

**THE ROLE OF ABET PROGRAMMES IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF RURAL BLACK WOMEN IN THE MKHUHLU AREA**

by

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DEDICATION

TO MY LATE MOTHER, ASNATH



ABSTRACT

The study aimed at investigating the role played by ABET programmes in the development of rural black women in the Mkhuhlu area. The study was to determine whether the ABET programmes that are provided in the area are offering relevant education that helps the women of the area in their development.

In-depth interviews were conducted with sixteen female learners. Interviews, observation and documentation were used as methods for data collection.

The research findings established that the ABET programmes provided in the area are not providing the relevant skills needed to develop the women participants. The programmes that are offered concentrate on literacy and numeracy, and it would seem not to be very effective in making a difference to the women's lives. The women that were interviewed have not yet improved their quality of life. They need skills that can help them generate an income to improve their living conditions. The study, in summary, established that the programmes offered by the ABET centres would be more effective if skills training is included to uplift and improve the lives of the participants on a social, economical as well as educational level.

SECTION 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

“Apartheid and other despotic systems put serious and often unbearable constraints on women and their families” (Snyder & Tadesse, 1995:9). In the past the status of women was undermined, yet they have the potential to contribute to the country’s economic and political sphere. Maseka and Makotong (1999), support the statement by pointing out that South African women are gaining recognition through several structures, for example legislative structures, government machinery and independent structures such as the Commission for Gender Equality and Women’s National Coalition (WNC) which was established in April 1992. However, illiterate women, because they lack the reading and writing skills, are unable to effectively access these structures.

South African governments of the past denied black people access to free, compulsory, general education which led to a high rate of illiteracy amongst blacks. The policies of the former government fragmented the education and training into different ethnic and racial sub-systems with unequal allocation of resources (Policy Document for Adult Basic Education and Training, 1997).

Black schools offered poor quality education. Before the emergence of the Government of National Unity in 1994, various education programmes offered basic education in the form of night schools or out of school classes. According to the Policy Document for Adult Basic Education and Training (1997), education provision was largely a second chance schooling system based on a primary or secondary school curriculum unsuited to the needs of adult learners; as a result those programmes were never effective, particularly in rural areas. Claessen and Wesemael (1992), support this statement and discuss how in the past, children’s booklets were often used as materials in adult classes.

Training in the past was the transference of knowledge by one set of people to another. In such training programmes the trainees were merely passive recipients of whatever the trainers decided to give them. Freire (1990), has a differing perspective of adult education. According to him learning is not a quantity of information to be memorised or a package of skills to be transferred to the students. Knowing, according to Freire (1990), means being an active subject who questions and transforms the world he/she is functioning in.

Rural black people are the most disadvantaged because of rural areas being so underdeveloped. Their lack of education contributes to their lack of employment, which results in poverty. Under the apartheid regime, women were discriminated against on the ground of their race, class, rural background and ethnicity (Maseka & Makotong, 1999). Generally, the status of South African women was undermined. These days we hear a great deal about women's empowerment, women's liberation and women's rights.

Women historically had limited access to paid employment. Those women who were employed were in poorly paid jobs such as domestic work and child minding. Women, according to McGivney & Sims (1986), are six times less likely to be employed than men. Rural black women in particular are the most disadvantaged in terms of literacy and prospects for jobs. They often experience poverty more acutely than men. Even so, most households in rural areas are headed by women, who have less access to paid employment. The majority of these women are not employed and lack income-generating skills to assist their families financially.

Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is often introduced as a remedy to the situation. Education is an essential component of the reconstruction, development and transformation process of South Africa. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) gives emphasis to the position of women in South Africa, and refers repeatedly to their rights. It also highlights the close link between women's education and development. ABET for women could contribute to economic development through its positive effect on family income.

According to the Policy Document for Adult Basic Education and Training (1997), the intention of the department is that ABET should occupy a central place in the development of South Africa through the provision of quality education and training opportunities for all.

Women development is one of the issues that ABET programmes have to address. My interest lies with women empowerment since they are left with the burden of supporting families. I will investigate the existing ABET programmes in the area of Mkhuhlu. Mkhuhlu is an area that falls under Bushbuckridge in the Northern Province. I will investigate whether the centres are providing relevant education according to the expressed needs of women in the area.

The first section will focus on the research interest and background to the problem, what motivated me to conduct research, the aim of the research, the main theoretical views and the methods to be used to collect and analyse data. Headings of the remaining sections will also be included.

1.2 RESEARCH INTEREST AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Like many other rural areas, the rural area of Mkhuhlu is underdeveloped. The majority of the population are women and children since most men migrated to cities or plantations in search of wage labour. Most of those who migrated to cities established new families there and no longer support their families left behind in Mkhuhlu. This resulted in many families being headed by women. Generally, polygamy is practiced in rural areas. Those who practice it find it difficult to support more than one family. Single parenting is very common because of the high number of widows. Demographic analysis together with evidence from local studies suggest that the proportion of women living as widows is high, notably in rural areas (Wilson & Ramphela, 1989). Teenage pregnancy in the area also adds to the number of single parents. Most women are under a great deal of strain as they are unemployed and lack income generating skills.

Although there are literates and some who are highly educated, the rate of illiteracy amongst women is very high. The problem of illiteracy has a definite

impact on the lives of people of this community. It makes it difficult for people to learn how to keep themselves and their families healthy (Mckay, 1995). Female education is seen as a health issue as well as a developing issue. Some women work as domestic workers in the small neighbouring township and earn an average income of R200.00 per month. Due to the lack of employment opportunities, the area is poverty-stricken and children are exposed to poverty related diseases. Women become the central focus in strategic planning programmes to overcome the hunger and malnutrition that accompany poverty because they and their dependent children dominate the poorest groups (Snyder & Tadesse, 1995). Malnutrition and gastroenteritis are very common results of poverty.

There is a high rate of infant mortality in the area. Some communities in the area have no health care centres. Mobile clinics are available to them only once a week. People experience problems when they are ill because they have to use transport to travel to a clinic or hospital in the township, or else they have to wait for the mobile clinic. The high birth rate contributes to poverty in the area. Snyder and Tadesse (1995:12), support this statement when they state that, "poverty could be limited by limiting fertility".

Rural women in general are destined to bear many children because of their ignorance of modern contraceptive methods. If the RDP aims to improve the quality of rural life, development efforts must address the special position of women. Women in the area of Mkhuhlu need empowerment so that they can contribute to the political and economic development of the society. Their lives should be transformed through various programmes which are relevant for women's empowerment. Women should learn what democracy could mean to them and not accept to be treated as subordinates. They should be made aware of their rights through the provision of relevant education and training.

Empowering women could lead to the development of the area. Most women in the area of Mkhuhlu lack the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. They also need income generating skills and other skills which can help them improve their living standards. Snyder and Tadesse (1995) see development for African women as a

positive answer to the needs for food, water, health, education and employment. Education provided by ABET programmes should be relevant to the needs of the community. Through empowerment women can take up their positions in the community. Through empowerment women can create and strengthen women's groups and organisations. The only organisations they belong to at present are burial societies and stokvels. "We need education which will affirm women, make them feel good about themselves and increase their self-confidence and self-respect" (Ursula, 1993:22). Women, according to McGivney & Sims (1986), need education or training which offer opportunities to move them out of traditional female work areas. Literacy should relate to other aspects of their daily life. Women need to be empowered to become economically independent and self-reliant. Education should empower them to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens of their communities.

ABET centres have been implemented in the area of Mkhuhlu to address the problem of illiteracy. According to Claessen and Wesemael (1992), programmes should not only teach women to read and write, but they should bring about changes in their lives in a positive way, such as improving the conditions under which they live with their husbands and children. Since most of them are responsible for providing financial support for their families they encounter a problem due to the lack of employment and income generating skills. It is the role of ABET to offer women those skills and empower them to change their living conditions. I will investigate the role played by ABET centres in developing women. I will study these ABET programmes in an effort to determine their role in these participants' development.

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Every South African has a democratic right to education. The Bill of Rights in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa enshrines the right of all citizens to a basic education, including adult education (The Policy Document for Adult Basic Education and Training, 1997). What motivated me to conduct this study is the concern I have about women's development. Many rural women still need to be empowered to realise their potential. As a group which constitutes the majority of

the Mkhuhlu population the responsibility of supporting families lies with them. They need programmes that will empower them to be able to start their own businesses, form groups and forums where they will discuss their family problems and how to overcome them, and also how to start their own projects. I am very interested in investigating the programmes that these ABET centres offer. I want to find out whether women, through these programmes, are being empowered.

Community education literature will be reviewed. Literature of all community educators / educationalists such as Townsend, Sergiovani, Freire, Vella will be studied and analysed. All literature on rural women development, community development, Adult Basic Education and Training and other literature which are relevant to the study, will be consulted.

1.4 THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

- 1.4.1 The ultimate aim of the research is to determine whether the ABET programmes that are being offered in the area lead to the development of women of the area.
- 1.4.1 Secondly, it aims at finding out whether the programmes offer income-generating skills for women participants.
- 1.4.2 The study will also investigate whether the ABET centres meet the needs of their women participants.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that I identified for this study are as follows:

- 1.5.1 How do the women perceive the programmes as contributing to their development?
- 1.5.2 Do these ABET centres meet the needs as expressed by female participants?

1.6 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Although ABET centres have been implemented in South African Communities for reconstruction and development, it is necessary that they should be investigated to determine whether they provide education relevant to the needs of that particular community. An understanding of the role of ABET is needed in order to address problems centres might have regarding the provision of ABET.

1.7 RESEARCH STRATEGY AND RESEARCH METHODS

For the investigation of this problem a qualitative research design will be followed. One major feature, according to Miles and Huberman (1994:10). Is that “they focus on natural, ordinary events and natural settings, so that we have a strong handle on what “real life is like.”

The theoretical population for the study will be female ABET learners in the Northern Province. Four ABET centres have been identified as sites for the investigations. These centres will be visited for observation of the programme activities. Observation will be conducted in a classroom setting at these centres. The observation will focus on what and how women participants learn. According to Patton (1987), the data from observations consist of detailed descriptions of programme activities, participants’ behaviors, staff actions and a full range of human interaction that can be part of the programme experience.

In-depth interviews will be conducted with sixteen female ABET participants from four different ABET centres. An interview guide will be employed to assist me in focusing my questions and collecting the relevant data.

Documents will also be analysed for purposes of investigation. In addition, one facilitator per centre, together with the supervisor and the coordinator, will be the key informants to the study. All data generated from observations, interviews and documents will be clustered and coded prior to being discussed.

1.8 GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE REMAINING SECTIONS

The essay is organised in four sections. In section one I presented the background to the study, motivation for the research, the aims of the research, the importance of the study and the methods of collecting, analysing and interpreting data.

In section two literature on rural women development, community education, community development and Adult Basic Education will be reviewed. Section three describes how data were collected, conceptualised, analysed, categorised and coded. The story of my investigation will be revealed, illustrated with examples of “raw” data and analytic data. In section four the findings will be discussed. Interpretations and recommendations will also be given.

1.9 SUMMARY OF THE SECTION

Mkhuhlu ABET centres have an important role to play in developing women in the area. This could lead to the development of the area as a whole, and in alleviating poverty by addressing illiteracy, lack of income generating skills and many other skills that may lead to the development of women. The inquiry will be conducted into the role of ABET programmes in the development of rural women in the Mkhuhlu area.

SECTION TWO

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Education has been denied to black people in the past, especially women. Snyder & Tadesse (1995), support this by saying that the unbearable constraints of women can be traced to apartheid. Rural women are the most disadvantaged as they were also denied education because of cultural and ethnic restrictions. This resulted in many women in rural areas being illiterate. Lack of literacy skills resulted in a significant number of women being unemployed and therefore poverty stricken. While most men in rural areas migrated to cities and plantations to seek employment, women were left in the community with the burden of looking after the children and the elderly. Since they are illiterate and unemployed they experience problems in supporting their families. Their families are exposed to poverty related diseases and the responsibility to fight hunger in their families, became their exclusive task.

This section focuses on the problems in rural areas that include illiteracy, lack of employment and poverty. It also discusses how women can be empowered through ABET programmes to solve these problems.

2.2 THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

Development is the process of changing or growing from one stage to another. The term is used in different ways depending on the context. However, when the term is applied to a country, it means the process by which a country modernises. Barbier et al (1990) defined development as change that is desirable. In my study, development will be defined as the process of improving the quality of life of rural women. According to Singh (1986), rural development as a concept connotes

overall development of rural areas with a view to improve the quality of life of rural people.

For illiterate rural women to develop, they need empowerment that could be advanced through various programmes. Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is one such programme that could offer skills that can transform their lives. Campaigns and transformations, according to Corner (1990), should also open up a wider range of learning opportunities and chances for women, which in turn should lead to a wider range of income generating forms of employment. Literacy makes possible better forms of communication, which is often at the core of progress and development (Hinzen, 1993). Without the basic skill of literacy, it will be difficult to learn other modern skills. Literacy, combined with other skills such as income generation, has been found to be most effective in poor communities.

2.3 WHAT IS ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ABET)

Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is education and training offered to adults. This type of education includes the acquiring of basic skills of literacy and numeracy. It also provides opportunities for life long learning and development. According to the Policy Document for Adult Basic Education and Training (1997:12), The South African Department of Education defines ABET as follows:

It is the general conceptual foundation towards life long learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts.

ABET could provide adults with the necessary skills required to lead a better life. Through ABET learners acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes useful to their daily lives. The new educational and training system in South Africa emphasises the formal articulation of education and training through the National Qualification Framework (Policy Document for Adult Basic Education and Training, 1997).

Most ABET programmes that were provided before 1994, emphasised knowledge but neglected the skills needed to lead a better life. When adults then failed to improve their living standards they tended to drop out of these programmes. According to Corner (1990), some of the fundamental factors affecting adult participation are certainly connected with employment. This is the most important motivator for adults to return to education. According to Klanedinst (1983), Adult Basic Education (ABE) was a programme of study for adults who had never completed the foundation phase of formal education. Those adults were returning to school to obtain certain basic skills in writing, Mathematics and communication.

The new Education and Training system in South Africa emphasises the recognition of prior learning and experience which learners have obtained through formal, non-formal and informal learning or through experience. As such education should be adapted to the needs of individuals at different stages in their development. In the past Adult Basic Education ignored prior learning or the experience adults had, when lessons were offered.

The syllabi and national core curriculum guidelines laid down what should be taught. Today the new education and training system is based on Outcome Based Education (Policy Document for Adult Basic Education and Training, 1997). Adults, by attending classes, acquire new skills and develop their own abilities. Hinzen (1993) states that as people discover that they are indeed capable of mastering the skills of reading and writing, they should also rightly conclude that they can be bolder in tackling other obstacles to progress in their lives. This concept is similar to conscientization, a concept that Paulo Freire made famous.

2.4 THE STATUS OF RURAL WOMEN

In South Africa women face several obstacles in all spheres of life, including their economic, social and sexual lives. Rural women are the most disadvantaged as they are oppressed in the public and private sphere. They are expected to behave according to traditional prescriptions and have to be accepting of subordination to men. They are considered to have subordinate social and economic status. Women in rural areas have fewer employment opportunities because of being

illiterate and because of a poor infrastructure. They are over burdened with household duties because their daily tasks include working in the fields, collecting firewood, fetching water and taking care of children.

Women, according to Bridger (1987), are more heavily involved than men in housework, childcare and private agriculture. In both urban and rural areas alike, the responsibility for childcare falls on women. They live most of their lives within the domestic sphere, while men on the other hand are usually associated with positions of authority and with the political life of the community. Women are often excluded from all levels of decision making. According to Obbo (1980), the need to control women has always been an important part of men's success in most African societies. Decision-making is for men, while women are expected to accept everything without questioning. This has been a contributing factor to a high number of women being illiterate, according to the Development Bank of Southern Africa (1994). The low literacy of adult rural women limits their ability to participate in decision-making structures and to benefit training and extension services.

The responsibility to care for the children, the sick and the elderly usually is the duty of women. According to Cain and Dauber (1981), the pre-colonial division of labour had tended in most instances to leave to women the task of raising children and growing food. Discrimination of women starts at an early age. The unequal treatment of women starts when they are just children. From childhood onwards a woman is taught by her mother to perform household duties to prepare her for marriage. Obbo (1980) supports the statement when she says that mothers encourage their daughters to learn to read and write but not at the expense of their wifely duties. Women's main duty becomes their handwork to be able to feed, support and rear their children.

In the 1950's it was the norm that boys were encouraged to become clerks outside the home, while parents opposed or ignored their daughters' education (Obbo, 1980). Snyder and Tadesse (1995) also support this statement when they state that daughters are forced to leave school to help their mothers to cook, wash and

fetch firewood. While girls fetch water, do washing and sweep the yard, boys are excused from such duties so that they could study and do their homework.

Rural women are mostly occupied with household duties throughout the day. According to Bridger (1987), lack of free time is a problem from which women suffer far more than men. As women are far more heavily involved than men in housework, childcare and private agriculture, they inevitably enjoy less leisure time. Cain and Dauber (1981) also talk about rural women's workload when they mention that, in rural areas of Asia and Latin America, women work longer hours than men in all age groups.

2.5 RURAL WOMEN AND POVERTY

In rural areas the people affected by poverty are mostly women. This is made worse by the number of women being illiterate and unemployed. Rural women, as stated, were denied the opportunity of education by the government and due to their cultural and ethnic traditions. In South Africa, particularly in rural areas, a large number of women are widows and therefore single parenting is very common. There are no precise figures of the number of widows in South Africa, but demographic analysis together with evidence from local authorities suggest that the proportion of women living as widows is high, notably in rural areas (Wilson & Ramphela, 1989).

Traditionally, women in black societies are compelled to be financially unusually dependent on their husbands. Should a husband die, the family's future is threatened. According to Sloane (1980), female-headed families have a much higher incidence of poverty than male headed ones. There are four groups amongst black women that are most likely to find themselves in difficulties, and they are widows, divorcees, wives of migrants and all women who head their own households. Life becomes difficult for a widow who is used to receiving a regular allowance from her husband. Wives of migrants also suffer from poverty because they do not receive financial support every month and when sent money, they receive a far smaller share of their men's income than they would do were he living with them. This is worse if the husband has started a new family in the city.

The cost of living in cities is very high and the city family's demands may drain his financial resources.

As females head most families in rural areas, the rate of poverty is very high. Some women head extended families composed of too many people who do not belong to a nuclear family. These people all depend on one person. It becomes the woman's responsibility to support them. Due to illiterate rural women lacking income-generating skills and the scarcity of job opportunities, a poverty situation often occurs. Poverty amongst women affects the whole family, including children and the old. Children of the poor go to school without food. In South Africa the government of National Unity introduced initiatives such as a feeding scheme in schools to help the poor. The scheme no longer exists in many schools because of a lack of funds. Poverty, malnutrition and ill health affect the child's progress in education. Nutritional status is an important determinant of learning capacity.

According to Wilson and Ramphela (1989), South Africa is one of the few countries in the world which exports food in considerable quantities, yet it is also a country in which there is wide spread hunger and malnutrition; and where diseases associated with poor nutrition take a heavy toll in deaths, particularly amongst children. Children are even admitted to hospitals because of Kwashiorkor, which is a disease caused by malnutrition. Women's lack of scientific technological education affects their own welfare and that of the household and the community in many different ways (D'Onofrio & Pfafflin, 1982). Children also suffer from gastroenteritis, which is caused by poor nutrition, sanitation and water supply. Adults are also exposed to diseases such as typhoid and cholera.

2.6 ABET AND FAMILY HEALTH

Rural areas are generally characterised by poverty and lack of various services. One of the major problems of health care in rural areas is the inadequate supply of doctors, nurses, hospitals and clinics. Often clinics and hospitals are very far. Some villages rely on mobile clinics, which come once a week.

Poverty in rural areas leads to poor health, which retards development. Where there is poverty there are cases of malnutrition, which make children to be exposed to diseases such as gastroenteritis, pneumonia and tuberculosis. According to McKay (1995), many children die before the age of four because of inadequacy of nutrition, inadequacy of immunisation against diseases and inappropriate treatment for common illnesses. Illiterate rural women bear many children, making the mortality rate higher for their families. Bearing and mothering children are important rituals which serve as proof of femininity. This is the traditional family role of these women (Scanzoni, 1995). Low fertility resulting from poverty and poor health of women causes unnecessary family tension and divorce.

According to Bhasin (1991), the high rate of consecutive births coupled with high rate of maternal and child mortality are very common patterns in Africa. Spacing of children is very important in healthcare. Illiterate rural women become pregnant frequently. Children born in this pattern have a very low chance of surviving. Because of having many children over short periods and having a heavy workload, women have no time or strength to care for or educate toddlers. "Better-educated women space births over longer periods which is good for maternal and childbirth" (Institute for Adult Basic Education and Training, 1999:24). Maternal education is closely related to the child's health and also to the child's intellectual development.

Uneducated girls marry or fall pregnant earlier, repeating the poverty cycle of their families. Teenagers' childbearing often leads to a poor quality of life for the baby and the mother. McKay (1995) supports this statement when she says that teenagers who fall pregnant often experience serious problems when they give birth. This raises the importance of ABET classes providing family planning education too. Women should be advised to give their children, of both sexes, such education. According to Bhasin (1991), women are important healthcare providers in the community; thus it is imperative for them to be provided with skills which will enable them to take adequate care of their children, their families as well as themselves.

The high birth rate in rural areas also contributes to poverty in the rural family. It is very common for husbands not to allow their wives to use contraceptives in rural areas. This is one way of ensuring that their wives remain faithful. Some women who stay with their husbands and those who are not married just ignore modern contraceptive methods.

Because of the inadequacy of health care units in rural areas, women should have knowledge of first aid and also what to do when a child becomes sick. Illiterate rural women need to learn about the benefits of hygiene habits for their family's well being. Many, for example, do not know the importance of covering food and the importance of washing hands. Such education should be provided in ABET classes.

2.7 POVERTY AND ILLITERACY

Poverty and illiteracy are closely linked. Both poverty and illiteracy are part of the system of deprivation and discrimination. Literacy leads to better health, better nutrition, lower infant mortality, better child education and fewer children. According to Suratwala (1992), Illiteracy is the cause of the impoverishment, exploitation and oppression of the poor, and literacy is the panacea for all their ills. In South Africa, according to Hutton (1992), black people were not given access to literacy on an effective scale. Mostly they were actively discouraged from becoming literate. Hutton (1992) also states that the problem has been worsened by policies which led to the creation of restrictive education systems such as Bantu education, which has deliberately limited the participation of blacks in the modern industrial and literate world.

Poverty reinforces illiteracy while economic well being, strengthens the educational base. According to Suratwala (1992), the economic conditions of the poor families in rural areas require not only the husband and the wife, but also the small children to work either full or part time either as labourers or on the farm, in factories or forests. They are also active in the handcraft trade and services for the survival and livelihood of the family. In most families girls stay at home to look after the children and to help their mothers with household duties. Those children

who somehow manage to enroll at school, cannot attend classes regularly because of poverty and lack of educational aids.

2.8 ABET AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

According to the literature, ABET centres should serve as institutions for empowerment. It is the central objective for programmes such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme to improve the quality of life of all the South Africans. ABET programmes therefore need to empower the illiterate and disadvantaged in black communities. They need to be empowered to improve their living standards. Furthermore, education provided by ABET programmes should be relevant to the needs of that community, otherwise development will be non-existent. It is therefore very important that before an ABET project is implemented, research is conducted to determine the needs of that particular community. Many ABET literacy programmes have high drop-out rates or fail to achieve the desired results when learners do not benefit economically or financially from attending classes. According to Claessen and Wesemael (1992:23) "motivation for literacy is only there if this is supporting economic activities".

Women join ABET classes with high expectations. They expect to receive education which will help them improve their quality of life. Literacy is a basic skill without which it's difficult to add modern skills (Hinzen, 1993). It is therefore very important that women are offered skills that will help them to cope in this changing society. With technology advancing everyday, those who cannot handle reading, writing and arithmetic are usually the poorest in the society and they will continually find themselves at a disadvantage (Hinzen, 1993). Literacy, according to Hutton (1992), is a vital component in development and transformation.

It is a common experience that illiterate persons, due to their uneducated state, keep quiet and let those who are educated run the country or their communities. It is the role of ABET programmes to empower such people through the offering of literacy and other skills so that they can enter into the political sphere of the country. According to the Development Bank of Southern Africa (1994), the low

literacy of adult women, particularly in rural areas, limits their ability to participate in decision-making structures and to benefit from training and extension services. Through the acquisition of literacy, women could become self-confident, critical and boldly exercise their rights and responsibilities as human beings. The real aim of education must be to liberate women from their helplessness. The poor should be liberated. However, literacy cannot liberate them if they are only made literate, which means that literacy should be accompanied by life skills. Claessen and Wesemael (1992) also state that literacy should be related to other aspects of the learners' daily lives.

Freire (1990) talks about a democratic learning process where learners should have the freedom to question and disagree with the facilitator's analysis. Women as learners need to be accorded the freedom to express their needs. They should be free to say exactly what they wish to learn. Freire (1990) is in favour of this type of education where there is a democratic transformative relationship between learners and the teacher. Literate women are more likely to ensure that their children attend school and since they are able to help their children at home, their children will learn to read at an early age. These children can also enjoy better health which can greatly affect their prospects in life. Townsend (1994) has a similar view when he encourages parental involvement in school matters, where he talks about parents visiting schools and becoming acquainted with classroom procedures. Parental involvement, which usually rests on the shoulders of mothers, can only be effective when parents are literate. Women need to be literate in order to be involved in school matters that affect their children's education.

Men believe that they have power over women and women also believe that they should submit to this domination by men. Education should liberate women to move out of this traditional belief. Daniels (1998) in her research on illiterate women found that because of their continual abuse, these abused women considered their situation to be normal. Women are sexually harassed and subjected to domestic violence and their sexuality is suppressed. Through educational empowerment they will know their rights. Programmes should not only teach women to read and to write, but they should bring about change in their

lives in a positive way, such as improving the conditions under which they live and improving their relationships with their husbands and children (Claessen and Wesemael, 1992). According to Forest (1995), in a liberating context, empowering is a concept, which gives meaning to the challenge to establish power relations between men and women. Since at present, many illiterate women play substantial productive roles, non-formal educational programmes should seek to provide them with the skills and knowledge that would make the execution of these tasks less demanding in terms of time and energy (Stromquist, 1994).

The offering of numeracy is also important in empowering illiterate women, especially those making a living in the informal work sector. They will learn skills of calculations, which will help them to calculate their profits, when they run their own businesses. By offering income-generating skills and business skills, women can be enabled to start their own small businesses. As there are a scarcity of jobs in South Africa, the offering of income generating skills in ABET centres is very important. With relevant skills women can become self-employed and alleviate poverty in their families.

The methodology used in ABET classes should be participatory. Outcome Based Education (OBE) as a new approach prefers a group work method. By applying this method, women learn to work in groups. Their self-image is built. By sharing ideas in groups on a given topic for discussion they learn to solve problems together. This form of empowerment will enable them to form women's clubs and forums in which they will be able to discuss their family problems. As groups, they can collectively start and manage projects. According to Klanedinst (1983), learning should be problem centred. In groups learners learn to solve problems together.

2.9 CONCLUSION

The above discussion set out to show how important ABET programmes could be to develop women as citizens. ABET centres should be considered as institutions for empowerment. South Africa is in a process of transformation. According to Forest (1995) empowerment is a tool for democratic transformation. In order for

ABET centres to be effective they should address the problems participants experience. As empowered beings, women would contribute to the country's economic and political sphere. When women are empowered, it can lead to social change in the community and society. It could lead to traditional black men and women viewing life in a different way. Women's empowerment has an effect on the general pace of community development. When a woman is educated, the whole nation benefits. Non-formal education programmes, according to Stromquist (1994), should seek to provide women with productive skills to enable them to enter the market economy in more advantageous conditions than before. Mkhuhlu ABET centres, as providers of non-formal programmes, could play an important role in developing women in the area. These centres could provide a solution to some of the problems the area encounters, such as illiteracy and unemployment of adults, especially women.



SECTION 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to discuss the research design and the methodology used in collecting the data on the role ABET programmes are playing in developing black women in Mkhuhlu rural area. The discussion includes:

- The description of the setting on the inquiry
- The research plan
- Sampling procedures
- Data collection
- Data analysis
- Final configuration

3.2 SETTING OF THE INQUIRY

The investigation took place in the Mkhuhlu area, which is in the Bushbuckridge district in the Northern Province. For this study, four villages were selected as the setting for the research. The villages are Tsema-marhumbu, Mashonamini, Goromani and Cork.

Tsema-marhumbu village is very close to Mkhuhlu Township. The village has many unemployed adults. Most of them make a living by selling fruits and vegetables. Their children carry basins of these fruits and vegetables every day when they come from school and sell them in the township. Many families are poor and have no other source of income. The roads in this village are underdeveloped and in a bad condition. ABET classes are conducted in Bejani Primary School.

Mashonamini village is roughly twenty kilometers from the main tarred road. According to one of the female participants, the name is derived from the high

death rate in the village. Roads are not developed and also in a bad condition. Most people in this village are illiterate and unemployed and as a result are poverty stricken. The village also houses many Mozambican refugees who add to the number of illiterates and the poor. ABET classes are conducted in a poorly resourced local primary school called Londinda.

Goromani is a village about 15 km away from the main tarred road. It also has poor infrastructure. Roads are in just as bad a condition as the other villages in the area. Also significant is the high rate of illiterates and unemployed. ABET classes are conducted in Phaphama Primary School.

Cork village is situated on the way to one of the Kruger National Park camps known as Skukuza. A few people living in this village work in Skukuza whilst most of the villagers are unemployed, illiterate and poverty stricken. Mkhumbini Primary School is used for ABET classes. All the villages share poverty, illiteracy and unemployment.

3.3 THE RESEARCH PLAN

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative data with their emphasis on the people's lived experience are fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes and structures of their perceptions, assumptions, prejudgements, presuppositions and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them. The researcher, therefore, selected the following qualitative research methods:

- Observation
- Documentation and
- In-depth interviews

Sampling was done according to geographic location when four villages closest to Mkhuhlu Township, were selected. Typical case sampling was applied in the selection of the sixteen participants. The researcher was not familiar with the centres; thus a Mkhuhlu coordinator helped in identifying them. Data were collected through interviews where the interview guide was used to make sure that

the same questions were asked of the sixteen women that were interviewed, allowing that the same material be covered by the interviewer. The data that were collected were then analysed by reducing and displaying the information. Miles and Huberman (1994) see the importance of displays when they state that looking at displays help us to understand what is happening. This could lead to further analysis or further action.

3.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURES

In this research purposeful sampling was used. The power of purposeful sampling, according to Patton (1987), lies in selecting information from the cases through in-depth study. The researcher focused in-depth on understanding the needs, interests and the quality of life of the selected participants. As I already stated, sampling was done according to geographic locations when the four villages closest to Mkhuhlu Township were selected. The researcher used typical case sampling to select the sixteen participants. Four female learners were selected from each of the four ABET centres. Initially one ABET female learner in each of the four ABET levels in the four centres was to be interviewed. Since the four centres visited only offer ABET at two levels, two female learners from each of the two levels were selected for interviews.

Table 1 reflects the field study sample as well as information about the female participants.

Table 1: Field study sample

Centre	Interviewees	Level	Age	Marital Status	Occupation
Phaphama	1. Christine	1	49	Married	Unemployed
	2. Busi	1	44	Married	Unemployed
	3. Doreen	2	50	Single	Unemployed
	4. Zodwa	2	24	Single	Unemployed
Bejani	5. Alita	1	26	Married	Unemployed
	6. Edith	1	28	Married	Unemployed
	7. Anna	2	46	Married	Unemployed
	8. Dorah	2	50	Married	Unemployed
Londinda	9. Alucia	3	26	Married	Unemployed
	10. Gloria	3	33	Married	Unemployed
	11. Julia	1	40	Married	Unemployed
	12. Welma	1	45	Widow	Unemployed
Mkhumbini	13. Mable	1	31	Married	Unemployed
	14. Ruth	1	45	Divorced	Employed
	15. Audrey	2	44	2 nd wife	Unemployed
	16. Rita	2	40	Widow	Unemployed

As the table shows, with the exception of one of the women, all were unemployed. Furthermore, two were single, ten were married, two were widows and one divorced.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected over a period of twelve days. Observation was done by the researcher in one class in each of the four centres. The purpose was to be able to describe the programme as thoroughly and carefully as possible. This included describing the activities that took place in the programme and the people who participated in those activities. Observation allowed better understanding of the people to be interviewed and of the context within which programme activities occurred. Rural women, especially Shangaans, are very shy and it was anticipated that it might be difficult for them to provide information to a stranger. By first meeting them in a classroom situation, the researcher had the opportunity of establishing a good relationship. This made the conducting of interviews easier as they were then free to respond to questions and also to air their views.

During observation field notes were taken. Patton (1987:92) defines field notes as "the description of what has been observed." The field notes included the description of the classroom, the arrangement of desks and the participant's activities together with how they interacted with one another in the class. The programmes offered to learners were also observed and recorded. The field notes were dated and information such as where the observation took place was recorded as well.

Documents were also analysed for purposes of informing the inquiry and supporting the data that were collected. These included attendance registers, learners' teaching and learning material and learners' work. The teaching and writing materials were studied to determine the content of the courses that were being offered. By checking the attendance registers the researcher could determine how frequent learners attended classes and also the dropout rate of the learners.

The following table reflects the attendance register for the four centres that were visited.

Table 2: Learners enrollment

Centre	Number enrolled		Number dropped		Learners attending	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Phaphama	5	26	3	8	2	18
Bejani	3	32	2	10	1	22
Londinda	-	23	-	19	-	4
Mkhumbini	3	26	3	8	0	18

The following table is a schedule of the dates when these interviews took place.

Table 3: Schedule of interviews

Names of centres	Participants	Date of data collection
Phaphama	1. Christine 2. Busi 3. Doreen 4. Zodwa	3/05 – 5/05/99
Bejani	5. Alita 6. Edith 7. Anna 8. Dorah	13/09 – 15/09/99
Londinda	9. Alucia 10. Gloria 11. Julia 12. Welma	27/09 – 29/09/99
Mkhumbini	13. Mable 14. Ruth 15. Audrey 16. Rita	04/10 – 06/10/99

In-depth interviews were conducted with four female learners in each of the four ABET centres. An interview guide together with a tape-recorder were used as tools in the data gathering process. Using the interview guide allowed the researcher to obtain the same information from different people by covering the

same material. The advantage of using an interview guide, according to Patton (1987), is that it makes sure the interviewer has carefully decided how best to use the limited time available in an interview situation. Using the recorder permitted the researcher to be more attentive to the interviewee. Interviewing one person at a time allowed face-to-face interaction. During the interviewing process notes were taken. The interview was conducted in the participants' own languages, which is Tsonga for the three centres and Swazi for one. These are languages that I am fluent in too. In two centres where it was not possible to use a tape recorder, my note taking was much more thorough and comprehensive. The interviewer had to read back to the interviewee what was written for confirmation of authenticity.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The aim of data analysis is to make the process of interpreting data much easier. According to Patton (1987), analysis is the process of bringing order to the data and organising it into patterns, categories and basic descriptive units. After the interviews the recordings were checked to make sure that they were recorded properly. I also went over the interview notes to make certain that what was written made sense and to review the quality of information received from respondents.

The collected data were initially transcribed from the tapes and then re-read several times. The aim of this was to derive clarification regarding the specific meaning of terms and sentences as the interviews were conducted in Tsonga and Swazi, and then translated into English. The field notes were also reviewed. All collected data for the individual interviews were processed into a comprehensive summary.

After I reduced the data, the following themes were identified to be explored in more detail:

- Motivation to attend
- Learners' experiences

Table 4 is an example of the codes and their meanings used when the data were analysed.

Table 4: Codes for data collection

Code	Motivation to attend
RBH	Learn to read the Bible and sing from a hymn book
LN	To learn literacy and numeracy
RWSE	To learn to read, write and speak English
CF	To learn to complete forms
GJ	To get a job
GP	To get promotion at work
SM	To save marriage
BOS	To broaden her knowledge of other subjects
SC	Sewing and crocheting

The following table represents the frequency of the themes as they occurred in the raw data for the interviewed women.

Table 5: Frequency of themes

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Code	Christine	Busi	Doreen	Zodwa	Alita	Edith	Anna	Dorah	Alucia	Gloria	Julia	Welma	Mable	Ruth	Audrey	Rita	Total
RBH	X	X															2
LN	X		X	X			X	X			X	X					7
RWSE					X				X	X			X	X	X	X	7
CF			X			X			X	X					X		5
GJ						X		X	X	X							4
GP														X			1
SM					X				X	X			X				4
BOS									X	X							2
SC	X	X	X		X	X	X	X							X		8

Table 6: Learner's experiences of ABET classes

Learners	Learning	Empowerment	Facilitator	ABET Programmes
1. Christine	EFF	MF	GD	MF
2. Busi	EFF	MF	GD	MF
3. Doreen	MF	MF	GD	MF
4. Zodwa	MF	MF	GD	MF
5. Alita	MF	MF	FR	MF
6. Edith	EFF	EFF	GD	MF
7. Anna	MF	EFF	FR	INF
8. Dorah	INF	MF	FR	INF
9. Alucia	INF	INF	FR	INF
10. Gloria	INF	INF	FR	INF
11. Julia	INF	INF	FR	MF
12. Welma	INF	MF	FR	INF
13. Mable	MF	MF	FR	INF
14. Ruth	INF	MF	FR	EFF
15. Audrey	MF	EFF	FR	MF
16. Rita	MF	EFF	FR	MF

GD = Good FR = Fair EFF = Effective INF = Ineffective
 MF = Mixed effective.

3.6.1 MOTIVATION TO ATTEND

The female learners that I interviewed had similar reasons for attending. They all wanted to learn to read, write and speak English, because most of the correspondences are written in English. They joined the centres with high expectations and when things did not happen the way they expected, they became discouraged. They wanted to know how to read, write and speak English. Reading was necessary, for instance, to read warning signs such as 'beware of dogs' or 'no trespassing'. As one stated, if you cannot read you might be bitten by dogs. She does not want to be caught unaware. She went on to say:

Hi lava ku hluvuka.

[We want to be civilized.]

Christine wanted to be able to read the Bible and sing from a hymnbook in church. Her comment was:

Nami ngifuna ukufana nabanye abafazi esontweni.

[I also want to be like the other women in church.]

Some women wanted to save their marriages. Their husbands work in cities and might leave them for city women who are educated and civilized. Alucia indicated that her husband has a senior certificate and she might lose him because of her illiteracy. Dorah wanted to know how to read, write and speak English because of her need to complete forms. She finds it embarrassing when she fails to complete forms in offices. She explained how she once failed to complete forms for borrowing money from the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) offices. Ruth, the only learner who was employed, indicated that she wanted to learn to read because as she is working with colours, she is experiencing problems in reading the names of the colours. She also could not be promoted because of being uneducated. She has been working for twenty years but is earning an income of R420-00 per month.

Another common problem that the women mentioned was that they were not getting jobs as they were unable to write application letters. Gloria wanted to be able to monitor the progress of her children at school. She said that she did not want to be in the company of educated people because they sometimes use English words that she could not understand. That is when she becomes embarrassed.

3.6.2 PROBLEMS AFFECTING ATTENDANCE

All the women who were interviewed felt disappointed by the approach of the facilitators. Reading, writing and speaking English was a priority for them but some facilitators concentrated on offering Tsonga more than English, which made them to become discouraged. Alucia and Gloria gave similar responses. They sometimes felt like not attending classes because they could not do all the subjects. They wanted to do subjects such as Geography, General Science and

History, like grade 7 learners, as they were in level 3. Audrey also mentioned that she sometimes feel lazy to go and attend classes. She said:

Ndzi pfa ndzi loloha ku ya exikolweni ndzi lovha.

[I sometimes feel like not going to the centre and decide to be absent.]

Some women expressed the problem of attending to household duties. Sometimes they find themselves very occupied with household duties like cooking for the family and fetching firewood during the time when classes are conducted since they have no money to buy firewood. They sometimes absent themselves from classes to sell vegetables for an income. Family problems also affect their concentration. Audrey mentioned her lack of concentration in class when there is no food for her children. She is a second wife with seven children. Her husband cannot afford to support both families. While she is supposed to concentrate on her school work, she worries about her personal problems at home.

3.6.3 BENEFITS FROM ATTENDING CLASSES

Most of the female learners who I interviewed said that they did not benefit from attending classes. They said that their living conditions are still the same. They are still suffering from poverty in their families. Some still could not write, speak or read English. Those who said they benefited, could read a bit of English and Tsonga.

Anna indicated that she only improved her reading and writing skills but nothing in her life changed. She started attending classes in 1992 but she is still in level one. For the other years she enrolled, she never benefited because as soon as she started acquiring reading skills, the centre ceased to function. This year she only improved her reading and writing skills. She said that she is selling tomatoes and onions but she does not make a profit. She went on to say:

Ekaya ha fa hi ndlala.

[At home we are starving.]

Audrey indicated that she could not even greet a person in English. She said:

A swi pfuni ku hamba mina a ndzi se pfuleka kahle.

[To be honest, I am still having a problem.]

3.7 CONCLUSION

In this section the data was coded and organised according to categories. The data provided in this section was a preparation for the discussion of the findings, which will follow in section four.



SECTION 4

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous section focused on the collection and analysis of data. This section will provide detailed descriptions of the categories that were presented in section three of this study. The implication of the findings will be discussed and recommendations will be provided. This section answers the research questions that emerged in section one of this study.

4.2 DISCUSSION OF THE FINAL CATEGORIES

The learners who were interviewed for this inquiry expressed their motivation to learn as being to acquire literacy as well as social and handwork skills. During the inquiry I found that the above skills were never acquired. Those who improved their skills would write and read a little bit. As already mentioned in section three, when female learners join adult classes they have high expectations. They hope to acquire what they needed within a short period of time. Upon investigation it was discovered that it took them a long time to acquire the reading and writing skills. Those who started attending ABET classes in 1992 were still in the beginners class. When learners started to improve, centres ceased to function for reasons not known to them, They had to discontinue their studies. When learners attend ABET classes they expect to improve their quality of life. When interviewed, the female learners also raised their concerns as to be educated and live better lives like others. They wanted to be civilised and live a better life. According to Stromquist (1994), non-formal education should be accompanied by a transformative vision. When female learners do not receive what they expected, they drop out. The attendance registers studied by me, attest to that. Of the one hundred and seven women who originally enrolled, forty five dropped out of the programmes.

During the investigation a concern that many learners had was the fact that facilitators put more emphasis on presenting their mother tongue which is Tsonga, instead of advancing English in the class. They, on the other hand, needed to learn English, an international language, to be able to communicate with the broader society. Claessen and Wesemael (1992) agree with this idea when they mention that proficiency in the local language does not give access to public life, and knowledge of an international language is a necessity to be able to exercise power.

Another motivation to attend classes was the receiving / acquiring of handwork skills that these centres do not offer. All centres that were visited, offer Tsonga / Swazi, English and numeracy. According to Claessen and Wesemael (1992), when women join ABET classes, their first occupation is coping with poverty and survival. Centres do not offer handwork skills. Acquiring handwork skills would permit the women to make their own articles and sell them for money, which could fight poverty in their families. Some learners mentioned that they sometimes feel it is a waste of time to attend classes; thus they sometimes decided to stay away from classes. During the discussion some learners revealed their concern of not being offered other subjects such as Geography, History and General Science. According to the interviewed female learners who were in level three, that would broaden their knowledge. They felt that it was not enough to learn literacy and numeracy only. This is an indication that female learners needed more knowledge. As expressed by the learners themselves, education is broad and they needed to be offered anything that can empower them. Claessen and Wesemael (1992) support this idea when they mention that the literacy should be related to other aspects of daily life.

The artifacts such as the registers, revealed that the drop out rate was high at all the centres visited. This normally happens when learners do not benefit from ABET programmes offered, especially when their living conditions do not improve. Learners experienced the programme as not beneficiary. Another contributory factor is poverty, which is significant in their families. Their children are starving and exposed to poverty related diseases. The female learners also mentioned

that they sometimes lose concentration in class when thinking of the problems they left at home. ABET centres could aim to remedy some of these problems. Some female learners mentioned that they do not know what to do to supplement their husbands' incomes. In some families both the husband and wife are unemployed, as is the case for many of the female learners I interviewed for the study.

The offering of literacy and numeracy is not enough; they should also be accompanied by the teaching of income generating skills. The women should also be empowered to be able to engage in a productive activity that will allow them some degree of financial independence (Stromquist 1994). The female learners' confidence is not being built in the Mkhuhlu ABET classes, as the programmes that are offered do not contribute to building women's confidence. Generally, illiterate black women have low self-esteem. During observation, it was observed that facilitators do not apply a group work methodology. Desks were arranged in rows and the facilitator was standing in front of the learners. By the offering of relevant skills and the use of relevant methods, female ABET learner's confidence could be nurtured.



It is imperative that the female learners acquire confidence to cope on their own. Women from this area are often left alone when their husbands migrate to cities and plantations. They are heading families and need to be confident in doing so. The use of group work in classroom activities builds confidence when learners get a chance to voice their views. By sharing ideas, which will be reported back to the whole class, it makes them realise that they know something. In a small group, adults are more likely to practice freedom. Vella (1995) affirms this statement when she says that the small group is a place where people practice freedom, autonomy and mutual acceptance.

Participation in a group contributes to improve critical thinking. In a democratic society, women need to be critical thinkers. They should have critical skills to be able to question their circumstances. They also need to contribute to the political sphere of their society at large. Programmes offered to female ABET learners need to transform them from being passive citizens of their country into active

participants. The women interviewed lacked confidence and critical skills and could benefit from empowering methodologies. By learning in groups, they might collaboratively find a solution to a problem. This will allow them to gain confidence to discuss their personal and family problems and come up with solutions. As women groups they can collectively discuss issues such as how they can fight poverty in their families and their community.

4.3 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE STUDY

The research that was conducted unfolded other dynamics involved in adult learning programmes. One might be swayed into thinking that adults have a limited scope of learning and that what matters to them is reading and writing. It is only after looking at the dynamics of the programme that one is able to identify genuine problems which are engraved in the minds and lives of the illiterates. The study revealed a need to address the needs of the illiterates as well as drafting a sound and relevant programme. As expressed by the learners, some of their needs and expectations differ from one individual to the other. The study has some limitations. As a pilot study it restricted the recordings of data due to the set criteria and time constraints.

4.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE INQUIRY

From the data which were collected and presented it is clear that the programmes do not empower women. The programmes' content are not enough and the methodologies used are not effective. What is needed by the participants is the offering of income generating skills to empower them economically. The ABET centres that were visited do not offer skills that can improve the quality of life of female learners. The learners who were interviewed had problems of how to become self-sufficient and earn a living. The ABET centres do not offer programmes that teach skills that they can apply to generate money. As most of the interviewees make a living out of selling fruits and vegetables, they need numeracy skills to be able to calculate their profit and avoid running their businesses at a loss. Health Education is also not offered. This type of education could be beneficial to them and their families. Legal education could also benefit

the women, though it is also not offered. Women should know their rights as citizens of this country. Claessen and Wesemael (1992) support this when they say that legal education should be provided to women. Women, as learners, are not given a chance to evaluate the programmes as a whole, which would permit the implementers to be able to assess the Programme. They are often not given a chance to say what they wish to learn, as is the case with the interviewees. According to Claessen and Wesemael (1992), programmes should start with priorities expressed by women themselves, such as health, skills, income generation or legal education.

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings I will recommend the following:

1. ABET centres should not only concentrate on the offering of literacy and numeracy, but should also offer the following programmes:
 - 1.1 Income generating skills – by acquiring these skills learners would be able to start their own businesses. In a community such as this where unemployment is rife, this might present a solution for some.
 - 1.2 Business skills – learners need to know how to start and manage their own businesses. Those who sell fruit and vegetables, could open fruit stalls and expand their businesses.
 - 1.3 Legal education – the offering of legal education is also necessary for rural women to know their rights.
 - 1.4 Health Education – is also a valuable programme to assist these women in looking well after themselves and their children.
2. Prior to offering any programme to women, a needs analysis should be done to determine exactly what women need to learn and ways of developing them furthermore.

3. ABET practitioners need to be empowered in workshops with the use of relevant methods in teaching adult learners.

4.6 CONCLUSION

The study investigated the role played by ABET programmes in the development of women in the Mkhuhlu rural area. The purpose was to determine whether ABET programmes that are being offered lead to the development of women in the area. The study was conducted in the four selected Mkhuhlu villages. It was conducted with sixteen female learners; four in each of the four ABET centres. Methods of qualitative research were used for data collection. Observation was done in one class in each of the four centres. Documents were also analysed for purposes of investigation. In-depth interviews were conducted with four female learners in each case. Research findings established that the female ABET learners are not improving their quality of life. The ABET programmes are not developing them economically, as was their prioritised need which results in a high drop-out rate. The study revealed the lack of offering skills that can lead to the development of women. It also revealed a need for ABET programmes that are relevant to the specified needs of poor rural people who see education as an opportunity to improve their lives and that of their families.

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APPENDIX

Questions for individual interviews

Biographic information:

Name : Christine
Age : 49
Marital status : Married
Occupation : Unemployed
Level : 1

Interviewer : Tell me about your family

Christine : I stay around here [Goromani]. I have eleven children and five Grandchildren. I had twelve children but one passed away at the age of four.

Interviewer : What is your husband doing?

Christine : He is not working presently. He was working but is now too old to work so he just stay at home with us.

Interviewer : What motivated you to join classes?

Christine : You mean to come to the centre?

Interviewer : Yes

Christine : My child, I cannot read the Bible and sing from the hymnbook. I want to be able to read the Bible in church like other women. I also want to learn crocheting.

Interviewer : What courses are you doing?

Christine : I am in level one and am doing Swazi, English and Mathematics

Interviewer : Do you benefit from attending classes?

Christine : Well, I can say I have improved a bit because I can recognise
Some numbers.

Interviewer : Did your life style change ever since you started attending?

Christine : You mean to change in which way?

Interviewer : To improve the way you leave at home

Christine : My child we are still starving at home. We do not have money to
buy food for such a big family.

Interviewer : Do you have problems affecting your attendance?

Christine : Honestly I have no problems, except that I sometimes fail to attend
If my elder daughter is not at home. I have to cook for the
Grandchildren or sometimes have to fetch some firewood.

Interviewer : What further needs do you have?

Christine : I want to know crocheting maybe I can sell my designs and get
money.