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APPLICATION OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN CROP PRODUCTION BY
SUBSISTENCE FARMERS IN VILLAGE 24 NYAJENA AREA, MASVINGO

BY

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(P008 529S)**

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS OF THE MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE

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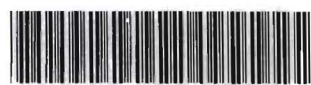
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ABSTRACT

Having observed that subsistence farmers in Village 24, Nyajena Area, Masvingo were food insecure and yet not taking advantage of the Indigenous Knowledge (IK) at their disposal to improve their farming, this study sought to investigate the extent of application of IK in crop production by the farmers. The main view emerging from the reviewed literature was that IK offers a full package in crop production ranging from land preparation, rain making to harvesting of crops. Using a mixed methods approach, a descriptive case study was employed to collect data from the Agricultural Extension Officer, also from a focus group discussion of 40 farmers and 10 key informants from the 150 homesteads in Village 24. Observations were also conducted by the researcher. Findings showed that those subsistence farmers who used IK mainly used it for land preparations, rainfall enhancement and predictions. Farmers mostly needed knowledge on growing crops, crop varieties and climate change. The sources of IK included elderly people in the community, Agricultural Extension Officers and 'rain makers'. Farmers were sharing IK during meetings and social gatherings. The challenges in accessing IK ranged from lack of printed materials like books, illiteracy, lack of sharing culture, absence of a library with IK information, expensive and slow Internet among other things. The researcher concluded that unawareness of IK could not be solely blamed for the droughts but some factors like climate change, new pests on the rampage and cultural erosion due to Westernization was also to blame. The researcher recommended that irrigation schemes be introduced; prices of farming inputs be subsidised for farmers and a library be constructed to facilitate IK documentation and access to information including agricultural information.