

**ESCAPING POVERTY AND CHRONIC POVERTY THROUGH RURAL
DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF AGRICULTURE WITH REFERENCE
TO THE BAR-SAURI MILLENNIUM VILLAGES PROJECT IN YALA
DIVISION, SIAYA DISTRICT.**

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**A Research Project Paper Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Award of Master of Arts Degree in Development
Studies, University of Nairobi**



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NOVEMBER, 2010

DECLARATION

I declare that this project paper is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other university.

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Date 24/11/2010

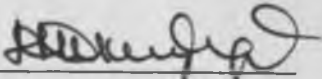
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DEDICATION:

This project paper is dedicated to my late brother Franco, R.I.P, and to Tamara and Trevor, so that they may grow in knowledge.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am greatly indebted to my supervisors, Prof. Njuguna Nge'the, and Dr. Karuti Kanyinga for their unfailing guidance, sound critique, support and patience during this study. Your comments and insights enabled me conceptualize and compile this paper. I am most grateful.

My gratitude goes to the Institute for Development Studies through CPRC-Kenya for the generous award of a scholarship which enabled me pursue the M.A programme.

To the MVP Kisumu, for facilitating my field work through a research grant. I am sincerely grateful to Dr. Patrick Mutuo, Jessica Masira and the entire MVP staff in Kisumu and Yala for your support during my field work. I would like to acknowledge Japheth Bulali for his input in data analysis and to my research assistants Tom and Carlos. I owe a great deal of gratitude to the study respondents who volunteered their valuable time to share information on this study.

I am equally thankful to my classmates and the whole IDS fraternity for their support and encouragement during the entire duration of the course. I would like to appreciate Prof. Winiew V. Mitullah for her encouragement and support during the M.A programme at IDS. Gratitude to Prof. Alila and Eric Manga who helped in the initial conceptualization of the paper. To my parents, Mr. Pius Opondo and Mrs. Margaret Opondo, for giving a good foundation in education and unending support in my pursuits. To my friends, relatives and any other persons who contributed in one way or another, I cannot mention all of you by names, I'm indeed grateful. God bless you all.

Finally I cannot forget the moral and financial support, encouragement and enduring patience of my sister Josephine and David Bong'o, without you, this would not have been possible. Thank you. To my brother Denis Opondo for your endless support all a long. Tamara and Trevor for the little fights and shows that would occasionally distract my attention when down with studies – you gave me that much need break and always made my moments.

All errors of omission and fact are entirely mine.

ABSTRACT

This study explored the role of Millennium Villages Project intervention in agriculture as an escape route out of poverty and chronic poverty in Siaya district. The ultimate goal of rural development is improved livelihoods and poverty reduction. Agriculture is an important and integral part of the livelihood strategies for many rural poor. Subsistence agriculture continues to be a major determinant of rural household welfare in rural Kenya.

The study findings established the multidimensionality of rural poverty and that agriculture still harbours many people in a poverty trap. In spite of MVP interventions in agriculture poverty and hunger still threatens human survival and livelihoods. An effective response therefore requires a better understanding of what it means to be chronically poor and better analysis of the characteristics and underlying social processes that result in sustained poverty. Furthermore, agricultural growth and poverty reduction strategies need to take into account the constraints faced by poor and chronically poor smallholders with regard to accessing inputs, microfinance, education and livelihoods diversification in the rural areas. Overall, the study contends that smallholder agriculture faces large uncertainties as a result of rapid population growth, declining farm sizes, falling soil fertility, environmental degradation and threat of climate change.

The study findings have a number of important implications for the design of interventions, strategies, programmes, and policies for reducing poverty and supporting smallholder agricultural growth in the rural areas. It calls for actions that can fundamentally transform access to the most basic needs of the poorest and rural areas such as food, health and education. In addition, it calls for the need to provide the poor with support in subsidy, extension and research, access to credit, education and training. Lastly, the papers' conclusion is that the ability of the poor to engage in productive activities in a sustainable manner and the prospects of 'intervention development' in the rural areas depend heavily on the wider socio-economic, political and institutional environment within and beyond the rural domain. Therefore, there is need to acknowledge the diversity of pathways out of poverty as agriculture alone cannot relieve rural poverty, though self-evidently is part of the answer.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASAL	Arid and Semi Arid Lands
CD	Community Development
CDF	Community Development Fund
CPRC	Chronic Poverty Research Centre
CPR	Chronic Poverty Research
DDC	District Development Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DFRD	District Focus for Rural Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IRD	Integrated Rural Development
HDA	Human Development Approach
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HDR	Human Development Reports
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
LATF	Local Authority Transfer Fund
MDG's	Millennium Development Goals
MVP	Millennium Village Project
NGO's	Non Governmental Organizations
PPAS	Participatory Poverty Assessment Survey
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RMFLF	Roads Maintenance Fuel Levy Fund
WMS	Welfare Monitoring Survey
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SDD	Social Dimension of Development
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
SRA	Strategy for the Revitalization of Agriculture
SRDP	Special Rural Development Programme

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This is a study about development intervention in agriculture as an escape route out of poverty and chronic poverty in rural Kenya. Escaping poverty has been a pre-occupation of development thinking in Kenya since independence. The government has been fighting poverty but the problem still remains, and has worsened thus leading to deepening poverty, especially in the rural areas. Agriculture is a vital tool for achieving MDG's that calls for halving, by 2015, the share of people suffering from extreme poverty and hunger. It is significant and development agencies have placed emphasis on the role of agriculture for sustainable development. Kenya's economy is also dependent on agriculture and therefore agriculture is generally viewed as providing opportunities for escaping poverty. The World Bank (2008) posits that in much of Sub Saharan Africa, agriculture is a strong option for spurring growth, overcoming poverty, and enhancing food security. Yet despite many years of investment in agriculture and rural development in Africa, Kenya include, poverty and hunger still threaten human survival and livelihoods. And in spite of agriculture being the backbone of the economy and a major source of livelihood in the Kenya, agriculture still harbours majority of people trapped in poverty. A significant number of these are trapped in long term, severe and multidimensional poverty.

Rural poverty remains a pervasive problem in Kenya. It presents formidable challenges to social and economic development. Poverty is overwhelmingly a rural phenomenon, particularly in developing countries and therefore has important implication for public policy and in the design of any strategy for its reduction. Three out of four people in developing countries live in rural areas and depend on agriculture as their major livelihood strategy (World Bank, 2008).

People who depend on agriculture for their living are typically much poorer than people who work in other sectors of the economy, and that they represent a significant share, often the majority of the total number of the poor (World bank 2008). The incidence of poverty among agricultural and rural households is persistently high. Three quarters of the poor in Kenya live in the rural areas and the incidence of poverty is highest among farmers, particularly subsistence

farmers. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2007) reported that rural areas have a much larger population that is poor: eighty percent of all poor people live in rural areas.

Rural areas suffer from low economic growth due to socio-cultural, political, technological and infrastructural bottlenecks, creating conditions for persistence of poverty. The causes of rural poverty are complex and multidimensional. They involve, among others things, culture, climate, gender, markets and public policy. More over, rural areas are often politically marginalized and poverty remains key impediment to progress in many developing countries, including Kenya. This situation has also been compounded by inappropriate public policies and ill designed programmes and projects that have served to impoverish rural areas and communities over time (Chambers, 2005).

Rural areas with low levels of physical, social, and human capital, one household's poverty reinforces another. People living in rural areas cope up with high levels of risk in the form of ill health or injury, natural disasters, harvest failures, terms of trade deterioration, reduced access to work or vulnerability to violence and conflict. Risk itself has several consequences. It degrades assets, impoverishes the most vulnerable and where the density of the poor and risk-prone household is high, it prevents households from climbing out of poverty (Bird *et al.*, 2001). Remoteness is a key factor in explaining concentrations of rural poverty in Africa: it limits access to markets, increase the prices of inputs and makes both economic and social services less accessible. The populations located in rural areas are likely to be lacking access to social and economic services. They are thus often poorly educated, lack skills and opportunities to participate in income generating activities. Rural areas are thus, associated with low levels of productivity, low levels of education, unemployment. This often leads to intergenerational transmission of poverty because it creates a cycle of deprivations. Unemployment, low levels of incomes, illiteracy, inadequate access to healthcare are thus linked to poverty because they lead to erratic incomes, low assets base, and vulnerability to shocks (CPRC 2004).

Focusing on the rural poor: who they are, where they live and what challenges does poverty pose in their respective localities is the basis for an effective rural development strategy. Likewise, the rural poor are quite diverse both in the problems they face and the possible solutions to these

problems. The rural poor include the landless, individuals/households with few assets, smallholders, pastoralists, women (especially women headed-households), ethnic minorities, and indigenous populations. The 1994/1997 welfare monitoring surveys categorized the poor in Kenya to include people with large families, those engaged in subsistence farming, and those lacking a source of income. Nevertheless, people in general and the poor in particular define and experience poverty in diverse ways. Most respondents associated poverty with deprivations including lack of land, unemployment, inability to feed oneself, lack of proper housing, poor health and inability to educate children and pay medical bills (Kenya, 2001). Understanding the needs of such different groups is central to the success of poverty alleviation strategies.

Due to the persistence of rural poverty, its reduction has been a longstanding objective of the government and other development stakeholders. The traditional approach has mainly been through rural development focused on agriculture and the role of government in delivering services to enhance productivity. The government has been designing and implementing anti-poverty programmes that target the distribution of food, assets, funds and social welfare services to individuals, households, and communities in both rural and urban areas (Kenya, 2005). These have been outlined in a series of national development plans, sessional papers and other policy action plans. The emphasis being on economic growth, rural development, provision of basic social services, economic restructuring and employment creation (Alila and Omosa, 1999; Ikiara, 1999).

The aim of these strategies has been to promote development in the rural areas by involving people at the local level in decision making processes on development issues that affect their wellbeing. Despite these attempts, many did not achieve their objectives for various reasons. A number of these initiatives had strong donor support and focused on several spheres including agriculture, rural infrastructure, and service delivery in the in the social sectors. Experiences were mixed, but common criticism focused on their top-down nature; supply driven approach, and excessive reliance on technical assistance and on heavy non-sustainable project specific structures. More over, most of these projects were often based on insufficient experience with local agricultural systems and the new farming methods had seldom been tested with small holders. The projects were also implemented with little understanding of the local socio-cultural,

economic and political environment (Alila and Omosa, 1999; Omiti *et al.*, 2002). According to Ng'ethe *et al.*, (2009), the focus on rural development has always been well intentioned in Kenya. The problem though has been that policy and institutional arrangements did not seem to fully appreciate the heterogeneity of the rural areas and thus the unequal capacity of the rural population to take advantage of policies and institutions. Increasingly therefore, rural access roads and existing rural growth and production centers for example, would usually benefit mostly those with goods to deliver to centers and markets. Similarly institutional re-alignments intended to participation at the lowest levels of development would end up being captured by the rural elites, not the poor (Ng'ethe *et al.*, 2009:70). As a consequence, the poor have often been reduced to passive participant of their own development and such projects and initiatives have been unsustainable (Chambers, 2005).

The persistence of poverty throughout Kenya's history despite efforts by the government, NGO's and other development stakeholders to combat it, suggest that the approaches, policies, programmes, and projects have not been effective or adequate in addressing the problem. Poverty reduction still remains a big national challenge that requires a review of its extent and causes, an evaluation of past and current attempts at alleviating it. With 80% of the poor living in rural areas in Kenya, rural development is critical in achieving progress in poverty reduction. Rural poverty is as diverse as are the poor in their livelihood strategies. This calls for the need to develop a clear understanding of who the poor are, the constraints they face, and the processes that engender and retrench their poverty. This understanding can greatly help in the formulation and design of effective policies and programmes. It is today widely acknowledged that poor men and women apply enormous creativity, strength, and dynamism on a daily basis to solve their problems. The poor have assets in terms of their own skills, in their institutions, in their values and cultures, and their detailed and sophisticated knowledge of their environment. Given necessary support, the poor can be the main actors for, as well as the beneficiaries of sustainable development. Rural development efforts should therefore empower rural dwellers to make decisions on their livelihoods on a sustainable basis.

African development crises are traced to the reliance on development models based on industrialization and urbanization strategies that embraced the uncritical outward looking

policies. The outcome of policies and programmes has been the apparent failure to provide dynamic forces to provide structural transformation of the African economies, especially in the rural sector (Alila, 2000). In terms of development, rural areas are the regions that continue to lag behind, evidenced by rampant poverty, illiteracy, ill health, and generally historically deep rooted underdevelopment. The rural sector remains dominant due to the predominant dependence of rural economies on agriculture. This calls for the need to accord rural development high priority out of the fact that Africa is likely to continue to remain rural than any other continent for sometime to come. Evidence to this is the fact that seventy five percent of African population is still locked in the rural areas. Moreover, agriculture is the most important source of employment and income for a disproportionately large majority. The prospects of urban industrial sector providing dynamic growth forces does not appear to hold ground with increasing urban poverty and squalor. Even with rapid urbanization, the developing world is expected to remain predominantly rural in most regions until 2020, and the majority of the poor are projected to continue to live in the rural areas until 2040 (World Bank, 2008). At the same time, a further decay and decline of rural economies and the concomitant drift of rural populations to cities lacking proper work and income opportunities makes apparent the need to promote local level development.

Overwhelming evidence from developing countries show that rural development has important salutary effects on overall development. Improving the quality of life in rural areas necessarily spills over to quality of life in urban areas. That is why improved agricultural productivity and growth is important. However, agriculture alone cannot relieve rural poverty; rural non farm economy is also important (World Bank, 2001). This is the reason for the renewed pre-occupation with rural development by governments, national political leaders, development assistance agencies, NGO's and academics.

In 2000, the nations of the world committed themselves to the millennium development goals (MDGs) and set time-bound and measurable targets for halving 'extreme poverty' by 2015. In line with the MDGs, various interventions to achieve these targets have been put in place. One such intervention is the Millennium Village's Project (MVP). Kenya is signatory to the MDGs and became the first country where the model MVP was inceptioned in 2004. Millennium villages

are designed to demonstrate how the millennium development goals can be met in rural Africa within five years. The assumption is that rural African communities can lift themselves out of poverty trap if they have access to proven and powerful technologies that can enhance their farm productivity, health, education, and access to markets (www.millenniumpromise.org).

1.2 Problem Statement

The main challenges for socio-economic development in Kenya are poverty, illiteracy, disease, and unemployment (Kenya, 2000). While this concern has preoccupied a central place in Kenya's development priority since independence, the problem of poverty has persisted, deepened, and widened inequalities and the incidence of rural poverty is very high (Kenya, 2000; KNBS, 2007). There have been various strategies and interventions to fight poverty, but over 50% of the Kenyan population is poor (PRSP, 2001). A significant proportion of these are trapped in long term, severe and multidimensional poverty (chronic poverty) in the rural areas.

Despite many years of investment in agriculture in Kenya, poverty and hunger still threaten human survival and livelihoods. Escaping from poverty and chronic poverty has always been a big challenge. One approach to addressing this challenge has been investment in rural development, specifically in the agricultural sub sector with a view to enhancing agricultural productivity. Millennium Villages' Projects are a specific illustration of this approach. MVP's are examples of the development interventions designed to uplift rural African communities out of the poverty trap. MVPs have evolved as one of the current approaches to poverty alleviation in line with the first Millennium Development Goal - 'end extreme poverty and hunger'. The MVP gives important prominence to agriculture as a critical intervention area through which poverty could be overcome in the rural areas. This is in recognition of the fact that the incidence of poverty tends to be higher in agricultural and rural populations than elsewhere, and most of the poor live in rural areas and many depend on agriculture for a living.

Whereas it is known that agriculture is an important instrument for poverty reduction and rural development in general, we know very little if this can be case when applied in a micro- setting like MVP. There is need therefore, for research to find out how the MVPs were conceived. How is the MVP conceptualization anchored on appreciation of the causes and effects of poverty and

chronic poverty in the rural areas?. A key constraint to addressing the problem of poverty in Kenya has been a failure to properly identify the poor and target programmes and interventions appropriately. Moreover, critical lesson from the MVP needs to be documented to constitute benchmarks against which impact of MVP interventions can be evaluated over time. This study seeks to find out how MVPs interventions in agriculture have addressed the poor and the chronically poor in particular.

There is need therefore, for a renewed rural development strategy that addresses a rural situation that is different from the past, a rural population that confronts many new problems, especially the challenges and opportunities in agriculture as a pathway out of poverty. Today`s agriculture faces large uncertainties as a result of rapid population growth, declining farm sizes, falling soil fertility, environmental degradation and threat of climate change, and reduced state /government support in a liberalized economy. Research of this nature will help the country and communities enhance food security, increase incomes, and create employment in rural areas. Identifying exit routes and overcoming poverty and chronic poverty is integral to the MDGs and poverty alleviation.

1.3 Research Questions

The overall research question to guide this study is to what extent is the Millennium Villages Project an escape route out of poverty and chronic poverty through agriculture?

1.3.1 Specific research questions:

1. Who are the chronically poor in the millennium villages?
2. In what agricultural activities are the chronically poor engaged?
3. How are the chronically poor benefiting from agricultural activities and escaping poverty and chronic poverty?

1.4 Study Objectives

The objective of this study is to examine whether the Millennium Villages Project is an escape route out of chronic poverty through agriculture.

1.4.1 Specific objectives:

1. To establish the chronically poor in the millennium villages.
2. To establish agricultural activities of the MVP and how the chronically poor are engaged.
3. To establish whether MVP is assisting them to escape from poverty & chronic poverty.

1.5 Justification for the Study

This study is important because despite several strategies and interventions by the government, donors, NGOs' and other development agencies, over 50% of Kenya's population is poor. A significant proportion of these are trapped in long term, severe, and multidimensional (chronic) poverty (PRSP, 2001). This study is unique in that it brings on board a new dimension to the poverty debate by focusing on 'chronic poverty'. Improved agricultural production will be beneficial to rural communities like Sauri in Siaya District and other parts of the country devastated by extreme poverty in terms of food security, income generation, and employment creation.

This study will seek to inform and support policy on poverty alleviation through sustainable agricultural investments in rural areas. This is because an effective response to the problem of poverty and chronic poverty requires a better understanding of the processes that result in sustained and intractable poverty. This study will contribute to this by evaluating agricultural interventions of the MVP so that corrective measures or possible adjustments can be made. Issues that will emerge will be critical in informing subsequent phases or replications elsewhere. Understanding the dynamics of poverty and chronic poverty may thus help in the design of effective poverty alleviation strategies and escape routes, especially in the rural areas where poverty rates are disproportionately high.

This study will help inform policy in pro-poor targeting and in the design of decentralized anti-poverty programmes and rural-based development strategies. More generally, the information will contribute to a wider and informed debate in the development discourse.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study investigates MVP's interventions in agriculture. The MVP agenda comprises interventions in agriculture and environment; health and nutrition; education and training; infrastructure, energy and communication. For the purpose of this study due to time and financial resource limitations, focus was on agriculture interventions with a view to the improvement of farm productivity/ agricultural production. The study was restricted to Sauri village which is a conglomerate of eleven villages, forming the MVP. The study was conducted through household survey, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and farm level observation.

1.7 Research methodology

This section presents the research methods used in the study. Specifically, it presents the details of the study sites, sampling methods, data collection methods and data analysis procedures and research findings presentation.

1.7.1 Site Selection

The study was conducted in Bar-Sauri Millennium village in Yala Division, Siaya District, Western Kenya. The Sauri Millennium villages' project comprises a conglomerate of eleven villages made up of the sub location that form Yala township location. The eleven villages that comprise Sauri MVP at the centre of the study are Sauri A, Sauri B, Yala A, Yala B, Madiri, Luwero, Silula, Nyaminia A, Nyaminia B, Nyamboga, and Kosoro. Siaya District was chosen as one of the poorest districts in Kenya owing to a confluence of geographic, economic, and environmental factors. Sauri is a rural community devastated by extreme poverty. Prior to the establishment of the project, the area experienced endemic malaria, high HIV/AIDS rates, chronic hunger and malnutrition, poor access to healthcare and safe drinking water, poor access to education and lack of employment. Between 60% and 70% of the population were surviving on less than one U.S dollar (\$1) per day. Approximately 25% were infected with HIV/AIDS, 43% were infected with malaria parasites, and 42% of the children in Sauri were underweight, signifying severe under-nutrition. Only a very small proportion of the children were attending school. (www.millenniumpromise.org).

1.7.2 Sampling Procedure

The unit of analysis for this study was households and household heads as the respondents. A sampling frame was derived from the Millennium Village Project office that carried out a baseline survey of Sauri Village in 2005. Multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to select respondents for the study. Sauri Millennium village covers eleven smaller villages. First, was the sampling of 300 total research households covering the eleven smaller villages using random sampling method to select 50 households for the study. A sample of 50 chronically poor households was drawn based on wealth ranking. The wealth ranking was based on household yearly percapita income. It generated four wealth ranks categories namely (A, B, C,& D). The poorest and chronically poor households in the millennium villages fall under wealth rank category (D).

Table 1.1: Wealth Ranks Categories

Wealth Category	Yearly income percapita Kshs.
A	11,120
B	5,290
C	2,350
D	< /Less than 2,350

The (2005) MVP's base line survey was based on the following indicators, *income, demography, household assets, livelihood strategies, household consumption/production and expenditure and household vulnerability to risks*. It established that 70% of people in Siaya District lived below the Kenyan poverty line of 1\$/day. It also identified a subset of the most extremely poor and needy to include poor widows, orphans, disabled, the ill without social networks and support.

The 1994 Welfare Monitoring Survey categorized the poor in Kenya to include people with large families, those engaged in subsistence farming and people lacking a source of income. PRSP (2001) associated poverty with inability to feed oneself and family, lack of land, unemployment, poor health, inability to educate children and pay medical bills, and lack of proper housing.

This study used the following indicators to define the chronically poor. Households with large families unable to meet their basic needs, those engaged in subsistence farming, people lacking a regular and reliable source of income, the housing structures and the kind of work undertaken by household members. Other deprivations included lack of land, inability to educate children and pay medical bills, lack of social networks and social support.

Non probability sampling was used to select 10 respondents divided into two groups of five respondents for focus group discussion, and 5 respondents for key informant interviews. The key informants included Siaya District Development officer, 2 coordinators on the sectors of agriculture and business enterprise, 1 village development chairperson, MVP deputy team leader and community coordinator.

Table 1.2: Sampling Frame

VILLAGE	No. of Households Sampled
Sauri A	4
Sauri B	6
Nyamninia A	7
Nyamninia B	4
Luero	4
Nyamboga	5
Silula	2
Yala A	6
Yala B	2
Kosoro	4
Madiri	7
Grand Total	50

Source: Sauri household sample, 2009

1.7.3 Data Collection

Quantitative and Qualitative data was obtained using both primary and secondary sources. A survey questionnaire was used to obtain quantitative data on the socio-economic characteristics of the poor. Qualitative data collection involved household survey, in-depth interviews with the selected key informants and focus group discussion.

In order to answer the research questions, the following chronic poverty indicators were taken into consideration, household asset portfolio, subsistence farming/occupations, literacy levels, health statuses, household consumption and expenditure and household vulnerability to risks. To answer the second question, house hold levels of engagement in agricultural production activities was determined.

1.7.3.1 Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussions consisted of more than 12 individuals divided into 2 groups and helped in clarifying emerging issues. The purpose of focus group discussion was to obtain in-depth information on concepts, perceptions, and ideas. For this study it covered perceptions of poverty and chronic poverty in light of the MVP project interventions in agriculture and income. This technique has the strength of allowing the study participants to express their views rather than merely respond to researchers questions.

1.7.3.2 Key informant interviews

Key informants were purposively selected based on their resourcefulness in different areas of this study. A key informant guide was be used to provide overall direction for interview (see appendix). The key informant guide consisted of open ended questions to elicit responses from the key persons.

1.7.3.3 Observation was used to complement and reinforce primary data collection procedures on various aspects of this study. Particular attention was paid by observing project activities on the ground, physical infrastructure etc.

Extensive review of secondary data was carried to inform and furnish primary data collection. This was done on published books, journals, articles, internet, and millennium village project records – relating to the concept of chronic poverty, poverty alleviation strategies in Kenya, and the millennium villages project.

1.7.4 Data Analysis

Completed questionnaires were cross-checked for data integrity. Data was then entered into code book (CSPRO data entry template) for analysis along key themes on chronic poverty in relation to the millennium villages' project intervention in agriculture. Quantitative data analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Cross tabulations were generated and descriptive statistics, including averages and growth rates in order to identify periods of transitions and factors that account for such trends. Raw frequencies were generated to categorize the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents. Qualitative data was further analyzed by descriptive and intuitive interpretation along key themes on defining characteristics of the chronically poor, their levels of engagement in agricultural activities, and levels of benefit in escaping poverty. The results of this study have are presented in the form of tables, explanatory texts, and summary statistics to elucidate relationships between key variables.

1.7.5 Research Ethics

Informed consent was obtained from respondents and they were informed about the purpose of the study and thereafter requested to participate voluntarily. The no-harm aspect of research ethics was observed by asking questions that do not infringe on respondents' emotional and psychological well-being. The confidentiality requirement will be observed by keeping information provided by respondents confidential.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Issues in Rural development

Rural development refers to overall development of rural areas with a view to improving the quality of life of the rural people. It involves extending the benefits of development to those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas. It emerged as a high priority in the development policy agenda in Africa and other developing countries due to the failures of development efforts in the first decade of independence to bring about the much publicized fruits of internal self rule (Alila and Omosa, 1999; Chambes, 1991). Instead, increasing unemployment, worsening poverty, and growing inequality pointed to a grim reality of endless crises and stagnation in the rural areas among developing countries of the world.

2.1.1 Meaning and Nature of Development

The origins, nature and implication of development have yielded various formulations of the concept of development. In the 1950's – 1960's it was economic perspectives that dominated development thinking and debate. Development thinking and practice that guided rural development policy in Africa was based on a conceptualization of development as economic growth. Urban areas where industries were located were to be points of origin of benefits that would trickle down to the rural areas. Economic models had strong western bias emphasizing the free market operating within a monetary economy. Economic policy focused on importation of western capital, technology and manpower for purposes of growth and industrialization. The western models had strong macro-orientation. Rural development policy was for a long time perceived in terms of community social mobilization, emerging out of the development theory that advocated comprehensive social and economic modernization (Alila, 2000). In the African context, the models did not focus on her resource endowments and institutions. In particular, the models ignored the non-economic and human factors in the process of development. The culture, attitudes, preferences and institutions of the African people were viewed as obstacles to development. Planners and policy-makers therefore assumed that indigenous populations, especially the rural poor needed to be led into modernity in virtually every aspect of their livelihoods, including culture. The key argument was that economic and social backwardness

was largely caused by endogenous factors and was perpetuated as a vicious circle. The traditional societies and cultures met neither the psychological, social and political nor economic requirements for progress. Accordingly, the focus was the village, specifically its traditional social order and pattern of behaviour, with the overall objective of elimination of hunger, disease and ignorance through planned social change. The traditional and underdeveloped sectors, especially agriculture were conspicuously neglected. The consequence of centrally generated, planned and directed development practice gave rise to a framework in which rural people generally did not feature as stakeholders, save for the rural elites (Chambers, 2005).

2.1.2 Dimensions of Rural poverty

As a consequence, poverty is more pronounced in low potential rural areas, politically marginalized regions, areas weakly connected to markets, slum areas in towns and cities, and areas affected by protracted and violent conflicts. However across the regions, the incidence of poverty and chronic poverty is still higher in rural than in urban areas. Rural areas often contain concentrations of people trapped in poverty. In areas with low levels of physical, social, and human capital, one household's poverty reinforces another. People living in rural areas have to cope up with high levels of risk in the form of ill health or injury, natural disaster, harvest failures, terms of trade deterioration, reduced access to work or vulnerability to violence and conflict. Risk degrades assets, impoverishes the most vulnerable and where the density of the poor and risk-prone household is high, it prevents households from climbing out of poverty (Bird *et al.*, 2001).

Spatial location (remoteness) is a key factor in explaining concentrations of rural poverty in Africa: it limits access to markets, increase the prices of inputs and makes both economic and social services less accessible. The populations located in rural areas are likely to be lacking access to social and economic services. They are thus often likely to be poorly educated, lack skills and opportunities to participate in income generating activities. Combination of these factors result in high incidence of poverty and low level of development as manifested in low income levels, unemployment, illiteracy, infant mortality etc in the rural areas.

This situation has also been compounded by inappropriate public policies and ill designed programmes and projects that have served to impoverish rural areas and communities over time

(Chambers, 2005). Rural areas suffer from low economic growth due to technological and infrastructural bottlenecks, creating conditions for persistence of poverty. More over, rural areas are often politically marginalized and poverty remains key impediment to progress in many developing countries, including Kenya. Thus the rationale for rural development, which is that the incidence of poverty tends to be higher in agricultural and rural populations than elsewhere, and most of the poor live in rural areas and a large share of them depend on agriculture for a living. There is thus, the need to put in place growth policies that emphasize rural development or other sectors where the poor are represented.

2.2 Theoretical perspectives

2.2.1 Economic Growth and Rural Development

The economic growth strategy is a top-down and supply-driven planning for development with an emphasis on planning in order to maximize economic growth. It assumes that that some level of economic growth is a necessary for rural development to occur. Rural development is thus based on conceptualization that puts emphasis on economic growth. The focus is on industrialization as the key to development with urban areas as points of origin of benefits that would trickle down to the rural areas. The rural areas are thus perceived as peripheral to the urban areas, identified as centers of economic growth. Therefore, the policy thrust of the economic growth approach is enhancing the economy to produce more and more of food and service. The strategy is marked by central planning for top-down development. The assumption is that for development to be successful, it must be centrally generated, planned and directed. In this context, rural development is considered purely as a function of economic growth.

2.2.2 Basic Welfare Needs and Rural Development

The theory of basic welfare needs seeks to promote the wellbeing of rural populations through provision of minimum basic human needs. Its assumption is that access to basic human needs of food, clothing, shelter, health, education as the basis of rural development. Basic needs are consist of certain minimum requirements of life. The primary means to achieve this strategy is the provision/distribution of goods, services and social amenities such as food, shelter, clothing, heath, and education.

Social welfare orientation perceives development in terms of opportunities for groups and individuals. Social welfare approaches view the poor as products of marginalization from some social, economic, and political process and structures in society. Development is thus, viewed as progress towards political equality, religious freedom, social justice, freedom from want, disease, human dignity, including freedom of conscience, equal opportunity for all citizens and growing percapita income distributed equitably.

2.2.3 Popular Participation and Rural Development

Participatory development refers to a process through which groups and communities determine, through inclusive and consensus, their development priorities and design solutions that address these needs. The critical assumption of this strategy is that the rural poor will identify and resolve their problems if provided with minimal support and otherwise left to their own devices and initiatives. The strategy aims at helping the rural people help themselves through their own organizations, active participation and other support systems. It is built on the belief that the citizens can be trusted to shape their own future. Therefore it is a 'people first' or people centered orientation to social change or development.

The approach aims at responding to the felt needs of the rural people as defined by them. Therefore the role of the government or external agents is to facilitate the self help efforts of the villagers by providing technologies and resources that are not locally available. The ability of the locals to take active lead in their own development is the basis of this strategy. The contention is that through strong local institutions, rural resident's capacity to determine and control their own affairs can be realized for socio-economic progress. Therefore poverty can be overcome if the poor are given greater share in decisions about programmes on poverty alleviation.

Participatory development is based on principles of local knowledge, local capacities, establishment of appropriate local institutions and a facilitative role for development agents

2.2.4 Decentralization and Rural Development

The underlying assumption in decentralization is recognition of the local community's right to identify and manage local development initiatives. Decentralization is therefore the creation of

conditions in localities which enable populations to participate in selection and implementation of actions which determines their wellbeing. This is out of the contention that the benefits of economic growth may not reach all people, particularly the most disadvantaged members of the community.

Decentralization assumes a gradual process of transferring development functions, resources and decision making powers from the central government or agency to the local levels. In terms of development, it is a means to mobilize and facilitate development initiatives proposed by grass root communities. The strategy aims at enabling local people and communities to be participants and be beneficiaries of local level development initiatives. The agenda of decentralization therefore is to act as a catalyst for local level development initiatives and projects, dissemination of new ideas and innovations and provision of critical information.

2.2.5 Integrated Rural Development

Integrated rural development is a development paradigm that requires multidisciplinary and pluralistic approaches to development, including poverty reduction. Its assumption is that no single approach taken alone is likely to result in development. It is a holistic approach that reflects the complex linkages and interactions within the system of overall rural development.

It advocates for a synergistic approach to rural development in order to link this development to other sectors of the economy. This approach incorporates both traditional networks and institutional analysis and focuses on working mechanisms and processes rather than ends. Substituting a holistic vision of "rurality" for the old instrumentalist and deterministic approach leads to understanding the need for fostering co-operation between public and private actors to achieve sustainable development.

Integrated rural development is based on several assumptions: that rural development is part of overall socio-economic development; development is a system of interrelated social change; agriculture has a multitude of functions in the development process; and agricultural development is one aspect of rural development. This means taking a holistic approach and integrating economic, social, and environmental systems in the process of rural development.

2.2.6 Agriculture and Rural Development

The role of agriculture in economic development and poverty reduction has generated enormous literature of both theoretical and empirical relevance. Much of this literature focuses on the process of structural transformation of economies, from the least developed in which economic activity is based largely on agriculture, to high-income countries where industry and services sectors dominate.

Agriculture was the precursor to industrial growth and revolutions that predated the industrial revolutions that spread across the temperate world from England in the mid-18th century to Japan in the late- 19th century. The green revolution in South Asia was as a result of revolution in agriculture.

The process of structural transformation is one of continuous redefinition of the role of agriculture, manufacturing, and services. First, at low levels of development, the share of agriculture in gross domestic product (GDP) and in employment is large, but it declines as countries develop. As GDP per capita rises, agriculture's share declines, and so does its contribution to economic growth. A declining share for agriculture in national employment and GDP is an inevitable consequence of economic progress (Byerlee, de Janvry and Sadoulet, 2009; Cervantes and Brooks, 2009). This is largely due to higher income elasticity of demand for non-agricultural goods and services. As their incomes grow, consumers increase their consumption of manufactured goods and services faster than their consumption of food. Paradoxically, the process is usually accompanied by rising incomes and a lower incidence of poverty among those who depend on agriculture for a living.

Lewis (1955) was one of the first of many development economists attempting to explain the paradox of economic growth. He viewed economic development as a process of relocating factors of production from an agricultural sector characterized by low productivity and the use of traditional technology to a modern industrial sector with higher productivity.

DFID (2004) emphasizes the historically close correlation between differentials of poverty reduction over the past 40 years and differences in agricultural performance – particularly the

rate of growth of agricultural productivity. The paper see links between agriculture and poverty reduction as being forged through four transmission mechanisms: one, direct impact of improved agricultural performance on rural incomes; two, impact of cheaper food for both urban and rural poor; three, agricultures' contribution to growth and the generation of employment and finally agricultures' fundamental role in stimulating and sustaining economic transition, as countries (and poor people livelihoods) shift away from being primarily agricultural towards a broader base of manufacturing and services. It goes on to note that the potential for future poverty reduction through these transmission mechanisms depends on the extent to which agricultural productivity can be increased where it is most needed.

World Bank (2008) World Development Report, contend that that agricultural sector growth is substantially more important than non-agricultural sector growth for those households in the lower deciles of the expenditure distribution, *i.e.*, the poorer segments of the population. On the other hand, development literature point to the fact that the poverty reducing powers of agriculture declines as countries get richer for example, the gains in income from off-farm sources was the main reason rural poverty declined in the US from the 1960s. The World Development Report, suggests that agricultural income growth is more effective in reducing poverty than growth in other sectors because: the incidence of poverty tends to be higher in agricultural and rural populations than elsewhere, and most of the poor live in rural areas and a large share of them depend on agriculture for a living (World Bank, 2008).

There are many success stories of agriculture as the engine of growth early on in the development process and of agriculture as a major force for poverty reduction. The Green Revolution in South East Asia was precipitated by agriculture. Most recently, China's rapid growth in agriculture has largely been responsible for the decline in rural poverty.

2.3 Empirical perspectives.

Rural development in Kenya has been a product of colonial legacy. In terms of policy, the colonial administrations through crisis policy making set in motion the process of differentiation. In dealing with issues of land and settlement, cash and food crops farming, provision of welfare services *i.e.* education, roads, health triggered off differences in social transformation between

areas largely dichotomized as scheduled (European areas) and non scheduled (African native reserves). European settled areas mainly concentrated in the white highlands, benefited immensely from a special attention. This attention included: a ban prohibiting lucrative cash crops growing by Africans, delivery of social welfare services and supply of cheap labour by Africans. These and other colonial policy ensured structural stagnation of the African native reserves and other rural parts of Kenya. African reserves were therefore characterized by small landholdings in which subsistence agriculture was and is still the predominant mode of production.

During the post independence era, strategies adopted by the Kenyan government largely built on inherited colonial structures. The resulting outcome was rural differentiation. The main features of the rural scene in Kenya therefore, comprised large farms, densely populated smallholder farming areas for both cash and food crops, sparsely populated pastoral communal areas mainly for livestock farming in extensive grazing land, and settlement and irrigation land schemes. The differentiation became aggravated in the post independence years due to the nature and direction of national development policy in which rural development became a policy focus (Alila and Omosa, 1999). In terms of rural development policy, the first landmark promulgation was the Sessional Paper No.10 on African Socialism and its application to development in Kenya. The document formed an economic and political philosophy which came to guide subsequent policies incorporated into successive development plans. The objectives incorporated in the policy document were to achieve high and rapid growth, equitably distributed, so that all are free from want, disease and exploitation, while at the same time guaranteeing political equality; social justice; human dignity; and equal opportunities but also without prejudice to remedying the inequalities inherited from the past. This set in motion national development planning policies.

Over the years, various rural development initiatives have been implemented in Kenya. The aim of these strategies has been to promote development in the rural and urban areas by involving people in decision making processes on development issues that affect their wellbeing. The following are key strategies to rural development in Kenya since independence.

2.3.1 Economic Growth Strategy and Rural Development (1960's)

In the 1960's development policy was based on a conceptualization that put emphasis on economic growth. The focus was industrialization as the key to development with urban areas as points of origin of benefits that would trickle down to the rural areas. The rural areas were thus perceived as peripheral to the urban areas identified as centers of economic growth. Therefore, the policy thrust of the economic growth approach was enhancing the capacity of national economy largely through primary commodities exports in agricultural sector and import substitution in industrial sector. The 1960's and 1970's marked the era of central planning for top-down development. The assumption was that for development to be successful, it must be centrally generated, planned and directed. During this period, rural development was perceived in terms of community development (CD). CD emerged out of the development theory that called for comprehensive and social and economic modernization. The argument was that economic and social backwardness was largely caused by endogenous factors and was perpetuated as a vicious cycle. The focus of CD was therefore in the village, specifically its social order and patterns of behaviour. Efforts to bring about development were concentrated on education, promotion of agricultural production, improvements of infrastructure, and hygiene and health. The overall objective was elimination of hunger, disease and ignorance through planned comprehensive change. The fundamental problem with this approach was the underlying assumption that CD was a peaceful means of mobilizing communities since it helped them realize the socio-political and economic needs for their own good. The approach was therefore rendered politically ineffective due to basic conflicts within the community emanating from local level power imbalances. It was also wrongly assumed that the notion of trickle down would automatically benefit the community. Thus, efforts were injected into improving economic performance at the expense of promoting welfare enhancing programmes for the poor. Therefore, poverty alleviation did not occur even when the country realized strong economic growth in the 1960s-70s (Omiti *et al.*, 2002). Instead increasing poverty was witnessed. The result was growth in the urban areas, while periphery rural areas remained largely undeveloped, with associated problems of poverty, unemployment, poor health, economic exploitation and inequality (Alila and Omosa, 1999; Ikiara, 1999). CPRC (2004) posit that people in chronic poverty are those who have benefited least from growth and development, and they and their children will make up majority of 900 million people still in poverty even if the MDG's are met.

Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP 1971) was a form of economic growth model. SRDP was based on CD as a way to addressing issues of rural development through decentralized planning. It aimed to increase rural incomes and employment opportunities, and develop methodologies for inducing self generating rural development activities. The SRDP was run by the Ministry of Finance and coordinated by the National Development Committee through respective District and Provincial Development Committees. It was through the two committees that local level input was to be channeled. SRDP was a milestone in the process of decentralizing planning and evolution of rural management systems, and stimulated the development of District Development Committees (DDC) and donor aid programmes leading to establishment of Rural Development Fund. However, SRDP was faced with many shortcomings viz: shortage of suitably trained and experienced local administrators, poor coordination of activities across ministerial lines, inability of government planners to prepare integrated area-specific plans, and the tendency of donors to shape plans so as to fit their own funding (Alila and Omosa, 1999, Mbithi ,1974). Instead, it had been realized that what attributed to grassroots apathy was actually the result of a discrepancy that had come to exist between official policies and grassroots needs and wants. Existing policies were not able to generate grassroots support as they lacked a flexible approach to local needs. As a result, community development approach failed to reach the majority of the rural population. This was mainly because the centralized orientation in planning and other development strategies adopted were built largely on inherited colonial structures, mostly oriented to the export of primary commodities and import substitution. Adopted policies and programmes did not bring about desired dynamic forces for structural transformation of the African economies, especially in the rural areas. This is mainly because the community development programmes did not address the basic structural barriers to equity and growth in the rural communities. On the contrary, rural development policies not only ended up accepting existing power structures as given, but also enhanced the economic and social-political positions of the elite. Rural poverty, low productivity and unjust distribution of resources continued to exist in society (Alila. 1987 in Alila and Omosa, 1999).

2.3.2 Basic Welfare Needs Approach and Rural Development 1970/80's

Provision of basic needs such as primary education and health has been another government strategy in an effort to redistribute the benefits of economic growth. This was after a realization

of the failure of economic growth to achieve poverty alleviation (Ikiara, 1999). The Social Dimension of Development recognized that provision of basic needs for the poor, would be a benchmark towards greater social progress (Kenya, 1995). However, despite the government commitment in social welfare and basic needs provisions, budgetary allocations were not enough and a significant amount of the money was spent on non-poverty alleviation projects. The poor did not feel its impact and an increasing numbers drifted into poverty (Omiti *et al.*, 2002).

2.3.3 Integrated Rural Development 1970's

The main objectives of the mid 1970's were universal freedom from want, disease, and exploitation, equal opportunities and high and growing percapita incomes, equitably distributed among populations. The key strategy was to direct an increasing share of total resources available towards the rural areas. It was in the 1970 -1974 national development plan that rural development was proposed for the first time as a basic strategy to ensure that rural areas received increased attention during the development process. This was to make rural development a continuous and self sustaining process. Emphasis was to lie in rural development, creation of more employment opportunities and increased participation of all people through out the nation. The process was to be reinforced through a process of greater decentralization of development planning and implementation to the district level. The need for a specific focus on the rural areas was underscored by the fact that the bulk of the poor reside in the rural areas and average incomes are much lower in the same areas. The IRD approach was based on the assumption that a critical minimum effort is necessary to have a noticeable impact on target populations in a short time. IRD approach had its shortcomings. Most projects were found to exhibit little understanding of the institutional environment. Many project administrators viewed the local communities as undifferentiated and therefore frequently ignored existing social structures, economic and political hierarchies. There was total lack of attention to the role of participation, especially in the decision making process. In the 1980's, IRD began to decline with a shift towards food production by small commercial farmers. This was because IRD failed to solve the most fundamental rural problem, unreliable production notably in food production.

2.3.4 Popular Participation and Rise of Bottom-up in Rural Development

The various disappointments with previous rural development policies led to the realization that an essential ingredient of successful rural development is increased participation in the decision making process. For this reason, the DDC was to be strengthened and revitalized. This was necessitated by the fact that poverty continued to be a major development constraint. The argument was that the only feasible way to reduce poverty was to assist the poor become more productive. The aim was to improve the prospects for development and to increase opportunities for constructive participation. This was to be in the form of integrated rural development and wide distribution of educational and health facilities. Popular participation is a dynamic bottom-up orientation and practice. In light of past development experiences, it was argued popular participation would increase quality and relevance of rural development policies and chances of successful implementation. In Kenya, popular participation became government policy in the 1980's as a way of mobilizing local level resources to facilitate self-reliance and efficient utilization of limited resources. On the basis of this, decentralization was officially adopted. The problem of this strategy was the difficulty of translating the rhetoric of participation into practice.

Another form of popular participation and decentralization strategy implemented in Kenya is the District Focus for Rural Development (DFRD). Although DFRD took effect in 1980, it can be traced back to the early 1970's. In stressing the role of rural development and agriculture, the government emphasized that the key strategy was to direct an increasing share of total resources available to the nation to the rural areas.

DFRD strategy was intended to broaden the base of rural development and encourage local initiatives that will compliment the ministries' role in order to improve problem identification, resource mobilization, and project implementation at the local level (Kenya, 1984). This was out of the then growing concern for local involvement. Given the fact that earlier plans had lacked location-specificity, which would have otherwise helped strengthened grassroots institutions for development planning. The DFRD strategy was envisaged to make development more consistent with the needs and aspiration of the people. Hence resources would be shared more equitably by being directed to areas where they are most needed. In addition, during this period, government responsibility also shifted from physical provisions to creation of an enabling environment. This

was to be sought by ensuring that all Kenyans share in the benefits and costs of development. By developing the rural areas, it was envisaged that the majority of the youthful population would find paid employment and self employment in the rural areas. This was to be achieved by devising methods of ensuring better use of land and provision of essential service such as credit, extension, input, markets, transport to small farmers; by addressing problems of and opportunities for those in arid and semi-arid areas; by presenting guidelines for the pricing of agricultural products intended to ensure advance in farmers incomes; by building rural access roads; by extending water and power to rural areas; by identifying inexpensive easily reparable technologies which can enhance smallholder productivity; and by providing incentives for dispersion of industry and rural non-farm activities in the informal sector; and through peoples increased participation in the decision making processes at the district levels. It was suggested that to bring people to the mainstream of economic development, they will need physical access to markets and commodities. In spite of DFRD good intentions, it had limitations. Political interests over-shadowed genuine representation and participation. The strategy ended up with a highly centralized bureaucracy.

2.3.5 Economic Restructuring and Rural Development 1980's -1990's

In the late 1980's there was a break with past policies with more emphasis being put on participation for progress and resource mobilization for sustainable development. Rural development was no longer of central focus in policy cycles. Instead there was movement towards cost sharing, privatization, retrenchment, price and import decontrols, removal of government subsidies and budget rationalization away from social programmes (Kenya, 1994.b) Economic restructuring relates to the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s-1990s. SAPs were donor policy prescriptions for aid, characterized by measures to enhance efficiency in public management and strengthening the role of the private sector. This was considered appropriate due to declining public resources, economic recession, and reduction of donor aid (Alila and Omosa, 1999). However, implementation of SAPs regimes increased poverty levels by making the poor exposed to high risks by instituting cost sharing in basic services such as health, education, removal of government subsidies, removal of price controls etc. (Ikiara, 1999; Onjala, 1999).

2.3.6 Decentralized Funds and Rural Development.

The purpose of decentralized funds is to take development to the grassroots levels. Decentralized funds was/is as a result of wider decentralization efforts by the government in recognition of the fact that the benefits of economic growth may not reach all people, particularly the most disadvantaged members of the community. In conformity with the government's goals of poverty reduction, one key intervention has been the disbursement of financial resources directly to districts and constituencies. The direct disbursement of these funds is intended to improve poverty targeting and project implementation by using local information and encouraging community participation especially in project identification, implementation and evaluation. The overarching goal is to improve development outcomes by involving communities in decision-making making processes and management of projects. Such resources include District Development Grant 1966, Rural Development Fund 1971, Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) 1998/99, Poverty Alleviation Fund 2000/01, Roads Maintenance Fuel Levy Fund (RMFLF) 2000/01, Constituency HIV/AIDS Fund 2001/2, Free Primary Education Fund 2003, Constituency Bursary Funds 2003, CDF 2003/04, Constituency HIV/AIDSs Fund, Rural Electrification Levy Fund, Rural Enterprise Fund, Youth Enterprise Development Fund, Women Enterprise Development Fund. There is overwhelming evidence that some of these funds have been wasted or misappropriated due lack of accountability, transparency and good governance. As a result the intended impact on poverty alleviation and social progress has been dismal.

In spite of the many notable outcomes through policy towards development and rural development, the failure to realize increased incomes and welfare has been attributed to many factors. A number of these initiatives had strong donor support and focused on several spheres including rural infrastructure, and service delivery in the social sectors. Experiences were mixed, but common criticism focused on their top-down nature, supply driven approach, and excessive reliance on technical assistance and on heavy non-sustainable project specific structures. More over, most of these projects were often based on insufficient experience with local agricultural systems and the new farming methods had seldom been tested with small holders. The projects were also implemented with little understanding of the local socio-cultural, economic and political environment (Alila and Omosa, 1999; Omiti *et al.*, 2002).

Farrington *et al.*, (2002) points a number of weaknesses to rural development initiatives as inadequate ownership by governments and sustaining the interventions once external funding comes to an end; the inability to recognize the heterogeneity of poor people, besides treating local communities as undifferentiated masses; the tendency to see the rural poor as farmers with limited attention to their roles as labourers and consumers; the weak links with macro-policy environment and the wider processes of governance; and with the difficulty of translating the rhetoric of participation into practice. As a consequence, the poor have been reduced to passive participant of their own development and such projects and initiatives have been unsustainable (Chambers, 2005).

For any rural development initiative to achieve its end goals, it has to base itself on well established facts about rural poverty and rural development. That the rural poor are not a homogeneous group and their livelihoods draw on a diversity of activities, assets, and income sources. The rural non-farm economy also constitutes an important and growing source of income and employment for rural households. Rural-urban interactions, whether in the form of migrants and remittances, or goods and services being exchanged between the two are increasingly important and need to be integrated in any rural development approach. The ability of the poor to engage in productive activities in a sustainable manner and prospects of development in the rural areas depend heavily on the wider political and institutional environment within and beyond the rural domain.

2.3.7 Agriculture and Rural Development in Kenya

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Kenyan economy. Majority of the population live in the rural areas where they draw their livelihoods directly/indirectly from agriculture. The chronic poor are largely agricultural and casual house holds and include those living in remote rural areas. In terms of agricultural production, the poor have low yields per acre due to differential access to fertilizers, quality of land, credit, irrigation, and other inputs (WMS,1994; 1997).Agricultural production is an important and integral part of rural economies, thus the need exploit the potential of smallholder production for poverty alleviation.

Kenya (2000) contend that Agriculture is the lifeline of 80% of Kenya's poor who live in rural areas, including farmers, workers and unemployed. 70% of Kenya's employment is in agriculture, consequently creating jobs and increasing income in that sector is vitally important and, if achieved, will have an important direct effect on poverty. Furthermore, agricultural growth can catalyze growth in other sectors, with an estimated growth multiplier of 1.64, compared to 1.23 in non agriculture; it is likely to have a strong indirect effect. Restoring high and sustainable agricultural growth is therefore critical for alleviating poverty.

Agricultural growth has been well below potential in Kenya due to a number of constraints. None availability of quality seeds and inappropriate production technologies especially for small holder farming; lack of access to credit, by the majority of small holder farmers, particularly women; high cost of farm inputs; poor and inadequate rural infrastructure, especially feeder roads, power supply and market facilities. Other constraints include inconsistencies in policy/poor institutional and legal framework; inadequate research, inefficient extension delivery systems as well as inadequate extension services and support; poor sequencing of the liberalization process; lack of effective co-ordination of investment activities among the key stakeholders in agriculture; insecurity in high potential areas and cattle rustling in some ASAL areas; unfavourable weather conditions and high dependence on rain fed production; and population pressure on the natural resource base. As a result, many indicators of rural livelihood have been worsening, indicating an increase in rural poverty (Kenya, 2000; WMS, 1994; 1997).

The World Development Report (2008) argues that three out of four people live in rural areas and depend directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihoods. The report argues that for much of Sub Saharan Africa, agriculture is a strong option for spurring growth, overcoming poverty, and enhancing food security. It further posit that agriculture can be the main source of exit out of poverty through improving the asset position of the rural poor, making smallholder farming more competitive and sustainable; diversifying income sources towards the labour market and the rural non-farm economy, and facilitating successful migration out of agriculture. The report advocates making smallholder farming more productive, profitable and sustainable as a pathway out of poverty through a broad array of policy instruments: improving price incentives, increasing the quality and quantity of public investment in agriculture, making

product markets work better, improve access to financial services to the rural poor, reduce exposure to uninsured risks, and enhance the performance of producer organizations.

Chronic Poverty Report (2008 -2009) highlights three pillars that could greatly increase the contribution that agriculture make as an escape route out of poverty as: *infrastructure*, and particularly transport to facilitate mobility, stimulate local markets and contribute to economic vibrancy. *Education* to increase agricultural productivity; facilitate transfers into non farm activities, and raises the likelihood of out-migrants being able to move successfully to urban areas (and send remittances back home). *Information*, typically the chronically poor lack access to important information about job opportunities, changes in input or output prices and new techniques. The report argues that traditionally, response to this has been agricultural extension and points to the need to improve access to information by the poorest through a wide spectrum of private, public and non governmental organizations.

For agriculture to contribute to national growth and effectively supports poverty reduction, a number of important elements need to be in place and actions to facilitate them need to be taken. These include: building an effective and efficient participatory extension and technology delivery service; undertaking affirmative action in agriculture by facilitating participation of women; establishing efficient rural finance and credit supply system for smallholders and rural primary agro-processors; ensuring policies, institutional and legal frameworks are investor friendly; implementing sound land use, water and environmental policies; facilitating long term investments in farm improvement; protecting water catchments areas by developing forest plantations; and improving the governance of the co-operative sector by empowering farmers. To address specific problems of ASAL areas livestock marketing needs to be improved and small scale irrigation investments undertaken in poverty stricken areas (Kenya, 2000).

The aims of the MVP's intervention in agriculture is to enhance agricultural systems that improve soil quality, irrigation and overall farming methods; train individuals to support farmers on an on-going basis; create feeding programmes for expecting mothers and school children; increase the income levels and sources through commercializing agricultural activities (<http://www.mvproject.org>). The MVP interventions in agriculture is based on the premise that with modest support, village economies can transition over a period from subsistence farming to

self sustaining commercial activity. It is believed that over time, household incomes will rise due to increased productivity, diversification into higher value crops and expanded off-farm employment. Higher incomes will raise household savings, accelerating economic diversification and household investment in human capital. Data on the MVP has demonstrated remarkable success since the project inception in 2005. This study will endeavor to find out if this transition has taken place in light of past efforts to develop agriculture as the key sector of the economy in Kenya. Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for Sauri population. The land area for farming is usually less than 0.5ha/ per household – insufficient to produce food for a family of five. Data on maize harvested indicated an increase of 3.5 times. For example maize harvested in the area prior to the MVP (1997-2003) was 1.1t/ha, this increased from 1.9t/ha in 2004 to 4.9t/ha in 2005 (MVP, 2005/2007). Research of this nature will enhance food security, increase incomes and create employment in the rural areas.

2.3.8 Agriculture and Poverty alleviation

Poverty has been defined variously by different individuals, organizations, and institutions. It is widely recognized that poverty is an outcome of multitude of causes, it is complex and multidimensional. Poverty is a state of *‘human ill-being and human deprivation’*. The concept of poverty extends from low levels of incomes and consumption to lack of education, poor health and include other social dimensions such as powerlessness, insecurity, vulnerability, isolation, social exclusion and gender disparities. Poverty is an outcome of myriad interactions between resources, technologies, institutions, strategies and actions at various levels – household, community, regional, national and global levels.

Poverty is multi-dimensional; it goes beyond income measures to include deprivation in knowledge, life expectancy and the quality of life (Kenya, 1999). There are several conceptions of poverty. It is defined and measured in multiple ways (Thorbecke, 2005). Poverty can be conceived as absolute or relative, as lack of income or failure to attain capabilities (Chambers, 1997; Sen, 1999; PRSP, 2001; World Bank, 2000, 2001). It can be chronic or temporary, is sometimes closely associated with inequity, and is often correlated with vulnerabilities and social exclusion (Devereux, 2002; Hickey and du Toit, 2006).

Absolute poverty refers to subsistence below minimum, socially accepted living conditions. Persons are said to be living in absolute poverty when their incomes is a dollar or less to meet food, shelter, clothing and other basic needs (World Bank, 2001; UN, 2004). As a relative term, various conceptualizations of poverty have come up, for instance, 'extreme and chronic poverty'. According to Osmani, (2007:2) extreme poverty relates to the notion of depth and intensity of deprivation, whereas chronic poverty relates to the duration of the deprivation.

Kenya (2000) defines poverty in absolute terms. The poor are those members of the society who are unable to afford basic human needs. Well-being is measured by expenditure on basic needs such as food, clothing, health, shelter, and education. The World Bank (2000) conceptualize poverty as a highly multidimensional phenomenon that includes powerlessness in the sense of insecurity, helplessness against corruption in public service delivery, general exploitation by service providers, vulnerability to natural and economic shocks, and isolation from the larger society and other socioeconomic infrastructure.

Poverty has also been described as a situation of "pronounced deprivation in well being" and being poor as to be hungry, to lack shelter and clothing, to be sick and not cared for, to be illiterate and not schooled. Poor people are particularly vulnerable to adverse events outside their control. They are often treated badly by institutions of the state and society and excluded from voice and power in those institutions (Mehta and Shah, 2001). Until the 1990s, poverty was considered mainly in material terms as low income or low levels of material wealth. More recently, vulnerability and multidimensional deprivation, especially of basic capabilities such as health and education, have been emphasized as key aspects of poverty (HDR, 2006:50).

The poor suffer from stunted growth due to malnutrition, early deaths among children, ill health, unsafe drinking water, low levels of schooling, and lack of proper shelter. On the other hand, wellbeing is peace of mind; it is good health; it is belonging to community; it is safety; it is freedom of choice and action; it is a dependable livelihood; it is a steady source of income; it is food (World Bank, 2000; UNDP, 1997).

The greatest challenge facing Kenya today is how to reduce absolute poverty. Despite the fact that poverty has been identified as the major challenge since independence, progress in

addressing the problem has been inadequate. Poverty has persisted and the incidence of rural in Kenya is very high, with income poor constituting 57% of rural households (Welfare Monitoring Surveys, 1994; 1997). An even more disturbing finding from poverty studies is that poverty rates have been increasing over time. The rural income poverty incidence for 1997 was found to be 58% while that for 2000 was 61% (Gamba and Mghenyi, 2004). It is evident over the years that policy, programmes and interventions in Kenya have not been successful in reducing poverty in rural areas.

Agriculture remains the backbone of the Kenyan economy. It is the single most important sector in the economy, contributing approximately 25% of the GDP, and employing 75% of the national labour force (Kenya, 2005). Over 80% of the Kenyan population live in the rural areas and derive their livelihoods, directly or indirectly from agriculture. Given its importance, the performance of the sector is therefore reflected in the performance of the whole economy. The development of agriculture is also important for poverty reduction since most of the vulnerable groups like pastoralists, the landless, and subsistence farmers, depend on agriculture as their main source of livelihoods. Growth in the sector is therefore expected to have a greater impact on a larger section of the population than any other sector. The development of the sector is therefore important for the development of the economy as a whole (Alila and Atieno, 2006).

The performance of agriculture, which remains the backbone of the Kenyan economy slackened dramatically over the post independence years from an average of 4.7% in the first decade to only below 2% in the 90s. This decline culminated in a negative growth rate of -2.4% in 2000. As a sector that engages about 75% of the country's labour force, such a decline implies lower levels of employment, incomes and more importantly, food insecurity for a vast majority of rural Kenyans. It is instructive to note that a sizeable proportion of the rural labour force (over 51%) is engaged in small-scale agriculture and that women are the majority in the sector. A decline in agriculture has thus far reaching implications in terms of employment and income inequality as well as food security for the country (Alila and Atieno, 2006; UNDP 2002). The small scale sector contributes 75% of total agricultural production and over 70% of the total marketed production, reflecting the increasing importance of smallholder farms in agricultural production, and absorbs about 51% of the total labour force in the sector. Food production also accounts for a

major share of small scale agricultural production (Kenya, 1999). The importance of agriculture especially smallholders as a source of livelihoods in the rural areas is therefore a major concern for rural development initiatives. This is because of the high poverty levels in the rural areas especially among smallholder subsistence farmers.

World Bank (2008) asserts that economic growth would only deliver poverty reduction when it occurs in sectors where the poor live and derive their incomes and livelihoods. Agriculture was one of the key sectors identified to have a potential for alleviating poverty in sub Saharan Africa. It identifies three complementary pathways out of poverty as, smallholder farming; off-farm labour in agriculture and the rural non-farm economy; and migration.

DFID (2005) policy paper gives prominence to the importance of the policy environment to pro-poor growth. It highlights preconditions for accelerating agricultural growth and reducing poverty as creating a supportive policy and operational framework; tackling market failures; improving access to land and securing property rights; targeting public spending more effectively, i.e. in roads, irrigation and agricultural research; filling the agricultural finance gap; and reducing distortions in international markets.

2.3.3 Agriculture and Chronic poverty

CPRC (2008 -2009) view the problem of chronic poverty as human suffering, as vulnerability, as basic needs failure, as abrogation of human rights, and as degraded citizenship. It is estimated that between 300 and 420 million people are trapped in chronic poverty. The largest numbers of these live in South Asia, while the highest incidence of chronic poverty is in Sub Saharan Africa (CPRC, 2004 - 05).

Chronic poverty refers to multidimensional and long term deprivation which leads to inability to meet basic needs. The distinguishing feature of chronic poverty is extended duration in absolute poverty. Therefore, chronically poor people always or usually live below a poverty line, which is normally defined in terms of a money indicator (e.g. consumption income, etc.), but could also be defined in terms of a wider subjective aspect of deprivation (CPRC, 2004). This is different from transitorily poor, who move in and out of poverty, or only occasionally fall below the poverty line (www.chronicpoverty.org).

Poverty that is both severe and multidimensional but does not last a long time, is by its nature not chronic. The defining feature of chronic poverty is its extended duration, the multidimensionality; severity and duration build upon each other (Hulme et al., 2001).

Moore (2001:4) defines chronic poverty as intergenerationally transmitted (IGT) poverty. Poverty that spans generations can be seen as both a characteristic and a cause of chronic poverty.

The chronically poor experience deprivation over many years, often over their entire lives and commonly passes poverty onto their children. For them, poverty is not simply about having a low income: it is about multidimensional deprivation – hunger, under nutrition, dirty drinking water, having no access to health services, social isolation, and exploitation.

Indeed chronic poverty is rarely the result of a single factor. Instead, a combination of, and interactions between, material poverty, extreme capability deprivation and vulnerability often characterizes the chronically poor. (Global Chronic Poverty 2004 – 2005). The causes of chronic poverty are complex. The factors involved may be the same as the causes of poverty in general, which include e.g. lack of access to markets (for agricultural produce, labour, etc), debilitating ill health, weak social safety nets, or oppressive social or political relations. But poverty may become chronic when these factors are intense widespread and lasting or when they come in combinations. It is this combination of capability deprivation, low levels of material assets and social or political marginality that keep poor people poor over a long period of time. Such poverty is devastating and hard to reverse (CPRC, 2004; Barrientos, 2007).

CPRC (2004) posit that rarely is there a single, clear cause of chronic poverty. Some of these factors are *maintainers* of chronic poverty. They operate so as to keep poor people poor. The first *Chronic Poverty Report* identified several important maintainers of chronic poverty: *no, narrowly based economic growth; social exclusion and adverse incorporation; 'logjams' of geographical, agro-ecological, socio-economic, and political disadvantages; high capability deprivation, especially during childhood; weak, failing or failed states.*

CPRC (2004) also identified *drivers* of chronic poverty that push vulnerable non-poor and transitory poor people into poverty they cannot find a way out of. These include *shocks in form of ill-health and injury, environmental shocks, natural disasters, violence, breakdown of law and*

order, and market and economic collapse. When shocks are severe and repeated, when people have few private and collective assets on which to fall back and when institutional support (social protection) are ineffective, such processes are likely to trap people in long term poverty.

A focus on people living in chronic poverty draws attention to those for whom escaping poverty is most difficult. People who experience the most severe poverty are least likely to escape poverty. Those who have been in poverty for a long time are most likely to fall further below the poverty line, and those who are severely and persistently poor are likely to be poor in many dimensions. Chronically poor people have little access to productive assets and low capabilities in terms of different types of poverty, expressing the idea of poverty that persists. An effective response requires a better understanding of what it means to be chronically poor and better analysis of the characteristics and underlying social processes that result in sustained and intractable poverty (CPRC, 2004).

Shepherd (2007) argues that while many poor people experience poverty temporarily and some are able to climb out of long-term poverty, others are stuck in 'poverty traps'. The chronically poor are structurally positioned so that escape is difficult or impossible without significant changes to the contexts in which they live and work.

CRCR (2007) argues that exit routes are hard to find for the chronically poor. The report argues that overcoming chronic poverty needs a framework that prioritizes livelihood security for all. Chronically poor people need targeted support, social assistance and social protection, and political action that confront exclusion. Thus, chronic poverty cannot be seriously reduced without real transfers of resources and sustained, predictable finance. Chronically poor people have little access to productive assets and low capabilities in terms of health, education, and social capital. Access to assets is crucial, but in others human capital and access to public goods maybe more important. Furthermore, given the dependence of chronically poor on their labour, sustaining good health is critical. For many, education is a pathway out of poverty. Formal education is often found to be strongly associated with decreased chronic poverty, as it improves the quality of labour as an asset (CPRC, 2007).

Work in India demonstrated that exit from poverty was more dependent on acquisition of assets, literacy and better demographic profiles of household (Mehtah and Shah, 2001). CPRC (2008 - 09) argues that some types of high capability deprivation such as education, for example is almost a life-long phenomenon lowers the possibility of escaping from other types of poverty. A study in Uganda found out that lack of education and constraints on other human capital are key barriers to moving out of chronic poverty. The study recommended enhancing opportunities, developing skills, facilitating empowerment, and addressing insecurity as key factors in moving people out of chronic poverty (Bird and Shinyekwa, 2003). This study will focus on transition out of poverty and chronic poverty through agricultural production as one of the MVP's key intervention area.

2.4 Conceptual and Analytical Framework

2.4.1 Conceptual Framework

Human Development Approach (HDA) is the conceptual framework adopted to inform this study. HDA is a development paradigm about creating an environment in which people can develop their potentials and lead productive lives. The Human Development Approach has been pioneered and popularized by the UNDP reports in the 1990s. Human development is viewed as a process of enlarging people's choices and raising their standards of living through the expansion of human capabilities and access to opportunities (UNDP, 2001). Fundamental to enlarging the choices is building human capabilities. The most basic capabilities for human development are to be healthy, knowledgeable, to have access to resources and opportunities, and to participate in the life of community (www.undp.org). The human dimension aspect refer to the nature and extent to which development is people centered in terms of their taking initiative, managing and taking control of their own affairs, and not being trapped in dependency syndrome.

The main tenets of this approach are capabilities and opportunities. Human capabilities entail a healthy life, being knowledgeable and having access to resources. More over, this approach posits that enlarging of choices for a person implies enhancement of capabilities. This can be

achieved through the developments of human capital of especially the chronically poor that face multidimensional deprivation.

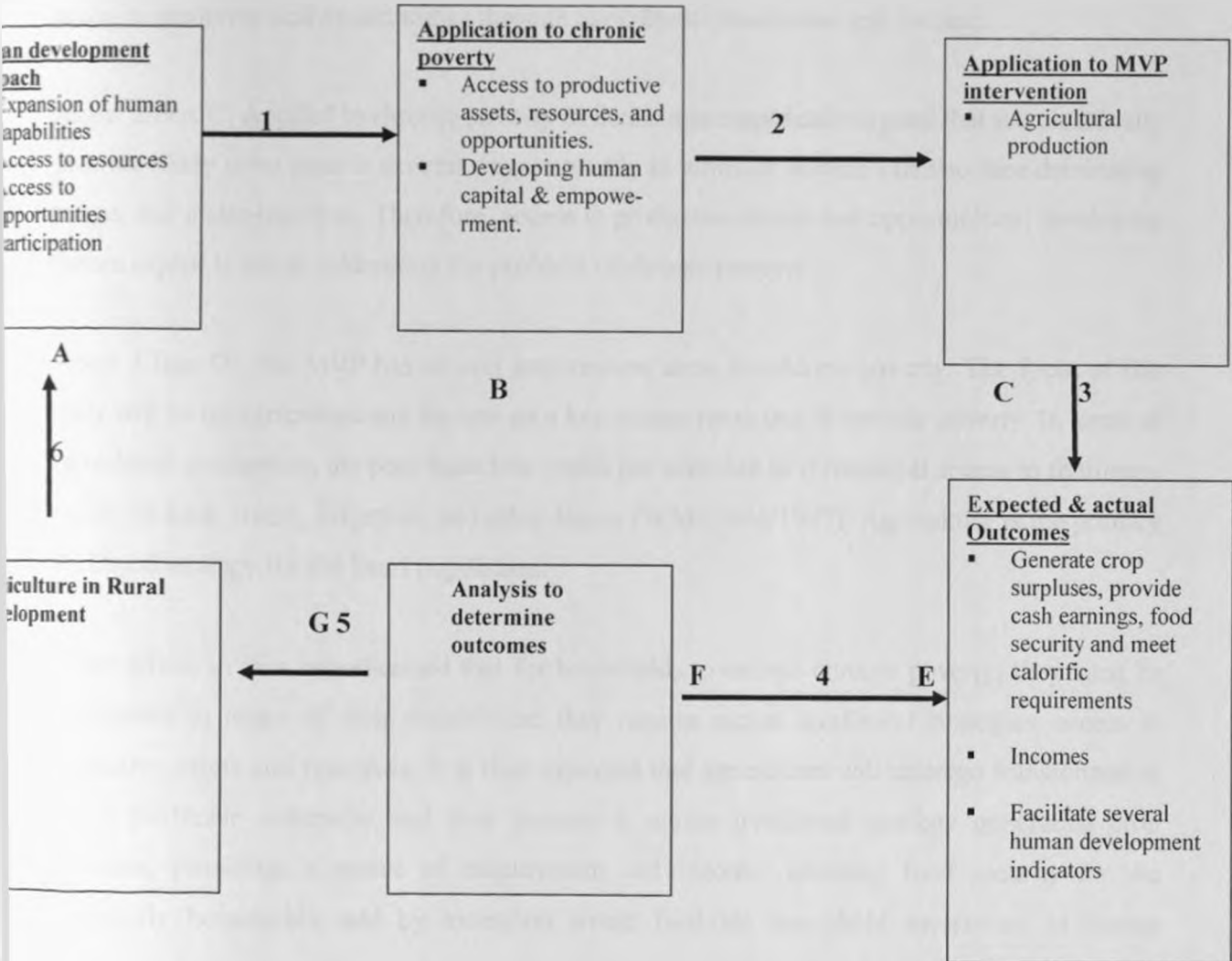
The human development approach has been adapted to inform this study because it focuses on aspects of human development concepts such as 'human poverty'. The approach views human poverty as more than income poverty, because it is a denial of choices and opportunities for living a meaningful life (UNDP, 2002). Human development approach is a holistic approach to development by encompassing different aspects. It focuses on human beings as active participants and beneficiaries in their own development, besides, widening their choices. The approach is based on the notion that people should be at the 'centre of development'. The basic goal of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, creative, and healthy lives (UNDP, 1999). Human development is therefore, both a process and an outcome. Addressing chronic poverty should be concerned with the processes through which choices are enlarged, but also on the outcomes of enhanced choices.

The human development approach has been used as conceptual framework for this study because it encompasses the widening of peoples choices and raising their standards of living through expansion of human capabilities and access to opportunities in the social, economic, and political spheres (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev/>).

The human development approach advocates for empowerment of the most vulnerable and a strengthened capacity for the poor to achieve secure livelihoods, hence its applicability to this study.

2.4.2 Analytical Framework

Figure 2.1: Analytical Framework



Source: author's own conceptualization

Box A: Human development is viewed as the process of creating an enabling environment in which people can develop their potentials and live productive and healthy life. This process involves the following broad tenets: human capabilities; access to resources; access to opportunities; and participation in its broad dimensions.

Arrow 1 /Box B: Points to a graduation from the broad tenets of the HDA into the specifics relevant to the current study. The key tenets adopted for this study are human capabilities and access to resources and opportunities through agricultural production and income.

Arrow 2/Box C: Applied to chronic poverty in Sauri, it is empirically argued that the chronically poor are likely to be poor in several ways, not only in terms of income but also face debilitating hunger and under-nutrition. Therefore, access to productive assets and opportunities; developing human capital is key to addressing the problem of chronic poverty.

Arrow 3/Box D: The MVP has several intervention areas to address poverty. The focus of this study will be on agriculture and income as a key escape route out of chronic poverty. In terms of agricultural production, the poor have low yields per acre due to differential access to fertilizers, quality of land, credit, irrigation, and other inputs (WMS1994/1997). Agriculture is the primary livelihood strategy for the Sauri population.

Arrow 4/Box E: It is hypothesized that for households to escape chronic poverty, they must be empowered in terms of their capabilities; they require secure livelihood strategies, access to productive assets and resources. It is thus expected that agriculture will undergo transformation into a profitable enterprise and thus become a secure livelihood strategy generating crop surpluses, providing a source of employment and income, ensuring food security for the chronically households, and by extension would facilitate household investment in human capital.

Empirical research has pointed out that access to productive assets and resources is key to escaping poverty and chronic poverty. Therefore, enhancing opportunities, developing human capital and empowerment is critical to moving people out of chronic poverty.

2.5 Research Hypothesis

This study will be informed by the following research hypotheses

1. Chronically poor households are likely to be agricultural households and those living in remote rural areas and have insecure livelihood strategies compared to the non poor.

2. Households are more likely to escape poverty and chronic poverty if they have secure livelihood strategies, which is an objective of the MVP's intervention in agriculture.
3. The poor are likely to engage and benefit from agricultural interventions if they have access to technologies that can increase their productivity; diversification into higher value crops; expanded off farm-employment; and access to markets and incomes.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MILLENNIUM VILLAGES, THE CHRONICALLY POOR AND THEIR AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections, each addressing the first and second research questions and study objectives. The first section presents the Millennium Villages concept and discusses the background information about the study respondents. It presents the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the poor and chronically poor in the millennium villages. It is based on the household survey and Participatory Poverty Assessment Survey. The PPAS was the point of departure in mapping out the attributes of the poor and chronically poor in the millennium villages. The second section discusses household engagement in agricultural activities and the implications for household poverty and chronic poverty.

3.2 Millennium Villages' Project and Poverty

In 2000, the nations of the world committed to the millennium development goals and set time-bound and measurable targets for halving extreme poverty by 2015. The MDGs are a set of 8 goals and 18 targets agreed upon member states of the United Nations in the UN Millennium Declaration of 2000. These goals include commitments to the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; universal access to primary education; promoting gender equality and empowerment of women; improvement in maternal and child health and reducing child mortality; environmental sustainability; halting and reversing progression of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other major diseases; and establishing a global partnership for development (UN, 2005).

The millennium village project is an initiative of the Millennium promise. UNDP, Earth Institute at Columbia University, UN Millennium Project in partnership with governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders in providing affordable and science based solutions to help people lift themselves out of extreme poverty. The millennium villages seek to end poverty by working with the poorest of the poor (www.millenniumvillages.org).

Millennium villages are designed to demonstrate how the eight MDGs can be met in rural Africa within five years. The assumption is that rural African communities can lift themselves out of poverty if they have access to proven and powerful technologies that can enhance their farm productivity, health, education, and access to markets (UN, 2005).

The first model millennium village project was started in Bar-Sauri in Siaya District of Kenya in 2004. The millennium village concept is based on the premise that with modest support, village economies can transition over a period from subsistence farming to self sustaining commercial activity. It is believed that over time household incomes will rise due to increased productivity, diversification into higher value crops and expanded off-farm employment. Higher incomes will raise household savings, accelerating economic diversification and household investment in human capital (UN, 2005).

Millennium Villages are pilot projects to demonstrate how to use community-based, low cost interventions to reduce poverty and meet the MDGs and to identify the mechanisms for scaling up the project. The MVP agenda comprises interventions in *agriculture and environment*: provision of fertilizer and improved seed for basic staples; training of extension agents in soil and water conservation and in the use of improved crop varieties; construction of local grain storage facilities; and promotion of community forestry. *Health and nutrition*: provision of insecticide impregnated mosquito nets; basic health care for common diseases, parasite infestations; provision of ARV therapy and HIV/AIDS counseling and testing; improved access to drinking water; provision of school feeding programmes etc. *Infrastructure, energy and communication*: provision/ rehabilitation of health and education facilities and equipment; provision of village transport/ambulance vehicle and a generator; individual solar lanterns; improved cooking stoves; VSAT equipment to provide internet access and mobile phones. *Education and training*: training for all primary school children in the use of computers and internet, establishment of a secondary school scholarship for the village; training of local facilitators in agriculture, health etc (www.millenniumpromise.org).

3.3 The Poor in MVP's: Socio-economic Characteristics

The socio-economic and demographic attributes of the poor and chronically poor were based on the following indicators: age, gender, marital status, household asset portfolios, dependency ratio, and household ability to meet basic needs, educational levels, physical dwelling structures, health statuses, household income and occupations. The above attributes were chosen because of the multidimensional definition and nature of poverty. Money metric measures of poverty based on household consumption have been inadequate in explaining household poverty levels. The study of household poverty needs to consider other variables that could explain household welfare such as asset dynamics, access to basic services and social networks and support.

The study adopted participatory approach. Participatory and interactive techniques to identifying and working with the poorest at the local levels have much strength, in addition to complementing quantitative approaches that study household poverty. Participatory and action oriented approaches can also facilitate meaningful explanations for quantitative data/information. In addition to being open, informal and non-directed communication, participatory and interactive techniques can also be used to identify views and behaviors that cannot be captured through quantitative techniques.

3.3.1 Gender in the MVP's

Gender is an important socio-economic, cultural and demographic factor. The unit of analysis for this study was the household, with the household head as the respondents. From the study findings, 78% of the respondents were women while men accounted for 22%.

Table 3.1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	11	22
Female	39	78
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field data, 2009.

This observation lends credence to past studies on household poverty differentiation based on gender. Women are said to comprise the majority of the poor in the rural areas. Many poor women engage in subsistence farming in the rural areas. The significant involvement of women in small scale agriculture is an important factor among measures to improve agricultural performance. Women provide 75% of the labour force in small scale agriculture and manage 40% of the small scale farms. Up to two thirds of the female population in rural areas is engaged in subsistence farming (Alila and Atieno, 2006). Poor rural women are particularly vulnerable to poverty, in addition to gender inequities in the rural areas. There is thus, the need to understand the character of their current range of livelihood commitments in the family, in agriculture, other natural resource activities and non farm jobs. This has an important implication for decision making, access to key resources, support and group participation and the opportunity cost of time. The women interviewed said they bear a disproportionately large share of domestic and agricultural work. They are responsible for planting, weeding, cultivating and crop harvesting. In addition, they are responsible for child care, housework, wood and water collection and food preparation.

Women's low socio-economic status, limited access to position of influence and power, unequal access to and control of productive resources like improved inputs, extension, marketing facilities, limited education, and lack of access to credit, especially in the rural areas mean they are unable to participate fully in economic and social life of their communities. Moreover, poor women's socio economic development is hindered by their heavy burden of reproduction, care giving and production (Kenya, 1999). From the field notes, poor women who engaged in farming activities said they were driven by the necessity to sustain livelihoods, especially to provide food and other necessities for their families. Women reported that their rights to land- a key factor of agricultural production is put at special risk by widowhood, divorce, separation and constrains within customary legal systems. The male folks on the other hand in addition to farming, engage in other casual work and sometimes migrate to urban centers in search of wage employment. It is also instructive to note that a sizeable proportion of the rural labourforce (over 51%) are engaged in small scale agriculture and that women are the majority in the sector. A decline in agriculture has thus far reaching implications in terms of employment, and income inequalities as well as food security for the country (UNDP, 2002).

3.3.2 Household Age Distribution in the MVP

Household age structure assumes particular importance for the functioning of household. Age is an important factor as it has a bearing on the poverty situation of a household. Poverty affects people of different age groups differently. The age structure of the household has an impact on consumption levels, since people at different ages have different needs e.g nutritional, medical and educational needs for children. The application of economic analysis to household age structure reveals that families with large numbers of children are less likely to save, and as a result, the level of investment is likely to be lower.

Table 3.2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age group (years)	Frequency	Percentage
10-20	3	6.0
21-30	5	10.0
31-40	9	18.1
41-50	9	18.0
51-60	9	18.0
61-70	8	16.0
71-80	6	12.0
80 & above	1	2.0
Total	50	100

Source: Field data, 2009.

Groups likely to suffer poverty and chronic poverty are those affected by the stage in their life cycle such as the children, youths and the elderly. Evidence suggests that age and life-cycle factors play a significant role in the poverty situation of households, with children and older people particularly affected by poverty. On the other hand, younger people are more likely to engage in development activities than older members of the community. The minimum and maximum age was 18 years and 84 years respectively. The mean age was 51 years. 10% of the

respondents were aged between 20 -30 years. 18% were aged between 31 - 40 years. Another 18% was aged between 41- 50 years, while 18% was aged between 51 – 60 years. 16% comprised age category 61- 70 years, while 16% was in the age category 71 – 80 and 2% of the respondents over 80 and above years. Majority of respondents fall within the age 50 – 80 years – not a very productive age in terms of undertaking physical agricultural production activities. The Study tools were designed to elicit responses as to who was impacted most negatively by poverty. Children were perceived to be more vulnerable than other age groups. Youths were regarded as more vulnerable in terms of lack of employment. The elderly, long-term sick without financial and social support were perceived to be particularly susceptible to poverty and chronic poverty. Interestingly, respondents indicated that old age plays an important though not critical role in household poverty status. Many elderly respondents cited collapse of support mechanisms either through capability constraints or death (of the breadwinner) as the primary reason for their poverty.

3.3.3 Education and Poverty Implication in the MVP

Education is a basic human development indicator that is very critical in determining the quality of human life. Education and training is key contributor to the development of human capital. Education imparts and fosters knowledge, confers skills and attitudes that help unlock human potentials for socioeconomic development. It is the key to empowering individuals with awareness to make informed decisions about themselves and the world around them. Lack of education is known to reduce people’s ability to take advantage of opportunities around them, and has often been associated with increased poverty. Therefore education of the household members and household head is a significant factor in the employment status and other livelihood strategies adopted by households, which is strongly correlated with poverty status. The poor and chronically poor typically lack access to information about job opportunities, changes in input, output prices and new techniques (CPRC, 2009). Poor families are likely to have low educational achievement, which perpetuates poverty. From the study findings, 26% of the sampled respondents did not have any formal education. 62% of the respondents had primary education, while 12% attained secondary schooling level. Interestingly, none of the respondents had university education qualifications. From the study findings on Spouse’s level of education, 52% had primary schooling, 18% had secondary education, and 2% had college education, while

10% did not attain any formal education. The implications of the findings point to a very large category without meaningful education. Empirical literature points to the fact that some capability deprivation- for example education lowers the possibility of escaping other types of poverty.

Table 3.3: Distribution by Level of Education of Household Head

Level of education	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	31	62.0
Secondary	6	12.0
No formal schooling	13	26.0
University	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field data, 2009.

Bird and Shinyekwa (2003) study in Uganda found out that most chronically households among Ugandan farmers were headed by illiterate persons. More over, they posit that lack of education and constraints on other human capital are key barriers to moving people out of chronic poverty. Empirical literature argues that post-primary education can break the intergenerational transmission of poverty and have dramatic effects on the prospects of poor households. Majority of the respondents had only primary level of education, an indication of low literacy levels. Therefore, a poorly educated farming population could be lacking skills required for optimal engagement in agricultural production. As a consequence, they are more likely to engage in low agricultural productivity that only reproduces mere subsistence. Kenya (2007) reported that the incidence, depth and severity of poverty declined with increase in the level of education of the household head. Education is often the most valuable asset for the rural people to pursue opportunities in agriculture, obtain skilled jobs, start businesses in the rural non-farm economy and migrate successfully out of agriculture.

Table 3.4: Cross Tabulation of Education and Income

		Level of Education			
		Secondary	Primary	None	Total
Income category	< Kshs. 500.00	1	16	10	27
	Kshs. 501 - 1000	0	9	1	10
	Kshs. 1001 - 3000	3	5	1	9
	>Kshs. 3001	2	1	1	4
Total		6	31	13	50

Source: Field data, 2009.

Education levels correlate significantly with income. The cross tabulation analysis above reveals that respondents with lower levels of education were more likely to earn lower incomes compared to persons with higher levels of education.

3.3.4 Marital Status and Poverty

Marital status has implication on household poverty status. 50% of the respondents were married, 44% widowed while 6% were single. Women who are widowed are susceptible to poverty and chronic poverty. Death of a spouse often reduces the collective income earning capacity of the household, and increases expenditure and is often cited as a driver into poverty and chronic poverty.

Table 3.5: Cross Tabulation of Marital Status and Income

		Marital status			
		Single	Married	Widowed	Total
Income category	<Kshs. 500.00	2	9	16	27
	Kshs. 501 - 1000	1	8	1	10
	Kshs. 1001 - 3000	0	5	4	9
	> Kshs. 3001	0	3	1	4
Total		3	25	22	50

Source: Field data, 2009.

An analysis of the relationship between marital status and income reveal significance. Thus, poor household are likely to be found among the widowed earning very low incomes.

From the field notes, married women were more likely to benefit from incomes earned by their spouses in other income generating ventures on top of farming. According to Hickey and Bracking (2005), widows may suffer poverty and chronic poverty due to the way in which adult female personhood is constituted as dependent on males to access various kind of rights for example land. From the field notes for example, it was noted Luo cultural inheritance systems privilege inheritance through the male line, thereby dispossessing the women. Such norms for example, do not bestow the right to inherit land on women; instead this is bestowed onto the son of the widow. Land being an important factor of production therefore has a bearing on women engagement in agricultural production and other economic activities. Whereas the analytical framework advocates for empowerment of the most vulnerable and a strengthened capacity for the poor to achieve secure livelihoods. As a consequence, the findings reveal that widows are more likely to suffer poverty and chronic poverty from being discriminated and neglected.

3.3.5 Household Number of Children and Dependency in the MVP

The dependency ratio in terms of the number of children has an important implication on household resources. A household with a larger number of dependent children puts a lot of strain on limited household resources and the time spent in care giving away from productive activities. As a result, households generate lower household incomes and are likely to become poor. From the study findings, 22% percent of the respondents had four children under the age of eighteen years, 20% had 3 children, 10% had 5 children to care for, 4% had 6 children under their watch, while 16% had 2 children, 10% had 1 child, and 18% did not have children under their care. The household dependency ratio in terms of the number of children is important to this study as it has implication for household consumption and survival strategies. The dependants have to be fed, clothed, educated, sheltered and given medical care. In addition children are seen as consumers of household resources and a large number mean more mouths to be fed. From the field visits, for instance, it was evident the ravages of HIV-AIDS in the millennium villages has left many orphans under the care of the elderly without financial and social support.

Table 3.6: Distribution of Respondents by Number of Children.

Number of children	Frequency	Percentage
0	9	18.0
1	5	10.0
2	8	16.0
3	10	20.0
4	11	22.0
5	5	10.0
6	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field data, 2009.

3.3.6 Household Occupations in the MVP

The study's analytical framework holds that the most basic capabilities for human development are to have access to resources, opportunities and to participate in the life of the community. Occupation is important for socioeconomic wellbeing. It is also widely acknowledged that agriculture is crucial for economic development of the country and rural areas. 80% of the respondents' main occupation was farming, 2% engaged in business enterprise, while 6% indicated they did not have an occupation, and 10% were engaged in other occupations like casual work in the informal sector. On the side of the spouse's occupation, 44% main occupation was farming, 2% engaged in business, 44% engaged in other occupations, 2% in civil service, and 6% did not have an occupation. The study findings are in conformity with various researches showing that 80% of Kenya's population live in the rural areas and engages in farming as the major source of livelihood. The preoccupation with farming in the millennium villages is largely for subsistence.

From the study findings, 90% of the respondents engaged in farming for subsistence, while 10% engaged in farming as an enterprise for income generation. This has a bearing on the poverty

situation in the millennium villages, since most of the agricultural production is to meet the basic needs of households (food security). The study findings show how food security in the millennium villages remains a critical challenge, given the respondents view on hunger and asset stripping which occur during harvest failures. Rural households face risks because their agricultural resource base is often insecure and uncertain from unpredictable weather, uncertainties in input supply and cost, the need to feed increasing number of dependants from ever declining landholdings. The study established that majority of the respondents were small scale subsistence farmers.

For meaningful change to occur in agricultural production in the millennium villages there needs to be a transition from subsistence farming to a more self sustaining commercial activity. The analytical framework hypothesized that over time household incomes will rise due to increased productivity, diversification into higher value crops and expanded off-farm employment. Higher incomes will raise household savings, accelerating economic diversification and household investment in human capital.

Table 3.7: Cross Tabulation of Occupations and Income

		Occupation				
		Farmer	Business	No work	Other (specify)	Total
Income category	<Kshs. 500.00	23	0	3	1	27
	Kshs. 501 - 1,000	9	1	0	0	10
	Kshs. 1001 - 3,000	6	1	0	2	9
	> Kshs. 3,001	2	0	0	2	4
Total		40	2	3	5	50

Source: Field data, 2009.

This analysis shows that poor people are more likely to be among people without work, farmers and are likely to earn very low incomes. Thus, in terms of agriculture production, poorer households have low yields per hectare and thus, low incomes.

3.3.7 Household Monthly Incomes in the MVP

Income is a crucial variable in the analysis of social welfare and as a key indicator of household wellbeing. Incomes provide the means to acquire goods and services for household wellbeing. Respondents reported deriving incomes from various sources, but the majority indicated they derive their incomes from trading off farm produce and remittances. Other sources included casual on-farm labour, off-farm business ventures, and salaried/waged employment. From the study findings, the minimum income was Kshs. 00, while the maximum income was Kshs 7,000 – with a range of Kshs 7,000 and a standard deviation of Kshs.1, 473. The mean monthly income was Kshs 1,094. Sixteen percent of the respondents did not have any monthly incomes, while a majority earned between Kshs.500 – 1000. These findings are in tandem with past studies showing that majority of the poor in Kenya live in rural areas and comprise people earning a monthly income less than K.shs.1,562 (Kenya, 2007). Whereas the conceptual and analytical frameworks of the study indicate that access to resources and opportunities were key to human capability development, the study findings points to incomes inequalities among respondents in the millennium villages. Household incomes varied across the study respondents, an indicator of the diverse socioeconomic and demographic profiles of the respondents. Most respondents earned low incomes. It is worthwhile to note that incomes reported maybe subject to respondents errors as a considerable degree of under-reporting or difficulty to recall all income sources must be expected.

Table 3.8: Household Monthly Incomes

	Number	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Monthly Income (Kshs.)	50	7000.0	0.00	7000.00	1094.000	1472.52524
Total	50					

Source: Field data, 2009

3.3.8 Household Access to Three Meals a Day and its Poverty Implications

Absolute poverty is a state where one cannot raise adequate incomes to meet basic human requirements. An individual is defined as hardcore poor if s/he has consumption levels that would be inadequate to meet basic food needs alone, even if s/he were to forego all non-food consumption in order to consume food (Kenya, 2007).

The analytical framework holds that human capabilities entails access to basic needs as fundamental to human development. From the research findings, 42% of the respondents' households could not afford three meals a day (breakfast, lunch, and supper), while 58% were able to afford three meals a day. Those who could not afford three meals attributed this to lack of money to buy food stuffs. Poverty in Kenya is associated with inability to feed one's family. The poor are reported to devote a higher proportion of their incomes to the purchase of food (Kenya, 2001). From field visits and FGD's, the problem of feeding a larger pool of dependants was underscored. Hulme (2007) argues that persistent impoverishment is not only a symptom of past deprivation; it is also the cause of future destitution. At the most basic level, people cannot be productive unless their food intake is sufficient enough to ensure that they can work.

Table 3.9: Household Access to Three Meals Daily

Three meals daily	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	29	58.0
No	21	42.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field data, 2009.

3.3.9 Household Residential Housing Structures in the MVP

The type of shelter is an indicator of individual's social and economic status. The type of house can be used as a proxy or indicator of the level of poverty in a household. The study sought to find out the type of residential housing the poor and chronically poor live in the millennium villages. Key informants and Participatory Poverty Assessment Seminar respondents described the poor and chronically poor as those who reside in grass thatched and mud walled or iron roofed and mud walled houses. The study shows that 18 percent of the respondents lived in mud walled and grass thatched housing, 66 percent lived in mud walled and iron sheet-roofed houses. 10 percent lived in semi permanent houses, while 6 percent lived in permanent stone housing structures. From the field interviews, some of the chronically poor widows who lived in iron roofed and mud walled houses indicated that their houses were built for them by MVP, relatives, church organizations, through funeral harambee's, and by their spouses before they

passed on. Therefore, the type of housing structure alone would not give a deeper insight about household poverty unless it is viewed within the context of other deprivations that characterize the poor. However, the house size, physical appearance, and condition can give important insights about household poverty status.

3.3.10 Household Place of Saving Money and Poverty Implication

Access to assets and opportunities to generate resources is a key tenet of the human development approach that informs this study. From the findings, 60% of the respondents did not save any money, 8% saved money in the banks, whereas 24% saved in other avenues like house, ROSCAs. This confirms low levels of incomes and a savings among the respondents in the millennium villages. From the field interviews, most respondents attributed lack of savings to poverty. Those that do not use formal banking as avenues for savings attributed this to 'perceived' high transaction costs, lack of collateral and geographic isolation, lengthy procedures that sometimes require some form of education or simple prejudice.

3.3.11 Household Asset Ownership and Poverty in the MVP

Assets holdings define a household capability to pursue different livelihood activities that generate income. Asset holdings increase the personal and collective agency of the poor. The more the asset (psychological as well as physical and social) - a household possesses, the more leverage it has in social networks and transactions as well as in formal financial markets. The asset endowment of rural households is often low.

Table 3.10: Distribution by Household Asset Ownership

Assets	Frequency	Percentage	Ownership period (yrs)
Bicycle	11	22.0	8
Charcoal stove	13	26.0	3
Radio	30	60.0	5
Sofa set	22	44.0	5

Mobile phone	28	56.0	9
Television set	6	12.0	8
Others (Specify)	3	6.0	5
Total	113	238¹	

Source: Field data, 2009.

From the table above, 60% of the respondents owned radios, 56% owned mobile phones, and 44% owned sofa sets. Another 26% owned charcoal stoves, 22% possessed bicycle, 12% owned television sets, and 6% owned other assets like rocket stoves.

Analysis of the duration within which the assets had been held gave the following information. Respondents owned mobile phones for 9 years, bicycles and television sets for 8 years, radio, sofa sets for 5 years charcoal stoves for 3 years.

Assets ownership alone does not tell much about the dynamics of household poverty. A study carried out on assets through panel data sets across time would yield informative relationship about household assets dynamics and household poverty. Since assets determine how households respond to shocks and the ultimate outcomes, the study findings show that most households did not possess productive durable household assets. Poverty is largely explained by the underlying lack of assets restraining the poor from earning a decent living. Adverse shocks often deplete already limited assets for poorer households. Assets ownership implies differing abilities to use the assets and resources in responding to constraints and opportunities. Respondents reported that assets are major determinants of the ability to participate in agricultural markets, secure livelihoods in subsistence farming, compete as entrepreneurs in the rural non farm economy and find employment in unskilled and semi-skilled occupations in the rural sectors. Sustainable poverty reduction needs to be built on a solid understanding of household asset position and the contexts where assets are used as the basis for identifying livelihood strategies that lead to pathways out of poverty.

¹Total percentage is more than 100 because this was a multi-response question. The sample size is 50

3.3.12 Who then Are the Poor in the MVPs?

From the household survey, FGD's and Participatory Poverty Assessment Surveys (PPAS), the complexity and multidimensional nature of poverty is evident. The poor and chronically poor were also characterized as heterogeneous. Poverty was seen to have a definite relative dimension in the sense that people could be categorized into rich, average, poor, or very poor/chronically poor individuals. The study found out that the socioeconomic and demographic background of a household has an influence on its wellbeing or ill-being.

The following were the views of PPAS respondents on the defining attributes of the poor and chronically poor households in the millennium villages: lack of ownership or access to assets; low income levels; inability to meet basic needs, lack of education, chronic illnesses, including HIV-AIDS; lack of employment; inadequate land to cultivate; and higher household dependency ratios. It was underscored that some poverty is structural, for example, if a parent is poor, the chances of the children becoming non poor are limited. The poor parent has no land to give, lacks money to educate family and often have a large family that is inadequately provided for. Moreover, most low income groups in the MVP experience hardship and suffering as members of families and households either as poor children, orphans, struggling husbands/wives or as widows.

From the focused group discussions, poverty and chronic poverty was defined in terms of household inability to meet basic needs, voiceless ness, hunger, lack of incomes, lack of social support and networks, lack of knowledge, disability, chronic illnesses, unemployment, lack of adequate land, lack of assets and vulnerability to shocks. Accordingly, the following categories were identified as most vulnerable to poverty and chronic poverty: people with disability, widows, the elderly without social support, those acutely infected and affected by HIV-AIDS, the long-term sick and children, especially orphans. In general, household poverty was understood in terms of lack of incomes, low levels of assets, illiteracy, poor health and inability to meet household basic needs. This is consistent with past studies that people are in poverty and chronic poverty for a multitude of reasons that form a web of interrelated factors (www.chronicpoverty.org). Previous welfare monitoring surveys in Kenya (1992, 1994, and 1997) for example, show that nearly half of the Kenyan population is living in absolute poverty.

The study established that poor people are likely to be among those with low, primary level of education or no formal schooling; earning low incomes; having limited productive resources. They are also likely to own smaller parcels of land, realize food harvests insufficient to meet household basic food requirements. In terms of occupation, they are most likely to be small scale subsistence farmers, unskilled or semi-skilled casual labourers and small scale business entrepreneurs. In terms of housing structures, they are likely to be among those residing in grass thatched and mud walled housing. They are also likely to be among children, HIV-AIDS orphans, women, the elderly, and widows /widowers, the chronically ill without social and financial support. Finally they are likely to be among the socially excluded and deprived persons in the communities. Having looked at the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the poor and chronically in the MVP, we now turn to the issues of engagement in agricultural production and MVP interventions and whether agriculture benefits the poor and chronically to escape poverty.

3.4 POVERTY AND ENGAGEMENT IN AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE MVP

Having seen the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the study population, this section seeks to answer the second research question. It seeks to establish the agricultural activities the poor and chronically poor undertake, the challenges and opportunities and the outcomes against MVP as a development intervention. This is borne out of MVP prominent support to agriculture as a critical intervention area through which poverty can be overcome in the rural areas. The assumption at the initiation of the MVP was that with initial support in agriculture, village economies would transition from subsistence farming to self-sustaining commercial activity.

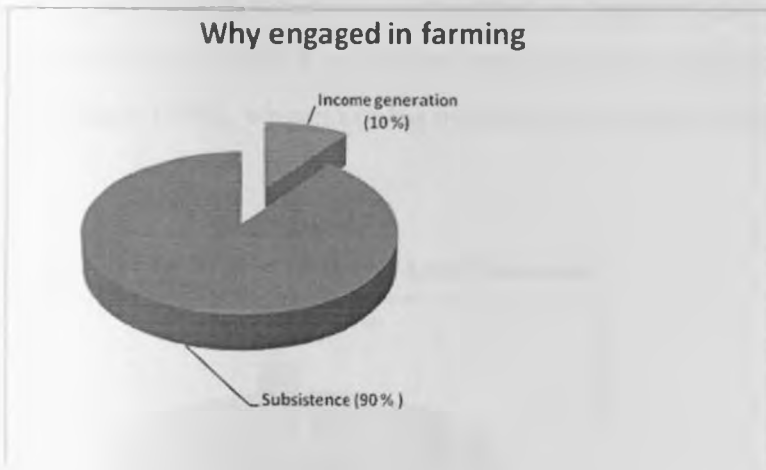
3.4.1 Household Engagement in Agricultural Production and Poverty in the MVP

Agriculture is the primary livelihood strategy for rural areas of Africa and elsewhere in the world. It is a source of food, employment and incomes, and raw materials. Smallholder subsistence farming is a reality for an overwhelming majority of households in the millennium villages. From the study findings, 98% of the respondents reported having been engaged in subsistence agriculture as their main occupation even before the project inception. This is

consistent with other studies that over 80 percent of the Kenyan population derive their livelihoods directly or indirectly from agriculture.

90% of the respondents engaged in farming for subsistence, while 10% engaged in farming as an enterprise for income generation.

Figure 3.1: The Scope of Household Engagement in Farming Occupation



Source: Field data, 2009.

This has a bearing on the poverty situation in the millennium villages, since most of the agricultural production is to meet basic household needs (Subsistence).

Whereas the study analytical framework holds that for agriculture to transform the livelihoods of the poor, production should be for the market besides subsistence. On the contrary, the findings reveal that smallholder production in the MVP's is to meet household basic food security. The importance of smallholder agriculture as a source of livelihoods in the rural areas like Bar Sauri is a major concern for agricultural and rural development. The major farming activities taking place in the Millennium Village Project include crops growing, livestock rearing, bee keeping, fish farming, horticulture, dairy farming and poultry keeping. From the field visits and interviews, to a great extent, the agriculture production is for subsistence, with surplus production sometimes traded in the local markets. The Strategy for Revitalization of Agriculture (SRA) recognizes that agricultural productivity can be increased, farmers incomes raised, more people fed and general economic and social welfare enhanced. The SRA policy paper recognizes that to improve

smallholder farm productivity as well as increase incomes, smallholder farmers must be changed from producing for subsistence to commercial profitable business. When agriculture is technology led, not only is food security achievable, but also poverty alleviation possible (SRA, 2004- 2014).

3.4.2 Household Land ownership and Agricultural Production

Land is an important asset and a key factor of production, especially for rural areas where agricultural is the major source of livelihood. Land is an important resource in agriculture in Kenya and lack of access to or ownership is considered as one of the causes of poverty (UNDP, 2002). All of the study respondents owned at least some land. Most of the land owned is through inheritance (96%), whereas (4 %) owned land through leasehold or rental.

Figure 3.2: The Scope of Household Land Ownership



Source: Field data, 2009.

From the study findings, 33% owned 0.5 ha, 23% owned 1 ha, 21% owned 0.21 ha, 9% owned 2 ha, and 6% owned 0.75 ha, while 4% owned 1.5 ha. The mean land size was 0.8 ha. Most of the respondents land parcels are therefore relatively small as a result of land subdivision across generations. The declining land sizes mean low volumes of returns from agricultural activities. Our findings are in conformity with findings of Siaya District Development Plan 2002 -2008, that the average land size is about 0.5 hectares in the area. In addition, access to land by women was an issue of concern as most female respondents reported they do not hold titles to property, which means they are dependent on male relatives to engage in economic development activities on land. It has been pointed out that the two key problems that make it difficult for the poor to access decent livelihoods are food insecurity and lack of income-generating activities. The

former can be linked to landlessness or inadequacy of land among most rural and urban poor. Majority of the rural poor either have no land or the land has been subdivided into units that are no longer economically viable, which aggravates poverty (Kenya, 1997). From the findings, the declining landholdings was attributed to land sub divisions among subsequent generations, selling of little land to meet expenses related to household basic needs, school fees, illnesses, and deaths in the household. This has negatively affected livelihood strategies in farming. Inadequacy of land was thus viewed by majority of respondents to be critical challenge to agricultural productivity. The findings also revealed that land ownership and use do not only involve economic considerations, socio-cultural factors such as lineage and status affect decisions about land ownership and use to a great degree.

Table 3.11: Cross Tabulation of Land Ownership and Income

		Size of land in Hectares							
		0.25	0.5	0.75	1	1.5	2	2.5	Total
Income category	< Kshs. 500.00	7	12	1	5	1	1	1	28
	Kshs. 501 - 1000	0	2	2	5	0	1	0	10
	Kshs. 1001 - 3000	3	2	0	1	0	3	1	10
	> Kshs. 3001	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	4
Total		11	17	3	12	2	5	2	52

Source: Field data, 2009.

This analysis reveals significance. Poor people are more likely to be among those who possess smaller parcels of land holdings and thus have low yields per hectare.

3.4.3 Farming Activities in the MVP

The study's analytical framework posit that can should result into a secure livelihood strategy for the poor, providing a source of food security, income, employment, and by extension facilitating human investment in human capital. 53% of the respondents engaged in both crop and animal

husbandry, while 47% engaged in crops growing only. This is indicative of mixed farming activities and the need to derive livelihoods from both crop cultivation and animal rearing. The type of farming activity in the millennium villages is farming and livestock rearing mix. The smallholder agriculture practiced in the millennium villages is rain-fed cropping, mostly undertaken using hand implements (hand hoes) and involves traditional crops and animals.

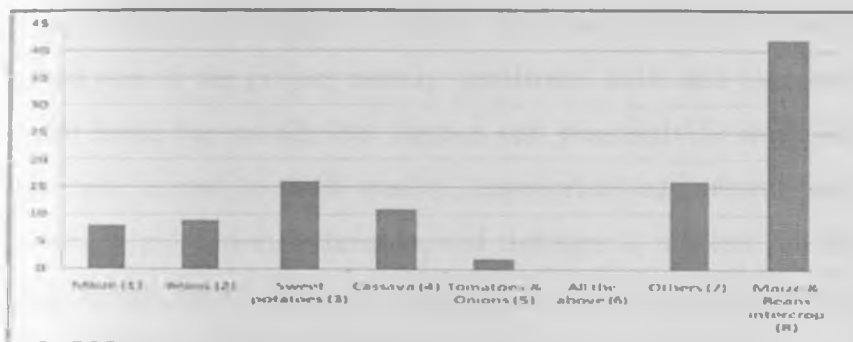
Table 4.12: Distribution by Type of Farming Activities

Type of farming activities	Frequency	Percentage
Growing crops only	23	47.0
Crops and animals	27	53.0
Keeping animals only	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field data, 2009.

Sauri millennium village is maize-based farming agro-ecological zone. Maize is the main staple food commodity in Sauri millennium villages. Other crops grown include beans, cassava, sweet potatoes, bananas, kales, tomatoes, onions, traditional vegetables, sorghum. The following were the main crops grown in the study areas: 42% of the respondents intercropped maize and beans, 8% grew maize only, 9% grew beans, 2% grew tomatoes and onions, 11% grew cassava, while 16% grew other crops that included sweet potatoes, onions, tomatoes, vegetables. From the study observations, maize and beans growing as the chief crops stood out. Respondents reported growing maize chiefly as a staple food crop and surplus production is sometimes traded to get income to meet other family needs. Respondents also indicated growing more than one crop to spread risks. From the findings, food security in the MVP is defined in terms of maize. The production of staple food crops as opposed to cash crops in the millennium villages shows the relative dependence on farming for subsistence rather than for cash incomes.

Figure 3.3: Respondents types of crops grown



Source: Field data, 2009.

3.4.4 Use of Commercialized Inputs in Agricultural Production in the MVP

Studies by World Bank (2008) have shown that agricultural productivity has grown rapidly where modern crop varieties and fertilizers have been adopted, but not where adoption has lagged. Commercialized inputs of certified seed and fertilizers improve productivity. Empirical literature argues that the poor often have low uptake and use of commercialized inputs. 76% of the respondents derived commercialized inputs through purchase, while 18% said they received the inputs from NGO's while 6% derived commercialized inputs from other sources which included borrowing from friends and neighbours. From the field observation, the level of awareness on the need to use commercialized inputs was very high in the millennium villages following four years of intervention activities.

Moreover, respondents attributed the declining smallholder productivity to declining soil fertility, weather variability, and environmental degradation. The use of commercialized inputs of fertilizers, certified seeds, herbicides and pesticides is known to enhance agricultural growth. The study yielded the following results with regards to use of commercialized input. 74% of the respondents used commercialized inputs, while 26% did not use. Of those that did not use for example, fertilizer indicated they used compost manure, animal manure or at times did not apply anything during planting. From the FGD's, respondents who did not use commercialized inputs attributed this to lack of funds to purchase these inputs from the market. 11% of those who used commercialized inputs said their decision was influenced by agricultural extension officers, while 89% attribute their decision to MVP awareness campaigns and activities in agricultural production interventions. From field visits, the high levels of awareness is attributed to MVP

programmes in farmers' education, training and extension services to enhance adoption of modern farming techniques. Farmers reported receiving subsidy inputs during the first and second year of the project namely: fertilizers, seeds and extension services. The World Bank (2008) found that smallholder farmers can progressively work their way out of poverty when they have access to high quality, appropriate agricultural inputs, capacity in intensified, diversified production techniques, and linkages to markets for high value farm products. The report further posit that the challenge lies in making useful products and services available to rural families in a sustainable way.

Table 3.13: Distribution by Use of Commercialized Inputs

Use of fertilizers/seeds	Frequency	Percentage
YES	37	74.0
NO	13	26.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field data, 2009.

3.4.5 Sufficiency of Harvests to Household Food Security and Poverty

According to the World Food Organization (1998), food security includes both physical and economic access to food that meets people's dietary needs as well as their food preferences. FAO (2008), posit that food security is built on food availability and access - which implies sufficient quantities of food available on a consistent basis. Food security is considered to exist in a condition where all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. From the study findings, 82% reported insufficiency of harvests to meet basic household food requirements till the next harvest, while 18% of the respondents said the harvests was enough to meet their household food requirements. The study findings shows how food security in the millennium villages remains a critical challenge, given the respondents view on hunger and asset stripping which occur during harvest failures. Rural households face risks because their agricultural resource base is often insecure and uncertain from unpredictable weather, uncertainties in input supply and cost, the need to feed increasing number of dependants

from ever smaller landholdings. The study established that majority of the respondents were small scale subsistence farmers.

Poverty is also presented as seasonal, hence transitory phenomenon (Kenya, 1999a). For instant, in the rural areas lean food periods coincide with limited job opportunities and reduced social support (Ng'ethe *et al.*, 2009). The main constraint to agricultural production in the area according to respondents was low soil fertility. For many farmers, small landholding is also considered a constraint to surplus production and food security. In addition farmers reported that maize production was greatly undermined by parasitic weed *stiga*, maize stalk borer, and maize streak.

Table 3.14: Distribution by Sufficiency of Harvest to Household Food security

Sufficiency of harvests	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	9	18.0
No	41	82.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field data, 2009.

3.4.6 Household Deriving Surplus Production from Agriculture in MVP's

From the analytical perspective of the study, agriculture can play a vital role in development, if production is geared towards the market - with surplus production being traded. 55% said they realized a surplus out of agricultural production, whereas 45% did not derive a surplus. Majority of the respondents that had surplus production attributed this to use of fertilizers and certified seeds, recommended crop spacing and timely weeding and reliable rainfalls. Those without surplus production are among those that did not use commercialized inputs and also among the poorer households. Some respondents attributed lack of surplus production to variable weather patterns despite using commercialized inputs. Respondents reported a high reliance on rain-fed agriculture in the millennium villages as vulnerable to weather variability thus leading to fluctuations in production and incomes. Poor rains always lead to poor agricultural performance and subsequent famines affecting large sections of the rural population. This confirms that

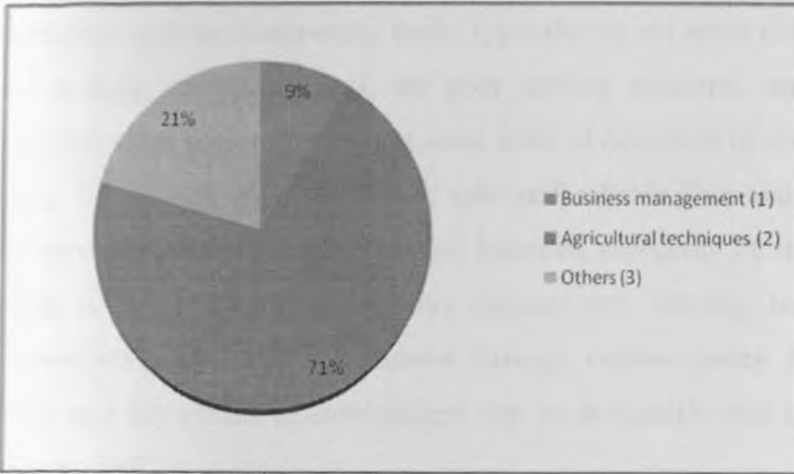
agricultural resource base is often insecure and uncertain from unpredictable weather, uncertainties in input supply and costs and farmers face great risks of decent into poverty as a result of shocks from crop harvest failures. From the field visits and interviews, respondents attributed low productivity, reflected in low yields to inability of resource poor farmers to afford modern agricultural inputs, limited access to credit and high cost of inputs. The key problem cited with inadequate fertilizer is that the soils are not being replenished so that the crop yield is measurably lower from one year to the next and pesticides are beyond the budget of poor farmers. The difficulty cited by elderly household members is that farmers can only till smaller areas or farm what they can manage.

3.4.7 Household Undergoing Formal Trainings in MVP Intervention Areas

Education and training is key contributor to the development of human capital. Education imparts and fosters knowledge and skills that help unlock human potentials for socioeconomic development. World Bank (2001) studies have pointed out that education and training influences rates of technology adoption.

The rural populations need training on modern farming methods, input output mix, information about markets among others. From the study findings, 60% of the respondents had undergone one form of training since MVP inception, while 40% indicated not to have trained since the project inception. 71% of the respondents reported having undergone training in agricultural production techniques, while 9% underwent business management trainings and 21% reported undergoing training in other areas of the MVP including post harvest handling and storage, compost making, soil and water conservation, cereal banking among others. The study findings points to active engagement of MVP in agronomic trainings, awareness and educational campaigns in the project area.

Figure 3.4: The Scope of Household Head undergoing Training in MVP



Source: Field data, 2009.²

3.4.8 Farmers Engagement in Co-operative Association as Social Capital

Cooperatives unions are user owned, user controlled and user benefited ventures. Cooperatives play a major role in savings and investments, production, primary processing, marketing of agricultural produce, provision of credit, and development of business enterprises. In Kenya cooperatives have been involved in provision of credit for purchase of land, farm inputs, housing, education and business development. From the study findings, 6% of the respondents indicated membership to farmer’s cooperative societies, whereas, 90% did not belong to cooperative associations. The study findings point to low cooperative engagement by Sauri farm communities. Focus group respondents attributed this to individual risk averseness since small scale farmers face high transaction costs and limited bargaining power given the small quantities they produce. Encouraging development of farmer cooperatives could bring small holders together to enjoy economies of scale in production.

Poor households the world over have demonstrated their ability to use and pay for financial services through longstanding informal arrangements such as savings clubs, ROSCA’s, cooperatives, mutual insurance societies (Otero, 1999). Access to credit is important to poor households that live close to subsistence levels. It cushions the poor from depletion of capital, especially for the poor household who do not have sufficient reserves to face unexpected shocks. In addition, the poor need financial services to smooth peaks and troughs in incomes and

² Total percentage is more than 100% because this was a multi-response question. The sample size is 50.

expenditure to make investments in homes, families and business. However formal financial institutions such as commercial banks typically do not serve the poor segment of the population due to high transaction costs, the poor lacking collateral, and geographic isolation, lengthy procedures that sometimes require some level of education or simple prejudice. Cooperatives can easily fill in such gaps for cheap, safe and reliable financial services for the poor. Thus to improve agricultural productivity and incomes, especially of smallholders, access to affordable credit is important to enable them acquire new farming technology to realize the higher productivity goals. The government through various policy documents envisages the use of credit as a key means to development, but its availability and accessibility has been inadequate (Kenya, 2002).

3.4.9 Engagement in Agro-business and Non-farm Ventures in the MVP

The main objective of MVP interventions in agriculture is the transformation of agriculture into a viable commercial undertaking. The assumption is that higher incomes would in turn raise household savings, and accelerate investment in human capital and other productive ventures. From the findings, 12% of the study respondents engaged in agro-business, whereas 88% did not. The agro business ventures reported included: banana tissue culture, kales nursery ventures, tree seedlings business. The following were cited as other income generating activities by respondents: cereals selling, vegetable and tomatoes vending, selling bananas and local brewing. The World Bank (2008) reported that many rural households move out of poverty through agricultural entrepreneurship, others through rural labour markets and rural non-farm economy. Many respondents reported lack of finances to improve and expand some of their business ventures. Although there are various financial institutions and microfinance organizations such as Equity bank, SAGA with tailored arrangements to offer subsidized financial services, resource poor farmers in Sauri reported low uptake of these services. Therefore, lack of finance for agribusiness limits increasing production and investment in value addition activities in agriculture. Inaccessibility to credit by small scale farmers and especially women has limited the range of activities, the type of technology used and the scale of operation that farmers may adopt. Financial services are needed for smallholders to break away from the cycle of poverty associated with subsistence agriculture. Focus for example should facilitate access to risk reduction for small scale farmers and other vulnerable groups in the rural areas through cheap, flexible, accessible crop insurance schemes, business capital and through social safety nets. Such mechanisms can prevent resource poor farmers from falling into chronic

poverty traps incase of crop failures and besides, could allow smallholders to invest more in commercially oriented agriculture.

Table 3.15: Distribution by Household Engagement in Agro-business.

Agro-business activity	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	12.0
No	44	88.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Field data, 2009.

The following are the study findings in this section, it is reasonable to conclude that rain-fed smallholder agriculture is the most widespread type of farming in most of the millennium villages. Most of households retained the bulk of its harvests for own domestic consumption, while at the same time derived incomes from trade in part of the produce. Households using improved agricultural techniques and growing improved varieties of crops reported potentially higher returns. This supports the evidence for the strong impact of education discussed earlier in the first sections. In addition, production shocks have significant impacts on the livelihoods of the most vulnerable for instance crop failure, pest attacks. Lack of adequate land was identified as a major constraint to smallholder agriculture in the MVP's. Land size, education, diversity of crops grown, access to agronomic information are significantly positively related with improved livelihoods for smallholder. Having looked the agricultural production activities in the MVP's, the next section seeks to asses the MVP interventions in agriculture as an escape route out of poverty and chronic poverty.

CHAPTER FOUR

ESCAPING POVERTY AND CHRONIC POVERTY

4.1 Introduction

This section presents findings on household perception of poverty, causes, durational analysis, household crises and coping mechanisms and poverty escape routes all in the context of MVP. To understand poverty, it is essential to examine the political, economic and social contexts, including institutions of the state, markets, communities and households. Poor people are more vulnerable to natural and economic shocks, material losses and loss of wellbeing. These events can easily destroy the ability of the poor to move out of poverty, both in the long and short term by depleting their human and physical assets which may be an irreversible process. Understanding factors that determine poverty persistence have important implication for the design of effective poverty reduction strategies and escape routes. The poor adopt all kinds of strategies to mitigate, cope, and escape poverty.

Escape route deal with issues of how the poor can pull themselves or be pulled out of poverty, and more importantly be prevented from sliding back into poverty (Ng'ethe *et. al*, 2009).

Shepherd (2007) argues that while many poor people experience poverty temporarily and some are able to climb out of long term poverty, others are stuck in poverty traps. The poor and chronically poor are structurally positioned so that escape is impossible without significant changes to the context in which they live and work. Multidimensionality of poverty means the poor experience various forms of disadvantage at the same time, and these combinations keep them in poverty and block off opportunities for escape.

4.2 Perceptions of Household Poverty and Chronic Poverty in the MVP's

The household poverty situation influences household well-being in terms of decision making in areas like investment in human capital, occupations and other livelihood strategies .22% of the respondents reported being poor.56% considered their households as averagely poor, while 10% viewed their households as chronically poor. Instructively, none of the study respondents perceived their households as wealthy. In general terms respondent's viewed poverty as the inability of an individual to afford basic needs such as food, clothing, education and health. From

the FGD's the poor recognize the gravity of their situation and the seriousness of the challenges poverty presents to them.

There is an indication of some changes here, in light of the fact that the study respondents had been derived from the poorest/ chronically poor in terms of wealth ranking category (D). This category had the poorest percentile in terms of annual income indicators. Those who considered themselves average said they have made progress in various facets of life since the MVP inception. Those who consider their households as chronically poor had not made much progress. They reported to still face crises like ill-health, crop harvest failures, do not use commercialized inputs. Among this category were the elderly, widows, disabled and orphaned children without social networks and support. These findings lend credence to earlier studies in Kenya that rural areas have a much larger population that is poor.

4.3 Household Poverty Durations in the MVP

From the study findings, 30% of the respondents reported to have been poor for between 1-5 years. 20% had been poor for between 6-10 years, while 45% reported being poor for over 10 years. The latter category can therefore be called chronically poor. The findings support earlier researches that poverty is overwhelmingly a rural phenomenon and people who depend on agriculture are typically much poorer than people who work in other sectors of the economy. Moreover, majority of the poor in Kenya live in rural areas and the incidence of poverty is highest among farmers, particularly subsistence farmers (Kenya, 2007; World Bank, 2008). The study findings also confirm existence of chronic poverty in the millennium villages. Chronically poor are largely agricultural and casual households living rural areas. The defining feature of chronic poverty is its extended duration in absolute terms, the multidimensionality and its severity (Hulme *et al.*, 2001). The minimum number of years for an individual, household or region to be regarded as chronically poor is arbitrarily set at 5 years, though the period can be longer (Hulme *et al.*, 2001:11 and 2003). Evidence in some societies has indicated that people who stay poor for five years or more have a high probability of remaining poor for the rest of their lives, and may pass on their poverty to subsequent generation. People who experience the most severe poverty are least likely to escape poverty. Those who have been in poverty for along time are most likely to fall further below the poverty line, and those who are severely or

persistently poor are likely to be poor in many dimensions. Chronically poor are those who experience poverty for extended period of time or throughout their entire lives: whose children are likely to remain poor and who have least benefited from national development initiatives. Those classified as chronically poor are likely to reflect a long term or permanent deprivation (Dutoit, 2005; Mackay and Lawson, 2002).

4.4 Household Perceptions on the Causes of Poverty in the MVP

The following were advanced by the study respondents as the main factors causing household poverty. 32% attributed their household poverty to unemployment, 25% attributed poverty to poor/ill health, 7% referred to lack of social support, while 36% attributed other factors as the cause of their household poverty, these included poor crop yields/harvests, lack of adequate land, lack of finances to purchase farm inputs, old age, educational expenses and school fees.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Causes of Household Poverty

Causes of poverty	Frequency	Percent
Lack of social support	7	7.0
Poor/ill health	25	25.0
Lack of employment	32	32.0
Others(specify)	36	36.0
Total	100	100

Source: Field data, 2009.

The risk of falling into poverty is higher for households whose incomes fluctuates for instance, households dependent on incomes from agricultural production. From the FGD's, the poor are aware that they are poor, they equally seemed aware of what they think causes poverty. Respondents reported that the conditions of the poor is at its obvious manifestation during times of stress i.e famine, harvest failures, drought, death of a key family member, loss of employment onset of chronic illnesses, and old age. An overwhelming majority of the study respondents indicated that the almost complete reliance on subsistence agriculture and the absence of other

livelihood options make these households particularly vulnerable to shocks like drought and ill health.

4.5 Household Crises over the Last One Year

Household crises and responses are major determinants of wellbeing. Household crises are major indicators of household vulnerability to poverty and chronic poverty. Sen and Hulme (2007) underline that household crisis negatively affect household wellbeing as they erode household assets and predispose vulnerable persons to poverty. 84% the respondents reported having faced a major household crisis during the last one year, whereas 16% reported not having faced a crisis. The respondents reported facing varying crises over the last one year. The respondents cited the following as the major problems faced. 47% reported poor/ill health as a major household crisis in the last one year, 21% reported crop harvest failure, 16% reported food shortages, 2% reported loss of employment, while 12% reported other crises which included death of spouse/family member, poor harvests, harvests failures etc). Multiple shocks and deprivations coupled with socio-cultural factors at the household and community levels could lead to descent into poverty. For example, household level shocks include family fragmentation following death of a key family member or marital breakdown, loss of savings due to theft, sickness and loss of employment (Ng'ethe *et.,al.* 2009). Shocks push vulnerable households into poverty. Illness, unemployment, financial crisis, policy changes, or natural disasters are associated with a higher incidence of poverty among affected households. This study established that poor/ill health and food shortages were the most common household problems faced by respondents in the millennium villages. The findings also highlight the seasonality of stress with regards to food availability and consumption whereby 21% reported harvest failure and 16% reported food shortages. There was consensus among FGD's respondents that such seasonality is predictable. The incidence of poverty following shocks is often higher among households with fewer buffers to protect their living standards. Poorer households with fewer assets and entitlements are therefore more exposed to the possibility that shocks will make them poor (Barrientos, 2007; Ellis, 2000). The implication of these findings with regards to ill/poor health has negative consequence to agricultural production given the dependence of the poor on their labour power. Therefore sustaining good health is important.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Household Crises

Crises faced	Frequency	Percent
Food shortages	9	16.0
Loss of employment	1	2.0
Harvest failures	12	21.0
Ill health	27	47.0
Loss of property	2	3.0
Other (specify)	7	12.0
Total	58	100.0

Source: Field data, 2009.

4.6 Household Crisis Coping Mechanisms and Poverty Implications

The probability of a household cushioning itself sinking deeper into poverty depends on whether a household has a form of insurance, asset base or the behavioural responses adopted in the face of decline in wellbeing. The poor often develop varying coping and risk management strategies to deal with crises presented by poverty. The following coping mechanisms were adopted by the study respondents in dealing with adverse situations in the households. 43% reported depending on relatives and friends as a coping mechanism, 30% depended on house hold incomes/ earnings, 15% resorted to sale of household assets, 9% depended on charity, whereas 2% depended on other crises coping mechanisms, including petty trading, selling firewood and burning charcoal for sale. Respondents reported that rural livelihoods in subsistence agriculture is dependent on weather and thus they are especially vulnerable to production and income shocks, and in most cases they respond by drawing down physical assets including durable household goods and livestock. Sale of productive assets implies that households can no longer participate in productive activities and cannot utilize opportunities as they arise.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents by Household Crisis Coping Mechanism(s)

Coping mechanism	Frequency	Percent
Sale of household assets	7	15.0
Depended on charity	4	9.0
Relatives and friends	20	43.0
Household income/ earnings	14	30.0
Other (specify)	2	4.0
Total	47	100.0

Source: Field data, 2009.

Those who depended on relatives and friends resorted to borrowing money and food stuffs in times of distress to sustain livelihood and survival rather than investment. Respondents reported that borrowing depended on the social capital (good will) of the relatives, friends and neighbours with the hope of repayment at a later date. Those who depended on household incomes and savings reported utilizing money saved in banks, in Rosca's and other informal savings avenues, sale of agricultural produce and small livestock e.g chickens, goats, sheep.

Those who sold assets reported selling of essential household income generating equipments and other durable goods. These included agricultural lands, livestock, residential plots, rental property, houses, business tools and equipments, and household items such as (furniture, clothing, TV's, radios). Respondents reported selling assets to acquire cash to buy food stuffs, pay hospital bills, and meet funeral expenses and repayment of debts. Other coping mechanisms mentioned include casual farm and off-farm labour in Yala township sometimes paid "in-kind". From the FGD's, and field visits, social factors and poor people's strategies played out. For example individual and household aspirations, attitudes to risks, rules of behaviour and emotional resilience were reported as important for coping with and escaping poverty. Respondents reported that the coping mechanisms as much as they sustain livelihoods, they don't fundamentally transform peoples livelihoods in the long run.

4.7 Household Poverty Assessment: Post-intervention Compared to the Period before MVP Intervention.

The study sought a self assessment and evaluation of household poverty of the respondent before the project and post intervention period. The study yielded the following results. 48% considered their household poverty as having bettered off, 38% considered their household poverty to have remained the same, 16% considered their household to experienced a decline in welfare. while 4% were unable to evaluate their household poverty status. In addition 80% of the respondents considered the MVP as an escape route out of poverty and chronic poverty, whereas as 20% did not view the MVP as an escape route out of poverty. There was a general consensus from study respondents that poverty can be alleviated based on how the respondents see their own lives, view vulnerability and their understanding of impoverishment and opportunity.

4.8 Household Satisfaction Levels and Benefits of MVP Interventions in Agriculture

Majority of the respondents (62%) were satisfied with MVP interventions in agriculture. 2% were very satisfied, while 36% indicated their dissatisfaction with the interventions. They gave diverse reasons for this including perceived corruption of MVP officials , locals not considered for jobs at the MVP site office in Yala, withdrawal of subsidy support, inaccessibility to responsive financial and credit facilities. Others were of the view that whilst MVP interventions made some progress in sectors such as education, health, infrastructure, it had not had the transformational impact in agriculture-for-business envisaged. An assessment of the benefits of households had derived from MVP revealed the following positive outcomes. 96% of respondents reported having benefited positively in the following ways: having accessed subsidized inputs of fertilizers and improved seeds; farmers also reported having undergone agronomic trainings, accessed credit facilities from SAGA and Equity bank for farm improvements; farmers having been taken to agricultural demonstrations and field visits. The other areas of MVP interventions where respondents hailed as successful are in the educational sectors through building and renovation of schools. Provision of computers and school feeding programmes; building/upgrading of health facilities; and provision of services at subsidized costs and opening and upgrading of rural areas previously inaccessible through rural access roads.

Figure 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Satisfaction Levels in Interventions.



Source: Field data, 2009.

4.9 MVP as Escape Route out of Poverty and Chronic Poverty

The World Bank (2008) contends that many rural households move out of poverty through agricultural enterprise; others through the rural labour markets and rural non-farm economy; others by migrating to towns, cities and other countries. In Tanzania most successful in moving out were farmers who diversified their activities by growing food crops for their own consumption and non traditional cash crops (vegetables, fruits, vanilla) as well as raising livestock. People who remained in poverty were those who stuck to the more traditional farming systems. In Uganda, escaping from poverty was linked to improving the productivity and diversifying into commercial crops. In India income from non agricultural sector – the labour pathway out of poverty was an important driver of growth in the rural areas (CPRC, 2004 – 2005).

From the foregoing, the formulation of appropriate poverty escape routes to effectively combat rural poverty requires the identification of the poor and a measure of the extent of their poverty. From the study findings, rural poverty is marked by its common connection to agriculture. Thus, poverty in the millennium villages is explained by low access to physical assets, low agricultural productivity, limited non-agricultural employment opportunities and limited social and economic infrastructure. The chronically poor are those most at risk. They often have little access to productive assets and low capabilities in terms of education, health and other socioeconomic indicators. The multidimensionality of their poverty means the poor experience various forms of

disadvantage at the same time, and these combinations keep them in poverty and block off opportunities for escape. Thus, it is the combination of capability deprivation, low levels of material assets and social marginality that keep people poor over long periods of time. Moreover, not all poor people are born into long-term poverty. Many respondents reported sliding into poverty after a shock or a series of shocks that they cannot recover from. From the analytical framework of the study, improving livelihoods of the poorest in smallholder agriculture means the poor will be able to generate food security, create employment, generate incomes, and facilitate investments in human capital development and thereby escape poverty. From the study findings, education may be the critical pathway out of poverty. Given the dependence of smallholder agriculture on physical labour, sustaining good health is crucial to the poor. Finally, addressing poverty and chronic poverty in the millennium villages should be concerned with the process through which choices are enlarged but also on outcomes of enhanced capacity the poor to achieve secure livelihood strategies in smallholder agriculture. The next chapter is summary of study findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings, draws conclusions from the findings, and gives policy recommendations, and suggestions for further research. The study sought to find out the role of MVP interventions in agriculture as an escape route out of poverty and chronic poverty in the rural areas. The ultimate goal of development is improved livelihoods and poverty reduction. Smallholder agriculture is an important and integral part of the rural livelihoods. The following are the summary of the general findings of the study.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

1. The study established that poverty is not only a state of existence, but also a process with many dimensions and complexities. The causes of poverty are complex and multidimensional. They involve, among other things, culture, climate, gender, markets and public policy, and individual household profiles. Poverty can be persistent (chronic) or transient (temporary), but transient poverty, if acute, can trap subsequent generations. The study established that poverty is multidimensional and the poor view and experience poverty in different ways. Poor households displayed diverse socioeconomic, cultural and demographic characteristics making it difficult to disaggregate them along a single trajectory. Considerable heterogeneity exists among the poor households. Likewise, it was established that the rural poor are quite diverse in the problems they face and possible solutions to their problems. Understanding the needs of such different groups is central to the success of rural development strategies. This might call for the need for a socially contextualized individual household poverty alleviation focus.

2. Secondly, the study found out that poverty differences cut across gender, age, location, occupations and income sources. In the households, children and women, widows, orphans, the elderly, long term sick and poor farmers were more likely to suffer poverty than other groups. The study also established that the poor and chronically people are likely to be among those with low levels of education or no formal schooling; earning very low incomes; having limited assets. They are also likely to own small parcels of land and realize food harvests insufficient to meet household basic food requirements. In terms of occupation, they are most likely to be small scale

subsistence farmers, unskilled or semi-skilled casual labourers and small scale business entrepreneurs. In terms of housing structures, they are likely to be among those residing in grass thatched and mud walled housing and dilapidated dwellings. Thus, unemployment, low levels of incomes, illiteracy, inadequate access to productive assets, healthcare are thus linked to poverty because they lead to erratic incomes, low assets base and vulnerability to shocks among the rural poor.

3. The study established that subsistence agriculture is by far the most important source of livelihood for a disproportionately large majority of rural poor in the millennium villages. The livelihood of most rural inhabitants is connected to agriculture directly or indirectly. Livelihoods in agriculture in the millennium villages comprise of a small percentage of market-oriented and a largely subsistence smallholder farming. The most insightful finding of the study is that subsistence agriculture for the poorest tends to at best reproduce mere subsistence and does not provide a graduation pathway out of poverty. For the poorest rural dwellers, subsistence agriculture often provides a survival strategy in the absence of jobs and other livelihood strategies. Moreover, the study findings shows that subsistence farming is increasingly unable to provide viable and sufficient means of livelihood in the rural areas due to the challenges of declining landholdings, high costs of inputs, diminishing returns to land, falling soil fertility, the realities of weather variability, poor rural infrastructure and limited access to markets. The implication with these findings in regard to development is that the preoccupation with subsistence farming is largely to meet basic household food requirements: implying development is largely at the level of subsistence. There is need for the poor to be facilitated to move beyond mere subsistence so as to have a positive impact on poverty in the millennium villages.

4. The rural poor are vulnerable to serious risk owing to changes in weather, health, markets, investments and household socioeconomic and demographic profiles. The resulting fluctuations in the value of their assets and of what they produce can either deepen their poverty or give them opportunities to escape from it. For example when illness, disability or old age renders the breadwinner incapable of working productively, the household often experiences a slide into poverty. Whereas many poor people depend on their labour power to earn a living in farm work,

much of which is insecure and low paid. Such work generates low incomes and only allows day-to-day survival but does not permit asset accumulation. The poor decried hard work, but with limited education, few assets, and limited chance of decent work. Many reported that their opportunities in agriculture are limited and as thus may have little scope to improve their situation. The main reason is that the poor have limited assets and very low capacity to absorb abrupt shocks. Adverse shocks often deplete already limited assets and the inability to cope with shocks induces households to adopt low-risk, low-return activities like sale of household durable assets, begging, and use of household saved incomes, depending on charity, petty trading, selling firewood and burning charcoal for sale. These and other factors were cited by respondents as drivers and maintainers of poverty and chronic poverty in the millennium villages. More over, natural environmental catastrophes like drought, crop harvest failures, and pest attacks on crops/livestock or death of a key family member (bread winner) can lead to descent into poverty and bring about sharp increases in household poverty and make it difficult for the poor to escape poverty. From a human development perspective, the implication of the findings on vulnerabilities is that the key issues of concern for the poor in the millennium villages still revolve around basic needs (food security, health) implying very low levels of socio-economic and human development. Vulnerability was a key factor explaining low levels of human capital investment observed among households in poverty.

5. The study established that access to credit was a key constraint to smallholders in the MVP's. Many respondents reported that the financial arrangements put in place for example, by SAGA and Equity banks were not responsive to the needs of the poorer segment of smallholders. The estimated cost of a one kilogramme of improved seeds is averagely between Kenya shillings 270 - 300 while a 50 kilogramme bag of fertilizer cost about Kenya shillings 2,500. Most respondents decried the high costs. The gradual scaling down on subsidy provision by MVP over the years has meant that some of the resource poor farmers are resorting back to traditional/indigenous methods of production with the consequences of low returns due to such factors as low soil fertilities.

6. The study findings also revealed a great deal of rural livelihoods diversification. Even though a large majority of rural poor engage in agricultural production, many also derive a large part of

their incomes from off-farm activities. The non-farm activities were also viewed as important in the livelihoods of the poor due to the increasing population density leading to constraints on land availability with the consequent effects on agricultural productivity. The rural non-farm sector and activities are important as they were regarded by respondents to absorb surplus labour in the rural areas, help farm based households spread risks, augment and supplement agricultural incomes, offer income potentials during agricultural off-season, and provide a means to cope and survive when farming fails. The following were some of the non farm activities: small scale businesses, local brewing, artisan, unskilled casual employment within the local townships and centres. Therefore promotion of off-farm activities is also critical to rural poverty alleviation and development agenda.

6. Finally, low levels of education among poor farm households in the MVP's was also a key constraint in adopting and adapting the modern farming and production systems. The illiterate or the less educated people are less flexible in responding to opportunities. Education contributes to the development of human capital. Agricultural production around the millennium villages revolves around a dualism between modern scientific methods of crops and animal husbandry and traditional/ indigenous methods of production. The two methods have both advantages and disadvantages and sometimes are necessary to complement each other.

5.3 Bar-Sauri and above Issues

Bar-Sauri MVP recognizes that poverty is a multi-dimensional issue, and has taken a multi-sectoral approach that seeks to confront poverty through access to healthcare, agriculture and environment, rural education and training, infrastructure, energy and communication. The assumption is that rural African communities can lift themselves out of poverty trap if they have access to proven and powerful technologies that can enhance their farm productivity, health, education, and access to markets. To achieve the above, MVP has put in place various platforms like partnership with local communities, participatory rural assessment, active community engagement and sensitization, development of community action plans and introduction of gender sensitive interventions and poverty targeting.

Despite this focus, the study findings with regards to agricultural interventions show that the poorest in the millennium villages have not fully achieved the transformation to market oriented agricultural production. Most of the agriculture practiced by the poorest is by and large, still at the level of subsistence. This category of the poorest may thus be bypassed by conventional range of development interventions. The findings show that the poorest categories were adversely affected by the gradual withdrawal of subsidy support. The most likely reason is that the very poorest had not attained a threshold level sufficient to sustain the gradual withdrawal of subsidy support by MVP. This therefore calls for the need for special targeting for the poorest access to for example, 'smart subsidy'. Limited access to productivity enhancing inputs was the major constraint to the respondents, yet smallholder agriculture is the most important source of livelihood for a large majority of the rural poor in the millennium villages.

Secondly, given the nature and vulnerability of the poor and agriculture to different factors, the study findings show that the vulnerability context for the poorest is increasingly complex and there seem not adequate measures put in place to cushion the poorest from vulnerability. The findings thus call for "social protection" that may take different forms e.g. cash transfers, health schemes, food subsidy, microfinance provisioning, agricultural input subsidy etc. Measure such as access to microfinance through Equity Bank has been cited as highly unresponsive to the needs of the poorest. These and other such measures need to be reviewed.

In terms of capacity building and education, MVP has done very well given respondents view on capacity building, trainings and awareness efforts in aspects of agriculture, health, water, energy, community organization, and environment since the project inception. This is particularly in agronomic trainings, workshops, seminars, field visits, exchange programmes. This has been complemented by government in terms of agricultural extension services. In spite of these, adult literacy levels are still limited for the poorest and needs continued and concerted efforts.

Diversification out of agriculture is another key area promoted by MVP through its business development interventions including entrepreneurial trainings and access to credit. Many respondents reported lack of capital to improve and expand some of their business undertakings. Empirical literature points out that many rural poor move out of poverty through rural non-farm

economy and diversification. For MVP's case, financial services are needed for the poor to break away from the cycle of poverty associated with subsistence. The poor need financial empowerment if they have to continue with interventions beyond the projects' life.

In conclusion, MVP has demonstrated the potential to support the underlying processes of poverty reduction in rural areas through agricultural production. From the study findings however, the transformational impact to make subsistence agriculture a commercially viable venture especially for the poorest households has not fully been achieved. For MVP to achieve this objective, the following and other recommendations needs to be taken on board.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations have been advanced in order to make smallholder agriculture an escape route out of poverty and a viable livelihood strategy in rural Kenya.

1. Off-farm/Non Farm Sector

Smallholder agricultural productivity and growth is necessary, but not singularly sufficient to drive rural economic growth. Poverty reduction and growth strategies need to recognize the multidimensionality of rural livelihoods and the importance of farm - nonfarm linkages in facilitating rural growth. No single approach taken alone is likely to reduce rural poverty. One of the weaknesses of rural development initiatives in Kenya has been the tendency to see the rural poor as farmers with limited attention to their roles as labourers and consumers. It is hypothesized that many rural households move out of poverty through agricultural entrepreneurship; others through the rural labour markets and the rural non-farm economy; and others by migrating to towns/cities. These pathways are complementary: non-farm incomes can enhance the potential of farming as a pathway out of poverty, and agriculture can facilitate the labour and migration pathways. Therefore promotion of off farm activities is also critical to rural poverty alleviation and development agenda.

2. Pro-Poor Poverty Focus

It was established that the rural poor are quite diverse in the problems they face and possible solutions to these problems. Rural poverty reduction and growth strategies need to recognize the multidimensionality of rural poverty. The study findings calls for the need for measures to boost human capital through increased access to quality healthcare, education, since poor/ill health , illiteracy and food shortages were reported as the most common household problems by respondents in the millennium villages. Pro-poor growth and targeting activities within agriculture with the highest potential for raising rural incomes is needed to address the issue of rural poverty reduction. Policy priority therefore should be given to providing an enabling rural environment for commercial activities such as institutional innovations that support competitiveness of small holder producers, increased investment in public goods such as agricultural research, education, extension, and infrastructure.

3. Access to Credit

Access to credit is another key issue of concern for this study. Improving smallholder's livelihoods in agriculture requires access to credit, extension services, markets access, research and development. It is today widely acknowledged that smallholders have the capacity to use credit services and repay loans. Access to financial services for rural poor smallholders and how this can break the vicious cycle of poverty in which high prices of improved seeds, fertilizers, and other inputs prevent resource poor farmers from incorporating improved technologies which has a potential to boost smallholder productivity. Poor farm households are particularly disadvantaged in their access to formal credit services as they lack information and collateral. Farming is also viewed as a high risk venture by financial institutions. Formal financial institutions should develop flexible and responsive credit facilities and services to the poor, taking into account the socio-economic environments they operate under. Modalities should be developed to make use of strategies used by informal financial organizations that have over the years successfully provided credit to the poor and those in the informal sectors of the economy. Informal financial institutions including ROSCA's, ASCA's kinship networks, women merry-go-rounds, burial societies, youth groups have provided credit in the absence of formal lending, though in small quantities to the poor. The informal credit systems should therefore be encouraged through social development programmes. Future MVP strategies must focus on

identification of new forms of formal and informal credit, including institutions capable and willing to mobilize and coordinate financial resources to the poor. Credit systems should therefore be re-organized in order to address the special needs of resource poor farm households. Financial services are important to smallholders to mobilize their asset holdings, improve farm incomes, increase productivity and recover and cope with production shocks.

4. Capacity Building and Training Programmes

The study recommends capacity building and continuous training of local communities. This would go along way in updating farming households with changing market information, new technologies and production techniques. This could take the forms of field demonstrations, extension service and farmer visits and exchange programmes. Capacity building will also ensure sustainability of the projects once external funding comes to an end. Finally, education is often the most valuable asset for the rural people to pursue opportunities in agriculture, obtain skilled jobs, start businesses in the rural non-farm economy and migrate successfully out of subsistence agriculture. From the study's analytical framework, development of human capital through adult education would greatly enhance capabilities, especially for the poor and the chronically poor in the millennium villages.

5. Provision of Inputs

Poor households need support in productive techniques, inputs and quality standards. The benefits of greater competition may by-pass farmers who have little support in inputs, little training and lack of advice on markets. MVP should endeavour to come up with 'smart subsidy' for the vulnerable and poorest in the millennium villages. This would greatly increase smallholder productivity as most poor respondent had cited non adoption and use of commercial inputs due to prohibitive costs. Provision of better quality and cheaper inputs like fertilizers and hybrid seed greatly improves farm production, and thus enable households meet their various financial needs.

5.5 Relevance of Study to Development Studies

The study contributes to development studies by bringing on board a new dimension to the poverty discourse by focusing on chronic poverty. Understanding the dynamics of poverty from

the poor people's perspectives may help in the design of effective poverty alleviation strategies in rural areas where poverty rates are disproportionately high.

Sustainable rural development should contribute to poverty reduction through promotion of basic needs for a majority of the rural poor. This calls for the need to put in place measures to ensure food security, raise smallholder farm productivity and incomes, reduce exposure to risks, and livelihoods diversification. The practical implication with the study findings with regard to smallholder agriculture is that raising productivity on small farms under any plausible productivity is necessary but not singularly sufficient to drive rural economic growth. Development interventions and growth strategies need to recognize the multi-dimensionality of rural poverty. Policy priorities should therefore be given to providing an enabling environment such as institutional innovations that would increase competitiveness of rural farm households, increased investment in public goods such as agricultural research, extension, microfinance provisioning and infrastructure. No single approach taken in isolation is likely to alleviate rural poverty.

5.6 Overall Conclusions of the Study

The findings of this study confirms the research hypothesis that the poor and the chronically are likely to be among agricultural households in the rural areas. In addition, they are likely to engage and benefit from agricultural production if they have access to technologies that increase their productivity, diversification into higher value crops, access to markets, and off-farm employment. Finally they are likely to escape poverty and chronic poverty if they have secure livelihood strategies. Focus need to be placed on chronic poverty as a specific, enduring and deep seated phenomenon. Chronically poor rarely accumulate assets, with no surplus to save., low levels of human capital development, and few productive assets, escape routes for people in chronic poverty may profoundly be limited.

From a chronic poverty perspective, MVP is an escape route out poverty and chronic poverty to the extent that it fundamentally addresses the most basic needs of the poorest and rural areas as access to food, health and education. MVP has demonstrated the potential to support the underlying processes of poverty reduction in rural areas through agricultural production. From

the study findings, the transformational impact to make subsistence agriculture a commercially viable venture especially for the poorest households is yet to be fully achieved. From the findings, it is evident that for a development project to achieve its objectives, it has to base itself on well established facts about rural poverty and rural development. Some of the key facts are: that the rural poor are not a homogeneous group and their livelihoods draw on a diversity of activities, assets, and income sources; the rural non-farm economy also constitutes an important and growing source of income and employment for rural poor households; that there is a constant rural-urban interaction, whether in the form of migrants and remittances. Goods and services are being exchanged all the time between the two and this needs to be integrated in any rural development approach; the ability of the poor to engage in productive activities in a sustainable manner and prospects of development in the rural areas depend heavily on the wider socio-economic, political and institutional environment within and beyond the rural domain.

5.7 Recommendations for Further Research

This study was based on household survey data using a small sample, which cannot provide a conclusive insight into how households move in and out of poverty across time. Therefore a longitudinal study using panel data sets with a larger sample is more likely to bring out the bigger picture. In addition, since there is no good panel data set on chronic poverty in Kenya, such a study would greatly contribute to this by capturing poverty dynamics and may be useful in generating information on why some households move into poverty, remain poor, and yet others move out of poverty and factors that account for such changes.

There is also the need for a study on the sustainability of MVP as a development intervention. MVP is a measurable and time-bound intervention in its last phase. This presents a viable potentiality for a study to look into the long term issues of sustainability of 'agency' in development intervention in the livelihoods of rural inhabitants.

Finally, given that MVP interventions cover *agriculture; environment; health and nutrition; infrastructure, energy and communication; and Education and training* and that this study focused specifically on agricultural (crop production), other studies should be conducted on the

other MVP intervention areas and their possible impacts on poverty and chronic poverty in the millennium villages as well.

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APPENDIX 1: HOUSEHOLD SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is **VINCENT OPONDO**, a postgraduate student at the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi. I am conducting a study on the **Millennium Villages Project in addressing chronic poverty**. You are among a group of persons randomly selected for the study. I would highly appreciate if you spare me a few minutes and share your thoughts on this subject matter. The information you give will be treated in confidence and will only be useful in informing this study. Please answer the questions as honestly and openly as possible. There are no "right or wrong" answers.

Questionnaire NO. -----

Name of Interviewer-----

Date of Interview-----

Village-----

Name of the respondent-----

Name of the household head-----

PART I: DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

1. Sex - 1. MALE [] 2. FEMALE []

2. Age -----

3. Marital Status

1) Single	
2) Married	
3) Widowed	
4) Divorced/Separated	

PART II: HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

4. How many children (below 18 years) are permanent members of this household? -----

5. What is your level of Education?

1.) University	
2.) College	
3.) Secondary	
4.) Primary	
5.) None	

6. What is your spouse's level of Education?

1.) University	
2.) College	
3.) Secondary	
4.) Primary	
5.) None	

7. What is your occupation?

1. Civil servant
2. Farmer
3. Business
4. No work
5. other. specify-----

8. What is your monthly income? KSHs-----

9. What is your spouse's occupation?

1. Civil servant

- 2. Farmer
- 3. Business
- 4. No work
- 5. other, specify-----

10. Does your household afford 3 meals every day (breakfast, lunch, supper)?

- 1. YES []
- 2. NO []

11. If no, explain-----

12. Type of residential housing (*record observation*):

- 1.) Mud walled (grass thatched roof) []
- 2.) Mud walled (iron sheet roof) []
- 3.) Iron sheet walled and roofed []
- 4.) Permanent house []
- 5.) Semi- permanent []
- 6.) Other, specify-----

13. Do you own land? 1. YES [] 2. NO []

14. How did you obtain the land?

- 1. Inheritance
- 2. Lease/rental
- 3. Purchase
- 4. Other, specify-----

15. What is the size of the land(s) in acres?

- 1. Inheritance-----
- 2. Lease/rental-----
- 3. Purchase-----
- 4. Other, specify-----

Household assets

16 a.)	Number of cattle		
	Breed of cattle	a.) Local	b.)Hybrid
	Number of goats	a.) Local	b.)Hybrid
	Number of sheep		
	Number of chicken	a.) Local	b.)Hybrid

b.) Does your household own any of the following items?

Item			Durati on held
1. Television set	YES []	NO []	
2. Radio	YES []	NO []	
3. Telephone/Mobile phone	YES []	NO []	
4. Sofa set	YES []	NO []	
5. Bicycle	YES []	NO []	
6. Motorcycle	YES []	NO []	
7. Car/Motor vehicle	YES []	NO []	
8. Gas cooker	YES []	NO []	
9. Charcoal stove	YES []	NO []	
10. Other, specify-----			

17. On average, how much money does your household earn from occupations and assets in one month? KSHs-----

18. On average, how much money does your household save from occupations and assets in one month? KSHs-----

19. Where does your household mostly save money?

1. Banks
2. House
3. SACCOs
4. None
5. Other, specify-----

PART III: ENGAGEMENT IN AGRICULTURAL AND INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES

20. Do you know/ are you aware of MVP?

1. YES [] 2. NO []

21. Have you noticed any new agricultural projects being implemented in the community during the past two years? 1. YES [] 2. NO []

22. If yes, which ones? (Tick all that apply)

- 1.) Training programmes
- 2.) Extension services
- 3.) Others-----

23. How did you learn about the project(s)?

- 1.) Through member of location development committee
- 2.) Other community members
- 3.) Chief's baraza
- 4.) Seen notices/posters/newspapers
- 5.) Member of project committee
- 6.) Other, specify-----

24. Did your household engage in farming activities before (the MVP)? 1. YES [] 2. NO []

25. If NO, above explain-----

26. What type of farming activity? (Tick all that apply)

1. Growing crops only []
2. Crops and animals []
3. Keeping animals only []
4. Others-----

27. Why do you engage in farming?

1. An enterprise for income generation
2. Subsistence
3. Past time
4. Others (explain) -----

28. What crops do you grow? (Tick all that apply)

1. Maize
2. Bean
3. Sweet potatoes
4. Cassava
5. Tomatoes & onions
6. All the above
7. Others-----

29. Do you use commercialized inputs of fertilizers and certified seeds?

1. YES []
2. NO []

30. If (NO above) what have you been using before?

1. Nothing
2. Compost manure
3. Animal manure
4. Other. specify-----

31. What influenced your decision to use commercialized inputs?

1. Neighbours
2. Agricultural extension officer
3. MVP officer
4. Other, specify-----

32. Where do you get them?

1. Purchase
2. Given by neighbours
3. Given by NGOs
4. Other sources-----

33. Comment on the use of fertilizer and certified seeds on the quantity of your harvest? -----

34. What was the value of your harvest last season?

1. Maize (sacks 90KG) -----
2. Beans (sacks /2KG tin/gorogoro) -----

35. Is the amount harvested sufficient to meet your household's basic food needs until the next harvest? 1. YES [] 2. NO []

36. Do you have a tradable surplus 1. YES [] 2. NO []

37. If YES, what do you attribute this surplus to? (Tick all that apply)

- 1.) Fertilizer use
- 2.) Crop spacing
- 3.) Certified seeds
- 4.) Weather

5.) Other, explain-----

38. Have you undergone any form of training in since the project inception?

1. YES [] 2. NO []

39. If yes, which one(s)

1.) Business management

2.) Agricultural techniques

3.) Others (specify) -----

40. Do you belong to any farmer's co-operative association? 1. YES [] 2. NO []

41. If yes above specify-----

42. Do you engage in any form of agro-business? 1. YES [] 2. NO []

43. If yes above specify-----

44. Do you/household engage in any other form of income generating enterprise/activity?

1. YES [] 2. NO []

If yes, Specify-----

45. What in your view have been the benefits of MVP interventions in agriculture to you and your household? -----

46. What is your level of satisfaction with MVP's interventions in Agriculture?

1. Very satisfied []

2. Satisfied []

3. Not satisfied []

4. Very dissatisfied []

PART IV: PERCEPTIONS OF POVERTY

47. How would you rate your household poverty situation?

1. Wealthy
2. Poor
3. Average
4. Chronically poor

48. If poor, how long has your household been poor?

1. Less than one year
2. 1-5 years
3. 6-10
4. Over 10 years

49. In your opinion, why are you (household) poor? (Tick all that apply)

1. Inherited poverty from parents
2. Lack of education
3. Lack of social support
4. Poor/ill health
5. Lack of employment
6. Others, specify-----

50. Have you faced any crises over the last year? 1. YES [] 2. NO []

51. If yes, which ones? (Tick all that apply)

1. Food shortages
2. Loss of employment
3. Harvest failure
4. Ill health/ poor health
5. Loss of property

6. Other, specify-----

52. What measures did you take to cope with the crises? (Tick all that apply)

- 1. Sale of household assets
- 2. Depended on charity
- 3. Relatives and friends
- 4. Household income/earnings
- 5. Other, specify-----

53. What is your assessment of the poverty situation of your household now compared to the period before the MVP?

- 1. Remained same []
- 2. Better off []
- 3. Worse off []
- 4. Difficult to tell []

55. In your view/opinion, is the MVP an escape route out of chronic poverty? 1. YES [] 2. NO []

Explain-----

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE AND TIME.

APPENDIX 2: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the chronically poor persons?
2. In your view/opinion what are the causes of poverty (chronic) in your household?
3. In your view what should/can be done to address (chronic) poverty?
4. What is your perception of the poverty situation of your household before the MVP, and after the MVP interventions?
5. In your view are the MVP interventions in agriculture and income sustainable escape routes out of poverty?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

APPENDIX 3: KEY INFORMANT GUIDE.

1. What is the scope of chronic poverty in the millennium villages?
2. Who are the main actors in Agricultural interventions? What roles do they play?
3. What are the milestones of the MVP in agriculture and income since the project inception?
4. How are the MVP interventions in agriculture sustainable in addressing chronic poverty?
5. What challenges/constraints have you encountered in the implementation of the MVP interventions in agriculture?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME