

**AN ASSESMENT OF THE ROLES OF WOMEN SMALL SCALE FARMERS  
CONTRIBUTION TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN CHEGUTU  
DISTRICT**

**BY**

**CHIDAKWA TICHAONA TALENT**

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**Department of Sociology**

**Faculty of Social Studies**

**University of Zimbabwe**

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## **Abstract**

*The study was conducted with the aim to empirically explore at women's contribution to agriculture production. The objectives of the study were to understand women's activities in small scale agriculture production, challenges they face and the coping strategies they employ in dealing with the identified challenges. Based on a qualitative methodology grounded in phenomenological interpretivism, a sample of ten women small scale farmers were purposively recruited from Celary and Oldham resettlement scheme whilst five key informants who comprised of the Chegutu District Administrator, District agricultural extension officer, District veterinary officer, Ward 24 Councillor and Chief Ngezi's representative were recruited using snow ball sampling. Data generation was through face to face interviews. Data was presented through thematic content analysis whilst the feminist political ecological framework was used in interpreting the research findings.*

*The study established that women are the key players in agriculture production as they partake in land tillage, planting, weeding, harvest, post harvest management and marketing using Tinevimbo multipurpose cooperative. The findings further established that women own and control small livestock which includes chickens, rabbits, goats and sheep whilst men retain control of cattle. The findings also revealed that women are in charge of tseu (women's small subsistence plot) and grow crops like vegetables, groundnuts and rapoko whilst men are in control of the main field and concentrate on cash crops like tobacco. Despite women partaking in everyday agricultural work, decision making and crop preference at household level in post fast track land reform Celary and Oldham remain a preserve for men. However, the findings established that in as far as women are the main players in agricultural production they have limited access to various forms of capital which inhibit them from realising their full production capacity. Women have limited access to credits due to lack of collateral security acceptable by financing institutions. Distribution of state sponsored inputs curry favour men and excludes women which is even perpetuated in agricultural extension work coverage. In coping with the work load women small scale farmers have resorted to partake in nhimbe as a way of assisting each other. They have also formed a multi-purpose cooperative called Tinevimbo which assists women in all spheres of agricultural production from facilitating human capital development, access to inputs, lobbying for women's rights and marketing of women agricultural produce.*

Abstract.....	<b>ii</b>
Chapter 1.....	<b>1</b>
RESEARCH OVERVIEW .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background.....	1
1.3 Statement of the problem .....	3
1.4 Aim of the Research.....	4
1.5 Objectives .....	4
1.6 Research questions.....	4
1.7 Justification of the study .....	4
1.8 Chapter summary .....	5
Chapter 2.....	<b>6</b>
2.0 Literature Review .....	<b>6</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	6
2.2 National Comparisons of women’s roles in agricultural production .....	6
2.3 Women subsistence farmers in Zimbabwe .....	10
2.4 Pre-colonial Period.....	10
2.5 Colonial gender relations .....	12
2.6 Women and agriculture production in the post-colonial state.....	14
2.7 Chapter Summary .....	19
Chapter 3.....	<b>21</b>
Theoretical Framework.....	<b>21</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	21
3.2 Champions of the Feminist Political Ecology.....	21
3.2 Basic Tenets of the Feminist Political Ecology .....	21
3.3 Strength of the feminist political ecology .....	23
3.4 Chapter Summary .....	24
Chapter 4:.....	<b>25</b>
Methodology .....	<b>25</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	25
4.2 Research Approach .....	25
4.3 Research Site.....	27
4.4 Population of the study .....	28
4.5 Sample and sampling methods.....	29
4.5.1 Purposive sampling .....	29
4.5.2 Snowball Sampling .....	30

4.6 Data Collection .....	31
4.6.1 Key Informant interviews .....	31
4.6.2 In-depth Interviews .....	31
4.7 Data Presentation .....	33
4.8 Data Analysis .....	33
4.9 Ethical Considerations .....	34
4.9.1 Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation .....	34
4.9.2 Privacy, Confidentiality and Anonymity .....	35
4.9.3 Minimizing Psychological Risk and Harm .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
4.10 Methodological Challenges.....	35
4.11 Summary .....	36
<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>37</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	37
5.2 Data Presentation .....	37
5.3 Women’s Activities in agriculture production.....	37
5.4 Challenges faced by women in Agriculture.....	43
5.5 Women’s Tenacity .....	48
5.6 Chapter Summary .....	53
Chapter 6.....	<b>54</b>
<b>DISCUSION OF FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>54</b>
6.1 Introduction.....	54
6.2 Women’s contribution to agricultural production.....	54
6.3 Challenges faced by women in agricultural production.....	59
6.4 Coping strategies adopted by Women small scale farmers.....	62
6.5 Directions for Future Study/ Research.....	64
6.6 Chapter Summary .....	64
<b>REFERENCE LIST .....</b>	<b>65</b>
Informed Consent .....	<b>71</b>
Interview guide: Key informant schedule.....	<b>72</b>
Women small scale farmers’ interview guide.....	<b>72</b>

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **RESEARCH OVERVIEW**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The focus of this research was to critically examine women's contributions to agricultural production. A study by Makura and Paradza (2010) revealed that in terms of land ownership women continue to be viewed as mere extension of patriarchal agriculture production despite the constitution recognising them as majors. This is further supported by Mariiwo (2008:6) whose research concluded that women subsistence farmers in Zimbabwe continue to be viewed as mere extensions of patriarchal agricultural production yet they are independent farmers in their own right. This reproduction in Eurocentric literature which has extended into academic discourses, rural development procedure manuals and project justifications has largely undermined women capabilities, diversity and agency in agriculture production, despite the critical role they play. However, the current research seeks to understand women small scale farmers' contribution to agriculture production, challenges being encountered and the coping strategies they have devised in Chegutu District. The chapter offers an overall analysis of the purpose of the research with regards to women small scale farmers' contribution to agricultural production. The chapter covers concepts like the background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, and justification of the study. The chapter provided an operational direction to the thesis.

#### **1.2 Background**

A precursory view of literature at a global level clearly shows that women are major players in agricultural production. The percentage of land possessed by women is disproportionately small considering their crucial contribution to agriculture and food security at household level and in communities UN Women Watch 2002 as cited in (Katsvairo 2016). Though women contribute much in agricultural development in general and economic growth in particular

however, their efforts are not recognized because of the patriarchal nature of Zimbabwean society (National Gender Policy, 2004). Women are the major producers of food, and food security at household level hinges on women. In modern Zimbabwe, 86 percent of women live in rural areas and are dependent on land for their livelihood and women also provide 70 percent of the agricultural labour force (Zimbabwe National Gender Policy 2004; Women and Land in Zimbabwe 2007). However, despite their contribution to agriculture production researches specifically focusing on their contribution to food security and food production is hazy.

Regardless of the significance of land to women in Africa, their land rights are not recognised and when recognised they remain rhetoric rather than in principle and continue to be discriminated against. In most African countries, customary and statutory tenure co-exist. A country comparative approach by Lahiff (2003) in South Africa, Mozambique and Kenya revealed that most women in Africa live in rural areas and derive their livelihood from agriculture production. The analysis further noted that despite majority of women population being domiciled in the rural areas where their livelihoods are dependent on agriculture production in Kenya, South Africa and Mozambique among other countries remains an excluded constituency in land distribution exercises. Thus rural women's invisibility in land tenurial system is aggravated by lack of social representation and lack of political power that manifests as gender inequality and a lack of recognition for the part they play in agriculture production and food security.

Women are the key players in agriculture production at subsistence level. Despite eighty six percent of women earning a living out of agriculture production for themselves and their families, women in communal areas continue to be viewed as dependents on men, not as land owners or farmers in their own right (Human Rights Watch 2003 as cited in Katsvairo 2016).

Thus the contribution of women to agriculture production for family consumption and partly commercial purposes needs to be initially studied from a historical context in order to determine women's relationship to agriculture production. With the support of men, women small scale farmers are also involved in cash crop production or buy and sell to earn extra income (ZWRN/ SARDC2008 as cited in Katsvairo 2016). The analysis further noted that rural farmers are a vital constituency in food production and food security at household level. They account for seventy percent of agricultural workers, eighty six percent of food producers, hundred percent of those who process basic foodstuffs and they undertake from sixty to ninety percent of the marketing (Fabiye et al 2007). Despite the agricultural revolution in Africa which also encompassed land redistribution, women in agriculture's workload increased by expansion of task such as weeding and transplanting without bringing women an appropriate share. Many of the farms in the communal areas have women as the heads of household (ZWRN/SARDC 2008). This is because many of the men work in urban areas, leaving the farming to their wives and children. These women have to balance production, consumption and nurturing demands (Muir-Leresche, 2006). The root of women's oppression is due to culture as most women do not own the land on which production takes place, and as a result they derive fewer benefits from it than men but participate more in the agriculture production and are responsible for food security.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Literature presenting women as vulnerable and helpless in rural communities and in agriculture production due to unequal power relations is plentiful (Bhatasara 2011; Jackson and Pearson 2011; Jacobs 2003). Contrary to the general conclusions by other scholars Mariwo (2008: 6) in her study of rural Zimbabwe is deeply critical of these conclusions, arguing that this portrayal of rural women constructs a global image which is eventually reproduced and perpetuated in academic literature, governmental rural development policies

and project justifications of nongovernmental organisations. In this regard, the facts of their female diversity, capabilities and needs are neglected and such essentialism, generalisation and stereotyping affect rural women negatively. As a result, the core of current rural development programmes and policies targeting rural women is wrongly placed. Thus this study through the use of qualitative methodology seeks to understand women's contribution to agriculture production and food security as current literature is conflictual and is mainly based on quantitative analyses.

#### **1.4 Aim of the Research**

- The aim of the study is to understand the roles of women in agricultural production

#### **1.5 Objectives**

The objectives of the research are to:

- Investigate women's level of participation in small scale farming
- Identify challenges faced by women small scale farmers.
- To determine the coping strategies used by women small scale farmers in dealing with the challenges

#### **1.6 Research questions**

- i. What role do women play in small scale farming?
- ii. What are the challenges hindering women from participating in agriculture activities?
- iii. How does women small scale farmers deal with the identified challenges?

#### **1.7 Justification of the study**

This study will contribute to the understanding of women's contribution in agriculture production. It will do so by specifically identifying the activities that woman small scale farmers are engaged in, challenges and coping strategies they employ in agriculture production. This is in line with Reiter (1975a:12)'s analysis that most of the time women's



roles are overlooked, treated as peripheral issues in research and sometimes absent from description. Despite a large volume of literature recognising the significant contribution they make across the globe, a study by Tegegne (2012) recommended for studies that focus on women's roles in agriculture production across Africa hence the relevance of this research paying particular attention to Chegutu District.

In most societies men's roles in agricultural production is assumed to be direct and clear. However women's role in agriculture production is not clearly recognized. Hence a clear picture of women's participation in agriculture is needed. Although there is increasing recognition that women are involved in the world agriculture, literature that provides a clear picture of where, and under what circumstance are women in agriculture doing particularly in the farm work have been very scarce (Annable1986). Thus this study will be a step forward in highlighting the experience of female farmers in Chegutu District.

### **1.8 Chapter summary**

The foregoing chapter gave a detailed account of the background situation putting it into the research context, the chapter also took into account the research problem, research questions and the objectives of the study, limitations, delimitations, purpose of the study and with the summary summing up all the issues addressed.

## **Chapter 2**

### **2.0 Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature related to women small scale farmers' activities in agriculture production, challenges and coping strategies. According to Machi and McEvoy (2012), a literature review is a written argument that promotes thesis position by building a case from credible evidence based on previous research. It approves the context and the background about the current knowledge about the topic and lays out a logical case to defend the thesis position taken. The outcome of a literature review is a document that presents a logically argued case founded in a comprehensive understanding of the current state of knowledge about a topic of study. This case establishes a convincing thesis to answer the study question.

#### **2.2 National Comparisons of women's roles in agricultural production**

A study by Radel (2011) in Mexico revealed extensively on the role of women in agriculture production and concluded that they partake in the whole production process. The study concluded that at the beginning of the season, the female farmer seeds the fields, prepares meals, and de-weeds them twice or three times within the same season. In harvest management, she gathers the beans and squash, and then when the corn is dry, she takes off the ears and brings them back to the house to be cleaned. Whilst in post harvest management women mills the corn for tortilla, and prepares the meals with whatever has been harvested. The study noted that women small scale farmers in Mexico attends the fields every day except for Sunday when she has to attend the church service and between harvests and sowing. The study by Radel (2011) noted that the seasonal routine complimented by a well calculated daily routine of women in agricultural production has assisted in the development of an intimate knowledge of such things as edible weeds, soil moisture and pests that is comparable to expert knowledge. The study by Radel (2011) concluded that the experience

documented in Mexico is common among women who are raised and then marry into farming families, and illustrates the breadth of agro-ecological knowledge held by women, even as they are discursively constructed as “helpers” or altogether invisible in agricultural contexts (Radel, 2011). However the research will also seek to refute or corroborate these findings as Zimbabwean society is very different from the Mexican experience hence realities have to be experienced from the point of view of societies under study.

There is a wide array of research that deals with gender and agricultural production in various contexts. This literature reveals a number of facets regarding women’s roles. Etenesh (2005) in his studies of women small scale farmers in Ethiopia concluded that women are key players in helping their families in particular and their community in food production. The study further concluded that despite the effort they put, it is most surprising that the communities in which the farmers toil do not recognise the activities that women small scale farmers do. This has also been supported by Tsehai (1991) in his research in Gambia which concluded that the problem with development literature is reaching a common understanding as to how female farmers are perceived in society as academic observations have in the past perceived women as co-farmers and others have concluded that they are marginal players in agricultural development particularly by those individuals with significant influence in research, extension and development positions (Tsehai 1991). Whilst feminist writers have argued that common descriptions, inclusive of self descriptions, of women’s role as supplementary contribution to the invisibility of women’s labour and their roles, an invisibility that is too often reproduced in policy and in environmental studies (Arias, 2009; Zapata Martelo, 1996). This invisibility also serves to maintain traditional hierarchical rights and obligations within the home (Arias, 2009). Hence it is imperative to also empirically study women’s roles in agriculture production in Zimbabwe as highlighting women’s tenacity

in agriculture production will contribute to the understanding of women in agriculture production.

On another note, Otieno (2001) revealed that crop preferences are gendered in subsistence farming in Gambia. Men cultivate commercial crops such as sorghum, millet, maize and groundnuts while women cultivate rice for subsistence purposes. This was also further highlighted by a conceptual research paper by UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (1998) that warned on the occasion of World Food Day, 16 October 1998, that women shoulder more and more of the burden of providing food in many parts of the world even in Europe in spite of the rate of development in the developed regions as they plant, plough, harvest and fish, gather wood, fetch water, cook, breastfeed, and sell foodstuff, but although they are the main actors in feeding the world and fighting hunger and malnutrition, most of their work is unpaid or grossly under paid and they have little or no access to land, credit, training and technology. The study by FAO (1998) recommended studies to document the experiences of women small scale farmers across the African continent hence the relevance of this research.

Women face a number of challenges in agriculture production. A study on challenges faced by women small scale famers by Hadera (2002) and further noted by Tesfaye (2003) concluded that in Ethiopia women are affected by many issues which differ across time and space. The study concluded that rural women do not have equitable access to agricultural resources. They have low involvement in development activities and have low decision making power. This has rendered their contribution to the agriculture sector invisible. The aforementioned conclusions are similar to the findings by Davidova and Thomson (2014) in Central Europe specifically focusing on the challenges and the prospects for Europe who concluded that the main economic challenges to women subsistence family farms are access to farming resources such as land and capital, and access to market, particularly in terms of

bargaining power in the food chain. However, despite the comprehensive nature of the studies they both were in consensus that the challenges faced by women small scale farmers differs across time and space hence the necessity of this research.

Furthermore, Darnhofer (2010) in Central Europe concluded that women small scale farmers have very little assets and poor access to credit, and they tend to diversify income sources through off-farm employment (Darnhofer 2010). Many farmers, particularly those with an agricultural area under 2 ha, have diversified to such an extent that the non-farm activity has become more dominant than agriculture production. This is similar to the conclusion reached by Otieno (2001) in Gambia which revealed that women in agriculture have diverse portfolios to cushion themselves from poor seasons. Household coping strategies used by women small scale farmers are diverse and highly location-specific (Campbell 1999). Darnhofer (2010) in his case study approach to women subsistence farmers coping strategies in Austria titled, Adaptation through the “bricolage” approach an example from Austria revealed that women subsistence farmers use “bricoleurs” which refers to use of reliably available resources with which women are familiar with in addressing newly emergent challenges, and they use resources that are available on their farm, like tools, materials, buildings. For example, one farmer who was already into animal husbandry, decided to switch from dairy cows to pigs (Darnhofer 2010). The farmer thus had to reorient the internal structure of the housing facility to the new mode of production. This is done to reduce large investments and to limit cash flow by instead of using wood in renovating the animal housing the small scale farmer cut down trees from their own forest. Darnhofer (2010) state that this means the piggery was not exemplary, but the compromises that women small scale farmers do in sustaining productivity.

Rural dwellers with diverse types of off-farm incomes are most able to cope with drought stresses (Ahmed 2004; Campbell 1999; Eriksen et al 2005; Krysanova et al 2008; Smucker

and Wisner 2008). Major coping strategies used in semi-arid Africa include (from highest to lowest importance): food aid, indigenous fruit collection, livestock and poultry sale, casual labour, support from neighbours and family, credit, handicrafts, salaries, charcoal making, small businesses and sale of land (Eriksen et al 2005). Flood-specific coping strategies include replanting crops immediately after the rains, temporary migration, and moving to high ground (Ahmed 2004). However the research by Ahmed (2004) concluded that specific communities react to challenges differently and studies on coping strategies requires constituency specific hence the relevance of this research.

### **2.3 Women subsistence farmers in Zimbabwe**

#### **2.4 Pre-colonial Period**

In Africa and Zimbabwe to be precise assessment of pre-colonial gender relations poses methodological challenges. The lack of sufficient detail on women significance and status in Africa before colonial advent is largely due to dearth of source materials (Okpeh Jnr 2007). Eurocentric literature which glorify the coming of Europeans and undermines the role of women in pre colonial Zimbabwe which has largely penetrated academic discourses reflects a deep seated prejudice against African women in particular and the African continent and its *modus vivendi* in general (Okper Jnr 2007). This has also been elaborated by Cheater (1986) that anthropological studies and historical studies of women in both the pre-colonial and colonial epochs were produced by men, more often of a different culture whose biases are very visible even at a glance.

Pre-colonial Zimbabwean society was agro-based (Cheater 1986; Masiwa and Chipungu 2004) and was supplemented by craftwork like trade, hunting and craft production (Beach, 1980 cited in Cheater 1986). Within and among households the nature of pre-colonial agricultural production had serious consequences on gender relations and division of labour. Tenorial rights were communally grounded and the chief was the custodian of the land

(Jacobs, 1990; Peters and Peters 1998). The chief would allocate land to the headmen who on behalf of the village held land in the family name and distributed it to male members of the lineage and at times to non-lineage members only through the consent of the chief (Peters and Peters 1998). However, contrary to the assertion by Peters and Peters (1998) a study by Cheater (1986) reviewed that chieftainship was not only a preserve for males only as there were also female chiefs. The study noted that there were female chiefs in Mashonaland West Province (Makonde District), Mashonaland East Province (Mutoko District) and Manicaland province (Cheater 1986).

Despite women's undeniable contribution to agriculture and craft production, they were excluded from access to land in their own right, but had control over grain stores, could own livestock and provided labour (Mackenzie 1975 and Beach, 1980 cited in Cheater, 1986). Land ownership was in a separatist manner in which men had primary rights to land whilst women had secondary rights through their husbands or male relatives (Cheater 1986; Gaidzanwa 1994; Kesby 1999 cited in Makura-Paradza 2010). Women's exclusion from primary rights was premised on their predestination which was marriage and movement to another community (Gaidzanwa 1994, Anderson 1999 and Kesby 1999 cited in Makura-Paradza 2010). The payment of bride wealth (*lobola* in Ndebele and *roora* in Shona) did not only legalise marriage but transferred the rights of women's labour and reproductive capacity from their own family to that of the husband, but also indemnified the women's family of the loss. Thus whilst land ownership remained vested in men, Cheater (1986)'s study revealed that food security at household level including day to day control of the house was a preserve for women.

The secondary user rights that applied to women was restricted to usually family fields whilst common land and in some cases a plot of land women could use as "their own" divorced from patriarchal control from which the benefits of the produce would contribute to the

collective ephavasine of the family (Hilhorst 2000). This view is further supported by Adepelumi (2007) whose research concluded that pre-colonial African women retained the right to profit from their labour although the gained profit would be pulled to the total family income. In Zimbabwe, society had created categories of crops regarded as feminine subsistence crops. Women were expected to grow crops such as pumpkins, potatoes, groundnuts and beans on women's small plots (*tseu/tsivande*) (Peters and Peters 1998). Widowhood and polygamous situations did not affect women's secondary user rights to land. However risk of losing secondary user rights for widows was rife in the event that she refused to be inherited by her late husband's brother (Hilhorst 2000, Chidakwa 2015).

Despite women's important role in agriculture production during the pre-colonial epoch they always appear as subordinate to men in literature of cross gender relations. This undermining of women's importance in sustaining human and agricultural fertility in Shona society is due to male hegemony (Mazarire 2003). The predominance of patriarchy in property ownership and authority was and is still vested in men as heads of the family unit (May 1983 and Muzvidziwa 2002 cited in Makura-Paradza 2010). However despite the adverse effect of customary law on women in practice, as long as land was available women were not entirely excluded from land use in pre-colonial but also had a share in land use.

## **2.5 Colonial gender relations**

At the advent of colonialism the colonial administrators introduced a dual economy in which Zimbabwean women stayed behind in native reserves as subsistence farmers whilst men were forceful and at times motivated to travel to commercial centres as labourers (Arrighi 1977; Aurret 1990; Raftopolous and Phimister 1997). This dual economic production which ushered in for the migration of male labour increased the burden of women in native reserves. However contrary to the conclusion by Aurret (1990; Phimister 1997) a research by Schmidt (1999) concluded that in Africa due to the technological development of agriculture



production as a result of colonialism women had a less burden in agriculture production. Despite this first conclusion which affirmed that women in colonial period had a lessened burden, the study by Schimdt (1999), also reached a rather conflicting conclusion when he concluded that the technological development did not benefit the Africans as draft animals which they relied on was a preserve for the well off, as majority of the herds were affected by tsetse fly endemic, hence the displacement of women from the burden of subsistence agriculture was not as rapid as in Latin America and in Asia. In light of these contestations the research will empirically explore at the role of women in small scale agriculture and understand their current roles.

The colonial period also fortified exclusion of women in polygamous unions and those not married from land ownership (Mararike 1996). Policy frameworks like the National Husbandry Act also disposed women of grazing rights for cattle since women who owned livestock could not register them in their own right as they were not entitled to land rights (Peters and Peters 1998). The aforementioned demonstrates the propensity of erosion and transformation that colonialism did to customary land tenure system and agriculture production in a trajectory that was disadvantageous to women (Auret 1990; Peters and Peters 1998; Adepelumi 2007).

A research by Schultz (1999) argues that African colonial government policies were patriarchal in nature and this pattern of administration has also been documented by Boserup (1970). The research by Boserup (1970) and further reviewed by Schultz (1999) notes that the colonial agricultural extension systems promoted cash crops as a way to engage the idleness of African men whose roles in traditional agricultural systems was peripheral whilst women had been active in traditional crop production. The extension of agriculture production facilitated the adoption of new technologies in enhancing productivity. The

adoption of new technologies increased labour in cash crops relative to subsistence food crops. Thus as a result, the economic productivity of men increased as compared to women. However the research generalised the findings based on a quantitative methodology for which the lived realities of women small scale farmers in Chegutu needs an exploratory analysis hence the relevance of this study.

A study by Schmidt (1999) and also further supported by Dey 1981; Von Braun and Webb 1989) revealed that in West Africa the introduction of cash crops was complemented by adoption of irrigation which led to the treating of rice as a commercial crop, shifting it from a traditional female crop to one regulated and managed by males. This was also similar to the findings of Murdock and Povost (1973; Embers 1983; Kennedy and Cogill 1986; Smith and Chavas 1997 who noted that in East Africa when coffee transformed into a cash crop, at production level it became dominated by men. This was also further supported by Boserup (1970) whose research concluded that historical crops that have benefited most from agricultural research and development funding efforts in Africa, including the gender bias in the extension effort favouring male farmers, is attributed to the colonial administration. However, research focusing on the role of gender relations in post colonial Africa is absent and if present treats the gendered element to the periphery hence the relevance of this research.

## **2.6 Women and agriculture production in the post-colonial state**

After a decade of fighting the liberation struggle Zimbabwe emerged an independent country (Peters and Peters). The government embarked on various land reform programs as a way to correct the colonial imbalances. Irregardless of the various land reform programs undertaken from independence up to date a study by Mbaya (2005) concluded that women in the A1 model still continue to cultivate small pieces of land because of limited inputs and they are

incapable of boosting production beyond subsistence level. Studies across Africa from Boserup (1970) concluded extension work tends to be dominated by male extension agents and this was a challenge in terms of efficient and effective transmission of technologies to female farmers. However, contrary to the above conclusion, Evenson and Siegel (1998)'s research across the African continent concluded that the gendered nature of agriculture extension institutions have changed for the better as female agents have also been hired and trained to effectively reach female farmers.

The study by Evenson and Siegel (1998) further revealed that when extension officers allow a gender bias, in farm visits or contacts between the farmers and the agriculture extension officers, female farmers are as effective as males in increasing their yields in response to new technology and inputs. The research further noted that effects of secondment of female extension officers are particularly positive for female farm managers. The study by Evenson and Siegel (1998) also concluded that in Burkina Faso female farm managers tend to have higher yields in maize and millet whereas male managers tend to have higher yields in cotton and groundnuts. Thus modeling of the gender of the farmer and the agent based on Evenson and Siegel (1998) is important in technological transfer, learning by doing and diffusion. The study by Mbaya (2005) in Zimbabwe went on to highlight that as one of the resolutions in the Inception Phase framework reference was made to the training of women in agriculture production but despite the commitment nothing tangible emerged. Mgugu (2008) in support of the aforementioned noted that the provision of agricultural extension services and related technical expertise in post fast track land reform resettlements continue to be biased against women small scale farmers. Out of the 10 000 tobacco farmers trained by the Farmer Development Trust only an insignificant 5 percent are female heads of households. However this research will explore Chegutu District which has farmers who are not only specializing in

tobacco farming but have a variety of crops. Thus based on these recommendations the research will explore at the response of extension officers in agriculture production paying particular attention to Chegutu District.

A study by Chizarura (2006) in lower Guruve on gender and cotton farming noted that women are major players in agriculture production and food security. Cotton is a high pesticide-input commodity, and women are often responsible for applying pesticides even when pregnant, thus female subsistence farmers face severe problems. On the other hand they face and absorb extreme climate (drought, floods) and market (price) shocks, but women subsistence farmers in particular are noted for preserving their structure, functions and identity. He further notes that out of these households, approximately 40 percent are female headed (the women are either widowed, divorced or have spouse gainfully employed outside Lower Guruve). Chizarura (2006) concludes that farmers have resorted to reliance on food hand-outs from NGOs, side marketing and abuse of input schemes as legitimate strategies for those who harvest less than expected by cotton merchants. In extreme cases some have resorted to cross-border trading, poaching and gold panning activities which are illegal in order to survive.

The study by Bhatasara and Mandizadza (2014) laments that the majority of studies on climate change have employed diverse quantitative models which have underestimated societal perceptions on the impact of climate change on rural livelihoods. A study by Makarau (1999) in analyses of climate change basis its assessment on increased variability of rainfall, temperature and rain days. This was also similar to the studies by Unganai (1996), Hulme and Sneard (1999) and Hume et al (2001) whose analyses had explored climate change from quantitative analyses and as possible to measure using observed climate data and seven global climate models. However despite Bhatasara and Mandizadza (2014)

pointing out the limitations of the quantitative analyses they failed to elaborate on the impact of climate change on small scale agriculture production as they only grossly elaborated on rural livelihoods for which agriculture production is one of the many rural livelihoods strategies. Hence the relevance of the study in elaborating on the challenges faced by women small scale farmers in agriculture production.

The study by Peters and Peters (1998) and further noted by Bhatasara (2011) concluded that the FTLRP instead of widening women's livelihoods it has actually diminished their capabilities. Proceeds from *mombe yeumai* are at stake as they are forced to graze the cattle on their husband's allocated land, and at times they may be denied the rights to graze if the husband's pasture does not suffice. The study further noted that when men decides to depasture their own rather than their wives' cattle. Women are not allowed to keep their cattle including the wealth that come along. The tseu/ tsivande elaborated by Bourdillon (1987) is no longer preserved in the post fast track land reform resettlements and this has diminished women's capabilities in post fast track land reform (Peters and Peters 1998).

A study by Nyawo (2013) revealed that the fast track land reform program created a living apart yet together type of family. This increased the workload of women who remained in the areas as they now doubled as fathers of households. They assumed additional roles and responsibilities. They now had to herd cattle, cultivate land with ploughs, cut firewood with axes, go fishing and even hunting for small animals to feed the family in some cases. These chores, things being equal, are traditionally the responsibilities of men. In addition, these women would also stand in as care givers, nurses and 'doctors' to the elderly who remained in the village. The fast track land reform program attracted able bodied young men who were adventurous and had energy to start a life, a new homestead and with a future to forge fresh

relations. As such, their services were removed from the communal areas which had seen them grow, removing them from offering some cultural or traditional responsibilities.

Despite the above negative experiences of land resettlement, Jacobs (2000) found that Zimbabwe departed to some extent from the general and rather negative picture of land reform. Women make important contributions to agricultural production although the exact contribution both in terms of nature and magnitude are often difficult to assess due to variations across the ecological regions. The study by Jacobs (2000) further noted that female small scale farmers played a major role in agriculture production and were now owners of their own plots. However the study did not elaborate on the activities that women contribute in agriculture production but only highlighted that in terms of land ownership they was a great improvement.

In a study on rural livelihoods diversification and vulnerabilities amongst the Moyo Musande Chirau et al (2012) concluded that for women who were practicing agricultural production water was a significant natural resource for them. The research revealed that women in small scale agriculture were not only into open agriculture but were also engaged in gardening. The study further noted that most of the gardens were located at home whilst some were located close to the river because of proximity of water. The study noted that women were into vegetables production like covo, spinach, rape, onions, tomatoes, cabbages and rugare which they consumed with Sadza. The study however noted with concern that crop preference differed depending on individual preference amongst the women famers. The research by Chirau et al (2012) revealed that the products from the garden are not just for consumption but the generated surpluses are marketed. On average a month the small scale farmers generate US\$10 from selling their produce. However, the research by Chirau et al (2012)

concluded that whilst women are into agriculture production men are into fishing. However this research seeks to understand the women small scale farmers experience as realities differs across space and time hence the relevance of this study.

A study by Chiweshe (2012) on the gendered nature of social capital in post fast track land reform in Mazowe in 2012 noted that women are excluded from social institutions like the water committee and when they are incorporated the level of incorporation is merely as window dressers. However, Chiweshe (2012) analysis reviewed that regardless of the exclusion women in Mazowe have shown great tenacity by negotiating their own space in order to meet, discuss and share. The research noted that at Blightly farm a horticulture club called *Budiriro Kumaruwa* was formed and at Usk farm there are two groups of women involved in savings. The other group comprises of four women whilst the other has six members. The research further noted that within A1 farms in Mazowe there are a plethora of clubs some are politically organized by ZANU PF (for example at Komani farm. However, Chiweshe (2012) noted that A1 schemes are made up of women from different social classes some are plot holders (single, married, widowed), small houses, relatives of plot holders, former white farmer's workers. They have different educational status, religion and even national backgrounds as such their experience are very diverse that it is neither desirable nor possible to talk of small scale farmers as a homogenous unit. The research only provides an overview of the experience in Mazowe however using a similar methodological approach the research provides an exploratory analysis of women small scale farmers in Chegutu District since in qualitative research reality is socially constructed and varies across time and space.

## **2.7 Chapter Summary**

The chapter looks at the available literature relating to the research topic. The literature review focused mainly on the disenfranchisement of women from land and how previous research has revealed women's positionality in agriculture production. The study revealed

literature across the globe, Africa and the African experience with regard to women and agriculture production so as to contextualise the current research within the context of the previous researches.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the theoretical framework to be used in the study. The study will borrow concepts from the feminist political ecology of Dianne Rocheleau et al (1996) in analyzing issues pertaining to identification of the contribution of women small scale farmers to agriculture production, challenges encountered and the coping strategies they have designed. The concepts will be used because of their ability to conceptualise the role of women in agriculture production.

#### **3.2 Champions of the Feminist Political Ecology**

Feminist political ecology is informed from several decades of intense feminist scholarship in different fields by scholars such as Carolyn Merchant (1980), Vandana Shiva (1989), Val Plumwood (1993:2002), who laid the foundation, by conceptualising and providing empirical tools for systematic analysis of nature and feminine. The feminist political ecology thus borrows heavily from the field of development, agriculture and feminist theories of development, agriculture, forestry and environmental science (Rocheleau et al 1996: Deere 1990: Carney 1993: Schmink 1999: Schroeder 1999). This research will make use of feminist political ecology edited by Rocheleau et al (1996).

#### **3.3 Basic Tenets of the Feminist Political Ecology**

The feminist political ecology derives basis from post structuralism to expand societal respective partial and situated knowledge through a politics of science that stretches beyond identity to affinities then work from affinities to coalitions (Rocheleau 1996: 459). The theory analyses gendered experience and responses to environmental and political-economic change that brings with it changing livelihoods, landscapes, property regimes and relations (Hovorka 2006). The theory does not assume that women's identities define them, but instead focuses

on “affinities” (defined as based on shared views of interest and affiliations, subject to transformations over time”). The theory recognises the need to include women in studies of land and agriculture as a moral justice approach to the ecological and social contexts that sustain women livelihoods, instead of separating them from the context of livelihoods and treating them as invisible in agriculture production. Hanson (2015) also notes that the feminist political ecology moves from other feminism approach of focusing on women’s vulnerabilities and the silencing of gendered and subaltern knowledge to stress the global significance of women’s embodied practices and collaborative action in livelihoods formation and sustenance.

The major aim of the feminist political ecology framework has always been guided by the need to answer the question that is gender a critical component in agriculture production struggles and how these struggles intersect with feminist goals/objectives, practices and strategies. However using a ground up approach the feminist political ecology framework emerged in the late 1990s with the intention of joining the feminist and political ecology scholarship. The theoretical framework treats gender as a critical variable in shaping crop preference, resource access and control in the struggle between men and women in the sustenance of ecologically viable livelihoods and the prospects of any particular society in its endeavour for sustainable development (Rocheleau et al 1994:4). The theory further documents that for one to conceptualise on the gendered nature of production one has to look at it from gender and environmental knowledge, gender and environmental politics, gendered environmental rights and responsibilities and grassroots activism.

The feminist political ecology is an intergration of the gender nature and geography on how the gendered subjectivities and the environment are co-produced through everyday agricultural production. This framework allows research not to only focus on material production, environmental knowledge, but also demonstrate exclusively women’s roles in

agricultural production, challenges they are facing and the coping strategies they have devised.

This conceptualisation stands in stark contrast to conventional feminist approaches to soil management whose conclusions regard the third world farmer as homogenous and undifferentiated (Gardner and Lewis 1996: 79), thereby denying history, individuality and multiple identities (Mbilinyi 1992: 45-46). Thus this research will empirically study women small scale farmers not as an otherised constituents but as the core of research.

### **3.4 Strength of the feminist political ecology**

The feminist political ecology recognises the critical role that women play in utilisation of natural resources for livelihoods sustenance. It also presents rural women as a constituency that has not been represented in the different publics (differentiated by gender, class, locality and occupation) (Rocheleau 1995: 460).

The feminist political ecology framework recognises the role played by both men and women in agriculture production, but nevertheless recognises gender as an integral part and key element in agrarian revolution and contemporary agriculture production (Hovorka 2006: 209). The theory recognises that before agrarian reform took off, socially constructed roles played a significant part in the gendered experience of the landscape. Gender determined the different roles, resource distribution, responsibilities and decision making. The theory notes that gender issues are rarely raised in patriarchal societies were “powerful policy frameworks restrict women’s domain to mere assistance in agriculture production and puts women’s autonomy under male guardianship (Hovorka 2006:211). Women’s accesses to productive resources remain limited compared to men’s, which has an adverse effect on women s livelihoods (ibid: 213). Rather than just adding women to standardised methods of empirical research this study recognises gender as a subject of study and in so doing incorporates the feminist political ecology in the research design and to apply it to an analysis of livelihoods

(Rocheleau 1995). Livelihoods are riddled with power dynamics and therefore the feminist political ecology recognises the antagonisms that gender, land and livelihoods play in small scale agriculture production.

### **3.5 Chapter Summary**

The chapter has highlighted on the feminist political ecology framework as the guiding principles to the analyses of women small scale farmers contribution to agricultural production. The basis for using the feminist political ecology derives from its strength in understanding the politics surrounding women and environmental interface in the sustenance of livelihoods and agricultural production. The analyses originates from a stand point that environment, livelihoods and women is shrouded with power dynamics in which women are excluded from gaining a fair day's share from a fair day's work yet they toil day in day out in the production process.

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The chapter focused on the general overview of the blue print or structure of data collection procedure, research tools and analysis. The chapter also gives a comprehensive description of how the study was conducted in respect to the research instruments highlighting their strength and weaknesses. It also outlines the research design, the sampling technique, limitations of the study, ethical considerations and the data analysis method used by the researcher in understanding the lived realities of women small scale agricultural production.

#### **4.2 Research Approach**

The study was based on a field research conducted on interpretivist basis/ qualitative design grounded in phenomenology. For Cresswell (2009) lived experiences of societal sub groups are best captured by phenomenology as it investigates phenomenon from the standpoints of the research participants. Polite and Hungler (1999) describe the research design as a blue print or outline for conducting the study in such a way that maximum control will be exercised over factors that could interfere with the validity of the research. Crocket (2007), in support of these sentiments defines a research design as a basic strategy of a research and logic behind in which then makes it possible and valid to draw specific conclusions about a phenomenon. The reason for use of interpretivism grounded in phenomenology was to generate a rich data that describes and explains the role women small scale farmers' play in agricultural production. The grounded analysis unearthed the everyday experience of women small scale farmers as the description recognised the reality of women farmers which was different from the reality that grand explanations accord to all women. The research was premised on qualitative basis through a participatory approach that recognised women not as objects but as participants and social actors in research who can elaborate on their

contribution to agriculture production. For Strauss and Corbin (1990), interpretivism is a procedure of gaining insights through discovery of meanings by improving one's comprehension of the whole.

This probe unearths the richness, depth and complexity of women small scale farmers in agricultural production. In view of the above, the guiding paradigm in this research is anthropological interpretivism grounded in phenomenology. Empirical phenomenology proceeds from the assumption that a scientific explanation in research must be grounded in the meaning structure of those studied. Schultz (1966: 5) and further analyzed in Shultz (1975: 51) notes that in scientific research the researcher should use the life-world of the actor as a point of departure, where the person acts within the natural attitude, which the actor takes for granted. The role of women in small scale agricultural production could only be understood from a grounded analysis provided by women small scale farmer erking a living out of agricultural production by themselves without prior subjective meaning by the researcher. This was in line with Gall et al (2007)'s recommendation that exploratory research should treat women small scale farmers as competent interpreters of their own lived realities. Based on such a standpoint this allowed the researcher to gather in-depth data on the role of women small scale farmers' contribution to agriculture production from the perspective of the farmers.

The first order construct of female small scale farmers assisted in the reconstruction of the precise undertaking that women small scale farmers are involved in that had been previously constructed by second order analyses which are sometimes based on misconceptions as supported by Schultz (1962:59). The research was grounded in what Schultz (1982: 128-131) termed as the ideal empirical research, as offering explanations that are grounded in the subjective experience of the society under study. At the same time, he highlights that the

researcher must not simply deliver a description of the state of mind but must understand why and how women engage in agricultural production.

The research was confined to a particular case of women small scale farmers who are into agricultural production at Oldham resettlement scheme and Celary resettlement scheme in Chegutu District. Yin (1984:23) defines the case study approach as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon critically. This was also further supported by Powell (1985:45) whose analysis concluded that the case method approach intensively focuses on a small participant in this case, women small scale farmers involved in agricultural production at Oldham and Celary resettlement scheme, drawing conclusions only on their own lived realities. The focus was not on the discovery of a universal generalizable truth, nor was it concerned with the cause-effect relationships, instead the research focused on exploration and description of women small scale farmers experience in agricultural production.

The case study method was used due to its recommendation not just in Sociology but in other disciplines in theory building, producing new theory and to dispute or challenge existing theories and knowledge (Soy 1997). This was also further supported by Powell (1985: 46) who noted that case studies results relate directly to the common readers everyday experience and facilitate an understanding of complex real-life situations. Thus for this research the case study approach unearthed the life of women small scale farmers and their lived realities.

#### **4.3 Research Site**

Based on a purposive sampling framework the research was conducted in Chegutu District at Celary resettlement scheme and Oldham resettlement scheme which are peri urban farms in Mashonaland West province. Research on land reform and livelihoods is regarded as of significance and therefore needs to be approved by the authorities first before commencement of research. As such the researcher forwarded his letters of interest to Sanyati District,

Kariba, Chegutu and Hurungwe for vetting by the District Administrators and the District Police Officer (DISPOL) and the Agriculture Research and Extension Officer. This involved a couple of interviews which turned into interrogation routines on the purpose of the research, the reason for selecting a particular district, the recipients of the research findings and the funding of the research. It took three months to finally get an acceptance letter from the Chegutu District Administrator and the agriculture research and extension office.

The reason for the selection of the above resettlement schemes is their recognition as a success story in circular 56 of the Chegutu District Administrator report of 2016 on food security and women's contribution to agriculture production in Chegutu District. Farmers in these areas were settled during fast track land reform. These schemes have more than 300 households and fall under Chief Ngezi. The fast track land reform facilitated the emergence of a new form of social organisation for the new farmers. Due to the constraints initiated by the crisis, the government of Zimbabwe could not afford to offer basic social services and support for the new small scale farmers. The farmers thus largely depend on social organization and networks to survive. Chiweshe (2011) characterizes these social formations as farm level institutions (FLIs), which are an important form of farmer agency. The farmers at these farms live in what Scoones et al (2011) termed as villagized arrangements. Major crops grown at Celary and Oldham are tobacco, maize, vegetables, rapoko, sorghum and these variety of crops are grown both for consumption and income generation.

#### **4.4 Population of the study**

The target population of the study were women small scale farmers doing agriculture production at Celary resettlement scheme and Oldham. The researcher used the standardised measure of a maximum of six hectares to define small scale farmers. All women farmers not domiciled at Celary and Oldham resettlement schemes and those owning more than six hectares were not a concern for this study. According to Best and Khan (1993) a research



target population is any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics that are of interest to the researcher, in this context the target population were farmers. In congruent with the above sentiments, Sekeran (1984) defines population as the entire group of people, culture or collectively shared symbols that is of interest to the researcher and being the prerogative objective of the study. In gaining access to the population, the researcher established prior contacts with the local leadership and negotiated for entry into the community. As a pre-requisite for gaining access, the researcher was tasked to forward a confirmation letter detailing the researcher as a student at University of Zimbabwe as basis for conducting the research. The study's focus was women small scale farmers who are earning a living out of agriculture production at Celary Resettlement scheme and Oldharm. The choice of location of this study was informed by the significant presence of women small scale farmers within the area. Oldharm and Celary were targeted due to the existence of women led farming cooperatives and their presentation as a success story of the best contributors in food security at District level in Chegutu District. Thus once at Celary and Oldharm the targeted participants had participated in agriculture production during the last farming season and only one representative will be purposively selected per household.

#### **4.5 Sample and sampling methods**

According to Nachmias (1976), the chief aim of sampling is to make an inference about a parameter that is unknown from the sample statistics that can be measured. For this research a sample of 15 respondents were drawn based on the quality of information they could provide to the research basing on the views of Kumar (2005), that in qualitative research quantity does not matter but what matters is reaching a saturation point.

##### **4.5.1 Purposive sampling**

The selection of the units was based on the characteristics of the sample relative to the phenomenon under study and also on a sample from which one can learn the most gained

understanding and insight (Merriam 1998). For this study, the sample was drawn based on quality information that could be generated from the sample. Once at Oldham and Celary resettlement scheme the sample was purposively selected at household level and those that makes contribution to agriculture production were the ones recruited. The researcher stopped recruiting respondents after data saturation had been attained. A total of 10 women small scale farmers were recruited. This was also supported by Kumar (2005) that in qualitative research quantity does not matter but what matters is reaching a saturation point. Thus there was no a preconceived number of sample prior to data collection but data collection was only stopped when new themes stopped emerging as the researcher was concurrently collecting data and analysing.

#### **4.5.2 Snowball Sampling**

For the recruitment of key informants snow ball sampling was used. Snowball sampling allowed the researcher to accomplish what Denzin (1989), calls interactive sampling, which is sampling of people who interact with one another. The first respondent was the District Administrator who then assisted the researcher with identification of other key informants who provided the different interfaces that woman small scale farmers interact with. This facilitated the recruitment of the District Administrator, Councillor for ward 24, AGRITEX Officer, District veterinary officer and a female headman. The use of snow ball sampling was guided by the need to get a rich data from people who directly deals with women small scale farmers on a daily basis and this was only possible through getting referrals from the different interfaces that the female small scale farmers interact with on a daily basis. For land administration and land allocation the women small scale farmers interact with the local headman and the District Administrator hence their recruitment, whilst for plant management and animal management the lands officer and the veterinary officer were recruited as they provide the various interfaces that women small scale farmers interact with.

## **4.6 Data Collection**

### **4.6.1 Key Informant interviews**

The researcher conducted five key informant interviews in order to gather rich data in relation to the roles of women small scale farmers. Key informant interviews were used due to their ability to generate rich qualitative data from key focal persons in Chegutu District who are well acquainted with the activities that women do in agriculture production. The key informant interviews were conducted by the researcher in different sites but within Chegutu District. The reason for conducting these interviews within the daily activities of the respondents was in order to facilitate generation of very rich data. The key informant interviews were open ended and spanned from thirty to forty minutes. The key informant interview did not follow a structured format but allowed the interviewee to elaborate extensively on the role of women small scale farmers. The key informant interviews were conducted at different sites. The District Administrator was interviewed at the command agriculture field day conducted at Old harm farm at Mrs Zinanzva's farm. The female headman was interviewed at her kraal whilst harvesting her maize, whilst the veterinary officer, the councillor for ward 24 and the AGRITEX officer were interviewed in the field conducting their daily routines. This assisted in generation of rich data as they elaborated comfortably without any distraction to their daily routines.

### **4.6.2 In-depth Interviews**

In-depth interviews were also used in generating data from female small scale farmers at Celary and Oldham. In-depth interviews were used due to their ability to generate not just verbal speech but even non verbal cues at individual level. The researcher pretested the questions for validity before administration. The interviews spanned from thirty five minutes to forty minutes. The in depth interviews were conducted by the researcher and involved pre-formulated interview questions with open-ended answers and the ability to expand responses at the discretion of the interviewer and interviewee which was in line with the

recommendations by (Schensul et al. 1999:149). In-depth interviews were used due to their high level of flexibility and complexity since facial and verbal responses were also encoded which provided a basis for generation of quality data from female subsistence farmers as they elaborated very well on their activities in agriculture production. However the researcher was continuously restructuring the questions depending on the previous answers provided by the respondents. The aforementioned was in line with Schensul et al. (1999: 1)'s argument that "semi-structured interviews combine the flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview with the directionality and agenda of the survey instrument to produce focused qualitative, textual data." The decision to use in-depth interviews was due to the nature of the research, where the researcher had enough information to develop a background analysis of issues pertaining to female subsistence farmers and the goal was to develop an understanding of how they are contributing to agriculture production, challenges faced and the coping strategies they have devised.

The in-depth interview was guided by structured queries that pursued a consistent line of inquiry on the role of women small scale farmers in agriculture production. The stream of the questions in the interviews was fluid and not rigid in line with the recommendation of (Rubin and Rubin 1995). The researcher throughout the interview process was observing the line of inquiry, as guided by the study protocol and asked actual conversational questions in unbiased manner that also served the need for the line of inquiry. In these interviews the researcher assumed different positionalities in order to generate rich data. In another interview schedule the researcher was more of a son, in another he was more of a grandchild and this did not compromise generation of data but necessitated the generation of rich data. Despite the changes in the researcher's positionality empiricism was never compromised as reflexivity was the guiding framework. The interviews were conducted during agriculture

work and as such the researcher was assisting the female small scale farmers with their work whilst interviewing them.

#### **4.7 Data Presentation**

Data was categorized into themes and presented through emerging themes, as the approach allowed for the richness of the data collected from women small scale farmers not to be compressed by the researcher but to be presented as explained by women small scale farmers. The compiling of field notes entailed interpreting events, activities and emotions, a process that required inductive reasoning, thinking and theorizing. The research used thematic content analysis in making inferences from written communications generated from the written messages generated from the fifteen responses by objectively and systematically identifying specific themes from the messages. This was in line with Cozby (2004)'s analysis that data analysis should involve the researcher devising a systematic coding system that classify information into themes or categories. Due to intuitive and inductive nature of qualitative data that emerged from Chegutu District at Celary resettlement scheme and Oldham emerging themes were used to present the qualitative data obtained from the in-depth interviews and key informant interviews.

#### **4.8 Data Analysis**

The data analysis integrated the findings of the research from the respondents with literature from previous studies complimented by the feminist political ecology framework and this was done in an objective manner that ensured high interpreter reliability. Guba and Lincoln's (1985) model of trustworthiness was used in order for objectivity to be maintained while analyzing the data. This model was used as it enables the researcher to determine the internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity of the qualitative data. The model includes four constructs, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Guba&

Lincoln, 1985). These constructs are similar to the more conventional terms of the positivist paradigm, namely internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity.

#### **4.9 Ethical Considerations**

The research was well guided by the rights and well-being of the participants in all areas of this study. This study was subjected to strict evaluation by the Department of Sociology at the University of Zimbabwe before receiving approval for commencement of the research. This research was governed by ethical procedures in the whole process by adhering to standards which include voluntary participation, informed consent, concerns related to confidentiality and anonymity as well as minimizing the psychological risk or harm to participants. In addition to this, research participants were treated with courtesy, dignity and respect.

##### **4.9.1 Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation**

The research championed voluntary participation and informed consent of the respondents in the study. The informed consent and voluntary participation used for the research was in line with Cone and Foster (2006)'s analysis that it is a process which entails giving adequate information to prospective participants of what their participation in the research will mean so that they participate in the research based on their free will and obtaining their written agreement without using deception. The participants were provided with sufficient information to formulate an informed decision as to whether they wanted to be included in the research or not. The principle of informed consent was applied from the gate keeper like the District Administrator, DISPOL, AREX officer and the female small scale farmers. This principle played a greater role in the acceptance of the researcher into the local community as the gate keepers felt that they had adequately been informed. Even after agreeing to participate in the interviews respondents had the right to withdraw in the middle of the interviews for example the District Administrator withdrew from the first interview citing that he wanted some of the questions to be asked at his office and not at the field day and the

researcher had to wait for him to make up his mind and later he called the researcher and had to be interviewed in his office.

#### **4.9.2 Privacy, Confidentiality and Anonymity**

The research was also guided by principles of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. These principles entailed taking a great risk in making sure the identity of the respondents remained anonymous and what they shared cannot be related to their identity. The aforementioned was in line with the sentiments of Huysamen (2001) that it is the responsibility of the researcher to make sure that personal matters discussed by the respondent and the researcher are not discussed in public as they have the capacity to trigger feelings of anxiety, guilty or shame. In this regard the researcher was very diligent in dealing with personal information. Confidentiality was also maintained through use of pseudonyms. Anonymity is ensuring that no uniquely identifying information is attached to the data, and this was ensured. Information gathered from the key informant interviews and in depth interviews was coded so as to maintain anonymity of the respondents. However the key informants refused to use pseudonyms as they felt their views were valuable when their real identity is attached as this is a critical element in rural development. Whilst for the female small scale farmers they all elaborated that giving them colour codes was important in order to avoid the stigma that society attaches to women who voice their opinions before men. The respondents highlighted that at one time they were even summoned by their husbands when another researcher came to interview them and he then proceeded to use their identity in the presentation of findings. The voice of the respondents was respected as their identity was concealed through use of pseudonyms.

#### **4.10 Methodological Challenges**

The researcher faced challenges in accessing the female small scale farmers as Chegutu District is a patriarchal society and any attempt to talk to women was treated as demeaning

the authority of men. However the researcher received a buy in to the community through the assistance of the District Administrator and the District Agriculture Research and Extension Officer who have already communicated with the village heads and this facilitated a smooth data collection.

#### **4.11 Summary**

This chapter highlighted on the methodology employed by the research, highlighting research design which was qualitative case study. It also looked at the target population, sample and the sampling procedure. Research instruments like in-depth interviews and key informant interviews were used. The data presentation was based on thematic content analysis.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents and interprets the findings of the study using emerging themes. The generated data documents the experience of women small scale farmers using in depth interviews and key informant interviews conducted at Celary and Oldham resettlement scheme. 10 interviews were conducted with women small scale farmers and five key informant interviews with the District Administrator, District Agriculture and Research and Extension Officer, the District Veterinary Officer, Councillor for Ward 24 and a women headman (sabhuku). The compiling of field notes entailed interpreting events, activities and emotions, a process that required inductive reasoning, thinking and theorizing.

#### **5.2 Data Presentation**

Socio demography could not be provided as the respondents were a very diverse sub group whose only connection was that they are all women small scale farmers residing at Celary and Oldham and that they associate with agricultural production but whose history is not an inch closer to the same category to warrant for socio demography. This is in line with Chiweshe (2012) 's analysis that women in A1 schemes are diverse and have different socio-demographic information and as such they are varied. The data presented reveals the researcher as a son, grandson, brother and a researcher as the positionality of the researcher facilitated the generation of data. Without such a positionality quality data would not have been possible.

#### **5.3 Women's Activities in agriculture production**

Data generated from in-depth interviews at Celary resettlement scheme revealed that women are the main actors in agriculture production. This was also further revealed by data generated from key informant interviews which revealed that women play a leading role in

agriculture production. Women respondents revealed that though in terms of deciding what crops to plant and when to plant is a politically contested they always play a leading role in the production process since most men are not domiciled at Celary as they are always following the gold rush that is grasping Chegutu District. The data revealed that men always dominate the decision making but at times women also contribute in the decision making process. The respondents went on to highlight that men spend at least six months away following the gold rush and at times the women are all alone throughout the crop life. Some respondents even asserted that at times men can follow the gold rush for the whole year without accumulating cash sufficient to come back home so the women will have to decide and plant in order to secure food for the household. The respondents also highlighted that when men are present women merely play a co-assisting part as men decide when to crop and what to crop. However they were differences between the views and perceptions of married female subsistence farmers and widowed farmers. Married female subsistence farmers elaborated that decisions are a preserve for men but they are responsible for the production process whilst single farmers and widows revealed that they decide for themselves. The single and divorced respondents revealed that they don't consult anyone as they play both the mother figure and the father figure. The widows and the single plan when to crop and what to plant and they don't have any separation of men and women's roles as they do it for themselves. The respondents revealed that:

*Muzukuru ini handisirini ndinosarudza mbeu dzekudyara asi sekuru vako ndivo sarudza asi patinorima vanenge vasipo nekuda kwekushambadzwa kurikuitwa goridhe ku Gadzema, Four stump neku ZMDC. Vanosarudza mbeu vari ikoko tichivazivisa nerunhare mbozha zvatinenge tafunga kuita vobva vatiudza zvekuita variikoko.*

*My grandson I don't decide on what to plant but your grandfather decides but he is not here during the production period since they is a gold rush at Gadzema, Four Stump, Pickstone and ZMDC. He decides from there and we always tell him via the phone what we intend to do and he decides from there.*

Despite majority of respondents highlighting that men always retain the decision making right in agriculture production Mrs Yellow revealed that her husband, a headmaster by profession, does not retain the decision making right since he only plays a supporting role to her in agriculture production. The respondent went on to highlight that as the owner of the six cows they have, she always decides when to sale or to buy but only informs his husband as he is not a farmer in his own right. This was also corroborated by Ms Pink, a divorcee, and Mrs Black, a single farmer, who noted that we are not controlled by anyone in terms of decision making on what to plant, when to plant and how I will till my land is up to my own accord. However, some respondents revealed that there was a separation of animals kept by males and females as they elaborated that men in most cases retained the decision making in cattle production whilst women retained the decision making right in small livestock like goats, sheeps and chickens. Mrs Yellow who now is a proud owner of a growing herd of cows narrated how she has acquired all the wealth:

*Ini ndini muridzi wemunda asi murume wangu anondibatsira, chero havo baba vari mukuru wechikoro pamubato wavo webasa asi vanonditendera kutungamirira pakurima. Ndakatenga mombe dzirimudanga pasina rubatsiro rwavo rwemari uye patinokohwa ndirikutoda kutenga tarakita*

*"I am the owner of my plot and my husband has been very supportive of me, though a headmaster by profession my husband has allowed me to facilitate production. I*

*bought the growing herd without his financial contribution and by harvest time I intend to purchase a tractor.”*

Data generated from key informant interviews also revealed that in terms of cropping majority of women small scale farmers still retains their small plots which they produce crops such as groundnuts, pumpkins and cowpeas. This was also supported by data generated from in depth interviews which revealed that men still retain ownership of the main field as the primary owners of land which usually houses the cash crop whilst women are owners of the *tseu* which is largely responsible for food security at household level. Irregardless of the separation, the respondents highlighted that in times of drought men automatically takes charge of the benefits accrued in the main field as well as in the *tseu*. Majority of respondents highlighted that for them it was justifiable for the husband to retain the benefits of the main field since he was the head of the household and since the benefits are used to support the household whilst the benefits accrued from *tseu* would only be used to buy kitchen utensils and to buy road runner chickens. The main crops grown at Celary and Old harm are maize, tobacco, soya beans and cow peas. However, out of ten respondents only Ms Pink a divorcee was in full control of the outputs from the main field whilst Mrs black pointed out they distribute equally the benefits accrued from the main field with her husband. However the respondents also elaborated that in times of bad harvests women are forced to loose total control of the *tseu* as the gains realized will be directly controlled by the husband. Despite the variations of the *tseu* the farmers were all in consensus that it is still being practiced in post fast track land reform program and was only worked by women as men did not partake in agriculture production in the *tseu*.

Data generated from key informant interviews at Celary resettlement scheme and Oldharm reflected that women undertake in cultivation, planting, weeding and harvesting during production. The respondents stated that they are the key players in agriculture production as

they are responsible for overall management of crops starting from land preparation right up to post harvest management. The Agriculture extension officer further highlighted that even when they are pregnant they participate in spraying of herbicides. This was also corroborated by data generated from respondents which revealed that women through the support of men undertake in cultivation since they use cattle to plough the fields. The respondents highlighted that irregardless of climate change and the reduced rainfall they are currently receiving they toil day in day out without rest so as to produce adequate food for the family. The respondents further revealed that in situations where they use hired labour they also cook for the workers. Data generated at Celary also further revealed that the female small scale farmers also fetch water for spraying and tobacco nursery from Bosbury dam which is 10 km away. Respondents reiterated that they work from as early as 4 am till dawn before going to do households chores whilst men rest in the shade. The respondents highlighted that when men assist in the fields they only play an assisting role. One respondent Mrs Purple revealed that:

*Mwanamgu ndinomuka mazuva ose nenguva dza4 mangwanani apo tinorima ini nababa vako asi kudyara nekusakura ibasa redu isu vakadzi asi kana zuva ronoreka tinozorora kubasa remumunda tonoita mabasa epamba ukuwo varume vachimwa hwahwa hwematanda vagere mumumvuri.*

*My son I am always up at 4 am and we cultivate together with your father whilst planting and weeding we do as women only. After dawn we usually retire from the fields and do household chores whilst men are drinking opaque beer in the shade.*

Data generated from respondents also further revealed that women small scale farmers are overally responsible for post harvest management. The respondents highlighted that the women have two separate granaries for cash crops grown in the main field and for other

feminine crops like rapoko, millet, cassava and ground nuts grown in the tseu/tsivande. This was also supported by information generated from key informant interviews which revealed that despite men being the owners of the household women are key players in post harvest management as they are the ones equipped with the skill needed to make sure the crops are kept safe to sustain the family for the whole year. The respondents highlighted that during the farming season they harvest even pumpkin leaves and dry them for the family to consume during the offseason. Respondents highlighted that men only assist with crops like maize in terms of shelling it whilst women do the packaging and preserving against rodents and pests. Mrs Green noted that:

*Kuchengetwa nekugadzirwa kwembeu tapedza kukohwa ibasa remadzimai chete nekuti varume havana hunyanzvi hwekupepete nekupatsanura mbeu kubva kumarara saka vanobva vasiya isu madzimai tichiita basa iri.*

*Postharvest management is a sole duty of women as men lacks the skill to sieve and to separate grain from chaff so men assign this role to women*

The key informant interviews further revealed that women dry vegetables as a way to preserve for future consumption. The respondents went on to show the researcher the dried vegetables which were packed in different sacks with some carrying dried cow peas leaves (munyemba), pumpkin leaves (muboora), cat whiskers (munyeve) and cooked and dried maize cobs (chibage chehumhare). The respondents highlighted that this is the responsibility of an active women small scale farmer as one cannot get them from anyone except from your own granary. All the respondents highlighted that they are the main players in post harvest management.

The respondents went on to highlight that they are not very active in terms of marketing of the produce as men always override their authority even in crops that are feminine. The

Respondents highlighted that this is the most controversial part as many women small scale farmers have committed harvest suicide after the husband failed to remit part of the cash to the wife for household use and drink it at the local shops and at times marrying a new wife. This was also supported by data generated from the extension officers which highlighted that they have even set up a conflict resolution committee in Celary and Oldharm which make sure that Tinevimbo cooperative does the marketing of the produce and pay the farmers within three working days only in the presence of both the wife and the husband in cases where they are a couple. However, for Mrs Purple and Ms Red, a widow and a single farmer, they revealed that they partake in all the marketing of their products and do not rely on male counterparts and this has facilitated the total realisation of their full benefits.

Respondents also highlighted that with regard to livestock production women are responsible for the overall responsibility of all small livestock like goats, sheeps, chickens and rabbits including supplying fodder and milking. The participants all elaborated that women are responsible for making sure that small livestock have been fed and drink quality and sufficient water. All respondents revealed that in terms of large livestock it was a preserve for men and the veterinary officer as the role was more masculine. In terms of ownership the respondents revealed that despite them being large players in small livestock production decisions to depasture remained in the hands of men as they have a final decision. The respondents were all in consensus that with regards to cattle men had an overall contract whilst women only retained the *mombe yeumai* only.

#### **5.4 Challenges faced by women in Agriculture**

The respondents also reiterated that with regard to access to information on farming methods and weather patterns they face a lot of challenges. The respondents highlighted that the extension officers always prioritize men over women as such farming and training programs at Celary are always dominated by men as if women are not farmers in their own right. The

respondents highlighted that they have to rely on secondary information from male farmers who would have attended the trainings. The respondents lamented that this has exposed them to misinformation and at times failing to get appropriate information. This was also visible in the data generated from key informant interviews which revealed that the extension officers were overlooking the existence of women small scale farmers through an assumption that only men were the key farmers whilst women play a supporting role. This was also supported by Mrs Khakhi an extension officer:

*Kutaura chokwadi munin'ina wangu ini fungidziro yangu ndeyekuti hakuna varimi vechidzimai asi vangori vabetsedzeri chete ndosaka chero pandinodzidzisa varimi ndinongoshevedza anababa chete nekuti tsamba dzemunda dzine mazita ana baba chete asi ndakazonzwa nezvechichemo kwekusadavidzwa kwemadzimai saka ndichazvigadzirisa.*

*To be frank my brother my assumption is female famers are non-existent and they only play a supporting role that is why in my trainings I only extend my invitation to male farmers since majority of offer letters bears names of male farmers however of late I have been told of the complain and I am yet to correct the anomaly.*

As a result of the failure to be recognized as in existence by the agriculture extension officers who are supposed to recommend them for contract farming and the Command Agriculture scheme, they are excluded from most agriculture programs. Respondents in the in-depth interviews also revealed that women without assistance of men face difficulties in accessing agricultural resources such as, fertilizers, seed, chemicals, transport and draught power. Only three out of ten respondents were contracted under the command agriculture scheme and they noted that they had registered the credit in the name of their husbands whilst four respondents highlighted that the extension officer had never pointed to the



existence of the scheme and so they only heard of command agriculture halfway through the season through other farmers but getting in touch with the extension officer was fruitless as she was always telling them that she was not in the area and would get back to them. However, three respondents highlighted that they ere threatened by the local leadership as to how can women access the inputs before men so they had withdrawn their applications for fear of being seen as outcasts.

*Mwanangu ndakabvunzwa kuti how on earth kuda kuwana mbeu nezvekurimisa ivo varume vasativapera kuwana. Ukainda against them unonenerwa mhosva dzakawanda wanda vamwe vanoti urimuoyi, vamwe vanoti ndiwe urikutora varume vevanhu saka unoda kudzingwa mudunhu dzimwe nguva kana kutonzi uri webato rezvematongerwo enyika ranhingi apo chiri chinhanho chekuda kugadzira ruvengo ne dunhu rese.*

*My son I was told how on earth a women can want to access the inputs before all men have benefitted. If you go against their will they will cook up all kind of stories like you are a witch or you are taking people s husbands and you should be chased away from the village and even at times telling you that you belong to political party X so that the whole community hates you.*

Moreover, the interview with key informant interviews revealed that women have limited access to credit because they do not own property worth of collateral and the banks do not consider offer letters, 99 Year Leases and Permits as collateral. Inputs are generally not available and unaffordable for all farmers and more so for female farmers. Women pointed out that the support given by the government is not enough because sometimes women farmers especially in the communal are given only a two kilogram packet of seed of which it is not enough for them for them to expand production. Also the assistance comes late for

example fertilizers is distributed in smaller quantity when it is no longer time for applying fertilizers. The respondents gave an example of the Command Agriculture fertilizer compound D which is yet to be distributed to the farmers despite their maize already being at tussling stage. Mrs Brown who is a leader of women farmers in the area said that:

*Tinopihwa mbeu ne fotereza mwaka waenda apo tinongopihwa chi 10kg icho tinogovaniswa tiri mhuri gumi zvinozoita kuti tisarima pakakura.*

*We are given the seed and fertilizers when it is too late and we are given 10 kilograms of seed and it shared among ten families of which it is too little for high production.*

The respondents also further revealed that despite the Brazilian sourced equipment being channelled towards small scale farmers, neither of the respondents or any women farmer benefitted from the mechanization scheme. The respondents revealed that their exclusion in the mechanization was even visible in the Agriculture mechanization program again as they were excluded in the list of beneficiaries. Respondents lamented their exclusion as being grounded on their lack of recognition as farmers in their own right and are no longer total dependents of men as most of the respondents are now owners of land in their own right. For those who have land registered in their names they stated that they are not treated as serious farmers so they even doubt their papers were even considered for the mechanization or they were simply archived as any efforts for a follow up they were simply told they will be notified in due course. Mrs Purple elaborated that:

*Ini ndakanyoresa kuzvirongwa zvese kubva kune che Bangi guru renyika chekupihwa zvekushandisa kusvika kune ich chekuBrazil asi hakuna chakabuda kana bhemba haro asi varimi vese vechirume vemunzvimbo vakawana.*

*I applied for all the schemes starting from the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe led mechanization up to the Brazilian sourced scheme but nothing materialized not even a slasher but all male farmers in the area have benefitted.*

Key informant interviews revealed that given women's structurally limited history of capital accumulation, this leads to their lack of collateral to access credit from financial lending institutions. To further substantiate this line of argument, the District Administrator pointed out that women's lack of basic items such as scotch carts, oxen and savings, let alone tractors and urban houses which are also used as security and enable farmers to have a productive record. Key informant interviews further revealed that it was observed that most women own one or two cattle and if they do own it is either it was given as part of the lobola for their daughters or they inherited it. This narrative was also further supported by data generated from respondents which revealed that in terms of collateral security women automatically disqualifies themselves from access to credits as men have all the properties registered in their names whilst women becomes mere owners by virtue of association.

From the interview with key informant and women in face to face interview, they both revealed that women have access to land but they do not have control and ownership of land. From the data gathered some women who owned land were widows and female headed families and the land is not registered in their name but the land is still registered in the deceased names. With further question on why they can't register the land in their own names, the data provided showed that most women were uninformed of their rights because of low education levels and even if they know most of them are reluctant to insist on their rights. Furthermore, culturally there is a belief that land and homestead is owned by the male counterpart. Among the women in the focus group one highlighted that she registered an A1 farm under the son's name for cultural beliefs. A widow Mrs White said :

*Zvakandinetsa kunyoresa munda wangu muzita rangu sezvo vaidira magwaro akawandisa saka ndakazoti mwana wangu mukomana anyoresa nezita rake asi haana kana kumbosangana nedambudziko.*

*It was difficult for me to register my farm they demanded a lot of papers and the process was too long and I asked my son to register in his name and he never faced many problems.*

### **5.5 Women's Tenacity**

Data generated from key informant interviews revealed that in order to reduce the labour burden of agriculture production on women they have adopted the traditional “*nhimbe/humwe*” collective labour brigades. The respondents elaborated that in the post fast track land reform program *nhimbe/humwe* has been adopted to lessen the burden of planting, cropping, weeding and harvesting for women. The respondents highlighted that they systematically rotate between the group's fields to make sure each and every member fully benefit from the assistance rendered to other members. The respondents went on to highlight that the hosting member only provides food for the members whilst the assisting members bring their own tools depending on the task at hand. The researcher even witnessed at Mrs Blue's farm women gathered for the event as he had gone for an indepth interview and Mrs Blue had this to say.

*Mwanakomana sezvauri kungoiona nhasi hokero iri pangu tine nhimbe apo tinochinjana kubatsirana mumaminda uyo anenge akokera nhimbe anozongopa chikafu asi isu tinouya nemapadza nezvekushandisa zvedu. Sekuona kwauri kuita nhasi munhu wese auya nechigubhu chake kuti tigouraya ma army worm mumunda wechibage.*

*My son as you can say today the brigade is at my farm we have nhimbe and we systematically rotate at each other's farm and assisting group members whilst the hosting member supply food whilst the other group members bring their own tools as you can see today everyone brought her knapsack we will be controlling army worms in the maize field.*

Data generated from the respondents revealed that in order to counter the limited access to inputs the women small scale farmers have registered Tinevimbo multipurpose cooperative as a championing vehicle for recognition of women as farmers in their own right. This was also supported by information generated from key informant interviews which revealed that Tinevimbo has been the game changer in recognizing and championing the agenda of women small scale farmers as it has organized workshops and trainings for women farmers. The respondents highlighted that these trainings have been beneficial as they have presented the echoes of female famers as they forwarded their grievances to the District Agriculture Research and Extension Officer over their exclusion from trainings and workshops for small scale farmers and the anomaly is in the process of being rectified. The respondents went on to highlight that the cooperative has even assisted the organization of conducting a field day at Mrs Pink's farm. The field day was a great success as the District Administrator elaborated that it was a wonderful display as the famer has a variety of crops which are best in the ward.

The findings of the study revealed that female-headed households have had to rely on pressure groups and advocacy champions in order to benefit from the land reform program. The findings from the key informant interviews revealed that Women and Land in Zimbabwe have been vocal in lobbying and advocacy on gender issues. Respondents revealed that advocacy training has been done in Chegutu and this was done to enhance the capacity among women farmers to advocate for their rights to land and participation in the

constitutional review process. The project has assisted women to understand their land rights and the need for women to put across women's issues in programs at institutional level.

Due to the pressure exerted from Women and Land in Zimbabwe in the Constitution Making Process women became aware of the Constitutional Review and ready to participate when the COPAC outreach teams reached their area. Data gathered from key informant interviews and further supported by data generated from in depth interviews revealed that women farmers wrote down their land related issues for presentation to COPAC team and most respondents who were part of this research participated in the laying down of the issues included in the constitution. This has yielded results in that most of the women's demands were included in the constitution and now they are also being recognized in agriculture production. Key informant data highlighted that there is an improvement so far in terms of land allocation to women and recognition as independent farmers Mai Vengesai said that:

*Takabatsirwa neve Women and Land in Zimbabwe pakuisa pazvinyorwa zvishuviro zvedu maringe nebumbiro redu remutemo tikaendesa gwaro redu kune veCOPAC vakauya mudunhu medu.*

*We were assisted by WLZ to lay down our demands regarding land in the constitution and we presented the paper to the COPAC committee that came in our area.*

Respondents in the face to face interviews revealed that in changing the patriarchal hegemony women farmers have managed to build rapport with traditional leaders in rural areas including the local chief. The key informants revealed that through the support of Women and Land in Zimbabwe they have engaged the Chief's council on issues surrounding land ownership and women. Chief Ngezi has managed to address this plight by appointing a female headman (*sabhuku*) who oversee all women's issues and this has

contributed to recognition of women as farmers in their own right. The respondents also further highlighted that they have also facilitated the inclusion of women in the village development committee and the ward development committee and the water committee as they are the committees that are visible if one wants to access inputs from the presidential scheme. The respondents highlighted that in as far as they are represented in the formal institutions recognized at ward level they have also formulated grassroots farming institutions which assist farmers in financing their production. The respondents revealed that now have a group called tabudirira which is money go round (*mukando*) where they assist each other buy small livestock for women farmers every month. The respondents alluded that this has been beneficial to the farmers as they all now have goats and sheep and next year in 2018 they are looking forward to upgrade their stock and be owners of cattle in their own right. Mrs Blue said :

*Takakwanisa kutauro nehutungamiriri hwedunhu pamwe nemutungamiri hwemadzimambo maringe nematambudziko anosangana nemadzimai. Izvi zvakabatsira pakuona kwavanoita isu madzimai pamwe nekuonawo kuti vanoshandawo sezvinoita anababa.*

*“We managed to reach the traditional leadership and also the chief’s council president discussing the issues that affect women. This helped in making them recognize that we as women are important and they are able to utilize the land as men do”.*

The respondents also revealed that women farmers had turned into head of households in the absence of husbands who have been lured to the more lucrative artisanal gold mining at Pickstone, Gadzema and Patchway. Since men spend prolonged periods not around women have had to wear two jackets at the same time as they have to be the mother and the father in

order to make sure agriculture production continues and they ensure food security at household level. Whilst single and widowed female small scale farmers elaborated that they don't rely on anyone as they are the head of the household as they are the decision makers as well as the implementers in agriculture production. This was further corroborated by data generated from key informant interviews which revealed that women always stood for their husband with regard to production as most of the time the men are not around. The collection of inputs have been changed as instead of waiting for the men who is a signatory the extension officers have had to co-opt women so as to continue with production. Mrs White revealed that:

*Ini ndini musoro wemba uye ndini ndinoona nezvese zviri pano pamusha murume wangu mukorokoza parizvino ariku patchway kwemakore maviri adarika uye ndinokwanisa kungotengesa mombe dzedu chero asipo.*

*I am the head of the household and I control everything in my household my husband is an artisanal gold miner and is currently in Patchway for the past two years and I can simply sale our cattle in his absence.*

From the observations the researcher noted that women small scale farmers have also diversified their income through off farm activities. This was further supported by information gathered from face to face interviews which revealed that part time work in neighboring farms was also utilised by small scale farmers. The respondents highlighted that the income generated from piece work is then used to buy inputs to be used for agriculture production. The respondents highlighted that they partake in planting, weeding, manuring and harvesting in exchange for a salary which they then utilize to buy herbicides and pesticides. Mrs Green revealed that



*Ndinoita maricho mumapurazi akatitenderedza ndichibhadharwa ne fotereza nembeu kuti ndikwanise kurimisa uye kuti ndive nenzira dzakasiyana siyana dzekuwana nadzo mari.*

*“I work in neighbouring farms and they pay me with fertilizer and seeds in order to finance my production and to have a diverse income base”*

Respondents also highlighted that to reduce their limited participation in marketing they have resorted to using Tinevimbo multipurpose cooperative as a marketing vehicle for their products. The respondents highlighted that this has allowed them to supply Jameson high in Kadoma and Brunswick clinic with agriculture products rather the marketing being done by their husband who would not declare the total gains to the wives. The respondents went on to highlight that the surplus products which is not marketed by Tinevimbo is usually sold at Chegutu green vegetables market and at times they do hawking in order to limit the role of the middlemen as they always undercharge the goods thereby prejudicing the farmer. The respondents highlighted that hawking brings more revenue than selling at wholesale price thanks to the lifeskills the women small scale farmers are receiving from Tinevimbo multipurpose cooperative and Family Aids Caring Trust.

## **5.6 Chapter Summary**

The chapter presented data collected from female small scale farmers and key informants at Celary and Oldharm resettlement scheme. The findings of the research revealed a greater participation of women in agriculture production not as mere assistance but as key players in the production process. The women face a lot of challenges in the production process which ranges from limited capital to finance their production and exclusion from government initiated projects. However regardless of their exclusion the women small scale farmers have shown tenacity amidst adversity.

## **Chapter 6**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The chapter discusses the research findings that emerged from interviews conducted at Celary and Oldharm resettlement schemes by integrating these findings with literature and the theoretical framework. The intergration of the generated data and the reviewed literature is for the sake of positioning the findings of the research to the broader academic lucanae so as to evaluate if the research has filled the knowledge gaps. Whilst the intergration of theory to the findings is aimed at reorienting theory into today's reality, as such the orientation contributes and improves existing sociological knowledge on women and agricultural production. The discussion will be guided by the feminist political ecology. The feminist political ecology derives basis from post structuralism to expand societal respective partial and situated knowledge through a politics of science that stretches beyond identity to affinities then work from affinities to coalitions (Rocheleau 1996: 459). The theory analyses gendered experience and responses to environmental and political-economic change that brings with it changing livelihoods, landscapes, property regimes and relations (Hovorka 2006).

#### **6.2 Women's contribution to agricultural production**

The findings of the research revealed that women in small scale agricultural production are a varied constituency whose identity is not defined by age or marital affairs to warrant socio demography. The farmers at Celary and Oldharm consists of married, divorced, singles, professionals, former farm workers, small houses and government employees. This is similar to the findings by Chiweshe (2012) in Mazowe which revealed that women small scale farmers are a diverse subgroup who cannot be viewed as belonging to the same strata. This is similar to the propositions of the feminist political framework which calls for sociological

analyses not to assume that women's identities define them, but instead research on women's livelihoods should focus on "affinities" (defined as based on shared views and affiliations subject to transformations across time and space) for which agricultural production is one of the shared experiences. This conceptualisation stands in stark contrast to conventional feminist approaches to soil management whose conclusions regard the third world farmer as homogenous and undifferentiated (Gardner and Lewis 1996: 79), thereby denying history, individuality and multiple identities (Mbilinyi 1992: 45-46).

The findings of the research revealed that women are the custodians of the household but does not wholesomely partake in decision making as it is a preserve for men, which they eventually take when widowed or when still single. This was similar to the findings by Tsehai (2008) whose research concluded that women partake in agriculture but decision making is a preserve for men whilst women constitute the labour force used. The results further fitted very well into the feminist political ecology framework which state that geography and environment is riddled with power dynamics in which women are rendered powerless in the control of decision making (Rocheleau 1995: 460). This form of powerlessness was not only in decision making but even extended to crop preference and even mode of production.

The research revealed that women partake in the whole production process as the main players whilst men are usually absent and even in their presence they contribute much. This is congruent to the conclusions by Radel (2011) whose study revealed that in Mexico women small scale producers partake in planting, weeding and cultivation in the absence of men. This was also congruent to the findings by the Zimbabwe National Gender policy (2004) which concluded that women are the major producers of food, and food security at household level hinges on women. In modern Zimbabwe, 86 percent of women live in rural areas and are dependent on land for their livelihood and women also provide 70 percent of the agricultural labour force (Zimbabwe National Gender Policy 2004; Women and Land in

Zimbabwe 2007). This is similar to the findings of Arrighi 1977: Auret 1990: Raftopolous and Phimster 1997) that during the colonial period women were responsible for agricultural production whilst men migrated to commercial centres as labourers. This is also further supported by the political feminist ecology which notes that as a moral justice principle studies should focus on women in studies of land, the ecological and social contexts that sustain their lives, instead of separating them from the context of livelihoods and treating them as invisible in agriculture production. Earlier studies had treated women as dependents of men and not producers in their own right hence depriving them an equal representation in land and livelihoods studies (Kariwo 2012). The findings of this study revealed that despite the challenges being faced by women small scale farmers they are not helpless and are earning something out of their labour as had been concluded by the ZWRCN/SARDC (2008) which had revealed that despite the agricultural revolution in Africa which also encompassed land redistribution, women in agriculture's workload increased by expansion of task such as weeding and transplanting without bringing women an appropriate share. However their findings were congruent with the research findings that many of the farms in the communal areas have women as heads of households. Thus whilst Muir-Leresche (2006) had revealed that men's absence was caused by men working in urban areas leaving the wife at the farm, this study revealed that most men in Chegutu are following the gold rush.

The study concluded that with the beginning of the farming season women clear the fields, plant, weed and also do household chores. Weeds management is a preserve for women and even when pregnant they are responsible. Thus women are responsible for the whole production process right up to post harvest management in which they make sure the grains are safe from bore worms. These findings affirmed the conclusions reached by (Radel 2011: Kariwo 2012 and Katsvairo 2016) that women do 90 percent of work in agricultural production. Their findings concluded that at the beginning of the season, women seeds the

fields, weeds the fields thrice or twice depending on the cleanliness of the field. Similar to post harvest management at Celary and Oldharm a study by Radel (2011) in his study of Mexico revealed that in harvest management women gathers, squash beans and bring them into the house for storage. The study went on to reveal that in post harvest management women mills the corn for tortilla, and prepares the meals with whatever has been harvested. However the study findings were contrary to the conclusion by Radel (2011) with regard to the effect of marriage on agricultural production. Whereas the study by Radel (2011) concluded that the experience documented in Mexico is common among women who are raised and then marry into farming families, the current study however revealed that even women were not married in farming families but partake in agricultural production experience the same conditions. However these findings were contrary to the conclusions by Etenesh (2005) whose study in Ethiopia concluded that women are helpers of their families in particular and their community in food production. The study further concluded that communities in which the farmers toil do not recognise the activities that women small scale farmers do. However within this research women acknowledged that the community recognises the role they play in agricultural production. However these two studies illustrates the breadth of agro-ecological knowledge held by women, even as they are discursively constructed as “helpers” or altogether invisible in agricultural contexts (Radel, 2011). The feminist political ecology recognises the critical role that women play in utilisation of natural resources for livelihoods sustenance. It also presents rural women as a constituency that has not been represented in the different publics (differentiated by gender, class, locality and occupation) (Rocheleau 1995: 460).

The findings of this research also revealed that women small scale farmers are retaining practices that used to characterise communal lands before the fast track land reform. *Nhimbe* and *tseu* are still being retained which is also complimented by separation of the main field

from the main field in terms of crops being grown. This is contrary to the findings by Peters and Peters (1998) that in post fast track land reform program *tseu* is no longer retained and has diminished women's capabilities. The diminishing of the *tseu* in post fast track land reform had also been observed by Bhatasara (2011). However this research affirmed that in Chegutu District it was still present which is also in line with Bourdillon (1987), though in pre land reform agricultural production.

The research further concluded that despite the agriculture revolution remnants of the pre-revolution period of patriarchal domination still exists in decision making and in crop preferences. Thus just like the pre-colonial Zimbabwean agricultural society in which despite women's undeniable contribution to agriculture and craft production they were excluded from access to land in their own right, but had control over grain stores, could own livestock and provided labour (Mackenzie 1975 and Beach, 1980 cited in Cheater, 1986) is still the same scenario. The secondary user rights that applied to women was restricted to usually family fields whilst common land and in some cases a plot of land women could use as "their own" divorced from patriarchal control from which the benefits of the produce would contribute to the collective ephavasine of the family (Hilhorst 2000). This view is further supported by Adepelumi (2007) whose research concluded that pre-colonial African women retained the right to profit from their labour although the gained profit would be pulled to the total family income. This is similar to the conclusions reached by Otieno (2001) in Gambia whose findings revealed that crop preferences are gendered as men cultivate commercial crops such as sorghum, millet, maize and groundnuts while women cultivate rice for subsistence purposes. This is further supported by the feminist political ecology which notes that patriarchal guardianship still exists. The theory recognises that before agrarian reform took off, socially constructed roles played a significant part in the gendered experience of the landscape. Gender determined the different roles, resource distribution, responsibilities and

decision making. The theory notes that gender issues are rarely raised in patriarchal societies where “powerful policy frameworks restrict women’s domain to mere assistance in agriculture production and puts women’s autonomy under male guardianship (Hovorka 2006:211).

### **6.3 Challenges faced by women in agricultural production**

The findings of the research revealed that limited resources constrain women small scale farmers partaking in agriculture production as independent farmers. The respondents reiterated that as a result of limited resources this limits their independence as farmers as they end up depending on men for decision making as well as crop preferences. However this was different with women who were independent and could decide without consulting the husband. Irregardless of the diversity majority of the findings revealed that indeed decision making was a preserve for men whilst women were mere labourers in the production process. This is similar to the conclusions reached by Hadera (2002) and further supported by Tesfaye (2003) in Ethiopia whose studies revealed that women small scale farmers as a constituency of rural women do not have equitable access to agricultural resources. The aforementioned conclusions are similar to the findings by Davidova and Thomson (2014) in Central Europe specifically focusing on the challenges and the prospects for Europe who concluded that the main economic challenges to women subsistence family farms are access to farming resources such as land and capital, and access to market, particularly in terms of bargaining power in the food chain. These findings were congruent to the conclusions reached by Hovorka (2006: 211) whose research concluded that women’s access to productive resources remain limited compared to men and this has an adverse effect on women’s livelihoods. This was further supported by the feminist political ecology framework that agricultural production as livelihood strategies is riddled with power dynamics and as such researches that recognises the antagonisms that gender, land and livelihoods play in small scale

agriculture production are the basis for reorientation of gender studies to include women in the social construction of livelihoods.

The study revealed that women in post fast track land reform women continue to be at the losing end as they are not in charge of the main field and crop preference is grounded in gender aspects as cash crops continue to be a preserve for men whilst women are responsible for food security at household level. The study also concluded that in times of drought women's livestock are the ones that are sold off first. This is supported by the conclusions reached by Mbaya (2005) that irregardless of the various land reform programs taken in Zimbabwe from independence to date; women in the A1 model continue practice production at subsistence level due to limited inputs. This was also further supported by Boserup (1970) whose research revealed that in Africa extension work tends to be dominated by male extension workers and this posed a challenge in terms of effective and efficient dissemination of information and technology to female farmers. However the findings of this research were in contrast to the findings reached by Evenson and Siegel (1998) whose research across Africa revealed that they has been a change in the gendered nature of agricultural extension institutions as women have also been trained to effectively reach female farmers. In Chegutu District women continue to be excluded in extension programs as they are treated as an extension of patriarchal production. This was also further supported by Boserup (1970) whose research concluded that historical crops that have benefited most from agricultural research and development funding efforts in Africa, including the gender bias in the extension effort curry favouring male farmers, is attributed to the colonial administration. This is also supported by the feminist political ecology which treats gender as a critical variable in shaping crop preference, resource access and control in the struggle between men and women in the sustenance of ecologically viable livelihoods and the prospects of any



particular society in its endeavour for sustainable development and agricultural development (Rocheleau et al 1994:4).

The study findings also revealed that women are viewed as an extension of patriarchal production as such extension workers excludes them in the programs intended for farmers. This exclusion also is reflected in the distribution of state resources intended for farmers and is supported by community perception which is largely engraved in patriarchy. This is congruent to the conclusions reached by Mgugu (2008) in his analysis of relations in post fast track land reform which revealed that state provision of technical expertise and extension services in the post fast track land reform resettlements continue to be biased against women small scale farmers. This is in line with Mariiwo (2008:6) whose research concluded that women subsistence farmers in Zimbabwe continue to be viewed as mere extensions of patriarchal agricultural production yet they are independent farmers in their own right. This reproduction in Eurocentric literature which has extended into academic discourses, rural development procedure manuals and project justifications has largely undermined women capabilities, diversity and agency in agriculture production, despite the critical role they play. This has also been supported by Tsehai (1991) in his research in Gambia which concluded that the problem with development literature is reaching a common understanding as to how female farmers are perceived in society as academic observations have in the past perceived women as co-farmers and others have concluded that they are marginal players in agricultural development particularly by those individuals with significant influence in research, extension and development positions (Tsehai 1991). Whilst feminist writers have argued that common descriptions, inclusive of self descriptions, of women's role as supplementary contribution to the invisibility of women's labour and their roles, an invisibility that is too often reproduced in policy and in environmental studies (Arias, 2009; Zapata Martelo, 1996).

This invisibility also serves to maintain traditional hierarchical rights and obligations within societies which have been documented in Chegutu District (Arias, 2009).

The findings of the research revealed that women face a great burden with regard to climate change. The respondents reiterated that as a result of climate change they have had to fetch water from distant water bodies like Bosbury dam and this has increased their work burden in agricultural production. This is congruent to the findings by Bhatasara (2011) that climate change has had an adverse effect and the experience of small scale farmers is gendered. This is in line with the feminist political ecology which propagates that in the environment discourse the effect of climate change portray a gender bias in which women deal mostly with the environmental hazards as such even in terms of their response is very difficult since government responses portray a patriarchal nature (Rocheleau et al 2008). This is similar to the research finding which revealed that in terms of climate change women are more affected than men.

#### **6.4 Coping strategies adopted by Women small scale farmers**

The study findings revealed that women small scale farmers in Chegutu District have diversified their portfolios as a way to cushion themselves from poverty. The women small scale farmers at Celary and Oldharm plant a variety of crops in case others fail and also utilises piece jobs (*maricho*). This is similar to the findings by Darnhofer (2010) in Central Europe who concluded that women small scale farmers have very little assets and poor access to credit, and they tend to diversify income sources through off-farm employment (Darnhofer 2010). Many farmers, particularly those with an agricultural area under 2 ha, have diversified to such an extent that the non-farm activity has become more dominant than agriculture production. This is similar to the conclusion reached by Otieno (2001) in Gambia which revealed that women in agriculture have diverse portfolios to cushion themselves from poor seasons. The findings of this research revealed that even in the face of extreme poverty

women in Chegutu always show tenacity and are not reliant on food handouts as concluded by Chazarura (2006) in his study of women small scale farmers in Guruve who observed that women as a result of extreme poverty and as a diversification strategy they now rely on food handouts from Non Governmental Organisations.

The findings of the research also revealed that as a result of exclusion in grassroots structures and institutions women small scale farmers have formed cooperatives and social groups to facilitate collective representation in lobbying for equal representation, accessing inputs as well as marketing their produce. This is also similar to the conclusions reached by Chiweshe (2012) which revealed that women in post fast track land reform are excluded from social institutions like the water committee and when they are incorporated the level of incorporation is merely as window dressers. However Chiweshe (2012)'s analysis reviewed that irregardless of the exclusion women in Mazowe have shown great tenacity by negotiating their own space in order to meet, discuss and share. The research noted that at Blightly farm a horticulture club called *Budiriro Kumaruwa* was formed, whilst at Usk farm there are two groups of women involved in savings. The other group comprises of four women whilst the other group has six members. The research further noted that within A1 farms in Mazowe there are a plethora of clubs some are politically organized by ZANU PF (for example at Komani farm. However Chiweshe (2012) noted that A1 schemes are made up of women from different social classes some are plot holders (single, married, widowed), small houses, relatives of plot holders, former white farmer's workers. Thus, this is in line with the feminist political ecology framework which states that women are not passive recipients in geography and ecology but their gender subjectivities and the environment are coproduced through everyday grassroots tenacity for which cooperatives is one of their reconstructions of social reality Reachaleau et al (2008).

## **6.5 Directions for Future Study/ Research**

The study was based on a qualitative case in which intensity was focused on understanding the lived realities of women small scale farmers in Chegutu, the findings cannot be generalised to the experience of commercial farmers. Accordingly, the study can also be done in other districts in Zimbabwe. There is also need for research to focus intensively on women in post harvest management and in the role of power dynamics in food security at household level as the study noted that the power dynamics do not only manifest at production level but are rooted in the marriage institution.

## **6.6 Chapter Summary**

The chapter integrated the research findings with the feminist political ecology framework and the literature reviewed in chapter 2 of the study. Based on three themes guiding the research the chapter discussed the roles and activities that women small scale farmers are involved in, challenges being experienced and the coping strategies they have devised to deal with the identified challenges. The discussed data corroborated with earlier studies and at times refuted the findings of other scholars across the globe. The major aim of the feminist political ecology framework has always been guided by the need to answer the question that “is there a gender dimension to agriculture struggles and how might these intersect with a feminist objectives, strategies and practices”. The theory further documents that for one to conceptualise on the gendered nature of production one has to look at it from gender and environmental knowledge, gender and environmental politics, gendered environmental rights and responsibilities and grassroots activism. The research has noted that women continue to be subjugated in the production process and this has largely undermined their capabilities. The study has further noted that women are constantly adapting to the challenges they face in the production process.

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## APPENDICES



### UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

#### Informed Consent

In signing this document I give my consent to be interviewed by Tichaona Talent Chidakwa (R151661B) who is undertaking a Masters in Sociology and Social Anthropology at University of Zimbabwe. The student is carrying out a study on: **An assessment of the roles of women small scale farmers in agricultural production in Chegutu District**

I understand that I will be required to participate in an interview which will take one hour. This interview will be granted freely. I have been informed that even after the interview has started I can refuse to answer some of the questions or decide to terminate the interview at any point. I have been informed of the psychological harm that can be caused by participating in the interview due to the sensitivity of the study. However diligence shall be instituted to reduce harm, but the researcher and the parent institution which is University of Zimbabwe is indemnified of the harm. I have been told that the information provided will be kept confidential through use of pseudonyms and being kept under lock and key and will be used

at the discretion of the researcher and University of Zimbabwe. The gained information is for academic purposes only. I have also been told that this information will assist in documenting the roles of women in agricultural production, the challenges they face and the coping strategies they use.

I..... the undersigned being a resident at Oldham/ Celary farm in Chegutu do hereby accept participation in the research as a respondent. Being a major under the constitution of Zimbabwe I do hereby consent to my participation in the research as a respondent.

Respondent Signature.....Date.....

Researcher Signature.....Date.....

For further questions, queries and requests please feel free to contact the researcher on his cellphone: 0713837166/ 0773538731. Email: [tichaona.chidakwa@gmail.com](mailto:tichaona.chidakwa@gmail.com)

## **Appendix 2**

### **Interview guide: Key informant schedule**

1. How long have you been working in Chegutu District?
2. How much do you know about Oldham and Celary resettlement schemes?
3. Are women involved in agriculture production and in what ways?
4. Have there been changes in activities women and men partake in agriculture production since the end of fast track land reform?
5. What has been the impact of the change on women small scale farmer's livelihoods?
6. What are the challenges encountered by women in agriculture production?

## **Appendix 3**

### **Women small scale farmers' interview guide** **Socio demographical questions**

1. How old are you?
2. What is your marital status?
3. What is your education level?
4. What are the agriculture activities you partake in?
5. Who own the land you derive a living from?
6. What are the challenges you face in agriculture production
7. Has there been change in the activities you partake in agriculture production and how.
8. How are you coping with the identified challenges?