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The role of indigenous knowledge in agricultural production: the case of the Svosve community

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CHAPTER ONE: Introducing the Concept of Indigenous Knowledge.

1.1. *The concept of indigenous knowledge: Challenges Ahead.*

The concept of indigenous knowledge has taken centre stage in mainstream rural development (Ashley & Maxwell, 2001). Ellis & Biggs (2001) argue for a paradigm shift from top-down development initiatives, which place the State at the forefront of driving development initiatives, towards bottom-up approaches that stress the need to integrate rural communities in driving development initiatives. Ashley & Maxwell (2001) argue the transition from top-down approaches to development from the bottom-up was born out of the notion that poor communities can only develop if their ideas are included in mainstream development thinking. The top-down approaches of the 1960s, under then dominant modernisation theories, State led interventions of the 1970s which continued this trend and the market liberalization approaches of the 1980s, all failed to eradicate poverty in the third world, particularly in rural communities in Africa (Ashley and Maxwell, 2001).

Since the 1990s, the shift towards bottom-up approaches emphasised the need for local people to participate in development initiatives from policy planning to practice (Ashley and Maxwell, 2001). It is during that period when the notion of indigenous knowledge began to take centre stage. However, ever since the bottom-up approaches were adopted into mainstream development initiatives, poverty, disease and food shortages have remained a growing concern for the developing societies. Furthermore, the questions of what constitutes indigenous knowledge and the problems it should address remain unclear.

The term indigenous knowledge has been selected on the premise that rural communities are endowed with indigenous knowledge systems which are unique and yet relevant to members of the community. Such knowledge is believed to have been used for several decades by indigenous communities and is the basis through which members of the community organise life activities (Battiste, 2002; Hagar, 2003).

The notion of indigenous knowledge, is however, a contentious concept in the field of development studies as it fails to fall under a single definition (Battiste & Henderson, 2000). Battiste and Henderson, for instance, argue that indigenous knowledge means different things to diverse individuals and communities. For instance, in Eurocentric thought, it has often been referred to as ‘traditional knowledge’ suggesting a body of relatively old

knowledge that has been handed down from generation to generation in static form (Battiste & Henderson, 2000). Hagar (2003) argues that the concept of indigenous knowledge has also been misinterpreted to mean 'local knowledge.' The argument put forward by advocates of 'local knowledge' is that knowledge cannot be limited to an ethnic group, a community, whether rural or urban area (Hagar, 2003). The term 'local knowledge' is used to refer to a group of people possessing a similar cultural identity. This includes citizens in a country or people living in the same region (Warburton and Martin, 1999). This assumption is problematic, however, because it assumes that there are unique knowledge systems that exist for many different communities, ethnic groups and even countries.

In addition, some definitions accentuate indigenous knowledge as 'spiritual' rather that comprehensive knowledge, while other definitions emphasise the economic, political, cultural and religious potency of the discourse (Battiste, 2002). Whatever definition chosen remains contested.

The last two decades have witnessed an increase in the number of international organisations, researchers and scholars that celebrate the notion of indigenous knowledge systems. For instance, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2004) reasoned that indigenous knowledge was of importance not only in agriculture, but also to improve biodiversity, healthcare, property rights and a range of cognate social issues. The majority of scholars attending the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development highlighted the importance of indigenous knowledge in solving problems faced by people in developing societies. Testahun Fenta and Murthi Anishetty (cited in UNCTAD, 2004) argued, for instance, that since the majority of the world's population is rural, there was a need to adapt to natural or farm-saved seed ahead of artificial seeds as a means to ensure food security. They argued that insecurity was viewed to be a result of the ever increasing costs of manufacture that reduces poor people's ability to access products as well as the failure of artificial seeds to adapt in certain environments. What seems sufficiently clear is the reliance on the capitalist model supported by Western scientific knowledge continues to be harmful in developing societies. The Western strategy appears to have done little to accommodate the views of developing societies. For this reason alone, an examination into the merits of indigenous knowledge appears warranted.

In 2004, the World Bank celebrated its five year anniversary on its theme of Indigenous Knowledge for Global Development. The World Bank (2004) reported several successes where the application of indigenous knowledge had improved the livelihoods of people in underdeveloped communities. However the World Bank (2004) argued that there were numerous challenges to be confronted before indigenous knowledge becomes more generally accepted. Some of the challenges cited by the World Bank (2004) include the dominance of Western development strategies, lack of familiarity with the concept among policy makers coupled by the reduced interest by developing societies to adopt indigenous knowledge (World Bank, 2004).

The International Conference on indigenous knowledge systems in Africa and their relevance in Sustainable Development, held in Brussels from 21-23 November 2005, noted that indigenous knowledge systems in Africa are on the verge of extinction due to their marginalisation from mainstream development programs (Ansay, 2005). The globalisation of cultures resulted in the erosion of ideas among diverse cultures and this ensures that most development initiatives being practiced in African countries are dominated by the views of Western countries. These ideas tend to sideline indigenous knowledge and the cultural practices of local communities (Ansay, 2005). Delegates in Brussels argued, for instance, that the indigenous knowledge systems of many African communities are suppressed by Western development initiatives and the current escalation of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa only serves to demonstrate that Western ways of development are fraught with problems of sustainability (Ansay, 2005). The conference resolved that rising poverty and food insecurity will be impossible to solve unless the world development agencies or the development community incorporated indigenous knowledge systems as the basis through which indigenous communities in Africa organise their productive and reproductive lives in order to ensure sustainable livelihoods.

On the one hand, one can note this concept has been romanticised in the past two decades. In acknowledging its importance to developing societies, it tends to overemphasise how it can uplift these communities. For instance, advocates of indigenous knowledge have focused less on other factors that constrain agriculture in developing societies in the seeming rush to demonstrate how indigenous knowledge will assist improve food production in these societies. Other factors such as government policies and ecological factors, lack of

productive resources, infrastructure development, technical assistance and human resource capabilities tend to be sidelined (Hove, 2006).

On the other hand, there are numerous problems and tensions that have resulted in indigenous knowledge not being considered useful as a development strategy in poor rural communities. Some of the challenges include its failure to possess a basis in scientific fact compared to Western scientific knowledge (Howes & Chambers, 1979; Briggs, 2005). Furthermore, there exist binary tensions between Western scientific knowledge which is well documented and indigenous knowledge that has not been codified (Howes & Chambers, 1979). Lastly, there are also problems that relate to differentiation, power relations and the romanticisation of indigenous knowledge as a philosophy (Briggs, 2005). The idea that indigenous knowledge is believed to be unique from community to community even makes it more rigid (Briggs, 2005). There is hence a need to ascertain the value of indigenous knowledge before it can be potentially accommodated as a useful development strategy.

Global development organisations such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 2010) and World Hunger (2013) show at least 852 million people, nearly 13.6% of the world's population, are regarded as undernourished and in dire need of food supplements by donors (World Hunger, 2013). The FAO (2012) and World Hunger (2013) argue that nearly all hungry people reside in the developing societies. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to 239 million people considered as hungry. The FAO (2011; 2012) claims the major causes of the rise in food scarcity are due to the neglect of the farming practices relevant to poor people by governments, the economic crisis of the last five years and the significant increase in food prices (World Hunger, 2013). These statistical facts highlight a genuine food crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa. The question of massive food shortages in Africa (especially when the World Bank (1998; 2004) clearly labelled African economies as heavily dependent on peasant agriculture, with the exception of a few countries like Namibia, South Africa and Botswana, cannot be answered here.

Moyo (2007; 2011) says, however, peasant farms, which depend on family labour and are heavily subsidised by the State, tend to produce with greater efficiency than large scale commercial farms. He further argues that such farmers make use of indigenous farming methods, low cost family labour, primitive technologies and little financial capital. Yet there

is evidence of a lack of belief in indigenous agricultural practices by governments in the region (Moyo, 2007). Most third world governments have been criticised for neglecting indigenous knowledge in mainstream development programmes (World Hunger, 2013). However, a significant number of Non-governmental organisations that include the FAO and the World Hunger emphasize the incorporation of indigenous knowledge in the development programmes as a means to reduce or eradicate poverty among the poor.

Advocates of indigenous knowledge claim that African traditional societies have long depended on indigenous knowledge in order to survive. Problems of hunger and food insecurity are said to be a result of the marginalisation of indigenous knowledge by Western development initiatives and this warrants a closer analysis. There is an urgent need to find a solution to the poverty crisis in the global south considering the rapid population growth, the ever changing climatic conditions, loss of biodiversity and the continued failure of development initiatives by the State.

This study seeks to investigate the role of indigenous knowledge in the Svosve community and its contribution to agricultural production. It will find out whether there are beliefs, practices and skills that fall under a working definition of indigenous knowledge in Svosve community, and their relations with agricultural production. It will also establish how indigenous knowledge interacts with development initiatives of the State. Based on the outcome of the study, it is envisaged that a determination can be made as to the contribution indigenous knowledge to agricultural production.

The focus of my study will be to tell how indigenous knowledge contributes to farming, and then assess the purpose of indigenous knowledge systems in small communities. The study will evaluate how the indigenous knowledge systems are affected by the development initiatives of the State. This case will be informed by the life experiences of farmers in the Svosve community, as well as stakeholders in agriculture who include traditional leaders, government administrators and extension workers.

The investigation will take place in the Svosve community, located in Mashonaland East Province, Zimbabwe. The Svosve rural community has been selected as the point of inquiry because of its largely agrarian arrangement. The majority of its inhabitants practice farming as a source of livelihood and yet productivity remains astoundingly low. Furthermore,

Svosve is regarded as poverty stricken and yet there is evidence the community is endowed with farming land and human resources.

1.2. *Indigenous knowledge in the farming activities of the Svosve.*

Due to the fact that the concept of indigenous knowledge remains unclear and yet continues to be romanticised as a valuable asset for rural communities, I will investigate whether and how indigenous knowledge informs agricultural practice in the Svosve community. The key research question which consequently informs this investigation is whether and how indigenous beliefs and practices of the Svosve community inform agricultural practices and their interaction with development initiatives of the State.

1.3. *Objectives of the study on indigenous knowledge in the Svosve community*

This study sought to elicit farmers' opinions and experiences with regards to farming in the Svosve community. The objective was to investigate the presence of indigenous knowledge in the Svosve community, to establish the characteristics of indigenous knowledge, to ascertain the role indigenous knowledge performs in the farming activities of the people and to find out what happens when indigenous knowledge is confronted by the development initiatives of the State. This study hence seeks to investigate whether and how indigenous knowledge exists in a form which differentiates it from Western scientific knowledge. Forms of indigenous knowledge are assumed to reside in the people of the Svosve community, that it is hereditary and it manifests itself in the form of beliefs, practices and skills. The study seeks to investigate whether aspects of what can be identified as indigenous knowledge assist farmers when conducting their farming activities.

CHAPTER TWO: Establishing a Working Theory in the Study of Indigenous Knowledge

2.1. *The emergence of indigenous knowledge as a concept: An alternative approach to Development*

In the late 1970*s* scholars in development studies discovered it was impossible to formulate a development approach that could foster macro-economic growth on the one hand, while allowing members of small communities to harness resources preserve the environment and end systematic poverty on the other (World bank, 1998). The focus shifted in the following two decades to allow rural communities to make use of their indigenous knowledge, social institutions, production methods and ecotypes (World Bank, 2004). The fundamental idea is to encourage smaller communities to make use of the knowledge systems they had developed in their own 'social contexts in order to build infrastructure, utilise the environment, preserve the ecosystem, as well as invent new strategies of development in line with the old ones' (World Bank, 1998: 3).

The use of the term 'indigenous' emerged from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, United Kingdom, 1979 (Hagar, 2003). The architects of this paradigm were Howes & Chambers (1979). Howes and Chambers' use of the term 'indigenous' did not explicitly clarify any boundaries on the use of this term, and this resulted in the emergence of alternative concepts as substitutes for 'indigenous' (Hagar, 2003). By the mid-90s, the term 'indigenous' was used alongside emerging concepts such as 'local, traditional and folk' resulting in a lack of consensus among scholars as to the meaning of these terms (Hagar, 2003). However, the term 'indigenous' became a constant feature in scholarly debates from the early 1980s into the 1990s and recently when it was adopted by institutions such as the World Bank (1998, 2002 & 2004), FAO (2010) and World hunger (2013) as an alternative approach to Development for small communities.

Howes & Chambers (1979) the architects of the discourse used the term 'indigenous technical knowledge.' They argued that the knowledge found in non-Western societies was different to Western knowledge. It was more technical and practical and it allowed members of such communities to work productively, as well as solve the challenges they faced in their localities (Howes & Chambers, 1979). It was held that indigenous technical knowledge derives from the community, should be regarded as something which becomes possible as

a result of a more general intellectual process of creating order out of disorder, and was not simply a response to practical human needs such as sustenance, food production and health (Howes & Chambers, 1979).

Howes & Chambers' argument is plausible, because it attempts to distinguish features of indigenous knowledge from those of Western scientific knowledge. However, to base an argument on the idea that indigenous knowledge is more 'technical' when compared to Western knowledge is not convincing. It remains unclear what Howes & Chambers referred to as 'technical' but they appear to assume that indigenous knowledge is rather practical knowledge inherited in communities to socialise the beneficiaries towards certain work practices. In this regard, it was stripped of other attributes akin to Western scientific knowledge. Such an argument is subject to contestation. Furthermore, their definition of the term indigenous technical knowledge remains inexplicit.

The works of Howes & Chambers (1979) and the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex were not immune to criticism. Firstly, it was argued that their meaning of the term 'indigenous' was by no means clear. This term remains poorly articulated as can be noted in the various definitions that scholars continue to generate which result in a lack of consensus (Hagar, 2003). Furthermore, Howes & Chambers failure to provide a definition that brings to the fore all aspects of indigenous knowledge resulted in a general lack of clarity on what the term 'indigenous' epitomises. Some scholars have attempted to move away from the term 'indigenous' by formulating other terms such as local knowledge, traditional knowledge, folk knowledge and traditional technical knowledge, such as Howes and Chambers, in an attempt to capture the unique beliefs, practices, skills and 'know how' that may be referred to as knowledge. These terms are being used interchangeably and rather confusingly. It is therefore not clear whether scholars are pursuing the same concept or whether these are different concepts.

Howes & Chambers (1979) were also criticised for defining indigenous technical knowledge by using the benchmarks of Western scientific knowledge (Silitoe, 1998; Hagar, 2003). This resulted in the restriction of forms of knowledge generated in developing societies to technical knowledge, therefore making indigenous knowledge appear inferior to Western scientific knowledge. It was argued that they undermined other features of indigenous knowledge such as its philosophical and scientific form (Silitoe, 1998). Silitoe

further argues that the comparison of indigenous knowledge and Western scientific knowledge leads in practice to the dismissal of indigenous knowledge as useless, incorrect or inferior to Western knowledge. The benchmarks set by Western scientific knowledge have become the indicators used to determine that which is, or is not knowledge (Silitoe, 1998). Juxtaposing knowledge developed in primitive societies and Western scientific knowledge sets up a comparison between two arguably different epistemic systems. This usually results in the continued dominance of Western oriented epistemology used as the yardstick of determining knowledge. Howes & Chambers were therefore forced into asserting that indigenous knowledge was inferior to Western scientific knowledge.

There is however, a significant body of literature pointing to the idea of a growing interest in the field of indigenous knowledge in the last two decades, especially among academics, research institutions and development agencies. This emanates from the growing frustration among scholars who criticise the top-down down approaches to community development that have dominated the last 40-50 years and not resulted in comprehensive development in developing societies (Rapley, 2007). Many development approaches preceding the indigenous knowledge approach to development often emphasised economic growth as a strategy of improving the human welfare of people living in rural communities (Rapley, 2007). Top down approaches to community development often emphasised the idea that the State is in control and hence the need to work within the parameters for development as defined by the State (Cobbett, 1987). Cobbett further notes that the top-down approaches to development envisaged a passive community, waiting for "experts" to teach skills required for advancement. However, the ever growing concerns of material poverty, food shortages, malnutrition, and health care, as well as environmental concerns, have pressed scholars to think otherwise.

In the last two decades, there has been a sweeping change in the relations between the economy and culture as global concepts (Ellen and Harris, 2000 & Hagar, 2003). Hagar for instance, says prior to the emergence of the concept of indigenous knowledge, culture and the economy were understood in a direct oppositional relationship and there were little or no efforts to unite the two fields. The two fields were hence viewed as separate entities which did not influence one another (Hagar, 2003). Hagar argues that the economy was thought to be a product of market forces regulated by government policies and that culture did not contribute in any way to the economy. Consequently, the cultures found in non-

Western societies were viewed as centred on the spiritual aspects of social life which had little significance for economic development (Hagar, 2003). Brokensha, Warren & Werner (1980) provided the first attempt to link these fields together. They noted that the knowledge and cultures existing in non-Western societies did not rely as heavily on the spiritual dimension as had been argued by some scholars. Rather, they noted that spirituality is embedded in a complex knowledge system that cannot be easily explained. For instance, religion or spirituality may be viewed as structures that support the economy of smaller communities. However, their role is embedded within other social structures. Of late, the concept of indigenous knowledge recognises the close relationship between culture and the economy.

There is a considerable body of literature that focuses on indigenous knowledge as an essential tool in preserving bio-diversity and creating lasting development (Agrawal, 1995). The assumption is that the people living in developing societies have the knowledge and skills to make use their natural resources sensibly, while also ensuring these are not depleted as a result of human activity. Indigenous knowledge is also seen as a useful tool in protecting local resources such as land, plants, animals and herbs (World Bank, 1998). Indigenous knowledge is a means of protecting indigenous resources in light of intellectual property rights and bio-profiteering. Thus from this view point one can observe the idea that there is a deliberate attempt by scholars to link the fields of culture and the economy which are viewed as inseparable.

Kilby (2002) attempted to explain the relationship between the knowledge and culture found in indigenous communities and how it contributes to production and reproduction. He notes that by the mid-1990s indigenous knowledge was perceived as a form of social capital of the poor (Kilby, 2002). Hagar (2003) added to this view by stating, indigenous knowledge is widely recognised in the social development paradigm as ‘one of the few sources of capital available to indigenous communities.’ (Hagar, 2003: 341). Hagar also contends that indigenous communities apply the social capital in their possession in order to develop, secure and manage unique resources available to them (Hagar, 2003). This process is achieved through sharing of ideas and experiences inside the community and this allows members to come up with innovations and problem solving mechanisms in order to survive.

One question that arises from the discussion is what precisely is being referred to as social capital? Bourdieu (2005) views social capital as the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. In short, Bourdieu regarded social capital as resources available to human beings living in the same community and these are accessible for use based on group membership, social relationships and networks of influence and support (Hagar, 2003). Putnam (1993) adds to the idea of social capital by stating that it creates social networks and associated norms that have an effect on the productivity of the community. This view was adopted by advocates of indigenous knowledge such as Warren (1991; 1992) and Shaw & Takeuchi (2007) who claimed that all communities depend on their social capital when making use of the natural environment.

2.2. *Definition of indigenous knowledge and the problem of terminology*

Defining indigenous knowledge poses a serious challenge to scholars (World Bank, 1998). This problem stems from the fact that there is no single definition of indigenous knowledge (Shaw & Takeuchi, 2007). Scholars tend to agree that there is considerable overlap on the definitions and this results in confusion as to whether scholars are discussing the same subject (Ellen & Harris, 1996: 2000; Hagar, 2003). Furthermore, scholars tend to be locked in a debate about whether indigenous knowledge is the same as indigenous environmental knowledge or traditional environmental knowledge, local knowledge or traditional knowledge (World Bank, 1998). These definitions have been used interchangeably and somewhat confusingly. I will proceed to establish a working definition for indigenous knowledge. On the other hand, I will separate the concept of indigenous knowledge from similar concepts such as local knowledge and traditional knowledge.

Grenier (1998:22) defines indigenous knowledge as the 'unique traditional, local knowledge existing within and developed around the specific conditions of men and women indigenous to a particular geographical area.'' Grenier's (1998) definition of indigenous knowledge is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it does not account for the use of the contested terms 'traditional' and 'local' of which all are contested in the study of indigenous knowledge. For instance, the use of the term 'traditional' leaves the impression that this knowledge is passed on from one generation to another in its original form. Horstheimke (2004) criticises the idea by stating that knowledge cannot be fixed and that all knowledge should have a

degree of validation that allows it to be tested and reformed to meet new challenges in the ever changing social world. Secondly, Grenier's use of the term 'local' was not adequately explained and this assumes that people living across different geographical spaces can develop unique knowledge systems based on their life experiences in the communities they live. Horstheimke (2004) disputes the perspective of multiple knowledge systems by arguing that if all societies can develop their own unique systems then there is no yardstick of determining what knowledge is and that which must be omitted.

Warren (1991) defines indigenous knowledge as the local knowledge unique to a given culture or society. Warren further argues that indigenous knowledge contrasts with the knowledge systems generated by universities, research institutions and private firms. In addition, he claims that it is the basis for local level decision making in agriculture, health care, education, food preparation, natural resource management and a host of other activities in rural communities (Warren, 1991). This view point is important for it places indigenous knowledge as a form of human capital that allows members of the community to use their beliefs and skills to achieve certain outcomes. This argument is in line with Grenier's view that indigenous knowledge is developed in the community and by the community members in order to organise their life activities.

On the other hand, Warren's definition remains controversial, because it suggests that the methods of organizing social and economic activities in ethnocentric societies consist of unique forms of knowledge outside the scope of Western knowledge production, suggesting that there are numerous knowledge centres with different procedures for every community (Horstheimke, 2004). Warren (1991) falls into the same trap as Grenier (1998) who argues that indigenous knowledge is a form of knowledge which is generated by a particular community for the purpose of usage by the community. Horstheimke (2004) criticises this notion by stating that indigenous knowledge should not be given the same status as Western knowledge as it fails to meet the benchmark set by Western scientific knowledge. In other words, indigenous knowledge fails to meet the criteria of what is considered factual (Horstheimke, 2004).

Horstheimke (2004) poses serious arguments that need to be considered before the concept of indigenous knowledge is adopted for this research. For instance, Horstheimke argues that what is being referred to as 'knowledge' does not qualify to be given the same status as

Western epistemology. He says these beliefs, myths and opinions do not amount to Western scientific knowledge (Horstheimke, 2004). What should be accorded the status of knowledge should be able to meet the universally acclaimed standards of knowledge that allow for the testing of reliability and validity (Horstheimke (2004). This argument should be considered on the basis that Western knowledge is based on a foundation of theory building and testing that has been proven over a long period. In addition, the aspects that constitute Western knowledge are explicitly outlined, unlike those of indigenous knowledge that require careful probing. On the one hand, Horstheimke's views deserve credit as they provide the distinction between Western epistemology and how it differs with alternative worldviews. On the other hand, Horstheimke's view allows for the opening of an investigation into a definition of indigenous knowledge that attempts to find the features of indigenous knowledge and to establish whether it or aspects of it can be given an equal status with Western knowledge.

The use of the term 'local knowledge' has also stirred a debate among scholars as there is no consensus on what the word 'local' actually means (Ellen & Harris, 1996: 2000; Hagar, 2003). The term local has been used in some instances to mean a particular community or in reference to a country or a group of countries (World Bank, 1998; Hagar, 2003). The potential problem that arises from using the term local knowledge emanates from the varied meanings that the word has generated. The World Bank's view is justified on the basis that a good definition of indigenous knowledge should be accurate in order to avoid homogenising communities with different characteristics.

For instance, Chivaura (1997) argues that there exists a worldview that is African and this can be observed in the way the *Bantu* speaking people of Southern Africa organise their way of life. In his conceptualisation of the *Hunhu/Ubuntu* (translated to mean: humanity to others) he makes reference to a regional culture that can be found throughout Southern Africa. He goes on to argue that indigenous people of Africa share similar languages, beliefs, religious practices and philosophies of life and these facets contribute to how the people organise their life activities (Chivaura, 1997). He alludes to the similarities in African civilisation that span from Egypt to Angola and from Timbuktu to Zimbabwe (Chivaura, 1997). This view is problematic as it appears to claim that African societies have a homogenous cultural practice. Furthermore, it neglects the idea that the communities in sub-Saharan Africa have different beliefs and cultural practices. According to the World Bank

(1998) various communities encounter different experiences and the methods they use to address potential challenges differ from one community to the other. Hence therefore, a definition for indigenous knowledge must not generalise the conditions of men and women living in different communities. Based on this line of argument, this research will avoid the term local knowledge as a reference to indigenous knowledge.

Some scholars have used the term 'traditional knowledge' as a substitute for indigenous knowledge. Berkes (1993) claims that what is considered as traditional may be difficult to define and more importantly, it may undermine the ability of indigenous groups to establish new solutions in the modern age. Based on this idea, there appears to be an on-going debate on what should be regarded as indigenous knowledge or traditional knowledge and whether such knowledge can be used by rural communities to improve their livelihoods. Legat (1991) for instance, prefers the term traditional knowledge. He contends that traditional knowledge is knowledge rooted in the traditional way of life. Legat also argues that traditional knowledge is accumulated knowledge and it involves the understanding of the human place in relation to the universe. Legat's definition of traditional knowledge, is however, unclear because it does not adequately define the terms 'traditional' and 'knowledge' but rather, only indicates that there is a form of knowledge embedded in the traditional way of life and used by human beings to understand the universe.

Stevenson (1996) contends that the use of the word 'traditional' in these definitions is often seen as problematic as the reader may assume that it relates to the past and that traditional is not contemporary. Abele (1997) reasons that the word 'traditional' can obscure the fact that all knowledge evolves and develops over long periods or that traditional knowledge can be misrepresented to refer instead to a people's traditional knowledge which may have been influenced by other people and other traditions of knowledge. The problem with using the term traditional is that some scholars tend to think that traditional views cannot solve today's environmental, social and cultural problems (Abele, 1997). Furthermore, scholars in the mould of Legat (1991) did not specify the features of traditional knowledge and this leaves an unclear picture of the meaning of traditional knowledge.

The use of the term traditional is also problematic due to the wide-ranging meanings it brings to the fore. Any definition constructed along the lines of traditional knowledge must be able to clearly define or contextualise the terms 'traditional' and 'knowledge.' Stevenson

(1996) attempted to define the terms in his definition of traditional environmental knowledge by arguing it is closely associated with how rural communities have learnt over years to manage the environment. Stevenson argues that traditional knowledge consists of ecological aspects closely tied to social and spiritual aspects of the knowledge system. Stevenson (1996: 281) defines traditional environmental knowledge as 'a body of knowledge and beliefs transmitted through oral traditions and first hand observation that includes a system of classification, a set of empirical observations about the local environment and a system of self-management that governs resource use.'' Based on this definition, there is the idea traditional knowledge consists of beliefs and practices that have been developed over long periods and these are transmitted orally as well as through observation to present and future generations (Stevenson, 1996). Of importance is the point that members of the community learn to understand, as well as to solve the problems in their society, using knowledge they have acquired from previous generations.

Other scholars prefer to use the term indigenous knowledge over traditional knowledge on the assumption that the latter refers to beliefs and practices of the past (Warren, 1991). Having noted this problem, Hagar (2003) says that there are observable distinctions between the two notions. He said, 'a true tradition comprises proven ancient, original and distinctive customs, conventions and routines' (Hagar, 2003: 338). He claims that these features function on the practical level of repeated actions based on belief (Hagar, 2003). This assertion points to the idea that tradition does not change but rather maintains its features and members of the community continuously use it in its original form while the present generation has the responsibility of passing it on to the next generation. He goes on to argue that indigenous knowledge boasts of similar characteristics to traditional knowledge, but these two differ in the sense that indigenous knowledge continuously adjust to meet the needs of community members in a particular community, more specifically the 'conditions of men and women in relation to their environment' (Hagar, 2003; Shaw & Takeuchi, 2007). Based on this idea, there is a need to clearly draw the line between these concepts in order to establish the nature and form of indigenous knowledge and whether it can be used as an effective tool for enhancing production.

Flavier et al (1995: 479) cited in the World Bank (1998) argues that indigenous knowledge is the 'information base for a society, which facilitates communication and decision making.' Flavier el al, further argue that indigenous information systems are dynamic, are

continuously influenced by 'internal creativity and experimentation' as well as by contact with external systems (Flavier et al, 1995:479). This definition is important because it raises four critical points worth analysing. Firstly, the definition points to the idea that indigenous knowledge lives and exists within the community and is the basis through which men, women and children in a community communicate and make socio-economic decisions (Grenier, 1998). Secondly, there is the idea that such knowledge is dynamic and is continuously influenced by 'internal creativity and experimentation' (Flavier et al, 1995: 479). This view points to the idea that such knowledge differs in its form from community to community and it can best be understood by members of the community from which it has been developed. Furthermore, there is the idea that such knowledge develops out of the internal creativity of the members in the community and constantly develops as society advances. From this view point, one can note that this form of knowledge is not static. It constantly evolves to meet the needs of the community members. In addition, it constantly changes its form in order to co-exist with alternative knowledge systems that do not derive from the community (Flavier et al, 1995).

The World Bank (1998) endorsed Flavier et al's (1995) definition owing to its empirical value to the study of indigenous knowledge. According to the World Bank (1998) two separate case studies conducted in Rwanda and Columbia, to determine whether two or three modern bean varieties considered by scientists, could yield maximum potential in these areas. The experiment achieved only modest results regardless of the use of modern technologies such as artificial fertilisers and irrigation equipment. The scientists then invited women farmers from the community who possessed valuable indigenous knowledge about bean cultivation to examine more than twenty bean varieties at the research stations and to take home and grow the two or three they thought promising. The women farmers planted the new varieties using their own methods of production and this outperformed those of the scientists by 60% to 90% (World Bank, 1998).

There are numerous lessons that derive from the case study. Firstly, one can note that the beliefs, practices and skills possessed by people living in small communities are vital in informing the process of adaptation of modern cultivation techniques (World Bank, 1998). The people who live in small communities for long periods of time tend to develop a stronger relationship and understanding with their natural surroundings compared to outsiders who may even possess better financial resources and technologies that are

unavailable to the locals. As such, the locals should be allowed to practice work activities based on what they know and what they understand. Foreign ideas should be permitted into these communities if only they are approved of by members of the community.

In a separate study conducted by the World Bank (1998) it was discovered that indigenous methods of transporting goods are more efficient in rural Nepal than modern means of transport. The Nepalese government sought to distribute food to rural workers in its 'Food for Work Programme.' The Nepalese government was assisted by several Non-Governmental Organisations that donated food and haulage trucks for transportation to the communities. However, it was established that using modern trucks to distribute food to remote areas in Nepal was difficult due to poor road networks. Furthermore, the process of using outsiders to distribute food to the communities was marred with inconsistencies and a lack of transparency. In order to prevent these challenges, the government resorted to using local distributors and community based supervision. Instead of using covered trucks, bullock carts were used for transportation. This approach yielded several benefits, it was noted that hiring bullock carts provided additional income for rural communities as opposed to using city based truck companies. The load of a bullock cart is a local standard and the amounts delivered could be easily calculated by the government as well as the community members. Any missing portion could be estimated publicly and any loss or inappropriate allocation could be questioned in public. Lastly, these carts could be used to reach even the most remote parts of Nepal (World Bank, 1998).

Based on these findings, it is difficult to define indigenous knowledge. It is also difficult to separate indigenous knowledge from traditional knowledge and local knowledge as there are a number of overlapping concepts within the three fields. However, literature demonstrates the marked discrepancies within these definitions.

2.3. *Demystifying the gap between indigenous knowledge and Western scientific knowledge*

Levi Strauss (1962) argues that, nearly all civilisations tend to impose the objective orientations of its thought by repressing the knowledge systems of other societies. He further argues that Malinowski made the same mistake when he undervalued the Trobriands interest in totemic animals and plants. Levi Strauss (1962:1) criticises Malinowski for thinking that the Trobriands interests in plants and animals were influenced by their ability to provide

food for the community, 'by nothing but the rumbling in their stomachs' while he neglected the ontological value of totems to a society. Voss (1997:29) argues that Levi Strauss (1962) believed that 'there is no qualitative difference behind the minds of primitive groups and the minds of the so called advanced Western societies'. Voss further argues that Levi Strauss believed that primitive societies have developed a scientific attitude to allow them to adapt the natural environment.

Levi Strauss (1962) demonstrates his view point using the cases of the Negrito, the Tyukyu of Archipelago and the Tewa of Mexico. He argues that all three communities employ scientific procedures to allow them to adapt to their environment. For instance, the Negrito was able to scientifically test the natural environment and interpret meanings using the human senses. Levi Strauss also noted that when a Negrito is not sure about a particular plant, they would taste the plant, smell the leaves, break and observe the stems and then remark on its habits. This practice was common among the Tyukyu while the Tewa could identify hundreds of plants and their sexes as well as identify some of their medicinal properties. From this view point, Levi Strauss claimed that primitive societies developed scientific procedures permitting them to interpret their natural environment as a survival strategy mechanism. Such knowledge differs from the principles of Western knowledge that has been built on the foundation of established theory and procedure and yet similar results may have been experienced from using the indigenous beliefs and practices.

Polanyi (1958; 1962) attempted to conceptualise knowledge by arguing that there is a form of knowledge that is tacit and can only be revealed through practice. He further argues that such knowledge is transmitted through social networks existing in a community. According to Polanyi (1962), tacit knowledge specialises on the 'know how' while knowledge is generally concerned with the 'know why.' In his analysis, Polanyi noted that tacit knowledge that cannot be written down or explained in theory, neither can it be understood by members outside the practice. The skilled experts do not make use of written theory, but they use their natural instincts. An example of such tacit knowledge can be noted in Chirikure & Hall (1998) & Chirikure (2010) who argue that the Bantu of the present Tlokwa area had skilled blacksmiths who smelted iron mechanically by crushing pigment and beating the mineral ores using stones in a heat driven chemical transformation of the oxides (Chirikure & Hall, 1998). Their methods of iron smelting were so advanced to the extent that contemporary efforts to generate such strong and durable iron have failed to yield

similar results (Chirikure & Hall, 1998). From this view point, one can observe that there may be other forms of scientific knowledge that exist in non-Western societies, but that this knowledge is not written down and such knowledge was certainly given prominence. Hence there is need to enquire about such tacit knowledge from within indigenous communities.

Foucault (1977) cited in Donald and Vander Zwaag (2006) claims the issue of knowledge is inseparable from power. He argues that knowledge is linked to power and it assumes not only the authority of the truth but has the ability to make it true (Foucault, 1977). He further argues that knowledge is used by dominant groups to dominate other social groups and this is usually a process that entails constraint, regulation and disciplining of practice. For instance, he claims that the power of education is not embodied in the school, nor is it with the teacher, but rather it is manifested within and through the control exercised by larger bureaucratic and military structures. From this perspective, knowledge is presented as implicated in and constitutive of social power relations. Foucault further argued that knowledge is ubiquitous, even small groups can wield power to counter the hegemonic influence of the dominant groups. Thus the central argument is that there are contestations that arise in relation to knowledge and power.

Horstheimke (2004) argues that indigenous knowledge does not meet the criteria of what is regarded as knowledge. Knowledge is built on three pillars that are belief, justification and truth. Horstheimke (2004: 33-34) further distinguishes the difference between the terms 'know' and 'knowledge' by breaking down the term knowledge into three examinable components, namely 'factual,' 'practical' and 'knowledge by acquaintance.' Horstheimke argues that Western knowledge is superior to indigenous knowledge because it is more practical and factual than traditional knowledge. He argues that Western knowledge can be tested for validity and reliability while indigenous knowledge cannot be accorded such status. He further argues that indigenous knowledge should be viewed as knowledge by acquaintance that should be interpreted as know-how and not knowledge. For instance, a traditional healer knows how to treat people and this implies that he apparently knows that certain barks have essential remedial properties (Horstheimke, 2004). This debate is crucial in attempting to establish a working theory for the concept indigenous knowledge by questioning its features.

The definition to be used in this research is based on Shaw & Takeuchi (2007:23) who argue that indigenous knowledge is knowledge that people in a given community have developed overtime based on tested experiences, embedded in the culture of the community and finally is dynamic and ever changing. Shaw & Takeuchi (2007) identified the essential facets of indigenous knowledge. They argue that it is generated from within and by communities, it is location and culture specific and is the basis for decision making and survival strategies. Howes & Chambers (1979) argue that indigenous knowledge should also be viewed as technical knowledge. They argue that indigenous knowledge should be viewed as scientific knowledge because indigenous people have developed technical skills and practices by taking advantage of their experiences with the environment.

2.5. *Conclusion*

The concept of indigenous knowledge remains unclear in terms of its meaning, methodology as well as a development strategy. There no consensus among scholars as to whether indigenous knowledge should be given the same status as Western scientific knowledge. However, the available literature points to the idea that indigenous communities are endowed with beliefs, practices and skills that originate from within the communities and these are vital resources for dealing with social, economic and political strategies. The three pillars of indigenous knowledge are viewed as going through multiple transformations. The transformative processes have resulted in numerous problem solving ideas being lost in the process. The role of the State and other global forces has also been questioned. These forces are seen to undermine indigenous beliefs and practices. However, the people's indigenous beliefs and practices tend to find ways to manifest.

CHAPTER THREE: Methodological Strategy used in the Enquiry of the use indigenous knowledge

3.1. *Introduction*

This chapter will discuss on issues with regards to the research design, procedures used, the selection of participants, the formulation of research instruments and the methods used for data collection. The chapter will outline how the research instruments were pre-tested prior to the actual collection of data as well as inform the ethical considerations that attracted attention during the course of this research.

3.2. *Designing a formula for the study of indigenous knowledge in the Svosve community*

The research was moulded in the qualitative approach. The qualitative approach involves an 'interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world'' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:3). The study sought to establish whether the beliefs and practices of the Svosve informed agricultural practices and their interaction with commercial and rural agriculture development initiatives of the State. The study required sourcing the opinions of farmers, community members, extension workers and Government Administrators. In total, twenty five open ended interviews were scheduled to be conducted. These people were identified as stake holders in the farming sector, while their life experiences as inhabitants of the Svosve community was considered essential for this research.

A qualitative research design is defined by Merriam (2009: 3) as an approach that seeks to 'understand the meanings that people have constructed.' For instance, it attempts to interpret how people make sense of the social world by asking them to reflect on their experiences. The qualitative approach suited this research as it allowed the participants to provide a descriptive account of their farming experiences. The qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth probe into the State's agricultural policy. Hence therefore, it became possible to establish how the State's agriculture policy informs agriculture in the Svosve community.

The method of inquiry involved multiple cases from the farmers, extension workers and government administrators. Emphasis was given to the farmers and extension workers more so than the government administrators mainly because the research sought to understand

how the Svosve people farm against the backdrop of State policy. Creswell (2003) suggests the use of multiple cases in a study that involves the intensive analysis and description of multiple units or systems bounded by space and time.

According to Hiatt (1986) qualitative research methods focus on discovering and understanding the experiences, perspectives and thoughts of participants. Hiatt further claims that qualitative research explores the meaning, purpose and perceptions of reality. My methodological strategy was aimed at finding out how the farmers organised their agricultural activities. The research aimed specifically to explore their beliefs with regards to agricultural production. The study also explored how State policy affected farming practices in the community. This strategy is informed by Denzin & Lincoln (2005) who argues that qualitative research methods should study things in their natural settings in attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Lincoln and Guba, (1985) further noted that a qualitative research study allows for the exploration of a topic of interest in which data is collected by the researcher through case studies, ethnographic work and interviews. These data collection processes allow for the interaction between researchers and participants in a naturalistic setting with few boundaries, resulting in a flexible and open research process.

This research was conducted in Svosve community ward 19, 20 and 21. Svosve is situated in Marondera district that consists of 21 wards, of which 8 wards are classified as urban, while 13 are classified as rural. These wards vary in size. Inside the rural wards, there exist three models of farming practice and these include large scale commercial farmers, A2 middle scale commercial farmers, and small scale household farmers. The small scale household farmers may be divided into two groups that include farmers residing in the former reserve areas and A1 newly resettled farmers. The A1 and A2 farming models represent the new resettlement areas established in the year 2000. The former represents small scale peasant farms while the latter is used in reference to middle scale commercial farms. The majority of people engaging farming in the Svosve community are black people who benefited from the Fast Track Land Reform Programme of the year 2000, although a few white large scale commercial farmers have remained. In addition, the farmers practising peasant agriculture in the reserves also constitute a sizeable number. Some of the variables

that determine farming practice in the community include land size, types of technology used, size of labour pool and the financial resources available to the farmer.

The data was collected by the use of in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews allowed the researcher to generate questions from each participant's responses in an interactive process. Furthermore, the adoption of in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to probe the participants for more information on their agricultural experiences as well as clarify issues that may not have been clear. This was achieved through the use of recurring interviews with participants.

3.3. *Conceptualising the farmers and other Stake holders in the agriculture sector of the Svosve community.*

Creswell (2003: 32) defines a research population as the 'total number of individuals who have certain characteristics of interest to a researcher.'' The population also refers to those units from which the sample is taken. In this research, the sample refers to those farmers that possess characteristics of interest to the researcher. Therefore, all farmers, male and female, young and old who resided in the Svosve community qualified for selection. Also included in this group were the traditional leaders whom I identified as farmers. Throughout this research, I refer to this subgroup as the Svosve community and they were interviewed by means of a semi-structured interview schedule.

The research made use of two other semi-structured interview schedules. The first targeted agricultural extension workers who had, prior to the research, been ascertained as serving as the link between government policies and the farmers. The second set of interview questions targeted Government Administrators. This group was selected on the premise that they are responsible for the formulation and implementation of agricultural policies at Svosve. Thus, the target population was divided into three subgroups each represented by a separate interview schedule.

In terms of their individual profiles, the participants in this research varied in age, gender, income levels, geographical location, education attainment, interest and historical background. These dynamics were identified as factors shaping their beliefs with regards to farming. These dynamics are important for they determine how the farmers conduct their farming practices from planning, preparation, planting, harvesting and trading. This may

include the tools used, the means of transport used to access markets, the methods of economic exchange used and how information is disseminated amongst stake holders in the farming sector.

Age has been in particular an important factor in considering and determining participants for this research. Participants were split into four categories. The first category consisted of farmers aged between 18-33 years and the primary focus was on establishing whether the youthful farmers favoured the modern farming practices or whether they preferred the indigenous beliefs and practices of the Svosve people. The second group consisted of farmers aged between 34-49 years of age. This group will be referred to as the young adults. The reason for selecting this group was to establish whether their agricultural activities were influenced by the indigenous beliefs of Svosve community or by modern ideas that are being pursued by the government. The third group consists of mature adults aged between 50-65 years old. These were selected for the same reasons as the aforementioned. While the last group consisted of the old, those aged between 66-81years and beyond. This group was selected on the basis of their experiences with the past and the present with regards to farming activities in the Svosve community. The interview schedule was designed to allow for memory recapitulation of the cultural practices.

The reason for splitting age into categories stems from the idea that indigenous beliefs and practices appear to be affected by the disruption of the socialisation processes, the result of national and global political and economic forces that reshape the social world. Age is an important consideration in terms of the norms operative among the different age categories particularly concerning their attitudes towards their indigenous beliefs and practices. Masoga (2008) points to the idea that indigenous knowledge is on the verge of extinction due to the disruption of communication channels between the older and younger generations. Masoga goes on to cite examples such as the deformation of the nuclear family and its roles. For instance, he says, the existing socialisation structures are the result of the Western educational and religious institutions which support ideas that favour modernity and orient the people towards a Eurocentric perception (Masoga, 2008).

Young generations were viewed more likely to be exposed to the western beliefs and practices than the older generations. In this research, it was reasonably assumed there is a higher possibility of finding the younger farmers implementing farming practices that

following the Western model. On the other hand, the older generation who are accustomed to the beliefs and practices of their fore fathers were more likely to resist change.

The farmers in the Svosve community can be ranked into class categories that include large income farmers, middle income farmers and low income farmers. Wright (2003: 2) argues that social class can also be viewed in terms of 'objective position within distributions.' In the Svosve community, I noted the farmers were not equal in terms of resource allocation and use. This idea was justified by the multiple farming models in the community. This idea justifies Wright's view of class groups as symbolised by 'rungs on a ladder' (Wright, 2003:2). In the Svosve community, stratification has its roots in the colonial order which appropriated large tracts of land to a few white farmers while subjecting the indigenous people to wage labour. In addition, the majority of the African farmers were relegated into peasant agriculture in the former reserves. Contemporary efforts to restructure this land tenure model have more or less maintained these hierarchical social groups. The farmers were identified in the three wards according to the dominant farming practices found in the area. The farmers were found to be able to talk about how they acquired land and how they utilised the land. The farmers that participated in the research include large scale commercial farmers, peasant farmers residing in the communal areas and newly resettled farmers under the A1 and A2 farming schemes.

The amount of land held by a farmer serves as an indicator to the means of economic and social capital available to him or her. Thus, I argue that the farmers in the Svosve community can be ranked into some form of hierarchical social groups that are similar to social classes. Of the farmers who are practicing large scale commercial agriculture, the majority of them are whites and most have been practicing commercial farming for decades. There are also few black large scale commercial farmers, the majority of who are politically connected to the government. Many of the large scale commercial farmers who occupy land within the Svosve community have access to financial credit facilities, sophisticated machinery and they also make use of enormous waged labour workforces. The majority of the farmers in this category grow exotic crop varieties that are consumed outside the community.

The majority of A2 middle scale commercial farmers included black entrepreneurs who either own private businesses in the urban areas, while others are formally employed in the private and public sectors in urban areas. Inside the community, such farmers are referred

to as ‘cell phone farmers’ as they are said to be conducting their farming activities through their mobile telephones. Nevertheless, a few of the A2 middle scale commercial farmers reported that they had abandoned urban life to take up full-time farming.

Small scale family farmers constitute the majority of farmers in the Svosve community. This category was split into two groups as it was established that some of the family farmers were situated in the communal reserve, ward 20, while the majority who are newly resettled farmers were spread around Svosve wards 19 and 21 respectively. Some of the newly resettled farmers, indications showed had been relocated from the formerly congested communal reserve located in ward 20. The majority of the family farmers stressed that they used traditional agricultural implements which were cheaper compared to modern agricultural implements, but these were less efficient.

Another consideration was the level of educational attainment. Educational attainment was seen to have an effect on farmers’ beliefs, practices and skills. Those with higher levels of formal education tend to be less superstitious, on the one hand. On the other hand, such farmers tend to have better access to formal information in modern innovations and skills and this was thought to have an influence how they conduct their agricultural activities. Sharada (1999) associated formal schooling in agriculture with improved productivity, increased levels of farm investment, farmer efficiency and the propensity to adapt to innovations. Education is associated with improved awareness and better management of resources. The majority of the participants had a high regard for formal education. However, the degree to which the farmers had furthered their education differed according to social class and geographical location. Many of the farmers in the communal reserves and small scale resettlement areas claim to only have reached primary and secondary level.

Participants were divided in terms of trained farmers and non-trained farmers, educated farmers and uneducated farmers. The reason for splitting the farmers into these groups was motivated by the idea that a trained farmer is more likely to be productive compared to non-trained farmers. While educated farmers, particularly those with occupations outside farming, said they could finance their agricultural activities compared to farmers who were not formally employed outside farming and had lived in the community throughout their lives. Moreover, educated farmers are more likely to invest in the schooling of their children due to their knowledge of the importance of education to capacity building compared to

non-educated farmers. In addition, educated farmers are more likely to establish broader formal networks of association compared to uneducated farmers.

3.3.1. *Information on the selected participants for enquiry on indigenous knowledge*

The sample was purposively selected. Purposive sampling refers to the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses (Tongco, 2007). The process of selecting participants for the research depends on the researcher, who in this case decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide information by virtue of their knowledge or experience (Bernard, 2002). Purposive sampling refers to a deliberate process of selecting respondents in a sample composed of elements that contain the most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population (De Vos et al, 2005). I chose purposive sampling in order to enquire on the life experiences of the farmers in the Svosve community. Hence therefore, only farmers were targeted in this research. However, purposive sampling recognises the potential problem that participants are not always selected equally. To reduce this shortfall, the snowballing approach was utilised. The researcher made use of referrals from the community leaders who are aware of each and every farmer.

A total of twenty five participants had been proposed to be interviewed and of this number, twenty participants were supposed to be selected from within the community. Out of the scheduled twenty interviews, only fifteen farmers were interviewed. The major reason behind this change was prompted by the difficulties faced by the researcher in identifying potential participants in a politically charged environment. The majority of farmers in the Svosve community were naturally suspicious of strangers on their farms due to political tension in the area dating from the 31 July 2013 national elections. The process of identifying potential participants also proved to be time consuming. This was coupled with suspicion that many of the identified respondents, especially the newly resettled farmers who acquired land following the Fast Track Land reform Programme (Moyo & Yeros, 2013) had for the researcher.

The main concern among the resettled farmers stems from the fear that, their land, acquired through the State, may be under scrutiny as nobody possesses private ownership rights to

land. Upon interacting with the farmers, some indicated they avoided sharing information on land issues with outsiders for fear of being labelled 'sell outs' by sections of the community members and the government. Apparently, some of the farmers testified that they feared losing their land to the government if they are reported negatively.

Again, the process of obtaining a State clearance to conduct research in Svosve engulfed more time than envisaged. In reality, it took four weeks to obtain a State clearance. I was left with no option but to reduce the number of participants. Emphasis was hence put on the qualitative aspects of the interviews (rich, deep anecdotal experiences of the community members) and on how they related the agricultural experiences, than on the number of interviews conducted.

The paramount chief of the Svosve community assisted in the identification of potential respondents. Approximately, nearly half the participants were accessed through the snowballing approach. These were assembled by the Chief at his residence where suitable informants were selected. After interviewing each farmer face to face, arrangements were made to visit their plots in order to observe how they are farming. As for others, I would drive to their farms and set appointments at suitable periods. This method worked best with the large scale commercial farmers and middle scale commercial farmers some of who did not reside on their farms.

This research had proposed to interview at least three of the government administrators, one at provincial level, one at district level and another at rural district level. However, only two were managed due to accessibility. Getting hold of the government administrators proved to be difficult as they reported being busy with their respective portfolios. In addition, the administrators said they were not allowed to release information on government policy unless a State clearance certificate is obtained from the central government. The process of securing the certificate was tedious due to the intense vetting process required by the State's bureaucratic structures. I had to wait for more than a week and half before I was issued with one. I was therefore only able to interview the Provincial Administrator for Mashonaland East and the District Administrator for Marondera where the Svosve community is situated.

This research had also proposed to interview two agricultural extension workers who work closely with the farmers and the government. However, only one extension worker was interviewed on the basis of availability.

3.4. *Piloting the interview schedule*

Hughes (2004) noted, pre-testing a data collection instrument should ensure the interviewees are able to interpret questions without difficulty. Pre-testing works towards subjecting the questionnaire to an evaluation process, to assess its ability to collect the desired data, regardless of the amount of time and care the researcher uses to formulate the interview questionnaire (Creswell, 2003). Prior to data collection, a pre-test of the interview schedule was conducted by the researcher. By doing so, I wanted to ensure the questions were able to generate valid answers. The goal was to ensure the information collected reflected the general views of all stake holders in the field of agriculture in the Svosve community.

Five potential respondents were selected to participate in the pre-examination process. These include a government administrator, an agricultural extension officer and three farmers. From pre-examining the questionnaires, many of the questions were fine-tuned and they became precise. Other questions were also strengthened with follow up questions. The ordering of questions was re-arranged. Shortcomings and inconsistences in the research instruments were eliminated as far as possible prior the actual process of data collection.

3.5. *The geographical setting of the Svosve community*

Much of the data collected for this research was obtained in Svosve community wards 19, 20 and 21. The three wards are important for they are representative of the three farming models and farming practices found in the community. However, other informants such as the government administrators were based in the Marondera town, about 40km away from the Svosve community. This prompted the researcher to conduct the interviews at multiple locations in and outside the community. Each interview took place were it was deemed most suitable. The interviews conducted with the Provincial and District Administrators were conducted at their respective offices. This required travelling to Marondera town to interview them from their administrative bases. Likewise, the interviews conducted on the agricultural extension officers were conducted in Svosve ward 16 at the District Development Fund offices where their offices were situated.

By interviewing the participants in places convenient to them, the motive was to ensure the interviews were conducted in an environment conducive to both the participant and the researcher. Some participants thought that if the interviews were conducted in their offices or homes their daily routines would not be jeopardized. Other participants were comfortable with the interviews being conducted at the chief's residence as they felt safe at these premises. The interviews were conducted in a silent environment were the interviewer and the interviewee could engage in a dialogue without any interference.

3.6. *Taking note of the ideas, sentiments, beliefs, practices and customs using semi-structured interviews.*

A qualitative interview seeks to describe the meanings of the central themes in the life world of the participants. The main task of interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees are saying about their experiences (Kvale, 1996). The primary agenda of the interview is to cover both a factual and a meaning level. Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. The interview allows the researcher to pursue in-depth information on the subject of interest (McNamara, 1999). The motive behind using the method was to ascertain the beliefs and practices of the Svosve people and how these potentially contributed to agricultural production. In order to achieve this, it was necessary to formulate interview schedules that would draw on how the locals organise farming. This method was deemed suitable as it unearthed certain characteristics from the life experiences of the farmers and this allowed the researcher to develop a verdict on how farming is conducted in the Svosve community.

Each of the three categories was examined by the use of a semi-structured interview schedule with open ended questions. Kvale (1996) noted that the semi-structured interview allows the researcher to ask a respondent a series of questions that help in answering the major themes in the research. Creswell (2003) adds to this by arguing that the semi-structured interview will allow the researcher to follow up leads with new questions during the interviewing process. This method created some flexibility as I was able to probe each participant based on his or her responses. This method was of particular interest to me because it presented the opportunity to gather varied opinions by means of probing. In addition, the interviews schedules were structured in such a way that they were open ended. This left participants with room to generate their own responses.

The interviews took place between July and September 2013. The reason for selecting this period was not accidental. During that period, many of the farmers were involved in off-field agricultural activities as it was the winter season. This gave me an opportunity to interact with the farmers for lengthy periods of time. This may not have happened in the summer rainy season when all farmers are busy attending their fields. The interviews were conducted in English, as most participants were able to read and speak plain English.

The use of plain language allowed respondents to internalize each question and respond according to the demands of the question. On the other hand, the use of English did create serious problems as some of the respondents were not articulate. In some instances, the respondents were not able to directly translate certain 'Shona' words to English or give description of certain things. Using English therefore did not always penetrate the cultural space of the Svosve people. As a result, some questions were asked in the native language and the respondents responded likewise.

De Leeuw & Van der Zouwen (1988) argue that a well organised interview should be well timed. Each interview was scheduled to take 45 minutes and all participants were fully made aware. However, many of the interviews exceeded the time limit as respondents' demonstrated their willingness to participate. This worked to the advantage of the researcher as I was able to exhaust all my questions as well as probe unclear issues. This can be credited to the use of face to face interviews as the process was cost friendly when compared to other methods such as the telephonic interview. Most participants felt comfortable in their localities and time proved not to be a hindrance for their participation.

3.7. *Ethical concerns observed before, during and after collecting sensitive data in the Svosve community*

Throughout this research, ethical morals were upheld by the use of different mechanisms and these included ensuring informed consent, voluntary participation, avoiding causing harm to participants and maintaining strict confidentiality of data as well as information that leads to the identification of participants. Neuman (2000) who argues that before, during and after conducting a study, a researcher has the opportunity to, and should reflect on research actions and consult his or her conscience. It became a priority to ensure that the

participants involved in this research did not face any physical, psychological or legal harm during and after participating in the study.

Informed consent and voluntary participation were prioritised before data was collected from participants. Before conducting an interview, I made it a point to introduce myself as well as explain the nature, procedure and purpose of the research. Participants were also informed of the potential risks or discomfort associated with participating in the study. Furthermore, the participants were informed how anonymity and confidentiality of records would be secured and that participation was strictly voluntary. In addition, the participants were also informed that participating in the research would not yield to any monetary compensation or other physical benefits. These issues were explained verbally and by means of a participant information sheet that required the interviewee's signature as a sign of approval.

Anonymity and confidentiality were identified as important for this research. However, informants who identified themselves as public figures expressed their desire to be revealed by use of their names. These persons are Chief Svosve Lovemore Zenda, Headmen Masangomayi, and Provincial Administrator Mr Ndarukwa. Participation in the research gave them an opportunity to present their views concerning their life experiences in agriculture. However, for those participants who expressed their unwillingness to be made public, anonymity was maintained by use of pseudonyms.

3.8. *Analysing the narratives of the Svosve people.*

Information collected from the Svosve community was presented and analysed using the narrative analysis approach. The fundamental goal was to ensure that the farmers in the Svosve community, agricultural extension workers and government administrators are in a position to provide detailed, narrative explanations with respect to the agriculture practice in the community.

Alden & Anseeuw (2009: 25) conceptualised narratives as 'broad renderings of events that contain and convey meaning as well as having a specific political context for communities in the form of discourses.' They further argued that these discourses should not only be viewed as ideas but they should include actions, thoughts and practices which make the ideas a reality and thereby making them knowable. Hence therefore, the thoughts, actions

and practices gathered from farmers in the Svosve community and other stake holders in the agriculture sector were presented in their original form and were analysed using the existing theory on indigenous knowledge.

The narrative analysis strategy was also important for the purpose of tracking indigenous beliefs and practices, farmers' perspectives and how these were and are shaped by the State. Narrative analysis allowed for the separation of the ideas, thoughts and practices of the Svosve people into paradigms consisting of the pre-colonial, colonial and the post-colonial. For instance, phrases such as 'our fore fathers used to….' or 'my father taught me how to….'' were noted, captured and conceptualised as part of the transformative journey of indigenous knowledge. Alden & Anseeuw (2009) argued that narrative analysis can be used to trace historical events or to demonstrate how a certain social phenomenon is constantly changing as a result of internal and external forces.

Narrative analysis also works towards drawing an alternative account of history by establishing how the indigenous communities react to the development initiatives of the State. This strategy was essential for it allowed the ordinary inhabitants of the Svosve community to articulate what they 'know' and 'practice' with regard to indigenous beliefs and practices that are tied to farming. On the other hand, it allowed the people a chance to explain how indigenous beliefs and practices are affected by government policy. In addition, this strategy was also applied for other stake holders in the agriculture sector in order to ascertain their awareness of the relationship between the farmers and the State.

Narrative analysis was used to allow the people's voices and ideas to inform the research. Some of the narratives contained deep anecdotal information regarding the personal life experiences of the people in the agriculture sector. Alden & Anseeuw (2009: 25-26) argue that the use of narratives is important in bringing out 'salient ideas, memories and social customs that cut across the boundaries…' The beliefs, ideas and the customs of the people were consequently captured and analysed in order to come up with a consistent and coherent perspective that portrays the lived experience of the people of the Svosve community.

The story line of this research report was arrived at after comparing and contrasting the narratives of different participants. The method of comparing and contrasting of the narratives was used to take note of the recurring ideas and then re-grouping these ideas into themes. According to Weber (1990), thematic analysis requires classifying of textual

material and reducing it to relevant and manageable data. The process of grouping the data into themes entailed the careful identification of recurring and consistent expressions. The researcher attempted to identify points of differences, contradictions and tensions available in the data. These ideas were then grouped into themes and sub-themes and were analysed using the literature on indigenous knowledge.

The data analysis strategies used in this research have their own limitations. Narrative analysis is complex for it entails taking note of each and every word uttered, the sentiments and the emotions. The researcher may omit some of these fundamentals. Narrative analysis is labour intensive and may lead to mental fatigue on the part of the researcher. On the other hand, thematic analysis is important because it allows for the grouping of volumes of data into smaller and summarisable content that can be easily conceptualised while also generating room for critical analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The problem of using thematic analysis emanates from it being time consuming and is difficult to draw on a theme if the responses are ambiguous.

3.9. *Conclusion*

The process of collecting data, the codification of the results and the analysis strategy required a systematic conceptualisation of theoretical, empirical and methodological strategies. The process of establishing what indigenous knowledge entails was made possible after having split indigenous knowledge into three categories which include their beliefs, practices and skills. The researcher set his sights on interviewing the participants who were the community members and mostly farmers, the government administrators and the agriculture extension workers. The participants were purposively selected, although other variables were used to determine the criteria for selection, for instance, geographical location. These subgroups each interviewed using a separate semi-structured interview schedule. The interviews were done face to face and the respondents were always available and willing to be re-engaged. This allowed the researcher to source rich anecdotal information regarding the farming experiences of each individual.

Much of the data presented in the form of narratives so as to capture who individual farmers conduct their farming activities, to trace historical trajectories, sentiments, emotions and expressions. These narratives were arranged and grouped into themes for the process of

identifying consistent social patterns, points of similarity, tensions and inconsistencies. The social trends were interpreted using existing theory on indigenous knowledge.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Svosve of the Pre-colonial era

4.1. *Introduction*

This chapter seeks to provide some detailed analysis of the Svosve people's rural political-economy during the pre-colonial era. The focus was on establishing how the pre-colonial Svosve inhabitants organised farming activities. The chapter also establishes key facets of indigenous knowledge found in the Svosve community. I argue that the Svosve possess unique beliefs, practices and skills that have been passed across generations. These facets constitute the basis of indigenous knowledge in the Svosve community. However, these beliefs, practices and skills continuously undergo extensive changes as a result of colonialism and consequently State policy.

4.2. *Revisiting the origins, beliefs and cultural practices.*

The area known as the Svosve community emerged from a colonial apportionment of land that began in the 1890s and was intensified in the 1930s following the Land Apportionment Act of 1930. Chief Svosve, Lovemore Zenda, highlighted this view when he said,

> *Our fathers were born in this community. I was also born in this community. However, this is not the original area were our grandfathers resided. My father told me before he died that his people lived in the area now known as Marondera town. My people were violently removed from the land where they lived and grew crops because the white man wanted to build a town and the rest was reserved for white commercial farmers. The land we live today was given to us by the whites.* (Interview: Zenda 10/ 09/ 2013).

Two questions emerge from this perspective that needs to be answered. Who are the Svosve and how did they organise their economic activities prior to settler encroachment?

Zenda was able to explain, based on what his fore-fathers often told him and his experiences as the traditional leader. He said,

> *The Svosve of today is not the original area where our fore-fathers lived a hundred years ago. My people are the original 'Mbire' people who formed the great Mbire kingdom more than 300 years ago. Initially, the kingdom was situated near present day Marondera. The 'Mbire' people are believed to be an offshoot of the Mutapa Empire which stretched from the Zambezi to Limpopo area and later known as the Rozvi kingdom. They are believed to have fled Portuguese invasion around the year 1850. So they migrated to present day Mashonaland where they set*

> *up a headquarters stretching from* ***Wedza to Marondera****. At that time, the area known as Marondera was home to small Shona groups and so it was easy to settle here. However, our fore fathers were violently removed from Marondera by the white invaders around 1898 during the wars of colonial conquest. Our fore fathers carried the names of* ***Jena, Chapendama, Zenda, Chigwedere, and Masangomayi*** *among the lot and these are the original Svosve people. When they came to this area, they were eventually called the Svosve people as* ***they were known to be small bodied, tiny like ants****. It is also important to note that before the 'Mbire' Empire collapsed, it covered more than 60km radius and Marondera is believed to be its Metropolis. As we speak, the people referred to as Svosve are scattered throughout the province including the inhabitants of* ***Marondera, Headlands, Rusape, Wedza/Hwedza and Chivhu.*** (Interview: Zenda 10/09/2013)

Zenda's remarks are crucial for this discussion because they sketch a clear picture of the people's origins. Nobody can relate the history of the Svosve more than the people themselves. This history is stored inside the minds of the people and can only be retrieved from the oral accounts of the people, thus making it indigenous knowledge. There is further evidence that the Svosve have a unique method of generating, preserving and conserving valuable information relating to their origins, beliefs, customs and way of life.

Nonetheless, despite the 'Mbire' people being identified as a unique ethnic group, one wonders whether these 'Mbire' people adapted to the beliefs and cultural practices of the 'Shona' groups that already resided in Mashonaland or whether these 'Shona' groups were assimilated into the Mbire way of life. Zenda said,

> *There was not much of a difference between the 'Mbire'* people and the *'Shona' groups that were scattered around Mashonaland. For instance, the 'Shona' had their ancestors '***vadzimu***' and their god '****Musiki.****' These spirits guided the people and were well respected. Similarly, our fore-fathers believed in their ancestors '****Madzinga****' and god '****Mwari****' who we also refer to as '****Musikavanhu'*** *meaning the creator of all human beings. There was not much of a difference in the way the 'Mbire' and the 'Shona' regarded the spirits. We became one big family under the 'Mbire' leadership. With time, the 'Mbire' people controlled Mashonaland because of their huge numbers that surpassed the Shona people* (Interview: Zenda 09/09/2013).

Zenda's ability to narrate the origins of the Svosve not only reinforces the importance of oral telling in traditional communities. Much of the histories of the traditional communities are undocumented as noted by Masoga (2008). However, traditional communities are bonded by these histories that are orally taught across generations. Not only is it history as told by custodians of knowledge, it also reminds the inhabitants of their customs.

Zenda's sentiments demonstrate that indigenous knowledge possesses some form of theory that can be equated to western scientific knowledge. For instance, his narration fits well into Park and Burges view, although it lacks scientific formulation. Park & Burges (1921) argue that assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life. It may also refer to a situation where one dominant cultural group absorbs another or others, so that the cultural traits of the assimilated group(s) become indistinguishable (Gordon, 1964). In the case of the Svosve, the elders are aware that the '*Mbire*' beliefs and customs absorbed those of the smaller '*Shona*' groups and these people became one holistic group.

The beliefs that inform practice in the Svosve community are mostly those of the '*Mbire.*' From the narrative, it has been noted that the '*Mbire'* hence who were migrating into Mashonaland in droves may have imposed their beliefs and customary practices on the scattered '*Shona'* groups. With the passage of time, the '*Shona*' were assimilated into the '*Mbire*' people's way of life. The term assimilation has been used here to refer to the acceptance of the cultural practices of a dominant group.

However, assimilation does not adopt a linear model. The dominant group also adopts certain cultural practices of the minority group (Park & Burges, 1921). The result may be a hybrid of cultures that reflects the beliefs and customs of the two groups, but which are skewed in favour of the dominant group (Bhabha, 1994). This perhaps explains why Zenda claims the '*Mbire'* people are scattered throughout the province of Mashonaland, while the Svosve community is the metropolis of '*Mbire*' customary practices and beliefs.

Zenda's narrative provides an important reference point that helps to separate the *'Mbire'* from other '*Shona'* ethnical groups like the ***Tonga, Kore Kore, Chewa, Manyika, and the Karanga***. This account may be viewed as indigenous for it is based on the oral testimonies and lived experience of custodians of knowledge in the traditional communities and hence knowledge because it can be taught across generations.

4.3. *The pre-colonial economy as dynamic.*

The pre-colonial Svosve had a complex economy. This contradicts some claims. For instance, Nelson (1983) argues that the Pre-colonial Shona were mainly agriculturalists who

practiced shifting cultivation on modest crop varieties. This view is not borne out of the oral accounts of the pre-colonial Svosve. This research argues that the pre-colonial Svosve inhabitants were agriculturalists who grew indigenous crop varieties for household consumption. However, farming was supported by other land-based economic activities.

The Svosve survived upon the existence of a complex economy that was built on multiple pillars that supported one another. Elder Muchadei Marimba, whose age cannot be established, said,

> *Our ancestors (**madzitateguru**) grew a variety of crops. Some of the crops include sorghum* (***mapfunde***), millet (***zviyo***), bulrush millet (***mhunga***), pumpkins (***manhanga***) *and several other varieties of vegetables. The crops were consumed by their families. Some of the crop was stored in barns (**matura**) for future use in periods of droughts or shortages. Most of the crops that they grew could be stored in the granaries for two to three years. Some of the crop was reserved for wanderers* (***vanosunza***) *from within and outside. They also kept cattle and goats. In periods of hunger, those with grain could exchange it with cattle or goats. A successful family was measured by the amount of cattle, goats and grain they possessed. Our ancestors were also known to be fisherman. Our land was endowed with many rivers. Others have dried up while others have not dried up and people use them today. Some of the rivers that exist today where our ancestors used to fish include **Save, Chineyi, Mupfure, Mhare, Nyamhembe and Nyamidzi**. Our fathers would go fishing during the rainy season (**zhizha**) when the rivers were filled up with water. My grandmother used to tell me how my grandfather was a fisherman and how he would go to Save River on sunny days to fish with his sons. He would catch lots of fish. However, he preferred a type of fish known as (**Rimba)** due to its huge size. Because of his fishing abilities, people ended up referring to him as Marimba hence our name.* (Interview: Marimba 12/09/2013).

The above sentiments demonstrate that the pre-colonial Svosve were not only agriculturalists who grew crops for subsistence but also fisherman. However, these people had the 'know-how' and skill to produce grass crops for domestic consumption. This 'know-how' perhaps informed the choice of crop as people grew crops that had the ability to withstand environmental constraints and last longer, a useful strategy for minimizing hunger in periods of drought and food shortage.

Crops grown by farmers were aimed at feeding the household. The cereal crops and vegetables grown formed the main diet of the people. Marimba emphasised that the people prioritised drought resistant crop varieties that could withstand harsh climatic conditions

such as low rainfall and excessive heat. This view point is important for it shows the people had mastered knowledge on crop life cycles and the importance of preserving and conserving food for household stability. This perspective is reinforced by Marimba's idea that crops such as millet and sorghum could be stored in granaries or ***matura*** for up to three years and perhaps even more. Such traditional storage methods may compete with the modern methods and yet these traditional methods are more effective and cheaper to establish.

In a later interview conducted with Zenda, he compared and contrasted the old crop from the new crops being produced in the community today. He said, modern crops such as wheat and maize, whose seeds are manufactured and treated in laboratories before they can be planted, are weaker compared to the old natural seeds. Zenda said the seeds being produced today cannot last more than a season, while the crop itself can hardly survive the harsh climatic conditions in Svosve community. He recalled how the elderly women separated grain from chaff using a winnowing basket. The women knew how to separate grain for planting, consumption and for storage.

Marimba's view also draws on the importance of planning as an integral aspect of indigenous knowledge. In the case of Svosve, the people had a unique method systematically planning farming activities. The people planned on what crops to grow and how surplus should be stored years ahead of consumption, a method that minimized the risk of food shortage.

The narrative by Marimba also highlighted the presence of internal interchange of goods in pre-colonial Svosve. Crop growers could exchange crop varieties for other goods they did not produce such as tools, jewellery, pottery and cattle. This method of exchange was a form of barter for it did not involve the use of monetary exchange. Rather, priority was placed on ensuring that resources were shared among community members.

While there is evidence showing the early inhabitants of Svosve were fisherman. However, it is unclear to what extent fishing was important to the Svosve, the tools used to catch fish and the varieties of fish preferred. Noteworthy, fish was an important component in the diet of the people. The people benefited from the abundance of seasonal and annual rivers scattered inside and outside Svosve community.

4.3.1. *Land: ownership and usage practice.*

The pre-colonial Svosve community had a system of land ownership and usage that differs from contemporary practices. Some of the key informants from the community were able to explain the differences between the pre-colonial, colonial and the current post-colonial land practices. Headman Masangomayi was able to narrate the beliefs and customs of the past when he said,

> *Our fore-fathers practiced **chitemene** [meaning shifting cultivation] because each and every family had access to land. Nobody complained that they could not use the land because it was in abundance. The elders often cleared small pieces of land that they would use for one or two seasons. When the land becomes infertile, they would find a new piece of land (**gombo**) where they would clear the land by setting up fires and then grow crops. Nobody used the same piece of land for a lifetime. They made sure that land that has been used is left for some years and when it becomes fertile after some years, they would use it again. This thing we have today came with the white man.* (Interview: Masangomayi 10/09/2013)

Farmers in the pre-colonial Svosve community practiced shifting cultivation or a ‘‘slash and burn’ agriculture.’ Kapekele (2006) reasons that the ‘slash and burn’ method is influenced by a complex set of social, economic, technical, institutional and biophysical factors that cannot be taken for granted (Kapekele, 2006).

The people preferred shifting cultivation for two reasons. Firstly, the land was available in abundance and there was minimal risk of overpopulation. Shifting cultivation was hence a viable option compared to other forms of land usage. The farmers sought to utilise virgin pieces of land as they were aware that such pieces of land contained more soil nutrients than frequently used soils. The ability to understand soils, crops, land use and the consequences of mismanagement demonstrates that these people had gathered knowledge from their experiences with the environment. Such knowledge allowed the farmers to maximise produce from small pieces of land, a process that involved identifying a lucrative piece of virgin land and clearing it. In addition, these farmers knew how to ensure greater practices of the land.

Nevertheless, the farmers were aware of the environmental hazards that emanate from uncontrolled land clearance. Two ideas emerge from the narrative. Firstly, the people understood the importance of the environment and its ecosystems by settling for ‘small

pieces of land'' Secondly, used land was not totally abandoned, the people often returned to use it when it regained its fertility. This demonstrates that the people had knowledge of the importance of preventing environmental degradation. The chiefs were present to ensure the land was fairly administered to all and was well utilised.

Zenda was able to explain the unique strategy of land ownership that allowed the people to have a sense of belonging and security within the community. He claims that,

> *Our ancestors (**vadzimu**) were the owners of the land but it belonged to everyone because it was a gift to the people by the creator (**musikavanhu**). It was the duty of the chief to ensure that all families had to access land for farming, including the by-passers. Nobody could be denied land. When a family required land for farming, the head of the house, who in most cases was the father, would visit the chief's council to seek land. If a family was given access to a piece of land, that land was often identified with the family. When the head of the house died, the land was often identified with his eldest son or his brothers. Everyone producing on the land was obliged to make sacrifices to **musikavanhu** as a way of thanking him for the land and the produce coming from that land.* (Interview: Zenda 12/09/2013)

Based on the narrative, one can note that all land rights were guaranteed through the spirits and this gave the tillers a sense of security on the land. However, land usage was controlled by the political hierarchy as a means of preventing disputes and land degradation. This line of argument contradicts that of Alvord (1958) who claims that the pre-colonial farmers were involved in land usage practices that were destructive to the environment.

Alvord (1958) claims the Shona farmers went about setting bushes on fire and chopping trees for short term unproductive agriculture. On the contrary, pre-colonial farmers had measures in place to counter the problem of land degradation as demonstrated by Masangomayi and Zenda's narratives. In addition, these farmers were endowed with the knowledge of plant and soils. These people were highly knowledgeable to understand that burned land, is more productive compared to an ordinary piece of land. They also understood that a piece of land left idle for a few years was often more productive compared to over-used land. This highlights the wealth of skill and experience that were found in the pre-colonial societies.

Marimba provided an alternative view on the importance of shifting cultivation. He claims it was an important method of dealing with pests, weeds and plant diseases. In his words, Marimba said,

> *Before a farmer decided to make use of a piece of land, he would set it up on fire so that they get rid of insects such as worms (**honye**), grass hoppers (**hwiza**) and many others that could damage the crops. By burning the land, the farmers were able to get rid of unwanted weeds. They believed that burning the land would also improve the quality of the soil* (Interview: Marimba 10/09/2013).

> *The farmers did not believe in the use of animal manure (**ndove)** as they believed that this would increase the risk of pests, the growth of weeds and their crops would be affected by diseases. The people only started to use animal manure when the whites came. But before that, our people were comfortable with their own farming practice* (Interview: Marimba 10/09/2013)

The pre-colonial farmers were highly skilled to understand that burned land was more productive than fertilised pieces of land. These skills may perhaps have been gathered over years of experience with working with the environment. For instance, the farmers may have attempted to use animal manure when farming, only to realise the manure attracted pests and weeds. Hence, these farmers found an alternative in burning the vegetation as a means to control pests and weeds while ensuring soil fertility. Of importance, is the idea that the farmers knew that weeds affected crop yields. The pre-colonial farmers developed an effective way of controlling these weeds by burning the bushes, a process which has the merit of being less environmentally harmful when compared to other modern methods such as the use of artificial chemicals.

Another key issue emerging from the narratives by Zenda, Masangomayi and Marimba is the tripartite relationship of the spirits, human beings and the land. There is a strong sense of belief that the land was inherited from the ancestors or (***vadzimu*)** and was made available to the people by ***musikavanhu*** or the creator. Future generations acquired rights to use the land by virtue of ancestry. Zenda on the other hand alludes to the idea that used land could also be inherited from father to son. He said that if a man inherited land from his father, he was indebted to make sacrifices to the ancestors who had given them the land as well as guided the family during their farming activities. The land often belongs to the man's lineage. Women also acquired rights to usage of land in this patriarchal system. However,

married women acquired rights of usage of land on the ground of their marital relationship with their husbands.

4.3.2. *A spiritually driven farming practice.*

Indigenous people are known to organise their production systems around certain shared beliefs and customary practices (Dei et al, 2002). The pre-colonial Svosve community is one such community where beliefs and customary practices shape the way people produce on the land. All members of the community were obliged to practice these rituals. In some cases, they were assisted by spirit mediums and community elders. The spirit mediums were often viewed as the mouthpiece of the ancestors and played a significant role in the rituals. The rituals took the form of beer brewing, vigil ceremonies and animal sacrifices.

There is a widespread view among the elders that success in farming is dependent on the relationship people have with the ancestors. Zenda said,

> *Our fathers often visited shrines before, during and after the farming season. These elders knew that without the guidance of the ancestors (**vadzimu, hapana chaibudirira pane zvavanobata)** nothing would come good for the people.* (Interview: Zenda 09/09/2013)

One can note from the narrative the centrality of the ancestral spirituals in the economic activities of the people. Another community member, Chipatiso, who is a village headman, echoed the same view. He said, '*All family heads were supposed to visit the ancestral mountain (**gomo ramadzinga)** before the planting season to pour beer (**doro**) on the ancestral stones. The elders believed the ancestors would plead with the creator (**Musikavanhu**) for a good rainy season.'* The Svosve people were convinced the success of their farming activities were dependent on the relationship with the ancestors.

The people believed it was only after engaging '***vadzimu***' and '***musikavanhu****'* that a farming season could become successful. This demonstrates that these people knew that, in order to succeed in the physical life, there was need to engage the spirits. Consequently, all human activities were regulated by some form of spiritual forces that needed to be accredited in good times and mollified in the bad times. The belief in spirits was perhaps crucial in regulating conformity among the community members. For instance, the people could not farm without the oracle, meaning everyone was obliged to participate in the rituals and in turn, this informed how the people planned their economic activities. All members adhered

to these spiritual beliefs for fear of being negatively sanctioned and this ensured good relations and food stability in the community.

Some elders actually believe the production process was anchored by the spirits. Headman Chipatiso who has lived in the Svosve throughout his life, said,

> *The elders' council and the chiefs played an instrumental role during the farming season. They had the responsibility of connecting the people with the ancestors. In the month of September (**gunyana**), the elders would assemble all the inhabitants of the community to participate in the planning of a rain making ceremony that would be conducted on the ancestors' shrine. This ceremony was known as **mukwerera wekutanga*** [first rain making ceremony]. *The elders council would call upon the spirit mediums of the ancestors (**mhondoro dzemadzitateguru**) announce the day that the ceremony would take place. In most cases, the elder's council would also inform the community about the goods that were required for the ceremony to take place. During this period and that leading to the day of the ceremony, the people community members were obliged to make contributions of sorghum, millets, goats, chickens and cattle that would be used at the ceremony. A few days before the ceremony, the chief and the elders' council would call upon the elderly women of the community to collect the items so that they brew beer in time for the ceremony. These women needed to be past the child bearing age and in most cases widows who are not involved with men. These women would often prepare food to be used at the ceremony. On the day of the ceremony, the people were obliged to go to the ancestor's mountain* (***gomo ramadzinga***) *where the rituals would be conducted. On the mountain, the mediums would lead the ritual ceremony by calling the names of the ancestors and pouring the beer onto the ground. The mediums would then communicate the message of the ancestors to the people. The mediums would then instruct the people to plan for the farming season. This ceremony usually took place before the first rains. People would only be allowed to plant after the first rains when tree leaves begin to show a dark green colour. The elders used to refer to the planting season as **mvumira mutondo.*** (Interview: Chipatiso 12/09/2013)

There was an inseparable relationship between production and spirituality in the pre-colonial Svosve community. This spirituality-production nexus was vital as one led to the success of the other. The people were dependent on the mediums and chiefs to inform them on how and when to plan for the farming season. These ceremonies were therefore strategically timed by the chief and his council, in order to prepare people before during and after the farming season.

As custodians of the customs and cultural practices, the chief and his council performed the crucial role of initiating customary practice and motivating members towards planning for

a successful farming season. The ceremonies were important because they prepared the people before, during and after the farming season, thus alerting people of what to do at specified periods.

On the other hand, the ceremonies may have been platforms for the extraction of surplus used by the chiefs and the elders' council who do not plough, plant or harvest, but play a dominant ideological, yet socially cohesive role. This argument stems from the idea that neither the community members, nor the chief and the headman indicated that they contributed grain or animals towards the ceremonies. In fact, the headman pointed out that members of the community (most likely commoners) were obliged to contribute towards the ceremonies. Marx as cited in Fine and Filho (2004) argued that religion is a tool used by those in positions of power to oppress the masses. Religion according to Marx is used by those in power to specifically to control those that adhere to it. Based on this perspective, one can argue that the chiefs and his council could have used religion to extract surplus from their subjects, while ensuring the people conformed to this practice as they had been socialized to believe such practices have a divine effect. Religion ensures conformity as those in the influential positions use all its authority to forestall any forms of resistance.

This view aside, the chief and the council of elders may also have learnt and understood environmental trends and thus were in a position to decide what has to be done before, during and after the farming season. Howes & Chambers (1979) refer to this knowledge as 'know-how' or knowledge by experience. The elders may also have used their positions in society to impose certain practices in order to maintain control the farming activities and food redistribution channels. Foucault (1977) argues that knowledge is power and the ruling classes have the ability to manipulate what they know into some form of truth in order to maintain control over those they govern. He argues that the process of manipulating certain practices into some form of reality entails constraint, regulation and discipline of practice (Foucault, 1977). This accounts for why Chipatiso explains that these ceremonies were made compulsory. The entire community was obliged to participate in the ceremonies by donating a fraction of their goods towards the ceremonies. In addition, it appears the chiefs, elders and the spirit medium possessed the monopoly of knowledge regarding the cultural ceremonies and how these could be used to benefit the community. However, there is a belief amongst members of the community that the ceremonies were significant to the

agricultural practices of the community and failure to perform the practice would result in dire consequences.

The pre-colonial people of the Svosve community had a unique way of naming farming seasons. They developed an annual calendar based on their understanding of nature and it formed the basis of planning socio-economic activities. Seasons were given names based on environmental changes as well as the work activities of the time. For instance, the period leading to the early rains was called '***mvumira mutondo***' deriving from the idea that trees had shed leaves signifying the beginning of the rain season. Similarly, Levi Strauss (1962) discusses how the Negrito took time to observe the behaviour of plant and animals and it became the basis for naming seasons. This symbolises a form of knowledge deriving from people's experiences with the environment. Howes & Chambers (1979) also refer to this knowledge as 'know how' and it develops over time as people became familiar with the environment. Successive seasons such as ***'zhizha'*** or the rainy season, were also identified through the same method. The identification of seasons allowed people to plan work activities using a reliable seasonal calendar. For instance Zenda indicated that in the month of '***Gunyana***' the people would do the first rain making ceremony as well as prepare the fields. In the winter, '***chirimo***' season, the people would rest as it was the post-farming season and no farming was done. This is the period when people celebrated their harvest with thanksgiving ceremonies. I hence argue that the pre-colonial Svosve inhabitants had a well-crafted agricultural season that was built on the basis of people's understanding of the environment.

These ritual ceremonies were symbolic for they possessed both a physical and spiritual significance. For instance, the beer brewing ceremonies took place before the planting and at the mid-point of the season. This was significant for two reasons. On the one hand, it was a means to instil a degree of consciousness in community members before, during and after the farming season. On the other hand, it contained a symbolic effect in that the elders knew that the success of farming in Svosve lay in the hands of the spirits who owned the land. These elders perhaps possessed a form knowledge which is indigenous to the practices of the Svosve people.

An important issue that emerges from the narratives is that of the importance of the spirit mediums for the farming activities of the people. The narratives point to the idea that these

mediums directed all agricultural activities. Chipatiso's narrative also points to the idea that all members of the community participated in the rituals directed by the mediums who understood the voice of the ancestors. For instance, Chipatiso claims that ***'mhondoro dzaifufutirwa kana mvura yoda kunaya dzokanda shoko kuvanhu kuti vagadzirire kukava mbeu***' (spirit mediums would fall into trance before the planting season begins). One can note that the spirit mediums were the living repositories of the spiritual knowledge and they possessed unique ways of interpreting and expressing (indigenous) beliefs and practices born of communal experiences over centuries.

Furthermore, there is more to this narrative than just the spiritual significance of the practice. For instance, the idea that the rains and the natural environment were controlled by the spirits of the land and these spirits determined the success of farming in Svosve. There appears to be a consensus among the elders in Svosve community that all agricultural activities were controlled by the spirits. The ancestors were believed to have the power to bring rainfall or drought. If there was a drought, it was believed that the ancestors are unhappy and need to be appeased. Appeasing the ancestors was the only solution to bringing rainfall. This of course differs from modern ways of weather forecasting that focuses on geophysical factors predicted by machines, yet their method ensured the survival of the community. In spite of the difficulty in interpreting the significance of such beliefs and practices, it can be stated that such religious practices have the effect of ensuring the conformity of practices by the community members, for fear of being punished by the spirits. This strategy ensured the stability of the community.

The pre-colonial Svosve inhabitants practiced thanks giving in order to acknowledge the guidance of the ancestors before, during and after the farming season. The ceremonies were important for the people as they got the chance to praise their gods and ancestors for the harvest achieved. Zenda said,

> *During the winter season, (**mumwaka weChirimo mumwedzi waChikumi),** the elders would organise ritual ceremonies to thank the ancestors for the rains as well as the harvests. In this period, the people would not visit the ancestor's mountain. Instead, they gathered at the chief's residence. Again, it was the duty of the elderly women to brew beer for the elderly people to drink. Before the drinking ceremony begins, the chief would thank his ancestors for the bounty. Thereafter the people would drink. This ceremony was called **mutambe** or what other Shona groups name as **shangara.** The ceremony was also popular for its dances. Drums (**ngoma**),*

> *rattles (**hosho)** and **mbira** would be played and young boys and girls would dance what is now known as **mbakumba** in Masvingo or **Muchongoyo** in Chipinge. The drinking would go far into the night as children, young boys, girls and women would be heard singing and ululating. In most cases, the spirit mediums* (***mhondoro***) *would join the singing and dancing. Everyone loved the ceremony.* (Interview: Zenda 10/09/2013).

The narrative raises a number of important issues. Firstly, the role played by women past child-bearing age in beer brewing. The participation of old women and not the young, shows these women had a deeper understanding and 'know-how' about the importance of the practice. These old women are supposed to have undergone the entire socialization course required for one to be regarded as a full woman. The old women were clearly repositories of unique knowledge to which younger women were not privy and they possibly knew the consequences for failure to uphold the practice. This explains why the old women played a pivotal role that began with the rain seeking ceremony and ended with the thanks-giving ceremonies. These remarks reinforce Ownor (2007) argument that the elders have the responsibility to teach, as well as demonstrate to the young how to work towards maintaining the stability of these societies.

Song and dance formed an integral part of the cultural practices of the pre-colonial Svosve people. Zenda's narrative indicates that men, women and children participated in these cultural ceremonies. In addition, he clearly emphasises the use of traditional music instruments, such as drums, rattles and the mbira that may have had some symbolic significance. Ownor (2007) discusses the importance of these traditional ceremonies involving song and dance by arguing that these were meant to teach and demonstrate some of the practices and skills regarded as important in the community. The songs that were sung at these ceremonies tend to reinforce the importance of certain practices and in some instances the dance would imitated certain practices celebrated in the community.

4.3.3. *Pristine land, organisation of work by the Svosve.*

Durkheim (1893) argues that primitive societies have inward looking social institutions and all economic activities are regulated by these institutions, with religion being the focal point. Work activities in the pre-colonial Svosve community were organised along lines of gender relations. Furthermore, Durkheim (1893) argues, where the mode of production is inherently agrarian, work is divided by a mechanical system constructed on shared beliefs and customary practice. The most basic of such a system is rooted in the gender relations. Men

performed their own responsibilities, while women and children carried responsibilities enshrined in the belief systems and customary values. Zenda elaborated on this issue when he said,

> *We learnt from our elders that for one to be regarded a man, he should be able to perform duties that women find difficult to carry out. Some of these duties include hunting, clearing of lands for farming and mining. Women and children on the other hand, were responsible for house chores such as gathering, cooking and tilling the land.* (Interview: Lovemore Zenda 09/09/2013)

This narrative demonstrates that men, women and young children all participated in socio-economic activities. However, they did so by performing separate roles and each contributing to society.

In the Svosve pre-colonial economy, women and children were responsible for gathering fruit and vegetables, farming and household tasks while men were involved in labour intensive practices such as the clearing of land for agriculture, herding of cattle, mining and iron smelting. This argument is shaped by the sentiments echoed by one of the elderly women in Svosve community, Rudairo Mavis Masuka, aged 83. She said,

> *We, women and our children did much of the farming and digging for wild vegetables. Our husbands would often prepare the land for us in* ***chirimo*** **[**translated to mean cold dry season]. *During the cold dry season, our husbands would burn the grasslands as well as cut down the trees. During that time, women would be busy separating grain for planting from the grain for feeding. When the rains begin to fall, it was the responsibility of women and children to go into the fields. Women were responsible for cultivating land, planting and harvesting. This is why our elders believed that the success of a family depended on the ability of a woman to bear children. A successful wife is one who had given birth to several children who can assist her with farming activities. A successful man was one who had married many women and given birth to several children to work for him.* (Interview: Masuka 15/09/2013)

As Durkheim (1893) noted, the pre-colonial Svosve inhabitants organised their economic practices using the social institutions intrinsic to their society. The family and its structures played a significant role. Polanyi (1944) argues that all primitive economies are built to support the household. In the pre-colonial Svosve community as noted, work was accomplished on the basis of gender relations. From the onset, one notes the marked distinctions of the roles ascribed to men and those ascribed to women. Men were involved

in much of the labour intensive activities such as the clearing of land while women and children had the responsibility of tilling the land and harvesting crops.

Through primary socialization, young boys and girls were schooled to perform certain work practices accredited by the community. The elders had the responsibility to impart knowledge in the form of beliefs, practices and skills that may also be interpreted as 'know how' to the children. For instance, Masuka and Zenda indicated that both boys and girls were schooled to become farmers. They learned to grow crops as well came to understand the importance of growing crops at an early stage in life. Hence, these children inculcated a set of unique beliefs, practices and skills that they used during the course of their lives. Of importance is the idea that children were taught new practices and skills at various levels of human growth. This demonstrates the unique practice of educating the children to fill in various social and economic spaces necessary for the stability of the community.

Women were central to the success of agriculture in the Svosve community. For farming to succeed, women had to produce several children to work in the fields. Women were obliged to produce many children in line with the beliefs of the community. Masuka used a Shona idiom that explained the importance of children in work related activities. She said, '***basa maoko***' [with more hands, the work can be easily accomplished]. Thus, it was a belief among the people that a family had to be huge so that the family members would provide labour to satisfy the needs of the family.

Proverbs and idioms were used to organise socio-economic activities in the Svosve community. The proverb often carried an important message or information that shaped the society's way of thinking. Proverbs and idioms formed an integral part of the Svosve people's way of life. Masoga (2008) added notes in support of this that the primary objective of proverb/idioms were to encourage members of the community to behave in a certain way or to plan their life activities.

However, it must be noted that men were actively involved just like women during the farming season, even though these were responsibilities reserved for women and children. Men participated in farming by virtue of being family heads, controlling territories of land. A successful man was measured by the size of his family, mostly the number of women that he married and the children born of his line. Women and children would in turn raise the man's status by producing enough to feed the family.

The Svosve people's philosophy of work was based on the notion that work responsibilities must be shared equally between men and women. The sharing of responsibilities was an extension of the socialization process, where men and women were taught about the importance of having large families to allow for the sharing of work responsibilities. Furthermore, the use of idioms, songs and other oral informative methods was a means to reinforce this knowledge. Hence therefore, work related activities were planned from a tender age and the adults grew up knowing the importance of sharing responsibilities to improve production.

Men were also involved in tilling the land and harvesting crops during periods when the load of work was burdensome for women and children. Zenda argues,

> *During the farming season, men could also join women in the fields. Sometimes, the amount of work could go beyond the ability of a woman and her children. It was the responsibility of the head of the house, who in most cases is the husband, to call upon other community members to assist in the fields. The head would invite people for* ***maricho.*** *The family in need of help would invite friends and relatives to work in their fields. His family had the responsibility of preparing food and beer for these people. Nobody expected any payment for helping a neighbour, friend or relative. The people believed that, if you help a neighbour, the neighbour would one day assist you in times of need. Sometimes, gifts in the form of grain or meat could be exchanged, but no payments were allowed. This practice favoured those who helped others as members often gave their assistance to those who helped them.* (Interview: Zenda 10/09/2013)

Farming was therefore important for both women and men. Men were equally important to women as they often participated in working on the fields as well as making decisions with regards to food production. However, the narrative raises new points worth discussing, primarily the practice of sharing work responsibilities with community members.

Marimba was able to explain the philosophy that motivated people to help one another and did so using Shona proverbs. Marimba said, the elders knew, *'chara chimwe hachitswanyi inda'* (translated to mean: one finger cannot crush an insect or bug). He also used another idiom referring to the importance of collective work in the community. He said, '*rume rimwe harikombi churu'* (translated to mean: one man cannot build an anthill on his own). These idioms demonstrate that people were not motivated by material gain. Rather, the people believed by helping other community members, they would one day be receive help.

Headmen Masangomayi expressed the importance of sharing responsibilities in order to ease the burden of work as well as to speed up production. Cultural ceremonies such as *nhimbe*, *maricho* and *majangano* served this purpose.

> *The people also practiced what was known as **nhimbe** where members of the community would organise themselves into groups and make turns to visit the fields of the other. If the members are to visit one's fields, the owner of the field has to prepare food and brew beer for those who would come to work. The **nhimbe** usually took place with the knowledge of the chief for it involved a large group of people. The people also practiced what they referred to as **majangano** and it was similar to **nhimbe** except that it involved as smaller group of people. In most cases, the numbers would range between five and ten. Because these groups were small, there was no need to inform the chief and his council. **Majangano** were more popular in the community as they could be done on a daily basis as opposed to **nhimbe.*** (Interview: Masangomayi 10/09/2013)

Based on this narrative, one can note the importance of the family and the community in the planning and execution of work activities. The success of farming during the pre-colonial era was dependent on one's relations with extended family and the community. Each family had to have strong ties or at least join hands with other community members. Just as work responsibilities were shared within the family, the people believed that work has to be shared within the community. These organised work groups (***maricho, majangano, nhimbe etc.***) were systematically institutionalised according to the beliefs of the people of Svosve. Through sharing responsibilities, certain life experiences that translate to into 'know how', were shared during the communal interactions. Thus, the people were compelled to act within a structure that reiterated the importance of sharing responsibilities and sharing responsibilities for the good of the community.

4.4. *Hunting and gathering: The importance of other land-based livelihoods related to food production*

The Svosve practiced hunting and gathering to supplement food production. Malowe (2005) defines a hunter-gatherer or forager society as a nomadic society in which most or all food is obtained from wild plants and animals, in contrast to agricultural societies, which rely mainly on domesticated species. On the contrary, the evidence gathered in the Svosve community shows the people survived on a complex mix of land-based livelihoods including farming, hunting and gathering. Zenda, argued,

> *Our fore-fathers* (***madzisekuru***) *were great hunters and they hunted wild animals such as buffalo* (***nyathi***), *the Eland* (***mhofu/shava***), *wild pig* (***nguruve/njiri***) *and other small animals such as the wild hare or* (***tsuro***). *My great grandfather was known to be a great hunter and he liked to hunt the Eland for its meat such that he became known as* ***mhofu chiwanzanyama*** **(***Eland large meat*). *He was particularly impressed by their huge size as well as their skins which he would use to make sleeping mats. He was a popular person in this community because he often shared the meat with other members of the family and extended family. They also gathered various wild such as* ***nyevhe*** (*spider flower leaves*), ***derere rechijonga*** (*burr weed*), ***derere remugururа***, ***mutikiti*** **wemusango** (*pumpkin leaves*), ***mowa*** (*amaranthus*), ***tsunga*** (*raab rapine*) *and* ***mujakari*** (*cleome epilobiodes baker*). *These vegetables formed the diet of the Svosve people. The vegetables were seasonal. When certain vegetable varieties became scarce due to a seasonal change, the community fed on others. Women and children were the ones responsible for picking vegetables, while men would go hunting. Some of the vegetable varieties can no longer be found these days.* (Interview: Zenda 09/09/2013)

This narrative shows the early inhabitants of Svosve community relied on a complex mix of land-based livelihoods. These people were reliant on the land not just for its productive use, but because it provided essential components in the diet of the people. Hunting and gathering practiced in pre-colonial Svosve were aimed at supplementing food production. Gowdy (1998) claims that such egalitarian practices are informed by the people's awareness of their environment. These people had knowledge about certain varieties of wild vegetables, of which other have become extinct in the community, while others have not attracted attention despite their nutritional value.

Social and economic activities such as hunting and gathering were necessitated by the people's experiences with the environment. Having spent several years in their locality, the Svosve perhaps were accustomed to the various plants and animal species found in the area. The understanding of plants and animals and their properties is often referred to as 'know how' or knowledge from experience (Howes & Chambers, 1979). Such knowledge allows people to make sense of the environment.

In the Svosve community, the people knew when a certain plant erupts or reaches a certain stage to be considered ripe. This signalled a seasonal change. This strategy could also be expanded to animals and their behaviours. There was 'know how' about which animals to hunt and those not to hunt. Certain normative practices regarding preservation of animals or the celebration of certain skilful practices such as hunting abilities became the means by

which people earned titles or received their totems. The titles were important for the purpose of sanctioning accepted practices in order to motivate people to do good for themselves, their families and the community at large. On the other hand, they could be used for the purpose of restricting certain practices that damaged the environment.

4.5. *House-holding, Reciprocity and Redistribution as informed by beliefs and customary Practices.*

The pre-colonial Svosve relied on a socio-economic system anchored around the clan, family and the extended family. Economic activities for instance hunting, gathering and farming were centred on sustaining the household. Zenda, earlier specified that, if a man killed a beast, the proceeds were shared with kinsmen who in turn shared with him if they did likewise. This practice was also common among women and children who often went picking and gathering fruit and vegetables in family units. Masangomayi and Marimba confirmed that it was common practice to share proceeds within the family and extended family.

Zenda highlighted that even strangers and the passer-by were viewed as family and it was common practice to assist these people in times of need. To explain this phenomenon, Whap (2001) argues that indigenous knowledge may be experienced through subtle and intimate expressions of individual acts such as love, respect, tolerance, care and feeling. These cultural beliefs and practices were present in the pre-colonial Svosve and were significant as they allowed members of the community to co-exist as well as maintain good relations with foreigners.

Polanyi (1944) stresses the point that pre-industrial societies develop economic activities that are embedded in social institutions such as the family, religion and in the political arrangements. Polanyi also argues that these social institutions inform the beliefs and practices that influence economic activities. Central to Polanyi's idea is the claim that the economy is not a self-regulating system. Rather, it is a creation of human beings, the product of beliefs and cultural instincts of the people (Polanyi, 1944).

During the pre-colonial era, no community member was allowed to sleep on a hungry stomach. It was the duty of community members to feed even the poorest in society. Zenda, also spoke about how the poor and those facing starvation where allowed to beg for food

from one door to another, and this practice was referred to as '***kusunza.'*** It was the duty of community members to assist such members in times of need. Apart from the shared norm of assisting the poor in times of need, it was believed that if one does not assist his or her neighbour that person is liable to punishment by the ancestors.

Furthermore, reciprocal exchange enabled members of the community to interchange goods with other family members, friends and kinsmen even if the goods were not of equivalent value. For instance, Zenda and Marimba consistently stated that the pre-colonial Svosve often shared proceeds of what they gathered with other family members and clan members. It appears as if no individual or single household could exist on their own. Rather, each individual and household survived with the help of other group members. Borrowing from Polanyi's argument, by sharing all proceeds, pre-colonial Svosve community members were able to create, maintain as well strengthen social relations while ensuring economic resources were evenly shared (Polanyi, 1944).

Henceforth, it can be argued that indigenous knowledge is embedded in the beliefs and cultural practices of the people. Certain practices such as the sharing of food among family and community members demonstrates how the people prioritised food sufficiency within the community. This is unlike modern farming that priorities selling for a profit. The pre-colonial people enjoyed the benefits of agriculture within their locality. This was an effective way of dealing with problems of food shortages. Members of the community as well as strangers in need of food were also catered for as they were viewed and treated as family. Such beliefs and customary practices amount to some form of knowledge.

4.6. *Trade and commodity exchange as informed by beliefs and cultural practices*

Trade formed an integral part of the pre-colonial economy. Two types of trade were practiced by the pre-colonial Svosve inhabitants. The first, interior trade, took the form of what Polanyi (1944) terms 'balanced reciprocity' and involved two individuals or groups engaging in a non-monetary or a barter type of exchange with no motive of profiteering against the other. For instance, Zenda said, '*a farmer could exchange a cow or grain for a hoe head or axe. People put more value on what they received. This is unlike today where people do things to gain from the other.*' The exchange process did not account for the commercial value of the cow, neither did it account for the commercial value of the hoe

head. Rather, it was based on meeting the socio-economic needs of the trading partners. The trading parties were believed to benefit equally from the transaction. Chipatiso also commented on the issue, He said, '*the farmer* (***hurudza***) *cannot farm if he does not have a hoe made by the black smith* (***mhizha***). *Equally, the black smith cannot live if he does not have food produced by the farmer.* A strong degree of this reciprocity allowed the two trading partners to benefit from the transaction. The traded goods were considered of equal value and none of the trading parties felt disadvantaged.

Polanyi (1944) explains this phenomenon by arguing that pre-industrial societies develop exchange systems that allow for distribution of resources while creating, maintaining and strengthening social relationships based on kinship ties. This allows for members of society to obtain products made by others and to prevent what he refers to as 'artificial scarcity.' The balance was necessitated by strong kinship relations informed by the beliefs and cultural practices of the people. The phenomenon of trade is important for the exploration of indigenous knowledge. Firstly, the people developed knowledge about trade that was embedded in their beliefs and cultural practices. This knowledge or 'know how' was built on the foundation of morality. Exchange ensured the fundamentals of the community such as equality, love, care and responsibility were upheld. Whap (2001) explains that most indigenous knowledge systems are built on moral beliefs and practices that form the basis of group stability.

Pre-colonial Svosve community members also ventured in long distance trade. Zenda acknowledged the presence of a complex trade network that included foreign trade. Trading was important in pre-industrialised societies because it allowed people to exchange goods they produced with those they did not produce (Chirikure, 2010). In the case of the Svosve, Zenda, said, '*the elders would dig and smelt copper* (***mhangura***), *which they traded with the Portuguese merchants for cloth (**machira**), salt (**munyu**) and sugar (**tsvigiri**).'* Zenda's remarks demonstrate the importance of exports and imports in the pre-colonial Svosve community. Through interaction with foreigners, the Svosve were not only able to access goods they did not produce, they possibly acquired valuable information and problem solving strategies from the foreigners. The Svosve possibly learned alternative beliefs, cultural practices and skills from engaging with other groups and yet they did not necessarily subvert their own.

4.7. *Indigenous mining and Iron working: The supporting pillars of the agriculture sector.*

The pre-colonial economy of the Svosve also draws upon the importance of mining to the community. Mining existed in the pre-colonial Svosve community prior to colonialism and it formed a significant part of the socio-economic activities of the people. This view is acknowledged in Chirikure (2010) who has dismissed the claim that mining and iron working emerged in Africa with the arrival of the Arabs and Europeans. Chirikure noted that pre-colonial societies had developed mining to support other economic fields such as agriculture and hunting (Chirikure, 2010). The evidence from the Svosve community highlights the importance of mining. Zenda, said,

> *Our great grandfathers were also miners. They mined (**mhangura)** or copper, (**ndarama)** or alluvial gold**, (simbi)** or simbi and others. These stones were mined in mountains such as (**gomo reWedza munyika yeVaMbire**) meaning in* [the mountain of Wedza in land of the Mbire] *or on river banks such as the **Save** river bank. They would mine the copper using iron rods, and then smelt the copper in a heat furnace (**mvuto**) until it turns into liquid form **(muto)**. This liquid was then left to cool, before it could be beaten into various shapes and tools. The elders made tools such as arrows, spears, hoes and axes that were used in the community. Raw copper could be traded with the Portuguese merchants for cloth, salt and sugar. Some of the copper would be smelted to make beads in order to decorate women. Men whose wives wore several beads were considered to be very rich. A man could also marry a wife using these beads or various tools made from copper* (Interview: Zenda 09/09/2013).

These remarks prove that mining was an important sector in the economy of the people of Svosve community. Zenda's claim that the elders were already extracting complex minerals such as iron, gold and copper to sell to the Europeans, this shows the pre-colonial Svosve inhabitants had mastered what can only be called a scientific understanding of the environment and its properties and that allowed them to extract minerals from underground and mould these into usable tools.

The mining of iron and copper as well as the smelting process, require a genuine scientific procedure, for the identification of mineral properties, the extraction process, the methods separating the waste from the minerals and the smelting process. Levi Strauss (1962) argues, scientific knowledge should not be limited to the Western conception of knowledge. Rather, it should incorporate how indigenous communities make use of the human senses to genuinely make sense of the environment and utilise it to the fullest (Levi Strauss, 1962).

To demonstrate this phenomenon, firstly, the pre-colonial Svosve inhabitants incorporated a form of indigenous scientific knowledge to identify mineral properties from mountainous areas and river banks. The people's understanding of nature gave them 'know how' to identify precious minerals. In addition, these people made use of scientific methodologies to smelt raw stones and beat them into various tools and ornaments, a process requiring extensive knowledge and skill. This perspective differs with the ideas of Howes & Chamber (1979) and Horstheimke (2004) who argued that indigenous communities do not make use of genuine scientific methodologies when doing work.

Chirikure (2010) argues indigenous mining and metallurgy has provided fascinating details, particularly about the techniques, used by the miners to identify as well as to extract different metals. However, much of these practices are undermined as a result of the establishment and dominance of industrial mining and its sophisticated applications (Chirikure, 2010). When asked to explain the techniques used by the elders to identify minerals such as gold and copper. Zenda, said,

> *Our elders would climb the mountains in search of red soils. If they discovered red soils, they would dig in search of gold, iron and copper. For example, the mountain of Wedza that has huge rocks and red soils were believed to be sacred as well as rich in copper. This is the place where most of the people would go with the permission of the spirits of the land to find the stones. Sometimes, the spirit mediums went with the people to the mining sites. They people also dug the sandy soils near rivers in search of gold. They would scrape the top soils until they found the gold. They people believed the clay soils were good for agriculture because these withheld water especially in the dry season.* (Interview: Zenda 09/09/2013)

This perspective signifies that the mining of metals in the pre-colonial Svosve community was a complex mix of indigenous knowledges. The Svosve, who had lived on the land for long periods of time used their experience with the natural environment to be able to identify and make use of the natural resources available to them. Ettema (1994) adds to this view. She uses the term 'ethnopedology' to describe how the indigenous communities rely have relied on their interaction with the environment to be able to interpret the various properties found in vegetation, soils and water and use these properties to advance the community's needs.

In the case of Svosve, the pre-colonial inhabitants were skilled in the classification of soils. Through observation, the people knew what soils were good for agriculture and what

mineral properties where likely to be found underground, without using any complex machinery. Furthermore, these people could recognise mineral properties found in rocks and soils. I argue therefore that the Svosve had developed scientific mind-set that they used to plan, organise and execute work activities. This mind-set translates into more than 'know-how' and was informed by the people's long term connection with the environment. These people had the capacity to identify valuable resources, extract these resources, manage these resources and lastly create value from these natural resources despite not having as advanced technologies as modern industrial sectors.

Rituals formed an integral part of the pre-colonial Svosve community's socio-economic practices. This idea is consistent with the ideas of Kense (1983) and (Chirikure (2010). For instance, Kense argues, mining and iron smelting in many primitive African communities, was associated with rituals and symbolic beliefs. He suggests that it was common in many pre-colonial societies for the traditional leaders and spiritual leaders to be involved in the socio-economic practices of the people. Some communities linked copper and smelting with human production and giving birth (Chirikure, 2010). As such, smelters observed a number of taboos such as not having intercourse with their wives during the smelting periods (Chirikure, 2010). In the Svosve community, rituals were an important part of the socio-economic activities of the people. Zenda said the miners visited the mining sites with spirit mediums who often participated in the mineral exploration processes. Based on Zenda's sentiments, there is an idea that some of the mining sites were sacred for instance '***gomo reWedza' or*** *the mountain of Wedza* and the spirit mediums were actively involved on the mining scenes. I argue, the spirit mediums were repositories of knowledge regarding how mining and agriculture should be conducted.

Kazembe (2011) explains the role of spirit mediums in the Shona and this is important in identifying the role played by the mediums in mining and agriculture. He argues, the spirit medium also known as ***'Svikiro*** or ***Magombwe'*** is someone chosen by the ancestors to be their mouthpiece to the living (Kazembe, 2011). He or she communicates the word of the ancestors to the people. Kazembe disputes the claim that mediums had extensive knowledge with respect to mining activities. He says, they were authoritative figures whose views were well accepted by the community members based on their spiritual credentials. Chirikure (2010) argues that in the case of iron smelters in Mazoe valley, the people [smelters] believed the spirits had influenced in the search for minerals and the smelting of metals in

the furnaces. Using this analysis, similarities can be noted in the way the ancient societies approached social and economic activities. For instance, the spirit mediums in the Svosve community acted as the mouth piece of the gods and provided guidance to the workmen (Chirikure, 2010). The mediums often engaged the ancestors by means of ritual ceremonies that include making sacrifices and song and dance (Chirikure, 2010).

Chirikure (2010) reasons that the traditional rituals influenced the mining and smelting processes. The views of the spirit mediums, which amounts to specific forms of knowledge were important for they motivated workmen to exercise control over the production process. Zenda argued that the miners and smelters seldom took to their tasks unless they had been permitted to do so by the spirit mediums. I argue, these mediums were in possession of certain information or valuable knowledge that was unknown to the miners and the blacksmith. This information or knowledge certainly did have an effect in the production process and this explains why the workmen respected the word of the mediums. However, it should be noted that even though the workmen were guided by some indigenous cultural beliefs originating from the spirits, they also possessed certain unique working skills that constantly improved as they executed their duties. It is not clear from the narratives how the elders acquired knowledge regarding mining and iron smelting. However, there is evidence that younger generations learnt of the practice through 'training on the job.' They often observed and imitated as the elders preformed duty. Zenda, said,

> *We had our own iron smelters, many of the young smelters benefited from watching their parents working in the iron in the mountains. It is difficult to explain how they learnt how to work on the stones. I remember that many of the smelters learnt how to work on the stones from their parents at a young age. In most cases, if the father is a* ***mhizha,*** *the son(s) often would become smelters.* (Interview: Zenda 09/09/2013)

Zenda's narrative raises an important point that can be traced back to Polanyi (1958) who argues that knowledge can be acquired in informal settings unlike Western scientific knowledge acquired in formal settings. Such knowledge is difficult to explain by means of Western scientific theory and is expressed as inherited knowledge, is tacit, and can only be observed while the skilled workmen are performing their duties.

However, the contemporary inhabitants of the Svosve community were able to summarise some of the methods and procedures used by the elders during mining, demonstrating the

importance of oral communication as an essential tool to revealing valuable information that is not documented. Zenda said,

> *Miners would dig for stones using iron hoes and hand scrapers. They did not make use of any heavy machinery like the ones we have today. The miners would scrape the top soils until they identified the minerals. Because of the difficulty to separate the minerals from the soil, the miners would use wooden sieves to separate the minerals from the soil. In most cases, this was done in the rivers. So they made use of the abundant water supplies found in the community. The good thing about our mining is we never used chemicals. The people extracted minerals without doing any damage to our vegetation and water supplies.* (Interview: Zenda 09/09/2013)

From the narrative, it can be established that in the pre-colonial Svosve, the skilled miners were in possession of a set of skills that allowed them to extract minerals from the ground using indigenous hand tools. The mining process itself was driven by human exertion and performed by hand compared to the modern highly mechanised process. The miners hence had to conduct their duties in groups, demonstrating the importance of sharing work responsibilities and ideas, a key feature of indigenous knowledge (Whap, 2001). Of importance, is the idea that the mining methods practiced by the locals emphasised the need to protect the environment. The old mining practices were of course much slower and labour intensive when compared to those of the modern. However, the people found merit in these old mining practices that prioritised the protection of natural resources, something the new practices have clearly failed to.

For the Svosve, mining paved the way for the rise of iron smelting and the making of tools used by the pre-colonial farmers. Chirikure (2010) argues, iron smelting was a key feature of the pre-colonial economy and the process was done by skilled personnel who were known as '*mhizha'* [in the Svosve community] and these people are believed to have mastered the practice from their parents at a young age. This also reinforces the idea that indigenous skills and practices are acquired through training on the job. Early socialisation ensured the young children were able to learn from their elders about how to conduct certain duties. Zenda' narrative of the smelting processes demonstrates the importance of Polanyi's argument. He says:

> *They would mine the copper using iron rods, and then melt the copper in heat furnaces (**mvuto**) until it turns into liquid form **(muto)**. They would then cool it and beat it to make various tools such as arrows, spears, hoes and axes.* (Interview: Zenda 09/09/2013)

This narrative provides a brief synopsis of the highly technical smelting process. Polanyi (1958) noted the difficulty of explaining certain work practices unless one is involved in the actual practice. Some practices cannot be explained and can only be observed as the skilled people do their work. The narrative fails to give a detailed account of the smelting processes and this may be because indigenous beliefs and practices are deeply rooted in tradition and those who have not been part of the practice find it difficult to explain the actual methods and procedure of the work practices (Polanyi, 1958). Furthermore, indigenous knowledge is practically transmitted and it requires those that are in practice to fully explain the methods and procedures that they use. However, mining and smelting were key features of the economy and they contributed significantly to other sectors of the economy such as agriculture.

Chirikure (2010) argues that the smelting methods practiced during the pre-colonial era were more sophisticated than is reported by scholars today. Chirikure further claims that some of the artefacts revealed by modern archaeology show the smelting processes could have been more advanced compared to the modern methods. For instance, he says, the process of smelting the ore was done under intense heat, which modern heating experiments have failed to replicate. This shows the pre-colonial societies possessed a unique but scientific mind-set, embedded in their beliefs and cultural practices.

Another interesting issue that emerges from the narratives is that children were taught at a young age to practice work responsibilities. This view demonstrates the importance of planning for continuity as children were taught from young ages to continue after their elders.

Mining and iron smelting contributed towards agriculture immensely through the production of tools such as hoes and axes which were vital components of agricultural production. The availability of locally manufactured tools meant the people did not need to import tools produced outside their community. Rather, these tools were manufactured within the community and made available to all farmers who would access these by means of internal exchange. These tools could also be used outside the agricultural sector. For instance, tools such spears, arrows and iron rods could be used for hunting and gathering purposes. And lastly, the presence of mining and iron smelting also facilitated the need for both domestic and foreign trade. Foreign trade was important for the people as it allowed

them an opportunity to access foreign commodities that were not available in the community.

4.8. *Conclusion*

In conclusion, there is evidence that points to the fact that pre-colonial Svosve economy was diverse and dynamic in nature. It was built on multiple pillars that consisted of agriculture, mining, iron smelting, hunting and gathering and exchange and trade. The bulk of these sectors were directly and indirectly linked to the agricultural sector. There is also evidence that points to the idea that the community survived on a complex mix of land-based livelihoods that made agriculture an important and indispensable sector of the economy. Agriculture was important in the pre-colonial economy for it provided the bulk of what was consumed in Svosve community. This argument stems from the idea that many of the crop varieties grown in the community, as well as the animals that were reared by people, were targeted at feeding the local households with a surplus being made available for exchange.

There is also evidence that points to the fact that the diet of the people was composed of indigenous crop varieties as well as natural plants that flourished in the natural environment. It appears the people practiced 'slash and burn' agriculture within their locality motivated by the abundant land at their disposal. This point contradicts the idea that the Shona people were perennial nomads who were constantly on the move to identify new pieces of land for farming and pasture. In addition, because farmers during that period were not highly mechanised, the land preparation techniques were a lot more primitive as people used hand tools that were manufactured inside the community to meet the people's needs.

In terms of duties and responsibilities, these activities were organised on socially prescribed gender beliefs and practices. Men, women and children performed different tasks in the economy. Men were involved in tasks where their strength and skills were valued. For instance, men were involved in land preparation, hunting, mining, iron smelting while women were involved in activities such as gathering, farming and other domestic chores. Men were also involved in long distance trade with outsiders. This is not to say men or women were restricted to certain tasks. Rather, the community survived on a unique mix of beliefs and practices derived from within the community and this ensured that both men and women knew their duties and responsibilities, but such barriers could be breached when need arises. For instance, men could join women and children in the fields if the workload

was more than women could handle. Likewise, women could also help their husbands in doing certain tasks that are reserved for men.

All production was informed by a complex mix of indigenous beliefs and cultural practices. Zenda and Masangomayi's assertions demonstrated that production was informed by the spirits and these spirits were viewed as important in guiding the people during work. The skilled personnel worked after having consulted with the higher spirits through the spirit mediums. This can also be explained by the way people consulted the ancestors before, during and after the farming season.

The pre-colonial agricultural economy was also supported by other sectors that include mining, iron smelting, domestic and foreign trade. These sectors acted as auxiliaries to agriculture. For instance, mining and iron smelting were important for they guaranteed a steady supply of tools used by the early farmers. Trade also played an influential role in the economy as it allowed the people to access commodities produced inside and outside the community that they did not produce. Thus one can argue that this economy was diverse in nature.

CHAPTER FIVE: The status of agriculture during the colonial era.

5.1. *Introduction*

This chapter aims to illustrate how the State re-shaped farming practice during the colonial age. The chapter demonstrates that the colonial government transformed the meaning of land, work organisation and the appropriation of produce. Finally, this chapter will demonstrate how indigenous religious beliefs and practices dating from the pre-colonial period have been affected by Western beliefs and practices that favour the market. To achieve these aims, the colonial land policy was probed as the locals presented their views on the changes and the effects of these changes.

5.2. *Colonialism, primitive accumulation and the emergence of commoditization.*

During the pre-colonial era, the entire 'Mbire' groups claimed ownership of the land by virtue of occupation and shared ancestry. Zenda, noted, 'no *one, including the chiefs could say that he owned the land. The land belonged to us all. It was a blessing given to the people by our ancestors. The elders believed all families were entitled to portions of the land……''* Land was viewed in a communal sense and everybody could access land by virtue of their shared identity.

Colonial rule brought about new land practices that differed, altered and replaced the beliefs and cultural practices of the Svosve. Tsodzo, a farmer, who was born in the Svosve community and has served government as Permanent Secretary, said,

> *When the whites arrived here, they said we* [the Svosve] *were not good farmers. They took all the good pieces of land and turned them into commercial farms. We were forced into the dry and rocky areas were we could not do any meaningful farming. It was bad for us black people as we had to live in the dry mountains. The white man made turned all the good land into commercial farms. As for us black people, we had no land to farm. We could not also keep animals as we were crowded in the reserve areas. The white people knew black people were good farmers and so they made sure that we Africans worked on their farms and not on our small pieces of land.* (Interview: Tsodzo 15/09/2013)

The Svosve people's farming practices were first altered when the European settlers emerged to set up commercial farms. Their land use practices were replaced by the capitalist model of farming. The focus was set on ensuring the productive land was appropriated by a

small group of white commercial farmers while black people who previously subsisted from the land were either relegated to overcrowded reserve areas or were retained as farm labourers on the commercial farms (Neocosmos, 1986). Bernstein (2006) explains this phenomenon when he says this transition from primitive agriculture to a capitalist model of agriculture, based on large scale dispossession, created the necessary conditions for market dependence. In addition, this process leads to the formation of new social property relations (Bernstein, 2006). The settlers appropriated the land, converting it into private property. Indigenous farmers were reduced to non-land holders, while African household was severely threatened by the lack of access to the means of subsistence.

The land that previously belonged to the community and was accessible through cultural protocols was altered by the imposition of a Western system of land ownership. Zenda, noted,

> *The whites took all the land and they passed a Law that made it criminal for black people to be found in those lands belonging to the white farmers. We had to stay in the communal reserves unless we were coming to work on the farms.* (Interview: Zenda 09/09/2013)

On the one hand, colonial legislation, sought to secure the commercial farmers an ample supply of low-priced labour which would subservient to their authority. On the other, legislation was vital in disrupting the African people's ways of life which were centred on the land. For instance, the people of the Svosve community, who had been practicing agriculture in family units, found themselves with no land to grow crops. The Svosve were redirected towards wage employment in the commercial farms, thus exposing the farmers to the beliefs and practices of the new land owners.

The narrative of Zenda is important for it makes reference to the watershed Land Act of 1930. This act became the instrument used by the colonial masters to safeguard the land seized from the indigenous farmers (Moyo, 2013). The Land Act is significant in the history of dispossession, for it divided land unequally in favour of capitalist farming while making it illegal for black people to access land in white designated areas. This phenomenon became the practical reality in the Svosve community as the white farmers occupied the large productive zones while black people were situated on the poor marginalised spaces. Murerwa an elderly community member, aged 69 years, said of this;

> *Svosve became dominated by large farms belonging to the white farmers. We* [the locals] *were allocated small portions of land that were divided into housing lands, grazing land (**mapani**) and farming land (**madhunduru**). We had to make do with these small portions of land.* (Interview: Taregerwa Murerwa 19/09/2013)

This idea reinforces the effects of colonial legislation in the restructuring of land ownership and land usage practices. The land previously owned by the ancestors and belonging to all members became private property safeguarded by the State via legislation.

Again, the indigenous farmers became exposed to new problems such as that of poor quality farming land and overpopulation in the reserves, as the land previously reserved for farming was shared between residential, pasture and farming land. There is therefore a sharp contrast between pre-colonial and colonial land practices.

The arrival of the settler farmers also ushered in the emergence of new crop varieties that differed from the indigenous crop varieties. Takaendesa, aged 72 years, noted,

> *The white farmers did not like our crops. They came here with their on seeds because they said our crops were not good enough. They introduced crops such as maize, wheat and tobacco.* (Interview: Muchadei Takaendesa 17/09/2013)

The narrative highlights the cropping challenges that emerged as a result of settler encroachment. The indigenous crop varieties such as ***mhunga, zviyo, mapfunde and manhanga*** [Section: 4.3], that formed a significant part of the diet of the Svosve, were undervalued. Their importance was replaced by crops with commercial value such as maize, tobacco and wheat. This transition may possibly have led to a transformation in how the indigenous farmers viewed farming. This is not to say they abandoned their indigenous crop varieties altogether.

Certainly, the government introduced what Polanyi terms fictitious commodities and these opposed the beliefs and cultural practices of the Svosve community. These were land, labour and money (Polanyi, 1944). The Svosve, who previously practiced subsistence farming on their ancestral lands via the ***chitemene*** system, were denied land on which to produce as their land was privatised. The people soon found themselves seeking wage employment in order to survive. Their land and labour were appropriated by the settlers and given a commercial value to the detriment of the indigenous Svosve community. Consequently, new species of crop emerged and the old ones were disregarded. The agenda was to create a

market and generate revenue for the settler farmers and this was only achievable by disregarding the indigenous crop varieties.

The emergence of capitalist agriculture in the Svosve community resulted in the emergence of three socio-economic groups or categories. These include the large scale land owners, the wage labours and the peasant farmers. These groups were separated by the economic resources available to each group. Unlike in the past, the Svosve believed in a communal system of resource allocation where each family had an equal claim, the new system allocated resources to individuals based on their skin colour.

There is also evidence that points to the emergence of a dual agricultural economy. On the one hand, there was the white large scale commercial farmers, while on the other, there was the small scale black subsistence farmers. Dr Tsodzo noted,

> *The settler government did not want us to compete with them in commercial farming and so they allocated us small pieces of land were we could grow our own crops. They changed our traditional system of land holding by making it illegal for us to practice land rotation. They told us that each family should have one small piece of land and that we should grow crops that do not take time to mature such as maize. The settlers also encouraged people to rotate different crops on a piece of land so as to preserve the fertility of the soil. Such practices were new to our people. Most people resisted what the government was saying by searching for alternative pieces of land. They would grow crops on hill slopes and river banks because the land was not sufficient. This is our story……* (Interview: Tsodzo 15/09/2013)

The Svosve were transformed from traditional farmers growing indigenous crop various under the ***chitemene*** system to sedentary subsistence farmers expected to grow exotic crop varieties for the purpose of feeding their families.

The new system was in direct opposition to the practices of the people and this culminated in resistance by the locals. For instance, the Svosve people, accustomed to using unrestricted land spaces, found themselves confined to small and unproductive pieces of land. This resulted in people seeking farming land in the restricted areas such as the river banks and on hill slopes. The people may have been aware of the environmental consequences. However, they were motivated by the desire to find productive land spaces.

The introduction of crop rotation as a substitute to mixed farming created dire problems for the indigenous farmers. Zenda, commented,

> *It was not part of our custom to grow maize in one season, grow nuts and round nuts in the following season and pumpkins in the next season. We had our own ways of growing crops. Our people were used to sowing sorghum, ground nuts and pumpkins on the same piece of land. The people believed that if one crop failed to yield enough, they could harvest the other. When the white man said grow we should grow one crop in a season, the people did not like the idea* (Interview: Zenda 10/09/2013).

The indigenous farmers were accustomed to mixed farming. Tension arose between the colonial government and the indigenous farmers who were forced to practice crop rotation as a substitute to mixed farming. Mixed farming ensured the indigenous farmers were able to grow multiple crops on the same piece of land. Thus, the people could maximise crop output on a piece of land. On the other hand, crop rotation was aimed at preserving soil fertility. The people's resistance demonstrates their willingness to maintain their farming practice which they understood. Again, by keeping true to their beliefs and practices, the people perhaps believed they could solve the new challenges in the reserves using indigenous methods such as mixed farming.

By creating a two tier farming system, the settler government sought to destroy the African system of agriculture by creating a sub capitalist system for the reserves. Chapendama, aged 52 years, noted,

> *The white man did not care about our crops and they told us that we must follow them by growing maize. They introduced maize to the people and made it their staple diet. The people were not allowed to grow crops like tobacco, wheat and cotton as these were for white farmers. Their government made it easy for the white farmers by giving them cheap resources from the Land Bank using title deeds given to them by the government. They were given machinery and tools for free by the government. The government also helped them by buying their produce at favourable prices. They also benefited from African labour made available to them by the government. We Africans were not given the same benefits. We were not given any title deeds as the land in the reserves belonged to the government. They also told us to grow maize and keep small herds of cattle for there was shortage of grazing land.* (Interview: Chapendama 21/09/2013)

On the one side, there was a State sponsored large scale commercial agricultural sector that benefited from the colonial structures. On the other side, there was a peasant agriculture economy that was marginalised by the State. The colonial government's role was to lead the transition from indigenous cropping practices to the modern cropping practices. The idea

was to create a market out of the Africans who were not permitted to grow some of the crops grown by the settler farmers. The indigenous farmers could barely adjust to the new challenges as they did not have the backing of the State when compared to the white farmers.

The new crop varieties such as tobacco, wheat, maize and cotton were the antithesis of indigenous crops such as millet and sorghum. Farming by the Svosve, entailed producing crop varieties consumed by the families. However, the colonial government encouraged the new food growers to produce non-edible crops, demonstrating a departure from the land use practices of people. For instance, sorghum and millet which formed an integral part of the diet of the people were replaced by crops such as maize and wheat. The colonial government reorganised the dietary needs of the people with the aim of creating a market.

Capitalism flourishes were property is privately owned, supported by legal structures regulated by the State (De Soto, 2000). In the Svosve community, the settlers turned the majority of the land into financial capital by pegging all productive land guaranteeing land rights to commercial farmers. On the other hand, the people's land practices were discarded by the State. The people's motherland now belonged to the colonial government. Kramer (1998) argues this was aimed at eliminating traditional land use practices such as land rotation by assigning permanent farming lands.

Colonialism then heralded the emergence of private property rights. The majority of land in the Svosve community was appropriated by the settler farmers and was safeguarded through title deeds. For the people, the land had to be communally owned as it was the gift from the ancestors. However, the settler system undermined the old practices by allocating land to a few individuals while the majority were neglected.

In spite of the pressure exerted by the western beliefs and practices, the people continued to make use of their beliefs and practices, demonstrating their resistance to the western views and the persistence of their views. This idea is captured in Zenda's narrative.

> *In the communal areas, the white man said we should change the ways by which we conduct our farming activities. We were told that if we continued practicing* ***chitemene*** (*slash and burn agriculture*), *we would be arrested for trespassing and causing damage to the environment. The people continued to burn and clear the hills, sometimes the people would farm near the rivers as they continued to search for land.* (Interview: Zenda 10/09/2013)

In spite of the changes imposed by the colonial government to spearhead the proficiency of western beliefs and practices, the majority of farmers in the Svosve community remained rooted in the old practices. In the process, the people risked being incarcerated for breaking the rules imposed by the government. Resistance did not involve any collective physical and verbal demonstrations. Rather, the people held on to their beliefs and practices. The people continued to seek alternative pieces of land to the detriment of the environment.

5.3. *The State, Extension work and changes in farming practice during the colonial era.*

In the Svosve community, the colonial government introduced new agricultural structures that undermined what the people knew and this created new problems in the reserves. Zenda noted,

> *When the colonial government told us to change the way we farmed, we found it difficult to do what they wanted us to do. Then, I was still a small boy but I remember well that my father would tell me that the* ***mudhumeni*** [translated to mean extension workers] *wanted him to grow one crop on a piece of land. We were told that we should grow sorghum on one portion of land, ground nuts on another and maize on another portion. For us, this was difficult because the portions of land were so small to separate the crops. Besides, our fathers often grew several crops on the same piece of land. It is them* [the settlers] *who introduced maize to us and all of us were forced to grow maize to feed our families and our animals. They told the people to rotate the crops on their small portions of land. Later on, we were taught to use animal manure such as* ***mupfudze wemombe*** [translated to mean cow manure] and ***mupfudze wembudzi*** [translated to mean goat manure]. *The elders were not happy because the animal manure often attracted pests into the fields. The white man took some of the promising young boys in this community and sent them to Domboshava technical school which is not situated in this community so that they could learn the new farming practices. We now had our own children telling us how we should grow crops and yet we had been growing crops for many years*. (Interview: Zenda (09/09/2013).

Kramer (1998) argues the changing role in the reserve areas was ushered by E.D Alvord the Agriculturalist for Natives who sought to centralize agricultural practices in the reserves. Centralization entailed establishing demonstrator programs as well as introducing technical assistance to the local farmers (Drinkwater, 1991). The introduction of extension workers was targeted at destroying the indigenous beliefs and practices. The farmers were obliged to follow the western farming practices and disband their own. In addition, the African farmers were taught how to conserve and preserve the environment. For instance, they were

discouraged from farming on slopes or river banks to avoid soil erosion and river siltation (Kramer, 1998). The people were also encouraged to depopulate the land by reducing their livestock (Drinkwater, 1991).

The programmes introduced by the extension workers were contradictory. On the one hand, they appeared to be assisting the indigenous farming practices and yet in reality, they worked on destroying the indigenous farming. Drinkwater (1991: pp40) cites one senior colonial official to have said, '*if they are going to use their old wasteful methods of agriculture on a limited piece of land, with nothing else to go onto. In four or five years' time they will not be able to get a return out of the land because the land will be worn out.''* Ironically, the colonial government failed to recognise that the indigenous practices of the Svosve they were dismissing had sustained the people for generations. This explains the resistance towards the western practices as the locals sought to maximise production using their beliefs and farming practices

Fatefully, the colonial government failed to realise the indigenous farmers stuck to their beliefs for a purpose. For instance, by continuously engaging in mixed farming as opposed to crop rotation, the farmers were adjusting towards maximising produce on the small pieces of land allotted to them. In addition, the desire to practice land rotation may have been motivated by the people's idea on how to preserve the fertility of the soil. These people had developed effective methods of dealing with plant diseases and controlling pests while ensuring the fertility of soils. For instance, they disliked animal manure for proven reasons, indicating that they had tried the alternative and noted the limitations.

5.3.1. *The problems of agricultural mechanisation in the colonial Svosve.*

Between 1940 and 1960, the colonial government stepped up efforts to modernize agriculture in the Svosve community. Headman Masangomayi noted,

> *I remember well that in the 1960s, we were introduced to lime fertilizers. The extension workers said we were not using the land the right way and that's why it was not productive. At first, the government gave us the fertilizers for free as we could not afford to buy for ourselves. The officers encouraged us to use the fertilizers and the treated seeds that were given to us by the government. At the time, we thought that was the way to improve because the white farmers were benefiting from the programmes and were performing better than us. The program only*

> *became a problem for us when the government stopped helping us with these implements.* (Interview: Headman Masangomayi 10/09/2013).

The successes registered in the commercial sector through the mechanization programmes ensured the programmes were imposed on the indigenous farmers resulting in the emergence of new challenges. Ironically, the programme aimed to improve the farming practices of the indigenous farmers created a perpetual dependency on western agricultural implements that were not readily accessible to the indigenous farmers. Arrighi (1973) noted, this shift was not meant to improve the status of agriculture by the indigenous farmers. Rather, these measures were meant to secure a market for the products being manufactured within the capitalist system. Hence, the local farmers in the Svosve community were bound to struggle regardless of the modern but not progressive methods that were being imposed. The indigenous people had virtually no previous cultural exposure to the western beliefs and practices, and these changes were bound to have a destructive effect on their farming practices. (Drinkwater, 1991).

Technological innovation also formed a key feature of the colonial government's agricultural development strategy. However, this development strategy was introduced from a position of capital and seldom involved the opinion of the indigenous farmers. Masangomayi said,

> *The white farmers used many tools that we did not have. They were able to get loans from the government to buy tractors, discs, ploughs and many other implements. In the early 1970s, I used to work for one farmer called Mr Coleman, he was the first to buy a double disc plough and he would tie it to his huge tractors. He often boasted about his tractors and was the best tobacco farmer here. I remember well that he used to prepare his fields a few weeks before the start of the rain season when other farmers had started planting but he always came up with the best crop. After some time, many white farmers bought the same equipment and that's how they became successful. All the black farmers here could not afford to buy these huge machines and we did not have the support of the government. We had to farm for many seasons to be able to raise money to buy a small cart or plough. These tools were not expensive but we did not have the money to buy.* (Interview: Masangomayi 10/09/2013).

The success of farming in the Svosve community became tied to State policy. The State regulated the type(s) of implements to be used by the farmers and the nod was given to the commercial farmers. In the commercial sector, new technologies such as tractors, combine harvesters, irrigation equipment and planters became a necessity to ensure the success of

the commercial farmers. The same privileges were not granted to the indigenous farmers. The indigenous farmers were hence forcibly directed towards a capitalist model of agriculture.

In addition, the people were not in a position to produce their own tools as a result of the confiscation of their land spaces and mines. The process clearly resulted in the destruction of the indigenous production systems, thus leaving the indigenous farmers susceptible to the needs of the open market.

5.3.2. *Infrastructure development and the marginalisation of the reserve areas.*

Bernstein (2006) argues that, for modern capitalist farming to flourish infrastructural development is a prerequisite and the State should institute policy programmes that drive the agenda. In the Svosve community, infrastructure development was necessitated by the need to promote market agriculture. However, there is a huge gap in infrastructure development between the areas dominated by the commercial farmers and those by the indigenous farmers. The commercial areas are endowed with tarred roads, market places, water and electricity systems and the same cannot be said of the other.

Mazhinduka aged 74 years, commented on this issue, he said,

> *I remember in the late 1940s, we did not have tarred roads here in Svosve. The first tarred road that was built in Svosve was built around 1952 and is the one that stretches from Marondera to Svosve. At the time, my fathers and older brothers were forced to assist in the building the road. Later on, many tarred roads were built but unfortunately none of the tarred roads goes to the reserves. We* (those that lived in the reserves) *only used the main road when going to Marondera. The whites built roads and bridges for themselves and for us nothing was done, not even a single road or a bridge.* (Interview: Mazhinduka 27/09/2013).

This narrative is central to understanding the opposing predicaments faced by commercial farmers and indigenous farmers in the Svosve community. Infrastructure development was not evenly shared in the two sectors despite the idea that the colonial government was arguing for the modernisation of the indigenous farmers. The indigenous farmers were not able access any markets outside the reserves, neither were they able to effectively move goods from their farms to markets.

Zenda lamented on how poor infrastructure development was a constraint for the indigenous farmers, emphasising how this was part and parcel of policy of dispossession and the marginalisation of indigenous farmers.

> *The white man took all the good pieces of land including those next to our big rivers. Look! That area where* ***Winimbe*** (a dam situated in the Svosve community about 25km east of Marondera town) *dam is today had good soils. Before the settlers came, our fathers were farming in that area but the whites took it because it was close to a big river. Their government helped them build a road and a bridge. The government could not do the same for us because we were moved to the dry mountains that were far from the big rivers. The white government did not find the need to build roads or dams for they knew that our area was not good for any agriculture and they would be wasting their resources. Many of the dust* (gravel) *roads and small bridges we have today were built by the black government through the DDF* (District Development Fund) *road construction scheme*. (Interview: Zenda 10/09/2013).

Infrastructure development targeted less on improving the reserve areas. The reserves were situated in the marginal areas that were a viewed as a burden for the colonial government. As such, the farmers in these zones were condemned to a perpetual catastrophe.

5.4. *Restructuring Labour: The problems of Native Development and their effects on the indigenous beliefs and practices of the people.*

Native development policies were introduced in Southern Rhodesia in 1923 (Kramer, 1979; 1998)). Native development aimed at providing a system of education which would help raise standards in the reserve areas (Passmore, 1979). The idea was to revolutionise the beliefs and practices of the indigenous farmers. These policies were problematic because they sought to impose a new worldview over a people that had been farming successfully for generations.

In the previous chapter, it was noted, the people's farming activities were organised in the presence of spirit mediums that had the responsibility appeasing the ancestors of the land. The elders and the mediums led the masses into the farming season, organising them before, during and after the farming season. Failure during the farming season was not attributed to incompetence. Rather, it was seen as punishment by the spirits of the land that had to be appeased through the ritual ceremonies. Women, men and children all participated in the ritual ceremonies as they were indispensable participants of the agricultural system.

However, colonialism resulted in the erosion of the beliefs and practices of the indigenous farmers by forcing them to adopt the western beliefs and practices.

The process of transforming the indigenous beliefs and practices of the people involved formally educating the indigenous farmers to the western way of farming. Tsodzo noted,

> *The white man took some of our children and educated them of their ways of farming and these young boys came home to our elders to tell them that their methods were not good enough. The children came here to teach us what they were taught in their schools but they forgot that our parents were farmers who knew how to grow crops because they had been taught to do so by their own parents.* (Interview: Tsodzo 15/09/2013)

The introduction of western education and vocational training are vital for the purpose of uncovering how the indigenous farmers in Svosve were structurally exposed to western beliefs and practices. Masoga (2008) argues that the purpose of colonisation is to conquer the minds of the colonised. The process involves weakening the institutions of the colonised, suppressing their beliefs systems and replacing them with those of the coloniser (Masoga, 2008). For instance, the children that previously were socialised within the household became targets for government training. They were sent to learn the ways of westerners and were tasked with the responsibility of transmitting the newly acquired practices to the elders who were treated as backward. Hence, the State played a crucial role in disrupting the social institutions that formed the basis of indigenous farming practice. However, it should be noted that the people's beliefs were not entirely dismantled. This can be noted from the resistance of the elders who sarcastically dismissed the ideas of the boys.

5.5. *Vocational training: A panacea or a curse to the indigenous farmers.*

The European Center for the Development of Vocational Training (2008: pp178) defined vocational training as 'educational training that aims to equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills or competences required in particular occupation or more broadly on the labour market.' The learners were to acquire technical skills to be used in a particular field (Kitainge, 2004).

In the case of the Svosve, the young children, mostly boys were the target for vocational training by the State. These boys were fed with western beliefs, practices and skills and were tasked with the responsibility of teaching the elders. Ironically, the young children assumed

the role of teaching the elders how to grow crops, make crop choices, make use of land, manage animals and yet these functions were reserved for the elders under the cultural beliefs and practices of the Svosve. Hence, the African socialisation passage was severely undermined by State policy.

However, it should be noted, vocational training did have some merit in the farming practices of the people. The people attest to the idea that it brought new solutions to problems and challenges that could not be solved by the indigenous initiatives. Christopher Makiwa explained,

> ***Vanamudhumeni*** (translated to mean extension workers) *were important as they taught people how to make good use of the soils. They told the people not to farm on the river banks as this would disturb the floor of water in the rivers. At the time, many of the rivers had dried up and there were severe water shortages. They encouraged people to dig water wells so that they have access to clean water. The people were discouraged from farming on the hills to prevent soil erosion. We were also told to dip our cattle every two weeks to prevent diseases such as* ***chigwadara*** (translated to mean anthrax disease) *and* ***chamapundu*** (translated to mean red water disease) *that were common in our community. They recorded all the cattle in the community. Our children were also taught to identify the illnesses in our cattle. This was good for us because many families were losing their livestock to these diseases. Our children were also encouraged to herd cattle in the dry grassland allocated as grazing lands and not in the wet grasses. We learnt many things as a result of the programmes.* (Interview: Christopher Makiwa 21/09/2013).

The narrative demonstrates that vocational training was not always met with resistance by the indigenous farmers. Some of the State initiatives improved the farming practices of the people. For instance, the introduction of cattle dipping was crucial in fighting cattle diseases that the local initiatives were incapable of solving. It should be noted these animal diseases had been in existence for years prior to the arrival of the settlers. It would be interesting to establish if various indigenous groups were able to deal with these animal diseases. Other changes that were lauded include the abolition of river bank farming and hill slope farming, but which of course emerged as a response to the land shortages in the Svosve community.

The main reasons why there are mixed feelings concerning the State's Native development initiatives, particularly the introduction of vocational training, emanates from its tactical approach to the development process. The programme assumed a top down format as it was established on the sole discretion of the State by means of commissions of inquiry that

barely involved African agriculturalists (Passmore, 1979; Kramer, 1998). There is evidence from the narrative by Dr Tsodzo (pp136) who claims that the elders were not happy about their children being used by the settlers to lead the way in changing the beliefs and practices of the Svosve people. He uses the phrase 'our children forgot that their parents had been farming for generations….'' This demonstrates the elders' unhappiness about how their children became the fore bearers of Western beliefs and practices, shunning the indigenous beliefs and practices that had survived for generations.

An aspect of indigenous knowledge that emerges from the narratives stems from how the people are able to trace the changes to their beliefs and cultural practices, while narrating the changes without the aid of written records. Dei et al (2002) argues that oral transfers of information are key features of indigenous knowledge which is usually unwritten, but live in the minds of the indigenous people. Such information is valuable for is passed to future generations in its original form and allows the beneficiaries to be aware of their history.

5.5.1. *Vocational training and the disorganised practice among the indigenous farmers.*

From the previous section, it was noted that some indigenous farmers benefited from the new ideas ushered in by the State. The schooling programmes aimed at improving the farming activities of the people and were clearly perceived by the government as beneficial to the youths who were expected to lead the reforms for successive generations.

However, scepticism exists especially among the elderly farmers who did not and still do not approve the ideas of the extension workers. Headman Masangomayi, commented on this issue by saying,

> *When the elders call for a bira* (translated to mean: rain making ceremonies) *to appease the ancestors in periods of drought, the extension workers tell the people not to attend the ceremonies. Many of the young farmers listen to them, as they are told when to plant, the crops to plant, how to plant and even the fertilisers to use. The past few seasons we have not been receiving enough rains and when the chief and the spirit mediums invite people to participate in the rain making ceremonies these young farmers do not want participate. Some of our children say that they cannot participate in these ceremonies because they are not allowed to so by their church. Their leaders in church have made them to think that our traditional ceremonies are not good. This is why our people cannot produce enough food to feed their families.* (Interview: Masangomayi 10/09/2013).

The narrative exposes the inconsistencies of agricultural extension work in the Svosve community. As teachings of the extension workers contradict the beliefs and practices of the people, a conflict emerged between the advocates of the new practices, who are backed by the State and the advocates of the old practices. Some elders continue to hold up to the idea that problems such as poor rainfall and the persistent droughts that modern practices have failed to solve, have their solutions in indigenous cultural practices. These problems have spiritual solutions that the elders know and understand, but are not being adhered to by the young. In addition, it appears the elders are not happy because the extension workers have usurped the role played by the traditional leaders and the spirit mediums in farming activities. They hence blame these failures on the western beliefs and practices imposed on the locals.

5.6. *The emergence of Christianity and its effect on the beliefs and practices of the people.*

In the Svosve community, the emergence of Christianity, was to further undermine the indigenous beliefs and practices of the people. We saw in the previous narrative, how Masangomayi makes reference to the church and its role in re-organising social and economic practice in the Svosve community.

In the previous chapter, I argued that the people's socio-economic activities had been regulated by the ancestors (***vadzimu***) of the land. The elders believed the ancestors were connected to the communities and were reachable through cultural ceremonies and ritual sacrifices. The spirit mediums (***mhondoro***) were the messengers of the spirits to the people. These spirit mediums mobilised people and issued instructions to the people with regard to work and production.

Colonialism ensured that Christian beliefs and practices assumed the duties previously served by indigenous beliefs and practices which informed work practices in the Svosve community. Headman Masangomayi noted that many people are unwilling to participate in the ceremonies because of the doctrines of the church. From a Marxian perspective, religion has long been used by the State as a weapon to shape the people's beliefs and practices. In Svosve, the colonisers used Christianity to turn the indigenous people against their beliefs and cultural practices. Many of the farmers benefiting from Christianity tend to shun the cultural rituals which had sustained people for generations.

To fortify this idea, Miriam Magombe aged 36 years, said,

> *I do not attend the ritual ceremonies because I was born a Christian. My family members are born again and we respect God. These people worship the ancestors and yet only God in heaven should be worshiped. It is sinful to worship a deceased person who is not God.* (Interview: Miriam Magombe 23/09/2013).

Another farmer, Nemaramba aged 45 years reinforced Magombe's remarks. This is in spite of the truth that she was aware of the importance of the rituals. She said,

> *I do not observe any of the traditional rituals but I have heard about them. My husband is an evangelist in local church. The church does not permit us to practice both traditional and Christian practices. In our family, we just do our work without observing the traditional rituals and it has worked for us.* (Interview: Nemaramba 23/09/2013)

Clearly, some farmers view the indigenous beliefs and farming practices as inferior to Christianity. The elders of the community who are the custodians of the land in context continue to be are aware of the importance of the indigenous beliefs and practices.

> *In the last few years, we have been experiencing rainfall shortages in our community. Last year, the chief called upon the community members to participate in the rain making ceremony but only a few farmers came. The chief and the spirit medium came and we did the ceremony. We as the elders know that the spirits of the land are not happy with us because we have not taught our children well. These droughts will continue until the day the community speaks with one voice.* (Interview: Masangomayi 10/09/2013).

In the Svosve community, there is evidence that the cultural ceremonies continue to have a meaning to sections of the indigenous farmers. For instance, Masangomayi indicated that the shortages of rainfall in the community necessitated the need to conduct a beer brewing ceremony. However, what seems to have changed among the different farmers is the meaning of the cultural rituals. Those who attended saw the rituals as necessary to improve their farming activities, while those who did not attend seem to believe the ritual do not have a bearing on their farming activities.

There are serious resentments with regards to the cultural ceremonies among sections of the farmers claiming to be Christians, but who pointed out other reasons for not attending the cultural ceremonies. Mr Chapendama, indicated that he did not attend the ritual ceremonies, not only because he is a Christian, but because felt the traditional leaders were using the ceremonies for their own good and not the good of the community. He said,

> *Many of us the farmer do not attend the rituals for they are a waste of time. These rituals have lost their importance and are now used by our chiefs to collect goods from the community for their personal use. It has been happening for a while that the chief's tells members of the community to donate food stuffs required for a beer brewing ceremony. In most cases, the ceremonies do not take place and the people lose their things to the greedy chiefs. Recently, the government banned the* ***Zunde raMambo*** **(**Chiefs granary practice**)** *in this community, because there were reports that the chiefs were using people to work in their fields. However, when the time to redistribute grain comes, the chiefs are not willing to share the grain with the community members.*

Based on the narrative, one can note that these cultural ceremonies have lost their meaning through the passage of time. The ceremonies which previously stood to assist the community members have become avenues for the traditional leaders to gain personal wealth at the expense of the community members they are supposed to lead and assist. The loss of some of the indigenous beliefs and practices can be attributed to individualism and greed that now supersedes the collectivism which previously shaped the pre-colonial society and encouraged members of the community to join hands in the wake of impending disasters and problems.

Another important issue that arose from the interviews with these two farmers points to their reliance on agricultural extension workers. For instance, Magombe explained that she would rather listen to an agricultural demonstrator as opposed to a spirit medium as the former is a professional while the latter is a mere traditionalist. Nemaramba declined to comment on the issue, but insisted that those who feel that traditional cultural ceremonies can improve their farming activities should be free to attend the rituals. Farmers who have adopted Christianity as a religion appear to have varied degree of tolerance towards the traditional ceremonies. However, it is clear that Christianity informs how they organise their life activities as Masangomayi noted earlier.

5.7. *Conclusion*

Colonialism ushered in significant changes that transformed the way agriculture was conducted in Svosve by the natives. During the colonial era, the State was central in re-organising much of the economic activities to support the newly established capitalist market. Consequently, the meaning of land and labour were transformed into fictitious commodities, thus, destroying the people's socio-economic practices in the process. The process ensured the natives were either denied land ownership and forced into wage labour on the commercial farms or relegated into the reserve areas to practice peasant agriculture. In the process, the land was awarded commercial value that was different in meaning to what the Svosve were accustomed.

The transition to capitalism ensured the disruption of the indigenous people's work practices. Where work previously targeted the family, the priority now became the market. The agricultural system created by the State ensured the majority of men, women and children were subjected to wage labour on the commercial farms. Human labour became a commodity determined by the market. The process ensured that the labour requirements needed to sustain the African household were heavily channelled towards commercial agriculture. In the reserves, men, women and children continued to perform tasks in line with their indigenous beliefs and practices. However, there were changes with regards to access to land distribution and use. Again, the families found themselves in a new predicament, unable to access land to grow crops, because the land was in limited supply coupled with problems of excessive human and animal density. Women were the most affected, as they found it difficult to access land compared to men who were better off due to patriarchal ties that favoured male inheritance. Much of the land in question was found in the unproductive areas characterised by poor soil fertility and water shortages. Consequently, this culminated in a decline in food production by the Svosve.

In terms of land use, the government established two separate systems. The first, was composed of white large scale commercial farmers, who had access to large tracts of land in fertile areas, using sophisticated machinery, artificial chemicals, and had access to low-interest loans from the government and private banks and who also enjoyed market protection and technical assistance provided by the State. Their primary objective was to tap into foreign markets by supplying locally generated commodities to foreign markets

with the aim of earning foreign currency for the State. In addition, the large scale commercial farmers were expected to produce enough to fast track manufacturing. Consequently, the boom in manufacturing was expected to support agriculture through the provision of implements and other products necessary to ensure a successful agricultural sector. These changes were State imposed in the Svosve community, against the backdrop of the indigenous beliefs and practices of the people.

On the other hand, there was a struggling peasant agricultural sector dominated by the poor black farmers who had been dispossessed of their land. The farmers did not have access to privileges such as credit facilities, sophisticated machinery and the market. The failure by Africans to produce adequate food supplies to feed their households was blamed on their lack of know-how as well as their backward beliefs and practices. This prompted the government to introduce training schemes to educate and train African youths to farm. This process was beneficial to some Africans who welcomed the changes as instrumental in assisting the struggling black farmers. The indigenous farmers claimed that the settlers used vocational training to change the cropping practices of the people. The people were educated to follow capitalist methods and systems of production that did not fully accommodate their beliefs and practices. This resulted in a confused practice in the reserves as some adopted the new practices, while others maintained the old. Nevertheless, there were sweeping changes in the way the Svosve people grew crops.

The problems of food shortages in the Svosve community should also be viewed in light of the drive towards market agriculture. In the Svosve community, the majority of the land was dedicated towards the production of both consumable and non-consumable cash crops. The State favoured the production of cash crops for export. The ultimate goal of this policy was to attract foreign currency from the sales while laying the foundation for the establishment of manufacturing industries to support agriculture. The transition towards capitalism ensured the suffocation of indigenous crop, animal and vegetable varieties. Crops such as tobacco, cotton, maize and wheat became a priority and yet these had little meaning and value to the indigenous farmers. Significantly, the black farmers were not permitted to grow these new cash crops, for fear of competition with the settler farmers, but later on, they eventually settled for the exotic crop varieties as they were forced to adjust to the new requirements.

The settler government resorted to crop varieties they had been accustomed to growing in Europe. Consequently, all educational and training facilities established were directed towards establishing and reinforcing the beliefs and practices of the settlers. The process of educating and training farmers also ensured the formation of social groups with clear racial and age boundaries. In this research, I did not focus on the education instructed by the white large scale commercial farmers on the farm workers. However, there are indications that some wage labourers may have undergone some form of schooling so as to understand the needs and demands of market farming. In the reserve areas, promising youths were targeted for training so that they could practice the western methods of farming.

There were nevertheless farmers, who stuck to the old practices. The majority of farmers that subscribe to the old practices are situated in the former reserve areas and are of a particular age. I observed that most of them were old people, the majority of who are aged 65 years and over. These farmers argue that they have stuck with the traditional crops such as sorghum and millet as these crops are of value to feeding their families. Thus, I noted that such crops remain significant to the dietary needs of the families. In terms of technological usage, these farmers use simple tools such as ox-drawn cultivates, hoes and axes. However, many of the tools are no longer manufactured in the Svosve community. The tools have to be purchased from retailers in the towns and cities. This proves a challenge for the farmers that have to travel a distance to acquire tools that were previously accessible within the community.

Consequently, the State has essentially suffocated the indigenous artisans that produced tools for the indigenous farmers. The settler established manufacturing industries were protected against the local artisans, in order to establish a perpetual dependency on commercially manufactured products. The process was spearheaded by means of the privatisation of land spaces, a process that removed the conditions necessary for the indigenous people to make their own tools for production.

Lastly, some farmers still believe in the role of spirit mediums and ancestors in their farming activities. For them, religion not only entails values that emphasise the importance of the family. Religion is also deemed important to explain certain things that technical expertise provided by the government through the extension workers, cannot provide. For instance, traditionalists, view protracted droughts as a spiritual issue as opposed to a geophysical one.

Thus the traditional farmers are of the view that for agriculture to succeed in Svosve, the people must re-engage their ancestors and spirits. However, these traditional farmers do not view technical expertise as their major problem for the food shortages in Svosve community. Rather, it is the market, a product of colonialism that emphasises the value of non-edible cash crops such as tobacco and cotton as important. In simple words, the market prioritises money as over the importance of family and household production and consumption.

CHAPTER Six: The Svosve community in the post-colonial era.

6.1. *Introduction*

This chapter will provide a detailed view of the Svosve people's agricultural economy post-independence. The core of this chapter is to demonstrate how current State policy shapes farming beliefs and practice in the Svosve community. The chapter will show successive economic policies by the State affect the indigenous people's initiatives.

6.2. *The ideals of land reform and agrarian transformation in the post-colonial era.*

In the last two decades, agriculture in the Svosve community has mostly been influenced by the land reform programme and successive policies. Mr Christopher Ndarukwa, the Provincial Administrator, said,

> *In the past twenty to thirty years, land use has mainly been influenced by the idea of land redistribution. Between 1980 and 1999, the government's land policy was shaped by the willing buyer willing seller policy. During that period, the government recognised the importance of white owned commercial farms in ensuring food security in the country and their ability to raise foreign currency for the country. However, there was a problem in the rural areas where the majority of black people lived without any economic resources to sustain them. The government recognised the need to empower them with land for farming as part of its poverty reduction strategy. Thus, the land policy emphasises the need for increased productivity and economic growth whilst ensuring redistribution, poverty reduction and efficiency of land usage.* (Interview: Christopher Ndarukwa 23/09/2013).

From the perspective of the government, the land policy for the Svosve community, falls within the broader national policy. The government is pre-occupied with addressing the challenge of unequal allocation of land. This problem was highlighted in the previous chapter, as the indigenous farmers said their productivity had decreased due to lack of access to land. Of interest is the idea that the government plans to redistribute land from a few large commercial farmers to a host of small scale farmers.

The land policy may have adopted a twofold objective. On the one hand, it recognised the value of land in bolstering economic growth. On the other hand, it recognised the need to

empower landless black people who constitute the majority of the poor (Moyo, 2007). Zenda, the chief of Svosve testified to this view. He said,

> *Some of the best large commercial farmers in the country had farms in Svosve and competed with the best farmers around the country especially those that produced maize, wheat and tobacco. This explains why there are many food depots, storage silos and tobacco auction floors in the nearby Marondera town. However, the growth of the economy benefited a few people. Many of our people were without access to land. The living conditions in the reserves were poor because of congestion. This explains why people began to storm into the white owned farms to demand land.* (Interview: Zenda 10/09/2013)

In spite of the improvements in revenue, economic growth and infrastructure development, such benefits only transformed the lives of a few privileged people. The majority of the people, particularly those in the reserves of Svosve, were marginalised from these benefits. Land reform consequently did not reduce the gap between the rich few and the poor majority.

The shortfalls in the land reform between 1980 and 1999, ensured the land allocated to blacks remained at a bare minimum and resulted in hostile social and economic challenges for the farmers in the reserve areas. Mr Chinyama, the Deputy District Administrator, said,

> *In Svosve, the people were packed on the rocky hills, with poor rainfall and water supplies. On the other hand, there were numerous white farmers who owned large portions of land with some individuals even possessing more than 2500 or more.* (Interview: Tonderai Chinyama 24/09/2013)

> *In 1979, the government signed a memorandum of understanding with the British government and it was agreed that land should be redistributed by means of a land market. The British government promised to fund the land purchases and transfers. However, these funds were not forthcoming, leaving the responsibility on our government. In addition, many white farmers including those in Svosve community were unwilling to sell their land. The government was not in a position to force these farmers to release some of the land because many of the white farmers where in possession of title deeds that gave them exclusive right to their land. The land policy of that time failed to allocate them land for agriculture and this led to massive shortages of land and chronic food shortages in the former reserves that required the government's attention.* (Interview: Tonderai Chinyama 24/09/2013)

Mr Chinyama's narrative helps to answer two issues. The first, explains why land reform was an urgent necessity. The second, explains why the post-colonial government failed to address these challenges within its first two decades of office. In the Svosve community, land reform was a necessity due to excessive poverty. However, the process of land transfer was constrained by structural factors. For instance, the land in question, was secured by legislation that recognised the right to private property. Moyo (2013) acknowledges this view, when he says, the post-colonial government's inheritance of the colonial regime's constitution secured the right to private property in the context of unequal people. Expropriation of land was illegal. The protection of private property rights in unequal societies tends to undermine the land reform process because it cements ownership rights for those that have acquired property rights under unfair circumstances (Alden and Anseeuw, 2009).

Ntsebeza (2007) provides a detailed analysis in the context of South Africa that can be used to analyse the case of Zimbabwe. Ntsebeza argues, the granting of private property rights to landowners makes it illegal for governments to use any methods of expropriation because the land belongs to an individual as enshrined the constitution (Ntsebeza, 2007). On the other hand, the provision of rights to all results in competing claims, because the poor and those who are landless become entitled to land that is ironically under private ownership (Ntsebeza, 2007). The opposing views between those with access and those without access may have resulted in the escalation of tension, a process that would eventually destabilise farming in the Svosve community.

By 1999 the former reserves were seriously congested. Farming space had relentlessly decreased and the environment was fast degrading. The Provincial Administrator, Mr Ndarukwa, said,

> *The government realised the congestion in the reserves, had resulted in the destruction of forests, soils and water sources. For instance, many farmers sought to farm on the hill slopes and near rivers. The chopping of trees also became uncontrollable and we had cattle grazing everywhere even in unauthorised spaces. This resulted in land degradation, drying of water sources and destruction of the natural ecosystems. The government was left with no option, but to redistribute the land* (Interview: Christopher Ndarukwa 23/09/2013).

Agriculture in the former reserves had become constrained by structurally induced ecologically factors. The term structurally induced ecological factors, refers to the State policy that affect human beings and the environment in a way that one becomes harmful to the other.

The colonial government had managed to concentrate the indigenous farmers in the reserves. Later on, the people's quest to subsist from the land, surpassed the ability of the natural resources and this resulted in the fast depletion of the environment.

Based on the narratives, the question that remains to be answered is, to what extent did the post-2000 land reforms succeed in decongesting the Svosve community, prevent environmental degradation and solve the food crisis? In addition, what happened to the remaining vestiges of indigenous knowledge in this period?

6.2.1 *The Fast Track Land Reform Programme: A crisis in the making.*

The post-2000 land policy in Svosve community is largely informed by the fast track land reform programme. The Svosve community experienced a complete shift in terms of land ownership and usage, a process that saw many landless black people allocated land spaces that belonged to a few white farmers. The Provincial Administrator, Mr Ndarukwa, said,

> *This policy works towards restoring the land that was previously under white minority ownership to the previously disposed black people without any compensation. The targets for land redistribution vary between landless people who live in the former reserves, poor people who lived in the urban areas, the farmworkers, the middle class, and black elites. The government realises people need land for different reasons.* (Interview: Christopher Ndarukwa 23/09/2013).

The official reasons that land reforms in Svosve were the initiative of the government to redistribute land from the white land owners to landless black people. From this vantage point, the programme adopted a top-down approach, as the government sought to de-racialise the skewed land ownership and usage pattern in the community. Of interest is the idea that the programme adopted a broad based approach. The programme was not tailor made to incorporate indigenous farmers only. The programme attracted the interests of multiple social groups that include the black elite and the middle class.

The fast track land reform program was poorly planned and hastily implemented and this affected food productivity in the Svosve community. The policy failed to integrate vital issues in its reform exercise. This standpoint is built on Mr Ndarukwa's sentiments. He said,

> *In the year 2000, the Government of Zimbabwe did not have a land policy that allowed for land expropriation without compensation. The compulsory land acquisition policy only came into use in 2004.The law was passed by parliament four years after the people led by the war veterans had begun seizing the white owned commercial farms. However, the government had recognised black occupancy on the white owned farmers from 2000.* (Interview: Mr Ndarukwa 23/09/2013).

Land reform programmes that are conducted outside the statutory regulations tend to be problematic (Sikor & Mueller, 2009). For instance, land invasions preceded the legal consent of the government. The government began planning its land policy in the midst of the land invasions (Moyo & Yeros, 2013). It appears, the government assumed control of the process midway through the chaos when legislation that supported expropriation without compensation came into use (Moyo & Yeros, 2013). Shay (2012). Therefore, food production was to be affected by the limitations of State policy. For instance, poor planning by the State ensured those that *wanted* the land were rewarded at the expense of those that *needed* the land. In addition, the land policy, did not address the serious social, economic and environmental problems in the reserves and as such, many farmers with know-how remained constrained in their farming duties.

It has been argued that a successful land reform programme should address the problem of land based inequalities, decongest rural spaces and ensure the beneficiaries are well subsidised by the State, through post-settlement support (Andrews, 2007; Hall, 2007). There is a disparity between the government's priorities on land reform and what the people of Svosve believed the programme should address. The Provincial Administrator said, *'there has been massive decongestion of the communal areas as villagers have been resettled in the former white-owned farms. Statistically, approximately about 500 rural families have been resettled in the former commercial farms in Svosve alone.''* The decongestion of rural spaces appears to have been a priority of the government. However, it should be noted, this perspective contradicts the perspective of the District Administrator who said the programme was more broad based and not tailor made for the Svosve.

The use of the term broad based approach is shaped by Moyo (2006) who has argued that the land reform in Zimbabwe was multifaceted as it integrated the demands of the poor, landless people in the former reserves, war veterans, middle class black people, black elites, unemployed urban dwellers and many more (Moyo, 2006; 2013). This programme, when

applied to Svosve, however, was not tailor made to advance the beliefs, practices and concerns of the people in general.

For instance, the government's perspective contradicts grassroots opinion. Some farmers dismissed the government's claim about decongestion and also complained about the beneficiaries of resettlement. For instance, Philip Marambo aged 28 said,

> *We thought the government would decongest the reserves. We have shortages of farming land and many of us cannot produce food because our lands are too small. The land is not good enough as it is dry and infertile. The government should have addressed our problem first. Instead, the government gave the land to outsiders, many of who live and work in the cities and do not care about farming.* (Interview: Marambo 24/09/2013).

There is a sharp contradiction between the government and the indigenous Svosve on how the problem of land should be solved. This gap can be explained in part by the theory of social distance. The theory recognises the existence of subgroups in a population (Akerlof, 1997). It also takes into consideration that multiple variables exist in a population, for instance, gender, class and power and social location and these ought to be factored equally to address problems at various levels of society (Akerlof, 1997). As a result of these complicated dynamics, there is need for social interaction by stake holders involved in the practice in order to accommodate these differences.

In the Svosve community, the government might have been aware of the problems of overpopulation, congestion and shortages of farming land space that constrained agriculture and food productivity. However, there was insignificant interaction between the government and the Svosve on the status of farming in the reserves, as well as the amount of land to be freed for use by the natives. This may also explain why the government appears to be celebrating its achievement on decongesting the former reserves and relocating many families and yet the locals are severely unhappy.

Three indigenous farmers indicated the difficulties in conducting farming in the former reserves at present. Headman Masangomayi summed up the situation by saying that '*many of our people are farming in the reserve. We have sand soils (**majecha**) and cannot grow some crop varieties. We are also experiencing water shortages, made worse by the drought spells the country has been experiencing in recent years.''* Therefore, the failure by the

government to solve the problems in the reserve ensures has condemned the indigenous farmers to abject poverty.

The land supposed to have been allocated to the indigenous Svosve was given to outsiders. To further complicate this problem, the majority of the beneficiaries are said to be less knowledgeable, skilled and less inclined to farming as they live in the cities far away from the land. Therefore, some indigenous farmers have been alienated by the redistributive exercise that has seen outsiders gain control of farming land at their expense

Generally, there is a perception among the indigenous farmers that the war veterans, middle class and the black elites represent the larger number of people resettled in Svosve. The exact number of farmers practicing farming and their origins was not fully captured. This is mainly because my study adopted a qualitative approach that focused on the life experiences of the farmers as opposed to numerical statistics about the activities of the farmers.

However, Andrews (2007) in Ntsebeza & Hall (2007) attests to the problematic nature of broad based approaches to redistribution. Such reforms are usually demand driven and the beneficiaries have to be selected by the government on a wider scale, resulting in the beneficiaries being of diverse interests that may not be in line with the immediate needs of the community. In some cases, the beneficiaries are usually inefficient and are competitive people (Andrews, 2007). Marambo's view compliments this line of argument. There is evidence that some of the beneficiaries either do not have know-how about farming, while others simply do not farm as they do not live on their farms. In contrast, those who live and subsist from the land, failed to acquire much needed land.

The sentiments of four farmers justifies the claim. One respondent Tariro (pseudonym), said her motive for acquiring land solely rests on reclaiming the land that belonged to the blacks before settler appropriation. She also said this was the major reason why the people had fought the liberation struggle and so it was her right to occupy the land, even if she did not make use of its productivity.

Another respondent, Runhambwe, said, his motive for acquiring land was necessitated by failure to obtain employment in the city and so farming offered new opportunities of making income by growing crops for sell. Headman Chipatiso, whose family was resettled from the former reserves said farming was a means of raising income for his family. He emphasised

the need to feed his twenty one children as well as send them to school as the motives behind his farming interests.

Rudairo Chigwedere said she acquired the land to establish a permanent home. In her words,

> *My husband and I, saw this as an opportunity to build a home for us and our children. Previously, my husband worked in Harare as an electrician. Then I was not employed. His wages were not enough to allow us to buy a house or a residential stand. The land reform programme gave us the opportunity to acquire land to build a house.* (Interview: Rudairo Chigwedere 19/09/2013).

Given the varied responses, there is evidence to show many of the beneficiaries of land reform acquired land to satisfy other interests outside of food production. Andrews (2007) claims the State-led Land Reforms are problematic because of the limited screening procedures. Some beneficiaries acquired vast pieces of land for non-farming purposes and yet those that needed land to produce food for subsistence remained marginalised.

The broad based approach to land reform, ensures that a significant number of the farmers practicing agriculture in the Svosve community cannot be referred to as indigenous farmers. Many farmers, particularly the newly resettled farmers, are not indigenous to Svosve. The land reform programme brought in new people with alternative ways of doing things. The broad based approach allowed for a redistribution exercise based on multiple variables that include unemployment, housing needs and many more. Shaw & Takeuchi (2007) argued that the indigenous knowledge resides inside the community and is stored in the minds of the people, and constantly evolves as the society encounters new challenges.

With the arrival of the whites, the indigenous farmers in the Svosve community were severely affected by State policy. State policies did not work maintaining or preserving the structure of communities. Governments initiate social and economic policies based on the immediate challenges that affect people on a broader scale (Andrews, 2007). The responses by beneficiaries of the land reforms highlighted the problems such as unemployment, low incomes, poverty and lack of housing. Many of these problems, were not the immediate concerns of the indigenous farmers in the Svosve community who needed land to grow crops and breed their animals.

Consequently, the use of terms such as 'indigeneity' and 'indigenous' are thrown into obscurity as they tend to align with the idea of a fixed culture or the immobility of beliefs and practices in a location that appears to be changing as a result of successive State policies. These structural factors affect people's beliefs and practices, transforming their way of life. Farming practices in Svosve today denotes a cross fertilisation of cultures. These practices appear to be shaped by the broader social, political and economic structures. However, this should not be misinterpreted to mean that the old beliefs and practices have all vanished.

6.3. *Land Tenure Challenges*

In the Svosve community, the majority of land holders are black agriculturalists. However, no farmer, particularly the beneficiaries of land reform, can say they fully own land. The farmers lack secure land ownership rights which affects their ability to secure inputs and productivity. Place (2009) argues that by assuring tenure rights for the farmers, the State provides the necessary security for agricultural investments and this guarantees increases in productivity, For instance, Rudairo Nemaramba an A1 farmer said,

> *This land belongs to us even if the government helped us to reclaim it from the white farmers. The politicians say the government owns the land and that we have offer letters to occupy the land. They tell us, do this and do that. If we do not agree, they say they will take it away and give it to another person.* (Interview: Nemaramba 23/09/2013).

There is a conflict between the farmers and the government over land ownership. It appears the government uses the land as a political instrument to control people. Nevertheless, what is certainly true is that the people do not have secure land rights.

Mr Chapendama a newly resettled farmer, raised a similar concern, He said, '*I am here today at the mercy of the government. The government promised to give me a 99 year lease in 2004. Since then, I have not received anything from the government.''* The unavailability of tenure security is a cause for concern among the resettled farmers. Lack of tenure security means the farmers are at risk of being removed from the land at any moment. This arguably affects the performance of these farmers.

State initiated land reforms in Zimbabwe have generally failed to provide the necessary tenure rights to beneficiaries because the process by which the land has been acquired is politically and legally contentious (Borras, 2003; Andrews, 2007; Sikor & Mueller, 2008).

In some instances, the government has maintained land rights as a means of gaining political mileage over its citizens. Elsewhere, Andrews (2007) supports this perspective by arguing that the outcomes of the land reforms tend to reinforce and promote the power and privilege of the ruling class over its citizens.

A few farmers said the land belonged to the people and was granted by the government. For instance, Headman Chipatiso said '*when government offers someone a piece of land, that person becomes the owner. Nobody can invade the land without the permission of the government.''* However, a closer analysis of Chipatiso's sentiments reveals the illusion that some resettled farmers have about land ownership. Permission to occupy, does not amount to full ownership. Hence, the new occupants are always at risk of being moved by the government.

Among the communal farmers, the land is held under customary law. The assumption is that the land belongs to the farmers by virtue of customary practice. Most farmers interviewed, who were living in the former reserves said the land had been inherited from a deceased parent or a family member. The chief and his council arbitrate over land disputes because they know all families in the community. However, the new communal farmers, said, they did not have written documents to prove ownership of their property. To avoid land disputes, nobody has the right to farm on any other person's piece of land without the consent of the owner. Ironically, the absence of property rights, ensures the government controls land occupancy, although most residents seemed not to be aware of this.

Many farmers, particularly the newly resettled, indicated their need for secure land rights. The people prefer the western model of land ownership. For instance, Nemaramba argued,

> *If I can obtain a 99 year lease, I will be able to borrow money from banks by using the land as collateral. At the moment, I do not have the capital to increase production. Our representatives have informed the government of the challenges. We have not heard anything from the government for years now* (Interview: Nemaramba 23/09/2013).

In most case, State land reforms, have problems of securing land rights for beneficiaries due to problems over property litigation. The State usually finds itself unable to provide title deeds and this affects performance of the new farmers, as they cannot access credit to improve production.

The farmers in Svosve desire property rights to facilitate credits for farming related needs that include housing, electricity and water and road infrastructure. Mr Chapendama said,

> *If the government offers the leases, we will be able to access loans from banks and build proper houses on the farms. Many of the new farmers reside in mud houses on the farms. Some of the farmers do not to stay on their farms and live in the city. If we had a 99 year lease, we would borrow money to invest in electricity or water infrastructure.* (Interview: Mr Chapendama 21/09/2013).

The remarks by the farmer indicate a preference for the western model of land holding and its associated benefits. Without ownership rights to property, the farmers cannot cope with the social and economic pressures of modern life. De Soto (2000) argues, where land rights are not adequately documented, the users do not adequately have absolute control over the properties. It is difficult for the farmers to uplift themselves from poverty because the assets in their possession cannot be turned into capital and neither can they be traded outside narrow local circles (De Soto, 2000). However, if the property rights are granted, the assets can be used as collateral for credit and for the creation of securities and secondary markets (De Soto, 2000; Cousins B, Cousins T, Hornby, Royston, Kingwill & Smit, 2005). In addition, by formalising property rights, this facilitates accountability in the collection of debts and taxes between lenders the borrowers and revenue authorities (Cousins B, Cousins T, Hornby, Royston, Kingwill & Smit, 2005). Modern agricultural systems thrive on private property rights and their ability to generate wealth for the farmer which other forms of property cannot guarantee.

However, the farmers in the former reserves, where the majority of the indigenous farmers reside, indicated they did have secure rights, protected under customary tenure. For instance, Headman Masangomayi said,

> *We have rules with regards to the use of land. When a father owns land and dies, the land should be distributed among his male children. Sometimes, the first son will inherit the land. In families where there are no male children, the land should be returned to the husband's family.* (Interview: Headman Masangomayi 10/09/2013).

The farmers that practice indigenous methods of land transfer, have less fears about the security of their property compared to the newly resettled farmers. Sikor & Mueller (2009) noted, the beneficiaries of customary tenure are more comfortable compared with those with

land rights granted by the government (Sikor & Mueller, 2009). For instance, the land tenure held under customary law is not prone to legislative litigation which is time consuming and expensive (Sikor & Mueller, 2009). This is because customary tenure is regulated by strict traditional customs that have to be followed by members of the community (Peters, 1994).

On the other hand, State registration and titling does not necessarily enhance security and in most cases, it becomes the source of insecurity (Sikor & Mueller, 2009). Andrews (2007) noted, in circumstances, were the State has acquired the land illegally or where there is contestation, the State cannot provide private ownership rights to the new farmer, when the same rights are held privately by another (Andrews, 2007). This explains the fears by newly resettled farmers in the Svosve community.

Thus, in Svosve community, there are mixed feeling with regards to land tenure. One significant group prefers to hold land under customary law. The other group prefers to hold land as private property so that they can pursue market farming as well as guarantee the security of their land.

6.4. *The Market Rush: State strategy and the transformation of Indigenous Cropping practices.*

My conceptualisation of the market is informed by Polanyi (1944; 2001) who views the market not only as a place where commodities are sold, but as an arrangement of economic life indistinguishable from the elements of human institutions, man and nature (Polanyi, 1944). Farming in the current Svosve community is clearly shaped by the social structure and the field players that include the government, extension workers and the farmers. The farmers in the Svosve community tend to work within the bounds of policies introduced by the State, although in some instances, discrepancies are evident. The 'market rush' concept was adopted after noting the government's overall vision for farming in the Svosve community.

The government's forecast is to have a fully urbanised farming sector in the Svosve community. The State model however, fails to account for indigenous beliefs and practices by favouring western arrangements of agricultural production. Mr Ndarukwa's sentiments, paint the picture. He said,

> *The government's foresees Svosve becoming fully urbanised. Many people who could not venture into commercial farming now have access to land. As government, we urge the new farmers to produce lucrative crops like tobacco, wheat, cotton and varieties of horticultural plants. Our people have to learn to respond to the needs of the local and the international economy. We want to see the lives of the people being transformed by access to land and markets* (Interview: Mr Ndarukwa 23/09/2013).

The government is dedicated to seeing the community transform from the indigenous beliefs and practices to the western practices that relate to the international economy. Bourdieu (2005) noted how the State manipulates its power and uses various forms of capital to influence the social, political and economic outcome. In his words, 'the State is the holder of a sort of meta-capital granting power over other species of capital and over their holders'' (Bourdieu, 2005). In the case of Svosve, the government has set the rules on how the farmers should conduct agriculture. This possibly explains Nemaramba's comment that *'Listen to the government or risk losing the land.'*

The State's position is justifiable in the context of globalisation. For instance, the Provincial Administrator highlighted the government's role in motivating the farmers to grow the modern crop varieties. On the other hand, the District Administrator, said the government wanted all farmers to at least grow a portion of maize crop. Many of the resettled farmers appeared to observe the State's directive. Some of the farmers admitted to growing maize as it was compulsory for newly resettled farmers to supply maize to the State owned Grain Marketing Board (GMB). Thus, the State uses its power to compel people towards certain practices.

The concept of power, in light of Bourdieu (1986; 2005), represents a certain symbolic authority or the socially recognised power to impose a certain vision of the social world. The State which is the rule maker and also a key player in the various economic fields such as agriculture, manipulates its position by using various forms of capital at its disposal to inculcate certain cultural practices (Bourdieu, 1986, 2005). In the Svosve community, one can observe that the State has influenced the people to grow certain crops over others. For instance the State has been able to manipulate the farmers to believe that maize is the staple diet while shunning the traditional crop varieties such as ***mhunga, zviyo, mujakari*** and many more. Hence it has to be grown for national consumption as well as for household

consumption. Some of the farmers said the traditional crops were no longer a preferred choice for consumers and thus fetched less money on the market.

The creation of the black middle scale commercial farmers also demonstrates the government's vision on agricultural development. These newly resettled farmers in the Svosve, have been socialised and equipped to produce for the market. Mr Chapendama said,

> *In 2007 the government put in place stiff measures that encourage the farmers to sell maize to the GMB. As farmers, we are not against the government or our responsibility of feeding the nation. The problem is that the GMB buys the grain at a very low cost of $380 per tonne. In some instance, the GMB has even failed to pay us after we have supplied the grain. This has happened to me before, at one point, I supplied the GMB with 220 tonnes of maize. However, I only received half of my cash payment. The GMB later on compensated me with inputs at the intervention of the government.* (Interview: Mr Chapendama 21/09/2013).

In spite of the positive role by the government in the creation of markets for the farmers, there is evidence that the State regulated market, stifles the farmers' interests. The State in particular forces the farmers to supply the GMB with grain and yet the parastate fails to pay for the services.

The small holder farmers, have divergent views with regards to maize production. The majority prefer to produce maize crop. The main reasons cited relate to household consumption and the market. The traditional crops such as millet and sorghum are not preferred by farmers who sell surplus grain because of their low market value. However, a few farmers grow the crops for household consumption and sell the surplus if the opportunity arises.

The small farmers pointed to various reasons to justify their cropping choice. For instance, Cathrine Masangomayi said, '*I prefer the maize crop for feeding my family'* In the Svosve community, the maize crop is the most widely regarded crop among the small holder farmers due to its value as the staple diet. Zenda reiterated the same but added a new dimension by saying, '*I grow maize for the purpose of feeding my family and the rest I sell to the GMB*.'' Other farmers that indicated a preference for growing maize as crop said the process of producing it was less labour intensive, less expensive and not highly technical compared to other crops such as tobacco, wheat and cotton.

The small holder farmers in the Svosve community hence recognise the importance of the maize crop as the staple diet. They find the market an indispensable part of their lives and this shapes the cropping practices in the community. This view is also echoed by Marimba, who said,

> *We grow maize mainly for feeding the family. During the rainy season, my family and I share the responsibilities from the time of planting until harvesting time. After the harvest period, as family we determine what we need and the rest we sell. I like the maize crop because it is not difficult to farm. If one has extras to sell, the government will always be there to buy. For instance, the government through the GMB sends its trucks to Svosve every year to buy grain from us the farmers. Sometimes, I have to sell to our local buyers if I do not like the prices of the GMB. I can also trade my crop for cattle and goats with other villagers. I prefer growing maize compared to sorghum and millet. If one wants to sell millet, one can only sell to Chibuku breweries or Delta Cooperation but their prices are less compared to maize. For example, last year, the Grain Marketing Board was buying one tonne of maize crop for USD $378.00 and yet Chibuku and Delta were buying a tonne of sorghum for half the price of maize.*

Two forces now determine cropping choices in the Svosve community among the small farmers. Feeding the family is the first. These farmers grow crops that reflects the dietary needs of the family and the food is shared within the family. However, the farmers also say the market has become part and parcel of their social and economic lives. Many of the traditional crops, although are still consumed by the Svosve, tend to be sidelined due to their inability to fetch a descent price on the market.

Social and economic pressures also aided to the demise of the traditional crop varieties as farmers make decisions, based on the broader national and international socio-economic pressures.

> *We farmers understand that we have to sell our crops so that we get money to pay the wages of those who work for us. These days, if a farmer invites members of the community to assist them in the fields, the people expect cash payments. This is unlike in the past when people would work without demanding any payment with the hope that one day, the farmer who has been assisted will help the other. The farmers understand that times have changed. People need money for food, clothing, transportation, hospital and school fees.* (Interview: Magombe 23/09/2013)

The farmers have clearly had to adapt to the crop needs and the work practices of the capitalist economy. The capitalist economy demands the use of financial capital, leaving farmers with no option but to adapt to its demands. Adaptation, entails the farmers having

to grow crops responsive on the market to allow for profits to be made. In addition, other costs such as the labour and inputs that have emerged with capitalism need to be serviced.

One can hence note that unlike in the past, when the pre-colonial Svosve produced for their families, farming in contemporary Svosve is about maximising profits

> *It is not that farmers are not interested in the traditional crop varieties. These crops do not allow the farmers to make huge profits. For instance, one tonne of maize will fetch between $370.00 and $380.00 which is very low. If you consider that the cost of buying maize seed is high. For instance, maize seed is selling at prices ranging between $21.00 and $47.00 for a 10kg bag. If you add the fertilisers required, a 50kg bag of compound D fertilizer costs almost $40.00 while ammonium nitrate costs almost $50.00. If one then adds the cost of paying those who do the work, the cost will definitely go beyond the price of selling the maize crop. Many farmers find the growing of cereal crops less profitable. As for me, I grow tobacco and winter wheat that allow for profiteering.* (Interview: Dr Tsodzo 15/09/2013).

The market pressure that farmers have become exposed to has essentially tended to influence cropping decisions. The farmers have to constantly adjust or seek alternative markets in order for them to remain competitive and to survive.

For instance, as noted above, in the case of Svosve, the farmers complained about the cost of production for cereal crops against the economic returns. The State as the main purchaser of cereal crops like maize, has not made life easier for the farmers as they buy the produce at low cost. The result is that some farmers tend to desist from growing cereal crops in favour of none-edible crops like tobacco and cotton which are more profitable.

6.5. *Agriculture Extension and the drive towards Modern Agriculture.*

The role of the extension workers cannot be underestimated in the Svosve community. They are the mouthpiece of the government, spreading the government policies to the farmers. The extension workers can be viewed as agitating for modern agricultural practices and this is noted from their sentiments.

Memory Mudautsi, an extension worker, said

> *Our responsibilities include agricultural research on soils, weather, climate conditions, crops, animals, rainfall patterns, farming practices and labour requirements needed for successful farming. We advise the government on the farming activities in the communities we work. We*

> *also advise the people on certain trends as directed by the government* (Interview: Memory Mudautsi 24/09/2013)

From the narrative, there is evidence that the farming practices pursued in the Svosve community are dictated by the central government and monitored by the extension workers. The plan of the government to modernise farming clearly shows the path taken to move away from the indigenous beliefs and practices of the people.

The work of the extension workers, goes beyond researching about the communities and knowing how they do things. The extension workers have been tasked to usher in changes in line with the State directives. Mudautsi, said,

> *We are also…transferring agricultural technologies to the farmers, advising farmers on what crops to plant, how best to manage the crops, identifying farmers needs and reporting to the government, teaching farmers new ways of farming and how to maximise production on certain crops, marketing produce and educate farmers as part of the community development programme.* (Interview: Mudautsi 28/09/2013).

The government has adopted a western model of agricultural practice which aims at modernising agricultural activities. The government's agricultural strategy, leaves less room for the indigenous agricultural leaders such as chiefs and spirit mediums who previously played significant roles in directing farming practice. There is evidence to show that community leaders play a minimal role in directing farming practice in the contemporary Svosve community.

The duties that previously were conducted by traditional leaders seem to have been usurped by the extension workers who are now responsible for advising the farmers. Mudautsi agrees with the claim. She said,

> *I have a lot of responsibilities in this area, all the farmers are considered to be under my monitoring. The government regards us as skilled personnel, who have the best available knowledge and it is our responsibility to train, teach and advise the farmers on what to do.* (Interview: Mudautsi: 24/09/2013)

The extension workers have consequently developed extensive influence on farming beliefs and practice in the Svosve community.

On the other hand, Zenda blames government policy for marginalising chiefs in the decision making process. Zenda says the chiefs no longer wield powers to influence practice in the community. He said,

> *Chiefs no longer have the powers to instruct our people on when and how to farm. The biggest challenge we have is the government which stripped our powers and the only thing we can do is to arbitrate land disputes in the communal areas and beyond that it is the government. In areas were the government has given people land, we are not allowed to solve the problems arising in the areas. The government does everything and we chiefs are not involved in their programmes. Sometimes, we attend meetings when we are invited to the District offices. However, there is nothing we say that gets to the ears of the central government.* (Interview: Zenda 10/09/2013)

This has resulted in conflict between the government and the traditional leaders in the Svosve community over who should instigate changes in the community.

The conflict can best be explained by the concepts of knowledge and power. Foucault (1977) cited in Donald and Vander Zwaag (2006) noted that power and knowledge are inseparable from one another. Foucault's argument is that powerful social groups have the ability to influence people towards certain beliefs and practices (Foucault, 1977). This ability stems from how they use the resources at their advantage to stifle other social groups, a process that involves constraint, regulation and the disciplinary role of practice (Foucault, 1977). Possibly, the chiefs are unhappy with the government because their influence in determining the appropriation of resources in communities has diminished. On the other hand, the chiefs feel the government is using land as a political tool for the maintenance of grassroots support. This idea is reinforced by one community member who said, '*the government declared an end to some traditional ceremonies as the chiefs were using people to work in their fields while collecting grain for personal consumption.'*

However, it should be noted, by reducing the powers of the traditional leaders, the government removed significant binaries that support indigenous communities. Traditional leaders are vital in the maintenance of indigenous beliefs and practices that promote virtues such as love, peace, sharing and many more. These virtues bound the people together. At present, it appears the farmers are fragmented and each family does its own thing. The government has assumed the role of driving the farmers towards capitalist agricultural beliefs and practices.

6.6. *The government Mechanisation Programme, a drive towards modernising farming practice in the Svosve community.*

In 2006, the government embarked on a mechanisation programme that aimed at rehabilitating agriculture by providing the farmers with agricultural inputs such as maize seeds, tractors, planters, harrows and many other modern farming inputs. The programme was State planned and was a response to the problem of shortages of farming implements country wide. In the Svosve community there are mixed feelings about the success of the programme. However, what is clear from the accounts is that the government is pursuing modern approach to farming and most farmers seem to comply.

The majority of the farmers appear to favour the government's drive for the modernisation of agricultural practice. Many have welcomed the government's mechanisation programme as positive. For instance, Headman Chipatiso said,

> *The government recognised that the farmers will increase their productivity if they get the required tools for them to farm or transport their goods to the markets. Most family farmers were given smaller implements such as maize seed, cultivators, wheel barrows, knapsack sprayers and many more, while those who are in commercial practice received tractors and other larger implements*

The government's plan to equip farmers not only highlights its commitment to agrarian transformation by ensuring support for the farmers, but to also ensure that farmers produce enough to food to feed and to sell on the market. Nearly all farmers benefited from the mechanisation programmes. For instance, Magombe, says she received a knapsack sprayer and a plough. Nemaramba, says she acquired a scotch cart that she used to transport produce from her field to the granary and to the nearby market. Chapendama and Tsodzo indicated that they received tractors and irrigation equipment demonstrating the government's commitment to promoting market based farming.

However, some of the farmers have criticised the government's implements distribution strategy. Farmers, particularly those living in former reserve areas, said the government promoted a few black elites into commercial farming, while the majority of the farmers remained poorly equipped to venture into commercial agriculture. For instance, Nemaramba said,

> *I was given a scotch cart, but I would have wanted a tractor or a generator or even irrigation equipment because there are water challenges in this area. Many people who got these big machines are those who are family and friends with the people in government or those who have money to pay someone they know in the government.* (Interview, Nemaramba: 18/09/2013)

There is evidence that the government's inputs scheme promotes the use of modern machinery. However, one can note the system privileges some farmers at the expense of others. Those with links to government officials are more privileged than those without. Farmers who benefit from the State programmes use their social capital to progress in the current market dispensation.

Also, those with little or no social capital find it tougher to venture into modern farming. For a view on this by Marimba indicates that

> *The government has to find out, from each farmer about what their needs are, and then make provisions. It does not make sense to give someone with three tractors another tractor, yet there are farmers who need the tractors more but cannot afford to buy them and live on borrowing from those with three or four. The problem that arises is that those with means have gained at the expense of the poor farmers.* (Interview: Marimba 19/09/2013)

This view highlights the contradiction behind the government's mechanisation programme that sought to aid the poor farmers and yet failed to address the needs of the under privileged farmers. Hence, many farmers are unhappy with the development strategies by the State.

When the farmers were asked to choose between the modern and the indigenous, the majority of farmers said they preferred modern farming tools. Most responses highlighted issues of efficiency. For instance, Tsodzo said a farmer who uses a tractor and a planter will take less time to plant compared to one who uses ox drawn ploughs. He also said that modern machinery makes work easier and is cheaper and faster for the farmers. For instance, he highlighted that it was cheaper to plant using tractors and planters compared to employing people who need wages and who take longer to complete the job. However, he also highlighted the problems of machinery when he indicated that many of the farmers were not well resourced and could not afford the service of machinery acquired from the government. In Svosve community, the majority of farmers said they did not have the resources to run some of the tools they had acquired from the government and most of these were fast becoming dilapidated.

6.7. *Conclusion*

Farming practice in the Svosve community is largely informed by the State's agricultural programme that seeks to modernise farming as part of a post-settlement support programme for resettled farmers. This programme has also been extended to the indigenous communities.

The government's initiatives that include land reform, the mechanisation programme and a commitment to extension work have stifled the institutions that supported the indigenous economy. There is a clear conflict between the government and the traditional institutions. However, the government tends to override traditional practices by imposing various policies that directly or indirectly antagonise indigenous beliefs and practices.

In terms of the farming population, many of the farmers have their roots in the Svosve community. However, there is evidence pointing out that a significant number are outsiders, brought into the community as part of the land redistribution programme. The beneficiaries include black elites whose quest for land is to practice commercial agriculture. The result of this is a hybrid of practices with little or no reference to indigenous beliefs and practices. In addition, the government has socialised the farmers into believing that market farming is the best form of farming. This has undermined the indigenous people's cropping practices as many farmers have abandoned the indigenous crops in favour of the new crops. This explains considerable challenges in the farming activities in Svosve community and the virtually complete demise of indigenous knowledge regarding agricultural practice.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Evaluating the Beliefs and Farming Practices in the Svosve Community

7.1. *Introduction*

This chapter provides an overview of the beliefs and farming practices that dominate the contemporary Svosve community. The chapter will evaluate the current status of indigenous knowledge in Svosve. The views of the farmers serve as the major points of reference. The role of the post-colonial government will also be evaluated.

The Svosve community of today is diverse in nature. One cannot claim that the farmers in the Svosve community of today rely solely on indigenous beliefs and practices. Neither can one argue that the beliefs and practices dominating the community are predominantly modern. However, it appears the majority of the farmers are slowly but actively siding with modern farming beliefs and practices being advocated by the government, although the indigenous beliefs and practices find ways to proliferate. The State's agricultural policy appears to have the greater effect in determining farming practices in the community. This view should not be misinterpreted to mean adherence of modern farming practices have completely overshadowed the indigenous beliefs and practices. Rather, they side with the modern practices whilst integrating aspects of indigenous knowledge. This idea is best explained in Bhabha' theory of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994).

7.2. *Insights Gleaned from the Study of Indigenous Knowledge in the Svosve community and the Effects on Agricultural Production.*

This research sought to establish whether the farmers in the Svosve community make use of indigenous knowledge when practicing farming. The prime focus was to ascertain how the community farmers, who make use of indigenous beliefs and practices react to State development initiatives. The foundation to understanding indigenous knowledge in the Svosve community became a possibility after having conceptualised the features of indigenous knowledge which were identified as beliefs, practices and skills. These were examined in the groups of farmers in the Svosve community in order to ascertain how they organise their farming activities. This research also tackled critical issues arising from

academic debates and global development strategies which include the debate on whether indigenous knowledge should be given the same status as 'Western scientific knowledge' or whether it is another form of 'knowing' not worthy of being incorporated into a global development strategy. It has been noted that indigenous knowledge represents a different form of knowledge which should be recognised as tool used by different communities to organise their way of life. Other issues that have been tackled highlight the importance of indigenous knowledge in food production and allocation of food in the small communities.

To achieve the objectives of the study, I established and traced the indigenous beliefs, practices and skills from the pre-colonial, colonial and the post-colonial eras. This was achieved through using various literatures and analysing the different narratives presented by the farmers and informants in the Svosve community. It allowed me to make sense of the past, track the changes, contradictions, tensions and to establish the remnants of indigenous knowledge which especially the farmers in the reserves and some others in the Svosve community appear to be clinging onto. Thus, my research reflects the views and concerns of the farmers in the Svosve community.

When writing this report, I noted the study on indigenous knowledge cannot be perceived solely within a cultural context. A broader historical framework was used to trace the changes in the beliefs and practices of the Svosve people. This argument reinforced Fanon's (1952) view that in order to understand the issues in the post-colony, there is a need to conceptualise the various historical trajectories that shape these societies. The pre-colonial work activities of the Svosve people were perceived as being informed by the indigenous beliefs and cultural practices in their generic form. These indigenous beliefs and practices were meditative of the social, political, economic institutions that cemented the Svosve community. However, with the onslaught of colonialism, several new structures where put in place by the settler government and these aimed at subverting the indigenous beliefs and practices of the people with regards to farming and other work activities.

This research noted that people of the Svosve community were originally powerfully shaped by the '*Mbire*' beliefs and cultural practices and informed how the people perceived the world and organised their life activities. The 'Mbire' people who share a close relationship with the '*Shona'* people have unique beliefs and practices which mirror many '*Shona*' customs. The 'Mbire' recognised the importance of their beliefs and customs which amount

to knowledge or 'knowing' and there was and still to some extent is a deliberate attempt by some members of the community to preserve it as can be noted from how the people understand their history and indigenous beliefs and practices as presented in the narratives. These beliefs and cultural practices are recognised and seen as important by some individuals, families and the community members. However, these beliefs and practices are under constant threat from Euro-centric beliefs and practices that emerged during the colonial era and have been pursued by the post-colonial government.

To say the farmers in the contemporary Svosve community rely solely on indigenous knowledge generated from within the community may not be an accurate representation of the cultural, social and economic activities practiced in this community. The information gathered from the community shows there have been significant shifts in how the farmers organise farming in response to colonial and post-colonial State policies and global forces which favour the modernisation of agriculture and related activities. For instance, in the Svosve community the government was seen to be favouring commercial agriculture in many ways such as the mechanisation programme or through promoting cash crops. The absence of a policy framework which encourages farmers to grow indigenous crops or make use of indigenous tools, reiterates the government's vision of agriculture. Thus, what currently exists in the Svosve community in terms of farming practice is no longer subject to indigenous culture originating from the past, but points to a degree of hybridisation of culture which merges indigenous beliefs and practices and Western beliefs and practices.

To further illustrate this view, the narratives by the farmers and the government administrators showed that the colonial government was pivotal in dislodging the broader institutions that supported pre-colonial agriculture and the people's indigenous knowledge systems. This view points to what Fanon (1952) argued that colonial structures of control, such as western religion, education, governance, language and methodologies, were imposed in the colonies and these had the effect of conquering the souls of the colonised and reshaping their worldviews to suite that of the coloniser. Fanon may have assumed that the colonised people's culture may have been totally banished, but this seems not to be the case in the Svosve community Zimbabwe. Bhabha's (1994) regarding hybridisation of cultures, appears to be more appropriate for the case of Svosve as it has been noted that farmers are locked in between the indigenous beliefs and practices and the western beliefs and practices. Their practices and skills reflect the dominance of modern methods more so

than the indigenous practices and this can be attributed to State policy during the colonial and post-colonial period. State policies which include the land reform programme have ensured that the government redistributes land to non-indigenous farmers and in some cases, the government has been seen to support small and middle scale commercial farming in the community. Other programmes such as the State mechanisation programs can also be linked to the government's quest to modernise agriculture in the community as part of its post-settlement support program and farmer empowerment program. Consequently, I argue that there is an attempt by the majority of farmers to implement modern farming practices while on the other hand, certain features of their indigenous beliefs and practices can be noted in their farming practices, especially in the reserve areas where the State has not been able to provide adequate modern implements and the farmers have to seek alternatives for themselves.

One can note therefore that two centers of knowledge shape the views of the different farmers in the Svosve community. There is the group of farmers who still subscribe to the indigenous cropping practices. These farmers continue to grow traditional crops and use indigenous farming methods and who view traditional rituals as an integral part of their farming practice. In addition, the majority of the crops they grow are consumed within their households while the surplus is shared inside the community. This group in terms of numbers represents the smaller fraction of the farmers practicing agriculture in the present Svosve community.

On the other hand, the majority of farmers in the contemporary Svosve community subscribe to modern farming practices. This can be noted in the way they plan their farming activities, the types of crop they prefer to grow, the technologies they prefer to use and their emphasis on the importance of the money market. The majority of these modern farmers appear to have distanced themselves from indigenous cultural rituals that are seen by the traditionalists as vital for farming in the community. Many of these modern farmers appear to have assimilated new religious beliefs that contradict with the old religious practices, while farming education in the community may be seen to follow a Western model. However, one can note that, in spite of the changes in the beliefs and farming practices in the community, many farmers are aware of the beliefs and practices originating in the community despite showing a preference for the modern.

7.3. *Redefining Indigenous Knowledge in the Svosve community: Exploring its Current Status.*

Defining indigenous knowledge in the context of the Svosve community is a complex task, mainly because it entails re-telling a deep, intricate and incomprehensible life journey of a people in a community undergoing several changes. However, one cannot argue that the people of the Svosve community do not possess indigenous beliefs, practices and skills that amount to some form of 'knowing' and which was argued amounts to some form of scientific knowledge which allows the people to make sense of their environment. These beliefs, practices and skills were in existence before the colonial era and were inherited by generations using various scientific methods. Colonial rule undermined some of the indigenous beliefs, practices and skills and this was enabled by the colonial government which sought to impose new beliefs and practices as well as destroyed much of the institutions that supported the community. The same can be said about the post-colonial government which continuously neglects the beliefs and practices of the people despite the overwhelming evidence that these facets continue to assert themselves in the lives of the people and have been the basis for organising socio-economic activities.

An account of the indigenous knowledge systems of the people of the Svosve community should be comprehensive and should explain the complex cultural practices, beliefs and skills which originate from the community and how these constantly evolve to meet the needs of the community. This has only been intimated in this thesis. What I refer to as indigenous knowledge are the beliefs, practices and skills that originate from the Svosve community which inform how people should organise their life activities and make sense of their environment. Hence, I defined indigenous knowledge in the context of the Svosve community after highlighting key features of this knowledge system. It remains to be summarised of the features of this knowledge system and the current status of indigenous knowledge in the Svosve community.

The '***Mbire***' beliefs and cultural practices distinguish the Svosve people from other '***Shona***' ethnical groups although the people claim to be an integral part of the '***Shona***' people. The fundamental binding force linking these groups stems from their beliefs in '***Musikavanhu***' or the creator. However, these people claim to have inherited unique beliefs and practices from their '***vadzimu***' or ancestors. One can argue, in the Svosve community, that indigenous

knowledge systems are closely linked to the divinity which shapes the life activities of the people. Many of the original inhabitants identify themselves with their ancestors whom they claim had the power to effect changes to the people's way of life. These ancestors had to be appeased in periods of crisis by ritual ceremonies in which the entire community was expected to participate. Such ritual practices worked towards cementing the community together as they encouraged a common purpose. Colonialism imposed a new religion which is an antithesis of the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the people and this new religion tends to discourage the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the people which previously bonded the entire community and motivated all work practice.

The belief in the spirits of the land encouraged family and community unity and this also encouraged collective work practice. Such rituals previously allowed the entire community, currently severely alienated to unite and seek for problem solving solutions in order to answer the problems and difficulties that arise from socio-economic activities. Furthermore, the resolutions that emerged following a ritual ceremony were important in shaping common practices aimed at solving the problems that have been identified. For instance, if there was a drought, people would be encouraged to save food as a mechanism of dealing with the problem of hunger. Those with excess food were encouraged to share with other community members facing. Thus, one can note an element of togetherness which emerged from the connection between community members and their ancestors. The Western religious beliefs that subsequently were introduced by the settlers to the the Svosve, broke the bond between the people and their ancestors and in the process, certain beliefs and practices that bonded the community together were significantly eroded.

Indigenous knowledge in the context of the Svosve community inculcated principles such as love, respect, sharing and tolerance. These principles were identified as vital in maintaining the cohesion of the community especially during the pre-colonial period. These values appear compromised in the contemporary Svosve community. For instance, it was out of love that people leant to share resources or share work responsibilities with other members of the community, a process that cemented the solidity of the community.

During the pre-colonial era, one can note that the people learnt to love one another as they identified themselves with their ancestors. In the contemporary Svosve community, the majority of people identify themselves with a common ancestry. However, some of the

values which bonded the pre-colonial Svosve people together have been eroded as a result of colonialism, which conveyed new practices and the post-colonial land policies, which resulted in the migration of non-indigenous people into the community, and have eroded and even suffocated these values. The introduction of modern farming practices has further entrenched this arrangement.

During the pre-colonial era, children were educated to respect the teachings of elders in the family and community and to acknowledge the importance spirits of the land as the drivers of success. Such practices have gradually lost meaning to many farmers in the contemporary Svosve community. This can be attributed the role played by Western education and religion which are viewed as undermining the indigenous beliefs and practices of the people. However, one can note that there is a small group of farmers who continuously subscribe to the indigenous beliefs and practices. Their interpretation of problems such as protracted droughts and famines in the community stems from the idea that the ancestors are unhappy with the people and need to be appeased through beer brewing ceremonies and other rituals. One can note the contradictions and tensions arising from problem solving methods used by indigenous farmers and the modern farmers in Svosve community.

In spite of the evolutional degradation of indigenous knowledge in the Svosve community, some of the indigenous beliefs are still upheld by the indigenous people and these are embedded in literary features such idioms, proverbs, wise sayings narratives and song and dance. Many of the elderly in the Svosve community were able to outline the importance these devices in organising the social and economic lives of the people. The elders argued that work practices in the pre-colonial society were informed by these features which translate into indigenous knowledge and these beliefs remain an integral part of the Svosve people. However, elders pointed out that Western education and supporting institutions have eroded many of the beliefs and practices as can be noted through the dominance of Western beliefs and practices in the Svosve community.

The indigenous knowledge of the Svosve people also entails the upholding of certain shared normative beliefs and practices with regards to the family and the community. These include the beliefs that the family and community exist above individual interests. For instance, it was common practice during the pre-colonial era that farm produce should be directed towards feeding the family, while the excess was shared among the community members.

Thus, all socio-economic activities were concluded with the vision of ensuring the stability of the community. In the modern era, the priority has shifted towards the money market as farmers seek to produce crops which allow them to earn financial capital in order to live up to the demands of the broader capitalist economy. The fundamental driving force behind the capitalist agenda is cited as the State, as policy demonstrates a preference for capitalist agriculture compared to family farming.

Indigenous beliefs and practices also determined how work should be organised. For instance, before the infiltration of Western beliefs and practices in the Svosve community, all work activities were based on gender ascribed roles. Indigenous knowledge entailed that the older members had to educate young children on the social and economic roles expected of them when they became adults. The process of socialisation begins in the family and was extended to the broader community as young ones learnt to perform duties through participating in community tasks. For instance, young girls and boys were socialised early to become food producers and learned technical skills such as the smelting of metals. As the children grew older, they were socialised on the importance of community participation and the importance of working together with other community members in collective tasks such as '***majangano***' and '***maricho***' which had the effect of cementing community unity. In addition, such practices maintained the stability of the community as the children grew up knowing what was expected of them and what was necessary to hold the family and the community together.

The work practices of the indigenous Svosve people contradict with the Western beliefs and practices which tend to undermine the roles of the family and the community in the socialisation of people towards market oriented work activities. Western beliefs and practices have ensured that the duties of the family and the community were transferred to formal educational institutions which taught the practices of settlers while undermining those of the indigenous people. It is no coincidence that the contemporary draws much on the practices of the Westerners in several aspects. For instance, many farmers were noted to have been virtually compelled into modern capitalist farming. For instance, the farmers unfortunately believe they cannot make a living from growing indigenous crop varieties, as Western crop varieties are seen as necessary to survive in the contemporary era. Some of the farmers claim they cannot practice farming using family labour and these farmers have resorted to hiring labour or using Western technologies, but which have been acquired with

their own problems. This is despite the fact that the people had been practicing agriculture using family labour and technologies originating from the community. The experience of the Svosve mirrors that of Africans elsewhere.

Fanon (1952) argues that Western education imposed on the Africans had the effect of subtly disseminating the idea that the Western beliefs and practices to solve problems that indigenous beliefs and practices cannot solve. From learning the works of the Westerners, the Africans adopt the prejudiced views of the foreigners, the African 'invests in the hero, who is white' (Fanon, 1952: 126). This usually leads to a life of wishing to be like the coloniser. In the Svosve community, the government was similarly noted to be spear heading the drive towards capitalist farming in various ways. In addition, many of the farmers also indicated they wanted to follow the path to success which the former white large scale commercial farmers had taken. Thus, in the wake of problems, the farmers have not resorted to indigenous practices. Rather, these farmers call upon the government to provide them with credit facilities, extension services and mechanised equipment.

Indigenous knowledge can also be transplanted through technical skills. In this thesis, I have shown how certain sophisticated skills originated in the community. The fore fathers of the Svosve had been copper and iron miners and had mastered the skills of extracting precious minerals from the earth. In addition, complex skills such as iron smelting are believed to have existed in the Svosve community. The methods used to extract the minerals as well as smelt the minerals into tools for use by the community appear to have been complex. However, these indigenous practices and skills were affected by various colonial policies which sought to rearrange the socio- economic lives of the people while some of the practices have virtually been lost. Nevertheless, many of the practices are known to the indigenous people, although they lack the platform where they can practice these skills owing to circumstances deriving from the capitalist system which today dominates the Svosve community.

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Appendix

A: Participant Information sheet

Good day.

My name is Tatenda Sean Takawira and I am student registered for an MA Industrial Sociology at the University of Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting a research study to inquire into *the role of indigenous knowledge in agricultural production*. It is hoped that the information attained may enhance the understanding of role of indigenous knowledge systems in the field of agriculture.

I therefore wish to invite you to participate in the study. Please note your participation is voluntary and there are no financial rewards for taking part. No penalty will be levied on those who choose not to participate. Involvement in the study requires you participating in interviews of approximately forty minutes. The interviews will be scheduled at a time and place that is suitable for you.

You will not be obliged to answer questions which you are uncomfortable. Hence therefore, you have the mandate to decline or respond to questions you have been asked. You are allowed to terminate your participation at any stage of the interview. I may also visit your plots of land to observe how you farm, taking note of the tools that you use during production and how you organise your agricultural activities.

With your permission the interview will be tape recorded. I will also take down some notes during the interview process. All data collected in the interview will be treated with strict confidentiality. The tapes and interview schedules will be kept for two years following any publications or for six years if no publications emanate from the study.

Please feel free to ask questions regarding the study. I shall answer them to the best of my ability. I may be contacted on email tatendatakawira6@gmail.com or mobile +27 715 782078 / +263 736 078 785. If you feel that any of your rights have been infringed upon, or if you need any clarification concerning the project, please contact Dr Paul Stewart from the University of the Witwatersrand on the telephone number +27 83 715 5760. Should you wish to receive a summary of the results of the study an abstract will be made available.

Thank you for taking time to consider participating in the study.

Yours sincerely

Tatenda Sean Takawira

B: Participant Consent Form

- I hereby consent to participate in the research that Tatenda Sean Takawira is undertaking.
- I understand what participation in this research means.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary.
- I understand that I have the right not to answer any questions that I do not feel comfortable with.
- I have the right to withdraw my participation in the research, at any time I so choose.
- I understand that the interview will be tape recorded. If I do not desire to have this interview recorded, it is my right to tell the interviewer who will be obliged to comply.
- I understand that the interviewer will take down some notes during the interview.
- I understand that any information you share will be held in strictest confidence by the researcher.

Signed by …… on…….....at……

Signature……..

C: Interview Guide

Svosve community members

1. Name?
2. Age?
3. Sex?
4. Marital Status?
5. Are you a resident of Svosve community, if so, how long have you been resided in this community? If you are not, please specify the community in which you live as well as its geographical closeness from Svosve community?
6. Where you motivated by someone to engage in farming, or were it through individual drive? If motivated by someone, or other, please specify and explain why you decided to be a farmer?
    a. Why do you like farming?
    b. When did you start farming?
    c. What type(s) of crop(s) do you specialise in?
    d. What motivated you to specialise in particular crop(s)?
    e. Where do you get your labour requirements?
    f. Do you have any permanent workers or contract workers working in your fields? If so, what form of contracts do you agree on?
    g. How do you organise your labour force?
    h. How do you reward those who work in your fields?
    i. Do you have enough resources to reward those who help in your fields?
    j. What happens when you fail to reward those that have worked in your fields?
7. Has there been a shift in choice of crop(s) from what you produced, *for instance 15-20 years ago*, and what you are now producing? If so, what necessitated that shift?
8. Does the government encourage the farming of any type(s) of crop(s)? If so, which crops, and why?
9. What type(s) of agricultural implements do you prefer to use, and why?
    a. Are these implements readily available for access and usage by the farmers?
    b. Who is responsible for buying these implements?
    c. Does the government assist in the provision of tools to farmers?

d. Have you ever benefited from any government mechanization programme? If so, how much did you benefit?

e. Do you make use of traditional tools? If so, please specify the tool(s) and explain how you make use of these tools? Who is responsible for manufacturing such tools? How efficient are such traditional tools?

f. Which tools are better to work with, the old or the new?

g. Do you make use of electrical power?

h. Do you make use water irrigation systems?

10. Are you aware of any skills development programs from the government that target the farmer(s)? If so, briefly explain some of the skills enhancement programs that have been implemented in Svosve community in the last five to ten years, and or those that are currently in operation?

    a. Do you participate in skills development programs that have been introduced by the government? If no, please explain why you do not. If you have, please clarify whether you have benefited or not benefited from the programmes.

    b. How often do you interact with agricultural extension workers?

    c. Which methods of farming do they encourage farmers to follow?

    d. What crop(s) varieties do extension workers prefer farmers to grow?

    e. Are there any traditional crop(s) that the government extension workers encourage?

11. Overall, what are your levels of agricultural production? What crop(s) perform best, and why? What crop(s) perform worst, and why? Are there any crop(s) that you perceive to be on the rise or fall? What leads to these changes? Do you perceive the changes as positive or negative?

12. Do you observe traditional Shona rituals such as the c*hisi* (Sabbath), *bira* (night vigils), *zunde ramambo* (the chief's granary) and mukwerera (beer brewing)? If so, please specify the ritual(s) and explain its importance to your farming activities?

    a. Where do the rituals take place?

    b. Who conducts the rituals?

c. To whom are the rituals directed and why?

d. Is there any beer brewing?

e. Who brews the beer?

f. How important are the rituals to other Svosve farmers?

g. Do all farmers participate in the rituals?

h. What effects do such rituals have on agricultural production?

i. How many are traditional farmers in Svosve community? What do they produce?

j. What percentage has moved over to the 'new' system? Is there such a thing? What form does it take?

13. Do you have access to the market?

a. How far is the market from your farm?

b. What means of transport do you use to get to the market?

c. Are the roads leading to markets in good condition?

d. Do you access the market on time?

e. Who buys the produce?

f. Are the prices favourable to allow farmers to make a profit?

g. Are the commodities consumed in Svosve community, or elsewhere?

14. What challenges do you come upon when conducting your farming activities?

a. How do you cope with these challenges?

b. Is the government aware of your challenges? If so, what has the government done to curb these challenges?

c. What happens to those challenges that cannot be solved by the government?

D: Interview Guide

For Agricultural Extension Workers

1. Name?
2. Age?
3. Sex?
4. Marital Status?
5. Are you a resident of the Svosve community, if so, how long have you been resided in this community? If you are not, please indicate the community in which you reside as well as its geographical closeness from the Svosve community?
6. What role do agricultural extension workers perform in the Svosve community?
7. As agricultural extension worker(s), how often do you interact with farmers in the Svosve community?
    a. How far does your jurisdiction extend?
    b. How many colleagues are doing the same work here?
    c. What is your programme of visiting?
    d. How do you get around (means of transport)?
    e. What are your main activities?
    f. What are your main challenges?
8. What varieties of crops do farmers in the Svosve community concentrate on farming?
9. Has there been a shift from what used be produced, *for instance 25-30 years ago*, and what is now being produced? If so, what necessitated that shift?
10. Does the government encourage the farming of any type(s) of crop(s)? If so, which crops, and why?
11. Do the farmers in the Svosve community diversify into other farming ventures for example *poultry farming or animal husbandry agriculture*? If so, why do the farmers diversify?
12. What type(s) of agricultural implements do the farmers prefer to use, and why? Are these implements readily available for access and usage by the farmers?
13. How do farmers in the Svosve community get their agricultural inputs? Are they self-funded, government funded or do they have other means for obtaining agricultural implements?
14. Are there any skills development programs from the government that target the farmer(s)? If so, briefly outline some of the skills enhancement programs that have been implemented

in the Svosve community in the last five to ten years, and or those that are currently in operation?

15. How do farmers respond to skills development programs that have been introduced by the government?

16. Overall, what are the levels of agricultural production? What crop(s) perform best, and why? What crop(s) perform worst, and why? Are there any crop(s) perceived to be on the rise or fall? What leads to these changes? Do you perceive the changes as positive or negative?
17. Have farmers been observing traditional Shona rituals such as the c*hisi* (Sabbath), *bira* (night vigils), *zunde ramambo* (the chief's granary) and mukwerera (beer brewing)? Are there any rituals popular in the Svosve community? If so-
    a. Where do the rituals take place?
    b. Who conducts the rituals?
    c. How important are the rituals to the Svosve farmers?
    d. Do all farmers participate in the rituals?
    e. What effects do such rituals have on agricultural production?
    f. What percentage are still 'traditional' farmers? What do they produce?
    g. What percentage has moved over to the 'new' system? Is there such a thing? What form does it take?
18. Do farmers have access to markets?
    a. Are the farms close to the markets?
    b. What means of transport are available for farmers to use to access markets?
    c. Who buys the produce?
    d. Are the prices favourable to allow farmers to make a profit?
    e. Are the commodities consumed in the Svosve community?
19. Are there any challenges faced by agricultural extension workers and farmers and with farmers? If so-
    a. What are the challenges?
    b. How do you resolve these challenges?

E: Interview Guide

For: **Government Administrators**

1. Name?
2. Age?
3. Sex?
4. Marital Status?
5. Are you a resident of the Svosve community, if so, how long have you been resided in this community? If you are not, please specify the community in which you live as well as its geographical closeness from the Svosve community?
6. As the District Administrator, what is your role in relation to agricultural production in the Svosve community?
    a. What are your main activities in relation to agricultural production?
    b. How far does your jurisdiction extend?
    c. Does your portfolio involve the crafting of agricultural policy for the Svosve community? If so, please specify some of the agricultural policies that are currently being implemented in the Svosve community?
    d. Do members of the Svosve community participate in the crafting of agricultural policy? If top down how does it get implemented? If consultative, what form does consultation take?
    e. Has there been a shift in policy for instance, in the current policy from that of the last 25-30 years? If so, what necessitated the shift in policy?
    f. What is the government's overall vision for the future of development in this community?
    g. Who are the beneficiaries of these new agricultural policies? Is it the farmer(s), community, government or other(*please specify and explain*)
    h. How often do you interact with farmers in the Svosve communal area?
    i. What is your programme of visiting?

j. How do you get around (means of transport)?

k. What are your main challenges?

7. What varieties of crops do farmers in the Svosve community concentrate on farming?

8. Has there been a shift from what used be produced, *for instance 25-30 years ago*, and what is now being produced? If so, what necessitated that shift?

9. Does the government encourage the farming of any type(s) of crop(s)? If so, which crops, and why?

10. Do the farmers in the Svosve community diversify into other farming ventures for example *poultry farming or animal husbandry agriculture*? If so, why do the farmers diversify?

11. What type(s) of agricultural implements do the farmers prefer to use, and why? Are these implements readily available for access and usage by the farmers?

12. How do farmers in the Svosve community get their agricultural inputs? Are they self-funded, government funded or do they have other means for obtaining agricultural implements?

13. Are there any skills development programs from the government that target the farmer(s)? If so, briefly outline some of the skills enhancement programs that have been implemented in the Svosve community in the last five to ten years, and or those that are currently in operation?

14. How do farmers respond to skills development programs that have been introduced by the government?

15. Overall, what are the levels of agricultural production? What crop(s) perform best, and why? What crop(s) perform worst, and why? Are there any crop(s) perceived to be on the rise or fall? What leads to these changes? Do you perceive the changes as positive or negative?

16. Have farmers been observing traditional Shona rituals such as the c*hisi* (Sabbath), *bira* (night vigils), *zunde ramambo* (the chief's granary) and mukwerera (beer brewing)? Are there any rituals popular in the Svosve community? If so-

a. Where do the rituals take place?

b. Who conducts the rituals?

c. How important are the rituals to Svosve farmers?

d. Do all farmers participate in the rituals?

e. What effects do such rituals have on agricultural production?

f. What percentage are still ‘traditional’ farmers? What do they produce?

g. What percentage has moved over to the ‘new’ system? Is there such a thing? What form does it take?

17. Do farmers have access to markets?

a. Are the farms close to the markets?

b. Do farmers have access to markets on time?

c. What means of transport are available for farmers to use to access markets?

d. Who buys the produce?

e. Are the prices favourable to allow farmers to make a profit?

f. Are the commodities consumed in the Svosve community, or elsewhere?

18. What challenges do you come upon when conducting your responsibilities?

a. How do you cope with these challenges?

b. What mechanisms are in place to resolve the challenges?

c. What happens to those challenges that cannot be solved at District level?

F. Ethics Clearance.

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Takawira

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER H13/09/10**
PROJECT TITLE	The role of indigenous knowledge in agricultural production: case of the Svosve communal area
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Mr TS Takawira
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Social Sciences /Sociology
DATE CONSIDERED	20/09/2013
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Unconditionally
EXPIRY DATE	14/10/2015

DATE 15/10/2013 **CHAIRPERSON** (Professor T Milani)

cc: Supervisor : Dr P Stewart

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10003, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.**

_____ _____/_____/_____

Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, RURAL & URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Correspondences Should not be addressed to individuals

Telephone :- +263 79 20299
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ZIMBABWE

The Office of the Provincial Administrator

Cnr Morris Avenue/Second Street
(P.O BOX 445)
Marondera
ZIMBABWE

REFERENCE: ADM 27

4 September 2013

The District Administrator
Marondera

CLEARANCE TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH ON ROLE OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES : CASE OF SVOSVE COMMUNAL AREA: TAKAWIRA TATENDA SEAN :

Please be advised that TAKAWIRA TATENDA SEAN , a Master of Arts in Industrial Sociology Student with the Wits University has been cleared to carry out his Research as stated above in the Svosve area of Marondera.

Any assistance rendered to him would be greatly esteemed.

MUDAUTSI R.T.
FOR PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATOR
MASHONALAND EAST PROVINCE

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR MARONDERA 04 SEP 2013

04 SEP 20