

## **Socio-economic Needs for Community Development in Selected Villages of Molopo Local Municipality of North-west Province South Africa**

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**ABSTRACT** This paper examined the Socio-economic needs for community development in selected villages of Molopo Local Municipality of North-West Province South Africa. Using a stratified random sampling technique 178 household heads were selected from a population of 561 households. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data on demographics, income and expenditure, employment, household resources, food security, marketing, training and socio-economic needs of the community. The data was analyzed by SPSS computer programme using frequency counts and percentages. The results shows that majority (57 percent) of the household heads were females, 69 percent fall within the economically active group 53 percent had no formal education, 67.9 percent survive by means of Government social grants and about 50 percent of the household heads earn below R1000 per month. Other results on the distribution of major occupations of the heads of the households were: gardening (62 percent), cleaning (32 percent), civil service (10.3 percent), farming (6.7 percent) and mechanic/petrol attendant (3.5 percent). The majority (56 percent) will like to engage in agricultural related ventures (vegetable production (21 percent), livestock production (21 percent) and poultry production (14 percent) in order to improve their income and livelihood. There is need to implement appropriate community development and empowerment programmes that can create an environment where the people can meet their basic needs and improve quality of their life. It is recommended that emphasis should not only be on the development of basic infrastructure, but also on income generating activities and education services aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty in the study area.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, the search for sustainable development efforts to solve the problems of the rural poor has become a national concern. Approaches that could be sustainable in terms of the ecological, social, cultural and economic contexts loom highest in terms of priority considerations in the formulation, identification and selection processes in programme development. Once found, these approaches have to be tested, demonstrated and later adopted on a wider scale. Socio-economic refers to environmental, economic, social and institutional patterns, and their linkages that compose the context of development (World Bank 1986). Social and economic factors at various levels of social systems form an environment where people interact through roles and relationships defined by gender, age, ethnicity and other social variables. A needs assessment is the process of systematically collecting and analyzing information in order to identify who is at risk, why, and what can be done about it. A good needs assessment should be the first stage in development planning process. A socio-economic needs assessment helps to identify developments required to change

the lives of current and future residents of a community. These needs if identified and implemented should have potential socio-economic impacts of development which include changes in community demographics; results of retail/service and housing market analyses; demand for public services; changes in employment and income levels; changes in the aesthetic quality of the community; and improvement in the general standard of living of the people in the community.

Possible impacts of identified socio-economic development needs of communities have to be assessed prior to implementation. Assessing the impact of socio-economic needs require both quantitative and qualitative measurements of the impact of a proposed development. For example, a proposed development may increase employment in the community and create demand for more affordable housing. Both effects are easily quantifiable. Also of importance, however, are the perceptions of community members about whether the proposed development is consistent with a commitment to preserving the rural character of the community. The socio-economic impacts of a proposed development on a community may actually begin the day the project is proposed.

Changes in social structure and inter-actions among community members may occur once the new development is pro-posed to the community. In addition, real, measurable and often significant effects on the human environment can begin to take place as soon as there are changes in social or economic conditions. From the time of the earliest announcement of a pending policy change or development project, attitudes toward the project are formed, interest groups and other coalitions prepare strategies, speculators may lock up potentially important properties, and politicians can maneuver for position (Aliber 2003).

Because socio-economic development is normally designed to impact positively on social and economic welfare, the process should rely heavily on involving community members who may be affected by the development. Others who should be involved in the process include community leaders and others who represent diverse interests in the community such as community service organizations, development and real estate interests, minority and low income groups, and local environmental groups. In addition, local agencies or officials should provide input into the process of assessing changes in the social environment that may occur as a result of the proposed development (e.g., providing estimates and information demographics, employment and service needs). Conducting a social impact assessment is important for several reasons. In general, it is used to alert the community, including residents and local officials, of the impact and magnitude of the proposed development on the community's social and economic well-being. The assessment can help communities avoid creating inequities among community groups as well as encourage the positive impacts associated with the development (Aliber 2009).

It is necessary to conduct the socio-economic needs assessment in the context of the other impact assessment components (i.e., fiscal, environmental, transportation). Unfortunately, socio-economic needs assessment often takes a backseat to other types of assessment such as fiscal and environmental impact analysis because the impacts are often more difficult to measure, and the social impacts associated with a development are generally more subtle than impacts on a community's fiscal balance sheet or local natural resources. However, it is important to consider, as early in the planning process as possible, whether the proposed development will

have a significant effect on the social and economic welfare of the community. The objective of the study was to determine the socio-economic needs for community development in selected villages of Molopo Local Municipality of North-West Province South Africa

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Molopo Local Municipality of the North West province. The province lies between 22 and 28 degrees longitude east of the Greenwich Meridian and between 25 and 28 degrees latitude south of the Equator. The region is situated 1.200mm above sea level and has an annual rainfall of 430mm. The climate is very dry, especially in winter and summers are hot with temperatures ranging from 16-38 degree celsius. The size of the scheme is 1054 hectares and plots are divided into 7.5 and 10ha respectively. Agriculture plays an important role with approximately 60 percent of rural livelihood.

### Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

A stratified random sampling method was used to obtain a representative sample. The technique draws sample from an identified population in such a way that every unit in that population has precisely the same chance (probability) of being included in the sample. Using a stratified random sampling technique 178 household heads were selected from a population of 561 households. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire which was developed based on the study objectives and review of literature. The areas covered by the questionnaire included: demographics, income and expenditure, employment, household resources, food security, marketing, training and socio-economic needs of the community and sanitation. The questionnaire was administered in a face to face interview by trained enumerators under the supervision of the researchers. The data were analyzed with SPSS computer programme using frequency counts and percentages.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The gender distribution among the household heads interviewed is presented in Figure 1a. The majority (57 percent) of the household heads were females. There are significantly more women than men in the study area implying that the area might

have been affected by migration of males to other areas. This is an indication of socio-economic conditions where women run numerous households and men seek employment in other urban centres. Generally it is accepted that women are more disadvantaged in terms of income and other resources. The marital status of the responding household heads is shown in Figure 1b. The marital status of the majority (49 percent) of the respondents is cohabitation. Only 10 percent of the respondents were married with 35 percent as single. The age distribution of the population of the study area is depicted in Figure 1c. Sixty-nine percent of the responding household heads fall within the economically active group (<50 years). This implies need for the creation of employment opportunities since there would be labour available for the communities. About 10 percent of the household heads were above the age of sixty.

It is clear from Figure 2 that monthly household income levels in the study area are very low. Close to 50 percent of the household heads earn below

Education is the major determinant of employment, income distribution, technology adoption and analytical ability in a community. Figure 1d shows that the majority (53 percent) of the responding household heads had no formal education. Only 1 percent had college education. An analysis of the household members' levels of education, on the other hand, indicated that 93 percent of the members of the households interviewed had an education of Matric and below. A further 3 percent had tertiary education. It is evident from this statistic that the population of the study area has low basic level of education and low levels of further education. This has a significant impact on employability, type of job opportunities that can be sought and the vocational distribution of the economically active population. Aliber (2009) reported similar findings on the household statistics in South Africa. R1000 per month while 40.4 percent earn between R1000 and R2500. Only 1.2 percent earns more than R5000 per month. Low income levels are indicative

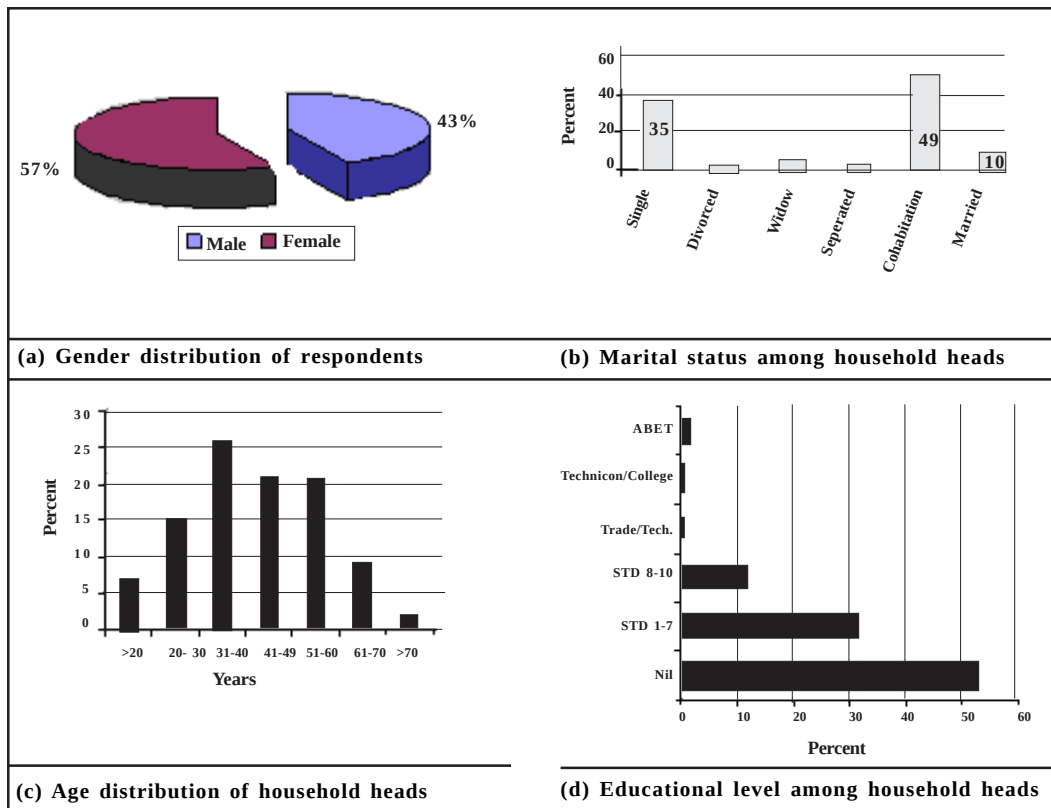


Fig. 1. Demographic characteristic among household heads

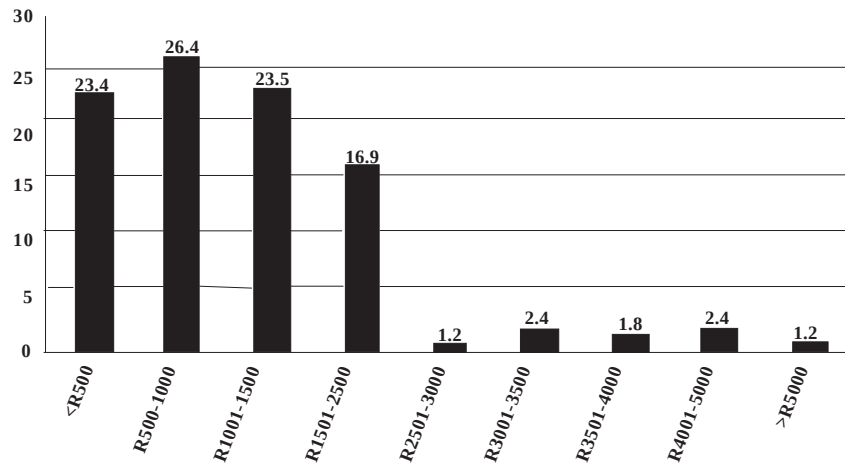


Fig. 2. Distribution of respondents according to income

of low affordability levels for basic services, housing and health services. The situation paints a bleak picture in terms of the ability of the study community to meet their basic needs and improve their quality of life. When asked to rate their welfare status, 56 percent of the respondents considered themselves as the poorest of the poor, 35 percent as poor and 9 percent as average. A combination of low income with large household sizes in the study communities will reduce the per capita or individual income. This implies that the provision of basic essential services to the community would be one of the greatest challenges of the local municipality. The low income levels of the household heads could have contributed to the low proportion of households with savings. These findings agree with Aliber (2003) on the incidences and causes of poverty in South Africa.

#### Employment, Household Resources and Transport

It was established that there was no stable and permanent employment for the people in the area. Most of the employments in the area are seasonal in nature. About 70 percent of the responding heads of households in the study area are unemployed. Unemployment is a serious problem in South Africa especially in rural areas. This, coupled with lack of skills and illiteracy, makes it difficult for rural population to find employment in the secondary or tertiary economic sectors. As a result of this high unemployment, many of the households depend on social grants for survival. The level of self-employment among the responding heads of households was very low (8 percent) compared to

92 percent that were not self-employed (which may be attributed to lack of entrepreneurial skills among the people). The majority (62 percent) of the responding heads of household were engaged in gardening while 32 percent indicated cleaning as their occupation. The other relatively common occupations were civil service (10.3 percent), farming (6.7 percent) and mechanic/petrol attendant (3.5 percent). The study established that generally the area is dependent on the agricultural sector (commercial farming, game farming and small scale farmers). Bundy (1988) found similar results on South Africa's peasantry farming.

Household resources play important role in the ability of households to explore income generating activities to sustain livelihood. The study found that livestock was the major resource possessed by the households. Livestock production is an important farming activity in the North-West Province especially in the dry areas in and around Vryburg where the study area is located. In most rural areas the animals are used as a quick source of cash, for paying Lobola, during funeral services, for cultural practices, for household food and generally as symbol of wealth. The proportion of the household heads that have movable and fixed resources (land) was comparatively lower (3.5 percent and 3.2 percent respectively). There is no land for the people to boost or better their lives. It is therefore important that the Municipality should consider the acquisition of land for future development initiative meant for the area. None of the respondents indicated to have any capital for farming implying that there will be need for grants

and/or loans for them to be empowered into farming activities.

The availability of transport is crucial for any socio-economic activity in any rural area including South Africa (Ellis and Bahigwa 2003). Lack of transport can hinder the implementation of any development initiative or programme of an area as it is important for both internal and external movement of goods and services. The majority (41 percent) of the households rely on Taxi as means of transport. About 22 percent of the respondents use Donkey Carts, while 13 percent use the bus and hiking, with 4.5 percent and 4 percent using cars and bakkies respectively. The relatively high proportion of people using Donkey Carts is attributed to the high levels of poverty among the households which make motor transports unaffordable. Donkeys carts are cheaper, easy to maintain and can be used in everywhere and any condition. The Donkeys are also hardy and easy to manage.

#### **Food Security, Access to Water, Sanitation and Housing among Respondents**

The results of the study show that a large proportion of the respondents (79 percent) were not food secure. The reasons may be that they could not either produce or purchase the right quality and quantity of food for their households at all times. Result shows that a large majority of the responding household heads (93.5 percent) rely on purchase food as opposed to 2.2 percent who produce their own food requirement. It was not surprising to find that the overwhelming majority cited unemployment, no money and less income (86.4 percent) as the reasons for their food insecurity. This underscores the need to improve the employment and income levels of the people. As a result of high food insecurity in the area, some of the households had to depend on food allocation by the Department of Social Development. World Food Programme (2002) reported the same trend of food insecurity in South Africa.

According to the result, access to portable water seems not to be a problem among the responding households. About 91 percent of the respondents had access to portable water mostly in the form of taps (Fig. 3). It was indicated that the local municipality is providing water to 111 households in Tosca and 450 households in Bray. Furthermore 50.9 percent of the water is located within the houses or within 50 metres from the

houses. The remaining 49.1 percent had to walk distances of over 50 metres to access portable water. The study also established that the authorities have concerns about the quantity and quality of water in the area. It was alleged from interviews that there is not enough water in the area to suit the communities' requirements such as irrigation projects. The water was said to be salty. This may imply that any crop production ventures should select crop species with low water requirement.

The results of the study show that a staggering majority (77 percent) of the households in the area do not have toilets. Only 23 percent of the respondents indicated that they had toilet facilities. According to the results pit toilets (64.1 percent) were the major type of toilet used by the people followed by VIP (23.1 percent) and flush toilets (10.3 percent). About 2.6 percent of the households use the bush as toilet. The study established that the Local Municipality has provided 45 VIP toilets in Bray and 5 VIP toilets in Tosca. The RDP houses in the area do not have toilets. It was established that the main sewerage system is not connected to all the houses and businesses in the Bray area. There were claims made that the sewerage system also gives problems continuously because of the way it was designed and sand in the area.

Shelter is one of the most basic needs that a household must have in order to survive and live quality life (Ali and Pernia 2003). In South Africa, provision of housing to the people is one of the basic human rights enshrined in the constitution. The study found that the majority (62.7 percent) of the households live in shacks, while 25 percent live in RDP houses. This situation indicates that provision of housing to the communities in the study area pose a big challenge.

#### **Training and Socio-economic Needs**

Skills, knowledge and technical competency are vital for the people in the communities to keep up with the dynamics of society (Ali and Bahigwa 2003). For successful and sustainable development strategy, the pillars of development have to be taken into consideration, i.e. skills, environment and the aspirations of the people themselves. The result indicates that 81.1 percent of the responding heads of households have never attended any skills training for socio-economic development. This suggests that training will be required in order for the household heads to acquire new technological, managerial

and administrative skills which they lack. The types of skills training obtained by the 8.9 percent were in the areas of: Catering; sawing; computer training; farm management; food preservation; fencing; financial management; home based care; livestock management; brick laying; malaria control; entrepreneurial skills; carpentry; voluntary HIV and AIDS counseling and testing. The skills training needs as prioritized by the responding household heads is presented in Table 1. It is clear from this result that the predominant skills required by 62.1 percent of the households are in agriculture (livestock and vegetable production). The proportion of the respondents who prioritized livestock production was the highest (43.8 percent). The results also shows that the respondents were also interested in acquiring skills in cooking and

SMMEs. It was noted that tourism and arts and craft were lowly prioritized (1.3 percent).

The infrastructural needs of the responding household heads in order of importance are reflected in Table 1. Electricity supply, jobs and tarred roads were the three top ranked needs while houses, transport and water followed in the order. Clinic, shops, multipurpose centre and financial facilities were ranked relatively lower while communication centre, schools and markets were ranked lowest. It was also established that most of the community members did not possess the relevant documents to access the social grants and other government benefits. It is recommended that the development programmes for the area should consider projects that focus on the socio-economic needs of the people indicated in Table 1.

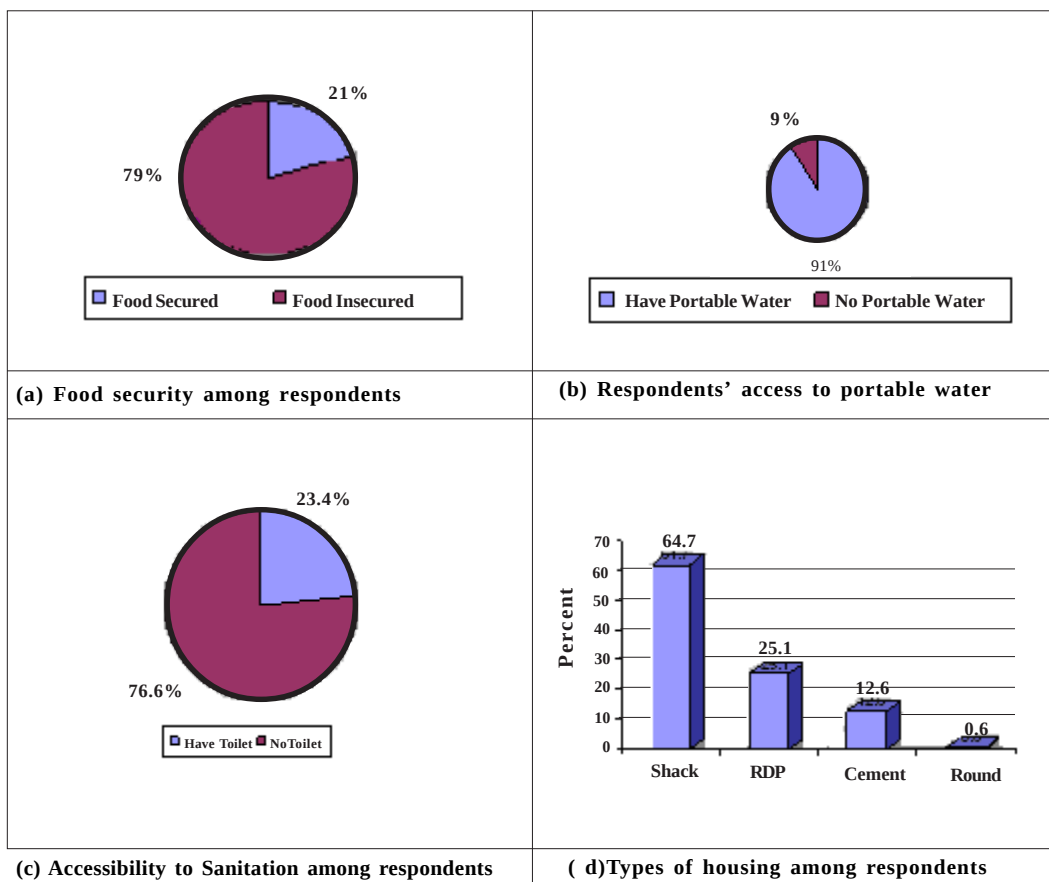


Fig. 3. Respondents distribution according to food security, access to water, sanitation and housing

**Table 1: Respondents' ranking of training and socio-economic needs**

| <i>Training needs</i> |                       |                 |                      | <i>Socio-economic needs</i>       |                |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Rank</i>           | <i>Training needs</i> | <i>Per-cent</i> | <i>Rank position</i> | <i>Socio-economic needs</i>       | <i>Percent</i> |
| 1                     | Livestock production  | 43.8            | 1                    | Electricity                       | 75.3           |
| 2                     | Vegetable production  | 18.3            | 2                    | Job Creation Ventures             | 66.3           |
| 3                     | Cooking               | 13.7            | 3                    | Tarred Roads                      | 61.2           |
| 4                     | SMME                  | 8.5             | 4                    | Housing                           | 49.0           |
| 5                     | HIV/AIDS              | 3.9             | 5                    | Transport                         | 47.6           |
| 6                     | Project Management    | 3.3             | 6                    | Water                             | 47.0           |
| 7                     | Marketing             | 2.0             | 7                    | Clinic                            | 38.2           |
| 8                     | Sawing                | 2.0             | 8                    | Shops                             | 36.1           |
| 9                     | Artisan               | 1.3             | 9                    | Multipurpose Centre               | 34.9           |
| 10                    | Arts & Craft          | 1.3             | 10                   | Financial Facilities/Institutions | 32.7           |
| 11                    | Tourism               | 1.3             | 11                   | Communication Centre              | 24.4           |
| 12                    | ABET                  | 0.7             | 12                   | Schools                           | 24.0           |
|                       | Total                 | 100             | 13                   | Marketing Infrastructure          | 15.7           |

### CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that the obvious challenges for the Bray, Tosca and the surrounding communities, in respect of the socio-economic situation, relates to serving a largely rural community of which 57 percent of the households are headed by females. The analyses indicate that the communities have low incomes, education levels, limited sources of survival, mostly unemployed, very limited household resources and transport, food insecure, poor sanitation and housing, limited facilities for shopping and entertainment, and lack the skills and training necessary to provide them with the capacity to engage in economic activities. The households have large sizes and depend mostly on social grants to survive. The low levels of education have an impact on the types of job opportunities that can be obtained in this rural area and therefore also potential income generation.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The challenge lies in implementing appropriate community upliftment and empowerment programmes that can create an environment where the people can meet their basic needs and improve quality of their life. The results of the study implies that emphasis

should not only be on the development of basic infrastructure, but also on the development of social, health, job creation ventures/income generating activities and education services aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty.

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