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Investigating the Significance of Wild *Aloe* (*Aloe ferox*) Harvesting in the Livelihoods of the Rural Communities of the Eastern Cape, South Africa

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Structure

- Introduction
- Methods
- Results and Discussion
- Conclusion and Recommendations
- Future Research Activities

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Introduction



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- The practice of *Aloe ferox* harvesting for various purposes started more than 300 years ago in South Africa (Newton and Vaughan, 1996).
- The communal areas of the Cape region are considered to have developed into hot spots for *Aloe ferox* harvesting in over the years.
- In the recent years, limited livelihood options to rural communities and increased opportunities for commercial exploitation of *Aloe ferox* rendered its harvesting to be one of the alternative livelihood activities for the poor rural communities inhabiting communal areas of the Cape region (Shackleton *et al*, 2009).
- However, there are few studies focusing on the significance of *Aloe ferox* harvesting in the livelihoods of the rural poor communities.

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Introduction



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- Single stemmed, perennial shrub, height of 2-3 metres, succulent leaves.
- Stems are characteristically clothed in a skirt of dry leaves.
- Boat-like shaped leaves which curve upwards and bordered by sharp reddish spines.



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Figure1. *Aloe ferox* plant



Introduction

- The aim of this study was to investigate the significance of *Aloe ferox* harvesting in the livelihoods of the rural poor communities of three villages (Khayamnandi, Pumulani and Jani) in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

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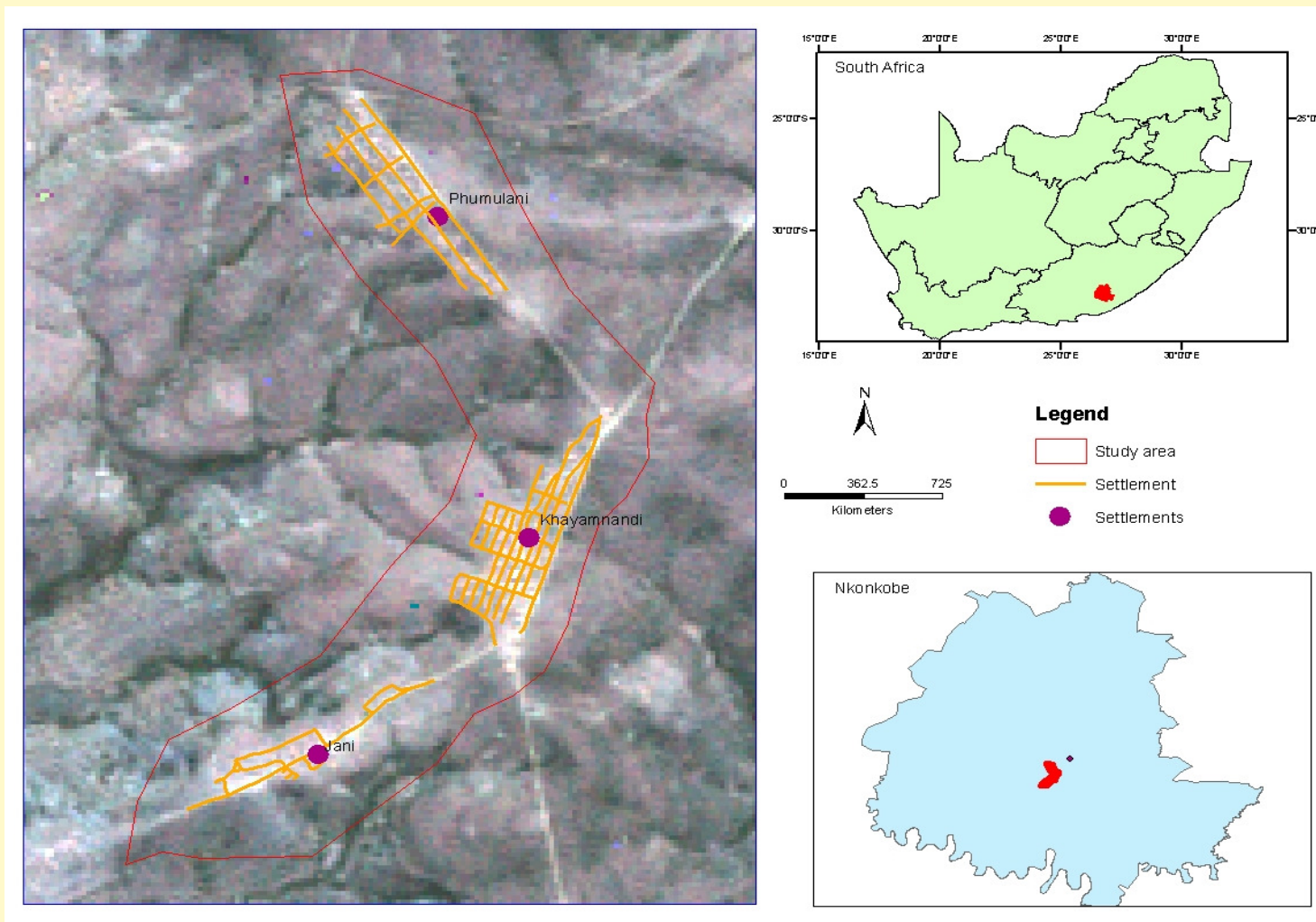


Figure 2. Location of the Study Area

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Methods

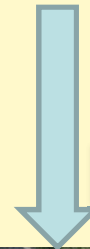
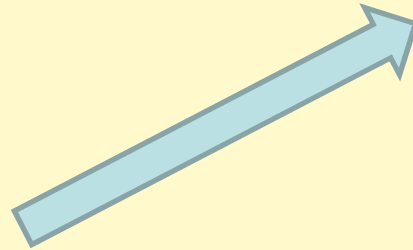
- Questionnaires were used to obtain data related to the perceptions of the communities about the significance of *Aloe ferox* harvesting in their livelihoods.
- Questionnaires were administered through individual interviews .
- A total of 38 individual (32 females & 6 males) were interviewed.
- A focused group discussion (15 individuals) was conducted.
- Field observations were undertaken.



Results and Discussion



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1-2L of exudates



Figure 3. Process of *Aloe* tapping
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20L = R240.00 approximately 22 USD



Results and Discussion

- All respondents found that *Aloe* tapping was already being practiced when they grew up.
- They learnt how to do *Aloe* tapping through observing elders who were already acquainted with the activity.
- The respondents were compelled to join *Aloe* harvesting group by lack of options for income generation.
- They were not aware of policy issues that affect their involvement in this activity.

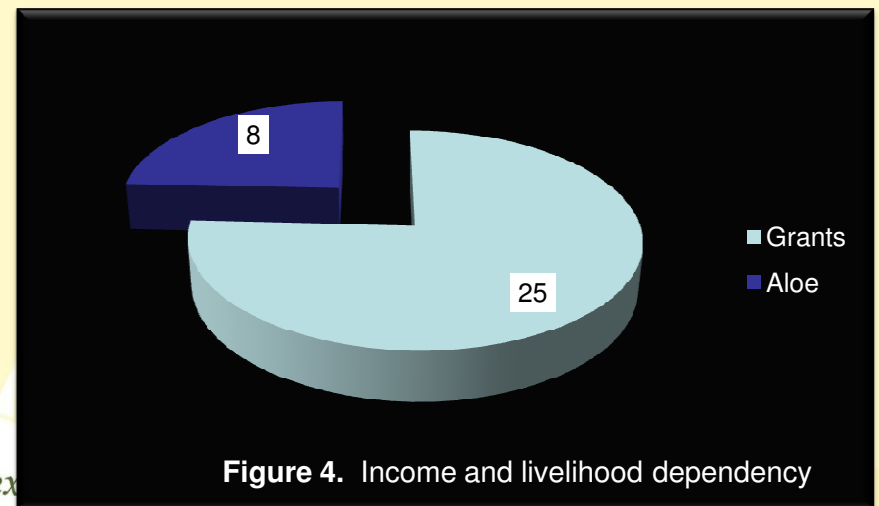


Figure 4. Income and livelihood dependency

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Results and Discussion



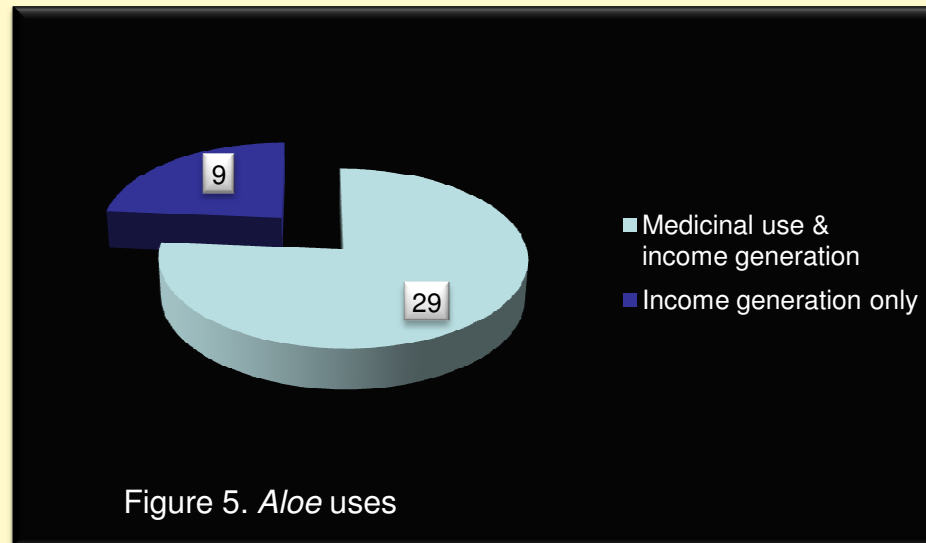
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- Harvesting was conducted any day except during rainy and windy days as these conditions negate productivity of the *Aloe* exudates.
- 7 respondents indicated that 2 members of their families were involved, while 1 mentioned that 3 family members were involved.
- Since the *Aloe* harvesting is conducted some distance away from the settlements, the harvesters usually go out in groups for security purposes.
- All harvesters did not have effective protective equipment, although some used conventional gloves, boots and coats.

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Results and Discussion



- Respondents indicated that some risks associated with *Aloe* harvesting include snake bites and injuries from the spines.
- They also alluded to some illnesses that they believed were caused by inhaling gaseous products from *Aloe* exudates. This was however difficult to ascertain.

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Results and Discussion

- Suggestions from the respondents
 - Government should
 - provide personal protective equipment,
 - set prices,
 - provide needed machinery,
 - train Aloe harvesters,
 - provide funds to start cooperatives/ groups.

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Conclusion and Recommendations



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- This research established that *Aloe ferox* harvesting is a potential poverty alleviation communal activity which can be implemented in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape.
- It is however not immune to challenges:
 - Lack of organization and coordination among the harvesters.
 - Lack of knowledge regarding the policies and regulations guiding the activity.
 - Lack of appropriate equipment.
 - Lack of monitoring and regulation of *Aloe* harvesting rates.
- The communities may be assisted by governmental organization or non-governmental organizations to form community based natural resources management trust.

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Future Research Activities

- Determine ways of assisting the communities to establish a community based natural resource management trust.
- Liaise with governmental and non-governmental organizations on issues of empowering the communities on *Aloe* harvesting related matters.
- Continue this research by incorporating issues concerning sustainability

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Thank You

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