

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE USE ON THE LIVELIHOOD OF  
RURAL WOMEN IN THE LOWVELD REGION OF SWAZILAND: A CASE STUDY OF  
HANDICRAFTS**

**by**

**MHAMBI MOSES NDLANGAMANDLA**

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**Supervisor: Ms M Masekoameng**

**Co-supervisor: Ms T Dweba**

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## DECLARATION

I, MHAMBI MOSES NDLANGAMANDLA declare that 'the contribution of indigenous knowledge use on the livelihood of rural women in the Lowveld region of Swaziland: a case study of handicraft is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature:.....

M.M NDLANGAMANDLA

Date: .....

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## **ABSTRACT**

Poverty alleviation is a key item on the agenda of both government and non-governmental organisations. The use of indigenous knowledge to embark on small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) such as handicraft making has shown that it has a potential to yield the desired outcome in many areas. The research addressed the question: to what degree are handicrafts made in the Lowveld region of Swaziland and to what extent do these handicrafts contribute towards the livelihood of rural households? The data was collected using questionnaires and observations.

Findings revealed that the production of handicrafts is the second most important livelihood activity for most respondents. Even though the income received from these activities is small, its significance lies in the timing at which it is received; and on its role in supporting existing livelihood activities. Sustainability of the business is, however, threatened by inaccessibility of resources, lack of organisation and trading challenges

There is a need to promote the cultivation of natural resources, continuous training workshops and for women to form cooperatives or groups.

Further research is needed that would focus on the following areas: a comparative study done in urban areas which shall also investigate the impact of handicraft on urban poor households; a study which will focus on handicraft marketing and consumption and lastly on the youth and handicraft.

**Key words: handicrafts, natural plant resources, crafts, rural economy, poverty alleviation**

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE**

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

The impacts of poverty and deprivation are far reaching. They have consequences for the mental and physical health, personal and material wellbeing of people, and greatly impede on the ability of people to participate socially and economically in wider society (Corrie, 2011:i). The impact of poverty is even worse in rural areas of developing countries where the development approach is more top-down and central in approach. Matunhu (2011:65) argues that poverty can be attributed to theories of development because the way a society deals with underdevelopment is influenced by development theories. In Swaziland for example, poverty can be attributed to the development ideology adopted when the country attained its independence in 1968. The 1960s was time when the world was highly concerned with development and a number of development theories were developed to respond to development needs. Modernisation theories proposed by scholars such as Nurske (1953) and Rostow (1960) have provided the main development paradigm in developing countries (Van Vlaenderen, 2001:88). According to modernisation theories the lack of development of Third World countries is caused by the absence of certain conditions which are present in technologically advanced Western societies (Bezanson, 2003). Development was described as a process of rapid economic growth through industrialisation, and the adoption of modern scientific approaches. Furthermore, development was supposed to start at the centre and spread out through what was referred to as the 'ink spot notion'. For that reasons, towns and cities were perceived as main centres of development and hence they were favoured with infrastructure and services. Rural areas were mostly left under-developed as their development was explained as automatic and dependent on the prosperity of urban areas (Bezanson, 2003).

The application of the modernisation theory on developing countries, such as Swaziland, was rather too theoretical (Van Vlaenderen, 2001:88). Rural economy in most developing countries such as Swaziland, comprises both farm and non-farm activities (Matunhu, 2011:66). It is therefore not easy to classify economies into neat categories or a clearly laid out path as suggested by the modernisation theories. For example, the World Bank (2010b), rural economy is dominated by agriculture, though the contribution of agriculture to the country's GDP has been steadily declining from 31.6% in 1999 to 21.0% in 2010 due to the effects of climate change and global warming. Because there is a decline in agricultural output the economically active population leave rural areas and migrate to urban areas in search for job opportunities

(Murdoch, 1992:12). This migration has direct impact on agricultural productivity as rural agriculture is then left in the hands of the elderly and the young who do not have enough energy to contribute to production in a meaningful way (Murdoch, 1992:12). Due to a decline in productivity and migration of the labour force there is a need to diversify rural economy to include both farm and non-farm activities.

Literature indicates that rural livelihoods, especially in Africa, have been dominated by a dependency on natural resources such as vegetation, soil, water, animals, climate and minerals (Karki 2001; Slater & Twyman 2003). These resources are often described as natural capital (Nicol, 2000:18). Even today these resources still act as springboard for households' future income which is crucial for subsistence. Also important in the history of African rural livelihoods was indigenous knowledge which each group at its own locale possessed (Warren, 1991:1; Berkes, Colding & Folke, 2000:1252). Indigenous knowledge was relied upon as a pillar that supported rural economies in guidance and contributing towards agriculture, protection of local environment, peace building, medicine and food security (Hoppers, 2004). The combination of natural resources and indigenous knowledge was and therefore still is vital for each household or community's satisfaction of needs such as food security, fuel and medicines. Flavier, De Jesus and Avarro (2003:478) state that indigenous knowledge is the basis upon which society communicates and makes decisions that determines its prosperity.

## **1.2 Rationale**

Nature and knowledge are undisputed prominent resources for human survival (Slater & Twyman, 2003). This is particularly true of rural African communities such as those found in Swaziland. The increased effort to reduce poverty, as envisioned in the millennium development goals, opened new debates on how to use the combination of indigenous knowledge and natural resources including modern technologies to fight poverty. These activities include, among others beading, pottery, sewing, weaving and knitting which are collectively known as handicrafts. Worldwide the economic contribution of handicraft has been reported extensively (Schwarz & Yair, 2010; Knudsen, Florida, Gates & Stolarick, 2007). This is further supported by the studies that were conducted in Southern Africa investigating the production and sale of products such as baskets, brooms and mats (Pereira, Shakleton & Shakleton, 2006:477; Makhado & Kepe, 2006:497). In Swaziland, handicraft has been part and parcel of the household economy for a long time (Zwane, Masarirambi, Seyoum & Nkosi, 2011:777).

Although handicraft was mainly done by older women in the past, the involvement of the younger generation has been reported by Boitumelo, 2010 in Zwane et al (2011:777). Handicrafts, whether in the urban or the rural areas, serve as strategy for survival among the low income social class and on such grounds should be viewed as a fully-fledged economic sector (Omari, 1989:12). Handicrafts are also of cultural importance to many and are mostly made from indigenous plants hence indigenous knowledge plays a crucial role in the skills required for production and conservation of these products (Zwane et al, 2011:773). The majority of them rely on indigenous skills and are made from locally available resources (Perreira et al, 2006:478)

Studies involving the contribution of handicraft on livelihoods were done in South Africa by Makhado, 2004, Mofokeng 2008, South African Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology 1998 and 2006, but not in Swaziland and these studies only concentrated on plant-based fibres. In Swaziland, Research studies on the contribution of both plant-based and non-plant based products on sustainable livelihoods are lacking (Zwane et al, 2011:778). In addition to this, the role of indigenous knowledge in Swaziland has been studied only in areas such as environmental management (Mwaura, 1998), medicine (Makhubu, 1993), and in agriculture (Dlamini 2007). A knowledge gap exists regarding indigenous knowledge and its role in handicraft. This lack of information about handicraft is reportedly responsible for the absence of clear policy on protection, loss of associated indigenous knowledge production and conservation practices (Makhado & Kepe, 2006:497; Pereira et al, 2006; Zwane et al, 2011:778).

The documentation of knowledge on handicrafts will contribute to the development of new policies by governments and policy makers (Makhado & Kepe, 2007; Zwane et al, 2011:778). Furthermore, this documentation of knowledge in Swaziland is vital in preserving and adding to the body of knowledge which is at risk of being lost to future generations by virtue of its association with indigenous knowledge (Masoga & Kaya, 2011:155). The loss of such information can be detrimental to livelihoods in Swaziland because, like other southern African countries, trends in Swaziland indicate that there is a rise in the number of younger women who are unable to access tertiary institutions, contributing to high unemployment levels. Such circumstances force them to resort to the selling of handicraft as an alternative for their livelihood (Zwane et al, 2011:777).



### **1.3 Indigenous knowledge**

Indigenous knowledge is similar to the other types of knowledge in that it has four dimensions (Mascarenhas, 2003:4). Firstly, it is the act of knowing; secondly, it is the acquaintance with a range of information; thirdly it involves that which is grasped by the mind or learning and finally, it consists of the body of facts accumulated by people. It can be described as traditional and local knowledge, involving social, economic and environmental variables, unique to a particular culture or society, existing within and developed around specific conditions of women and men indigenous to a particular geographical area in contrast to knowledge generated within the international system of universities, research institutes and private firms (Warren, 1991:1; Berkes, Colding & Folke, 2000:1252).

Knowledge is an asset that people may possess (Mascarenhas, 2003:4). This is very likely when the knowledge is more locally developed rather than imposed. For that reason the value of indigenous knowledge has been described as contained in its ability to deliver social and economic goods (Mwaura, 2008:76; Sillitoe, 1998:13). Flavier, De Jesus and Avarro (2003:478) state that indigenous knowledge is the basis upon which society communicates and makes decisions. It is intellectual capital or an asset which a society may possess. Mascarenhas (2003) further states that this asset enables societies to transform into many forms which could lead to development. The value of indigenous knowledge is now receiving recognition even in international organisations. For example, in an international forum of non-governmental organisations which was held in 2006 in Rio de Janeiro, indigenous knowledge was recognised as a major factor in meeting food security (Nakashima, 2006:1)

As stated before, indigenous knowledge has been key in many aspects of communities such as agriculture, protection of local environment, peace building, medicine and food security (Hoppers, 2004). The use of indigenous knowledge is now considered by many as an alternative source of income, especially for women who reside in rural areas where social structures present few opportunities to women (Vilane & Madonsela, 1996:16). The American Home Economics Association (1981), Downer (2000:7) and Albee (1994:3) state that instead of attempting to compete for the few jobs available in urban areas, it may make more sense for women, especially in rural areas, to capitalize on the skills and resources they have in hand, and to organise their work in a way that also allows them to attend to their traditional family responsibilities while establishing small businesses.

As indicated earlier indigenous knowledge systems play a crucial role in handicrafts as most of these products are made from indigenous plants. The indigenous knowledge systems associated with handicrafts include the preservation practices of indigenous plants, harvesting, processing, production and utilisation of the end products. Handicrafts as an income generating activity have a number of advantages which include that these businesses are dependent upon human labour rather than on machines; the production sites are in homes; and they utilise predominantly locally grown or processed materials. These handicrafts are not only cash producing or cash offsetting for producers; but are useful in the households because they are reportedly of practical use. Handicrafts are used to sit and sleep on, used as burial mats, for winnowing and to carry goods thus saving the users the costs involved in procuring manufactured alternatives (Pereira et al, 2006:478; Makhado & Kepe, 2006, Zwane et al, 2011:497). Other handicraft products include cooking utensils and food storage utensils. The fact that little capital is needed to perform these activities, they are considered to be an important entry point for poor households and the unemployed into the formal economy (Pereira et al, 2006:478)

#### **1.4 Research problem and objectives**

Though handicrafts are of cultural importance and economic value to many poor rural household they remain neglected by most governmental policy makers (Wood, 2011:3; Haggblade, Hazell & Reardon, 2005:1). They do not receive enough support from the government and other institutions. Due to this the potential contribution of handicraft to livelihoods and poverty alleviation is not fully exploited (Pereira et al, 2006:478). Furthermore, because handicraft is largely based on indigenous knowledge systems, which is mostly not documented, there is fear of extinction if nothing is done to preserve such knowledge (Zwane et al, 2011:497). In the face of continuing challenges such as the decline in urban employment, climate change, agriculture failure and population increase, locally available resources remain an alternative way to help support rural livelihood (Merrian, 2009:1; Gauteng news, 2011:3; Crafts Council of India, 2011:16).

The research problem is therefore stated that the contribution of handicrafts in addressing challenges facing rural household livelihoods is unknown. The research question is therefore stated as: "To what degree are handicrafts made in the Lowveld region of Swaziland; to what extent are handicrafts contributing towards the livelihood of rural households?

This research question was unpacked into the following related research objectives:

1. to document the handicraft activities present in the Lowveld region of Swaziland
2. to investigate and document the most prevalent types of handicrafts
3. to document the resources required for the production of handicrafts
4. to determine the contribution of handicrafts to livelihoods of the participants at the household level
5. to identify the existing livelihood strategies other than handicrafts undertaken by participants and their households

### **1.5 Conceptualisation**

The main concepts of the study are handicrafts, natural plant resources, crafts, rural economy, and poverty alleviation. The way in which these terms are conceptualised in terms of this study is as follows:

Indigenous knowledge – what indigenous people have known and done for generations (Eyong, 2007:1)

Handicrafts – the type of products where useful and decorative devices are made completely by hand or using only simple tools.

Household – a social unit whose labour organisation and distribution of resources and roles are shared by members for their perpetuation and survival (Omari, 1998:4).

Livelihood – the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living.

Poverty alleviation- it is the creation of economic opportunities and enabling or empowering communities and individuals to access economic opportunities.

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

The significance of this study rests on the fact that there is little documented information on indigenous knowledge in Swaziland. This was found to be a matter of concern because indigenous knowledge is the foundation of conserving and understanding of what we do not know (Eyong, 2007:4). In addition, in the documented information, no study had been done to look at the role indigenous knowledge can play in households' ability to generate income. It is therefore hoped that this study will help in the documentation of this valuable knowledge, and

also provide a foundation to start informed debates on the role that indigenous knowledge can play on income generation.

### **1.7 Limitations of the study**

Because of budget and time constraints this study was limited to one region. This poses the major limitation of the study because the results lack diversity which could have brought about richness in the study.

### **1.8 Outline of the study**

This study is structured into six chapters. The outline of the remaining chapters is as follows:

Chapter 2 contains a discussion of relevant literature. This chapter includes discussions such as the theoretical framework of the study, handicraft as a household strategy, constraints experienced in handicraft trade, importance of handicrafts and economic contribution of handicrafts

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology, a description of the study area including location, socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the population, as well as its climate. Then the research design, data collection methods and sampling, materials, and data analysis methods that were used in the study are highlighted. The chapter is concluded by explaining the ethical consideration.

In chapter 4 results obtained from the research are presented and chapter 5 involves a discussion and analysis of the results.

Chapter 6 provides the conclusion and revisits the aim and objectives of the study, as well as recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

Crafts were originally produced to fulfil utilitarian purposes such as baskets for storage or transportation of goods, clothing for everyday wear, or furniture for household use. Among the earliest basic crafts are basketry, weaving, straw-work and pottery (Sellschop, Goldblatt & Hemp, 2005:3; Yeneabat, 2004:4). Crafts have great cultural and historical significance (James & Bansil, 2010:73). For example, other bead products were used as traditional jewellery and as a sign to communicate a certain status of a person and message (James & Bansil, 2010:73). In Swaziland, certain beads '*simohlwane*' are worn by males who have been admitted into the regiments '*kubutseka*', while others are worn by princes and princesses. Crafts also play a role in medical practices, especially in occupational therapy. For example, patients may be taught crafts to strengthen weakened muscles or to help in gaining the use of an artificial limb. Emotionally disturbed people are also taught crafts as an outlet for feelings. Crafts also provide the disabled with an occupation that diverts attention from their handicaps (Chilvers, 2003).

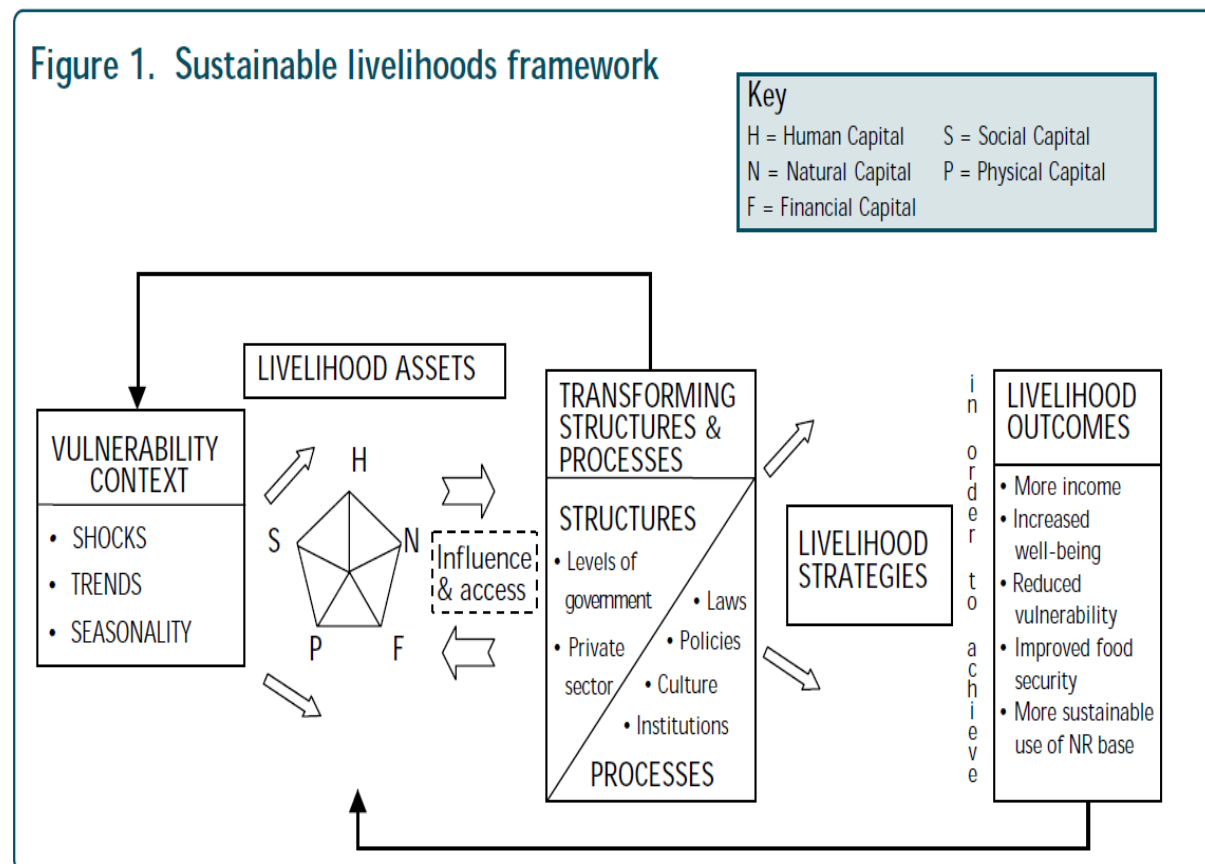
Apart from the social or cultural role that handicrafts are known for, they have also played a prominent role in different economies as means of earning a living. Globally, the making and selling of rural handicraft date back into yesteryears (Pereira et al, 2006, Zwane et al, 2011:777). Scholars also link selling of handicraft with the formation of town and city economies throughout Europe until the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century (Chilvers, 2003). Today the aesthetically appealing nature of handicrafts, in a world dominated by mechanisation and standardisation, has paved way for them to national and international markets, as objects of memorial significance to tourists and simultaneously acting as source of income to sustain livelihoods especially to the rural poor (Kloppers & Kloppers, 2006; Jongeward 2001). According to The Sector Core Team (2005) handicraft tradition had waned considerably over time. Of late, however, handicraft production has seen an upswing as the industry is perceived as a potential business opportunity for sustainable income generation, thus attracting more and more artisans, traders and exporters.

In this chapter the role of handicraft as a strategy to sustain households is discussed. To start this discussion the researcher begins with the discussion of the sustainable livelihood

framework which has been used as the theoretical framework of the study. This is followed by the discussion on types of handicrafts, raw materials that are used in handicrafts, the resources used, labour, uses of handicrafts and constraints experienced in handicraft. The economic contribution of handicrafts is also discussed in detail.

## 2.2 Theoretical framework

The sustainable livelihood framework (Figure 1), which outlines different types of assets that can contribute towards sustainable livelihoods was used as a theoretical framework for this study.



**Figure 2.1: The sustainable livelihood framework (Department For International Development, 1999)**

This framework was chosen because it puts people at the centre of development. Unlike its predecessors this approach advocates for local solutions, pluralism, community-based solutions and reliance on local resources. This approach to development and poverty alleviation strategy is informed and embroiled in people's values. Therefore the critical issue which this framework

supports is that ‘transformation’ for the future depends on achieving transformation of institutions, technology, values and behaviour consistent with ecological and social realities (Korten, 1990:4).

The livelihood framework comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for means of living (Chambers and Conway 1992:7). This framework depicts that livelihood is dependent on people’s access to various types of assets and their ability to utilise them creatively to achieve sustainable livelihood (Chambers and Conway, 1992:7). These assets include:

1. Physical assets- this includes equipment, infrastructures such as roads, telecommunications, and production places.
2. Human assets include the degree of skills and experience vital for the production of beneficial products and activities within the household.
3. Natural assets is the natural resource stocks (soil, water, vegetation, air, genetic resources and others) and environmental services such as the hydrological cycle, from which resource flows and services useful for livelihoods are derived.
4. Financial assets refer to cash, credit, savings and other economic assets including basic infrastructure and production equipment and technologies which are essential for the pursuit of any livelihood strategy.
5. Social assets refer to the external networks and connectedness that a household has (Ellis, 2000:10)

No single category of assets sufficiently provides all the livelihood outcomes that people seek. The ability to move out of poverty is critically dependent on access to all the different types of assets (Warner, 2000:5) and activities they engage on to meet their needs. Activities sometimes referred to as ‘livelihood strategies’, cover a range of choices open to rural people to support their livelihoods (Scoones 1998; Davis & Bezemer 2004). The definition of activities can be expanded to include work and care, employment and entrepreneurship, agricultural production and trade, and a range of other dichotomies (Davis & Bezemer 2004:7). The combination of assets and activities are therefore strategies that households employ in order to achieve outcomes such as food security, more income, reduced vulnerability and nutrition security (Scoones, 1998:3; Davis & Bezemer 2004:7) and some of these desires are depicted under ‘livelihood outcomes’ in Figure 2.1. Rural households are normally subjected to certain barriers

in the endeavour to achieve their livelihood desired outcomes referred to as 'vulnerability context'. A vulnerability context identifies aspects that may influence, often negatively, livelihood strategies that households undertake; namely, the trends, shocks, culture and environment (Scoones 1998; DFID 1999).

This study focuses on how women make use of all these assets natural, physical, financial, social and human to achieve their livelihood hence the relevance of this livelihood framework. In this case study, handicraft is a natural resource based activity which uses natural capital as raw material. Rural women rely on indigenous skills and knowledge (human capital) other than formal education to make craft products. Physical infrastructure such as electricity, roads and transport infrastructure (physical capital) is needed for their business to operate. To establish this business handcrafters need start-up capital where needed (financial capital), and often rural entrepreneurs often get this capital from other household resources such as relatives, pensions, selling household assets or, in other cases, from government support. Entrepreneurs also have formal support institutions or informal support networks in their disposal (social capital).

## **2.3 Handicrafts as a household livelihood strategy**

### **2.3.1 Traditional Handcraft**

Handicraft is described as fine pieces of art, jewellery and decorations that are made from grasses and reeds using hands or simple tools (Mkhonta, et al, (2014:43). This definition suggests that handicraft is both an activity and a portable product. The definition is also in line with the phrase "*umsebenti wetandla*" used by Swazi practitioners to describe this activity and items. Traditional handicrafts are made and imbued with indigenous knowledge, skill, and innate design ability for use. The form, the volume and the integrity of the material introduce a connection to the roots of a living culture and bring a sense of the permanence of the creative spirit of humankind into living space (Sellschop, Goldblat & Hemp, 2005:5). For most practitioners, traditional handicraft is a heritage that has been passed down and received through informal practices (Zwane & Masarirambi, 2009:35). The fact that handicraft skills are acquired mainly through informal practices puts indigenous knowledge and its transmission at the centre of this activity. Key to the transmission of this knowledge is age and participation. Age plays a role as a formative influence on indigenous knowledge as generally the older generation tends to be more knowledgeable than the youth, who are consequently instructed by their elders (Ruddle 1993; Ohmagari & Berkes 1997). Therefore handicraft can be viewed as a



multipurpose activity in rural areas as it goes beyond being a source of income for many but also provides an opportunity for the elders to pass indigenous knowledge to their youth. The passing of this knowledge among the youth is influenced by the different gender roles (Mtshali 2002:150). Older women, mothers, grandmother and sisters share this knowledge in an enclave “*liguma*” where girls are taught and advised on life matters while doing handicraft. Consequently, women in handicraft possess an extensive experience in the activity as they learn it in the early ages of their life from elders (Mkhonta, et al, 2014:43).

Traditional handicraft products have a universal attraction that crosses cultural and geographic borders and transcends time. Mkhonta, et al (2014:43) observed that in Swaziland most handicraft products have cultural uses, such as in funerals, cleansing ceremonies and traditional weddings. Mkhonta, et al (2014:40) further acknowledge handicraft as a key sector of the economy, producing a diversity of goods for local and export markets while providing employment and generating income. In rural areas handicraft is mainly practiced by women as a survival strategy, due to the poor economic situation which is associated with modernisation (Mkhonta, et al, 2014:40; Madonsela and Vilane, 1996:16).

Zwane and Masarirambi (2009:35) argue that the handicraft industry is dominated by the formal division of educated Swazis, who are engaged in product development of unique craft products targeted at the export market. However, through the renewed grass-root approach to development adopted by the government of Swaziland, informal handicraft sector is also gaining some important recognition in the fight against poverty and strengthening of the country’s economy (Swaziland Government, 2007). Employing handicraft is in line with other running government programmes such as the Rural Development Area Programme (RDAP) which its main objectives are to increase productivity and improve the living standards of rural people, while protecting the natural resources. The RDAP recommends that rural development measures and strategies should be pragmatic, flexible, cost effective, and encourage community initiative and participation (Dube and Musi, 2002).

Handicraft is a labour intensive process with use of very low level of technology. These include household tools such as sickles (*emasikela*), knives (*imikhwha*) and even bare hands. Like most subsistence activities in the household such as farming, family labour also plays an important role in handicraft activities that are carried in rural areas. Family labour participates in

collection and processing of raw material and other activities involved in handicraft giving even more opportunity for imparting indigenous knowledge between the young and the old, the knowledgeable and the ignorant (Mkhonta et al, 2014:43).

Women use locally available raw materials such as bones, clay, timber and non-timber (plant sources, fibres, seeds, fruits and stems, soils, and plants to make their craft (Mkhonta et al, 2014:40; Zwane & Masarirambi, 2009:35). Common Swazi natural plants used in handicraft include *Cyperus latifolius* (*likhwane*), *Scirpus inclinatus* (*inchoboza*), *Coleochloa setifera* (*lutindzi*), *Ascolepsis capensis* (*umuzi*), *Phragmites australis* (*umhlanga*) and *Phoenix reclinata* (*lisundvu*) (Mkhonta et al, 2014:43). Synthetic and natural soft fibres are often dyed with natural and synthetic material then woven to form patterning. Originally the patterns on the domestic objects and other is determined by tradition or used as identification of a place or family or perhaps even convey messages such as the beads which a female gives a man as a sign to accept love '*kugana*'. In order to harvest the best raw material, a crafter must be able to recognise and differentiate this material at the point of harvest. The reliance on nature as raw material is a reiteration of the view that to a great extent the relationship between nature and women is a socially constructed one (Madonsela and Vilane, 1996:16).

The wider the indigenous knowledge practice of a community correlates to the wider resource base for that community. In a study conducted by Dube and Musi (2002) on analysis of indigenous knowledge in Swaziland, they found that the use of the tree or plant did not depend on availability but was also linked to the indigenous knowledge systems. For example, in the case of plants used for dying, use seemed to be more a function of knowledge that the dye could be obtained from the tree or plant. They found that in some communities certain trees which could be otherwise used for dying were not used because of indigenous knowledge limitations. As a consequence, in some communities where the trees were not available, the women would travel to the areas where they would obtain the necessary tree to dye their handicraft. The differences in this practice confirm the general belief that if a community is able to retain a relatively fair amount of their indigenous practices it also stands a better chance of having a wide resource base for handicraft production.

### **2.3.2 Types of handicraft products**

Handicraft products are as useful as modern products. They are used for a number of activities in different households. Rural handicraft activity largely constitutes a category of home-based work, especially for the poor and women (Jongeward, 2001). Handicrafts are generally classified into two categories, namely articles of everyday use and decorative items (Tripura Bamboo Mission Handicrafts Sub-sector Report, 2011:3). The category which is described as articles for everyday use includes those items which are produced for utilitarian purposes (Planning Commission Government of India, 2006). Goods for utilitarian purposes are as old as handicraft itself and therefore sometimes referred to as traditional craft. The production of these items can be intended for self-consumption whilst a small portion put up for market exchange (The Cultural Strategy Group, 1998). Utilitarian crafting aroused out of need and necessity in the society or household. These items can be used for storing, transporting, cooking and other household activities (Sellschop, Goldblat & Hemp, 2005:3). Today these items may be used to showcase the tradition of a population. Examples of these products are baskets for keeping domestic articles, smoking pipes, footwear, hunting arrows, combs, storing, wooden and stone plates for use, textile items such as shawls, coats and jackets (Sellschop, Goldblat & Hemp, 2005:5).

The decorative handicraft category grew from the utilitarian kind of handicraft. Previous research shows that these products developed when crafters became artisans and wanted to go beyond the utilitarian limit to creating products of memory and beauty which would please their senses and also serve as an expression of their creative capabilities (Tripura Bamboo Mission Handicrafts Sub-sector Report, 2011:5). These handicrafts products can be made for personal use or sold at markets in exchange for money. Such items include jewellery, ornaments, earrings, ankle belts, necklaces, head gears and head dresses. Other decorative items include wall paintings, deities made from either wood or stone, and artefacts.

The Cultural Strategy Group (1998) and Rogerson and Sithole (2001) provide a useful categorisation of five different segments of production. However, these categories can also be classified under the two main groups discussed above. The first segment concerns traditional art products. This category consists of cultural items, which convey meaning and significance in a specific community. Items produced are often for domestic purposes whilst a small fraction is

put on the market. This segment includes items such as clay beer pots. Another segment is called the designer goods category. In this category items are defined by traditional art but also with a slight appeal for the international market. Examples would include Ndebele beadwork and decorative ornaments. The craft art category includes items that are mainly handcrafted and also dominated largely by indigenous skilled crafters. Examples of products would include grass mats, hats and baskets. The fourth category is for functional wares. In this category, items such as pottery, furniture and home-ware are hand crafted in large quantities in small workshops or factories-like setups. The last category is called the souvenirs. Items produced in this category are primarily influenced by the memories of particular places, and they are often inexpensive, universal trinkets or simplified crafts.

### **2.3.3 Raw materials used in handicraft production**

The materials that are used in handicraft come from all over the world. The material can be natural and synthetic; there are no limits to what qualifies as material (The South African Craft Industry report, 1998:37). An abundance of native natural resources have played a key factor in many types of craftwork produced in most rural areas by women and the poor (Dar & Parrey, 2013). They use these resources as a basis from which to develop their talents. These resources include state's waters, woods, earth, plants and animals (MacDowell & Avery, 2006:8; *Times of Swaziland*, May 2013). For example, potters obtain clay from local rivers and then do their pots while weavers also harvest different grasses from their local areas and produce their different products (Planning Commission Government of India, 2006:2; Masarirambi, Manyatsi & Mhazo, 2010:12). This also plays an important role in improved management of indigenous forest resources while maintaining traditional and cultural knowledge and practices (Falconer 1992; Robles-Diaz-de-Leon, 1999).

Communication and the introduction of new cultures into local societies, and the access to trade increased the variety of natural, cultivated and imported resources used to produce crafts (MacDowell & Avery, 2006:8). The manufacturing industry created a secondary industry of refuse and by-product materials that became available resources for craft fabrication. The unemployed have found that trash on production sites and shops can be very useful in producing their products (Gauteng News, 2011:3). This refuse is collected from dumping sites and then cleaned by artisans to produce nice useful products.

#### **2.3.4 Equipment used in the production of craft**

Similar to materials, the equipment used in the production of goods range from industrial machines to hand tools and is too diverse to be explored in any detail in this study. Equipment is sourced from a wide variety of places such as hardware shops, art supply stores, junkyards, general dealers, and the natural environment among many other places. Some equipment has to be imported and this adds significant cost to production (The South African Craft Industry report, 1998:37). However, due to the financial muscle of traditional crafters, most equipment or tools are just simple tools that are also used in everyday household activities such as a knife, hammer, saw and an axe (Sellschop, Goldblatt & Hemp, 2005:38).

#### **2.3.5 Labour in handicraft production**

Most crafters rely on family labour without having to employ any outsider. Children are an important source of labour mainly because they are still young, energetic and mostly healthier than the adults. For example, children are sometimes used to transport the finished products to the market. Using family labour on these activities can also be interpreted as a way in which indigenous communities invest for the future and sustainability. It is also important to involve children in the making of crafts because it provides an opportunity to pass the skill to the young ones (The South African Craft Industry report, 1998:37). Thus transmitting this knowledge from one generation to another is therefore considered vital by the elders (Hewlett & Cavalli-Sforza 1986; Ohmagari & Berkes 1997). The sons and daughters of the handicraft producers are the heirs to the artistic traditions because they will ensure that the craft making continues in future generations (Yeneabat, 2004:4). A study conducted in India pointed out that tribal handicrafts are specialized skills which are passed on from one generation to another and these handicrafts are means of livelihood for the artisans (Planning Commission Government of India, 2006).

#### **2.3.6 Financial capital used in handicraft production**

Financial capital is also important to set up and maintain production. Crafters obtain capital to start their business in a number of ways, such as the sale of family assets, labour, government grants, relatives and sometimes remittances from other members of the family. One major advantage of handicraft which has been cited by many writers and testimonies from artisans as a reason why it is a popular activity among the poor is that it requires very little capital (Planning Commission Government of India, 2006; Weijland, 1999). This stems from the fact that the

means of production which are needed in handicraft normally do not require large amounts of money as they are obtained locally.

## **2.4 The importance of handicrafts**

The cultural and financial importance of handicraft has been reported extensively in the literature (Pereira et al, 2006:466-478). Makhado and Kepe (2006:406) state that handicrafts are used as presents during traditional ceremonies such as weddings, circumcision ceremonies of boys called “*ukwaluka*” and the initiation of girls into womanhood. These events represent the beginning of a new life phase. In addition to its cultural importance handicrafts such as mats culturally known as “*isithebe*” in Xhosa are used to serve meat on during community festivities (Perreira et al, 2006:407). They are also used as a sign of appreciation and apology (Makhado & Kepe, 2006:406). In the same vein, Yeneabat (2004:4) states that handicrafts play a positive role in daily lives of the community and are mediums of communities’ beliefs through their artistic designs and paintings.

Handicraft remains relevant especially in the lives of rural dwellers in developing countries. Generally, rural areas in developing countries require small, medium and micro enterprises (SMME) development such as handicraft as another type of economic activity other than agricultural economy (Harper & Vykarnam 1988). Davis & Bezemer (2004:01) state that rural population in developing countries derives important share of its income from rural non-farm activities. Therefore, income and employment generation potential of SMMEs has been seen to be increasing with time (Mead 1994; Liedholm & Mead 1996). This corresponds to the observation made by Kepe 2003 and Hoppers, 2004 who state that the overriding attribute of these enterprises is that they form an important aspect of many people’s livelihoods, especially rural poor people such as women and economically marginalised people. According to Jongeward (2001) the handicraft sector is an important sphere of rural non-farm employment and it turns out to be a component of sustainable livelihoods. It is seen as the main source of income that adds to the economic feasibility of rural families and communities. In most rural areas in South Africa such activities may be seen as survivalist enterprises as opposed to urban enterprises (Rogerson, 2000).

#### **2.4.1 Economic contribution of handicraft**

There are two approaches to revitalising local areas: exogenous and endogenous (Limkriengkrai, 2010:82). Exogenous development is a way to promote economic prosperity by introducing investments or resources from the outside, especially from foreign companies in developing countries. A strong argument has been made by scholars that development dictated from outside rather than anchored in the knowledge base of the target population is in principle modernization disguised and not fully concerned with local needs. Imposed development path is central and biased towards economic progress yet development should be considered as a gradual transition of society to a strong socioeconomic status (Matunhu, 2011:65). Evident, throughout the developing world, economic activities, specifically industrialization, tend to be concentrated in large cities, as opposed to being evenly dispersed throughout a country (Mundle & Van Arkadie, 1997). In Swaziland for example, the area in and around Matsapha and Mbabane is home to a disproportionate share of the country's total number of industries (Vilakati, 2005:116).

Economic activities concentrated in one geographical region, tends to utilize the capital earned in that same geographical region. This results in urban centres becoming well developed, while rural and unindustrialized regions are neglected and remain underdeveloped (Krongkaew, 1995). Urban development hinders the development of rural areas as urban industries makes the rural sector less attractive for both domestic and foreign investment, which results in fewer industries emerging in rural areas. As a consequence, the rural sector becomes stagnant and falls deeper into poverty. Rural poverty coupled with urban industrial development attracts rural dwellers to urban areas. Urban migration results in further stagnation of the rural sector (Mundle & Van Arkadie, 1997).

Presently, it has been realized by researchers that more endogenous approaches, which are more people centred, whereby the indigenous knowledge system and local resources would constitute the core of development models in developing and undeveloped nations should be employed (Sillitoe 1998). This approach is based on the idea that every situation is unique, and each development is specific and localised (Brigg & Sharp, 2004).

Such an approach argues also for “quality of life”, which is not solely defined in terms of economic wealth and it emphasises the importance of voluntary grassroots movements for local

development (Van Vlaenderen, 2001:91). The most important element of the endogenous programme is the leading role that people play in the effort. Citizens can choose a speciality product themselves, and promote it at their own risk. While making full use of their potential resources and capital, and also preserving the environment, people can develop their areas by promoting semi-secondary industries (Limkriengkrai, 2010:82). Even though this type of development makes a small contribution to the economic development however, the 'reach' of such an approach, in terms of geographical and population coverage can be very significant.

Handicrafts are a good example of an endogenous approach to development. According to (Mohi-ud-din, Mir & Bhushan, 2014:75) handicrafts plays an important role in the development of national economy in general and rural economy in particular. In countries such as Swaziland which are characterised by limited domestic markets, handicrafts are crucial to the economy as they provide employment and generate income to local communities and country as a whole (Mkhonta et al, 2014; Zwane et al, 2011). The following sections seek to discuss the role of handicraft in national and rural economies

#### **2.4.1.1 National economy**

It is important to mention that it is difficult to quantify the economic contribution of the craft sector (both locally and internationally) due to the unavailability of complete hard data regarding economic contribution (Cultural Strategy Group 1998; Rogerson & Sithole 2001; ECI Africa, 2004; Zwane et al, 2011). However, studies undertaken in different parts of the world provide estimates in terms of handicraft economic contribution. Furthermore, despite the lack of statistical economic data, these studies concluded that the size of the craft economy is fluid; it expands and contracts in reaction to seasonal trade and tourism conditions, inconsistent periods of income opportunities and the existing economic situation.

Ferreira and Lanjouw (2001) argue that wage employment plays an important role in the economy, but because of certain economic factors such as recession and an increased demand for jobs due to population increase, wage economy is failing to absorb everyone. This means a large portion of the world population is without income hence more people are drawn into poverty. In Swaziland for example, the unemployment rate stands at 40% of the economically active (Swaziland Central Statistical Office, 2007:499; Mkhonta et al, 2014:40). The high rate of unemployment is debilitating for the country's social fabric and for the economy. The handicraft sector can have a major impact on national economies through foreign exchange earnings,



employment creation, gross value added, productivity and sustained economic growth (Indecon, 2010; Shushma, 2012:33). The craft industry's potential for job creation and labour absorption is one of the major attractions and outstanding positive qualities of this industry. In rural Brazil, for example, 21.8% of the working population engages in rural based activities as a primary source of employment. When counting those who work in rural industries as a secondary occupation, this number increases to at least 40% (Ferreira and Lanjouw, 2001). In India, a conservative estimate of 23 million Indians are considered "craftspeople," which makes it the second largest source of employment in the country (Sood, 2002).

Individuals involved in handicraft goods and services not only increase employment but also receive income just like any other workers in the economy (Singh 2004:9). This adds to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which is a vital element in studying the concept of economic impact. GDP refers to the sum of the value added of all industries in a country. In South Africa for example, it is claimed that the sector contributes approximately R2 billion to GDP in retail sales, which represents approximately 0.14% of GDP, of which approximately R150 million is in export sales (Creative Industries in South Africa, 2008:35). In Swaziland the sector contributed 0.4% of the total GDP (Central Bank of Swaziland, 2011/12:17). In India, for instance, the handcraft industry contributes \$5.6 billion to the national economy. In Morocco artisan production in 2004 generated \$1.5 billion sales for 500,000 artisans, benefiting one third of the population (Shushma, 2012:33).

According to the South African Craft Industry Report (1998:3), the primary contribution of the craft sector to the GDP is only one aspect of what the craft sector contributes to the South African economy. Related economic benefits lie in the spin-off industries that arise from craft production and retailing, and the training of skilled people for the formal sector. The handicraft sector has indirect and induced economic impacts on the economy. In Ireland when these factors are taken into account, the direct, indirect and induced impacts it was estimated to have facilitate 17,994 jobs (Indecon, 2010). In the case of handicraft, many of the crafters travel extensively to sell their wares, and this has extensive benefits for the economy. At shows and festivals crafters meet up with each other, exchange ideas, barter with each other for goods, or for those who can afford it purchase other crafter's goods for resale at other retail sites. In addition, not only do these travelling crafters earn themselves a living on the festival circuit, they encourage spending through the novelty value of their products. The money they earn gets

ploughed back into the local economy through their expenses such as in accommodation, food, entertainment and transport, to name a few. As a result of their activities, a healthy flow of goods and cash is achieved throughout the country. Also the national economy benefits in that these businesses contribute through taxes to the national economy (South African Craft Industry Report, 1998:19).

Handicrafts also play an important role when calculating the gross value added. Gross Value Added (GVA) is one of the most widely used and reported indicators of economic activity. It is defined as the difference between the value of goods and services produced for any given sector and the cost of intermediate inputs and consumption used in the production process (Indecon, 2010). In other words, GVA is the difference between output and intermediate consumption or the difference between the value of goods and services produced and the cost of raw materials and other inputs. In a survey conducted in Ireland by Indecon in 2010 it was estimated that Gross Value Added of the handicraft sector employing three or more persons amounted to €178 million. It is reported that this number however, underestimates the total GVA as it excludes the contribution of the numerous smaller craft businesses, although Indecon believes that the estimate is likely to account for the majority of GVA in the sector (Indecon International Economic Consultants, 2010).

#### **2.4.1.2 Rural economy**

Despite the negative economic effects of the exogenous development approach which exist in rural areas (Molefe, 1994:9), many small and medium scale industries such as handicraft have come up basically in the traditional sectors. Dar & Parrey (2013) argue that the natural factors which exist in areas that lack industrial development are more conducive for handicrafts and small scale industries. Women employ their indigenous knowledge to start income generating activities such as handicrafts, in order to meet their needs and improve their quality of life. Dlamini and Geldenhuys (2010:311) note that handicraft products contribute to increased rural household incomes, and cash flow into rural areas and from abroad into the country. These indigenous knowledge based handicraft has become a major form of employment in many developing countries and often a significant part of the export economy (Khan and Amir, 2013:23).

Weijland (1999) argues that while craft industries are typically among the poorest industries and as a whole show no significant growth, those that do survive are able to yield high growth rates and contribute significantly to the livelihoods of rural dwellers. Handicraft as a livelihood activity confronts directly the economic challenges which face rural dwellers (Medhin, 1987:16). Its activities are more labour intensive and thus create more wide-spread income than the formal industry. Its products serve as substitutes for those of the industrial sector in that they are cheap and affordable to the needy. It is small in scale and most often home-based. Raw materials used to produce handicraft are usually found locally and the methods of production are often rudimentary. Handicraft industries are ideal for entrepreneurs who lack start-up capital (Weijland, 1999).

Handicraft is mostly preferred sector after agriculture because of suitable conditions in terms of topography of state (Dar & Parrey, 2013:26; Mkhonta et al, 2013:40). It provides opportunities to its citizens to enhance their standard of living; escape the uncertainty of agriculture; support agriculture and helps them to meet their social and psychological requirements of a sustainable life. Hansohm & Wohlmuth (1985:7-8) note that handicraft can help to smooth down a rural exodus and it has strong linkages with the agricultural sector. The income that is received from handicrafts plays an important role in buying farming inputs such as fertilisers and consequently playing a major role in sustaining rural economy and food security. Even though agriculture can be widely considered a men's activity, however, through handicraft rural women receive income that enables them to cater for the daily needs of their households and further support agricultural activities (Medhin, 1987:16). This improves women's self-worth. Handicrafts are suitable way for women to generate income because they are often built around traditional women's skills, for example sewing, braiding and beading. This means women often have baseline skills needed for production and that they merely need to adapt their existing skills to generate income, instead of having to learn totally new skills.

The importance of handicraft is also supported by research done in countries such as Mexico (Chibnik, 2000), Indonesia (Weijland, 1999), India (Sood, 2002), and Thailand (Jongeward, 2002) which have revealed the possibilities of developing handicraft industries as a source of sustainable development in rural areas. The Thailand experience provides a best example of the benefits that could be realised if endogenous approach to development is employed. In the early 1980s, the Thai government paid considerable attention to improvements of the rural

handicrafts sector. Their Fifth National Plan (1982-1986) highlighted restructuring the economy to make it more export oriented and diversifying the economies of rural areas. The underlying objective was to confront the increasing problem of unemployment in rural areas. Rural handicraft activities provided the cornerstone of this policy.

With this initiative, each community developed and marketed its own local product or products based on traditional indigenous expertise and local know-how. This initiative helped to expand the national productivity base, increase employment opportunities in rural areas, raise rural incomes and so reduced poverty, promoted exports, and served as a mainstay for future rural and national economic growth and stability (Parnwell, 1993).

## **2.5 Constraints experienced in handicraft trade**

Handicraft, like most other small-scale industries, is despite its importance for the economy, not contributing fully towards development. The main reason for this is that this industry faces a number of challenges regarding its operations. Most obstacles originate from the economic and business system surrounding entrepreneurs (Gordon 1999; Whitehead 2003). Redzuan and Aref (2011:258) state that constraints to the development of handicraft can be grouped into two areas, namely the demand constraints and the supply constraints.

### **2.5.1 Demand constraints**

The demand constraints are those factors that are related to the restrictions of the size and pattern of the markets that the crafts cater for. They include factors that account for the lack of demand, or the fall in demand for the craft products within a particular market. The three market types for handicraft goods, namely the local and national market; the tourist market; and the export market (Redzuan & Aref, 2011:258) are discussed below.

#### **2.5.1.1 Local and national market**

In the business sector, marketing of micro businesses is as important as it is for larger businesses. Effective marketing increases the future success of the business (Mofokeng, 2008:17). To the contrary, a number of small scale indigenous activities, especially rural, lack effective marketing, and hence marketing is one of the serious concerns in the development and promotion of rural handicrafts (Alberts 2004; Ndabeni, 2002).

The domestic market is a key factor in the development and support of local products. At local and national market the demand can be constrained due to the low income of potential buyers and the priority they place on the decision to purchase a product. In this market, products of a utilitarian nature would presumably be higher on the priority list of buyers than would ornamental products (Redzuan & Aref, 2011:258). Meanwhile, because of high prices, some craft products such as silverware are not frequently bought as they are generally beyond the reach of the average wage-earner. These products are mostly afforded and used by the higher class of the local or national market such as royalty. Onchan (2001) argues that it is necessary for a business to ascertain what is being bought, where, and at what price as well as types of products that suit the market opportunities. Basically, a business must stay in contact with market trends, especially, where markets are far from the rural producers.

Furthermore, also constraining trade of crafts in local market is that certain products can attract a particular ethnic group more than others, thus limiting the market. The fact that certain craft activities have always followed traditional lines; even designs as well as shapes tend to be preordained for the products. As a consequence, new items are not easily introduced because artisans fear that they will not get buyers (Redzuan & Aref, 2011:258). This constraint also discourages creativity.

#### **2.5.1.2 Tourist market**

Certain craft items are only intended for local customers and cater for local tastes. Such products' sizes, designs and durability do not meet tourists' demand. In addition, some of the items (baskets, pottery) are rather bulky, which does not ring positively with travellers who have to travel far distances (Redzuan & Aref, 2011:259). Another factor constraining the tourist market is that tourists are normally not overtly aware of the variety and quality of the handicrafts that crafters have to offer. This factor is further compounded by the fact that in most instances tourists do not stay long in a country and they spend most of their time close to the towns and cities without getting time to visit rural areas where most of the crafts are produced.

In order to maximize the benefits from the tourism industry, it is important for the handcrafters to understand the structure of the varied tourist markets to be able to design and deliver marketable products that appeal to tourists, such as conference participants, pilgrims, environmentalists and domestic tourists. At the outset, product design and development must

be demand driven. Handcrafters need to correctly read current trends in the marketplace such as the colours, the sizes, the materials that are selling best. Good product development does not change traditional design and creation, but works within it to fashion items based on the culture that appeal to contemporary consumers (Shushma, 2012:34).

#### **2.5.1.3 Export market**

The export market constraints are related to lack of knowledge on how to export the products; and the passive, hesitant attitude of crafters to try for relatively unfamiliar, new markets (Redzuan & Aref, 2011:259). This constraint can be related to the inadequacy and/or inefficiency of channels that communicate market information to all involved in craft production and sales. Ndabeni (2002) states that technology and information is increasingly becoming the heart of the modern economy, therefore access to information is also essential for the success of rural SMMEs. Lack of access to information inhibits both rural and urban small enterprises from entering foreign markets and it restricts their ability to establish foreign partnerships (Mkhonta et al, 2013:44). One main constraint as far as this channel is concerned is the inaccessibility of handcrafters to information due to transport and road linkage problems. Mkhonta et al (2013:44) reported that some women who were involved in handicraft complained that their products ended up unsold because they did not have direct access to the world of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and marketing. As a consequence, handcrafters end up engaging middlemen to try and increase their market and in the process lose some profits which could otherwise be gained from dealing directly with buyers (Mkhonta et al, 2013:45).

In conclusion, demand constraints could impede the growth and development of the industry. There is therefore a need to widen markets of the craft products as well as to increase their market competitiveness through quantity and quality.

#### **2.5.2 The supply constraint**

The supply constraints are those factors that hinder production and the availability of products of the various crafts. These include unavailability of skilled labour, difficulty in obtaining raw materials, reluctance to adopt modern methods of production or technology, lack of credit facilities, inadequacy of quality control measures in the production process and other supply-

related constraints. These factors help determine the amount of products supplied on the market.

#### **2.5.2.1 Labour constraint**

Handicraft production faces labour constraints both in the number of people who are willing to produce handicrafts and the quality of labour. Scholars have noted that there has been a decline in the number of skilled craftsmen currently involved in handicrafts production (Redzuan & Aref, 2011:259). The main reason for this is economic in nature and includes the need for better wages in other professions, the slowly declining demand for the products that they produce, inadequate job security in handicraft production, and an unstable income (Redzuan & Aref, 2011:259). Meanwhile, certain labour supply exists seasonally, particularly for the part-timers such as housewives who help men in the fields during paddy planting season. Another labour challenge is that majority of the skilled artisans are not young (normally above 40 years of age) (Berma, 1996:283). Although perfection comes with practice, as stated earlier, there is lack of interest among the younger generation to follow this line of profession. One of the reasons is that apprenticeship involves a very long period, and one would normally have to start during early ages of youth yet formal education is demanding all the time. Some governments are trying to compensate for the loss of skilled human resources by setting up training centres. Unfortunately, many of the training centres are in the urban areas. Thus, a shortage of skilled human resources and a lack of training facilities restrict skill formation and the spread of technical knowledge, which in turn impede the development of handicrafts.

#### **2.5.2.2 Raw materials**

The handcrafters are often plagued with problems of raw materials supply; these are not only matters of non-availability but also of availability of quality raw materials (Berma, 1996:280). Concerning availability, handcrafters often face challenges of poor accessibility as competition with other activities. One of the major problems is that there is an inconsistent supply of raw materials for artisans to consistently produce the products. Seasonality is a major constraint related to raw material inconsistent supply. This is especially a challenge to indigenous crafters who rely on the natural environment for raw material (Planning Commission Government of India, 2006:56). Another challenge is that some areas are characterised by heavy logging activities making it difficult for the carvers to find high quality soft wood for their carving (Berma, 1996:281). The time involved in searching for raw materials and the near absence of synthetic

materials have also been cited as the reasons for crafters unwillingness to produce for the market (Mkhonta et al, 2013:45). This goes to an extent that some handcrafters such as carvers, to prefer to carve for local use because there is less pressure to find raw materials continuously. Others who sell their carvings have resorted to using harder wood where they can, which often results in poorer quality products (Berma, 1996:281).

Furthermore, some raw materials used have to be imported from outside the local area. A related problem to this is the rising price of the raw materials which adds to the increase in cost of production. The high cost of raw materials is also influenced by the distance between the sources of supply of raw materials and the production premises. Berma (1996:282) argues that the high incidence of raw materials-related problems has a long-term implication on the small-scale craftspersons. Unless they make the necessary efforts at using alternative raw materials, or cultivating some of the raw materials from the forest which are rapidly diminishing, they will not be able to survive, let alone develop into a competitive business enterprise.

### **2.5.2.3 Education**

Mofokeng (2008:16) states that the success or failure of rural SMMEs also depends on the access to training, since it is a critical factor in the operation of these enterprises. The majority of crafters has low level of education, and thus has had little exposure to technical and management knowledge (Mkhonta et al, 2013:45; Rogerson, 2001). As a consequence, they are still using obsolete technology to produce their crafts (South African Craft report, 1998:68; Ahmad & Hassan, 1990:9-14) causing production to be slow. The quality of products is also sometimes low, inconsistent and unattractive. Their low level of education can also be pointed out as the reason why craftsmen are unable to quickly receive changes in design information, which is a relatively common constraint to supply. Once a craftsman has become skilled in a particular design, it may be extremely difficult to change due to production techniques and the skills factor. The possibility to produce innovative patterns and designs is restricted to the knowledge that the craftsman has acquired. Furthermore, one must also accept the fact that some craftsmen do not desire to conform to market requirements. They are more comfortable producing traditional motifs and designs because such motifs signify what their crafts essentially stand for. As such products as demanded by the market are not produced. There is thus a great need to upgrade both the skills and the management capability of operators (Rogerson 2001)



#### **2.5.2.4 Poor road infrastructure and services in the remote areas**

The poor road infrastructure and services in the remote areas have a negative effect in promoting handicraft artisans. For example, the cost of transporting goods and services is high (Swaziland Small and Medium Enterprises, 2003:36).

### **2.6 Summary**

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature to this study. Clearly the use of indigenous knowledge and locally available resources is identified as a possible solution to the needs of the rural poor. Even though this approach to sustainable livelihood is perceived by some scholars as backward, based on the landlessness and unemployment; denoting primarily a system of very intensive exploitation of labour with very low wages and often very long hours (Lieddholm & Mead, 1996:19). The role played by such activities in the household economy cannot be overlooked as stated by Mirrien (2009:34). The impact of these activities has started to gain government recognition as a potential to create employment and generate income (Central Bank of Swaziland 2011:13; Jongeward, 2001). An important element revealed by the literature is that women are a strong force to be highly considered in planning rural development. Literature has revealed that their empowerment provide a foundation for poverty alleviation. Finally, this chapter showed that rural women can easily get involved in income-generating activities because of the nature of the work. To produce handicrafts does not require much capital and sophisticated skills which rural women normally lack.

However, what motivated this study is that despite the growing importance of women entrepreneurship in creating job opportunities for millions of people and government's efforts to create and develop quality, resilient and successful entrepreneurship, and to cultivate an enterprising culture among women, little is known about the motivation of these women to become entrepreneurs, and the contribution of these activities to rural livelihoods and their prevalence in the Lowveld of Swaziland. It is therefore crucial that we understand the motivational factors associated with these activities. The current study aims to fill that gap.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the research methodology used in this study is discussed; followed by the description of the study area, research design, sampling technique, data collection, data analysis, criteria for measurement, limitations of the study and ethical considerations.

#### 3.2 Description of the study area

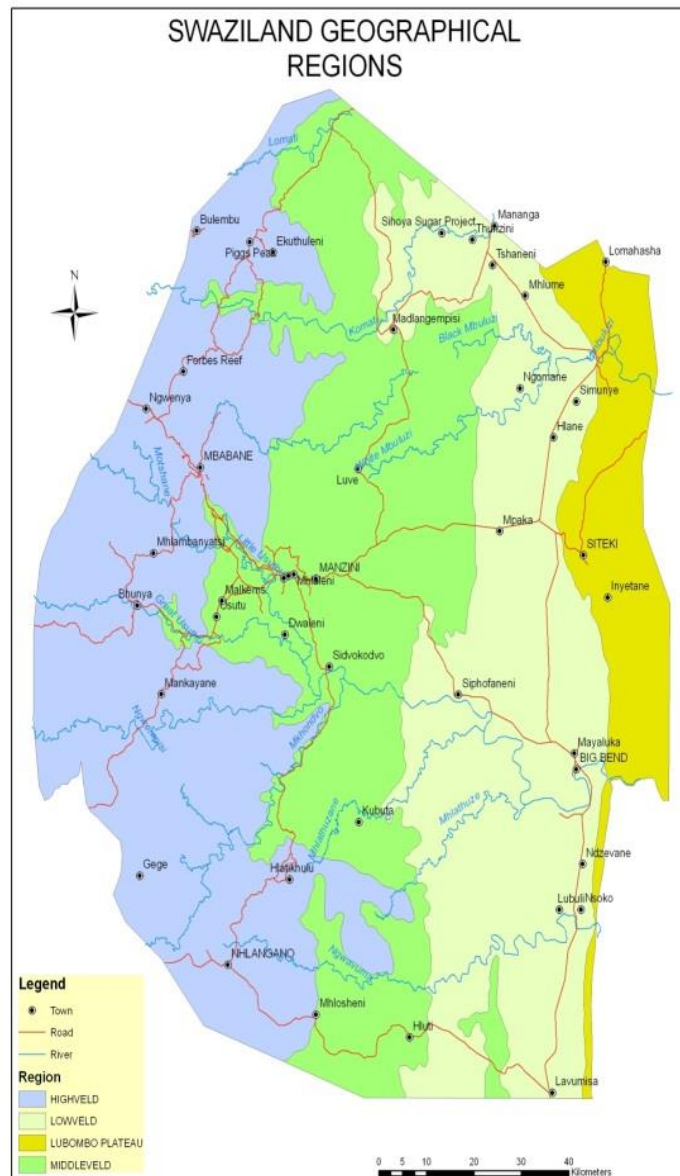
##### 3.2.1 Position and relief

The Lowveld region is one of the four physiographic regions of Swaziland. Swaziland is a small, independent monarchy in southern Africa, bordered on the east by Mozambique and on the south-east, south, west, and north by the Republic of South Africa. One of the smallest of the continental African states, it has an area of 17,363 sq km (6,704 sq mi). The capital of Swaziland is Mbabane. The country lies between coordinates 30°45' and 32°07' east and 25°30' and 27°30' south of the equator.

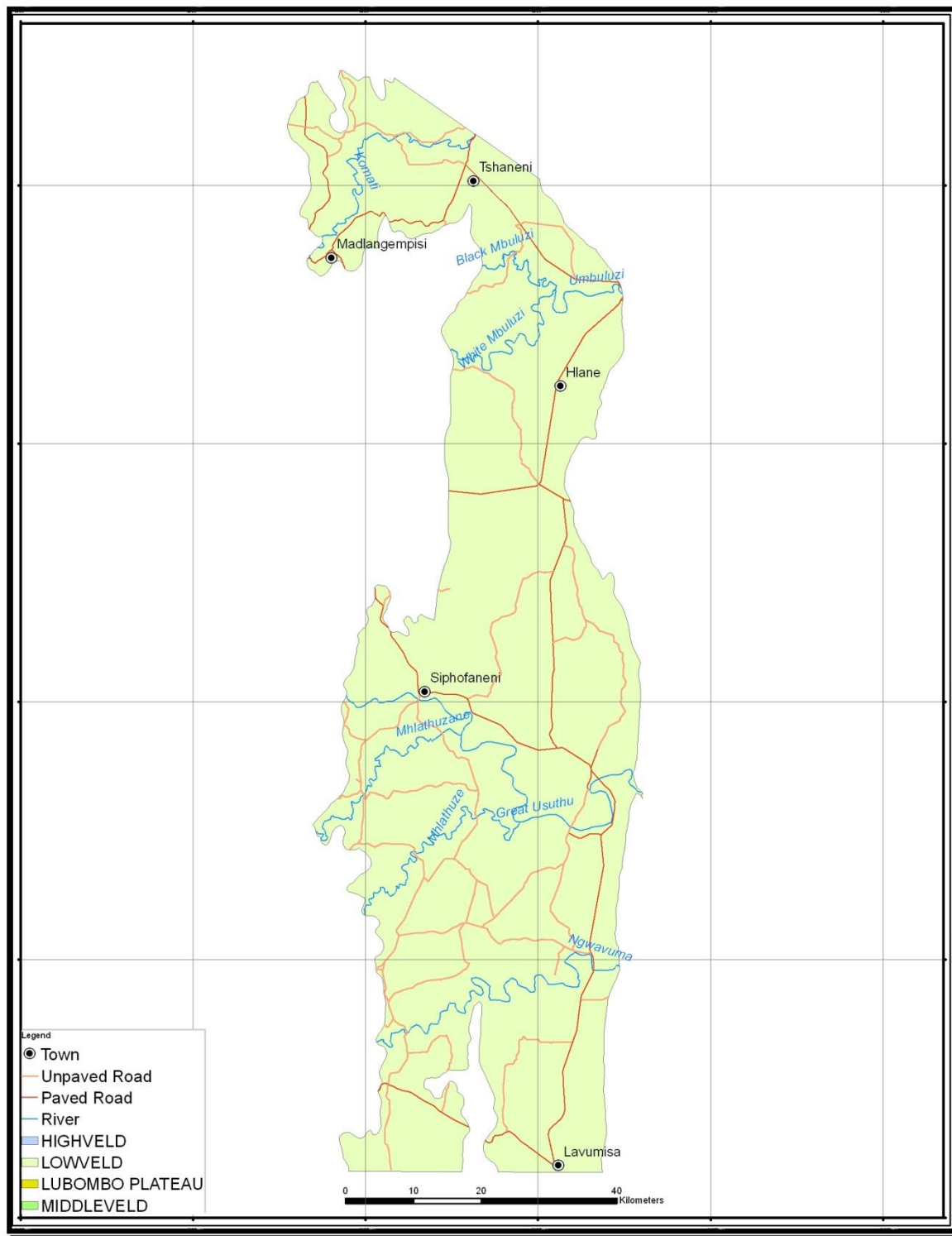


Figure 3.1: Map 1 showing Swaziland (source: [www.worldatlas.com](http://www.worldatlas.com))

The Lowveld is the last but one region to the east of the country. Like all the other three regions, the Lowveld cuts Swaziland vertically across from north to south. This is a rolling area with the lowest altitude in the country ranging between 225 and 300 metres. It covers a total area of 2400 sq miles.



**Figure 3.2: Map 2 showing geographical regions of Swaziland (Source: Geo systems Swaziland)**



**Figure 3.3: Map 3 showing sampled areas and pilot study area in the Lowveld of Swaziland (source: Geo systems Swaziland)**

### **3.2.2 Climate**

The Lowveld lies on the leeward side of the Lubombo Mountains. This makes the region a generally a dry area and prone to drought conditions with an annual rainfall of 500 to 900 millimetres. These rains are unreliable and received between October and March. Generally, the region has an annual average temperature of 22 °C. However, in the summer season, temperatures rise up to 40 °C. This has been worsened by global warming and in the recent past, temperatures of 44 °C have been recorded in areas such as Big Bend (Swaziland Meteorological report, 2009/2011).

### **3.2.3 Socio-economic status**

The Lowveld region has the highest rate of poverty which stands at 43% of the total poor in Swaziland (Boudreau, 2010:4). This is partly caused by the climate of the region, which is semi-arid. Since agriculture is a mainstay for most rural communities, poor rainfall and high temperatures negatively affect agricultural yields in the region. About 70% of food in the Lowveld comes from food aid. People in this region supplement this food aid through purchases of maize and any increase in the price of maize seriously affect them.

On the other hand there is limited opportunity to expand sources of income. The very poor in this region have both expenditure (E1786) and food deficits of (42%). The main sources of income are casual employment in the sugarcane fields, self-employment and remittances which are not affected by agricultural production (Poverty Reduction Task Force of Swaziland, 2005:21).

## **3.3 Research design**

A research design is a plan or blueprint on how the researcher intends to conduct the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:74; De Vos, 2005:137). This involves how data would be collected and analysed to respond to the research problem and objectives raised in the research. Polit and Beck (2004:162) state that a research design spells out the basic strategies that the researcher adopts to obtain evidence that is accurate and interpretable. The major purpose of this study was to investigate the contribution of handicrafts on livelihoods of women in the Lowveld of Swaziland. A survey research design, which is the administration of questionnaires to the sample of respondents chosen from a population, was used in this study. Survey research

designs are used in studies that have individual people as the units of analysis or where some individual persons must serve as respondents or informants (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:232). In this study for example, women who make and sell handicrafts served as respondents. Among the strengths of this design is that it is useful in describing the characteristics of a large population; it enables the researcher to ask many questions on a given topic. This allows for considerable flexibility in data analysis; and enables the researcher to develop operational definitions based on actual observations (Babbie & Mouton, 2000:263).

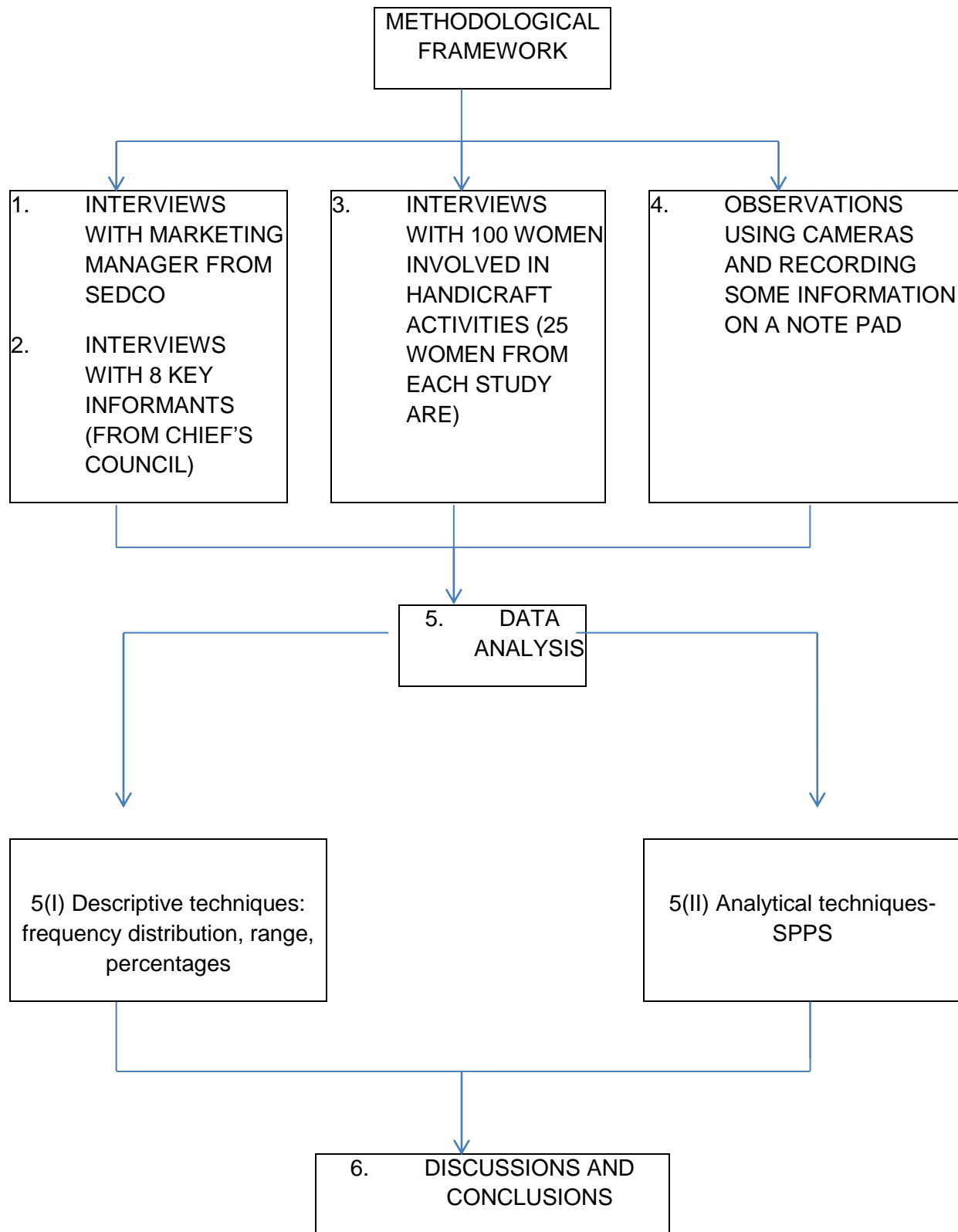
Mixed methods were used as the research paradigm combining the collection of qualitative data and quantitative data. Combining these methods is particularly useful in livelihood assessment because it is not simple to unpack the complexities of diversity, change and isolation of rural livelihoods. Ashley and Hussein, (2000:21) argue that in order to analyse a livelihood, one has to determine the network of factors and processes involved, as well as making comparisons over all encompassing livelihood attributes. A livelihood study is descriptive or qualitative in nature, but also requires certain quantitative techniques to assess certain relevant elements. Therefore, although the qualitative and quantitative methodologies differ, they complement each other in many ways (Bryman, 2008:609) and they enable the researcher to secure information through another method if it is difficult to do so through the other (Ashley & Hussein, 2000:21).

A quantitative methodology often generates data according to categories, while using less efforts of revealing the processes involved in the dynamics of society (Bryman, 2008:140). For example, the researcher employed this methodology to quantify the economic benefits of handicrafts. The qualitative approach, on the other hand, performs comprehensive examinations of cases and processes in a social life, other than generating data or tallying of the different attributes in a society. It is engaged when the researcher attempts to understand behaviour and institutions getting to know the people involved and their values, rituals, symbols and emotions (Nachmias & Frankfort-Nachmias, 2005:281).

### **3.4 Methodological framework**

Figure 2 represents the methodological framework of the study. The study comprised of three samples, two categories of key informants and 100 women. The first key informant was a marketing and business development manager from the small development company known as

SEDCO. The main purpose was to solicit information about the existence of handicraft as a commercial activity in Swaziland, products that are manufactured, and the kind of support received by people who are manufacturing, conservation laws, trade of these products and envisaged challenges. The other group of key informants was made up of eight members of the local inner council. Here a questionnaire administered to document information on the traditional conservation laws, the role of women in a household, trade of these products and envisaged challenges. The third category of the study population selected were 100 women from the four chiefdoms of the Lowveld region. This was done to document knowledge on handicrafts and its contribution to livelihoods.



**Figure 3.4: Methodological framework**



### **3.4.1 Sampling the study area**

Before selection of the study areas, the researcher observed that in the Lowveld region of Swaziland, handicraft making is practised in almost all chiefdoms. Four chiefdoms were selected for the study. These chiefdoms were selected because they are the largest in size and the researcher was certain that the required sample can be obtained. Even though four chiefdoms (Tshaneni, Mpaka, Siphofaneni and Lavumisa) may seem a small number, the researcher felt that in qualitative studies numbers are not that important as long as the right qualities to explain the studied variables are identified, (Bryman, 2008:462). Furthermore, collecting data from only four chiefdoms also suited the financial and time restraints of this research.

### **3.4.2 Sampling of key informants**

The purposive sampling method was used to select key informants. The researcher used an officer from the small development company (SEDCO) and members of the local inner council (*bandlancane*) as key informants in this study. These were selected because they are familiar with the women's activities under study. The inner council is responsible for the development and are custodians of culture. SEDCO on the other hand was selected because it is an organisation which deals with small businesses in Swaziland and also has a special department that focuses on handicraft. Furthermore, both the inner council and SEDCO normally interact with households and thus they have first-hand information about the respondents.

### **3.4.3 Sampling of women**

To select women involved in indigenous handicraft activities the researcher used the snowball sampling method. The reason for using snowball sampling is that the researcher did not know who is involved in handicraft making. Since interviews with these women were done after key informants' interviews, the researcher asked key informants to identify at least five women involved in handicraft activities. This same exercise was employed on every respondent until the sample got saturated (De Vos, 2005:200).

### **3.5 Research methods and instruments**

#### **3.5.1 Questionnaire for key informants**

Two different questionnaires were prepared for key informants (Appendix A and B) and they were more qualitative and contained mainly structured open-ended questions with few closed-ended questions. The questionnaire which was used to interview the officer from SEDCO was inclusive in that it contained questions which focused on raw material, income received from these activities, the strengths and weaknesses of these activities. The other one which was used to interview key informants from the inner council contained questions which focused mainly on culture and the use of the environment by people and especially women involved in handicraft. The time spent with each respondent ranged between 40 minutes and one hour. A questionnaire was not given directly to the respondents, but an interviewer asked a series of questions and responses were recorded on the sheets.

#### **3.5.2 Questionnaire for the women involved in handicrafts**

A questionnaire was developed using the objectives of the study mentioned in chapter 1 (section 1.4). The questionnaire comprised of both closed and open-ended questions. It was divided into five sections, namely personal details, handicraft activities, other livelihood activities, resources used in handicraft and the contribution of handicraft to livelihood. Questions on challenges experienced were also asked.

#### **3.5.3 Field visit: pilot study**

A pilot study was carried out in Mandlangempisi area in preparation for a proposed larger regional survey. The pilot survey had the following aims: to determine the suitability, reliability, validity, appropriateness and effectiveness of the research instruments; to eliminate errors normally associated with questionnaires such as ambiguity, double barrel and leading questions; to identify other issues that are important in handicraft production; and to shape objectives of the study. According to De Vos (2005:210), a pilot study must be conducted in a place which has similar characteristics as the area in which you intend to conduct the main study. It was found that Mandlangempisi showed similarities to the main study areas in that the area is in the Lowveld region of Swaziland; women in this area are faced by similar conditions such as being de facto household heads, while also practising informal income generating activities which include handicraft. For the purposes of this exercise, five women who are

involved in handicraft were interviewed. The questionnaires were then modified and used for the final study.

### **3.6 Data collection**

#### **3.6.1 Data collection: interview with manager from SEDCO**

As mentioned earlier in the methodological framework, data collection for this study began with one-on-one interviews conducted with marketing manager from SEDCO using a questionnaire (appendix A). The interview lasted for an average of one hour. This interview was done at the SEDCO office in Mbabane.

#### **3.6.2 Interviews with members of the chief council**

This was the second category of the interviews or data collection using appendix B. Interviews with these informants ranged between 30 to 50 minutes. The interviews were conducted at the homesteads of these members. These key informants were crucial in identifying women who were involved in handicraft in the different study areas.

#### **3.6.3 Interviews with women**

Interviews with women started at around 10 in the morning and were done at the households (natural settings of respondents) of the women producing handicraft. The interviews lasted between 25 to 40 minutes. Interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis to ensure minimal interference from third parties. This questionnaire was administered using a face-to-face approach, in other words a questionnaire was not given directly to the respondents, but the interviewer asked a series of questions and responses were recorded on standardised pre-coded sheets with blank spaces to record responses probed by open-ended questions. This method of data collection is commonly used where the respondents' literacy level is low (Laws, Harper & Marcus, 2003). This method allowed the researcher to pursue open-ended questions in greater depth. Data collection for this study started in the Lavumisa area followed by Siphofaneni, Mpaka and lastly in Tshaneni. The researcher interviewed 25 respondents per chiefdom in order to maintain or get a balance from the different study areas.

### **3.6.4 Observations**

Non-participant observations were used in order to gain first-hand information. Polit and Beck (2004:375) define research observation as the systematic selection, observation and recording of behaviour, events and setting related to a problem under investigation. This is better done on its naturally occurring behaviour and its usual context (Neuman, 2000:360-361). In this study observations provided the researcher with a better understanding of the activities taking place in the study area. The researcher observed and recorded the attitudes, reactions and non-verbal cues of key informants, marketers, buyers, surroundings and other related information during the interviews and visits. Above all, this method of data collection allowed the researcher to obtain a careful description of the programme, including activities, members and the significance they attach to their activities. Field notes derived from the observation exercise were recorded on the note book. The researcher also used a camera for pictorial presentations.

### **3.7 Ethical consideration**

Before doing the study the researcher identified ethical issues related to the study. These issues included rights of respondents to voluntary participation, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality and deception as suggested by (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:100). The researcher also applied for clearance from the Unisa ethics committee to verify if all ethical issues related to the study had been observed (see appendix D).

In order to collect data for the study, permission from the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade was obtained (see appendix E). The permission to gain entry to the study area was obtained from the local authorities (inner councils). When visiting households the researcher also observed the Swazi protocol, for example observing the custom that the man is the head of the household, and as such in cases where the man (husband) was present, the researcher introduced himself to the man and requested permission to talk to the wife. Before each interview started individual consent was sought from each person by means of a consent form (appendix F). The details of the study were explained and participants were ensured that the information will only be used for the purposes of the study and that no individual names will be mentioned. The researcher informed potential interviewees that their participation in this study was completely voluntary, and that they had the right to refuse to be interviewed or to withdraw from the study at any time, without any prejudice or explanation. This consent form was handed over and signed before an interview process. Since the study involved other sensitive issues

such as money, the researcher ensured that these interviews were conducted in a private place away from others. In addition, information disclosed by handicraft artisans and other key informants during the interviews was treated with strict confidentiality and kept in a safe place where only the researcher had access to it.

### **3.8 Data analysis**

Data analysis involves organising what the researcher has seen and read in order to make sense of what has been gathered and learnt (Glesne, 1999:130). According to De Vos (2005:222), the purpose of data analysis is to shrink data into a manageable form which will allow the establishment of relationship in the studied variables. In this study data analysis was done in two statistical software packages called SPSS Data Entry II TM computer program version 20 and Microsoft Excel. These software packages were found suitable for both the qualitative and quantitative types of data collected. Questions and answers were coded and programmed into the SPSS package. According to Kvale and Brinkman (2009:201) coding is the breaking down of the text into manageable segments and attaching one or more keywords to a text segment, in order to come up with an explanation of the observed phenomena. This allows for standardization and analysis. This exercise helped the researcher to identify emerging categories and concepts of interest. Subsequently, frequencies in terms percentage were calculated to interpret the results. Frequency, as an element of descriptive statistics, helped the researcher to tally the results and present the result in the form of graphs.

The Microsoft Excel program was also used to analyse some of the data gathered. This included information such as determining the sources of income in a household. To get this information the respondent was given a list containing 10 sources of income. To analyse this data, if a certain option is a source of income for the household it would be scored as '1', but if not it will be scored '0'. This numerical information was programmed into a spread-sheet and plotted against the income sources to develop a pie chart for interpretation of the findings.

It is a general understanding in social science that qualitative methods of analysis are subjective to bias. For that reason triangulation was employed in this study to create, reinforce credibility and reduce bias in the qualitative findings. The triangulation employed in this study was a methodological triangulation, involving key informants at the beginning of the study prior to visiting the households, individual interviews and observations.

### **3.9 Constraints**

Lack of documentation on the part of women practising handicraft was identified as a major constraint in this study. This came to light when the researcher asked the respondents about the money they receive for their activities. Most of them had to try recalling and estimating what they actually receive from their activities. Furthermore, because of the introduction of the Swaziland Revenue Authority and rumours that all commercial activities were going to be taxed, some respondents appeared to distrust the researcher even though proof that the study was solely for academic purpose was given. Both these constraints were found to be major factors which could compromise the authenticity of the results.

Another constraint is that the researcher had to wait for some respondents who were found not to be at home. In some instances the researcher had to walk to respondents and return later. A lot of time was in this manner.

### **3.10 Summary**

The study was conducted at the Lowveld of Swaziland with Lavumisa, Mpaka, Tshanani and Siphofaneni chiefdoms as study areas. To undertake it, both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed with particular focus on qualitative methods. As primary source of data and information the researcher conducted interviews using semi-structured questionnaires together with observations.

The questionnaire questions were aligned to the five objectives of the study mentioned in chapter 1, section 1.4. A purposive sampling method was then used to select a total of nine key informants who were interviewed; eight were members of the chief council in the different study areas and one was a senior manager at SEDCO, an organisation working with handicraft producers in Swaziland. For the core of the study which is the understanding of the contribution of handicraft in the study area, a purposive sampling method combined with snowball sampling method was used to select 100 women involved in handicrafts. The data collected from women participated were validated against those from the key informants and in particular from the SEDCO manager. For analysing data, frequencies and percentages were made with the help of SPSS.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA PRESENTATION**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented as obtained from the responses given by respondents. Quantitative data is summarized in tables and charts for easy interpretation and understanding. In qualitative data, themes that emerged from data analysis are used as sub-headings to present results. These results will be discussed in chapter 5.

#### **4.2 Presentation of results**

The chapter includes results obtained from the key informants, household interviews and observations as mentioned in chapter 3. The results are presented into two main sections, namely results from the key informants and those obtained from interviews and observations. Results from the interviews and observations are presented concurrently because they cover the same objectives of the study and data collection was done simultaneously as indicated in section (3.5.4) of chapter 3.

#### **4.3 Results from the key informants**

The responses gathered from the key informants helped to generate general overview of the business and also matters which concern conservation and the future of handicraft business. From these interviews five main themes were identified, namely types of handicraft, conservation of the resources, institutional support of women involved in handicraft, perceived advantages of the handicraft business, and lastly challenges in handicraft business.

As mentioned in chapter 3 (section 3.3.2) key informant interviews were designed to acquire specific information from those individuals deemed to have expert knowledge on certain aspects such as indigenous and cultural laws pertaining to the access and use of resources used in handicrafts, types of handicrafts, strengths and weaknesses of handicraft as a livelihood activity. The key informants included a senior official from Small Enterprise Development Company (SEDCO) and community leaders.

#### 4.3.1 Types of handicrafts

The key informants revealed that there are about seven (7) types of handicraft that are done in this study area. These handicraft include pottery, weaving, knitting, sewing, beading, dyeing and carving. Members of the chiefs' council mentioned that types of handicraft are inspired mainly by culture which dictates roles within a household and community. It was also suggested by key informants that culture also plays a role in the skill development which is developed through children hobbies and household activities which are normally gender biased. According to the key informant from SEDCO handicraft products are mainly used in cultural activities such as traditional weddings (*imitsimba*), the first fruit ceremony (*incwala*), reed dance (*umhlanga*) and marula (*emaganu*) ceremony, which are still vibrant in the country.

#### 4.3.2 Conservation of resources

Questions of the access and use of the local resources were deemed necessary as the literature in chapter 2 (section 2.3.3. and 2.6.2.2) suggested that most resources used in handicrafts are natural resources harvested from the local environment. Bearing that in mind the researcher wanted to find out if there are any conservation laws to prevent unsustainable use and depletion of resources which can be detrimental on the sustenance of handicraft as a livelihood activity. During the discussion it emerged that there are both traditional and modern laws governing the use of natural resources in Swaziland.

At traditional level it was strongly suggested that the chief and indigenous knowledge plays a major role in this regard. The Chief is the "King's eye" and has responsibility of looking after nature in the area as well as conservation of resources such as natural grass, trees, wild animals and other traditional sites. Resources in each local area are meant to provide support to local people. It was also found that outsiders are strongly prohibited from exploiting local resources and they can only do so if the chief gives permission.

Traditional rules were mentioned as playing a crucial role in conservation of resources. The chief and council are responsible for enforcing these rules. Anyone accused of breaching these rules is taken through disciplinary action at the chieftdom and if found guilty of breaking any of these rules is usually punished in the form of a fine. Example of these rules include not cutting certain grass such as *Cyoeus articulatus* (*incoboza*) and *Cyperus latifolius* (*likhwane*), at certain periods of the year are commonly used. It is believed that cutting such grass may cause



some unfavourable environmental conditions such as storms and drought. Additionally, rules such as respecting the King's trees (tree species used for royal purposes) such as *Combretum spp* (*Imbhondvo*) and *reed* (*umhlanga*) are common. These rules are also applicable to other useful trees such as indigenous fruit trees. In addition to this the key informants revealed that, trees such as *Eucleas spp.* (*incitamuzi*) are regarded as taboo for household uses. It was suggested that this tree is believed to cause conflicts and quarrels and consequently the disintegration of the family when burnt within the household. Furthermore, it was also reported that other trees are perceived as totems because they are not used by individuals with certain surnames, an example being *Gymnosporia Senegalensis* (*umcanco*) which is not used by the Maziyas. Lastly, it was mentioned that some trees such as *Ximenia caffra* (*umthunduluka*) and *Vangueria infausta* (*umntulwa*) are not supposed to be used as firewood because they cause swollen testicles in males. The respondents further indicated that there are people working voluntarily as community police to ensure that these laws are observed by monitoring and reporting offenders to the chiefdoms.

Regarding modern laws it was mentioned that Swaziland Environmental Authority was responsible for ensuring that the natural environment is well protected. The Swaziland Environmental Authority entity is also responsible for the monitoring of activities taking place on the environment and also advising the government in the development of environmental laws. In addition to that, it was indicated that since the realization that handicraft is an important source of income; organisations such as SEDCO and Swaziland Environmental Authority have started to teach the nation through the media on the sustainable ways of utilising the natural environment which include reforestation and re-use.

#### **4.3.3 Institutional support of women involved in handicraft**

Several statements from key informants indicated that there are a number of institutions that are in place for providing, and promoting handicraft as a livelihood activity. These institutions include the government of Swaziland under the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade which has established a special department which focuses on handicraft. At the time of data collection it was found that the government, together with other related stakeholders, had just established a fibre forum which also focuses on handicraft. Other institutions besides SEDCO which promote handicraft include Gone Rural, Buy Swazi Campaign, SIPA, SACRO and the Swaziland Tourism Authority. It was further mentioned that these institutions encourage women doing handicraft to take part in national and international exhibitions to show off their products.

For example, it was gathered that SEDCO and other institutions assist women in handicraft to visit trade fairs in the SADC region (Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa and Namibia to name a few) to showcase their products. These visits have benefitted them because it increased their market base and created trading friendships. The visits also taught them new patterns to make certain products. Some learnt to use different resources especially those which are deemed to be waste products of industries and shops to make handicraft products. Furthermore, the officer from SEDCO highlighted that besides empowering or supporting women, they also teach women business skills such as handling finances, how markets work, and initiating new designs.

#### **4.3.4 Advantages of the handicrafts business as perceived by the key informants**

Key informants were also asked to mention the advantages of handicraft activities. In response, informants stated that handicraft has made women realise they are able to perform tasks that will ensure that they do not have to depend heavily on their husbands or anyone else. Key informants perceived income which women receive from these activities as making crucial contribution towards livelihoods of participants. In addition to this, it was mentioned that handicraft provide an easy point of entry to the participation in the economy. One of the key informants added that “if you talk to these women, some of them shed tears of joy when they reflect on what they have done through handicraft. Some are widows who have been left with young children but through handicraft they managed to school, clothe and feed their children”. Lastly, several statements from key informants indicated that handicraft play a major role in uplifting and preserving the culture of the Swazi people.

#### **4.3.5. Challenges involved in doing handicraft**

A number of challenges were identified as facing the handicraft sector. Some of these challenges concern promotion of the business while others relate to the production of handicraft products. The challenges as narrated by the officer from SEDCO include that most women in handicraft are not organised as groups but work as individuals. This makes it difficult to hold joint workshops and to follow up on the progress that women are making. In addition, this means that women do not have bargaining power when it comes to pricing their products, buying resources and transporting their goods. Poor creativity in making the products was mentioned as another challenge facing women involved in handicraft production. Therefore many producers end up making the same product thus leading to oversupply of certain products

which in turn affect the sales. Lack of investment (capital) in the handicraft production was revealed as another problem especially for those women whose resources are bought from the market.

Culture was also identified as part of the challenges experienced in handicraft making. It was reported that culturally women have the added burden of being the main caregivers in the households. They are therefore responsible for a number of household chores such as taking care of the children, cooking, washing, cleaning the house while some still travel long distances to collect water and firewood. As a consequence, most women do these activities mainly as secondary activity which is done after they have finished their primary duties and consequently fail to meet deadlines. It was also reported that when trying to chase deadlines, they sometimes end up producing substandard products which do not meet the market requirements. Additionally, this added burden makes it difficult for some to leave their homes and go to a central workshop.

Key informants further indicated that accessing natural raw material is becoming a challenge due to climate change which has resulted in a decline of certain species. According to the officer from SEDCO, climate change has caused the drying of swamps where women cut grass used in handicraft. The change in climatic conditions has also caused decline and extinction of some grass and trees that are useful in handicraft production. In addition to that, there has been an invasion of land by the *Chromolaena odorata* species (*sandanezwe*) and overpopulation. Overpopulation which results in deforestation due to demand for more land for construction of homes, cultivation and grazing of livestock was reported as another problem facing women in handicraft production.

Failure to observe conservation laws by certain members of the community especially indigenous regulations was highlighted as one of the problems preventing proper regulation of harvesting of resources. One key informant from an inner council said “people now are proud of their rights and because of that, you cannot tell them anything”. Even though there are regulations these offences are not regarded as serious making it easy for offenders to +walk free. Furthermore, the chiefs do not have enough authority to enforce these laws, for example when a person refuses to pay fine there are no strict laws to enforce that.

#### **4.4 Results from women involved in handicraft production**

In this section data gathered from 100 women who are involved in handicraft production is presented. For the purposes of clarity or logical presentation, data presentation has been arranged according to the main objectives of the study mentioned in chapter 1 (section 1.4). The results therefore are categorized into five main sections, namely bibliographic information, handicraft products existing in the selected study area, resources required, other livelihood strategies and lastly the contribution of handicrafts into livelihoods.

##### **4.4.1. Bibliographic information of women**

The various ages, marital status and level of education of women are given in table 4.1. It should be noted that “frequency” in each table indicates the number of times a certain choice was made or the number of respondents (women) who made a certain choice.

The majority (32%) of 100 women were between ages of 40 and 49 years of age, and 24% between ages 30 and 39 years. Eighteen per cent (18%) were between 21 and 29 years, 13% were between 50 and 59 years, while 9% were above 60 years. The remaining (4%) were below 20 years of age. A large proportion of women (56%) who participated in the study were married, 19% widowed, 11% cohabiting while the rest were single (8%), divorced (3%) or separated (3%).

Out of the 100 women interviewed only 2% had tertiary certificates. The majority of women (60%) had secondary education, while only 5% had finished high school. The rest of the women (9%) reported that they never went to formal school even though they can read and write the Swati language. In summary, the bibliographic characteristics mainly reflected married women, below the age of 50 and largely without high school education.

**Table 4.1 Socio-demographic characteristics**

Variable	Frequency N=100	% of respondents
Age		
Below 20 years	4.0	4.0
21-29	18.0	18.0
30-39	24.0	24.0
40-49	32.0	32.0
50-59	13.0	13.0
Above 60 years	9.0	9.0
Total	100	100
Marital status		
Married	56.0	56.0
Widowed	19.0	19.0
Cohabit	11.0	11.0
Single	8.0	8.0
Divorced	3.0	3.0
Separated	3.0	3.0
Total	100	100
Education		
No formal education	9.0	9.0
Some primary	15.0	15.0
Primary	19.0	19.0
Some secondary	17.0	17.0
Secondary	18.0	18.0
Some high school	15.0	15.0
High school	5.0	5.0
Tertiary	2.0	2.0
Total	100	100

#### 4.4.2. Economic factors

The economic factors are presented in table 4.2 in terms of household size, employment status, household head, household income and income contributors. These variables were considered to have a bearing on the income and expenditure of money in a household. Out of the 100 women interviewed, the majority (81%) of households had members of more than seven members with 38% of these having more than thirteen members. The majority of women (84%) were unemployed, 11% worked part-time, while only 5% had full-time employment even though the majority of women interviewed (91%) were below the pensionable age of 60 years.

**Table 4.2 Economic variables**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency N= 100</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
<b>HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b>		
1-6 Members	19.0	19.0
7-12 members	43.0	43.0
Above 13 members	38.0	38.0
<b>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</b>		
Unemployed	84.0	84.0
Working part time	11.0	11.0
Working full time	5.0	5.0
<b>HOUSEHOLD HEAD</b>		
Male headed	38.0	38.0
Headed by women because husband is not always at home (due to employment)	32.0	32.0
Headed by woman because of husband death, left (desertion)	22.0	22.0
Yourself (never got married)	8.0	8.0
<b>INCOME CONTRIBUTORS</b>		
Respondent only	32	32.0
Respondent and spouse	36	36.0
Respondent and child	32	32.0
Total	100	100

Thirty eight per cent (38%) of the households were male headed, while 62 % were female headed due to husband working away from home (32%), death or divorce (22%) and women that were never married (8%).

Regarding income contribution there was not much difference in the figures. It was found that in most households (36%) the respondent and her husband were the main income contributors. This was closely followed by 32% respondents who reported that they were the sole income contributors. The role of children in income contribution cannot be overlooked as 32% respondents reported that their children were also contributing to the household income as shown in table 4.2 above.

## 4.5 Handicraft production

### 4.5.1 Reasons for participating in handicraft making

The majority of respondents (77%) indicated that they participate in handicraft because they like it, while 23% indicated that they do not like it but they are forced by circumstances. Out of the 77 women who indicated that they liked handicraft making, sixty six per cent (66%) indicated that the reason for liking handicraft is to earn income, while 34% reported that handicrafts is part of their heritage.

**Table 4.3: Reasons for participating in handicraft making**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Frequency N= 100</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
They like it	77	77.0
Forced by circumstances	23	23.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>REASONS FOR LIKING HANDICRAFT MAKING</b>		
<b>Reason</b>	<b>Frequency N=77</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
To earn income	51	66.0
Heritage	26	34.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.5.2 Time for doing handicraft

Figure 5.1 below shows the time in which different respondents do handicraft. The majority of respondents (64%) said that they do handicraft in the afternoon when they have done most of their household work. Another 21% of the respondents reported that they do not have specific time to do handicraft but they fit it in between their duties when it is convenient. Only 8% reported that they do handicraft as their full-time activity. The evening and morning were unpopular times to do handicraft with 4% and 3% of the respondents reporting that they do handicraft during these times.

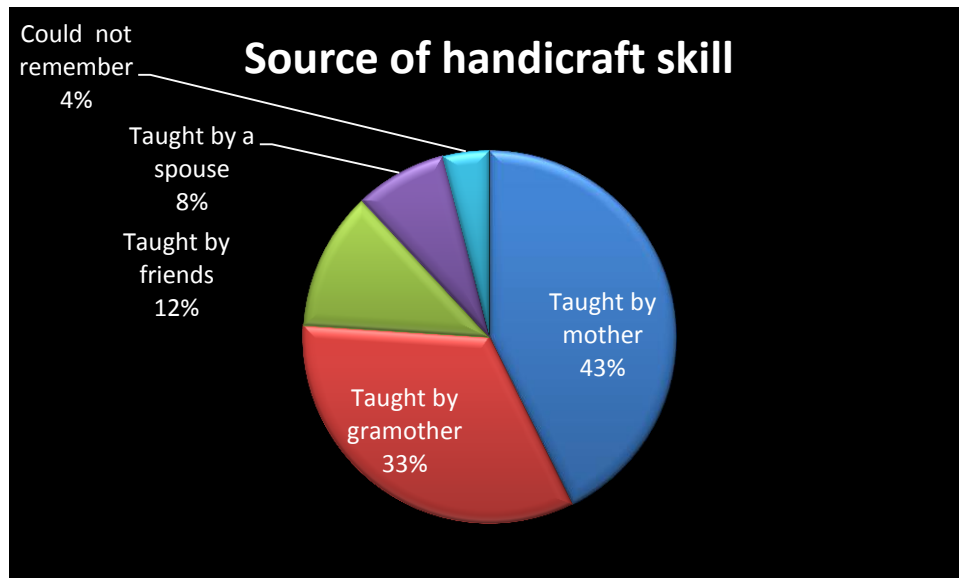


**Figure 5.1: Time for doing handicraft**

#### 4.5.4. Source of handicraft skill

Data gathered shows that all the respondents (100%) were using informal knowledge to do handicraft. The family played an important role in teaching respondents handicraft skill. For example, in combination 76% of the respondents learned their skills either from their mothers or grandmothers, 12% of respondents learned from their friends, 8% learned from spouses while 4% could not remember whom they learned the skill from.





**Figure 5.2: Source of handicraft skill**

#### **4.5.5 Experience in handicraft activities**

The number of years women have participated in handicraft making are presented in table 4.4 below. The word experience was used to refer to the number of years each respondent has been involved in production and trading of handicraft products. Regarding experience in handicraft production, most women had extensive experience in handicraft activities. The majority (36%) had been doing handicrafts for more than 20 years. Some of these respondents reported that they were introduced to handicraft production and making at an early age by their parents hence this experience. Twenty five per cent (25%) had between 11 to 20 years of experience, 21% had between 6 to 10 years, while the remaining 18% had less than five years of experience in handicraft making and selling.

**Table 4.4: Experience in handicraft activities**

Number of years	Frequency N= 100	% of respondents
Less than 5 years	18.0	18.0
6-10 years	21.0	21.0
11-20 years	25.0	25.0
More than 20 years	36.0	36.0
Total	100	100

#### **4.5.6 Handicraft activities carried out**

Respondents reported they are involved in seven different handicraft activities, namely beading, pottery, sewing, weaving, dyeing, carving and knitting. It was discovered during data collection that some respondents (table 4.5) focus on one product while others produce more than one product. The majority of respondents (77%) combine one or two products while 23% focus on one product only. Handicraft combinations which were identified are: the dyeing and beading (34%); weaving, dyeing and beading (13%); sewing and beading (8%); knitting and beading (7%); and lastly pottery and beading (7%). Of those who were concentrating on one activity beading was found to be the most popular as 11% respondents reported that they only do beading. This was followed by 8% respondents who said they only do weaving. Knitting appeared to be less popular as only 1% of the respondents were practising it (see table 4.5 below).

**Table 4.5: Handcraft activities carried out**

Handicraft activity	Frequency N= 100	% of respondents
Weaving and beading	34	34.0
Weaving, dyeing and beading	13	13.0
Beading	11	11.0
Weaving	8	8.0
Pottery and beading	7	7.0
Knitting and beading	7	7.0
Beading and dyeing	5	5.0
Sewing and beading	4	4.0
Carving and dyeing	4	4.0
Sewing	3	3.0
Weaving and dyeing	2	2.0
Knitting and sewing	1	1.0
Knitting	1	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

In overall, when the number are combined the most popular handicraft product in the study area was beading done by 81%, followed by weaving which is done by 57% respondents. Dyeing was also found to be a common activity practised by 25% of the respondents. It was reported that respondents harvest grasses such as *Cyperus latifolius* (*likhwane*) and *Uncus krausii* (*indvuli/incema*); dye them and sell them to weavers to add colour to and decorate their products. However, some respondents such as those doing weaving, practise dyeing on their own in order to add colour and attraction to their products. Figure 5.3 below shows an example of a place mat in which the weaver used dye to add colour on grass before weaving the mat.



**Figure 5.3: Picture of place mat made of dyed grass (Picture by researcher)**

Pottery and carving were identified as unpopular activities. These activities were practised by 7% and 4% respondents respectively. Carving was reported to be a difficult activity for the respondents because it involves a lot of strength in cutting and carrying the raw material, which most women do not have. Furthermore, carving falls mainly in the male category of activities. The unpopularity for doing pottery was reported to have been caused by decline in their use in homes.

#### **4.5.7. General challenges involved in handicraft**

All respondents reported that involvement in handicraft production and trade has a number of challenges. The challenges mentioned by respondents corroborated those which were given by the key informants. The reasons given were access to raw materials mentioned by 32%, trading challenges (47%) and health challenges (21%).



**Figure 5.4: Challenges in doing handicraft**

#### **4.5.7.1. Accessing raw material**

Access to raw material was identified by 32% of the respondents as the major challenge. Respondents attributed this difficulty to reasons such as long distances that are travelled from their homes to harvest raw materials, competition with animals, seasonality, climate change and population growth. It was observed that difficulty to access raw material due to distance was mentioned mainly by older people. As a consequence, they reported that they sometimes buy raw material from the younger women. Alternatively these women send their children to collect the raw material.

#### **4.5.7.2. Trading challenges**

Forty seven per cent (47%) mentioned trading challenges as a major challenge in producing handicraft. The respondents mentioned that there is a limited number of customers and they also compete among themselves for only few customers. For example, a number of them commented that in Manzini where marketing of handicraft takes place, one could find more than 200 handcrafters selling the same product. Respondents reported that because of this challenge, they are forced to give credit to buyers and often reduce the price of their products in order to get money.

#### **4.5.6.3. Health challenges**

Twenty one per cent (21%) mentioned health challenges as a major problem in handicraft production and trade. Health challenges that were mentioned included nail burns, eyes problems and back-ache. Respondents who do beading for example, said that with time such activity results in the development of eye problems and back pain. Another challenge which the respondents mentioned was that because trading areas are in the open air traders are exposed to all sorts of weather conditions. They mentioned that they normally have a problem when it is raining because apart from the fact that rain damages their products, they also get cold and flu which often results in pneumonia. Respondents also associated their back-pain to transporting raw material on their heads over long distances.

#### **4.6 Resources in the production of handicraft**

As indicated in section 4.5.5 different types of products were found in the study area. Respondents use both natural and synthetic material to do their handicraft. Table 4.7 below lists the different resources used in different types of products. It should be noted that some resources are used in more than one product.

**Table 4.6: Resources and raw materials used in handicraft**

<b>TYPE OF HANDICRAFT ACTIVITY</b>	<b>RESOURCES REQUIRED</b>	<b>HOW THEY ARE OBTAINED</b>	<b>WHERE</b>
Weaving ( <i>kweluka</i> )	<i>Cyperus latifolius</i> ( <i>likhwane</i> ), <i>Juncus krausii</i> ( <i>indvuli/incema</i> ), strings, <i>Cyperus articulatus</i> ( <i>incoboza</i> ), <i>Miscanthus capensis</i> ( <i>umtsala</i> ), <i>Xyris rehmannii</i> ( <i>umuzi</i> ) <i>Xyris rehmannii</i> ( <i>Umuzi</i> ), dyes, sisal ( <i>halibhoma</i> ) stones, refuse material (Torch batteries, thin ropes, old cabbage or orange bags, plastic shopping bags)	Women cut these grass using sickles ( <i>lisikela</i> ) from the local environment. Also collect it in their built environment	These grasses are found in local mountains, pastures, river banks and forests. Sometimes bought in other areas. Refuse material is collected in the built environment.
Beading ( <i>kuphotsa</i> )	Beads ( <i>buhlalu</i> ), strings ( <i>umtiya</i> ), needles ( <i>tinyalitsi</i> ), buttons ( <i>emakinobho</i> )	Purchased, local environment	Local shops and sometimes in towns, local fruits are also picked in the natural forest
Knitting ( <i>kukolosha</i> )	Wool ( <i>kotini</i> ), knitting needles	Purchased	Local shops and towns
Pottery ( <i>kubumba</i> )	Clay ( <i>lubumba</i> ), Dye, Beads ( <i>buhlalu</i> )	Obtained from local environment and also purchased	Rivers are source of clay while beads are bought from local shops and towns
Carving ( <i>kubata</i> )	Kiatt ( <i>umvangati</i> )	Local environment	Local forest, women ask help of their husbands
Sewing ( <i>kutfunga</i> )	Fabric ( <i>indwangu</i> ), sewing machine,	Purchased	Local towns
Dyeing ( <i>kudaya</i> )	( <i>Singa/Umngamba</i> ) <i>Acacia davyii</i> , ( <i>Umganu</i> ) <i>Sclerocarya birre</i> , ( <i>Umcozi</i> ) <i>Syzgium cordatum</i> ,	Purchased, harvested in local	Towns, local natural forest

	(Inhlaba) <i>Aloe spp.</i> (Chuchuza) <i>Bidens pilosa</i> , (Umsobo) <i>Solanum</i> , (Nukane) <i>Tegetes minuta</i> , (Bhotiruthi) beetroot, shoe dye, clothes dye	environment	
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The researcher also observed that even though natural resources are very important in handicraft the use of synthetic and refuse material is also increasing. Through refuse material, women produce products such as decoration mats and door mats shown below in figure 5.5.



**Figure 5.5: Handicraft products made from refuse material (Pictures by researcher)**

It was reported that examples of waste materials that are utilised in handicraft production include thin ropes, old cabbage or orange bags, plastic shopping bags and wool.

#### **5.6.1 Harvesting of natural raw material**

Respondents said that material for handicraft becomes ready at different times of the year, for example, grass are ready for harvesting from beginning of March until the end of June. For the fruits which are used for making handicrafts products such as earrings and necklaces, respondents reported that they are usually ready from the end of November until end of January and their availability partly depends on the rains in that particular year. During these times, they visit the veld where these raw materials are found. Indigenous knowledge is used to recognise ready material. For example, they reported that they have learnt to recognise grass and fruit that



is ready for harvesting mainly through the colour. Respondents reported that harvesting of raw material is done in the same manner. Grasses in wetlands for example, are harvested by cutting the base or stalk or stem using a sickle while harvesting fruit is usually done by hand picking the fruits from the tree. A bundle is then made which is tied with a rope and carried home most commonly on women's heads.

#### 4.6.2. Labour for harvesting raw material

Table 4.8 below shows the different people who harvest raw material for handicraft production. Even though both natural and synthetic raw material is used in the making of handicraft, table 4.8 refers to the harvesting of natural resources. In total 78% of the women reported that they obtain their raw material from their local environment. The majority (57%) mentioned that they harvest raw material on their own. Another 17% mentioned that they also involved their girl children in the harvesting. Only 4% mentioned the involvement of their husbands.

**Table 4.7: Labour used to harvest raw material**

<b>Harvester</b>	<b>Frequency N= 78</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
Respondents	57	73.1
Respondents and girl child	17	21.8
Respondents and their husband	4	5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.6.3. Processing of raw material

To process these raw materials respondents relied on their indigenous knowledge as indicated earlier in section 4.5.3. The processing of raw material mainly involves preparing it for the production of different products. Those who use grass for example normally spread it on a flat surface to dry. When leaves are slightly dried and have become light brown in colour, they are measured for cutting to the required length in preparation for weaving. The respondents then wrap the grass in moist material or carefully spread them outside if it is raining. Respondents stated that they do this to moisten them to prevent breaking. Even when weaving, they would constantly sprinkle water on the grass. Some indigenous plants such as aloe are burnt and its ash is used to prevent termites from destroying grass. In the case of wood, respondents mentioned that they prepare wood for carving by drying them in the shade to avoid losing shape

and cracking. To prepare fruits such as guavas and *Persian Lilac (emaputjutju)* which are used for making earrings and necklaces, respondents reported that they first boil them and then drain them and let them dry in the shade. Waste material is washed with soap and water then dried in the sun.

#### 4.6.4. Storage of natural raw material

Table 4.9 below shows that there are three ways in which respondents store raw material. These include hanging raw material in the kitchen, putting them on roof tops and lastly using the house to store tools. House for storing tools (41%) was found to be the most popular storage facility among respondents. Thirty six per cent (36%) were using kitchens while the remaining 23% reported that they put their materials on their roof tops. Respondents reported that they tie most of their raw materials with a rope before storing them. In the case of synthetic raw material, respondents mentioned that they are stored in plastic bags or packages in which they come from the shop.

**Table 4.8: Raw material storage ways**

Storage method	Frequency N= 100	% of respondents
Hanging in the kitchen	36	36.0
Tools storage house	41	41.0
Roof tops	23	23.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.7. Contribution of handicrafts to household income

Regarding this aspect of the study, the researcher mainly focused on the financial contribution of handicraft towards the livelihoods of the respondents.

##### 4.7.1. Handicraft products and their cost

Information gathered revealed that the cost of items women sell ranged between R5 and R160. The cheapest item (R5) was a beaded ring most popular with young boys. The most expensive item was a picnic basket priced at R160. On average most items were found to cost less than R100 and were dominated by weaved items such as washing baskets, flower baskets and a set

of beads. Table 4.9 below shows items which are sold by different respondents and cost of items.

**Table 4.9: Handicraft products and their cost**

List of handicraft products	Frequency N= 100	% of respondents	Average price per item SA rand
Flower basket	69	69.0	R50 – 75
Place mat	63	63.0	R30
Rasta colours (bracelets and necklaces)	61	61.0	R30 – 80
Washing basket	57	57.0	R80 – 120
Decorative plastic mat	52	52.0	R70 – 130
Door mat ( <i>limethi</i> )	51	51.0	R35 – 50
Beaded necklace ( <i>lijiva</i> )	49	49.0	R60 – 100
Beaded ring	49	49.0	R5 – 15
Weaved plastic bag ( <i>sikhwama</i> )	43	43.0	R60 – 100
Sisal bowl ( <i>sitsebe</i> )	43	43.0	R40 – 60
Indigenous seeds earrings ( <i>emacici</i> )	40	40.0	R25 – 50
Grass mats	39	39.0	R 50 – 140
Traditional skirt ( <i>luvadla</i> )	32	32.0	R25 – 45
Hat ( <i>sigcoko</i> )	27	27.0	R50 – 80
Beaded key holders	19	19.0	R5 – 25
Picnic basket ( <i>libhasikidi</i> )	17	17.0	R120 – 160
Curtain	16	16.0	R100 – 130
Grass nest ( <i>silulu</i> )	9	9.0	R35 – 45
Traditional women's dress ( <i>sidziya</i> )	5	5.0	R120 – 150

#### 4.7.2. Best time for business

When asked which time is best for business, respondents said that selling depends on time of the year and week of the month. They mentioned that these times were also heavily dependent on cultural ceremonies such as the reed dance and first fruit ceremony. Majority of respondents (54%) identified November to January as the best times for business, while 29% stated that the whole year is good. Seventeen per cent (17%) identified May to September as best time for business. All the respondents indicated that within the identified times, the third and fourth weeks of the month are their best time for business.

**Table 4.10: Best time for business (months)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Frequency N= 100</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
November – January	54	54.0
Throughout the year	29	29.0
May – September	17	17.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.7.3 Marketing base for handicrafts

The majority of women (61%) said that they sell their products in Manzini (hub town of Swaziland), 18% said they sell in local markets while 11% indicated that they sell from their homes to the traders who sell at Manzini and 10% said that they sell along the roads. Selling of handicraft in Manzini takes place every week on Wednesdays and Thursdays. It was reported that on these days, buyers from as far as South Africa come to buy these items. Most of these buyers buy these items in large quantities (not necessarily from one marketer). These bulk sales give them big advantage because they can sell more products. Respondents also reported that this market allows them to develop a good working relationship with their customers because customers phone them and place orders.

#### 4.7.4. Income from handicrafts

The income of respondents generated by selling handicrafts varied considerably as shown in table 4.11 below. These figures were based on an average amount they generate per day during the busy months. Generally when respondents were asked how much they receive from

selling handicrafts the following figures were obtained. The majority of respondents (47%) reported that they receive between R401 and 500, while 19% receive between R301 and R400. Seventeen percent receive between R201 and R300, 10 % percent between R101 and R200 and 2% of the respondents get between R0 and 100. Only 5% reported that they receive over R500 from their sales. These figures were based on what they get at the end of the month. The respondents further indicated that sometimes they return home without selling anything especially during the first and second weeks of the month. The respondents who said they get over R500 per day attributed their sales to the 'trading friendships' that they have created with buyers from neighbouring countries such as South Africa and Mozambique. Consequently they are forced to produce more in order to cope with the demand. For example, one respondent reported that the highest amount she has ever made per day was R3000. This respondent when probed further on how she copes with the demand, she pointed out that she then buys extra products from other crafters.

**Table 4.11: Income from handicraft**

<b>Amount received from handicraft (per day)</b>	<b>Frequency N= 100</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
R0 –100	2.0	2.0
R101 – R200	10.0	10.0
R201 – R300	17.0	17.0
R301 – R400	19.0	19.0
R401 – R500	47.0	47.0
More than R500	5.0	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **4.7.5. Use of handicraft income**

The income received from handicraft activities plays a very important role in the households of the respondents. They reported that the money they receive is spent on expenses across the household depending on the respondent's priorities. Of the responses given by the respondents, seven different categories were identified (table 4.12). The uses include food, household goods, clothing, education, pocket money for dependants, health, transport, cell phone, savings and burial societies. The frequencies in which these uses were identified are depicted in table 4.12.

**Table 4.12: Use of handicraft money**

<b>Household need</b>	<b>Frequency N= 100</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
Food, household goods, clothing, education, pocket money for dependents	30	30.0
Food, household goods, clothing, pocket money for dependents, education	20	20.0
Food, household goods, health, transport, cellphones	14	14
Food, household goods, health, transport, pocket money for dependents	13	13.0
Food, household goods, education	12	12.0
Food, household goods, pocket money for dependents and clothing	7	7.0
Food, household goods, savings, burial, clothing	4	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **4.7.6. Decision maker in the use of income made from handicraft**

The majority of respondents (73%) reported that they take their own decisions on how to use the money received from handicraft. However, on activities that would be very visible such as building a house within the premises or deciding where a child should attend school they still needed permission from their husbands. On the other hand, 19% reported that it is their husbands who make decision on how the money should be used while 8% said they take decision in consultation with their husbands. No respondent reported the involvement of a child in decision making.

#### **4.6. Other livelihood strategies**

##### **4.6.1. Participation in other livelihood activities**

All (100%) of the respondents reported that they were involved in other livelihood activities even though mainly for subsistence purpose.

#### 4.6.2. Other livelihood activities besides handicraft making

Respondents were asked to choose from a list of nine livelihood strategies commonly done in rural areas. These activities included the selling of beer, old-age grants, selling of scones, hawker, farming remittances, full-time employment and working part time. It was found that respondents mainly combined their livelihood activities. Table 4.13 below shows how these activities are combined. Farming was the most common activity as all (100%) respondents mentioned that they were engaged in farming. Other popular livelihood activities included old age pension grant, selling of farm produce and selling of scones with each accounting for 12% of the respondents. Few respondents (3%) were found to be involved in more than three livelihood activities.

**Table 4.13: Other livelihood activities**

<b>Livelihood activity</b>	<b>Frequency N= 100</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
Farming	15	15
Farming, and old-age pension grant	12	12.0
Farming, selling of farm produce	12	12.0
Farming and selling scones	12	12.0
Farming and hawking (second hand clothes)	11	11.0
Farming and working part time	11	11.0
Farming and selling beer	10	10.0
Farming and remittances	7	7.0
Farming and full-time employed	5	5.0
Farming, old-age pension fund and selling of beer	3	3.0
Farming and other	2	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.6.4. Constraints in participating in other livelihood strategies

The majority of respondents 37% mentioned lack of finances (financial capital) was the major reason for not participating in other livelihood strategies. Reasons such as high prices for the

ingredients and utensils were mentioned as a major constraint. Education was mentioned by 29% of the respondents as a major constraint in engagement in other activities. One respondent commented as follows: ‘nowadays you cannot work even in kitchens (domestic worker) if you are not educated. People ask your level of education and then decide not to hire you’. Other respondents identified their religion as another factor which restricts their diversity in livelihood strategies. For example, 19% respondents said that they cannot participate in the brewing of traditional beers and keeping of certain livestock such as pigs because of their religion. The remaining 15% mentioned that they do not participate because of personal reasons. For example, some said, ‘my husband is working’. Another one commented, ‘I do not want to leave my children alone at home and even the man would take another wife when I go to find job in urban areas’. Table 4.14 gives a summary of the responses.

**Table 4.14: Constraints on participating in other livelihood activities**

<b>Constraint</b>	<b>Frequency N= 100</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
Finances	37.0	37.0
Education	29.0	29.0
Religion	19.0	19.0
Other	15.0	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **4.6.5. Other coping strategies**

Respondents were requested to identify different coping strategies they employ when they do not make enough money to meet their household needs from handicraft trading or other livelihood activities mentioned in section 4.6.2. It was revealed that respondents either seek help from relatives (68%), church (12%), neighbours (10%), cooperatives (6%) and 4% from non-governmental organisations (NGOs).



**Table 4.15: Other coping strategies**

<b>Source of help</b>	<b>Frequency N= 100</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
Relatives	68	68.0
Church	12	12.0
Neighbours	10	10.0
Cooperatives	6	6.0
NGOs	4	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **4.8. Summary**

This chapter revealed that handicraft production and trading are still widely practised by women in the Lowveld region of Swaziland. The type of handicraft made vary from one participant to the other and producing more than one type of handicraft is common. It also became apparent that the government, traditional leaders and other non-governmental organisations are beginning to take interest in handicraft by providing both institutional support and regulating access to natural resources. This is done to promote handicraft and ensure the sustainable use of resources. Furthermore, handicraft production and trading was found to be contributing largely towards livelihoods. Challenges within handicraft production and trading which could threaten this business were also reported.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to present a discussion of the findings presented in chapter 4. The discussion of the results is presented in terms of the subsections and objectives of the study.

#### **5.2 Results from the key informants**

##### **5.2.1 Types of handicrafts**

The findings of this study revealed that women in the Lowveld region of Swaziland produce different types of handicrafts, such as weaving, beading, pottery, carving, knitting, sewing and dyeing. With regard to weaving, women produce items such as sleeping mats, flower baskets, place mats, washing baskets, door mats, handbags made from plastics, sisal bowls, traditional skirts, hats, picnic baskets, curtains, and grass nests for chicken. These findings correspond to the findings in a study conducted by Zwane et al (2011) in Swaziland. Authors such as Makhado and Kepe (2006) and Pereira et al (2006) also reflected this phenomenon in their studies which were conducted in the Eastern Cape. Woven products identified by these authors included sleeping mats, baskets, food mats, laundry baskets, baskets for laying chickens and beer strainers.

Similarly to the study that was conducted by Makhado and Kepe (2006), in this study, traditional ceremonies such as the reed dance, first fruit ceremony and marula ceremony were identified as playing a major role in the trading of handicrafts as they increase the demand on the products. In the study by Makhado and Kepe (2006) ceremonies identified included girl's initiation and cleansing ceremonies. The differences in the types of ceremonies can be attributed to the difference in culture and geographical areas. Pereira et al (2006) and Mtshali (2002) also support this view by indicating that woven products are popular as wedding gifts. These authors further suggest that apart from being useful for traditional ceremonies they are also used to symbolize peaceful rest in the graves.

##### **5.2.2 Conservation of resources**

Conservation is the sustainable use of natural resources, such as soil, water, plants, animals, and minerals. In economic terms, the natural resources of any area constitute its basic capital,

and wasteful use of those resources constitutes an economic loss (Clark, 1985:132; Meserve, 1999:417). In this study it was found that conservation of resources is governed by both traditional and modern laws. These laws included restricting cutting of the grasses during certain periods of the year thus ensuring sustainable use of the resources. According to Inksater (2006:4) this is known as a pluralistic legal system, whereby there is simultaneous existence of distinct normative systems within a single territory. The existence of these laws in Swaziland has been very important in responding to the four aspects of environmental management which are stated as protection, use allocation, resource conservation, and ecological control. Zwane et al (2011) also emphasized the role played by traditional laws in preventing the over exploitation of natural resources.

The existence of the pluralistic legal system is comparable to the findings of a study conducted by Craig and Gachenga (2012) in Australia which focused on the recognition of indigenous customary law in water resource management. These authors found that the appreciation of the link between indigenous law and modern law is a necessary precondition for indigenous communities to achieve sustainable development. This was based on the observation that indigenous people have an integral and unique relationship with the earth (including land, seas, resources, wildlife) and they do not fragment or compartmentalise their rights and obligations relating to their ecological, spiritual, cultural, economic and social dimensions. As such, indigenous knowledge about land and water resources was identified as important in developing the emerging theories, concepts, and methods that promote the integrated management of land, water and living resources (Craig & Gachenga, 2012).

Zwane et al (2011) noticed the same phenomenon in Swaziland where they report about existence of both traditional and modern laws. These authors argue that traditional laws assist in preventing the over-exploitation which can lead to the extinction of some of the species. This form of conservation is favoured and is called In-situ conservation. Furthermore, these traditional laws are based on indigenous knowledge system and therefore passed from one generation to the other. This was confirmed in a study that was conducted by Kyasiimire (2010) in Uganda where he found that the use of these laws allows the resources to replenish themselves and ensure availability in future. Contrary to the findings of this study Zwane et al (2011) further suggest that ex-situ conservation which includes conservation of plants and animal in facilities such as zoos, seed banks and botanical gardens is also found in Swaziland.

The importance of ex-situ conservation was also emphasized by Pereira et al (2006). In their study these authors reported that this type of conservation was associated with the economical sustainability of the business.

With regard to modern laws, a number of acts which also help in the conservation of the environment were identified in the literature. These include the Swaziland National Trust Commission Act of 1972, Natural Resource Board stipulated in the Natural Resource Act of 1951, the Environment Authority Act of 1992, and the Flora Protection Act of 1952 repealed in 2005 (Masarirambi, Manyatsi & Mhazo, 2010; Zwane et al, 2011).

### **5.2.3 Institutional support for women involved in handicraft**

It was revealed in this study that institutional support from the government, local traditional authorities and non-governmental organisations existed. These institutions assisted in showcasing the handicraft products, improving crafting and business skills, and introducing women to new resources. The existence of institutional support corresponds with the reports by the Government of Swaziland where it is stated that institutional support through the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade is provided (Government of Swaziland, 2007). Through these departments the government has supported women in handicraft mainly by providing finances, knowledge, skills and technology. As a start, the government through the Tinkhundla Development Fund organises workshops on business management intended to help local people who are interested in starting up small businesses. This also involves providing capital to those who want to start small businesses (Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development, 2012). The money from this fund has particularly helped women who do sewing as handicraft by giving them money to buy machinery and raw material.

The institutional support provided by SEDCO, Gone Rural, Buy Swazi Campaign, SIPA, SACRO and the Swaziland Tourism Authority reported on in this study was also confirmed by a newspaper report on 3 February 2014 entitled '*Handicraft SMEs reaping dollars from exports*'. This report indicated that these institutions have been a pillar of strength to people involved in handicraft in a number of ways which among them is transporting crafters to trade fairs outside the country such as Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia. At these fairs, crafters are able to create trading relationships and also learn new ways of making certain handicraft products (*Times of Swaziland*, 3 February, 2014).

This trend has also been confirmed by many researchers such as Limkriengkrai (2010), Mutsigwa (2009), Olson (2007), Pereira et al (2006) and The South African Craft Industry Report (1999). These authors emphasize the importance of institutional support in handicraft. In the study by Pereira et al (2006) institutional support resulted in increased incomes, improved business skills and skills related to the production of handicraft products. These findings correspond to the result of this study as institutional support was found to be responsible for introducing crafters to non-traditional markets.

#### **5.2.4 Advantages of the handicrafts business as perceived by the key informants**

Several statements from the key informants in this study revealed that handicraft production and trading is associated with financial independence, and promotion of culture. Zwane et al (2011) support this view that handicrafts contribute significantly to the households of the population in the SADC region. He further suggests that handicraft provides the main source of cash income for the majority of local people especially in the rural areas. In addition to this, handicraft provides employment and reduces poverty as it enhances the earning capacity of women (Makhado & Kepe, 2006). In another study, Hoque and Itohara (2008) reported that the personal income of rural women received through participation in various earning activities significantly contributes to the increase in their household income and affordability which is consistent with the findings of this study.

The perception of the key informants of handicraft activities was positive. Responses from the key informants confirmed the assertion by Limkriengkrai (2010:191) that handicraft making is not only the main source of the respondents' income, but is also embedded in their everyday lives (Kepe, 2003:153). The key informants described handicraft as that activity which defines the lives of rural women in both economic and social terms. Handicraft was also recognised as an important element in the household economy and crucial in promoting Swaziland to first world status. The importance mainly rests in the fact that the income which is generated from these activities enables women to meet basic needs of the household. This includes being able to buy relish, soaps, candles and other household goods as shown in section 4.7.5.

According to the key informants, the handicraft business was an easy entry point into the formal economy. This is based on the fact that the raw materials used to produce handicrafts are found locally while the methods of production are often rudimentary (Chelladurai, Nunes & Erande,

2007:4). Szydlowski (2008) and Chelladurai, Nunes and Erande, (2007:4) state these characteristics make handicraft production and trading ideal for entrepreneurs who lack start-up capital. These results correspond to Wondimeneh's (2010:61) statement that the role of a livelihood activity can be understood in terms of proportions of income, employment, and its relationship with household level vulnerabilities, risk-coping and risk-dispersing mechanisms. Biradar (2008:15) states that a livelihood activity is about building securities through increasing economic power of people, facilitation of asset creation, capacity building and access to opportunities. In this study key informants stated what has also been reported in the *Times of Swaziland* (3 February, 2014) that women engaged in handicraft were able to generate some income for themselves; a factor which lessened their dependence on their husbands. Furthermore, it also reduced their household vulnerabilities by contributing their income towards attaining household needs and wants. However, Arnold (1994) in Makhado (2004:30) sees these characteristics as also contributing to the weakness of these activities. Arnold (1994) argues that the low entry barriers often result in high numbers thus resulting in severe levels of competition between producers. This causes reduced profit levels to the extent that it is very difficult to generate the surpluses needed for reinvestment to improve productivity and growth.

The cultural importance of the handicrafts has been widely reported by researchers as indicated in section 5.1.1. Pereira et al (2006) emphasise that handicraft products are responsible for maintaining tradition and uplifting culture as production of these ensures the cultural use of the products.

#### **5.2.5 Challenges involved in doing handicraft**

One of the challenges that were identified in this study was lack of organisation between the women who are involved in handicraft production and trading. In their paper on "Improving local communities through traditional crafts", Chelladurai, Nunes and Erande (2007:5) state that the main factors preventing the organisation of handcrafters in communities are the individual, home-base and subsistence nature of the business. This makes it difficult to organise training workshops and reduces their bargaining power when buying resources or requiring services such as transport. In addition they are unable to set standard prices for their products. These handcrafters had little or no bargaining power and often sell their products at prices below market value. The same phenomena was observed by Pereira et al (2006), namely that women involved in a joint project had higher incomes, more opportunities, enhanced skills and showed more initiative compared to those who were working as individuals.

During data collection, it was revealed that most women produce the same products using the same pattern or design. Consequently most products are traditional and lack innovation making them unappealing to tourists. The lack of creativity could be linked to a lack of training and the fact that most women work as individuals. Pereira et al (2006) support this view by noting that women in cooperatives produce innovative and unique products alluring to a wide variety of consumers. This ability to be innovative was attributed to the constant training workshops that were held for women who were part of the cooperatives. The ability to produce unique products reduces competition thus increasing the incomes (Makhado & Kepe, 2006). This challenge was also noted by the Indian Planning Commission (2006) who reported that the quality of products in traditional handicrafts were not meeting the market standards and preferences of consumers because old tools, designs and equipment were used. Therefore, a need exists for those involved in promoting handicraft in the country to organise design development workshops which would improve production techniques.

Sustainable production of handicrafts is heavily dependent on the availability of raw material. According to Berma (1996:281) the extent to which the handcrafter has access to good quality raw materials is important in determining the continuity and expansion of the business. In this study it was observed that raw material is harvested from the natural environment such as local rivers, mountains and forests which are communally owned while some are procured on the open market. This differs from a study conducted by Makhado and Kepe (2006), where it was found that most people involved in making handicrafts owned *Imizi* gardens both at home and away from home along the streams. The major challenge that arises when using communally owned resources is that there is inadequate supervision or protection which results in animals feeding on the grasses, trees and fruits used as raw material in producing handicrafts. In supporting this view, Makhado and Kepe (2006), point out that when *Imizi* gardens are away from home they are susceptible to theft and attacks by animals. These authors link the failure to create a personal garden to the fear of attracting snakes and the required regular watering which could be a problem when there are water shortages.

Climate change was mentioned as a major threat to the business in that it causes the drying up of swamps and the extinction or decline of certain tree species which are used in handicraft production. This challenge results in poor quality raw and extension of raw materials. Similar reports were made by the United Nations (2007) in a climate change overview around the world. Reporting on the Kalahari desert, the United Nations (2007) pointed out that the rise in

temperatures and the expected dune expansion along with increased wind speed will result in the region losing most of its vegetation cover. This observation was also confirmed by the Centre for Indigenous Resources (2007) on their study on the impact of climate change on traditional medicine and traditional food. They argue that climate change has resulted in the invasion of the area by pests and insects which destroy traditional trees that are important in making medicine and food. The absence or decline of natural raw material is particularly a challenge to those doing activities such as carving because alternative material can be used.

Another challenge which was mentioned in this study was that the natural raw material is highly seasonal thus affecting production. The problem of seasonality of handicraft material was also reported by the Indian Planning Commission (2006). According to this commission the seasonality of raw material affects production. The winter season in particular deprives handcrafters the much needed raw material as most wild trees and fruits dry up. As a consequence, the production tends to be seasonal and irregular. These factors deny women in handicraft a steady market as customers may want or expect continuous availability of the product (Indian Planning Commission, 2006:57).

Culture restricts the mobility of women and as a consequence women end up working as individuals in their homes. In Swaziland women are culturally the main caregivers and home managers (Madonsela & Vilane, 1996:9). They are therefore responsible for a number of household chores such as taking care of the children, cooking, washing and cleaning the house. Some women still travel long distances to collect water and firewood. Therefore this added burden makes it difficult for some to leave their homes and go to central workshops. Contrary to the statement made by the American Home Economics Association (1981), Downer (2000:7) and Albee (1994:3) that working in homes is advantageous in that women also get time to attend to their traditional duties as caregivers, key informants in this study raised concern that this added burden affects production and makes it difficult for them to meet deadlines.



## **5.2 Discussion of results from women involved in handicrafts**

### **5.2.1 Bibliographic information of women**

The majority (32%) of the respondents in this study were between 40 and 49 years of age. These results correspond with the findings in Pondoland in the Eastern Cape province, where the majority of women were over 40 years of age (Makhado & Kepe, 2006). These authors attribute the age profile to the added burden of women alluded to in the previous section (5.2.5). This makes sense as women below 40 are still at the child-bearing stage, therefore might be too pre-occupied with chores associated with raising children. Furthermore, most of them are daughters-in-law, and culturally they inherit most of the household duties. However, Cocks and Dold (2004:119) argue that the low participation in these activities by younger women is that few of them have the interest or skills for handicraft.

The majority (98%) of women in this study had low education levels with only 2% that had completed tertiary education. This characteristic is very similar to the crafters that were found in Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Pondoland and in Addis Ababa (Pereira et al, 2006; Makhado and Kepe 2006; Yeneabat, 2007). Low literacy levels of women are common in rural areas as the general practice is to educate boys because it is believed that girls will get married one day and move out to stay at their husband's house (Sheheli, 2012:98; Makhado, 2004:54). This lack of education is particularly worrying because some authors state that, lack of education can be the source of intergenerational transmission of poverty (Bird 2007:8). Education has an important role in determining one's situation in the social structure. Education can also affect health and mortality through a number of pathways, such as lifestyle, health behaviour, problem-solving abilities, social relations, self-esteem and the ability to handle stress, as well as through income or occupation. It can be considered a predecessor to other indicators of economic status, such as, income and occupation (Yadollahi, Paim & Taboli, 2013:1909). Gjonça and Calderwood (2004:17) state that low educational attainment strongly correlates with diseases, health risks and mortality. In such a situation, the rate of poverty is expected to be higher among illiterate households (Yadollahi et al, 2013:1909).

### **5.2.2 Economic factors**

The households in this study were found to be relatively big in size with an average of 8.7 people. This is slightly above the 8.1 national average of rural households which was reported by the 2007 census results (Central Statistical Office, 2008:13). Partly contributing to the large

household sizes is that in Swaziland rural households are traditional and comprise of extended family members (UNICEF, 2003:15). Secondly, most respondents (84%) were found to be unemployed and subsistence agriculture is the mainstay for most households. High unemployment in this area corresponds to the findings of the study by Makhado and Kepe (2006:499) whereby it was reported that a significant majority (54%) of respondents had no formal employment.

In that study about 64% of the respondents reported that the old-age pension (which is a government grant) was their most important source of household income. The contribution of government grants in the form of old-age grants cannot be overlooked when it comes to the economic status of these households. These grants are received by those who are over the age of 60 years every three months. This money plays an important role as pensioners are able to help their grandchildren by giving them some money for school, food and clothing. The importance of the government grants has also been confirmed by Mofokeng (2009) who mentioned that government grants in the form of old-age pensions, disability and child grants, constitute regular income and account for a significant proportion of income in rural households. Makhado and Kepe (2006) also reported that government grants were also playing a major role in the households of handcrafters in Pondoland.

### **5.3 Handicraft production**

#### **5.3.1 Reasons for participating in handicraft making**

The majority (77%) of the respondents mentioned that they do handicraft because they like it while 23% of the respondents mentioned that they do not like handicraft. The majority of those who like handicraft (66%) mentioned that they like handicraft because it allows them to generate income, while 34% reported that handicrafts is part of their heritage. Similar findings were reported by Makhado (2004) where income generation was mentioned as the main reason for doing handicrafts. To support this view Mofokeng (2009:60) states that the high unemployment rate in rural areas of South Africa is one of the reasons rural people commercialise natural resources.

#### **5.3.2 Time for doing handicraft**

In this study handicrafts production is done as a secondary activity. The afternoon was found to be the most favourite and convenient time to do handicraft for most women. The results show that the majority of respondents (64%) do their handicraft in the afternoon while 4% and 3% do

it in the evening and morning respectively. Only 8% reported they do handicraft as a full-time activity while 21% of the respondents mentioned that they do not have specific time to do these activities but fit them in between their duties. This could be attributed to the cultural responsibility of women alluded to in section 5.2.5 such that any other activity comes as secondary to household duties. Therefore, doing handicraft in the afternoon reflects the only convenient time for most women in rural Lowveld. Apart from being preoccupied with household duties this can also be attributed to the fact that most households prioritise farming as a major livelihood support for their families. Other non-farm activities therefore are fitted between certain periods within the farming schedule or during off season (Omari, 1988:7).

### **5.3.3 How the handicraft skill was acquired**

The results of this study indicate that 100% of the women acquired their skills through informal or indigenous knowledge which they learnt in their early ages of life. Their close relatives, which are also their social capital, especially mothers and grandmothers, played an important role in teaching these women the skills that they use in doing crafts. In combination 76% of the respondents learnt their skills from their relatives. Friends and spouses were reported by 12% and 8% respondents respectively as having played a role in their acquisition of handicraft skills. These results are also similar to the studies done by Makhado (2004), Yeneabat (2007), Dlamini (2007) and James and Bansilal (2010) whereby people use informal knowledge taught by mothers, sister, grandmothers, friends and relatives to make a living. Rural people depend on indigenous knowledge for survival especially on aspects such as health, agriculture and even income generation. The passing of this knowledge among the youth is influenced by the different gender roles (Mtshali 2002:150). In the Swazi tradition, mothers and grandmothers spend time with girls in an enclave called *liguma*. In this enclave, young women are taught survival skills such as weaving, beading, pottery and many other skills through hands-on training and apprenticeship working under supervision until the skill is mastered (Ohmagari & Berkes, 1997).

### **5.3.4 Experience in handicraft**

According to Makhado and Kepe (2006:503), handicraft is an activity which requires intricate skills. Most women who engage in handicraft sales have extensive knowledge in handicraft making. As reported by Makhado (2004), most women start doing handicraft very early in their lives helping their parents in harvesting and processing raw material and sometimes in the

making of different products. This study found that 36% of the respondents had over 20 years' experience of doing handicraft. Another 25% and 21% had 11 to 20 and 6 to 10 years respectively. Only 18% stated that they had fewer than five years.

### **5.3.5 Handicraft activities carried out**

Respondents were found to be involved in seven different handicraft activities as mentioned by the key informants. These are beading, pottery, sewing, weaving, dyeing, carving and knitting. Few women focus on one product. These findings correspond with what Pereira et al (2006) observed, where handcrafters made a whole range of activities. Most respondents as shown in table 4.5 combine different activities and produce different items. These activities are mainly influenced by what is readily available in their environment, skills they possess and what the market demands (Varshney, 2011:180). Diversifying in the products was also confirmed in a study that was conducted in Durban, whereby the participant not only sold beaded items but other traditional items as well. This is attributed to the need to supplement the income made from handicrafts (James & Bansilal, 2010).

It can also be concluded from the results of this study that the most popular products were beaded and woven products. James and Bansilal (2010) and Mtshali (2002:158) arrived at a similar conclusion, noting that beadwork has historical and traditional significance, especially among the Nguni women such as the Swazi, Zulu, Ndebele and Xhosa. Contributing to the sustenance of beading is its ability to evolve thus making it relevant. For example, in the recent times it is common to find beaded pins being used in conventions and other meetings. The HIV/AIDS pin is a good example of how women who do beadwork try to be relevant by keeping up with the demands of the time. Furthermore, there is an increase in the design and sale of beaded products such as cushion covers, bedspreads and necklaces in some stores (Sellschop, Goldblatt & Hemp, 2005:39). Mtshali (2002:158) states that beadwork is still important among women for personal adornment and to generate income.

With regard to weaving this study found that the women made products such as bags, grass mats, baskets and curtains. Grass mats for example, are traditionally used for sleeping and seating. These products are still used by households, particularly for significant ceremonial functions, such as weddings and funerals. The popularity of weaving found in this study is similar to the findings of Pereira et al (2006); Makhado and Kepe (2006) and Zwane et al

(2011); where woven products such as sleeping mats were produced by the majority of the interviewees. Baskets are used in harvesting and storing grain, winnowing and collecting and transporting food and possessions (Yadav, Sangwan & Khambra, 2004:42).

The most unpopular handicraft product in this study was pottery and carving. This is different from Pereira et al (2006)'s findings where it was beer strainers that were found to be unpopular. The unpopularity of certain products is attributed to the difficulty in making them (Pereira et al 2006). However, these authors go on to argue that the unpopular products provide crafters with higher gross return due to less competition. The difference in the popularity of the products can be attributed to the fact that the comparison in the study by Pereira et al (2006) was done between woven products only, which is not the case in this study.

#### **5.4 General challenges involved in handicraft**

It should be noted that there were some similarities in the challenges identified by women and those that were identified by key informants (in section 5.1.5). However, the challenges identified by women though similar gave a different perspective from a hand crafter's point of view hence there was need to discuss these separately. These challenges include access to raw materials, trading challenges and health challenges.

##### **5.4.1 Accessing raw material**

Respondents mentioned distance from their homes, competition with animals, seasonality, climate change (drying of wetlands and extinction of some plants), and population growth as reasons which make accessing raw material a challenge. The issue of distance from homes was mainly mentioned by the older women. This challenge was associated with their age as it becomes strenuous to walk long distance as you grow older. The issue of raw material raised in this study have also been well reported by Mofokeng (2009), Redzuan and Aref (2011:259), Makhado (2004:79) as well as Suich and Murphy (2002:18). Suich and Murphy (2002:18) state that many types of dye tree, used as raw material, do not grow near the villages, so the women must walk long distances to collect it. Consequently, women run the risk of encountering elephants, snakes, scorpions and bees on the way. Mofokeng (2009:48) supports this view in his study that was conducted in Eshowe, South Africa, namely that it is dangerous for a woman to walk alone in the veld.

It was found in the study, that due to the inability of older women to walk long distances, they either buy resources from others or send their children. The challenge prevalent in sending children is that some of these children do not have experience to recognise the best grade of raw material. For example, sometimes these children harvest grasses before they reach maturity thus making them unsuitable for good quality handicraft production.

Suich and Murphy (2002:18) also reported a similar challenge concerning the destruction of raw material by animals. In their study conducted in Caprivi, they reported that elephants found in that area often eat the new palm leaves which are suitable for weaving; thus leading to unavailability of raw material. In this study respondents mentioned that rains are becoming scarce and as a result a number of wetlands in their area are drying up leaving them with no source of raw material. Suich and Murphy (2002) arrived at a similar conclusion, noting that the amount of good quality palm available was decreasing due to the dry cycle and drying up of Lake Liambezi.

Other respondents commented that access to raw material has been made worse by population growth. Associated with population growth is an increased need for land to construct houses and also to practise agriculture. This implies that forests would be cut down. These responses about scarcity of resources differ from the findings by Pereira et al (2006). Comparing the two study areas, Mpozolo and Ntubeni, on which they conducted their study, these authors found that in Mpozolo scarcity of resources was not an issue. Apart from the difference in geographical areas, this difference could also be associated with an increase in cultivation of the plants used in handicraft making at Mpozolo.

#### **5.4.2 Trading challenges**

Forty seven per cent (47%) mentioned trading challenges as a major problem in handicraft. The respondents mentioned that profits are less because they compete among themselves for few customers. These challenges correspond with those raised by respondents in the study done by Makhado (2004) whereby respondents mentioned competition from other traders as a problem. In this study for example, in Manzini where the trading of handicraft takes place, you find that there are more than 200 handcrafters selling the same product which creates stiff competition. As a consequence, respondents said that they are often forced to give credit to buyers and often reduce the price of their products in order to sell products and to get money. This is confirmed by the reports made by James and Bansilal (2010) and Makhado and Kepe (2006)

who state that handcrafters are often forced to give product on credit and reduce prices. These authors further argue that giving credit results in delayed payments which inconvenience their household budgeting process.

### **5.4.3 Health challenges**

Twenty one per cent (21%) mentioned health challenges as major problem in handicraft production and trade. These included nail burns, eye problems and back-ache, cold, flu, tuberculosis and pneumonia. This view is also confirmed by Suich and Murphy (2002:18) who reported that women endure physical pain at their backs, shoulders and hands from sitting for long periods. The awl used in weaving can inflict painful injuries and cause calluses on the women's fingers.

### **5.5 Resources used in the production of handicraft**

In this study it was revealed that respondents use both natural and synthetic resources. Several authors confirm these findings by suggesting that the natural environment, such as local rivers, wetlands, mountains and forests, were found to be very essential as most of these plants grow naturally (Varshney, 2011:180; Pereira et al, 2006; Ngugi, Newton & Muasya, 2011:163). Shackleton et al (2007) comment that in rural areas the natural environment is the refuge for people as they have little else to rely on but the available natural resources. Grasses such as *Cyperus latifolius* (*likhwane*), *Juncus krausii* (*indvuli/incema*), strings, *Cyperus articulatus* (*incoboza*), *Miscanthus capensis* (*umtsala*), *Xyris rehmannii* (*umuzi*), *Xyris rehmannii* (*umuzi*) are used by the respondents in this study. These results are similar to other studies that have been conducted in this field, whereby some handcrafters would own private gardens while some harvest these plants from communal areas (Pereira et al 2006; Masarirambi, Manyatsi & Mhazo, 2010:8; Zwane et al 2011). Makhado and Kepe (2006) and Chelladurai, Nunes and Erande (2007:2), go on to note that these plants play a major role in fighting poverty in the rural areas as products made from them are used in the households and to generate income.

Apart from the natural environment that is used to obtain some raw material, synthetic material is acquired from shops. Buying of raw material is mainly important for those who are doing beading. Although it was reported that bead products are made from natural seeds and beads, the challenges already mentioned in this study have resulted in the rise in demand for man-made beads. Most importantly also is that satisfactory beadwork requires beads of equal size

and shape (Sellschop, Goldblat & Hemp, 2005:19) which can be a challenge when natural seeds and fruits are used to produce handicrafts. Furthermore, products made of man-made beads tend to stay intact for a longer period compared to products made of natural materials.

Synthetic materials used in this study include plastic bags, orange sacks, papers and many more waste materials. This was supported by Makhado and Kepe (2006) who mentioned that the production of a mat for example requires several resources thus making both synthetic and natural resources to be crucial in the handicraft production and trading. The importance of synthetic products handicraft was also confirmed by the Gauteng News Magazine (2011). Through refuse material, people make a number of products such as pillows, traditional skirts (*luvadla*) for children and door mats. Refuse material also helps to fill the gap usually created by the seasonality of natural raw material. A positive factor is that the use of refuse plays a big role in ensuring a clean environment.

#### **5.5.1 Harvesting of natural raw material**

Zwane et al (2011) state that the harvesting of raw material is seasonal and regulated. This could be attributed to the existence of regulatory laws that were mentioned earlier in sections 4.3.2 and 5.2.2. In this study, the seasonality in harvesting was further linked to the readiness of different plants as it was reported that they become ready at different times of the year. Based on the findings regarding the extinction of certain plants, strict regulation for harvesting could play a significant role in ensuring sustainability. According to Barnes (2012:3) following sustainable collection procedures helps to ensure the continuation of the species and the preservation of flora.

The use of a sickle to cut the base, stalk or a stem of the plants corresponds with the reports by Zwane et al (2011). This method is highly beneficial and ensures that plants geminate. Collectors should adopt practices that do not merely fulfil their commercial needs but also ensure that plants are harvested in such ways and at such rates that the species perpetuates indefinitely in its natural habitats (WHO, 2012:8).

#### **5.5.2 Labour used to harvest raw material**

Regarding labour for harvesting of natural resources, 57% respondents indicated that they do much of the harvesting on their own especially of those raw materials that are not heavy to carry, such as grasses for weaving, fruits for making earrings and dyeing, and collecting clay as



shown in table 4.8. Another 17% mentioned that they also involve their girl children while 4% said their husbands were also involved. This corresponds to Varshney (2011:180) statement that as opposed to other enterprises that involve hired labour, handicraft enterprises make use of mostly family labour. The involvement of girls could contribute significantly to the transfer and conservation of knowledge as it was reported earlier that most of this knowledge is learned by observation. In this study it was also reported that some women force their girl children to participate in handicraft activities. The reluctance of the youth to participate in activities related to indigenous knowledge stems from their association of it to poverty and being backward (Kaya & Masoga, 2011:155). The forcing of girls to do handicraft in this study is contrary to what was reported by Mihanjo (2010) in a paper on pottery household production presented at the workshop 4 on community entrepreneurship and local economic development in Denmark. In this paper Mihanjo (2010) reported that the girls' involvement in pot making was their own choice.

### **5.5.3 Processing of raw material**

As noted by Zwane et al (2011:777), in this study processing methods include spreading, drying on flat surfaces, cutting and moisturising. Freshly cut plants and picked fruits are susceptible to staining fungi and insect infestation. Zwane et al (2007) argues that careful drying and treatment methods are important steps before their utilisation. Drying and treatment is essential to enhance durability and prevent staining and borer attacks. The average period for drying is about seven to fourteen days (Adu-Anning, 1995:268). Contrary to this study the use of technology such as a wooden loom or frame in weaving is also reported in Swaziland that it speeds up the process and reduces fatigue (Zwane et al, 2011).

### **5.5.4 Storage of natural resources**

The respondents identified three ways of storing the natural resources. These include hanging the raw material in the kitchen (31%), putting them on roof tops (23%) and lastly using the tools storage house (41%). Storage facilities are very crucial in handicraft as poor storage could make natural resources to be susceptible to damage by rats' infestation and vermin. Furthermore, the poor storage could also encourage bacterial and fungal growth which could result in poor quality products. These storage facilities are not only important in the case of raw material but also for finished products (Zwane et al, 2011). This is particularly important especially due to the seasonality of resources as good storage facilities could ensure that there

is a continuous supply even when the plants are not in season. In a similar study conducted by the WHO (2012) on medicinal plants, it was emphasised that storage of produce is of the utmost importance as inappropriate storage conditions may render the produce unusable, no matter with what care it has been harvested and processed. According to the WHO (2012:15) plant produce should be stored in a dedicated storehouse, constructed in such a way as to avoid entry of rodents, birds and other animals and should be free from dampness, dirt and dust.

## **5.6 Contribution of handicrafts to household income**

### **5.6.1 Handicraft products and their cost**

In this study the prices for different products ranged between R5 and R160. According to Makhado and Kepe (2006) the price of the product is determined by the location where the product is sold, design, type of the product and size. As a result, bigger products cost more than smaller ones and prices at the market place are higher than when sold at home. This is comparable to the findings of this study. However, with regard to prices of different products the results differed. In Makhado and Kepe (2006), the products ranged between R5 to R75. This could be attributed to fluctuations in prices as this study was conducted in 2006 as opposed to the current study which was conducted in 2013. The price of the beaded necklace is, however, similar to the findings of James and Bansilal (2010), where it is reported that it ranges between R50 to R100.

### **5.6.2 Best time for business**

It was reported in this study that handicraft trading takes place throughout the year as reported by Makhado (2004). However, some periods are better than others. In this study for example, the months of November to January were identified by 54% respondents as the best time for business. This was followed by 29% who said business is going well throughout the year while 17% identified the months of May to September as the best time for business. As noted by James and Bansilal (2010:74) and Mtshali (2002:158), handicrafts are closely related with culture. A closer look at these times mentioned by the respondents, the month of November to January and May to September period is normally characterised by a number of cultural activities. Between May and September, traditional weddings are common in Swaziland. Also at the end of August and beginning of September, the country celebrates the reed dance ceremony. Between November and January, there is the celebration of the first fruit ceremony.

During these activities the use of handicraft products such as *imigaco* and necklaces is high. Similarly grass mats and grass brooms are important for traditional weddings. These results are in line with the findings made by Makhado (2004:75) that handicrafts sell better during *imigubho* or ceremonies.

Apart from the traditional ceremonies which are celebrated at the end of August and December, the country also enjoys high rate of tourists who come to visit the country also with the purpose of watching these traditional ceremonies. During these ceremonies tourists also get to buy the products which are sold by handcrafters. In general, travellers want to take home with them authentic, quality souvenirs that represent the area they have visited, the things they have seen, and the memories they have made (Wicks 2004:1; *Times of Swaziland*, February 3, 2014). Tovey (2009:85) arrived at a similar conclusion by noting that tourism plays an integral part in promoting rural handicraft. Consequently when taking these products home they also help to advertise them in their countries. According to the *Times of Swaziland* (2014) through tourism, one business woman once exchanged her telephone numbers with the tourist and after a month she received a call that the tourist needed more of her items. Apart from increasing her sales, this also introduced the crafter to international markets.

### **5.6.3 Marketing base for handicraft**

The majority of women (61%) said that they sell their products in Manzini (hub town of Swaziland); 18% said they sell in local markets while 11% indicated that they sell from their homes to the traders who sell at Manzini and 10% said that they sell their goods along the roads. The choice of location of informal traders and the products they sell reflect specific geographies of flows of people (Van Eeden, 2011:34). These locations must be easily accessible to all people (Ayeh, Emeffa, Sylvana & Isaac, 2012:25) such as railway stations, bus and taxi ranks; alignment with the location of major movement routes and density of residential activity (Dewar and Watson, 2000:89). As stated earlier, tourism is an integral part of the handicraft business and women who sell handicraft try to get good locations for their products so that the visitors can see them (Radovich, Balazote & Rotman, 2010:41).

In the case of this study, a good number of tourists, especially those in caravans and backpackers, have found these types of craft markets favourable because of their easy accessibility (*Times of Swaziland*, 3 February, 2014). Due to its proximity to the five star hotels in the city and nearby eZulwini hotels Manzini is a favourable site for handicraft markets.

Moreover, these sites can act as wholesale markets from whom most retailers purchase their handicrafts for re-sale as it will be shown later in this section. As reported, some retailers come from as far as South Africa and buy in large quantities thus increasing sales. Respondents also reported that this market allows them to develop a good working relationship with their customers because customers phone them and place orders. Lastly, as mentioned earlier selling at market places result in higher returns when compared to selling from home as reported by Makhado and Kepe (2006).

#### **5.6.4 Income from handicrafts**

It is tricky to estimate the income producers receive from handicraft (Makhado, 2004:76). In the case of this study part of the challenge is that women do not keep records of the income they earn from handicraft. Furthermore, some traders are not willing to divulge how much they get as they fear being taxed by the Swaziland Revenue Authority (*Times of Swaziland*, February, 3, 2014). However, besides that, as in other business activities, the income made by respondents from handicrafts varied considerably as shown in table 4.17. A bigger portion (47%) of the respondents reported that they receive between R401 and 500 per month, while a minority of 2% of the respondents get between R0 and 100. Those who get the highest amount (more than R500) in handicraft totalled 5% of the respondents. So many factors come into play that determine how much can be earned from handicraft. Makhado (2004:74) mentioned reasons such as the amount of time the producer was able to put into the process of her handicraft; the demand of household duties; infrastructure such as electricity (for lighting at night); amount of money the customer is willing to pay for an item; the effort that has been put in marketing the product and the quality of the product.

Other scholars, such as Van Eeden (2011:34) mention that the amount of income one can receive in informal trading depends on factors such as being positioned in an area of high foot traffic. Furthermore, on days when the weather is great the sales are equally good and better than on rainy or cold days. It was revealed in this study that the time of the month and year is important in determining the amount of money that the women get. As pointed out by some respondents, there are days when they return to their homes without having sold anything. Consequently, some women opt to skip certain weeks of the month in order to avoid losses which are incurred through travelling costs. Those who get more income in handicraft associated their success to the trading friendships which they have with buyers. This was also

confirmed in the *Times of Swaziland* (3 February, 2014) where it was stated that marketers exchange their numbers with customers so that the customers can place more orders. These relations help to guide the women on what and how much to produce. Women who have more orders sometimes buy from their friends in order not to spoil their relationship with their customers (*Times of Swaziland*, 3 February, 2014).

#### **5.6.5 Use of handicraft income**

The income received from handicraft activities plays a very important role in the wellbeing of their households as shown in table 4.12. The money earned is spent on basic needs of the household such as food, clothes and other household goods. These findings are in line with the studies conducted by Suich and Murphy (2002), Pereira et al (2006), Mofokeng (2008) and James and Bansilal (2010). In their study on the livelihood impact of craft income in Caprivi, Suich and Murphy (2002) stated that those who produce handicraft mostly spend their money on food, followed by other basic needs. They further stated that although the income received from these activities may be small it enables them and their households to afford future investments. The income also contributes to the welfare of these producers and their households to some extent. Makhado (2004:78) points out that even though the importance of this income can be emphasized, the income mostly serves as supplementary income in most of the households. Mofokeng (2008:54) supports this view by noting that the significance of this income may lie largely in its timing as opposed to its amount. Pereira et al (2006) has reflected on this phenomenon and states that money from handicraft is used for groceries, school fees, and school uniforms.

#### **5.6.6 Decision making in the use of income made from handicraft**

The majority of the respondents (73%) reported that they take their own decision on how to use the money received from handicraft. Nineteen per cent (19%) of the women reported that it is their husbands who make decisions while 8% said they take the decision in consultation with their husbands. These results show a similar trend to findings made by other authors such as Mofokeng (2008) and Suich and Murphy (2002), namely that most women take decisions about the money they receive from their activities. Mofokeng (2008:55) points out that most women take decisions about this money because most of them are heads of their households.

Allowing women to take decision about their income can be seen as a positive factor in the livelihoods of their households because this allows them to make a contribution to their households. Women's contribution to their family expenditure is an important indicator of economic empowerment (Kabir & Xuexi Huo, 2011:136). When women are economically and socially empowered, they become potent force for change in their families and communities (Murthy, Raju & Kamath, 2010:5). A number of studies such as those by Duflo (2011), Doepke and Tertilt (2011), Kennedy and Peters (1992) and Thomas (1990) concur that putting earnings in women's hands is the intelligent thing to do to speed up development and the process of overcoming poverty as witnessed by the fast development rate and low poverty witnessed in countries with greater gender equality. Women usually reinvest a much higher portion in their families and communities than men, spreading wealth beyond themselves (Kristof, 2009:103; Irish NGO, 2009:2). For example, a study on child health conducted in Brazil and in Kenya revealed that when income is in the hands of the mother, the survival probability of a child increases by at least 20%. Furthermore, children's nutritional wellbeing is improved because mothers usually invest more of their income in health and nutrition (Duflo, 2011:20).

## **5.7 Other livelihood strategies**

The purpose of this section was to find out if respondents do engage in other livelihood strategies mainly because it has been reported in the literature that money made from handicraft is not enough to meet daily needs (Makhado & Kepe, 2006; James & Bansilal, 2010). In addition to that the sustainable livelihoods approach states that livelihood is a combination of the resources used and the activities assumed with the intention of making a living (Scoones 1998). The diversity, multiplicity and dynamic nature of rural livelihoods are often aimed at managing risk, reducing vulnerability and enhancing security (Makhado, 2004:17).

In response to the challenges that rural women and their households face, it was found that they depend on two or more livelihood activities as shown in table 4.11. Among all the livelihood strategies, combining three activities was commonly practised by 76% respondents. Nine per cent (9%) of respondents were involved in four livelihood activities and 15% were involved in two activities. This confirms the assertion by Barrett et al (2001:1); Chambers and Conway (1992); Shackleton et al (2001) and Kepe (2002) in Makhado (2004) that livelihood diversification is a norm for most rural households. Rural families construct a diverse portfolio of activities and social support capabilities in their struggle for survival and in order to improve their

standards of living (Ellis, 1997:5; *Times of Swaziland*, 3 February, 2014). Goodrich (2001) states that poorer families tend to diversify activities in order to survive a crisis, as opposed to richer families who diversify to accumulate assets.

In this study, farming was found to be the primary livelihood activity. Other sources of income such as old-age grants, selling of traditional beer, selling of fruits and vegetables, selling of scones, selling of clothes, full-time employment, remittances and wages earned as domestic workers were also mentioned. This was confirmed by Piya (2011) and Shepard and Bird (2009) who found that farming contributes significantly to the livelihood in rural areas.

#### **5.7.1 Constraints in participating in the other livelihood strategies**

In this study, respondents mentioned a number of reasons which deter them from engaging in other livelihood strategies. These include lack of finances to inject as capital 37%, lack of education 29%, religious beliefs 19% and personal reasons 15%. These findings corresponds to a study done by Alemu (2012) where variables such as gender of household heads, the education level of household heads, the age of household heads, households' access to social infrastructure, and household structure were identified as having an effect in choosing a livelihood strategy. According to Alemu (2012:15), households with higher levels of education engage in high-return livelihood strategies. Ncube (2012:128) states that some of the potential livelihood activities require specialised skills which the majority of respondents who participated in this study do not have. Kim (2011) identifies educational attainment as one of the most important determinants of non-farm earnings. In particular, more remunerative non-farm sectors such as salaried and skilled employment require substantial educational attainment and skill. Davies (2004:7) also regards education as critical since better-paid jobs require formal schooling. He also noted that there is a correlation between education with rural non-farm business success. In this study, the majority of respondents had low educational levels which could explain the poor employment and low involvement in high return livelihood strategies. Lastly, Ncube (2012:133) and Kim (2012) state that constrained access to credit and financial savings can impede acquisition of assets necessary to diversify beyond agriculture to non-farm activities.

### **5.7.2 Other coping strategies**

In this study, relatives, the church, neighbours, cooperatives and NGOs were identified as coping mechanisms when household do not make enough money to meet their household needs from handicraft trading or other livelihood activities. According to the sustainable livelihood approach, social assets refer to the external networks and connectedness of a particular household (Ellis, 2000:10). Relatives, the church, neighbours and NGOs identified in this study therefore represent the social assets available to the participants. It is a common thing that the poor may rely more on their social network than those who are better off. Kim (2011) states that while many of the initiatives focus on material provisions have failed due to lack of resources and persistent underlying structure enhancing inequality, social network has an unexploited potential to promote favourable diversification for the poor. Furthermore, social networks such as the ones mentioned in this study can be beneficial to the poor as they play a role in the provision of capital, infrastructure, training and education. For example, formal and informal kinship and community networks have long supported an access to credit for the poor through mutual lending in case of need. This is important because a lack of assets and collateral prevents the poor from getting a commercial loan. Social capital also improves access to better knowledge through information sharing and better training opportunities. Lastly, social network can also be utilised to overcome mobility problems, thus enhancing market access.

### **5.8 Summary**

This chapter examined issues arising from handicraft production by women in the rural Lowveld of Swaziland: the types of handicraft activities carried out, the dominant activities and the challenges facing these activities. The contribution of some livelihood activities and challenges which prevent households from engaging in livelihood activities were also discussed. The implication of education as a prerequisite for engaging in livelihood activities has been emphasized.

These discussions also emphasised the importance of the income generated from handicraft. It can be concluded that even though the income from handicraft production gives women little income, the importance of this income does depend much on the amount but rather on its timing. This income is also crucial in supplementing income received from other livelihood sources such as farming and government grants.



## **Chapter 6**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The main focus of this study was to investigate the question “to what degree are handicrafts made in the Lowveld region of Swaziland; to what extent are handicrafts contributing towards rural household livelihoods as well as development in the country?” These findings provide a foundation for debate on the role that handicrafts can play in alleviating poverty. In this chapter the main findings of this study are presented under the following sections:

- Measurements
- General summary of the sample
- Summary of results
- Conclusion and
- Recommendations

#### **6.2 Measurements**

A survey research design, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods was implemented to attempt to answer the research question. This involved the administration of two questionnaires to the sample of respondents chosen from a population. A pilot study was conducted to test and refine the questionnaires used for data collection. Two questionnaires were developed; one was administered to key informants while the other was administered to a sample of women involved in handicrafts (100 respondents). The questionnaires for key informants covered four themes, namely types of handicrafts, conservation of resources, institutional support for women involved in handicraft, advantages of the handicrafts business as perceived by the key informants and challenges involved in doing handicraft. On the other hand, the questionnaire used for women involved in handicraft covered aspects such as the biographic information, handicraft production, contribution of handicraft activities to household income, and other livelihood activities. Observations were also used to gather certain information. Photographs for some handicraft items produced by women were also taken using a camera.

The first step in collecting data was to interview key informants. To select respondents the purposive sampling method was employed. Interviewing key informants also helped the

researcher to identify the first five women of the sample in each area, who were involved in handicraft making. In order to build the proposed sample, the snowball sampling method was then employed until the sample was saturated. Individual consent was given by all respondents. Data was analysed using the SPSS version 20 computer program. This also helped to draw frequency tables and pie charts to present the information.

### **6.3 General summary of the sample**

The sample of the study was generally made up of nine key informants. Eight of the key informants were members from the chiefs' council in the different areas where data were collected. It was assumed that these key informants have knowledge of the area and they know most of the livelihood activities practised in the area. The ninth key informant was a marketing manager from SEDCO, a company which focuses mainly on handicraft products in Swaziland.

All of the 100 women interviewed were women involved in handicraft. Their ages were divided into six main groups, namely those below 20 years, between 21 and 29, 30 and 39, 40 and 49, 50 and 59 and above 60 years. The majority of women (32%) were between the ages of 40 and 49 years while those below 20 years were the minority (4%). The low participation by younger women is to be expected in a way because such women are still at child-bearing age and mainly and also traditionally they have to work closely with their mothers-in-law. The majority (84%) of them were unemployed and relied on government grants, farming and handicraft making. Furthermore, they were characterised by low educational levels. Ninety eight per cent (98%) had no tertiary education and 9% had no formal education. Even though most of them (56%) were married, it was also found that most households (62%) had women as de facto heads as opposed to the 38% who indicated that males were heads of the household. This is also expected and common in most rural areas in developing countries. Most males migrate to urban areas to look for formal employment in industries leaving behind their wives to take care of the household. Other reasons for women being household heads include widowhood, never being married or being divorced. Their households were big in size with an average of 8.7 people per household, a factor which is common in most rural household in the country as most of them are extended families. Forty three per cent (43%) had between 7 and 12 members and closely followed by 38% respondents who mentioned that their household had above thirteen. In general, all these women had significant roles to play in their households in terms of contribution

towards its standard of living. Handicraft activities in the area were more of a refuge for most women.

#### **6.4 Summary of results**

The main research problem of this study was:

“To what degree are handicrafts made in the Lowveld region of Swaziland; to what extent are handicrafts contributing towards rural household livelihoods?”

In order to investigate the main research problem four research objectives were identified, namely:

1. to document the handicraft activities that exist in the Lowveld region of Swaziland
2. to investigate and document the most prevalent types of handicrafts
3. to document the resources required for the production of handicrafts
4. to determine the contribution of handicrafts to livelihoods of the participants at the household level
5. to identifying the existing livelihood strategies other than handicrafts undertaken by participants and their households

Therefore the results summary is discussed using the objectives as subheadings. First a general summary of the perception of key informants towards handicrafts is given.

##### **6.4.1 Perception of handicraft activities by key informants**

According to the key informants, indigenous knowledge still has an important socio-economic role in the situation of women in the Lowveld of Swaziland. Women apply their indigenous knowledge, which they were taught by their parents and friends, to make handicraft products which in turn generate income for them. This income allows women to make a meaningful contribution to uplift the standard of living in their households. This also includes improving household food security. Furthermore, key informants mentioned that through this income women are able to take their children to school, feed and clothe them even without the support of their husbands. This is especially important because most respondents in the study were heads of households. A number of obstacles such as shortage and seasonality of raw material, culture, lack of organisation and climate change, were mentioned as a challenge limiting the benefits which could otherwise be achieved from these activities.

#### **6.4.2 Handicraft activities present in the Lowveld of Swaziland**

It was found that a number of handicraft activities occur in the Lowveld of Swaziland. In total there were seven different types and they include weaving, beading, dyeing, knitting, sewing, pottery and carving. In most instances, respondents combined these activities with the intention to attract more customers and improve their products. In all the following figures were recorded, weaving and beading, 34%; weaving, dyeing and beading, 13%; beading, 11%; knitting and sewing, 1%; weaving, 8%; pottery and beading, 7%; knitting and beading, 7%; beading and dyeing, 5%, sewing and beading, 4%; carving and dyeing, 4%; sewing, 3%; weaving and dyeing, 2% and knitting, 1%. These figures show beading and weaving were the most prevalent activities practised in the Lowveld. Beading was being done by a total of 81% respondents while weaving was done by 57% respondents. Other activities were not as popular as the two due to a number of reasons which include market demand, lack of skills, lack of capital and challenge in getting raw material.

#### **6.4.3 Resources used in handicraft activities**

In order to do their handicraft, women rely heavily on the natural environment for raw material. However, due to challenges such as seasonality, climate change, market demand and scarcity, which are associated with natural raw material, the use of synthetic material was discovered to be on the rise. Furthermore, the use of refuse material which was usually thrown away in the past is also gaining some momentum in handicraft. However, the challenges are also a threat to some handicraft activities especially those which do not use synthetic material. The reliance on indigenous knowledge and working as individuals were identified as limitations responsible for lack of diversity in designs in the industry. Consequently, respondents end up doing same designs and this develops competition among themselves and further profit decline. Household labour is employed in the harvest of raw material using simple tools that are also used in other household activities.

#### **6.4.4 Contribution of handicrafts to livelihoods of the participants at the household level**

This study appeared to be in line with the theoretical discussions and debates and some proportion of international knowledge in terms of the role that handicrafts play in contributing to rural people's livelihoods. Although, the income is not the same among the women, and the economic impact is somehow limited, most importantly, the argument is that this activity is

taking place in an environment (rural area) where the women, have limited income-making opportunities. However through this activity women have managed to derive an income to improve their families' welfare and the money has contributed effectively to the households' expenditures on items such as food and other household goods. It was found that this helps to improve the sense of self-worth of the women in that it lessened their reliance on other people such as their husbands and relatives or even organisations. In general, craft production in this case study increases livelihood diversity for producers and acts as an entry point to cash economy for the majority of these producers.

#### **6.4.5 Other existing livelihood strategies**

Although handicrafts are important for the livelihoods of the respondents in the study area, the assessment of other livelihood strategies showed that coupling or combining strategies enabled the women and their households to manage their livelihoods more easily. Women participated in activities which included government pension grants, farming (growing crops and keeping of livestock) and to some extent informal/formal employment. Among the activities in which respondents engaged, agricultural activities are the most important source of income. All respondents were found to be engaged in them and they were considered by 29% of the respondents as major source of income. Farming provided them with basic food requirement and the selling of livestock was mentioned as important particularly at the beginning of the year when children need to pay school fees. Government grants were also mentioned as important source of income in the area.

### **6.5 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

#### **6.5.1 Recommendations for policy makers**

It is recommended that handcrafting should be incorporated in school curricula. This is based on the fact that the corporate sector is struggling to cope with the ever increasing population numbers that are looking for employment. As noted by Mofokeng (2009:60) that unemployment rate in rural areas of South Africa is one of the reasons rural people commercialise natural resources to create employment and generate income. Zwane et al (2011:777) further stated that contrary to what use to happen in the olden days where the selling of handicraft was only done by older women, these days younger women with O' level education are now engaged in

handicraft. In this study, findings have shown that handicraft is a refuge for these women. Therefore, incorporating handicraft skills in school curriculum will equip young people with skill to start on while seeking for employment in the other sectors.

It is also recommended that governments and non-governmental organisations such as SEDCO, Gone Rural and SACRO, conduct frequent workshops to help women improve their skills in handicraft making and business management. This would help to improve women's handicrafting skills and eliminate statistics which have been reported in this study. Workshops would also help women to develop ways of managing their income.

In addition to that, documentation of the knowledge regarding handicraft is also needed. The documentation would help to preserve the culture and methods of doing craft especially because currently it is the elderly who are mainly involved in handicrafts making.

#### **6.5.2 Recommendation for handcrafters**

It is recommended that women must form business cooperatives or organisations. This would give them a number of business benefits such as having a bargaining power in determining the price of their products, using one transport to get raw materials from other areas and also taking their products to the market. By forming these organisations and enjoying such benefits, these women would be able to make more profit on their business. Working as a group can also enable them to approach the local authorities to ask for land where they can also grow their raw material as reported in other areas. This would enable them to protect the area from animals which normally feed on the plants that are used to make different handicraft products.

#### **6.5.3 Recommendations for future research**

Since this study focused on rural areas, it is recommended that a comparative study is done in urban areas which shall also investigate the impact of handicraft on urban poor households. That study would help to measure the extent at which handicraft making features as a livelihood option for the poor households in urban areas. Doing that study would shed more or new light to policy makers on the importance of handicraft in the livelihoods of the poor in Swaziland.

Another study that needs to be conducted on handicraft concerns its marketing and consumption. This study was able to capture mainly the information from handicraft producers but was more limited in gauging ideas and experiences concerning handicrafts from customers in connection with product development. Such study can be very important in the sustainability

of the handicraft industry. This is especially important because there is an increased reliance on handicraft especially by the poor.

Last but not least, another study which focuses on the youth and handicraft can be conducted. The study should focus on their educational changes, their occupations and their livelihoods. The evidence and discussion of this thesis focused mainly on their parents' generation (household heads), and was more limited in assessing connection of young people with handicraft. Such a study can be very helpful also in the sustenance and preservation of handicraft skills even for the future generation.

## **6.6 Conclusions**

From the findings of this study it is concluded that women engage on seven handicraft activities which are beading, knitting, pottery, dyeing, sewing, carving and weaving. However, beading and weaving are the most prevalent handicraft activities as they are practised by most women. Based on the interviews, it is concluded that weaving and beading are favoured by most handcrafters because they are still more relevant in everyday life in the Lowveld and other parts of the country. For example, weaved products such as grass mats are still used in ceremonial activities such as burial and weddings. Grass mats are also commonly used in households to sit and sleep on. Beaded products, on the other hand, are more popular and have been able to survive and meet the market demands. Beaded products, particularly those made out of synthetic material are popular in the tourist markets both locally and internationally. For example, it is common to find brooches made out of beads at conferences. A good example which has been made in this study is the HIV/AIDS brooch. Beaded products are small and easy to carry and therefore especially popular with tourists who want to buy them to take home. It has also been noticed that there is an increase in the design and sale of beaded products such as cushion covers, bedspreads and necklaces in some stores (Sellschop, Goldblatt & Hemp, 2005:39). Apart from the fact that these products do well in the market, the abundance of raw material for making these products also makes them favourites. The material to make them is accessed in local rivers, forests and mountains and this also promotes the practice of these activities.

On the issue of resources it is concluded that women engage both tangible and intangible resources in their activities. The first intangible resource which they use is their indigenous knowledge learnt from their parents, close relatives and friends. According to the findings of this

study the use of indigenous knowledge has both merits and demerits. On the merit side, indigenous knowledge is important as their human capital. It is this knowledge which is also used when harvesting raw material from the natural environment, which is their natural capital. In this study the demerit of using indigenous knowledge was that it results in lack of diversity and limited variation in the type of items produced. As a consequence, competition and poor profits characterise this business. The tangible resources include the raw material and the tools used in this business. The first tangible resource used is their natural environment which provides trees, grasses and soils. However, this environment is communally owned and this factor prevents women from protecting the areas where they get their raw material. There is need for those with authority, especially at local level, to provide women doing handicraft with land which they can protect. This will eliminate the challenge which was reported in this study, namely that women have to compete with animals in an effort to obtain grass. The use of refuse collected from their built environment is also becoming very useful in handicraft. Other raw material is bought from local cities and towns. For tools, women use the same utensils that are used in the household for other purposes such as knives, axes and sickles. Family labour is also an important resource in this business. Women are sometimes accompanied by their husbands or their girl child to harvest raw material. In the handicraft business, multiple use of space is also common. Women use tool storage warehouses, kitchens and roof tops to store their raw material and items which they have produced. This was also the case found in this study and can be seen as their physical capital.

Making of handicraft in the study area is an important source of financial capital for households. Through income that they receive from carrying out these activities, women are able to support their households. In this study, it was found that the income they receive is then used to meet a number of household needs as discussed in section 5.1.4 (advantages of the handicrafts business as perceived by the key informants) and section 5.7.5 (use of income from handicraft). The needs which are met include buying food, household goods, clothing, education and giving pocket money for dependents. It can therefore be concluded that even today, handicraft has a social and economic significance to provide long-term security rather than being just a survival or coping strategy for the poor such as the women in Lowveld region of Swaziland (Angelsen & Wunder, 2003 in Pereira et al, 2006). At another level, the income from these activities is important in supporting the other primary livelihood activities which are carried by women in their households such as investing in farming. However, it remains a fact



that handicrafts are mainly important as secondary or supporting activities because the income received is not that high. On that note, Mofokeng (2008) states that the significance of this income may lie largely in its timing as opposed to its amount. Based on reports on what other handcrafters have achieved through handicraft, it can be concluded that handicraft can indeed play a role in helping people to meet their basic needs. Hence, there is a need to promote women involved in handicraft making through markets and providing financial capital.

Finally, it can be concluded that the role of other livelihood activities in supporting women in the Lowveld cannot be overlooked. Livelihood strategies such as farming, old-age grants and informal jobs are very important for women. The old-age grant is one particular reliable source of income. Even though the income is meagre it is more reliable. Farming provides most homesteads with basic food, especially maize. The practice of farming is therefore important to these women because it relieves them of the burden to spend more money buying food. Instead, their only burden becomes buying relish. It is also important to note that providing these women with seeds that can withstand the current weather conditions can play a vital role in alleviating the conditions under which these women and their households live.

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## APPENDIX A

### KEY INFORMANT A: SEDCO OFFICER

#### THEME: HANDICRAFT ACTIVITIES

1. List the handicraft activities through which some of the women in Swaziland.  
.....  
.....  
.....
2. What are the main economic and social factors influencing the choices of the different indigenous activities?  
.....  
.....  
.....
3. How can the choices be improved if there are any limitations?  
.....  
.....  
.....
4. Please name the products which they manufacture from these activities.  
.....  
.....  
.....
5. What are these products used for?  
.....  
.....  
.....
6. How has the craft contributed to women's realisation of self-worth?  
.....  
.....  
.....
7. In your experience, what do you consider to be the main challenges facing handicraft business?

- .....
- .....
- .....
8. Is there any kind of support that is being provided to producers in order to cope with the challenges?

Yes	
No	

Please expand on your answer you gave above.

- .....
- .....
- .....
9. Where do these women obtain their raw material?

- .....
- .....
- .....
10. Do they experience any challenges in accessing the resources?

Yes	
No	

11. If you have answered yes to question 16, what are the challenges that they have encounter?

Scarcity of the resources	
Price is too high	
Other (specify)	

12. For the raw material that is gathered from the wild, are there any nature conservation laws which govern their collection?

Yes	
No	

If yes, please state them and how they are enforced.

.....

.....

.....

13. Who are responsible for the conservation of indigenous resources in the country?

Rangers	
Nature conservation officers	
Extension workers	
Others	

14. Where do they trade their products?

Home	
Home and pension market	
Town market	
Home, pension market and town market	
Other (specify)	

15. What do you consider to be the main drive that sustains the market of craft products and why?

.....

.....

.....

16. Apart from your organisation who else is responsible for supporting handicraft in the country?

.....

.....

.....

17. Please describe how you and other stakeholders promote handicraft.

.....

.....

.....

18. For the purpose of this research please name women in your area who are involved in indigenous income generating activities?

.....

.....

.....

19. Where can one find them? (be specific i.e. homes/physical address)

.....

.....

.....

## APPENDIX B

### KEY INFORMANT B: COMMUNITY LEADER

Area: .....

Position: ..... Date: .....

1. List the handicraft activities through which some of the women in this community earn a living from.

.....

.....

.....

2. What are the main factors influencing the choices of the different indigenous activities?

.....

.....

.....

3. What are the challenges facing handicraft producers in this community?

.....

.....

.....

4. How has the craft contributed to women's realisation of self-worth?

.....

.....

.....

5. Is there anything that is done in this chiefdom to protect the natural resources which are used by women in handicraft? Please expand on your answer.

.....

.....

.....

6. Who is the custodian for nature in this chiefdom?

.....

.....

.....

7. Why are they the custodians?

.....

.....

.....

8. What is their role as custodians?

.....

.....

.....

9. How does the community leadership ensure the conservation of natural resources in this chiefdom?

.....

.....

.....

10. What are the rules pertaining to the use of natural resources in this chiefdom?

.....

.....

.....

11. Do people follow these rules?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Elaborate on response.

.....

.....

.....

12. How are these rules conveyed to the community?

.....

.....

.....

13. How does the chiefdom ensure that all members of the community get to hear about these rules?

.....

.....

.....

14. How are these rules enforced?

.....  
.....  
.....  
15. What is the penalty of not abiding by these rules?

.....  
.....  
.....  
16. For the purpose of this research please name women in your area who are involved in indigenous income generating activities.

.....  
.....  
.....  
17. Where can one find them? (be specific i.e. homes/physical address)

## APPENDIX C

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WOMEN INVOLVED IN HANDICRAFT ACTIVITIES

#### PART 1

#### BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Household Code .....

2. Age at last birthday

Below 20 years	
20-29 years	
30-39 years	
40-49years	
50-59 years	
Above 60 years	

3. Marital status

Single	
Married	
Cohabit	
Divorced	
Widowed	
Separated	

4. Educational details

No formal schooling	
Some primary education	
Primary education completed	
Some Secondary school	
Secondary school completed	
High school	
High school completed	
Tertiary education	



5. Are you employed?

Yes	
No	

If yes, please state the type of your contract

Working full-time	
Working part-time	
Unemployed	

6. Is this household

Household head	Tick
Male headed	
Female headed <i>de jura</i> (man dead/left)	
Female headed <i>de facto</i> (man works away from home for most of the year without making regular decisions)	
Yourself	

7. How many people live in this household?

1-6 members		7-12 members		Above 13 members	
----------------	--	-----------------	--	---------------------	--

8. How many income contributors in this household?.....

9. Who are the income contributors?

.....

.....

.....

10. What are the sources of income in this household?

Source of income	Tick	Source of income	Tick
Craft products		Remittances	
Farming (crop and livestock sales)		Selling fruits and vegetables	
Old age pension		Selling scones	
Other		Selling traditional beer	
		Wage employment	

### HANDICRAFT PRODUCTION

11. Do you like handicraft?

Yes	
No	

12. Why did you decide to participate in handicraft production?

.....

.....

.....

13. At what time do you do handicraft?

Morning	
Afternoon	
Night	
At convenience	
Fulltime	

14. Who taught you the handicraft skill?

Mother	
Grandmother	
Friend	
College/school	
Observation	
Other	

15. How long have you practiced handicraft?

Less than 5 years	
6-10 years	
11-20 years	
Over 20 years	

16. What handicraft activities do you do?

Weaving	
Pottery	
Carving	
Beading	
Sewing	
Dying	
Other	

17. Why did you decide to concentrate on this handicraft activity?

.....

.....

.....

18. What are the general challenges in your activity?

.....

.....

.....

19. What resources do you use in your activity?

Tools

.....

.....

.....

Raw material

.....

.....

.....

20. Where do you obtain your raw material?

.....

.....

.....

21. How do you harvest your natural raw material?

.....

.....

.....

22. Who harvests your raw material?

Myself	
My husband	
My children	
Other	

23. At what time of the year do you harvest your raw material?

.....

.....

.....

24. How do you process your raw material?

.....

.....

.....

25. Where do you store your raw material?

.....

.....

.....

## CONTRIBUTION OF HANDICRAFTS TO HOUSEHOLD INCOME

26. What products do you sell and how much do they cost?

Product	Cost (S.A. Rands)

27. What is the best for business?

Period	Tick
Pension day	
Festive season	
Month ends	
Other (specify)	

28. Where do you sell your handicraft?

Location	Tick
Home	
Local market	
Along the road	
Town	

29. How much do you make from selling crafts?

Amount received from handicraft	Tick
R0-100	
R101-R200	

R201-R300	
R301-R400	
R401-R500	
More than R500	

30. What is the money used for per month?

Household need/want		Household need/want	
Burial		Give to dependents	
Clothing		Health	
Communication/cellphones		Paying loans	
Education		Savings	
Food		Transport	
Other			

31. Who decide on the use of the money you make from your handicraft trade?

Decider		Decider	
Myself		Husband	
Myself and husband		Myself, husband and children	

### OTHER LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

32. Do you participate in any other livelihood activity?

Yes	
No	

33. What are the livelihood activities you participate in?

Livelihood activity	Tick	Livelihood activity	Tick
Brewing beer		Farming	
Full time employed		Hawker	
Domestic worker		Baking and selling scones	
Nothing		Other	

34. Which strategy do you consider your primary source of income?

Livelihood activity	Tick	Livelihood activity	Tick
Brewing beer		Farming	
Full time employed		Hawker	
Domestic worker		Baking and selling scones	
Nothing		Other	

35. Are there any reasons for not participating in the other livelihood strategies?

.....  
 .....

36. Where do you get help when there are pressing needs in your family?

Church	
Relatives	
NGOs	
Other –specify	

## PART 6 – RESEARCHER’S OBSERVATION

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

## Appendix D

### CONSENT FORM

#### TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT

---

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE USE ON INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES BY WOMEN IN THE LOWVELD REGION OF SWAZILAND**

---

Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms \_\_\_\_\_

Date...../...../20...

#### NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Indigenous products, handicraft, have featured for many years in the livelihoods of rural households. These products were mainly produced to cater for immediate household use and needs such as, dishing objects, decorations, and ritual activities. However, the coming of modernisation and also the dominance of the cash economy has forced households especially rural women to produce these products mainly with the intention of generating income, which in many households has been a prime source and in some as a supplement for remittances. There has been opposing views about the usefulness of indigenous knowledge and these activities some claiming that they are a waste of time since their income is very low while others insist that it is an important alternative for generating rural household income. In order to make an informed conclusion it is important that a survey is conducted with the people involved in these activities to find their view on the use of indigenous activities in income generation.

#### RESEARCH PROCESS

1. **100** Voluntary respondents are required who will be recruited from the different research areas
2. Respondents will be women over the age of 18 years and above who are involved in indigenous income generating activities
3. Each respondent will be briefed about the purpose of the study before the interview commences
4. An individual(one-on-one) interview will be asked from you to get your individual opinion
5. The interview will take a maximum of 20 minutes
6. Basic information on you and your household shall be required. This shall involve asking you about your household assets and income that your household receives including that which is received from indigenous activities



7. A camera and other photographic devices will be used in the process to photograph where the products are used and how they are made
8. Since this exercise is solely for academic purposes of the researcher, there will be no incentive of any sort.
9. Feedback on results will be made available through the regional administrator's office

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality in this study will be ensured. Your opinions are viewed as strictly confidential, and only the researcher and the supervisor will have access to the information. No data published in dissertations and journals will contain any information by means of which you may be identified. Your anonymity is therefore ensured.

## **WITHDRAWAL CLAUSE**

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I therefore participate voluntarily until such time as I request otherwise.

## **POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE STUDY**

This study may assist in the development of informed debate on the efficacy of indigenous activities in income generation for rural households. It may also shed more light on how to overcome the challenges faced and how best the activities could be carried out.

## **INFORMATION (contact information of your supervisor)**

If I have any questions concerning the study, I may contact Ms M. Masekoameng at 0027471 3102 or Ms T. Dweba at 00274712264

## **CONSENT**

I, the undersigned, ..... (full name) have read the above information relating to the project and have also heard the verbal version, and declare that I understand it. I have been afforded the opportunity to discuss relevant aspects of the project with the project leader, and hereby declare that I agree voluntarily to participate in the project.

I indemnify the university and any employee or student of the university against any liability that I may incur during the course of the project.

I further undertake to make no claim against the university in respect of damages to my person or reputation that may be incurred as a result of the project/trial or through the fault of other

participants, unless resulting from negligence on the part of the university, its employees or students.

I have received a signed copy of this consent form.

Signature of participant: .....

Signed at ..... on .....

**WITNESSES**

1. ....

2. ....

Appendix E

**SWAZILAND**



**GOVERNMENT**

Tel: (+268) 404 3201/6  
Fax: (+268) 404 4711/3055  
E-mail: mee@realnet.co.sz

Principal Secretary's Office  
Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Trade  
P. O. Box 451, Mbabane H100

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

25<sup>th</sup> October 2012

UNISA  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

ATT: M.R. MASEKOAMENG (SUPERVISOR)

**RE: MOSES NDLANGAMDLA'S RESEACH.**

In reference to your letter dated, 16/10/2012, regarding the above matter; the  
**MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND TRADE** hereby authorised the  
student to carry out the research assignment as requested in the said region  
(LUBOMBO).

Yours Faithfully

M. ZWANE  
**FOR: PRINCIPAL SECRETARY**

2013-03-04

Ref. Nr.: 2013/CAES/023

To:  
Student: MM Ndlangamandla  
Supervisor: Ms M Masekoameng  
Department of Agriculture and Animal Health  
College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences

Student nr: 36101559

Dear Ms Masekoameng and Mr Ndlangamandla

**Request for Ethical approval for the following research project:**

*An investigation into indigenous knowledge use on income generating activities by women in the Lowveld region of Swaziland*

The application for ethical clearance in respect of the above mentioned research has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Unisa. Ethics clearance for the above mentioned project (Ref. Nr.: 2013/CAES/023) is **approved**, after careful consideration of all documentation submitted to the CAES Ethics committee.

The Ethics committee would like to remind the researcher that observations should be clearly explained in the consent form to ensure that all parties involved are informed about the observations. The researcher is requested to ensure that this is captured in the consent form and that such a copy is submitted to the Ethics committee for records.

Please provide the correspondence as soon as possible to Ms Marthie van Wyk before data collection takes place.

Kind regards,



Prof E Kempen,  
CAES Ethics Review Committee Chair



