

Rural Youth and Homestead Food Production Practises in Mpindweni Village, Eastern Cape

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Declaration

I, **Mbulelo Qumntu**, student number **2016041929** declare that the coursework master's degree mini-dissertation that I herewith submit for the qualification of a *Master of Development Studies* at the University of Free State is my independent work, and that I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education.

I am cognisant of the fact that plagiarism is using someone's work and presenting it as my own, and without permission and acknowledgment of the source, it is an academic offence and is punishable. I have used the Harvard Referencing System for citation and referencing. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this project from the work or works of other people has been attributed, cited and referenced.

Mbulelo Qumntu

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Abstract

Rural poverty is prevalent in developing countries like South Africa. Ill-development of rural areas coupled with a lack of assets are some of the causes of this rural poverty. Realities like hunger and food insecurity are some of the manifestations of rural poverty. This is despite the fact that rural areas are endowed with natural resources like land. Youth, being the majority demographic group, are one of the most adversely affected population groups in the rural areas. Unemployed and out of school rural youth feel the effects of this rural poverty as hunger and food security become prevalent among the rural youth.

The potential of homestead food production is hailed as an ameliorating activity for hunger and a source of food security. This is central in the rural areas where land is available. Furthermore, the availability of rural youth as an unemployed cohort could provide the much-needed human capital for the attainment of food security. Youth capabilities like energies, technology and innovation are generic youth attributes that can facilitate homestead food production.

Therefore, this study set out to explore the involvement of rural youth in homestead food production activities. It was undertaken to understand whether the rural youth as an asset are utilised for the attainment of food security as a livelihood framework outcome.

Generally, the study discovered that rural poverty is well entrenched in rural areas and that hunger is prevalent among the rural youth. The rural youth are not involved in homestead food production, and this is why hunger is widely spread among the rural population. Data gathered shows that rural youth's aspirations and ambitions are city-based. It is city-based aspirations that disassociate them from rural land-based initiatives like homestead food production.

Keywords: Rural Poverty, Rural Youth, Homestead Food Production, Hunger, Food Security, Food Insecurity and Sustainable Livelihood Framework.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Poverty continues to be a developmental challenge in the global world. This is despite the achievements recorded in places like Asia where poverty alleviation programmes have yielded the desired results (Van den Broeck & Maertens, 2017:96; Urquhart, 2018:97). This is largely due to the economic growth and economic distribution that Asian countries like China have enjoyed in recent times (World Bank, 2018:4). A totally different story is told about Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) regarding poverty eradication. It is reported that poverty has deepened in this region over the years as most of the population lives below the poverty line (Castañeda *et al.*, 2018:251).

Whilst the average poverty rate in Asia is recorded as less than 13%, it is reported to be above 41% in Sub-Saharan Africa. This Sub-Saharan percentage is expected to grow exponentially due to rapid population growth in the region (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2017:89). To this effect the World Bank (2018:5) projects that 87% of the world's poor population will be in Sub-Sahara Africa by 2030.

Most of this poor population live in rural areas in the SSA region as per Devereux (2016:55) who further asserts that 79% of the global poor live in rural areas with over 60% being from SSA. This highlights the rurality trait of poverty in the SSA region. Poverty in the region is also characterised as a youth reality, because the youth are a majority population group in the region (Efem, 2007:17; Francis & Webster, 2019:788). Their population number is projected to grow from 160 million to 245 million between the years 2015 and 2030 (Christiaensen & Brooks, 2018:10).

This majority population group suffers from multi-dimensional poverty as they are generally trapped in the ill-serviced rural space (White, 2019:144). This multi-dimensional element of poverty is, among others, manifested through hunger, general food insecurity and low employment rates (Ali *et al.*, 2018:2511). As much as these are not exclusively youth challenges, youth are still the most affected population group (Feighery *et al.*, 2011:18). Their prospects of socio-economic growth are trapped by poverty. Their human development is also adversely affected by hunger and food insecurity (Westaway,

2012:120). Food security practises like rural homestead food production have been promoted as some of the enablers of food security that subsequently alleviate poverty (Rammohan & Pritchard, 2014:598).

1.1 Aim

The aim of this study was to investigate the involvement of rural youth in homestead food security practises. The focus of the study was the youth of Mpindweni, a village in the King Sabata Dalindyebo Municipal area in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The following objectives were formulated for the study:

- Reviewed literature on rural poverty as a research problem
- Reviewed literature on rural youth as research strategy
- Reviewed literature on food security as another research strategy
- Reviewed literature on homesteading
- Conducted research on the youth of Mpindweni
- Reported on findings and recommendations

1.3 Problem Statement

Hunger is prevalent in SSA, and South Africa follows the same trend, where the rural population is the most affected (White, 2015:331). The rural youth, being the dominant population group, suffer the most from this hunger (Burchi & De Muro 2016:13). This persistent hunger turns the spotlight on food security among the rural youth (Christiaensen & Brooks, 2018:8).

Most of the South African population access food by purchasing it. In their study Dodd and Nyabvudzi (2014:117) observe that many South African households depend on purchased food for their consumption. With youth unemployment reported to be extremely high in South Africa, this can only mean that South African youth are struggling to access food (Statistics South Africa, 2019:4). The South African youth unemployment

rate amongst 15 to 24-year-olds is reported to be at 59% in the first quarter of 2020 (Statistics South Africa, 2020:12). The same youth group is profiled as a group with capabilities necessary and appropriate for homestead food production (White, 2019:2115). They also have their homestead land as an asset that is readily available for food production.

In this study rural poverty was identified as an umbrella developmental problem, with persistent hunger as one of its manifestations among the rural population, especially the rural youth. Because of the general rural poverty and youth unemployment, rural youth find it difficult to access food. Alternative and creative means of availing and accessing food becomes critical in this reality of cash scarcity. This research sought to understand the involvement of the rural youth in food security practises as alternative solutions to the hunger and general poverty problem.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the study was dedicated to a review of literature, providing a theoretical framework and background to this study that was aimed at investigating rural youth's involvement in homestead food security activities. The theoretical framework was built by exploring rural poverty, rural youth and food security.

2.1 Rural poverty

There is no universally acceptable definition of what a rural place is. All that exists are interlinking descriptive characteristics used to define what a rural centre is (Okumbor *et al.*, 2018:446; Adato *et al.*, 2006:229). Rural centres tend to be remote, and far removed from economic centres. Selepe and Mtyingizane (2015:9) assert that one of the ramifications of this remoteness is backwardness and underdevelopment of the rural areas.

The above sentiment is amplified by writers like Uleanya and Omoniyi (2019:140), who argue that the entrenchment of ill-development in the majority of rural areas has led to a total collapse of rural life. This collapse is caused and exacerbated by the lack of vital rural resources and services (Kaneene *et al.*, 2015:97). A lack of access to resources like clean and healthy water has been identified as a core problem for many rural areas (Moyo, 2013:5157). Insufficiency of health and education services has also been highlighted as part of the core of the underdevelopment of the rural areas.

Gillis *et al.*, (2001:89) uphold that poverty is a state of lack or deficiency of essential enablers of human wellbeing. Resources facilitate and reinforce the state of wellbeing for the individual and the community. The presence of resources such as road networks, community based primary health, well-resourced and rural based industrial parks like agro-processing plants and education facilities would bring about an achievement of sustainable livelihoods (Lausund, 2017:65). Livelihoods are defined as the reality where individuals and households are able combine their assets, resources and capabilities to achieve a better state of life (Msutwana *et al.*, 2019:156). Livelihoods become sustainable

when the individual or household is able to achieve this state of wellbeing continuously over a lengthy period. Poverty can be understood as the disintegration of the livelihoods of the people, due to the lack of assets (Kabbani, 2019:75).

Lack of assets can be severe in rural areas to an extent that the rural poor have no access to minimum cash for consumption. Universally acceptable minimum cash is \$1.25 per day per person (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2020:10). In South Africa the minimum wage is set at R20 per person per day (Statistics South Africa, 2019:17). Minimum cash has been used to determine the poverty line, a threshold that classifies the poor and non-poor (Francis & Webster, 2019:790). Any person below this threshold is deemed poor (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, 2020:17). Other poverty-defining elements like being voiceless and powerless, illiteracy, food insecurity and hunger have been cited as manifestations of poverty (Christiaensen & Brooks, 2018:8).

When the poor are in what Chambers (1983:114) calls a deprivation trap, they are deemed to be chronically poor. Chronic poverty covers the longevity of the experience of poverty for a person or individual. A person/household is termed chronically poor when poverty has been experienced over a lengthy period (Ali *et al.*, 2018:2513). The experience has been severe over this extended period to an extent that the person/household can only exit poverty through external help. The opposite of this is episodic poverty where a person/household periodically moves in and out of poverty (Francis & Webster, 2019:791).

2.1.1 International perspective of rural poverty

The total population of the world is 7.9 billion people as per 2019 figures (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, (2020:11). This figure is projected to rise to 8.5 billion by the year 2030. This population is polarised and has brought to the fore the inequalities that exist between the developing and developed regions of the world (Baro & Deubel, 2006:521). The more industrialised developing regions have enjoyed a sustained period of economic growth and prosperity. On the other hand the developing regions have seen stagnation in matters of development, to the detriment of their

populations (Ali *et al.*, 2018:2513). The disparities are mediums through which the poverty narratives of the two regions are told.

In the developed regions of the world, rural areas are utilised as food baskets of their respective countries. Literature shows that in developed regions, rural areas are optimally used to secure food and further boost the economy (World Bank, 2018:68; Kaneene *et al.*, 2015:99; Boetemma *et al.*, 2018:275). Large industries like agri-processing plants that are located in the rural areas, do not only provide food for the nations, but also create sustainable employment for the rural population. Industrial operations further contribute to the establishment and maintenance of the rural infrastructure, like roads. Thus, rural areas are brought to the centre of the economic development of the country (Rogan, 2018:92).

Places like China and India are considered examples of food production successes. Through their massive agricultural initiatives that targeted the rural population, these two countries were able to massively curb hunger and drastically reduce the numbers of the rural poor (Xu & Yu 2014:50; Kabbani, 2019:19). Their pro-poor strategies put the rural poor at the centre of development.

Another case example is Moldova, a European country with a population of 2658 million, 60% percent of whom are rural dwellers according to 2016 figures. Through its rural transformation strategy, Moldova has managed to reduce its rural poverty rate from 70% to 30% over a period of 10 years (Baro & Deubel, 2006:523). The key to their rural transformation strategy is the creation of resilient rural livelihoods through diversified sustainable agricultural practises (Lausund, 2017:68). Another important part of the strategy is the utilisation of dominant and capable rural demographic groups, like the youth. It is said that the youth's involvement has accelerated the achievement of sustainable livelihoods (Kabbani, 2019:18).

The cases presented show that sustained investment in rural areas and lives has yielded positive results for the developed regions of the world. Desolate areas have been transformed into thriving economic hubs to the benefit of the rural population (Megbowon & Mushunie, 2018:240). Furthermore, rural populations are on course to achieving the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 1 and 2 (John, 2014:89). A concerted effort is being made to end poverty in all its forms. In addition, hunger is being eliminated due to revitalisation of rural centres, as they are being turned to the service of food security where nutrition and sustainable agriculture is promoted (Kabbani, 2019:19).

The sustained development of the rural areas has contributed to the overall transformation of the rural areas of the developed regions. This results in low rural poverty rates as shared prosperity drastically eliminates rural poverty (Francis & Webster, 2019:789). The international perspective of rural poverty is that of revitalisation of rural areas by capitalising on their innate resources. Revitalisation is successful through the mobilisation of rural resources (people and natural resources) for the development of the rural centre and the elimination of poverty in all its forms and manifestations (Boetemma *et al.*, 2018:277).

2.1.2 African perspective of rural poverty

Africa is home to 1.3 billion people and this number is expected to rise fast due to the rapid growth of the African population (World Bank, 2018:70). It is estimated that over 50% of this population lives below the international acceptable poverty line (Christiaensen & Brooks, 2018:8).

A large concentration of poverty is reported in the rural areas. Underdevelopment of Africa, which is seen in its large rural areas, is cited as a major contributing factor of Africa's rural poverty (Mekore & Yaekob, 2018:23; World Health Organization, 2007:55). This underdevelopment is attributed to a range of factors like the colonial past, conflicts, famine, and corruption (Madzivhandila, 2014:89). A general lack of interest and investment in rural areas has been observed by scholars like Van den Broeck and Maertens (2017:100) who have indicated that this lack of investment has led to low rural economic growth. The lack of a vibrant rural economy has led to the rural population's dependency on urban centres for survival, but even this is challenged by poor rural road networks (Bezu & Holden, 2014:260).

The development deficiencies highlighted above have rendered the African rural populations to be socially, economical, and politically excluded. This exclusion further leads to marginalisation. Unlike the rural areas from the developed regions that are vibrant economic centres, African rural areas are places of desolation and marginalisation (Suttie, 2019:94). Crucial rural economic growth has always been an elusive reality for most of the African rural population. They have been left behind and have not had a meaningful share in the growth of their respective countries (Campos *et al.*, 2018:8).

Exclusion of rural areas from growth and development is a major cause of rural poverty in Africa. A high concentration of economic resources in urban centres causes an imbalance in prosperity sharing and that pushes rural poverty numbers up (Urquhart, 2018:10; Christiaensen & Brooks, 2018:18). The exclusion of rural areas also means that a majority population group is at risk of sliding into extreme poverty, and being vulnerable to future poverty. This creates what Castaneda *et al.*, (2018:255) defines as structural perpetuation of chronic poverty. This is a reality where future rural generations will be born into poverty and experience the same, if not worse, poverty reality (Ali *et al.*, 2018:251). A further exposition of rural exclusion is provided below in Section 2.1.4. on rural poverty in the Eastern Cape.

Another defining factor of African rural poverty is the dependence of rural population on subsistence farming. This element has been identified as a critical activity in the lives of the African rural population (Madzivhandila, 2014:89). For a long time, the African rural population has practised localised food production, and their livelihoods have largely been dependent on it (Tyenjana & Taruvinga, 2019:375). However, factors like climate change and ageing population have led to a decline in agricultural productivity, causing the rural population to be vulnerable to poverty (World Bank, 2018:20; Uleanya & Omoniyi, 2019:160). Kabbani (2019:18) agrees with Van den Broeck and Maertens (2017:100) in upholding that a collapse of agricultural activities impoverishes the vulnerable African rural population. They further maintain that a lack of innovation, energetic farming population and adaptability has largely contributed to this unfortunate collapse.

The African rural poverty reality brings to the fore the issue of attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2. Like all the regions of the world, Africa must end poverty in all its forms by the year 2030. Furthermore, Africa must eliminate hunger and attain food security by improving nutrition and sustainable agriculture (Ali *et al.*, 2018:2513). The World Bank (2018:37) observes that the current poverty rate of 50% of African rural households casts firm doubt on Africa's effort to achieve SDG goal 1. Africa has seen a decline in household income, especially among the rural African population (Khatiwada *et al.*, 2017:6). This decline, coupled with a weak asset base has stalled Africa's journey towards achieving SDG goal 2. Unless Africa intensifies its rural transformation and development, hunger will not be eliminated by 2030 (Madzivhandila, 2014:89).

This suggests that poverty is an entrenched reality in rural Africa. This means that Africa's perspective of rural poverty is that of rural disempowerment and ill-development (Van den Broeck & Maertens, 2017:100). This needs to be addressed vigorously and multi-dimensionally. If this continues unabated, Africa will not only fail to achieve SDG goal 1 and 2, but will also pass this reality to future generations (Selepe *et al.*, 2015:11). Again, a general lack of diversified rural household livelihood strategies decelerates Africa's efforts of achieving set goals.

2.1.3 South African perspective of rural poverty

South Africa instituted its democratic dispensation in 1994 and subsequently adopted a constitution in 1996. This constitution has been hailed as one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, largely because of its socio-economic tone (Uleanya & Omoniyi, 2019:143). It strongly asserts that South Africa is a developmental state and thus affirms the socio-economic rights of its citizens, whilst launching the developmental trajectory of the country (Msutwana *et al.*, 2019:165). Services such as housing, health care, provision of water and food security services are developmental rights stated in the constitution. Development is therefore at the heart of constitutional foundational principles of South Africa (Adato *et al.*, 2016:66).

Constitutional foundations informed the subsequent development policies of the country like the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) and, most recently, the National Development Plan (NDP) (Baloyi & Geyer, 2019:13970). The approaches of the policies may vary, but the pronouncement of the problem of rural poverty is common in all of them. It is this pronouncement that gives a perspective of rural poverty in South Africa (Uleanya & Omoniyi, 2019:143). According to Mutyeniyoka *et al.*, (2017:8), through the mentioned policies the government does acknowledge that a significant proportion of the South African population are rural dwellers who are grappling with poverty, despite the fact that South Africa is 65% urbanised. Therefore, the overarching spirit of this legislative and policy framework is that of prioritising the elimination of poverty and inequality in the quest of achieving a better life for the people (Statistics South Africa, 2017:6).

A roll-out of free basic services like water, housing, education and primary healthcare is evident in the government's endeavour to uplift the lives of the rural people as per its constitutional mandate (Suttie, 2019:11). Ngumbela *et al.*, (in press:96) accentuate that government efforts have facilitated a degree of a better life for the majority of the rural population. The subsidies that have served as a form of social wage have provided social protection and safety nets for the rural population (Megbowon & Mushunie, 2018:236).

Through the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, South Africa continues its pronounced intention to develop the wellbeing of the rural population. Through its Comprehensive Rural Development Programme, the Department aims to build vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities (Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, 2020:8). Communal initiatives like co-operatives are encouraged by the Department with the hope that they will create economically vibrant communities and sustainable rural households (Adato *et al.*, 2006:227). Job creation, wealth redistribution and food security are among the envisaged outcomes of communal initiatives.

A lack of co-operation, insufficient funding, access to markets and internal squabbles have been cited as some of the challenges faced by communal establishments (Francis & Webster, 2019:791). In their appraisal of such initiatives, Ngumbela *et al.*, (2019:17) are of the opinion that the challenges outweigh their successes. This limited success implies that there is a general struggle in achieving the intended goals of such initiatives, to the detriment of the already impoverished rural households (Msutwana *et al.*, 2019:165).

Social grants are another resource that were instituted for the mitigation of the plight of rural poverty in South Africa. Grants for child support, disability and old age have been a source of cash income not only for the recipients, but also for those associated with them (Selepe *et al.*, 2015:9). The contribution of social grants in the fight against poverty has been immense, especially within the rural population of South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2017:8). This immense contribution is attested by the fact that 18 million of the 56 million South Africans are recipients of social grants (Madzivhandila, 2014:90).

From their perspective, however, Dube *et al.*, (2018:38) caution that due to the severity of vulnerability of rural households, social grants are insufficient for many of the households. The over-reliance on grants and the soaring food prices have been cited as one of the causes of insufficiency of the grants (Francis & Webster, 2019:795). Msutwana *et al.*, (2019:155), extends the discourse by citing cost of living, non-diversified rural household's livelihood strategies and big household's population numbers as factors that strain the social grants.

Rural poverty is still an extensive and intensive reality in South Africa, despite all of the government's efforts (Francis & Webster, 2019:791). For example, poverty increased from 53% to 55% in the period between 2011 and 2015 (Statistics South Africa, 2017:14). The intensity of poverty is indicated by the fact that the rural poor experience a serious deficiency of resources and assets that are necessary for attainment of reasonable standards of wellbeing (Dube *et al.*, 2018:38). Zulu and Mubangizi (2014:425), argue that the interplay of poverty, unemployment and inequality has

entrenched poverty in rural South Africa especially among black women, children and youth.

The perspective of rural poverty in South Africa is that of deep rural underdevelopment that has caused and perpetuated this rural poverty (Ajuruchukwu & Sanelise, 2016:517). Whilst the government has come up with initiatives to reduce rural poverty, the desired developmental results have not been yielded (Statistics South Africa, 2017:88). This non-achievement of the developmental targets like inclusive growth has led to a total socio-economic exclusion of the biggest portion of the population, namely the rural population (Statistics South Africa, 2019:5).

The same non-achievement of desired results caused South Africa to fall below its constitutional development targets (Moyo, 2013:5153). Kabbani (2019:20) opines that even the Sustainable Development Goals will be difficult to attain. This is because poverty and hunger are still prevalent and deeply rooted in the majority of the population of the country. Rural poverty continues to grow exponentially in South Africa, despite the varied poverty alleviation initiatives of the government (Nesengani *et al.*, 2016:114).

2.1.4 Rural poverty in the Eastern Cape Province

The Eastern Cape Province is one of the nine provinces in the Republic of South Africa. It was established with the dawn of democracy by amalgamating the former Ciskei, Transkei and parts of regions that were known as South African regions (Hajdu *et al.*, 2020:748). Both the Ciskei and Transkei were independent states known as homelands during the apartheid regime. Rural poverty in the Eastern Cape is an important perspective in this study because it is the provincial setting for this research as Mpindweni village in the King Sabata Dalindyebo Local Municipality is in the Eastern Cape. This section will deal with the Eastern Cape provincial perspective of rural poverty.

The Eastern Cape Province, being a predominantly rural province, has a population of about 6 million people (Msutwana *et al.*, 2019:155). In terms of national poverty statistics of 2017, the Eastern Cape Province has the biggest share of poverty statistics (Statistics South Africa, 2017:150). It takes a 24% share of the national poverty

count (Mutuyenyoka *et al.*, 2017:3). Taking a closer look at the extent of poverty in the province, Msutwana *et al.*, (2019:157) and Statistics South Africa (2019:138) report that over 68% of the population are chronically poor, and that the largest percentages are in the former homelands, namely Transkei and Ciskei. The poverty growth trajectory is set to increase over time, thus worsening the state of wellbeing among the majority of the population in the province (Adato *et al.*, 2006:230). The province has had a sustained increase in poverty numbers over the years (King Sabata Dalindyebo Municipality, 2016:128).

Over-reliance on cash for consumption, high food prices, unemployment and the exclusion of dominant demographic groups, like the rural youth, in socio-economic initiatives are cited as some of the peculiar causes of rural poverty in the Eastern Cape (Hajdu *et al.*, 2020:748). From a national perspective, the income inequality reported by the Statistics South Africa 2019 Report, indicate that cash assets are mainly concentrated on minority urban population groups in affluent parts of the country (Statistics South Africa, 2019:6). The majority rural population groups, like those found in the Eastern Cape, grapple with a lack of cash assets, a reality that exacerbates rural poverty.

The lack of assets such as cash has a direct negative impact on the rural livelihoods of the people of the Eastern Cape. Since assets are a pivotal ingredient in the pursuit of livelihoods, their absence leads to the failure of achieving livelihoods (Mutuyenyoka *et al.*, 2017:3). This failure in turn renders the rural population vulnerable (Westaway, 2012:120). Studies like Woolard and Klassen (2005:867); Rogan (2018:95) and Msutwana *et al.*, (2019:156) uphold that vulnerability is one of the characteristics of rural poverty in the Eastern Cape. The narrative of rural poverty in the Eastern Cape is that of 56% of the population are poor. Furthermore, this number is expected to grow in future to 62%, meaning that a greater portion of the population is exposed to a future decline of wellbeing (Msutwana *et al.*, 2019:157; Hajdu *et al.*, 2020:747).

The province has had its poverty alleviation programmes driven by the Provincial Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform. The Department has food security as one of its objectives (Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural

Development, 2020:18). Through its programmes, especially the food security programme, the Department aims to address rural poverty in the province. Added to that is the Eastern Cape Rural Development Agency, whose main aim is the provision of sustainable development for the rural communities of the Eastern Cape (Eastern Cape Rural Development Agency, 2019:10). Its strategic focus is the upliftment of the people through meaningful partnerships and government initiatives aimed at addressing rural poverty in the province.

Despite efforts, the rural population of the Eastern Cape is still the majority poorest population in South Africa. Francis and Webster (2019:790), accentuate that rural women, children and the youth are the biggest affected demographic groups. Even programmes like Siyazondla that were designed to promote communal gardens for food security could not bring about the desired results. Such programmes are not widespread to match the extent of rural poverty in the province (De Cock *et al.*, 2013:270; Adato *et al.*, 2006:227).

2.2 Description of the youth

The youth age is classified as an age of transition from childhood to adulthood. Youth transition denotes a move from a state of dependency to independence (Giuliani *et al.*, 2017:871). The start and end of this age is debated within development circles. The United Nations classify the youth age as from 14-25 (Van den Broeck & Maertens, 2017:35), whilst the African Union and South Africa classify the youth stage from 15-35 (Kristensen, 2013:177). White (2019:23) upholds that the meaning of youth as a stage largely depends on the perception and description of the society. Independence is seen by the society as a level of actualisation of the person's potential (Uleanya & Omoniyi, 2019:48). Whoever reaches this level of actualisation is, therefore, socially considered as having transited the level of the youth. Actualisation is attained through responsible and productive actions that in turn have a positive impact on the society (Westaway, 2012:116).

Owen & Goldin (2015:544) mention agency, connectivity and productivity as defining qualities of the youth. Agency is when young people take ownership of their life and development. They connect with people, the economy and the environment to

produce a prosperous life. Stecklov and Menashe-Oren (2019:41) postulate that this youth trajectory leads to youth being a resourceful cohort in the development of their communities. This youth resourcefulness is the subject of discussion in this section of the study. A sustainable livelihood framework will be used in dealing with the rural youth as an asset in the attainment of food security through homestead food production activities. This clarification is necessary given the focus on rural youth in this dissertation.

2.2.1 Sustainable livelihoods framework as a poverty amelioration strategy

Emerging formally in the 1980s, livelihood is a developmental concept that deals with people’s activities and initiatives in trying to make a living. It is about people’s efforts in the quest of not only surviving, but also attaining and improving their lives (Chambers, 1987:11). Proponents of this school of thought uphold that livelihood is attained when capabilities, assets/resources are explored and utilised (Chambers & Conway, 1992:5). Assets and resources are explored and utilised through an engagement with processes and activities in a particular context to attain a living (Scoones, 2009:181). This livelihood is further termed or classified as sustainable when it can withstand external challenges like droughts and loss of income. Livelihood is also sustainable when it can last for a longer period for the benefit of future generations (Chambers, 1987:12).

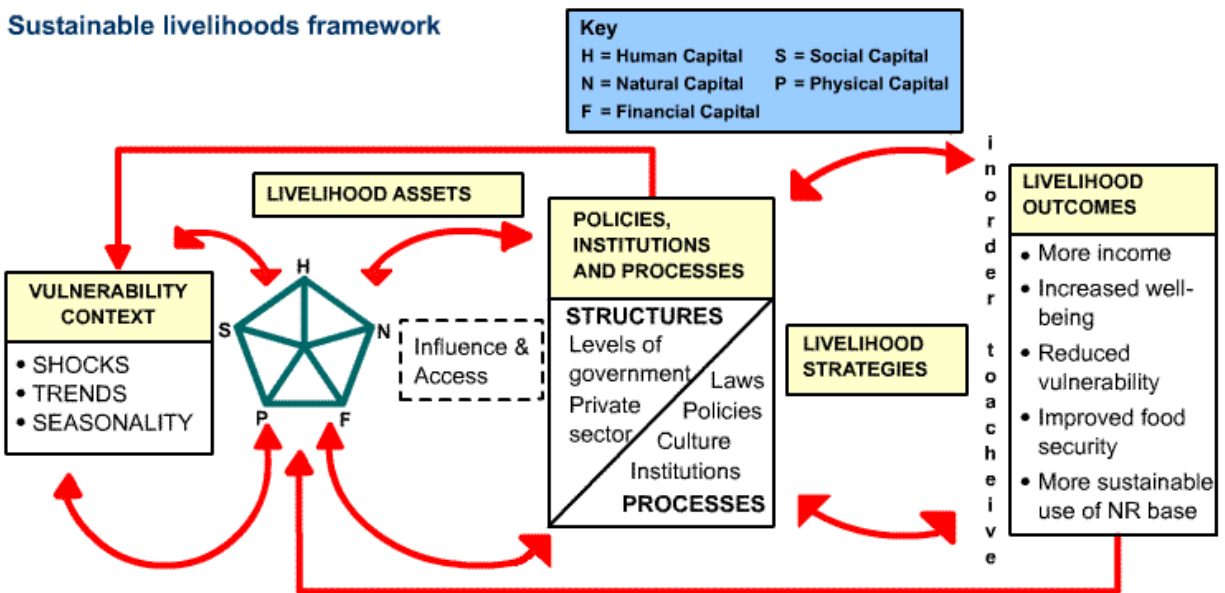


Figure 1: Sustainable livelihoods framework (Campos et al., 2018:11)

Figure 1 depicts the narrative of the sustainable livelihood framework. The outcomes of the framework are mainly an improvement of the quality of life of the people. Improved quality of life is attained through the utilisation of assets combined with processes and activities (Tyenjana & Taruvinga, 2019:375). Shocks and seasonal variations test this quality of life, and it only becomes sustainable if resilience to obstacles is shown over a long period of time (Megbowon & Mushunie, 2018:240). Among the assets that are utilised is the human capital, and improved food security is among the outcomes of the framework. For the purpose of this research work, rural youth will be explored in relation to them being a human capital asset. Furthermore, food security will also be reviewed as an outcome of the framework.

2.2.2 Rural youth as a human capital asset

Innovation, exuberance, courage and technology are intrinsic qualities of the youth stage and are of critical importance in the development discourse (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2019:22). Through technology-based innovation, cutting-edge and appropriate solutions emerge for the betterment of human society and are energetically implemented against all odds with unrelenting vigour through exuberance and courage. This is one of the outcomes of utilisation of the youth in the development process (Giuliani *et al.*, 2017:5).

Giuliani *et al.*, (2017:876) postulates that the development context is a fast-growing reality, therefore there is always a need to have development solutions that are prompt and appropriate. Prompt solutions enable the development environment to remain relevant and resilient. According to Rogan (2018:95), the youth is better positioned to play a critical role in this fast-growing development reality. Due to the transitional nature and flexibility that is innate in this stage, the youth can easily play a pivotal role in the development context.

Innovative thinking, learning and experimenting are all closely linked with risk taking, and all are integral parts of the youth stage. Such qualities further entrench the youth as potential agents of development (Majee *et al.*, 2019:11). With development being a learning and error reality, the youth can play a massive role due to their appetite for

experimenting and learning (White, 2015:333). Therefore, the youth, including rural youth, is capable, due to innate capabilities, of being protagonists of development (White, 2019:114).

A combination of the youth capabilities with natural capital like land and social capital such as household co-operation can bring about a livelihood strategy in the form of a household food production activity (Megbowon & Mushunie, 2018:240). This strategy can bear an outcome in the form of improved food security. For this to happen there has to be a spirit of activism and agency among the youth (White, 2019:115).

In their study Baloyi and Geyer (2019:13972) are of the view that the majority of the rural youth in South Africa are left behind on development initiatives - they are an unutilised asset (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2017:3). Rural land-based development initiatives like agriculture have been hailed as sources of subsistence and livelihood in Africa and in South Africa (Majee *et al.*, 2019:15). However, the lack of involvement of the youth in such activities has been reported as one of the deterring elements (Anyidoho *et al.*, 2012:17; Ngumbela *et al.*, 2019:19 (in press)). This lack deprives the development process of the youth's innovative thinking and necessary exuberance (Baloyi & Geyer, 2019:13972).

Generally, livelihood is driven by both internal factors in the form of aspirations and external factors in the form of labour market and food prices (Hajdu *et al.*, 2020:745). South African rural youth have their dreams and aspirations disassociated with their rural settings. They dwell in rural settings whilst their hopes are pinned on a move to the urban centres (Proctor & Lucchesi, 2012:23; Majee *et al.*, 2017:11). They identify the actualisation of their potential and dreams in the city life, as they perceive cities as centres of prosperity and growth (Anyidoho *et al.*, 2012:15). Their rural underdevelopment disengages their dreams with their rural homesteads. Kristensen and Birch-Thomsen (2013:180) and Giuliani *et al.*, (2017:871) emphasise that the discord between the rural youth's aspirations and their rural setting, is one of the reasons why the rural youth are disengaged with land-based rural activities like food production. The majority of the South

African rural youth aspire to employment and life in the urban centres (National Youth Development Agency, 2005:39; Hajdu *et al.*, 2020:743).

2.3 Food Security as an outcome of sustainable livelihood framework

The sustainable livelihood framework is a trajectory from a vulnerable context to a state of wellness with specific focus on the abilities and strengths of people to facilitate this change (Kumar, 2010:34; Alkire & Robles, 2017:87). One of the outcomes of this framework is improved food security. The study will now turn to food security as one of the outcomes of the sustainable livelihood framework.

Food has a foundational contribution in the attainment of a healthy human life and general wellbeing. A lack of food contributes to ill-health and decreased productivity, and limits chances of utilising development opportunities (Mekore & Yaekob, 2018:29). The securing of food becomes a critical process in the development of the people. This is because food fuels the human development process (Hajdu *et al.*, 2020:744). Food is also an outcome of the development process. For instance, a young person involved in crop production will need food consumption for energy to carry out the crop production process (Kabbani, 2019:66). The outcome of this is crops that are ready to be consumed by the same young person to have energy to produce more crops. In this way food is both the enabler and the outcome of this development process (Megbowon & Mushunie, 2018:237).

The concept of food security was first introduced in the development discourse in 1976 during the global food crisis. It was later coined and defined by the World Food Summit 1996 as a reality that:

...exists when all people at all times have physical and economical access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life style. (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/FAO, 2001:111).

This definition denotes the following elements with regards to food: insecurity, availability, access, utilisation and stability.

2.3.1 Food insecurity

Definition: A situation where an individual/household struggles to access healthy food for their welfare (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2001:134; Oldewage-Theron *et al.*, 2006:798). Viewing food insecurity from a sustainable livelihood perspective, Battersby (2012:13) upholds that food insecurity ranges from being a cause to being an outcome of vulnerability. Lack of nutritious food deteriorates human wellbeing, a situation that leads to non-productivity, which in turn negatively affects food security (Megbowon & Mushunie, 2018:237; Devereux & Waidler, 2017:67). Building on this argument, Rogan (2018:95) postulates that non-productivity is a combination of lack of assets and utilisation of assets and resources, which leads to the undesirable outcome of food insecurity.

Effects: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2017:5) mentions malnutrition and hunger as other foundational and definitive elements of food insecurity. Due to lack of quality food, food insecure individuals resort to low-quality food, which leads to malnutrition (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2017:15). On the other hand, hunger emanates from lack of access to sufficient food. The food consumed by food insecure people is inadequate, thus creating a situation of hunger (Selepe *et al.*, 2015:9).

Economic factors like low cash income and physical factors like non-utilisation of available land have been cited as some of the food insecurity contributing factors (Ngumbela *et al.*, 2019:15). Food insecure people are unable to secure their preferred food and rather settle for any food, even low nutrition food types. Rogan (2018:91) stresses that food insecurity is also associated with a lack of food choice. A food insecure individual/household cannot choose the preferred, or the generally acceptable, healthy food (Selepe *et al.*, 2015:11).

Prevalence: Food insecurity is a global development challenge, as 25.9% of the global population experience hunger and do not have regular access to nutritious and sufficient food (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2017:60). Further, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2019:61) reports

that the prevalence of food insecurity is in the low-income countries of the world. Over 815 million people are said to be affected by hunger and malnutrition in Africa. Food insecurity is widely reported in rural households of South Africa. Statistics South Africa (2019:7) reported that 6.8 million people suffered from hunger and 10.4 million did not have access to food in South Africa according to the 2017 General Household Survey. In its 2019 report on development indicators, the Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Council (Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Council, 2019:17) shows that 53% of the provincial population is food insecure due to rampant rural poverty in the Eastern Cape.

The Eastern Cape scenario prevails despite the fact that South Africa has been termed food secure on the national front (Ngumbela *et al.*, 2019:19; Rogan & Reynolds, 2017:100). An interaction between poverty, unemployment and food insecurity has been recorded in populous provinces like the Eastern Cape (Statistics South Africa, 2019:10) with a resultant struggle to feed their population. The devastating effects of this failure are felt by vulnerable demographic groups like women, children and the youth. Food insecurity then finds its local expression and amplification with such groups, and is an indication of lack of utilisation of assets like land (Mutyenyoaka *et al.*, 2017:11).

2.3.3 Food availability

Food availability is food at the disposal of the people to access and utilise sustainably for a healthy and productive lifestyle. This food must be produced for it to be at the disposal of the people (Scoones, 2009:171). Furthermore, it must be supplied and equitably distributed. Therefore, production and equitable distribution of adequate nutritious food is at the centre of food availability (Selepe *et al.*, 2015:9). Food, being a human fundamental need, has to be available all the time for human survival (Phiri, 2009:20). The food availability and population nexus are therefore foundational in any development discourse. Growth in population inevitably magnifies the need for growth in food supply (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2017:11).

On the international front, the world is said to be producing enough food for its population. This is despite weather challenges that have been brought about by climate change (Rogan & Reynolds, 2018:6). Africa's potential of being a bread basket for its

bulging population has been cited, however, adverse weather conditions that have led to droughts and famines are crippling the realisation of this potential (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2001:15). The non-realisation of this potential has also been attributed to conflicts and wars that have ravaged some parts of the continent. South Africa is regarded as a food producing country, to an extent that it exports some of its produce like maize (Statistics South Africa, 2019:19). Provinces like the Eastern Cape are profiled as green provinces due to their fertile lands that are conducive for food production (Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Council, 2012:119).

In addressing the importance of food availability through its Food and Nutrition Security Policy, the South African government highlights the potential positive impact of household food production - also known as homestead food production (Department of Agriculture, 2017:9). Household food production is profiled as a safety net for the household by the household. It is a localised means of producing food, where household assets like human capital (household members), physical (land and water) and financial (from salaries and remittances) are utilised to produce food (Boatemma *et al.*, 2018:267). The main aim of this localised food production enterprise is household consumption for the upkeep and sustenance of the household.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2020:87) avers that the focus of household food production is not just a strategy by a transformative initiative for the developing countries. It is argued that the same households are currently experiencing hunger and starvation due to the high incidence of poverty in the developing world (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2017:5). To focus on food production within poor households would be to transform their poverty status and would be tantamount to setting them up on a development trajectory (Rogan, 2018:97).

This is the same trend that is reported in the Statistics South Africa report on poverty trends of 2019, where rural households involved in agriculture have been reported as food secure (Statistics South Africa, 2019:11). However, the report also cites that there has been a decline of such households since 2016. Ageing of the population involved in household activities of provision has been mentioned as one of the reasons behind the

decline (Boatemma *et al.*, 2018:279). Furthermore, unfavourable weather conditions, especially disturbed rainfalls, have also been highlighted as one the challenges. This decline in the prevalence of household food production among rural households leads to non-productive households, which perpetuates the vicious rural poverty cycle (Selepe *et al.*, 2015:89). Studies by Rukuni (2002); De Cock *et al.*, (2013); Burchi and De Muro (2016) strongly recommend the resuscitation of household food production. They further suggest that the utilisation of the youth as an available, capable human capital can make the households achieve food security as a sustainable livelihood outcome (Rukuni, 2002:3446; De Cock *et al.*, 2013:271; Burchi & De Muro 2016:17).

2.3.4 Food access

Food access is a reality where the population can acquire the available food for their consumption. This depends on the population's capacity to afford the kind of food they prefer for their wellbeing (Burchi & De Muro, 2016:15). It is further enabled when the population has the necessary resources to acquire this food. They can access it by utilising their produce or by purchasing it, or both (De Cock *et al.*, 2013:271). As suggested above, food access for human development is an overarching principle in the development discourse. It is for this reason that the nations of the world have made it a development agenda item in the 2030 Development Goals (Burchi & De Muro, 2016:13).

As clarified above, access to food is a constitutional principle in South Africa, including the right of all citizens to access quality and nutritious food (Ngumbela *et al.*, 2019:19). However, the ripple effects of poverty, inequality and unemployment have led to 53% of the South African population being declared food poor according to the 2019 Statistics South Africa report (Statistics South Africa, 2019:47). The identified triple developmental challenges have led to the inability to acquire even the basic food consumables for the majority of the population.

The lack of access to food is prevalent among low-income rural populations located in poverty-stricken provinces like the Eastern Cape. Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Council (ECSEC) (2019:18), reports that the population of the Eastern Cape largely depends on cash resources like salaries and social grants to access food through

purchase. The implications of high unemployment rate means, that the majority of the population is unable to access food. This is particularly true of the youth who are the dominant demographic group in the province (Msutwana *et al.*, 2019:157).

2.3.5 Food utilisation

This is a reality where available food is accessed and utilised by the human person for all livelihood activities. This is about the human body making use of nutrients from healthy food to enable it to grow to its full potential (Conceição *et al.*, 2016:7). This magnifies the role of food in human health. Quality food contributes immensely in the achievement of human health, which in turn leads to the development of the person (Rukuni, 2002:3448). The intersectionality of food and other development elements like clean water and dignified sanitation are also put under the spotlight by food utilisation (Devereux & Waidler, 2017:111). This is because food utilisation depends on multiple elements for it to achieve the intended purpose of human health and human development (Selepe *et al.*, 2015:89).

Utilisation of healthy food enables the human body to be a healthy and energetic asset to the economic production cycle. Food nutrients not only heal and develop the body, but they also capacitate it to function optimally in the economic cycle (Devereux, 2016:55). An optimal functioning human body leads to the achievement of livelihood outcomes like food security. In this way food utilisation launches the economic ecosystem where human beings are enriched to produce more (Ngumbela *et al.*, 2019:19).

2.3.6 Food stability

Food stability is achieved when the available food is accessed and utilised in a sustainable fashion (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, 2020:11). Sustainability is achieved when all three facets (availability, access and utilisation) are able to withstand shocks that come through loss of income and natural calamities like droughts and pandemics (Devereux & Waidler, 2017:34). This calls for responsible utilisation of available resources, especially land and water. Reckless usage of such resources leads to general instability with direct implications on food security (Hajdu *et*

al., 2020:745). It is therefore incumbent on the current generation to engage in food security activities, whilst being mindful of the needs of the future generations.

The topic of food stability also highlights the importance of the uninterrupted supply of food. This uninterrupted supply is possible when a culture of productivity is promoted among the food consumers, especially the vulnerable (De Cock *et al.*, 2013:273). It becomes possible when dominant demographic groups like the youth are active agents of food production. The centrality of the youth in achieving food stability is also evident in the fact that they are the future household and community leaders (Burchi & De Muro, 2016:19). When they are groomed into this food production culture, they easily carry this into their adult life (Conceição *et al.*, 2016:20).

Climate change that leads to adverse fluctuations in weather patterns has a direct negative impact on food production stability (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, 2020:17). This calls for adaptability on the side of food producers so as to respond to weather changes, a response that is aimed at achieving stability and resilience of food production (Baro & Deubel, 2006:525). Adaptability can be achieved, among other things, through technologically innovative advances in food production (Burchi & De Muro, 2016:18). The youth can play a pivotal role in this technological innovation as they have an affinity for technology. In this way the involvement of the youth in the food production process can advance food stability (Feighery *et al.*, 2011:12; Owen & Goldin, 2015:541). This has the potential to capacitate the disfranchised rural youth to be leaders of household food production utilising available assets like their homestead land (National Youth Development Agency, 2005:112; Alonso *et al.*, 2018:115). The extent to which this potential prevails in Mpindweni Village, Eastern Cape, is of central interest to this research work.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section of the study provides a detailed description of the methods that were used for purposes of gathering empirical data. It consists of a combination of logically related steps that were all aimed at achieving the objective of the study, including the description of data collection, data analysis and sampling technique. In addition, an overview of ethical considerations such as the trustworthiness, credibility, limitations, and confidentiality will be discussed in this chapter.

3.1 Research approach and Design

Quantitative, qualitative and mixed method are research approaches that are generally used in exploring a certain reality (Seidman, 2013:19; Tuffour, 2017:12). A qualitative research approach was used in this study.

3.1.1 Qualitative research

A qualitative approach was adopted for the study topic because it is by nature an exploratory approach that emphasises the comprehension of human lived experiences (Seidman 2013:37). Doyle and Buckley (2017:95) mention that a qualitative approach investigates to understand the meaning people attach to their life experiences. It approaches reality through the collection and interpretation of people's lived experiences with a special focus on narration rather than quantification of the lived experiences (Moser & Korstjens, 2017:15; Doyle & Buckley, 2017:99).

The research participant's construction of reality is at the centre of qualitative research. An open-ended research strategy like semi-structured interviews features prominently in understanding the participant's construction of reality (Maree, 2007:1). Intangible elements of a reality-like participation that deserve to be explored but are difficult to measure, are best explored by qualitative research (Richards & Hemphill, 2018:227).

The main criticism of qualitative research is that it is open-ended and might lack precision (Etikan *et al.*, 2016:4). Another criticism that is levelled against this approach is around its subjectivity, because it is largely dependent on the worldview of the researcher, which is naturally subjective (Gill *et al.*, 2008:291). This subjective character of the approach makes it difficult to re-do or copy in another setting (Ansay *et al.*, 2004:311). This criticism notes that because the researcher is the main data collection instrument, it is difficult or impossible for other researchers to be able to replicate the same study (Richards & Hemphill, 2018:225). Objectivity in this study will be highlighted when dealing with trustworthiness in the research considerations.

The reason why a qualitative approach was considered for this study was that the study aimed to understand youth participation in homestead food production practises for the attainment of food security. The study was able to investigate the social reality of homestead food production through an investigation of the interpretation of this reality by the rural youth. Therefore, a quantitative approach would capture the number of houses that secure food but would limit the understanding of lived experiences of rural youth. The objective of this study was to capture the lived experience of rural youth in food production practises and food security.

3.1.2 Case study research design

According to Hyett *et al.*, (2014:5) a research design is a combination of interrelated methods, processes and technical systems that directs the research in achieving its set objectives. The design directs the study in the gathering and analysis of data for the purposes of exploring the relationship between the research problem and the lived human experiences (Baxter & Jack, 2008:546). Various research strategies are used in a research process, namely conceptual studies, historical research, action research, case study research, ethnography and grounded theory (Ansay *et al.*, 2004:315).

This research was guided by a case study research design which explored the participation of the youth of Mpindweni in homestead food practises. The ability of this research design to examine people's lived experiences in their natural setting was compatible with the objectives of this study of investigating how the youth of Mpindweni utilise their available land for food security outcomes (Baxter & Jack, 2008:547; Krusenvik, 2016:14).

3. 2 Data collection strategy

In a qualitative research approach, data is understood as the account of the people's lived experiences (Polkinghorne, 2005:137). Therefore, this study was grounded in a case study framework, and data was collected by making use of semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

3.2.1 Semi- structured Interviews

In the research literature, semi-structured interviews are understood as a data collection method that is carried out through a dialogue between an interviewer and an interviewee. In this dialogue the interviewer asks a series of questions that are in turn answered by the interviewee to see the world from the paradigm of the interviewee (Gill *et al.*, 2008:291; Given, 2008:15; Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013:16; Guest *et al.*, 2020:201). The interviewer further examines interviewee answers to unearth and uncover the perceptions, feelings and worldview of the interviewee with the purpose of establishing an understanding of the world view of the interviewee (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013:17).

In line with this nature and purpose of a semi-structured interview, this research established the views, attitudes, aspirations and beliefs of the youth of Mpindweni about homestead food security practises. Six young people were interviewed using an interview guide that posed the same questions to all six of them. Given the detail of case study inquiry, six cases sufficed and there was no need to increase the numbers. During the interviews, the researcher had a list of open-ended interview questions that aimed at

giving the youth an opportunity to converse and share their involvement in homestead food production practises.

3.2.2 Focus groups

The main attribute of a focus group as a qualitative data gathering method is to generate an understanding of the collective lived experiences of the sampled population (Gill *et al.*, 2008:291). A distinct feature of focus groups as a qualitative data gathering method is that of being a tool that facilitates a group discussion (Moser & Korstjens, 2018:11). The strength of a focus group as a qualitative data gathering method is that it facilitates debate about the subject matter. In this debate, both consensus and disagreements are accommodated (Maree, 2007:55) to attain more knowledge on the subject matter.

The study made use of a focus group as a second data collection method. The same youth who were interviewed formed a focus group. Through the interviews, the study collected valuable data from the individual young people. Further data was collected from the same young people through focus groups. The youth had an opportunity to jointly reflect on their collective lived experiences. The same set of interview questions were asked with the intention of triggering debate and collective reflection.

3.3 Data Collection Process

This section elaborates more on the process that was conducted in attaining the data.

3.3.1 Data identification and synthesis

Qualitative data analyses can be approached by one of its three methods, namely ethnography, phenomenology, and content analyses. This study approached data analyses through the phenomenological approach (Lester *et al.*, 2020:100). The motivation for this choice lies in the compatibility of this approach with the aim of the study. This is so because phenomenology approaches data analyses by identifying and

synthesising dominant themes in the collected data (Gill *et al.*, 2008:291). Data is analysed through the search, analyses and description of common and dominant themes from the data collection tools (Miles *et al.*, 2018:100). The result of the approach is a comprehensive account of the themes that represent the fundamental meaning of human lived experiences.

3.3.2 Data analysis plan

This study aligned itself with a thematic analysis plan that has been described by Lester *et al.*, (2020:95), as a process plan with interlinking phases all aimed at describing human lived experiences. The motivation for this is that the phase steps provided the study with a systematic and transparent plan of data analyses. By following the steps, the study was able to scrutinise the data logically. Through this plan the scrutiny is transparent and objective. Seven phases are identified in the process plan, all of which are tabulated below. Seven phases are identified in the process plan namely:

Table 1: Seven phases of the process plan

<p>Preparing and organising the data for analysis</p>	<p>Data was collected from individual interviews and focus groups. This data was recorded through written notes and voice recordings. Permission and consent to record the data was sought from the participants. Written notes and audio recordings are kept, locked securely in the office of the researcher. The voice recordings are retained in the recording device.</p>
<p>Transcribing the data</p>	<p>In this phase the researcher transcribed the audio recordings to a written format. The recordings were transcribed verbatim.</p>

Familiarising with the data	The researcher acquainted himself with the organised and transcribed data. This assisted the researcher in familiarising himself with the data and doing a mini analysis of it. This step refreshed the memory of the researcher about what transpired in the data collection process.
Creating data memos	The result of becoming familiar with the data is that of getting to relate with the data. In this stage the researcher interacted with the data by writing up his initial reactions and views about the data. In this phase of analyses, the researcher also wrote up and reflected on the non-verbal signs that he picked up during data gathering. The importance of this step is that it assisted the researcher to start highlighting areas of critical importance in the data, and to initiate the theme identification process.
Data coding	In relation to data coding, Benaquisto <i>et al.</i> , (2008:18) asserts that data coding is a process of assigning relevant and appropriate meaningful ideas to the segments of the raw data. The assembled data was broken down and various codes were assigned to the broken-down units. This was important in linking the empirical data with the theoretical foundations of the study.
Moving from coding to themes and from themes to categories	The research compared the emerged themes with each other to create categories. The categories were evaluated in the light of the conceptual framework of the study.
Making the analytic process transparent	Adherence to the above six steps automatically lead to the transparency of the data analyses process.

Patterns from the data collected answered the following research questions:

- What is your understanding of poverty?
- In your experience, what are the causes of poverty?
- Is there any value in homestead food production?
- What is your general involvement in food production in your home?
- How do you experience your youth stage in Mpindweni Village?
- What qualities do you possess that can contribute to homestead food production?

3.4 Sampling

Sampling is defined as the process that is employed in choosing a section of the population that is appropriate for the purpose of the research (Lewis, 2015:474). This research approached sampling from a non-probability angle. A non-probability sample approach is a pre-planned approach informed by the aims and objectives of the study (Marshall, 1996:522; Moser & Korstjens, 2018:18). In line with this non-probability approach, this study used a non-probability sampling method known as purposive technique in selecting its participants (Etikan *et al.*, 2016:4). This technique was the most appropriate one for this study as it enabled the researcher to choose the rural youth purposefully as the sample of the study.

For the quality of discussion, the study targeted the rural youth only. The rural youth that were selected were males and females of consenting age between the ages of 20 and 35 years old. The choice of males and females was meant to achieve inclusivity, as well as to source the lived experiences of the two genders. Consequently, there was an equitable representation of both genders. Furthermore, the study focused only on the rural youth that are non-schooling and unemployed, who are members of households where homestead food security practises are not performed, and where there is no member of the household with any kind of employment. The rationale of this selection criteria was informed by the fact that such youth are vulnerable to hunger and are at risk of being adversely affected by chronic poverty (Polkinghorne, 2005:137). Therefore, the study purposefully aimed to comprehend only the lived experiences of this group, thus excluding any other group that was outside of this defined profile.

3.5 Data saturation

Data saturation is an integral part of the sampling process as it is generally understood to be a guide in determining the number of the participants necessary for the study (Kara, 2015:17). However, a foundational and defining element in qualitative research is the availability of adequate quality data about the subject matter (Moser & Korstjens, 2018:17). Guest *et al.*, (2020:3) highlight that the researcher judges whether data saturation is achieved by determining whether the research aims and objectives have been achieved. It is the role, and at the discretion of the researcher to determine the quality of the data emerging out of the data collection strategies and by doing so, determining data saturation (Lewis, 2015:474).

The study determined data saturation by assessing the quality of the data that emerged from both the semi-structured interviews and the focus group discussions. The fact that the study chose to have two data collection strategies was to ensure that the sourced data was of high quality. The study therefore reached a reasonable and acceptable level of data saturation through the two data collection strategies. The study further achieved the data saturation by following its data collection plan, and it was the role, and at the discretion of the researcher to determine the saturation point.

3.6 Recruitment strategy

The researcher approached the local social worker in order to get information about the targeted group. The social worker had a database of such youth, and this assisted the researcher in recruiting the prospective participants. Upon receipt of such information, the researcher visited the prospective participants and invited them to be part of the study. Letters of invitation were distributed to the prospective candidates who agreed to be part of the study. The letters also served as information letters and were written in the vernacular, i.e.: isiXhosa. The location for research was practical and achievable as it was 10km away from the place of residence of the researcher. There was no conflict of interest between the researcher and participants, as the participants were not related to, and were not known to the researcher.

3.7. Research ethics considerations

Qualitative research ethics is a combination of ethical principles that guide the entire research. The principles ensure that participants are treated with dignity throughout the research process (Roth & von Unger, 2018:34; Jackson, 2021:11) and further guide the social interactions that naturally exist between a researcher and participants in a qualitative study (Gill *et al.*, 2008:291).

Subject matters like poverty, hunger and illiteracy are sensitive personal and social matters. This is because they are linked to the livelihood and the dignity of the people (Lewis, 2014:747). A participant who is classified as poor and is suffering from hunger might be undergoing a lot of social stigmatisation, personal grief and depression (Elliot, 2018:2853; Kara, 2015:474). This was mitigated by organising counselling services with the same local social worker. This provision was made to cater for any participant who might have experienced an emotional breakdown during the data collection process. The data collection process went well without any emotional breakdowns being experienced.

3.7.1 Informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity

Each participating member was asked whether they wanted to participate in the study or not. Only participants who gave their informed consent participated in the study. No participant was forced to participate. Adequate information was given to the participants in the IsiXhosa language. Participants signed informed consent forms after having received adequate information. The main source of information for the study was people. Ethics, in general, spell out the right way of dealing with people. It also gives guidance by offering principles that must be followed in human interaction (Jackson, 2021:71). One of the guiding principles is the issue of confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher treated all the views of the participants confidentially. Furthermore, the names of the participants will not be mentioned. Another ethical consideration that the study looked at was the issue of free will of the participants. This means that the participants were motivated to participate and contributed freely to the study.

3.7.2 Vulnerability

The study is about one of the painful realities of humanity - hunger and starvation caused by food insecurity. The participants were poor rural youth. The researcher engaged with rural young people with respect and sensitivity. No financial incentives were offered, to allow them to participate freely.

3.7.3 Risk-benefits assessment

Interviews and group discussion for data collection posed a physiological risk during this time of the Covid-19 pandemic. Preventative measures were adhered to and included the wearing of masks, social distancing, sanitation (sanitiser provided by the researcher), temperature screening (temperature screening device provided by the researcher) and a well-ventilated venue. A psychological risk emanated from vulnerability caused by the poor status of the youth. This is directly linked to the economic risk, since the targeted group is unemployed. The targeted group might have had expectations of remuneration. The benefits of the study being a contribution to the body of knowledge was well presented to the participants. Another benefit was that the youth engaged in a reflection of a sensitive, but critical topic. A spinoff of this reflection is that solutions will be triggered, and possibilities and alternatives for making a living were unveiled. The researcher undertakes to go back to the group and give proper feedback. The researcher benefited as the objectives of the study were met and at the same time the youth, who were the targeted population, also benefited. Benefits outweighed the envisaged risks.

3.7.4 Data trustworthiness

Data collected should be trustworthy, encompass credibility, conformability, transferability, and dependability (Moser & Korstjens, 2018:17). This study ensured that the collected data was trustworthy through:

- Credibility - the interpretation and presentation of the authentic views of the participants (Elliot, 2018:2857). The researcher familiarised himself with the context of the participants by observing, amongst others, the physical outlook of

their households. In addition, the researcher utilised both the semi-structured interviews and the focus group sessions to get to know more about the participants and their context.

- Conformability - the degree to which the results can be confirmed by another researcher (Lewis, 2015:474). This also includes following a data analyses plan. Data was analysed using the plan provided in the study.
- Transferability - the degree to which the same study can be transferred to another setting (Kara, 2015:477).
- Dependability - the availability of the data to the participants (Moser & Korstjens, 2018:17). The researcher will ensure this by giving proper feedback to the participants at an opportune time.
- Reflexivity - the self-introspection and self-evaluation of the researcher to assess personal reactions and bias that may negatively affect the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:11). The researcher carried a personal journal to record any emerging feelings and reactions during the research process. The researcher accessed this to evaluate himself, especially after data gathering sessions.

3.8. Limitations of the study

Sampling size: the sampling size has been dramatically reduced due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, which limits human contact. Therefore, only a limited number of participants were contacted.

Increased vulnerability: due to the increased number of unemployed youth due to the pandemic-induced lockdown, the study could have included a bigger number of the unemployed youth. However, due to Covid-19 control measures the number had to be kept to the bare minimum.

Resource constraint: the gathering of data had to occur under constrained resources. Time spent collecting data had to be within the Covid-19 regulations. Financially, the researcher utilised his limited family budget for traveling, sustenance and administrative costs.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSES

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of the research findings of the study. The findings are in the form of reports on the six semi-structured interviews and one focus group session. All six young people that were targeted were invited to the interviews and the focus group, and they all responded positively. The two sessions (interviews and focus group session) took place in a community church hall in Mpindweni. Covid-19 protocols were observed while conducting the sessions. Protocols included temperature screening, hand sanitisation, adequate ventilation of the venue, wearing of facial masks and social distancing.

The problem that the study sought to understand was rural poverty with hunger as its manifestation, especially among the rural youth. The involvement of the rural youth in homestead food practises was also considered as one of the poverty amelioration strategies. Research questions emanated from this research problem and were posed to the six rural youth through individual interviews and a focus group session. The research questions assisted the study to generate the lived experiences of the rural youth about homestead food production.

Themes that emerged from the answers to the questions will be presented and analysed as findings of the study. The responses that have been categorised into themes will be presented as responses of individual interviews; and responses from focus groups. The following themes emerged from this research: Rural Poverty, Homestead Food Production, Youth's Perceptions of Livelihood Strategies, and Youth's Aspirations and Priorities. The themes that emerged will be presented and then analysed.

4.2 Presentation on Rural Poverty

4.2.1 Definition of rural poverty by the youth

One participant said:

I would say poverty is the inability to meet your basic needs. You have no money and there are few free basic services in the rural areas that you can access to satisfy your basic human needs. Even the few available services are not enough for our population and are of poor standards compared to those of urban centres. Look at our clinics, they always have a shortage of medicines and staff; look at our schools they are crowded with few teachers; look at our roads they make it difficult for us to reach places of help.

(Participant 1, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

4.2.2 Causes of poverty

- a) Unemployment: The dominant theme that is immediately linked to the above is the centrality of unemployment as the biggest cause of poverty. Participants unanimously agreed that employment is definitive and central in the poverty narrative. Their loathing of unemployment was glaring in both their individual facial expressions and in the collective agreement. The researcher could tell that youth unemployment was a matter of grave concern for the participants. Their non-verbal expressions were noticeable. In their experience, employment plays a central role in poverty alleviation. Therefore, unemployment is the biggest cause of poverty.

“We are poor because we are unemployed and our government has forgotten about us. We feel deserted and left out.” (Participant 2, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

“We find ourselves having to depend on our parents’ government grants and on our children’s support grants. We cannot sustain ourselves as we have no income due to unemployment.” (Participant 3, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

- b) Lack of creative thinking and negative self-identity: Another theme that emerged as a cause of poverty is the inability of young people to think creatively, which is

linked to young people having a negative self-identity. Participants reflected on the inability of young people to realise development opportunities due to low self-esteem. They mentioned that young people look down on themselves to the extent that foreign nationals are taking over resources that could be utilised by the young people. One participant raised this point:

We create poverty ourselves by allowing people from abroad to come and use our resources and land. All we do is to be passive and crowd places of human settlement. Foreign nationals are capitalising on our passiveness and utilising our land and are creating wealth for themselves.

(Participant 4, 2021 Personal interview, 13 November)

Another participant raised a similar point and maintained that:

We look down on ourselves as rural youth and also look down on our rural resources that are vital in poverty alleviation. That is why poverty is on the rise. We are not using what we have because of negative self-identity. We do not love ourselves and we loathe our rural establishments including our homesteads. We feel trapped in a perpetual curse.

(Participant 5, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

- c) Lack of constructive youth networks: The participants also identified lack of constructive youth networks as another cause of poverty. Constructive networks would assist them in information sharing. Ideally they would share information about how to fight poverty. This lack of networks means that the youth is trapped in poverty with no information on how to fight it. Lack of circulation of constructive knowledge among the youth leads to poverty. A participant had this to say about this point:

We lack constructive co-operation among ourselves as rural youth. As a result we do not have constructive networks. This leads to a knowledge and information deficiency about the best ways of fighting poverty.

(Participant 6, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

4.2.3 Devastating effects of poverty

a) Poverty leads to crime: One participant cited that:

...because of poverty and unemployment, a certain group of young men of Mpindweni have resorted to distractive criminal activities like housebreaking, stealing of livestock, especially chickens and sometimes stealing elderly people's crop produce. They do this to satisfy that addiction. They have turned to drugs and alcohol abuse as a coping mechanism as there are no recreational facilities due to our underdevelopment status.

(Participant 1, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

b) Intergenerational poverty: One female participant continued the conversation by highlighting the element of intergeneration in poverty. She had this to say:

Our parents were trapped in this rural poverty. We are also trapped in it and our children will also be trapped in it. We cannot even meet our basic human needs, including our female hygiene necessities.

(Participant 3, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

4.3 Discussion and Analyses of Rural Poverty

4.3.1 Multi-dimensionality of poverty

The presentation on the findings of the understanding of poverty by the rural youth indicates a high degree of awareness by the rural youth on the meaning, causes and effects of rural poverty. From the lived experiences of the rural youth, the researcher conceived that rural poverty is a multi-dimensional reality. This postulation is aligned with findings from studies such as Alkire and Robles, (2017:112); Campos *et al.*, (2018:12). Megbowon and Mushunie (2018:235) even suggest a holistic approach when dealing with poverty. One of the facets that emerged from the participants was a lack of access to resources, which has been well documented in studies like Chambers and Conway (1992:5) and Ajuruchukwu and Sanelise (2016:518).

4.3.2 Chronic poverty

The participants reflected on the depth of poverty in their lives and how interlinking facets pushed them further into poverty. The participants had a deep sense of feeling trapped in what Chambers (1983:114) and Adato *et al.*, (2006:228) call a vicious cycle of chronic poverty. The participants' reflections revealed that they have been overwhelmed by poverty over a period of time, and this reflection matches the discourse on chronic poverty presented by Ali *et al.*, (2018:2513), and Francis and Webster, (2019:791).

4.3.3 Rural poverty and ill-development of rural areas

Another critical point of analyses is the ill-development of rural areas and its negative causal effects on rural poverty. The participants mentioned that one of the causes of their poverty is rural ill-development. The lived experience of the participants is that this ill-development manifests itself in poor education, dilapidated roads and lack of primary healthcare facilities, such as community clinics. The effect of this ill-development is rural poverty, which leads to a collapse of the rural livelihood. This collapse of rural livelihood is particularly felt by the youth as they are the majority population group in the rural areas. This reflection on the lived experience of rural poverty by the rural youth is ground knowledge about rural ill-development. This ground knowledge is aligned with studies like White (2019:222) and Ali *et al.*, (2018:2513).

4.3.4 The collapse of social cohesion due to underdevelopment

Crime was cited as one of the devastating effects of poverty. Young people tend to use their energies and creativity to commit criminal activities like house breaking, stealing of homestead food products like vegetables, chickens and eggs. Stolen products are sold to secure substances like drugs and alcohol. In some extreme cases a young person would steal his own homestead food products to feed his addiction. The participants maintained that such distractive social behaviour breeds social disharmony and social cohesion is adversely compromised.

4.4 Presentation on homestead food production

The participants were particularly chosen because there is no homestead food production activity taking place in their homesteads. They were facilitated to reflect on homestead food production and its value in the livelihood of the homestead. The general view of the participants is that homestead food production is a valuable exercise as it secures food for the household. It is the view of the participants that this food can be either crop production or livestock keeping. This food can easily be accessible to the homestead members for consumption. The excess products can be sold and the income be used to secure other necessities that contribute to the livelihood of the household.

4.4.1 Value of homestead food production

One participant had this to say about the value of homestead food production:

There is value in homestead food production because you can produce and consume so that you do not buy everything, meaning the household can also save money for other important needs. Again it is food produced by the household for the consumption of the household.

(Participant 2, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

Another participant emphasised that:

...the members of the household provide the necessary labour for the household food production, and this makes the production possible. No one will be employed to provide labour, therefore it is production at a low cost

(Participant 1, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

Connected to this, another participant emphasised that “household food production is also valuable and possible because it is a utilisation of the available land. So a household makes use of the land that is readily available.” (Participant 3, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

This value was further emphasised by another participant who maintained:

...that household food production is valuable because the food that is produced is healthier. Further to that the food produced at home is easily accessible for the nutrition of the household.

(Participant 4, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

4.4.2 Youth involvement in homestead food production

The reflection of the youth on the value of homestead food production is positive. They received a chance to report on their involvement in this valuable practise and the following sentiments represent their reflections:

I am not involved in homestead food production because I do not see it as my responsibility. It is the responsibility of the adults - not for me as a young person. It is a laborious activity that is just not meant for me.

(Participant 5, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

Another participant had this to say:

I am not involved in homestead food production because there are no young people who are doing it here in our village. As a young person I do not see myself being involved in such difficult and backward activities. I just do not see myself being burnt in the sun whilst doing garden or rearing livestock.

(Participant 6, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

The reasons for non-involvement were articulated by another participant who averred that:

Household food production is not fashionable for me as a young person. I am sure that it is not fashionable for my peers as well. Yes, it is valuable as we have said, but I view it as unfashionable because it involves energies, working in unfavourable weather conditions, dealing with smelling livestock like pigs and chickens. It is just a demanding and a strenuous enterprise, and it is not for me.

(Participant 1, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

This sentiment collaborates with a female participant, who maintained “I cannot afford to be seen as a backward young person by being involved with crops, pigs, chickens, sheep and cows.” (Participant 2, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

To take the reflection further, participants also raised household infrastructure challenges as one of the reasons for non-involvement in household food production:

Household food production is enabled by fenced and secured yards. It is further enabled by the availability of things like water tanks and gutters for water harvesting. Further to that, garden tools are also critical. Now, my household is impoverished and therefore cannot afford all these. For example, my parents did try to produce food at home. But these challenges overwhelmed them. The fencing in our yard fell off so their crops were eaten up by stray animals.

(Participant 3, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

The majority of the participants raised the centrality of water in homestead food production. One participant opinionated that:

We are experiencing water scarcity in this village. It is discouraging to be involved in such enterprises like food production with the scarcity of water that is so prevalent in our community. Homestead food production is therefore an activity done by those who are affording life. This is because they are able to fence their yards, fit gutters in the houses, secure tanks for water harvesting. Those who have income are further able to cart water from distant communal water sources using their vehicles. My poor household has not been able to meet the demands of household food production due to affordability. Starting a household food production is costly in terms of buying the necessary tools. That is the sole reason for my non-involvement in household food production.

(Participant 4, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

Another participant mentioned that:

I am not involved in household food production because it has never been practised in my home. At home we grew up purchasing food and we have never produced it. It has never been our practise at home, and therefore I am not oriented to it.

(Participant 5, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

Climate issues and soil conditions were also cited:

I see no point in being involved with an enterprise like homestead food production with the droughts that we are currently experiencing. What is the point of growing crops if they are going to be destroyed by the drought? What is the point of keeping livestock when they are going to die of hunger due to non-availability of grazing fields due to the drought?

(Participant 6, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

4.5 Discussion and Analyses of homestead food production

4.5.1 Youth valuing homestead food production

The foregoing sentiments represent contextual information and knowledge about rural youth and homestead food production. It is clear that the youth realise value in homestead food production. They know that it has an immense contribution in the household livelihood. It is clear from the citations that the youth do perceive homestead food production as an enabler of household food security.

This perception is in synchrony with the defining elements of food security, being availability, access and consumption. These defining elements were dealt with in this study under the sub-theme of food security as an outcome of sustainable livelihood framework. The first point of analyses is that the youth are a conscious cohort who are aware of the valuable development possibilities like homestead food production. This is confirmed by studies conducted by Feighery *et al.*, (2011:33) and Tyenjana *et al.*, (2019:373). These studies assert that the youth group does recognise positive developmental initiatives as they are a highly perceptive group.

4.5.2 Reasons for youth's non-involvement in homestead food production

Anyidoho *et al.*, (2012:11) motivated the reasons for listening to the voice of the youth about their non-participation in development initiatives. This study recorded the youth's reasons for their passiveness in homestead food production. In analysing the reasons,

the study found out three dominant sub-themes, namely, youth-based reasons, structural reasons and upbringing/grooming.

- a) Youth based reasons: it became apparent from the presentation of the findings that the youth do not identify with homestead food production. They see it as an adult responsibility that is incumbent on their parents. They still see their parents as having a responsibility to provide for them by feeding them. As part of this responsibility then, their parents must labour and toil hard under unfavourable conditions producing food for the youth. The youth view their parents as producers whilst they view themselves as dependents. This talks to the theme of how the youth view homestead responsibilities at large and how they view their belonging and responsibilities in their homestead.

The centrality of youth dependency in the definition of the youth stage is addressed by studies like Kristensen (2013:177) and White (2019:114). The mentioned studies aver that dependency is a hallmark of the youth stage due to its transitory nature from youth to adulthood. Giuliani *et al.*, (2017:871), and Van den Broeck and Maertens, (2017:100) extend the discourse by comparing the United Nations youth age bracket and the African Union age bracket. They do this by mentioning that the youth stage is shorter for the United Nations as their youth exit age is at 25 years compared to the African Union exit age, which is 35 years.

Giuliani *et al.*, (2017:871) further points out the possibility of having an extended period of youth dependency in Africa due to the exit age being set at 35 years. Westaway (2012:116), and Uleanya and Omoniyi (2019:13) round off the discussion by highlighting that developed nations' youth are able to attain their adulthood status earlier due to the overall development of their region. A different story is told of African youth whose attainment of adulthood is mired due to the snail's pace of the development of the African region.

This puts a spotlight on the lack of a sense of identity and pride of the youth regarding their general rural surroundings, in particular their homesteads. Bezu

and Holden (2014:260) articulate that one of the causes of rural poverty is the fact that rural youth do not identify with rural development initiatives like household food production. This is a point that is amplified by Ajuruchkwu and Sanelise, (2016:517) who further cite that the youth tend to view agricultural activities as primitive activities that misaligned with their preferred popular culture.

- b) Structural reasons: the comprehension of poverty by the youth also pointed at structural issues in the form of infrastructure. They raised that homestead food production is enabled by infrastructure. This indicates that affordability of the necessary infrastructure is not only an enabler but also a source of encouragement and motivation. The reality of non-affordability enables and perpetuates poverty. It further casts despair and distress to those few young people who are willing to be protagonists of homestead food production. This despair eventually leads to hopelessness and entrenchment, and the perpetuation of chronic and intergenerational poverty.

This discussion is aligned with the study of Ali *et al.*, (2018:2513) who maintain that non-affordability of household asserts has a direct linkage with household food insecurity in Africa. Ajuruchkwu and Sanelise (2016:517), and Baloyi and Geyer (2019:123) put this in a South African context by submitting that low income in rural South African households has contributed to non-attainment of household infrastructure, which is vital for household food production. According to the Eastern Cape Rural Development Agency (2019:29) this has contributed to impoverished Eastern Cape households only focusing and channelling their paltry incomes to their immediate survival needs.

- c) Upbringing/grooming: It also became obvious that upbringing and grooming of children on household food production has an impact on them participating in the activity during their youth stages. This brings to the surface the issue of inculcating a culture of household production within the members of the household at an early stage. This, however, can only be possible if the household can afford the

infrastructure and other enablers of household food production. Furthermore, the parents must lead the process of inculcating this culture through creative and attractive means to their children.

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (2019:120) advocates positive grooming of children through issues such as homestead food production activities. They further urge parents and custodians to instil the love of green production at household level. They cite that this will not only develop food producers, but healthy and responsible users of the environment. In the promotion of positive upbringing of children, the Social Justice Coalition (2018:101) teaches both township and rural parents the importance of grooming children by involving them in homestead food production. This is a message that is amplified by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (2020:20) in their review of household food production, especially during the Covid-19-induced lockdown. It is said that families found solace and joy in collectively engaging with household food production as they were always together due to restricted movements.

4.8 Youth identity, aspirations and priorities

Another central theme in the study is youth identity, aspirations and priorities. The intention of the study was to facilitate a reflection by the youth on how they perceive their identity, what they aspire to and their priorities.

A participant articulated:

As a young person, I see myself as a useless member of my family and community. Because I am impoverished and have no contribution in my family and in my community. I cannot afford my basic needs and I cannot assist my family to make ends meet. I am dependent on my child support grant together with my mother's old age pension grant.

(Participant 5, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

Another participant added:

My rural surroundings make me identify myself as a failure because I am unable to realise my dreams. The lack of opportunities here makes me to see myself as a stagnant person. I feel that I am not progressing, my life journey is at a standstill.

(Participant 4, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

In a group session, the sentiment arose that “I feel that as the youth we are perpetual dependents of our parents as we are not productive. We are always fed by them through their limited social grants.” (Participant 3, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

Another participant took the discussion further by mentioning that:

As the youth of Mpindweni we are an uninspired cohort due to lack of opportunities. This leads us to be involved in distractive behaviours like drugs, crime and risky sexual behaviour that lead to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

(Participant 2, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

A participant contributed:

We are spreaders of a negative and distractive culture in our families and in our communities. It is our peers that pack up local taverns. We are really not productive instead we are distractive.

(Participant 1, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

Concerning youth aspirations, one of the participants said “I aspire to leave this ill-developed place and seek a better life through employment in a distant city.” (Participant 6, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November).

Another participant raised a similar sentiment and maintained that:

The situation here is dire, there is just no way that I can stay here for a longer period. I aspire for a life in the city with better opportunities. I already have a child - it is therefore my dream that my child accesses better opportunities. He cannot grow up and be old in this distractive space.

(Participant 1, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

In a group session, this became prevalent and was represented by a participant who emphatically mentioned that:

What we see in mainline media like television series and social media like Facebook is a life of glitter and glamour in the cities. This appeals to me and my peers. As a result, we aspire for that life. We realise that we are trapped in these rural areas and we want to be set free to go to the cities. We cannot continue to exist here as we feel excluded and left behind.

(Participant 2, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

The discussion was taken further by a participant who reflected that:

As an initiated Xhosa young man I aspire to take care of my parents by contributing towards the livelihood, especially now that they are old. Further to that I have a responsibility to start my own family by marrying and having children. It is my aspiration to take over my family legacy in the near future. My current situation of poverty casts doubts over these aspirations. Lack of livelihood opportunities in our rural community breaks down my aspirations.

(Participant 2, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

Concerning youth priorities, the participants uphold that “our priorities as young people is to get jobs in the cities and leave our homesteads. It is important for me to get a job and start living my dreams.” (Participant 3, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

Another participant mentioned that:

It is not good for me to be stagnant like this. I can now see that this will deteriorate my development as a young person. In as much as homestead food production is

valuable, right now it is not my priority. My priority is to get a job in the city and leave this place.

(Participant 4, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

In a group discussion, this sentiment became dominant:

Our priority is to stop being dependent on our parents and start a life of our own. I am tired of being dependent on my parents. I want to be independent and be able to meet my basic necessities.

(Participant 4, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

Furthermore, a participant raised that:

Homestead food production is not my priority at this moment. It is a distant adventure as it needs infrastructure. I would not consider it as an option and priority as it will hold me back. It would make me stuck in my rural home, something that I do not want at this moment. I want to be in the city.

(Participant 5, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

4.9 Discussion and Analyses of Youth Identity, Aspirations and Priorities

The reflection of the lived experiences of the youth regarding their identity, aspirations and priorities is important. This importance is well documented in studies like Anyidoho *et al.*, (2012:13), Owen and Goldin (2015:544), and Stecklov and Menashe-Oren (2019:41). The mentioned studies advocate the centrality of listening to the voice of the youth regarding development initiatives. This study aligned itself with such research and has sourced the youth's perception of their identity, aspirations and priorities. The analyses section will discuss and analyse the sourced elements.

- a) Youth identity: It became apparent in the interview extracts that rural ill-development with its resultant rural poverty has contributed to a youth with negative perceptions of themselves. Their inability to provide basic needs like food has led them to understand themselves as worthless members of society. Their failure to pursue their dreams has led them to define themselves in negative terms

like 'failure' and 'worthlessness'. Furthermore, they perceive themselves as architects and catalysts of distraction.

The youth's perception of themselves, and their identity, is critical in their development discourse. These are sentiments recorded by studies like Conceição *et al.*, (2016:9); Devereux (2016:52-62), and Devereux and Waidler, (2017:88). The aforementioned studies suggest that the success of youth development hinges on how they identify themselves. They further suggest that due to the prevalent ill-development of the rural areas, rural youth tend to have negative self-image and perception. The result of this negative self-image is non-productivity. Owen and Goldin (2015:545) maintain that youth agency, connectivity and productivity are foundational in youth involvement with livelihood functions like homestead food production. Agency is the responsibility that the youth assume in using their connections to produce things like food for their livelihood.

This agency is enabled by a positive self-identity by the youth. This suggests that the negative self-identity that is prevalent among the participants is a huge hindrance to their homestead food production. The distraction of the social order by the rural youth is another manifestation of the negative self-identity that is ubiquitous among the rural youth (Banks, 2015:22). The distractive identity that they are attracted to overflows and emanates into a continuous distractive behaviour. This behaviour leads to criminal activities like house breaking, rape and theft that terrorise rural communities, especially rural women and children. Bezu and Holden (2014:259) identify this as rural youth developing into liabilities and sources of terror in their rural communities.

Eastern Cape based poverty studies like Megbowon and Mushunie (2018:237) and Msutwana *et al.*, (2019:155), and reports like King Sabata Dalindyebo Municipality (2016:128) and Eastern Cape Rural Development Agency (2019:10) confirm that rural youth in the Province have become sources of terror in the rural communities. This study concludes that due to their negative identity, the rural youth have

developed into both liabilities and sources of distraction instead of being homestead food producers.

- b) Youth aspirations: the youth as a group that is in transition from childhood to adulthood is a group with ambition and aspirations. They aspire to actualise and realise their transition from dependency to independency. The general view of the participants is an actualisation that is distant from their rural homesteads. They have ambitions and aspirations of attaining their livelihood in the cities. The effects of rural ill-development like the breakdown in livelihood are driving them away from their rural homes. Through the media, they find life in the city attractive.

Alonso *et al.*, (2018:113-127) submit that youth aspirations are definitive in understanding youth involvement in rural livelihood attainment. This is further pronounced by Ali *et al.*, (2018:2513) who assert that, due to the fact that youth aspirations are city-based, rural youth are unable to engage with rural-based activities like homestead food production. The participants' stance on their city-based aspirations was reflected in this study in the section about rural youth as human capital. As much as the rural youth have the necessary capabilities for homestead food production, they do not aspire to a rural-based life. Their rural homes are unable to benefit from their potentials because their aspirations for a better life in the cities drive them away from their rural homes.

This study also reported on the discord between the rural youth's aspirations and their rural settings. This report was based on studies like Hajdu *et al.*, (2020:770), Proctor and Lucchesi (2012:23), and Majee *et al.*, (2019:11). The mentioned studies uphold the non-involvement of rural youth in homestead food production because their aspirations are dissociated with their rural homesteads. The rural youth remains an unused human resource in the attainment of sustainable livelihood due to this dissociation of rural youth aspirations with their rural settings. The ground knowledge from the participants is in synchrony with the aforementioned studies.

- c) Youth priorities: another emerging theme from the youth reflections is that of priorities. It has become clear that the youth are concerned about their unproductive lives. Subsequently, the youth prioritise the improvement of their conditions. They therefore deem employment as a panacea for their problems. City-based employment is what they are aspiring for and it is, therefore, their priority. According to them, employment will be a catalyst for their transition from dependency to independence. It will enable them to actualise their dreams of a better life and would essentially assist them to start their own families. There was a prevailing sense of urgency among the youth in terms of the need of employment. It was further noticeable that city-based employment is a high priority for the youth. They deemed homestead food production as something that can be done after employment has been secured. It is therefore not a pressing matter for them now.

International organisations like the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations have raised youth priorities when dealing with youth non-involvement in agriculture. They have cited that in poor African countries agricultural activities are abandoned by the youth as their priorities are city-based livelihoods (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: 2020:17). This prioritisation of jobs by the youth over land-based livelihood strategies is a well-documented subject in South African studies like Boatemma *et al.*, (2018:265), Baloyi and Geyer, (2019:12), and Francis and Webster (2019:789). The result of this singular focus of city-based jobs is that of neglect of possible attainment of livelihood through land-based rural activities.

4. 5. Presentation on livelihood strategies

The final theme that emerged from the data collection is how the youth perceive and prioritise livelihood strategies that are compatible with their preferences. One participant had this to say:

My priority and my aspiration is a better life in the city. It is in the city where employment is possible. This employment will lead to me actualising my expectations as a young person.

(Participant 6, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

Another participant added, “Securing employment is critical at this point in my life as it will enable me to get cash so that I can buy household necessities like food.”

(Participant 5, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

To this effect one of the members of the group maintained:

The immediate need for us now is to get jobs, even if it's part time jobs. We need to secure cash for our needs and for those of our household. Producing food using my homestead is not my priority at this moment.

(Participant 4, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

All the participants approved this point by making an affirmative sound and some by nodding. This led to one participant quickly raising this point:

The climate and soil conditions, infrastructure issues and the laborious nature of homestead food production make it an unattractive enterprise for us as the youth. It would take time for us to achieve our dreams of good life in the city. On the other hand, employment in the city will accelerate our dream of a better life.

(Participant 3, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

Another participant raised this point:

It is pointless for us as the youth to pursue rural land-based livelihood strategies as these are incompatible with our aspirations. Homestead food production would further attach us in these rural places. Even our parents wish that we could leave these areas and migrate to better places.

(Participant 2, 2021, Personal interview, 13 November)

4.6 Discussion and Analyses of livelihood strategies

The above extracts reveal that the youth is focused on achieving livelihood through employment. Their priority is to secure city-based employment for attainment of cash to

secure their livelihood. This is in line with the findings of Dodd and Nyabvudzi (2014:118), which uphold that youths prioritise jobs as means of attaining livelihood over agricultural activities. Furthermore, Megbowon and Mushunie (2018:237) report that the rural youth of the Eastern Cape Province migrate to bigger cities like Cape Town to search for employment as means of livelihood attainment.

In recent history, unemployment has increased in South Africa. Statistics South Africa (2019:13) reports that unemployment has increased from 32.6% in the first quarter of 2021 to 34.4% in the second quarter. It is further reported that youth unemployment accounts for 62%. A singular focus of the youth on employment as the sole means of livelihood attainment leads to the failure of livelihood attainment.

Youth potentials and capabilities are further stifled and unutilised by lack of employment. The rural youth tend to be an unutilised capital asset. Their non-involvement on household food production due to their city-based employment aspirations leads to them being a redundant asset. It further breaks their morale and causes them to be liabilities to their families and the communities.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The first aspect of this chapter will be the conclusion of this research, which will round off the entire discussions of the study. The second purpose of this chapter is to present recommendations based on the conclusions of the study. The recommendations will be centred on the youth cohort since the study was about rural youth's involvement in homestead food production. The recommendations will be divided into structural and youth aspirations issues.

5.2 Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to investigate the rural youth's involvement in homestead food production practises. This study set out to investigate this reality, firstly, through a review of the literature and secondly, through empirical data gathering. Both the literature and empirical data indicate that rural poverty is the main developmental problem as it is a state of deficiency of life-giving resources and services. This deficiency is caused by the remoteness and ill-development of the rural space. A breakdown in basic infrastructure like roads, primary health facilities, education centres, lack of rural based job opportunities and poor quality of the land, are some of the causes of this rural poverty.

Rural households feel the effects of this deficiency, as they struggle to achieve a meaningful, sustainable livelihood. The inability of the rural centres to create vibrant and viable economies has led to a lack of assets for the rural homesteads. A lack of assets has largely resulted in the inability of rural households to meet their daily livelihood demands. Furthermore, rural households are vulnerable to future poverty shocks as the lack of assets renders a lack of social protection. Perpetuation of poverty is therefore a reality due to this socio-economic vulnerability of the rural population.

Developed regions of the world have utilised rural areas as thriving economic hubs to the benefit of their rural populations. Establishments like factories and agricultural centres are the main drivers of the rural economy. The opposite is true of developing regions like Africa, where rural communities are excluded from the mainline economic

development drive. This has led to a collapse of rural livelihood, to the detriment of the rural population. A singular focus on development of mega urban centres has led to total economic exclusion of the rural centres, leading to the demise of the rural population. Developing countries like South Africa with renowned progressive legislative provisions are still experiencing an upsurge of rural poverty statistics. A province like the Eastern Cape with available natural endowments like land, is ranked second in national poverty figures.

The devastating effects of this rural poverty impacts all rural occupants, with a special impact on the rural youth, who are a dominant demographic group. Rural poverty also delays the development of the youth as they are in transition from youth to adulthood. Rural poverty is experienced by the rural youth as an exclusion from life-giving opportunities. It is further conceived by the youth as a trap in an ill-developed context where youth dreams of a developed life are shattered.

The youth's innate capacity in the form of innovation, exuberance, energies and technology could easily be used for development initiatives like homestead food production. However, their aspirations are tied to a life in the city where they perceive an abundance of employment opportunities. The collapse of the rural livelihoods due to rural ill-development creates a disconnection between the rural youth and their rural context. They therefore identify rural-based livelihood strategies like homestead food production as laborious enterprises that are disconnected with their lifestyle. The dreams and aspirations of the rural youth are focused on securing employment in the city and therefore attaining livelihood through city-based employment. These aspirations cause the rural youth to disassociate themselves and not be involved in rural-based livelihood attainment activities like homestead food production.

Non-involvement of the rural youth in rural homestead food production and their inclination towards city-based employment indicate that they are averse to being food producers. They do not identify themselves as potential food producers; instead they aspire to be employees in the urban centres. A lack of producers' identity among the youth renders them to be unutilised human capital in the broader rural livelihood

framework. The high rate of unemployment, even in the city centres, indicates a non-fulfilment of the dreams and aspirations of not only the rural youth but also youth in general. This non-fulfilment of dreams can, among other things, lead to a negative identity by the youth, which can further launch a distractive trajectory where their personal and communal lives are adversely affected.

The non-utilisation of the rural youth as human capital to achieve livelihood outcomes like food security enables hunger and therefore deepens rural poverty. Food as a foundational enabler of human development has to be produced so that households can access and utilise it in a sustainable way. Rural areas with abundant land and readily available youth should be food production centres for the benefit of the rural population. However, structural issues like the ailing rural infrastructure and climate change challenges such as droughts, hinder this all-important process of food production in the rural areas. Furthermore, the frail, elderly population that is practising subsistence rural farming can no longer keep up with the laborious demands of homestead food production. This entrenches dependency on cash for consumption. The burden is therefore on the government's meagre government grants.

5.3 Recommendations

This sub-section highlights recommendations based on the conclusions from the study. The recommendations will be presented in two groupings: structural recommendations and youth aspirations recommendations. The intention of the recommendations is to aid an improved way of thinking about the role of the rural youth, not only in homestead food production, but in general rural development. In this way the recommendations will be applicable to the role of the youth in the attainment of the rural livelihood framework outcomes. The recommendations will be rounded off by general recommendation for further study.

5.3.1 Structural recommendations

Recommendation One: there is a need for policy makers to relook rural development policies. The study recommends the relooking of rural development policies

by pulling unemployed and out of school rural youth from the peripheries of the development process and put them at the centre. This should be done to tap into the potential of rural youth as human capital and as agents and champions of rural development. The essence of this recommendation is the prioritisation of the unemployed and out of school rural youth in the rural development processes and initiatives. A prioritisation of the rural unemployed and out of school youth will not only utilise the latent youth capabilities, but will also inculcate a production spirit among the rural unemployed and out of school youth. Local development policies from the various development authorities need to prioritise the development of the rural youth and be synchronised towards the achievement of this goal.

Recommendation Two: the above recommendation can be implementable through development training and education of the unemployed rural youth. There is a need for rural development training where the youth are exposed to possible rural local economic development potentials. Ventures like rural tourism, indigenous games like horse riding and mountain hiking, forestry and agriculture should be exposed to the youth as potential local economic development potentials. In this way an entrepreneurial spirit will be promoted among the rural youth and this spirit will drive them to be producers who utilise both their innate capabilities and natural resources.

Recommendation Three: there is a need to form local development youth clubs/forums. This is informed by the fact that the youth feel isolated as individuals who are overwhelmed by poverty and trapped in an ill-developed rural area. Furthermore, this need is informed by the need for a youth-to-youth outreach. This is a reality where young people motivate each other and hold each other accountable on matters of development in their rural areas. This will also initiate leadership among the rural youth for the development of the rural youth. The same clubs can be used as cohorts of positive influence within the community. The training that has been proposed in recommendation two can be facilitated through such clubs.

Recommendation Four: the study further recommends a direct investment in the rural areas by both the government and private sector. A direct investment in the rural

areas will be capitalising on the potential of the rural areas by utilising available resources, such as the land. This investment should be in areas of agriculture; both primary agriculture in the form of massive crop and livestock production, and tertiary agriculture in the form of processing plants and abattoirs. This investment could also be in the form of manufacturing factories.

Investment opportunities will not only provide employment for the rural youth, but also accelerate skills training and technology transferral. In this way the rural youth could start to see that their rural areas are centres of economic activities that could meet their employment ambitions. Another spinoff of this rural economic investment would be the building of the asset base of the rural homestead through salaries from the youth employment. It is envisaged that the employed youth would transfer their income from their employment to the accumulation of assets. This accumulation could be in the refurbishment of their homesteads in the form of fencing their yards and securing items like water tanks and garden tools.

5.3.2 Rural Youth Identity and Aspirations recommendations

Recommendation Five: the success of the above-mentioned recommendations largely depends on the rural youth's cooperation and responsiveness to the recommended development initiatives. It transpired in the findings that rural youth are not involved in homestead food production because of their negative self-identity and their city-based ambitions and aspirations. This study recommends that this negative youth self-identity and aspirations for the development of the rural youth be addressed. A holistic rural development plan would simultaneously address rural economic investment together with negative rural youth identity and city-based aspirations. Initiatives are geared towards moulding and formation of rural youth to understand themselves as agents of change and champions of rural development. Since the rural youth have been exposed to a venomous narrative about rural life, a positive narrative needs to be created and spread virally. The youth is also a cohort that easily follow trends. There is therefore a need to create a positive trend about rural areas so that the rural youth can generate a positive self-identity.

A sense of hopelessness, feeling trapped and socio-economically excluded dominated the findings. Furthermore, a deep sense of failure, disappointment and destroyed dreams was also dominant among the rural youth who participated in the study. This raises a need of a pointed and concerted effort for individual and group counselling for the betterment of the rural youth.

Non-profit organisations and civil society organisations in partnership with the business fraternity, and traditional and religious forums are just a few non-governmental institutions that need to be utilised in driving a rural youth moulding. Programmes of human development, life coaching, and individual and collective counselling can be of great help in such moulding. Centres of higher learning, like neighbouring universities and TVET colleges, are well placed to offer tailor-made formation programmes, as they are centres of research and innovation. They are also centres of youth academic training, so the youth who are currently students at the aforementioned centres can easily be utilised to reach out to the unemployed and out of school youth. The unemployed and out of school youth would both identify with such initiatives, and their aspirations and ambitions would be moulded.

5.3.3 General recommendation for further study

A research study that sought to understand rural youth's involvement in homestead food production has unveiled a need for further study. Like any other exploration that seeks to understand a social reality, this study has led to a realisation of a broader multifaceted area of study. Such multifaceted social realities call for a holistic approach to rural development. The study then concludes by recommending a treatise on non-employed and out of school rural youth as agents of socio-economic transformation of the rural areas. This suggests a concrete, in-depth and all-encompassing discourse on the motivation and methodology of turning the unutilised rural youth asset into a vibrant, resilient, reliable and sustainable instrument of rural local economic development.

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