

Chapter 2

Literature Review of Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture

2.1 Introduction

The literature on urban agriculture has been on the increase due to number of reasons since the late 1970's. There has also been a very considerable increase on urban agriculture literature since 1992 (Hardoy, Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2001: 280). Researchers are gaining interest in this topic which is becoming overwhelmingly important. Rural people from farming environments are migrating to cities; many people in urban areas are not earning enough income from the formal sector needed to meet basic needs and there will be urban agriculture, and moreover the formal sector is unable to employ rural people. Urban areas are also facing three processes namely, they are becoming huge metropolies, with growth uncontrolled, they are faced with increasing poverty and food supply is a problem.

2.2 International literature on urban agriculture

Karaan & Mohamed (1996) state that South African urban planners, policy makers, researchers and practitioners do not have a strong tradition of urban agriculture and it is essential to draw experience from international countries so as to gain a better understanding of the activity. International literature reviews outline vegetable production in highly dense urban areas in other parts of the world, and it is from their successes and experiences that South African officials and planners should deduce the potential of urban agriculture in our densely populated urban areas.

In the United States of America, Manhattan city (Schmelzkopf, 1996) and North America (Frodhard 1993; Klinkenborg, 1995) offer some valuable suggestions to policy makers with regard to the potential of urban agriculture. Eberhard (1989b: p.54) states that: "*In Britain city farms are a new and growing phenomenon, these city farms are community projects working with farm animals and gardening, situated on areas of derelict land in the centre*

and edges of towns and cities.” In Asia several studies have alerted policy makers, planners and authorities to the significance of urban agriculture (Yeung, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988; Latz, 1991) cited by Rogerson (1993: p.35). In China, policy makers and the positive attitude of public authorities have greatly enhanced the role of urban agriculture (Hardoy, Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 2001). Before 1998, urban agriculture was virtually unheard of in Cuba, but today there are 28,000 kitchen *huertos* or gardens, run by almost 10,000 people (Gilmore, 2001: p.60).

In Latin American, countries such as Peru, Brazil and Argentina, urban agriculture could save a poor household 10% to 30% of its food cost, which is approximately 20% of its income (Gutman, 1987). In Peru, urban gardening is a food production strategy that has been promoted in the form of backyard gardens or community food gardens to provide balanced nutritional requirements needed to meet a balanced diet.

2.3 Africa

In Africa, urban agriculture for food and economic survival is a widespread practice (Rakodi, 1988; Rogerson, 1993; Mbiba, 1994; Maxwell & Zziwa, 1993). For example 25% of urban families in the six major African cities claim they cannot survive without self-produced food (Tinker, 1994). To cite a few examples from Africa, by the early 1990s, 50% of urban area in Tanzania, was farmed by about 30 percent of the total population. In Zimbabwe, Harare open space cultivation increased from 4 822 hectares to 8 392 hectares from 1990 to 1994 (Dierwechter, 2000). In Tanzania harsh economic booms of the country resulted in the expansion of urban agriculture. At least 90% of home gardeners and fields were used to grow crops for home consumption (Mlozi, Lapanga & Mvena, 1992). Also in Tanzania, people of all economic, socio-economic statuses are now undertaking urban agriculture throughout towns and cities (Mlozi, 1997: p.116). In Kenya two-thirds of urban households live partly on subsistence agriculture and 29% of these household produce food in cities (Lee-Smith & Lamba, 1991). In Ethiopia, for some families, growing their own food is their only means of survival (Lee, 1993: p.1). In Zambia it was estimated that 57% of low-income households cultivate gardens to supplement family food supply (Eberhard, 1989b: p.29).

2.4 South Africa

In South Africa, Eberhard (1989a) studied the potential of urban agriculture in Cape Town, such research highlighted pessimistic figures that: home gardening is economically insignificant and accounting for less than 1% of the monthly budget of a household living at household subsistence level. However it probably overlooks the rest contribution of urban agriculture to livelihood systems. Eckert, Liebenberg & Troskie (1997) state that unlike many other cities throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America, household-based food production in Cape Town is insignificant. On the other hand (Meadows, 2000: p.114) concludes that the fact that urban farming exists in the townships and that there are NGOs dedicated and committed to providing support services for vegetable gardeners, suggest that there is significant support for the practice. Slater (2001: p.3) contests Eberhard (1989b): *“If urban agriculture has little to offer by way of income generation or substitution then why do so many households in the townships of Cape Town continue to endeavour to produce vegetables.”*

De Necker & Uys (1995) conducted a study on urban manager’s perceptions with regard to urban agriculture in Greater Cape Town. Their findings reveal that urban managers perceive urban agriculture as being of a temporary nature and economically insignificant. Migrants moved to cities in search of jobs and they have to adapt to city life, accommodating urban agriculture hampers densification and leads to urban sprawl. De Necker & Uys (1995: p.3) point out: *“Apart from five working paper series on urban agriculture by Town Planning Branch of Cape Town City Council, most officials were unaware of the available literature and moreover substantial body of literature does not reach intended target.”*

2.5 Sustainable livelihood framework

Singh & Gilman (1999, 540) state that: livelihood systems consist of a complex and diverse set of economic, social, and physical strategies. These are realised through activities, assets and entitlements by which individuals make a living. Singh & Gilman (1999, 540) go on to define sustainable livelihoods as those “derived from people’s capabilities to exercise choice, access opportunities and resources and use them in ways that do not foreclose options for others to make their living, either now, or in future.” In consolidating the existing knowledge and identifying knowledge gaps the research was guided by the Sustainable Livelihood

Framework developed by the Institute for Development Studies, at the University of Sussex, and adapted to accommodate the DFID’s concerns as described in the book *Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: What contribution can we make?* (Carney, 1998).

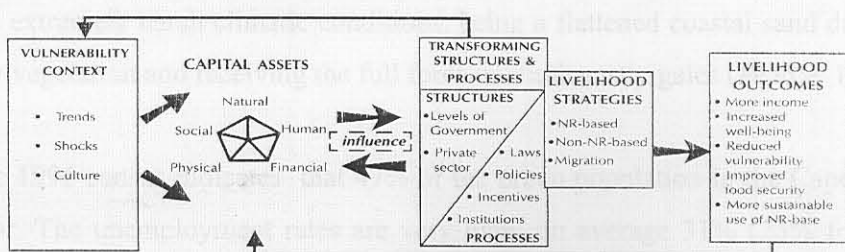
Methodology and Analytical Framework

The Sustainable Rural Livelihoods approach exists as an hypothesis, namely that the integrated management of livelihood assets in rural areas is a universally applicable means of eliminating rural poverty (Carney, 1998). This report’s hypothesis is that it is also true for urban areas and the framework will be used in the analyses in chapters 4 and 5. The livelihood framework makes explicit the multiple dimensions of livelihoods, which are pursued by individuals and social groups. It draws attention to the fact that livelihood is more than monetary income, but embraces local values systems, preferences and the strategies people adopt to fulfil their aspirations.

3.2 The study area

Livelihoods are not just analysed at household level. Wider social relations beyond household and community underpin the circumstances in which people are vulnerable. Intra-household relations between men and women and between generations are highly significant. Membership of networks can influence access to resources and are discussed under social assets. Household strategies and individuals are also linked to policies, institutions and processes outside the household. Some of factors which increase the vulnerability of urban poor are political factors, market fluctuations which affect prices of essential goods and demand for labour, environmental damage, rapid urban growth and limited resources. An important constraint in the South African context is the insecure tenure and limited access to land.

Figure 1: Sustainable rural livelihoods: Framework



Source: Adapted from Carney (1998). DFID