

SECOND CARNEGIE INQUIRY INTO POVERTY
AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

A socio-economic survey in
Tzikundamalema (Venda);
An interim report
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A MICROSTUDY : TSHIKUNDAMALEMA IN VENDA

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1. INTRODUCTION

The research that will be discussed in this paper was originally not intended to be part of the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development. The focal point of this research was the socio-economic position of the hut groups, also known as kraals, in Tshikundamalema (Venda).

This research project was planned as the first phase of a larger research project, aimed at planning the development in the research area. Although the research does not deal explicitly with the poverty problem, the results are considered to be of great value towards the understanding of the poverty problem mainly because some of the socio-economic variables dealt with in the research, can be seen as indicators of poverty.

To place results of the research within the wider context of the poverty problem, it will be wise to take a closer look at the poverty concept. Thereafter attention will be paid to the method of research, different features of the research area, the findings of the research in relation to specific socio-economic aspects in the area as well as possible causes and results of poverty. Certain suggestions in the combatting of the problem of poverty in the research area will also be made.

2. THE POVERTY CONCEPT WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO IT'S COMPLEX NATURE

Various and varying definitions of the concept of poverty are found in the literature. Infact it is impossible to provide a single definition of poverty that will be useful at all places and at all times. The popular concept of poverty is being referred to as "a condition in which a person or persons do not possess the necessary

aids to maintain provision in their basic needs, suited to their class, culture, philosophy of life and habits." (See Schoonees, 1970:263).

In sociological literature the poverty concept is looked upon from different perspectives. Although each of these perspectives leads to better understanding of certain aspects of the concept, other viewpoints, important in the understanding of the various aspects of the concept are ignored. In order to understand the relatively complex nature of the poverty concept, a closer look at the main perspectives of the concept is necessary.

- Poverty can be seen as an objective condition that grows out of a particular social and economic system. Economical indications, with certain relative or absolute standards as norms can be used as barometers of poverty.
- Apart from the reference to poverty as an "objective condition", certain subjective features also have an influence on the meaning of the concept. Thus the fact that from the interactional perspective, poverty is referred to as not just a matter of economic deprivation, but involves, among others, the person's self-respect, the harshness of living, feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness. (Manis, 1984 : 212).
- Divergent and opposing group interest can be among the social forces that produce and maintain poverty in societies. In such a case the poor can be poor, because they are exploited by more powerful groups who benefit from the existence of poverty. (Sullivan e a 1980 : 377).
- Poverty differs from one community to the next, and from one ethnic group to the other in the same community. One of the reasons for this phenomenon could be cultural differences.
- The poverty concept is linked to a time dimension and in each dimension one finds different degrees of poverty and wealth.
- Poverty not only has different implications for different categories of poor within a community, but also for the community as a whole.

From the abovementioned, it should now be clear that a simple economical-operational definition of poverty hides its complexity. The subjective nature of poverty must also be taken into account.

Manis draws a clear (1984 : 212) distinction between "mass poverty" in under-developed countries or countries of the Third World and "poverty in developed societies" which creates a better understanding of the poverty concept in the research. There are only minor differences concerning the interpretation of the nature of poverty in the developing countries. In developing countries poverty refers to severe deprivation of basic necessities, or the lack of the barest essentials for good health and wellbeing. In developing countries most of the poor are rural people who barely manage to survive at a very low subsistence level. Malnutrition stunts their growth and makes it difficult for them to resist disease resulting in a decrease in life expectancy. Having only just enough to feed themselves, many are unable to save up or store against natural disasters.

These natural disasters, illness and injuries can cause starvation or death for many people. People who have been living in poverty in the relatively isolated rural villages have mostly come to terms with its existence. The degree to which this abovementioned poverty occurs in the research area, will be clear from the results discussed in paragraph 5.

3. THE RESEARCH METHOD

It was mentioned earlier that the focal point of the research in Tshikundamalema was the socio-economic position of the hut groups and that this research was originally planned as the first phase of a larger research project, aimed at the planning of development of the area of research. With this in mind certain socio-economic variables has been examined and analysed on a micro-level within a macro-context. The households in the hut groups were research units.

The research was preceded by two three-day investigations in the research area during which a population census was taken. A file was opened for each hut group in which the hut group number and identifying particulars of the inhabitants were quoted.

Bearing the results of these two investigations in mind, a third investigation was planned and implemented. Certain socio-economic aspects of the inhabitants of the hut groups were to be examined and analysed in terms of the broader Venda context.

Historical detail and information on socio-economic aspects and Tshikundamalema in the general Venda context has mainly been attained from printed matter, research reports and other literature dealing with the area. In order to determine the level of certain socio-economic aspects of the inhabitants of the research area, it has been attempted to include each of the one-hundred-and-sixty-six hut groups in an empirical research. Unfortunately only ninety-one of the hut groups could be included due to absenteeism in the others. The field work was conducted over a period of four days.

One team, consisting of a team leader, four workers and five interpreters, was used. The area was sub-divided into three geographical areas. The first geographical area was the responsibility of two field workers and their interpreters and the remaining two areas were the responsibility of the team leader and the other two field workers each with an interpreter. The field workers mainly gathered information by using a structured questionnaire.

This information was combined with the information that had been gathered in the two previous investigations. The combined data was then coded, processed and analysed. Descriptive statistics were mainly used in the description and analysis of data.

4. APPLICABLE FEATURES OF THE AREA OF RESEARCH

4.1 Historical background

Historical records indicate that the present Venda are partly the descendants of the blacks who moved into the area two hundred years ago. At that stage the Venda moved Southwards from Zimbabwe in various migratory streams and settled in the South-East, as far as Duiwelskloof (Eloff, 1968 : 5). From this early stage in their history the Venda gradually sub-divided in three identifiable groups: of the Western group, - at present the most senior group, - the Eastern group and the Southern group.

Until 1836, when the Voortrekkers arrived in the area, the Venda lived in complete isolation. Their mountain fortresses were so well hidden that no other tribes could conquer them. (Stayt, 1968: 18 & Eloff, 1968: 11). After the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), Venda became "Crown and Trust Lands" of the British Empire (TNAD, 1905: 63).

In 1904 the Venda were disarmed. A relatively small rural area was left at their disposal. Furthermore it was, figuratively speaking, flanked by the Sibasa and Louis Trichardt districts. When South Africa became a Union in 1910 these Trust areas became the inheritance of the poverty stricken Boers. The Venda were left to develop by traditional customs, and at that stage twenty-six sub-tribal districts were formed within the traditional three main groups mentioned earlier. This development was mainly initiated by the mediation of the German missionary Günter Wessmann. On 13 September 1979, Venda became an independent republic responsible for its own development. Of particular relevance to this paper is that before the independence of Venda the sub-tribes of the far North Eastern parts of Venda, and thus also the research area were in constant conflict with the Eastern tribes of the Singo (the senior lineage and still today), co-operation is hampered by this constant conflict and development hardly takes place in these remote parts. Furthermore some of the North Eastern tribes are isolated because of their geographical position and the fact that they have hardly any contact with the Western culture. At present, it is mainly the male migrant workers, who sell their labour in the industrial areas of the RSA, who have any contact with the Western lifestyle and - culture. Thus in these Eastern parts, including the research area, the most traditional and isolated tribe-members of the Venda are found.

4.2 Situation and geographical features

Venda can be sub-divided into five physiographic regions. These regions can again be sub-divided into sub-areas:

- Area A : Limpopo Lowveld Region.
- Area B : North Western Soutpansberg Region.
- Area C : Southern Granite Region.
- Area D : Eastern Soutpansberg Region.
- Area E : Central Soutpansberg Region.

Venda is divided into four administrative magisterial districts, namely Sibasa, Vuvani, Dzanani and Mutale. Each of these magisterial districts include a number of tribal-governed areas. Tshikundamalema is one of the eleven tribal-governed areas included in the Sibasa magisterial district. Tshikundamalema is 56 179 hectares in area and is the fourth greatest in area size in Venda. It lies on the border between the A and D regions. The agricultural community which is the focal point of this research is situated in the D region.

The major river running through this area is the Mutale. The area has a very low annual rainfall and is relatively dry and hot. The growth in the area is typical Mopani Bushveld.

4.3 The physical infrastructure of the area

The physical infrastructure of a community includes roads, railways, telephones, water supply, electricity and sewerage. On micro-level, the distribution of the infrastructure of a community, is closely related to the larger community in which it is situated.

Besides having economical and social implications, an infrastructure also has an influence on the general wellbeing and social welfare of the community.

If roads are in a bad condition, clinics, hospitals, shops and schools cannot be reached and cannot be utilised fully. Bad sewerage systems and inadequate water supply have negative effects on the general health of inhabitants. However, it is important to note that an infrastructure must be developed in conjunction with the level of development of the inhabitants. Only then will proper utilisation and maintenance of the infrastructure be understood and assured.

A very low level of development of the physical infrastructure exist in the research area. No railway facilities are available and only secondary and tertiary roads are in existence.

The inhabitants mainly rely on the newly implemented bus service between Sibasa and the research area for transport. Results have shown that 74,7% of the inhabitants travel by bus while the rest

walk to their destinations. According to some of the inhabitants the bus service is unreliable and irregular. This limits their mobility to the central areas, where most of the services are situated.

No post offices and telecommunication services are available in this area. This not only has negative implications for the economic development of the area but also for contact with the migrant worker and social communication of the inhabitants. No electrical services, water supply, or sewerage services are rendered to the area. The influence of this on the health of the community is still to be determined.

5. SOCIO-ECONOMICAL ASPECTS IN THE AREA OF RESEARCH

5.1 Population

5.1.1 Ethnicity

Generally Venda shows cultural homogeneity in spite of external influences especially as far as language is concerned.

5.1.2 Household and family composition

Traditionally a unit or hut group is referred to as a "kraal" in Venda. These huts are jointly occupied by one to twenty persons. Generally the group comprises of a husband, his wife (wives) and their children. In the research report this group composition is referred to as a family, while all the families in one kraal or hut group, together with other inhabitants (i.e. father, mother, brothers) are referred to as households. In the case of polygamous marriages each wife with her children has a separate hut, thus forming definite segments of the family. At present monogamy occurs more frequently than polygamy. Seventy-two of the marriages in the area of research were monogamic marriages and nineteen were polygamous. Fourteen (17%) of the first wives were single due to divorce or were widowed, while five (22%) second wives were single. In only three hut groups did a man have three wives.

On average the first wives gave birth to 3,22 children and second wives 1,74. Of the third wives one had one child, and one had two. The average number of children per female is thus relatively low.

Over and above these general family groupings in hut groups there are extended groupings in which a son (usually the elder son) is the binding factor, with different combinations of one or more of his grandparents, own parents, parents-in-law or younger sisters and brothers with their own wives and children.

The average number of inhabitants per hut group was 6,18 persons.

5.1.3 Sex and age composition

Concerning the sex composition of the population, 50,6% of the inhabitants in Tshikundamalema are male and 49,4% are female. Fifty one percent of the population are aged 1-16 years, 40,8% are 17-60 years and 7,9% are older than 60 years. As in other developing countries the tendency is towards youthfulness. This youthful composition can lead to a high population growth.

Only 40,8% of these inhabitants are part of the economically active group. The sex composition of the economically active group consists of 47,89% males and 53,2% females. Even though 40,8% of the inhabitants of the research area can be economically active only 16% are in fact economically active. This percentage indicates that the community is maintained by a small group of adults.

5.2 Housing

Shelter is a basic human need. The primary aim of any developing country should be to create an acceptable surrounding, establishing effective households in adequate housing units. The materials from which the units are built, the number of rooms, the utilization of sleeping facilities and the general household facilities are some of the factors which determine the degree of acceptability of the housing unit (Kies, 1978: 18 & 19). Other aspects related to

housing are the residential surroundings, ability and willingness to pay for additional services and the right of ownership.

Tshikundamalema comprises of nine agricultural communities and a few scattered hut groups. The research area includes one of these communities and consists of hundred-and-sixty-six hut groups. The properties are either with or without agricultural land, and rights may be inherited. The chief of the tribe allocates property, and a nominal hut tax is payable. The property remains the property of the chief and his tribe. It is necessary to note that Venda's housing is closely related to the traditional lifestyle and habits of the Venda.

Usually a kraal is composed of a group of huts, with an entrance, a few huts for living and sleeping purposes, a kitchen-hut, and a few optional extras such as a grain-hut, miniature grain-silos and a cattle-kraal. In this research finding the average number of huts per kraal is 3,75 of which 2,95 are for sleeping purposes (1,08 for males, and 1,09 for females and 0,76 for additional members). Thirty four percent of the households have a storehut, 30% have a cattle-kraal and 31,9% have a fowl-run.

Comparing the abovementioned figures with comparable results of other researchers (Kies, 1978: 21 & Swart 1981: 12), accomodation is adequate for the inhabitants. It seems that they maintain traditional habits and that over-utilization of huts and undesirable sharing of sleeping huts by members of opposite sexes does not occur.

Because natural building materials are used, cost has no effect on additional buildings.. Materials used are mainly grass, mud and wood. In the research area 82,4% of the units are built from wood, grass and clay, 7,7% from galvanised iron and bricks and 22% from a combination of galvanised iron, bricks and clay, grass and wood.

Facilities are as follows: 37% of the households have tables, 48,4% have chairs, 61% have beds and 26% have wardrobes. None of these hut groups are supplied with running water, electricity or domestic sewage services.

5.3 Education and training

The level of education of the inhabitants of the research area is relatively low. Forty-nine percent have no school qualification, 22,1% of these are pre-school aged. Only 4,5% hold a qualification higher than std IV. Nevertheless, the level of education in the area in question is relatively higher than the general level of education in the rest of Venda in 1970. What is significant is that more than 91,03% of the inhabitants who hold a school qualification are still excluded from participation in high level administrative work. Considering that only 2% have qualifications higher than std VI, the chances of a potentially higher level work force such as engineers and medical practitioners etc are slim.

As found in other Third World Countries, the area shows an enormous increase in pupils enrolled for schools. This is obviously due to compulsory education. The increase in numbers holds serious implications for the availability of adequate classroom facilities, study material and trained teachers. Unfortunately this enormous increase in scholars is usually linked with a high drop out figure in Third World Countries. In the research area the sharp decrease from the percentage of inhabitants who have std IV qualification to those who have std VI can be an indicator of a high "drop out" figure.

5.4 Income, expenditure and diet patterns

The inhabitants of this area live mainly on a cash basis. Cash is obtained from the following: work outside Venda, work within Venda, part time jobs, own business and home-industries. Pensions represent a major source of income. A relatively low percentage of the inhabitants are economically active (16,6% - 4,7% female and 11,9% male).

An interesting fact is that 9,2% of the inhabitants work outside Venda and only 2,5% within the boundaries of Venda.

Of the 9,2% who work outside the boundaries 94,1% are male and 5,9% female. 4,5% of the inhabitants are involved in home-industry of whom 76% are female and 24,0% male. Six comma nine percent receive some or other form of civil pension.

Due to the different sources of income, it is difficult to assess the specific cash income of each household. The cash flow mainly consists of payments of wages for services rendered outside Venda, buying and selling cattle, brewing beer and selling home-made articles.

Migrant workers also contribute to the housekeeping by sending groceries and clothes home. As there is no centralized dealers' market, swopping is also in practice. In order to overcome the difficulty in assessing the specific cash income of each household, separate questions have been formulated regarding each possible source of income both from internal or external sources. The cash value of commodities received from migrant labourers was added to the available cash income of each household. Information supplied by respondents regarding pensions, salaries and wages of migrant workers was as far as possible officially verified. Despite these precautions the following figures can only be regarded as estimated averages. The total estimated monthly cash available to all the households in the community is R7,621-00. This implies an estimated monthly cash income of R83-74 per household. At an average of 6,18 members per household, it implies R13,55 per member per month. Table 5.1 explains the monthly distribution of income per household. From this it is clear that 72,5% of the households have less than R100 available per month, 46,2% have less than R60 available per month and 7,7% have less than R20 available per month.

Tabel 5.1: The montly cash income available to each house=hold

<u>Category</u>	<u>Absolute Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Frequency %</u>	<u>Accumulated Frequency %</u>
Less than R20	7	7,7	7,7
R21 - R40	17	18,7	26,4
R41 - R60	18	19,8	46,2
R61 - R80	13	14,3	60,4
R81 - R100	11	12,1	72,5
In excess of R100	<u>25</u>	<u>27.5</u>	
TOTAL	91	100.0	100.0

According to the minimum existence figures released by the Institute for Planning and Research at the University of Port Elizabeth (Potgieter, 1982: 9), the minimum income that a family of six needs in order to survive in the national states, is R130 per month. With this in mind and if the previous figure of R83-74 per household is subtracted from the minimum figure of R130 it indicates that the average household earns substantially less than the minimum necessary for survival.

However, it should be noted that due to the rich natural resources of the research area and the high exploitation thereof by the inhabitants it is possible that their level of existence is higher than that of urban Blacks.

Commodities are bought from the local shop and general dealers at Sibasa or bought in the RSA and brought or sent home by migrant labourers. Figure 5.1 shows a typical expenditure pattern.

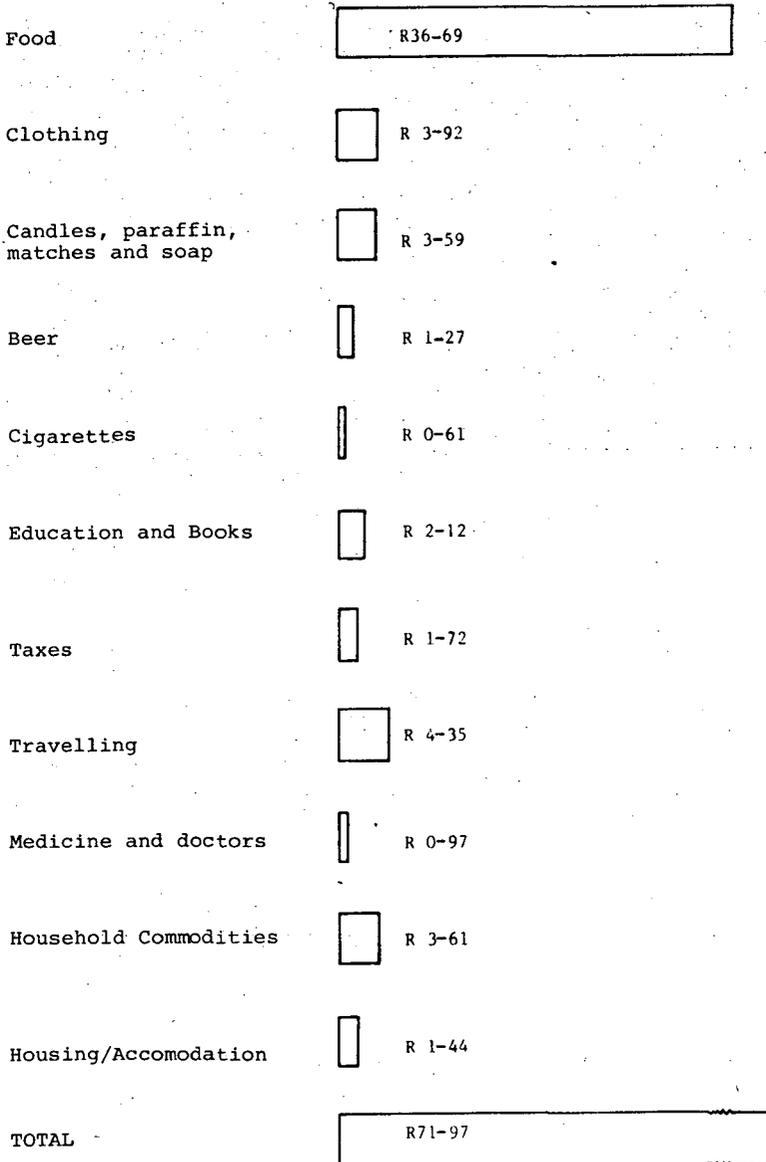
This figure shows that more than 50% of the monthly income is spent on foodstuffs. The rest is spent on commodities as indicated.

The typical diet of the inhabitants consists of one major meal per day consisting of a main dish of maize, supplemented by self cultivated produce, food from the fields; such as edible berries, seeds, grasshoppers or mopanie worms. Seventy to eighty percent of the households complement this main meal with bread, sugar, tea or coffee, ranging from once per day, to once per month.

It is interesting to note that 35,2% of the households eat meat only once per month and 7,7% eat no meat at all while 68% never drink milk. As many as 69,2% of the respondents claim that they never enjoy luxuries such as cold-drinks, while 63,7% never eat cake or sweets.

When comparing data with regard to the diet of the research group with similar data in respect of urban Blacks in the RSA, certain surprising differences can be observed. Blacks in

Figure 5.1: Typical monthly expenditure pattern



urban areas frequently include evaporated milk, meat, fish, eggs, cheese etc in their diet while the respondents in the research area do not consume these products as frequently.

Table 5.2 Typical diet pattern

Type of food	Never	Once per month	Twice per month	Once per week	Twice per week	Every day
	Percentage					
Maize					4,3	95,7
Bread	23,0	17,6	6,6	16,5	12,1	23,0
Meat	7,7	35,2	22,0	14,3	16,5	4,4
Produce	17,6	6,5	3,3	5,5	11,0	46,2
Sugar	31,9	18,7	4,4	4,4	4,4	35,2
Tea and Coffee	26,4	16,5	2,2	8,8	9,9	33,0
Milk	68,1	3,3	4,4	0	4,4	15,4
Cold drink	69,2	5,2	3,3	5,2	2,2	8,8
Cake and sweets	63,7	12,1	4,4	6,6	2,2	7,7

The extent to which the health of the inhabitants suffers because of their diet will be determined by the extent to which the natural sources of food compensates for any limitations in their diet. What can generally be accepted is that the consumer capital amount of R83-74 available per household and R13-55 available per person, hardly meets the necessary life essentials. Expenditure on only bare necessary life essentials will definitely have a negative influence on the overall development of the community.

5.5 Agriculture in the research area

In the research area agricultural activities are mainly of a subsistence nature. Very little of the products are marketed. This can be seen from the low monthly cash income of R0-93, and R4-78 earned from produce and cattle sold, respectively.

Decisions with regard to cultivating activities are taken by the effective head of the household and ploughing is usually done with

cattle and donkeys. The main cultivated crops are maize, vegetables and fruit. There are households that do not own any stock, and only some households own cattle. The estimated number of specific types of livestock as well as domestic animals per household is indicated in table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Livestock per household

Livestock	Estimated number in the area	% householdings possessing the specific kind of livestock	Average number per household
Cattle	389	34,1	4,28
Horses	0	0	0,0
Donkeys	17	3,3	0,19
Sheep	0	0	0,0
Goat	334	45,1	3,67
Pigs	23	22,0	0,25
Poultry	466	71,4	5,12
Dogs	84	52,7	0,92
Cats	10	9,9	0,11
Other	13	6,6	0,14

The research revealed the following as the main obstacles experienced in agriculture and stock breeding:

- An almost complete absence of the physical infrastructure necessary for agriculture and stock breeding;
- The physical distance from central markets;
- A lack of sufficient transport facilities;
- Insufficient capital for investment in agriculture and stock breeding;
- The inadequacy of suitably skilled labour;
- Limited abilities of the local inhabitants of the area;

- The economically inadequate size of agricultural units;
- Inadequate advice to and training of farmers with regard to agriculture and stock breeding.

5.6 Health and welfare

Due to the incidence of parasitical, infectious and contagious diseases, a low level of health and a low standard of living in the developing countries, the necessity for paramedical - and medical -, community health services and charity services is increasingly accentuated. The personnel of the Hans Snyckers Institute found that the level of health in the area is relatively high except for the occurrence of parasitical diseases. Heart diseases, arthritis and malnutrition hardly occur. No particular tendency is found regarding mental illness and infant mortality. Further research is necessary as far as the abovementioned is concerned. On the whole it was found that the efficiency of community health and welfare services are on a low level.

A manpower shortage hampers medical and para-medical services. Furthermore the inhabitants have limited access to clinics and hospitals due to inadequate road and transport facilities. There is very often a language barrier, hampering communication between doctor and patient.

The Donald Fraser hospital, close to Sibasa, serves Tshikundamalema. The closest clinic to the area is plus minus 20 km distance away, however, it is hoped to have a fully equipped local clinic operational soon. Closely related to the well-being of the inhabitants is leisure, religion and community security. No sports facilities are found in the area. Religion, does play a major role in some of the households. Hardly any serious offences such as theft, assault rape and murder are reported.

5.7 Conclusion

From the findings the following conclusions may be drawn in terms of the poverty problem:

- At this stage the physical infrastructure of the area is at this stage on a low level of development. This restricts the

mobility of inhabitants. Furthermore the health of the community can be adversely affected by an absence of electricity and water supply and other necessary services to the house units. Likewise the social life in the community is adversely affected by the absence of post and telegraph facilities.

- Ethnically the community is quite homogeneous. The average number of inhabitants per kraal is 6,18 consisting mainly of a husband, his spouse(s) and their children. Although polygamy occurs, it is less common than monogamy. The number of children per female is relatively low. The community is relatively youthful, with a fairly even average between the sexes.
- The housing situation is rather favourable. It seems that the inhabitants maintain traditional habits and that over-utilization of huts and an undesirable sharing of sleeping huts by members of different sex groups is not found. Although no explicit research had been done in this respect, no correlation was found between materials used to build dwellings, and the local health level.
- The level of education is low but relatively high compared to the rest of Venda. It is alarming to note that the greater part of those with some education (51%) are insufficiently qualified (91,03%) for higher administrative and professional positions. A potential high "drop out" figure was observed. The inefficient physical infrastructure, cultural habits and inefficient aids do have major effects on this.
- The inhabitants trade on a cash basis. Cash is mainly obtained through wages earned outside Venda. A relatively low percentage of the locals are economically active.
- The average monthly income per household is R83-74 with an average of 6,18 members per household. This amount of R83-74 is far less than the minimum necessary for a household of six to survive in the national states. In view of these figures it is doubtful whether the majority of the households can survive and meet their basic minimum demands.

- The typical diet of the inhabitants consists of one major meal per day consisting of a main dish of maize, supplemented by foods such as edible berries, grasshoppers or mopanie worms. The extent to which the health of the inhabitants suffers because of their diet is determined by the extent to which the natural sources of food are sufficient to compensate for any deficiency.
- Agricultural activities are mainly of a subsistence nature. Agriculture is considered important, but its success is adversely affected by a shortage of manpower, knowledge and skills, capital outlay, and the fact that there is no central market.
- Excluding the occurrence of parasitical diseases, the general health in the area is not of a particularly low level but medical paramedic welfare and other health services are insufficient. This insufficiency is mainly the result of an inadequate physical infrastructure and a shortage of staff.
- The community is relatively safe. A low level of crime exists.

If the income of the inhabitants is used as barometer, the inhabitants of the area can be measured as poor, but due to the fact that the research was not meant to assess the poverty problem, no subjective indicators were used in the assessment of poverty in the area.

It is nevertheless important to note that poverty in the area has no severe implications for the inhabitants. Wide spread starvation and disease do not reduce life expectancy as they do in other Third World countries. Malnutrition hardly occurs. No above average tendencies regarding mental disorders or infant and child mortality are evident from the research findings. Furthermore the community experiences a low crime rate.

With this in mind, it is tempting to adopt Schultz's (1964: 98) characterization of developing societies as "poor but efficient". Supplementary to this Wilkinson (1973: 208) feels that developing societies in the Third World, as seen from a Western point of view, may be regarded as poor but that these

societies may find themselves within a well maintained ecological equilibrium (see Wilkinson, 1973: 21) and may not experience any of the subjective reality of poverty.

This implies that the natural sources of food in the area can compensate for the low cash flow. If the inhabitants do not experience themselves as being poor, "...they may not regard economic development as particular advantageous. From their point of view it may seem to entail sacrificing leisure and some of the other advantages of their way of life to obtain 'unnecessary' increase in cash flow". (Wilkinson, 1973: 208).

On the other hand, due to the high number of migrant labourers, it is possible that some of the households do experience poverty, and hope to find relief from another source (Koornhof, 1982: 50).

6. CAUSES AND PREVENTION OF POVERTY IN THE RESEARCH AREA

Although a variety of causes of poverty, including "individual inadequacy" and the concept of "culture poverty" can be listed the abovementioned information should clearly indicate that development is a primary cause of the extent of poverty.

In addition to the economic system, various other factors within the specific research area itself have retarded development.

Firstly, the area is situated in the North Eastern parts of Venda. Until recently these parts have been isolated from Venda and the rest of the world due to the topography of the area. At present they do have some contact with the outside world, but the inefficiency of the physical infrastructure of the area, cause them still to remain in isolation.

Secondly, the sub-tribes of this far North Eastern parts of Venda, are in constant conflict with the Eastern tribes of the senior lineage (Singo). Co-operation is hampered due to this constant conflict and thus development hardly takes place in these remote parts.

A third factor is migrant labour. Though this might overcome the short term poverty problem many an author question the desirability thereof in terms of the development of the community in the long run. Wilson (1972: 175) points out that "...it (oscillating migration)

hampers the development of the rural area, not only because of the haemorrhaging of its economically active men, but also because the area becomes so densely populated - with women, children and old people - that there is insufficient land for the rationalisation and improvement of agriculture".

On the other hand it was found in the research area that without the remittances of the migrant wage labourers the community might not be able to reproduce themselves. Wages of migrant labourers, thus aid households in the utilization of their land and, in this way, increase their income. Thus, households from which migrant labourers originate, own more cattle, have a higher monthly income, (about 200% more than of that of the households which do not include migrant labourers) and maintain an overall higher standard of living.

Migrant labour does have certain effects, both negative and positive, on the development of the community, but due to the dependance of the community on this source of income, it cannot be discontinued at this stage. In spite of the abovementioned problems regarding development of this area, development still has to be the major priority in the combatting of poverty.

As far as broad guidelines in this respect are concerned the following two overall aspects may be considered:

- A total development strategy in the research area in which planning is of primary importance, within the frame of the suggested development strategy of Venda (RAU, 1979). In this strategy it will be of primary importance to bear in mind the topography and isolation of the area concerned as well as the longstanding conflict between the subtribes in this area and the Eastern tribes of the senior lineage.
- The importance of the total involvement of the community as a major component of the development strategy.

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