be encouraged. According to Rigg (2006), the solution to rural poverty has generally been focused on the invigoration of farming and redistribution of land. However, this study confirms that the idea of regarding farming as the core ingredient in the essential recipe for rural development may not have much impact in fighting poverty and improving livelihoods, especially in Ngqele village. In as much as land is a fundamental livelihood asset, access to arable land is not always a sufficient condition for improving rural livelihoods. Thus, rural development should also focus more on employment creation and promotion of non-farm activities.



Although the contribution of social grants in fighting poverty in rural areas cannot be questioned, its viability from the standpoint of sustainability considerations warrants attention. For social grants not to create dependency, they must be linked to economic activities aimed at empowering households to take care of their livelihood needs out of their own efforts. Social assistance in the form of cash provides purchasing power which increases demand for locally produced commodities which is an advantage to the local farmers. Households must, therefore, be encouraged to take advantage of the increase in local demand and produce more so as to improve their livelihoods.

Households in Ngqele village require a direct and continuous support and encouragement to sustain their level of interest in farming. There is, therefore, a need for the provision of technical and institutional support to farmers in the form of extension services, training, inputs, credit and markets in order to motivate them to take farming seriously and improve their livelihoods. In this regard, a well-packaged agricultural development support programme, specifically designed to assist farmers is desirable. Such a programme can make a substantial contribution towards changing households' attitudes towards farming which will result in livelihood improvement.

REFERENCES

- Abdullahi, Y.M., Gidado, A.S., & Jibril, S.A., 2010. Attitude of Rural Youths towards Family Farming in Dass, Bauchi State, Nigeria and the Implications for Policy. *Journal of Agricultural Extension*. 14 (2).
- Barrett, C.B., Reardon, T., & Webb, P., 2001. Nonfarm income diversification and household livelihood strategies in rural Africa: concepts, dynamics and policy implications. Cornell University, Ithaca, USA.
- Berkverns, R.J.A., 1997. Backing two Horses: Interaction of Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Household Activities in a Zimbabwean Communal Area. *De-agrarianisation and Rural Employment Network, ASC Working Paper, Vol 24*.
- Bless, C., Higson-smith, C., & Kagee, A., 2006. Fundamentals of social research methods- An African perspective. Fourth edition. Juta & Co. Limited. Cape Town.
- Bryceson, D. 2002. Rural Africa At The Crossroads: Livelihood Practices and Policies. Natural Resource Perspectives. Available online: <http://www.odi.org.uk/nrp/52.html>. Accessed [30 August 2013].
- Bryceson, D.F., & Jamal, V., 1997. Farewell to Farms: De-Agrarianisation and Employment in Africa. Aldershot, Ashgate.
- Davis, R., 2003. The rural non-farm economy, livelihoods and their diversification: issues and options. *Report No: 2753*. Natural Resources Institute, Chatham, UK.
- DFID., 2002. Better livelihoods for poor people: The role of land policy, consultation document. Department for International Development, London. Available online: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/>. Accessed [10 May 2013].
- Ironkwe, A.G., Ekwe, K.C., & Mbanaso, E.O., 2006. Participation of extension agents in Research-Extension-Farmer-Input-Linkage-System (REFILLS) activities in Abia State. *Nigerian Journal of Agricultural Extension*, 9:109-115.
- Leedy, P.D., & Ormrod, J.E. 2004. Practical Research Planning and Design. Pearson, United States.



- Manoma, C., 1999. De-agrarianisation and the Urbanisation of a Rural Economy: Agrarian Patterns in Melani Village in the Eastern Cape. *De-agrarianisation and Rural Employment Network, ASC Working Paper 32*.
- Mwamfupe, D., 1998. Changing Village Land, Labour and Livelihoods. Rungwe and Kyela Districts, Tanzania. *De-agrarianisation and Rural Employment Network, ASC Working Paper 29*.
- Nargis, N., & Hossain, M. 2006. Income dynamics and pathways out of rural poverty in Bangladesh, 1988-2004. *Agricultural Economics* 35 (2006) supplement 425-435.
- Ntsangani, A.W., 2010. Nkonkobe municipality IDC review. Available www.nkonkobe.co.za
- Phiri, C., 2009. "Livestock, rural livelihoods and rural development interventions in the Eastern Cape: A case study of Chris Hani, Alfred Nzo and Amathole District municipalities" PhD Thesis. Unpublished. University of Fort Hare. Alice
- Potts, R., 2012. Social Welfare in South Africa: Curing or Causing Poverty? Available online: http://psujia.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/social_welfare_final.pdf. Accessed [04 November 2013].
- REGIONAL HUNGER AND VULNERABILITY PROGRAMME., 2010. Frontiers of Social Protection. Available online: <http://www.wahenga.net>. Accessed [12 May 2013].
- Rigg, J., 2006. Land, Farming, Livelihoods, and Poverty: Rethinking the Links in the Rural South. *World development*. 34 (1). 180-202.
- Russell, E. B., 1993. Attracting Youth to Agriculture, *Journal of Extension*, 13:4.
- Shepherd, A., Wadugodapitiya, D., & Evans, A., 2011. Social assistance and the 'dependency syndrome'. Available online: <http://www.chronicpoverty.org>. Accessed [11 May 2013].
- SMERU., 2004. Transitions to non-farm employment and the growth of the rattan industry: The example of Desa Buyut, Cirebon. In T. R. Leinbach (Ed.), *The Indonesian rural economy: Mobility, work and enterprise* (pp. 244–266). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Taylor, B., & Heath, A., 1996. The use of double-sided items in scale construction. Working Paper no. 37, Centre for Research into Elections and Social Trends: Available online at: <http://www.crest.ox.ac.uk/p37.htm>. Accessed [11 May 2013].
- Van Averbek, W., M'MARETE, C.K., IGODAN, C.O., & BELETE, A., 1998. An investigation into food plot production at irrigation schemes in central-eastern cape. A WRC report 719/1/98. Water Research Commission, Pretoria, South Africa.