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*Full Length Research Paper*

## Perspectives of sexuality and aging in the African culture: Eastern Uganda

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Ugandan people still regard sexuality for older people as taboo. While a good sexual relationship is seen as important to quality of life for the majority of older adults, the quantity of interpersonal relationships is even more important. Cultural biases have tended to stereotype older people as asexual, devoid of feelings or emotion. This is because a woman's sexuality is often linked to the ability to bear children, and for women, their concept of themselves as sexual beings may also be tied to their ability to reproduce, which she loses after menopause. However, men's sexuality is not expected to change in a life time. This study focused on the experiences and perceptions of sexuality and ageing of Eastern Ugandan women and men, and how they affect gender relations within households and communities. An exploratory study design was employed and to examine the gendered perceptions and experiences of older men and women, and data were collected using a mixed-methods approach, where qualitative and quantitative techniques including survey, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used. The study found that older women and men do not perceive their sexuality in the same way. Women largely relate their sexuality to their reproduction. Men feel that women should give up sexual activity earlier than them, because it is shameful for ageing women to be sexually active. Women themselves feel that beyond the age of 40-45 years, when they start experiencing body changes including menopause, sexual activity should be ruled out. Men and women reported going through a period of reduced desire which often results in poor gender relations. Despite the assumption that culturally, African women are not supposed to discuss their sexuality, the women were very open about sharing their experiences. There is a need for social networks, to enable ageing people to understand and discuss matters of sexuality openly so that they can relate the changes brought about to aging.

**Key words:** Gender relations, sexuality, ageing, stereotypes

### INTRODUCTION

Human sexuality and gender relations are closely interrelated and together affect the ability of women and men to achieve and maintain sexual and reproductive health. Ortner et al. (1981) and later on Masters and

Johnson (1983) documented the importance of sexuality throughout life. They found that sexual activity declines gradually over time for both women and men, and that sexual interest declines with time but more slowly than

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sexual activity. In most of the cultures in Uganda, sexuality is not supposed to be discussed in public or at least not with anyone except intimate friends. Gender relations structure the entire life cycle from birth to old age, influencing access to resources and opportunities and shaping life choices at every stage. The relevance of gender is both ongoing and cumulative; the differences that shape the lives of men and women in old age are the outcome of the many different opportunities, challenges and constraints that they have gone through life.

In feminist writing sexuality refers to an aspect of personal and social life that has erotic desires, practices and identities but also the discourses and social patterns which construct erotic possibilities (Jackson and Scot, 1996) Essentialists and biological determinists argue that women's sexual (that is, biological) differences from men is the main cause of women's oppression (Rubin 1998). However, feminist constructionists counter argue that it is not the biology but oppression that produces sexual difference. The study was based on the constructionist argument where as a social construction; it is reproduced historically and varies cross-culturally.

Sexuality is a site that shapes, reproduces, articulates and transforms gender relations. The issue of sexuality therefore, is integral in the whole spectrum of power relations between men and women. Gender relations reveal not only the division of labor and resources between men and women but also ideas and representations (attitudes, desires, behavior patterns, personality traits etc) Gender relations are constituted by and help constitute these practices and ideologies in interaction with other structures of social hierarchy such as age, class, race caste etc.

Although sexuality is a fundamental need across the life span, society typically ignores the sexual needs and concerns of older adults. Aging brings with it many challenges similar to those faced in childhood or adolescence. Sexuality, sexual behavior, intimacy, and relationships are fundamental human needs, whether we are 14 or 100 years old.

Cultural attitudes that revere reproduction and youthful good looks may contribute to the expectation that older people are, or ought to be, asexual (Deacon et al., 1995). A wide variety of negative attitudes exist within society concerning sexual behavior and older people which has influenced the thinking of older people themselves (Spence, 1992). Gerontological research is frequently conducted within a reductionist and biomedical model which assumes that decline is the inevitable result of individual biological ageing ignoring the social conditions, which the study addressed.

Society in Africa has generally been viewed as restricting the sexuality of older adults, and therefore the study attempted to examine gendered dimension of sexuality and aging in Eastern Uganda, Pallisa District, Butebo-County. Examining gender relations in order to understand how both men and women experience aging. It was not about old age as a woman's or man's issue, instead

it was about how women's and men's experiences and perceptions of aging shape the gender relations. The study explored women's and men's perceptions, practices, coping mechanisms and the gendered attributes therein.

In the paper, aging has been defined as an accumulation of changes over time. It is viewed as a multidimensional process of physical, psychological and social change. Individual and community expectations and perceptions of how people should act and behave as they grow older are the main focus. In early 1940s sociologists saw aging as the problem of old men (loss of work), In 1970s feminists identified the problem of old women in relation to poverty, bereavement and disability. In 1990s there emerged men's health movement critique (lethal aspects of male role). By 2000 there were calls for rebalanced approach to gender within a political economy of well-being.

This paper is based on the heterosexual experiences and perceptions of sexuality and aging.

## METHODOLOGY

An exploratory study design was employed to examine the perceptions and experiences of men and women regarding gender relations in their sexuality and ageing.

Data was collected using qualitative techniques that was the most appropriate. Using Purposive Sampling of 80 rural men and women between age of 40-80 years were targeted. Surveys using a questionnaire (50), In-depth interviews (7), Focus group Discussions (2) and Life Histories (1) were used for collecting relevant information.

## RESULTS

Men and women had different perceptions of aging, depending on the socio-economic status. Women perceived sexuality and aging to be in relation to numbers of children and grand children, time spent in marriage, body changes, interest in sexual activity and general feelings in the body (health status). Men on the other hand associated sexuality and aging with economic and social accomplishments, social behavior, graying. A wealthy man is expected to stay young all the time and can marry several young women, no matter how many children he has. There is even a saying that "*It is older men who know how to take care of younger women*"

It is assumed that men do not grow old because they don't change their sexual behaviors with age. However, as time progresses men realize that they have to respect themselves in society by changing their behavior.

In both men and women, it was strongly felt that it is necessary to stay sexually active within the limits of marriage institution. Women and men go through the period of reduced sexual desire although men do not easily accept it. This finding is similar Masters and Johnson's findings.

Aging women are said to be complicated, sensitive,

quarrelsome and sometimes selfish. They are less valued in society and therefore feel unwanted. This corresponds with Hunt (1994) argument that ageing in women more than in men are still viewed as unattractive and unnecessary members of society. It is similar to the Western cultural stereotypes of women that equate sexual interest and activity with youth and deny the sexuality of older women.

Women reported that aging is an issue in their sexuality. The sexual desire declines (*fire goes out*), which affects gender relations especially for married couples. Widows for instance, have to show that they are respectable in society and conduct themselves well to avoid being victims of rape and sexual assault. If a widow does not respect herself, by keeping society's norms, she will lose respect and be demonized. On the other hand, widowers are encouraged to remarry as soon as possible because it is believed that a man cannot live alone without a woman. As Foucault (Butler, 1990:103) maintains, sexuality must not be seen as a drive which is alien and natural, but as especially dense transfer of point for relations of power.

An aging woman who gets into a relationship with a younger man is usually blamed for her behavior while for a man it may be seen as normal. However, an older man who goes out with or marries a girl fit to be his grand child is not respected in society. One of the respondents pointed out that: *"..... a retired headmaster, in his 60s defiled and married a school girl of 15 years. He bribed his way through the local council system and the case was not taken to police"* Such cases may be many in society but because legal action against defilement and rape is weak many go scot-free.

A woman who stays sexually active into old age is regarded a disgrace to womanhood, other women do not give her respect. It is even worse if she goes out with a younger man, it clearly shows how women's sexuality is more controlled especially as they grow older. It is regarded as unbecoming sexual behavior for aging women while it is okay for the men to have relationships with younger women.

## Practices

As a woman grows older she reaches menopause followed by loss of sexual desires. There is also loss of interest in some of the things one once loved like dancing, and listening to music etc men do not have the same experiences. Men are expected to stay strong and active until they are very old (80+).

Tradition demands that a widow gets inherited, a practice being discouraged now due to HIV and AIDS is normal in rural-set-up. However, if a woman is beyond reproductive age, no one will be interested in inheriting her except for properties that the late husband left. She is no longer called by her name but called "widow" as her

identity. Widowers of whatever age are normally under pressure to remarry, because they need a helper in the household (cooking, cleaning, washing etc). The gender roles are supposed to be maintained, for man's masculine identity. Widowers also become very lonely due to the limited social networks compared to women. An aging widow is therefore less likely to receive support and expected to have no relationships with men.

In the past older men used to invite younger men into their homes to work for them, but also unofficially give sexual satisfaction to their younger wives. This practice ensured that there was food security and harmony in the home.

On the other hand, if the woman is aging and the man feels he needs a younger woman, there is tendency to desert the older wife. In such a situation there will be poor gender relations and limited support to the aging woman and her children.

If a woman is economically and socially empowered, the effects of aging will be mild compared to one who is not. As this retired civil servant commented:

*"At the age of 62 years, I am approached by some men who do not even believe that I am that age. They tell me that I am still attractive, but this is because I have lived well as a civil servant and retired teacher"*

In cases of sexual dysfunction, women tend to assume that their husbands must be having extra-marital affairs while men think that they are bewitched by their wives. This may result into conflicts and mistrust in gender relations.

As the women grow older they tend to neglect their physical appearance, they do not think that they are attractive any more. It is partly because they become too busy with gender roles and do not have enough time to take care of themselves. In some instances gender relations improve as men and women grow older, they become very good friends and enjoy each other's company. This finding is in line with Caldwell and Caldwell (1987) argument that African sexuality is not as plain as it is sometimes claimed. Different social contexts involve different rules and taboos associated with sexual practice.

It is a common practice for a couple to separate beds as they grow older. It was reported that as a woman goes through menopause, experience of hot flashes is embarrassing. The night sweats make it uncomfortable to share a bed with someone else.

There is a widespread but unsubstantiated assumption about old age which includes the belief that most old people are sick, unhappy, cognitively impaired and isolated. However, aging and barren women face far more challenges than men or other women, because the older they grow the more difficult life becomes. Society does not even recognize them as useful members of the community because they do not have any off-spring as



the life history of one respondent revealed.

### Coping mechanisms

Both men and women go through reduced sexual desire as they age however, it strains relationships. The men may become aggressive or over drink as a defense mechanism while women may become more quarrelsome in the household. Through their social networks, they are able to share what they are going through with their peers. Both men and women sometimes use herbal medicines to boost their sexual desires. Younger women talk to older women for advice. The challenge is that men do not easily seek help for fear of not wanting to be seen as a failure. In a polygamous relationship, older women will be deserted.

### Conclusion

Gender organizes every aspect of our lives, it intersects with other hierarchies of age, class, ethnicity sexuality etc. Aging people share the realities of aging bodies and society's expectations depending on several factors whether literate or illiterate, and the different cultures. Experiences of sexuality and aging are diverse however, age distinguishes acceptable sexual behavior for men and women. Cultural norms define how society defines what is considered appropriate by age. The way individuals feel and express their sexuality varies across societies and social status over time. All societies prescribe and codify sexual activity and in this way legitimize some sexual practices and not others (polygamy). This is an area feminist discourse has not adequately examined. Marriage has continued to be seen as the appropriate location for containing and controlling sexual feelings. In a rural set-up where society believes that a "good woman" must get married till death, women

are forced to sometimes stay in abusive relationships. It is not only hard for them to remarry, but also society's expectations for them to be asexual at a certain age.

Bodies are key sites for judgment about age, so bodies are very important in our identities throughout the life span and presentation of self. Given the patriarchal nature of societies where the importance of appearance for women is paramount, it is not surprising that much of the discourse on the body so far has concerned women's bodies. Self identities are increasingly bound to how we look and how our bodies perform.

### Conflict of Interests

The author(s) have not declared any conflict of interests.

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*Full Length Research Paper*

## Factors affecting the level of patronage of traditional herb Sellers (THSs) in Osun State, Nigeria.

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**This study examined the factors affecting the level of patronage of traditional herb sellers (THSs) in Osun State. The sample of 120 randomly selected registered THSs (those who had full stock of herbal materials/animal parts in their stores) out of a population of 800 in the three senatorial zones of the State. Two hundred and forty members of the public (clients) were also randomly selected from the same senatorial zones in which one hundred and sixty people indicated that they were regular users of herbal medicines. Data generated were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Among others, key findings showed that resources of THSs (the capital base, size of shop, volume of herbal commodities or wares) were the most important factors that determined the level of client's patronage. Majority of the clients that had patronized the THSs rated them highly (76.2%) and was very satisfied with their services and the herbal medicines used which could be due to the effectiveness of their medicines, availability of variety of needed herbal commodities or wares at any time (91.7%); efficiency in their work (90%); presence of matured assistants/apprentices to attend to clients (92.5%) and so forth. The study concluded that the resources of THSs had influence on client's patronage due to the availability of varieties of needed herbal wares, clear efficiency in their work, presence of capable assistants/apprentices, and improved hygiene.**

**Key words:** Client patronage, Herbal medicine, Resources, Socio-economic class, Traditional herb sellers.

### INTRODUCTION

Patronage is the support, encouragement, privilege, or financial aid that an organization or individual bestows to another. In the history of art, arts patronage refers to the support that kings, popes and the wealthy have provided to artists such as musicians, painters, and sculptors. It can also refer to the right of bestowing offices or church benefices, the business given to a store by a regular

customer, and the guardianship of saints. In some countries the term is used to describe political patronage, which is the use of state resources to reward individuals for their electoral support (<http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Patronage&oldid=586930965>). The word "patron" derives from the Latin *patronus*, "patron," one who gives benefits to his clients

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which is the concern of this study. It has been noted that traditional systems of medicine in which THSs belong to, have made significant contributions towards fulfilling healthcare needs of the people in the past. This present study, therefore, aimed to examine the influence of the economic resources of traditional herb sellers in terms of herbal commodities they are selling on the clients' patronage in Osun State, Nigeria.

In Nigeria, modern health services have failed to meet the needs of the teeming population, especially in the rural areas. The state of the health care in the country point to the very poor living habits of the people. Poverty, joblessness and ignorance have all compounded the situation of the average Nigerian, making it difficult for him to enjoy adequate health care. The immediate consequence has been to resort to traditional medicine.

In quoting Ayantunji, (2002) stated that: "The patronage of traditional medicine has increased due to a number of factors, such as poor or non effectiveness of synthetic drugs which are either fake and adulterated or expired. For instance, chloroquine as antidote of malaria is becoming less powerful as a result of the fake ones now available and the resistance of the malaria parasite." It should again be stressed at this juncture that the cost of some of these drugs is beyond the reach of many Nigerians; there is also a dearth of facilities as well as scarcity of qualified medical practitioners in orthodox medi-care in the State. In support of this, (Ojua et al., 2013) also stressed the problem of fake drugs, inactive or inefficient healing or curative strength of the orthodox services, high cost, and poor distribution, and so forth have made the trado-medical services to enjoy high patronage. All these tend to enhance the preference and patronage of herbal medicines.

Traditional Herb Sellers (THSs) or Traditional Medicinal Ingredient Dealers (TMIDs) are sellers of medicinal materials which may be in form of plants parts such as leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds, stems, barks, roots, and rhizomes. They also trade in other animal parts and in whole form. The THSs are known by different names in Yoruba land as "*Elewe Omo*" (dealers in plants and animals parts) or sometimes called "*Alagbo Omo*". They sell plant materials with or without animal and mineral substances. They have the skill to manufacture and prescribe the herbs for healing, particularly for child diseases and mother's ailments. Often they are referred to as "*Oniwosiwosi*" or "*Alate*" which connotes sellers of varieties of materials for medicinal uses but not necessarily include plants and animals parts in Yoruba land (Opatola, 2005). The Hausa people called them "*Masu magani gargajiya*" meaning native medicine sellers, while in Igbo land they are being called Umuofia. Their names and roles vary from one society to the other. Hence, the study aimed to examine the factors affecting the level of patronage of Traditional Herb Sellers (THSs) in Osun State, Nigeria.

## The purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to find out the factors affecting the level of patronage of traditional herb sellers in Osun State so as to know what this would have on the relationship between their resources and the number of clients that patronize them. Secondly, the purpose was to locate which socio-economic status would assess the THSs more positively.

## Hypotheses

- (i) The larger the resources of the THSs (income, capital base, size of shop, volume of herbal commodities or wares), the greater their contribution in terms of number of clientele.
- (ii) That a higher proportion of the people on the lower socio-economic status would assess the THSs more positively than the proportion of those on the higher socio-economic status would.

## Methodology

The study was conducted in Osun state (Southwest) Nigeria. Osun State is one of the 36 States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Presently, the State consists of 30 Local Government Areas with one area office (Ife-East Area Office, Modakeke-Ife). As at 2006 census, her population was 3,423,535 with land area (km<sup>2</sup>) of 7985 and density per/km<sup>2</sup> of 275 [National Bureau of Statistics ([www.nigerianstat.gov.ng](http://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng))].

## Sampling and sample size

The three senatorial districts in Osun State were considered for the study. Two local governments (LGAs) out of the ten LGAs from each senatorial district were purposively selected. This selection of LGSs was done on the basis of where there were high concentrations of THSs. This made up a total of six LGAs from which the populations of traditional herb sellers and public were selected. These six LGAs were each stratified into rural and urban communities. In each of these communities, the markets were visited to identify the THSs using the snowball technique and the assistance of contact persons. From the total number of 800 THSs identified, 120 THSs (shared equally among rural and urban areas) were selected for interview using systematic random sampling technique. Respondents were interviewed using semi-structured questionnaire. In order to get a sample of the public opinion, a multistage sampling technique was used. The LGAs were stratified based on residential patterns - Elite areas (Government Reserve Area and others) and low class or slum areas. This was made up of a total of 12 residential clusters. Using simple random sampling technique, a block was selected per cluster. In the selected block, the numbers of housing units were identified. From the housing units in the study area, the numbers of households (both men and women) were listed for interview on their views about THSs. This is because women are the primary care givers. The head of the households (where available) was again interviewed to get the male's views on THSs, as men too were known to patronize them for different types of ailments. They were all interviewed using

**Table 1.** Percentage of average number of clients that THSs received per day.

Number of clients THSs received per day	Number of Observation	Percentage
1-10 clients	44	27.5
11-20 clients	51	31.7
21 and above clients	65	40.8
Total	160	100.0

**Table 2.** Sex of clients (Public).

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	77	48.2
Female	83	51.8
Total	160	100.0

structured questionnaire. Altogether, 160 respondents were fully interviewed. The urban/rural distinctions were being made in order to establish whether or not there were differences in responses based on locations.

#### Data collection

The pilot study was conducted shortly before starting the field work. This was to familiarize the researcher with the THSs and the public (clients). The survey protocols and questionnaire were administered to THSs and the public (clients) in Ile-Ife and Modakeke to obtain their understanding of the various questions. The results and reactions to these were used to further improve and perfect the questionnaire before the actual study. Data were collected using only quantitative method of survey questionnaires to both THSs and the public.

#### Data analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse field data. Such parameters as means, frequency distributions, percentages and chi-square were used to test relationships between different variables involved in the resources of THSs as regard to their patronage on health care delivery.

Ethical Clearance: The authors received the consent of the respondents before carrying out the study.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Traditional herb sellers

There were 120 traditional herb sellers that completed the questionnaire, though other-administered required face-to-face approach.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents showed that majority of the THSs were 30 years and

**Table 3.** Frequency of patronage of THSs by the clients.

Rate of patronage	Frequency	Percent
1 – 3 times	62	38.8
4 – 6 times	52	32.4
10 – above	46	28.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>

above, the sex of the respondents revealed that 118 were women which constituted about 98.3 percent while men were just 1.7% of the sample population. This supported Omobuwajo et al. (2005) study that all the indigenous herb sellers were women. This definitely means that herb selling is a female dominated profession. As regards the marital status of the THSs, 95% of them were married while the remaining 5 percent were single. This showed that the herb selling career is not only for married people. Religiously, majority of the herb sellers were Muslims and they comprised 65.8% of the sample. This also corresponded to the findings of Omobuwajo et al. (2005). The Christian population comprised 34.2% of the population. These might comprise those who were not Christians. On the income of the herb sellers, 66.7 percent were in the high income group. That is those who earned more than N5, 000: 00k monthly (\$33.3). While those who earned less than N5, 000: 00k monthly (\$33.3) (low income group) were 33.3%.

From the Table 1, 40.8% of the THSs received average number of 21 or more clients per day, while 27.5% received the least number of clients that was between 1-10 client per day which cut across both low and high income groups.

With respect to sex, 102 females (51.8%) responded to the questionnaire. This might be due to the fact that women are always at home every time, and also the interest in which they had in the study. The 48.2% were males Table 2.

From Table 3, one hundred and sixty (160) clients patronized THSs differently. The groups which had patronized the THSs before were then asked to rate their services and to state the level of satisfaction received from the herbal medicine used. Majority (76.2%) rated them highly and was very satisfied with their services and the herbal medicines used (Table 4).

On the question of how the respondents who had used THSs felt with herbal medicine, 90% confirmed that they were very satisfied and satisfied. This could be due to the effectiveness of their medicines. However, 1.9% claimed that they were very dissatisfied and 6.2% stated that they were indifferent. The satisfaction derived by the respondents from the herbal medicines used was further confirmed by the answers provided by the public on how they viewed THSs and their services. For instance, majority of the public (99.2%) explained that their image

**Table 4.** Assessment of the THSs' services by clients

<b>Rating of the quality of the THSs' Service</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very high	88	55
High	34	21.2
Undecided	6	3.8
Low	23	14.4
Very low	9	5.6
Total	160	100.0
<b>Satisfaction received from herbal medicine</b>		
Very satisfied	92	57.5
Satisfied	52	32.5
Very dissatisfied	3	1.9
Dissatisfied	3	1.9
Indifferent	47	6.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100.0</b>

within the society has improved considerably (Table 5). The most frequently cited explanation provided by the public for believing that their public image had improved is the fact that their level of patronage has gone up tremendously (80.0%). They felt that this was connected with the public's recognition of their worth. When clients too were asked about the benefits they derived from the THSs' products, majority stressed that they were affordable (cheap), readily accessible, had minimal side effects, and that they even attempted to cater for the spiritual aspects of their illnesses.

The reason given by the majority of the public for patronizing THSs were the availability of variety of needed herbal commodities or wares at any time (91.7%); there is clear efficiency in their work (90%); they have raised the state of hygiene involved in the preparation of their products (89.2%); public now friendly toward them (63.3%) and finally that the presence of matured assistants/apprentices to attend to clients (92.5%).

### Testing of Research Hypotheses

**Test of Hypothesis I (H<sub>1</sub>)** "The larger the resources of the THSs (income, capital base, size of shop, volume of herbal commodities or wares), the greater their contribution in terms of number of clientele".

**Null Hypothesis I (H<sub>0</sub>)** "The larger the resources of the THSs" (income, capital base, size of shop, volume of herbal commodities or wares), the lower their contribution in terms of number of clientele".

To test this hypothesis, data collected on THSs' income and average numbers of clients that THSs received per day were subjected to chi-square analysis using cross-tabulation.

Chi-square analysis of the resources of the THSs (income/capital etc) on the client's patronage yielded a chi-square (X<sup>2</sup>) value of 11.931 which is significant at  $p \leq 0.05$  level. This means that the resource of THSs (income/capital etc) was a significant determinant on the clients' patronage. These data accepted the alternate hypothesis. This tended to show that the capital base of the THSs, that is the ability to expand and stalk up the stall, the variety of herbal commodities or wares available, the number of assistants/ apprentices and so forth would definitely enhance the patronage as clients would naturally believe that the THSs was successful, effective and knowledgeable. Thus more clients were likely to flock there.

**Test Hypothesis II (H<sub>1</sub>)** "that a higher proportion of the people on the lower socio-economic status would assess the THSs more positively than the proportion of those on the higher socio-economic status who would.

**Null Hypothesis II (H<sub>0</sub>)** "that a higher proportion of the lower socio-economic status would assess the THSs less positively than the proportion of those in the higher socio-economic status would". To test this hypothesis, data collected on the socio-economic of the public (client) and the rating of service of THSs (assessment) were subjected to chi-square analysis using cross tabulation tables (Table 7).

A chi-square analysis of the socio-economic class (income group) and the patronage and rating of service of THSs using cross-tabulations yielded X<sup>2</sup> value of 17.225, which is significant at  $p \leq 0.05$  level (Table 6). This implies that the socio-economic class (income group) of the public (clients) had a significant effect on the assessment of THSs. These data rejected the null hypothesis, while accepting the test hypothesis.

From the Table 7, one can see that the low socio-

**Table 5.** Public (clients) perception and reasons given by clients for patronizing THSs in Osun state.

<b>Public perception on whether the image of the THSs has improved</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	159	99.2
No	01	0.8
Total	160	100.0
<b>Reason given by public for patronizing THSs</b>		
<b>Availability of variety of needed herbal commodities or wares at any time</b>		
Yes	146.72	91.7
No	13.28	8.3
Total	160.0	100.0
<b>There is clear efficiency in their work</b>		
Yes	144.0	90.0
No	16.0	10.0
Total	160.0	100.0
<b>They have raised the state of hygiene involved in the preparation of their products.</b>		
Yes	142.72	89.2
No	17.28	10.8
Total	160.0	100.0
<b>Public now friendly toward them</b>		
Yes	101.28	63.3
No	58.72	36.7
Total	160.0	100.0
<b>Presence of matured assistants/apprentices to attend to clients</b>		
Yes	148.0	92.5
No	12.0	7.5
Total	160.0	100.0

**Table 6.** Showing the effect of resources of THS on the client's patronage.

<b>Average number of Clients per day</b>	<b>Low income</b>	<b>High income</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>X2</b>	<b>p-value</b>
1-10 clients	17	16	33	2	11.931	0.003
11-20 clients	15	23	38			
21 and above clients	8	41	49			
Total	40	80	120			

Significant ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).

economic class (low income group) had the highest rating of the services of the THSs. One can therefore confidently

say that our test hypothesis has been confirmed and accepted.



**Table 7.** Effect of socio-economic status of people (Income group) on the assessment of THSs.

Income Group	Very high	High	Undecided	Low	Very low	Total	df	X2	p-value
Low	45	21	2	19	9	96			
High	43	13	4	4	-	64	8	15.6011	0.048
Total	88	34	6	23	9	160			

Significant ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).

**Table 8.** Socio-economic (Income group) of clients and patronage of THSs in Osun State

Income Group	1-3 times	4-6 times	10- above	Total	df	X2	p-value
Low	46	31	19	96			
High	16	21	27	64	2	11.9068	0.003
Total	62	52	46	160			

Significant ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).

## DISCUSSION

First and foremost, the study revealed that the resources of the indigenous herb sellers (that is their income base, their size of shop, volume of stock) had influence or significant impact on the clients' patronage. That is, most of the herb sellers who had enough money to buy herbal materials / animal parts and so forth in their shops had large patronage by the public. This was confirmed by the response of the THSs, for 99.2% of them accepted that they were expanding because their shop were fully stocked up than in the previous years and so forth.

The study also showed that the higher proportion of the low socio-economic class patronized the indigenous herb sellers more than the proportion of the higher class, which confirmed the acceptance of the test hypothesis. Table 8 showed that the two social categories of people (high and low income group) patronized indigenous herb sellers, but the low income group patronized them the more.

This shows that socio-economic parameters had significant impact on consumer's attitude towards the usage of traditional system of medicine in Osun State at the period of study.

## Conclusion

The study was designed to examine the factors affecting the level of patronage of THSs in Osun state, Nigeria. The reasons given by clients for patronizing THSs in Osun state were that the resources available to THSs in terms of the availability of varieties of needed herbal commodities which could be seen in THS's shop, clear efficiency in their work, presence of mature assistants/apprentices to attend to clients, improved hygienic

preparation of their products which make public now friendly toward them. All these definitely enhance the patronage of THSs.

## Conflict of Interests

The author(s) have not declared any conflict of interests.

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*Full Length Research Paper*

# Understanding contributions of traditional healers to the prevention, care and support in the fight against HIV and AIDS Pandemic in Kariba, Zimbabwe

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**The role of traditional healers in HIV management in Zimbabwe remains undocumented; thus the paper investigated the role of traditional healers in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Random sampling was used to select 80 community members who were recruited as study participants. Eight interviews were conducted with traditional healers who were conveniently sampled. The study used quantitative and qualitative techniques to allow for triangulation of data. Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents knew about HIV and AIDS issues. Fifty-six (56%) of the respondents with various medical and spiritual problems had visited a traditional healer for help. Amongst those who sought help from traditional healers, 72% improved, 23% their condition did not change and 5% deteriorated. Traditional healer's consultation charges range from US\$2 to 13 for treatment which was considered as being fair by health seekers. The maximum number of clients per week ranged from 3 to 50. Health seekers indicated a range of instruments used and skin-cutting gadgets were the most frequently used. In conclusion integrating TH into the formal health sector would offer an opportunity to benefit from their useful herbs and therapies, while offering the chance to dispel practices that might exacerbate the spread of HIV.**

**Key words:** Traditional medicine, Zimbabwe, herbal therapy, HIV and AIDS.

## INTRODUCTION

Although, HIV sero-prevalence has declined from 29.3% in 1997/98 to 24.6% in 2003 and 15.1% in 2009 (AVERT, 2009; ILO, 2009; UNAIDS, 2009), Zimbabwe still hosts a large population of HIV positive people. Caring for the HIV positive population creates a dire challenge for the community and health delivery system characterised by shortage of manpower and resources (Amzat and Abdullahi, 2008). Traditional medicine and traditional healers have become a good alternative and they complement the formal health system. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2001) defines traditional healing as diverse health practices, approaches, knowledge and

beliefs incorporating plant, animal and/or mineral based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises applied singularly or in combination to maintain well-being, as well as to treat, diagnose or prevent illness.

Statistics on the number of patients seeking help from traditional healers in Zimbabwe has not been documented. However, UNAIDS estimated that 80% of the total population in developing countries make use of traditional therapies for management and treatment of diseases including HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS, 2002). In Africa, traditional herbal medicines are often used as primary treatment for HIV and AIDS related problems

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including dermatological disorders, nausea, depression, insomnia, sexually transmitted diseases and weakness (Babb et al., 2004). Academics, politicians and HIV activists are divided over the contribution of traditional healers in the HIV and AIDS pandemic (SASI, 2006). Traditional medicine is the dominant CAM used by HIV and AIDS victims in Africa. There is therefore, need for continued research to understand the contributions that traditional healers are making in care, support of people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS as well as prevention and mitigation of HIV.

Two schools of thought have emerged on the debate around traditional medicine use, namely the pessimists and optimistic; the former oppose traditional medicine with the latter supporting it. Amzat and Abdullahi (2008) have detailed the arguments of the two schools of thought. The pessimistic school is of the view that traditional healers and their practice and therapies do more harm to the patients than good (Amzat and Abdullahi, 2008). Contrary to the belief of the pessimistic school, the optimistic school believes that traditional medicine and its practitioners have contributed very immensely to the health care needs of those who utilise their services (Erinosho, 1998; Amzat and Abdullahi, 2008). Most literature that exists on Zimbabwean traditional healers focuses on the negative practices of traditional healers such as poisoning, rape, using skin piercing and cutting objects (ZHDR, 2003; Jackson, 2002; Runganga, 2001; Hampton, 1991; Mhloyi, 1990). Therefore, some traditional healers are engaging in practices that may exacerbate HIV, hence the stigmatisation and misrepresentation by critics. Scientists have more often than not misinterpreted cultural practices and beliefs associated with traditional healers, since some are intangible while others are and are protected unconditionally by the followers (SASI, 2006); hence they label them as rigid.

Optimists have focused on the efficacy of traditional healers' medicines, while ignoring the healer (Lynde, 1996; Homsy et al., 2004; Ssenyonga, 1994; Makhubu, 2002). Increasing research work in Africa is investigating the positive contributions of traditional healers to HIV (Colvin et al., 2001; Green, 1994; Kaboru, 2007; Peltzer, Mngqundaniso and Petros, 2006; Amzat and Abdullahi, 2008); similar research is limited in Zimbabwe.

The legal framework in Africa has been showing signs of shifting attitudes from pessimistic to optimism. Starting with the WHO Resolution WHA56.31 which, encourages Member States to adapt, adopt and implement, as a basis for national programmes, WHO's strategy for traditional medicine (WHO, 2005). Zimbabwe launched its traditional Medicines policy and Traditional Medicine Practitioners Code of Conduct in August 2009. In Zimbabwe, the colonial government and Christian missionaries who established western medical institutions discouraged traditional healers and medicine. Waite (2000) documents the trajectory of traditional healers in fighting for legal recognition until the start of the new

millennium, when they were legally recognised.

The biomedical hospitals mandated with people's health charge consultation fees that range from \$3 to \$10 depending on the health centre. For example, Kariba Hospital charges \$5 as consultation fees while Harare Hospital charges \$10. Furthermore, patients pay for all medical procedures and drugs with the exception of anti-retroviral (ARV) and tuberculosis (TB) drugs. HIV testing, counselling, treatment and CD4 counts are free of charge in public health institutions. This is due to resources from the government through the AIDS Levy, as well as development partners such as USAID, Global Fund, Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, UK AID. Besides these subsidised conditions, treatments of other opportunistic infections (like sexually transmitted Infection, K. Sarcoma) are charged on the patient. Thus, traditional medicine complements and also acts as a cheaper medical care.

Today, the AIDS epidemic has challenged and changed traditional healers' role and their practices (Richter, 2003). Literature points to the fact that in Africa HIV and AIDS patients utilise both the biomedical and traditional medical systems (Green, 1994; Jackson, 2002; UNAIDS, 2006; Kaboru, 2007). Literature reviewed identified gaps on the roles of traditional healers in the fight against HIV and AIDS. It is against this background that the study investigated the role of the traditional healers in the fight against HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe. Specific variables to be addressed include the following: exploring perceptions, attitudes and knowledge of traditional healers regarding HIV and AIDS; to explore perceptions and attitude of community to traditional healers and their practices: to identify traditional healers clientele and practices used in the care and support of HIV and AIDS victims and examine opportunities for integration of traditional and formal medicine and practice.

## METHODOLOGY

### Study context and setting

The study was conducted in Nyamhunga high-density suburb of Kariba. Kariba town is situated in the North-western border of Zimbabwe and Zambia. The town is situated in a national parks area. The town developed into an urban area after the construction of Kariba Dam wall across the Zambezi River in the late 1950s. The main purpose for constructing the dam was hydroelectric power generation. Kariba town is the capital of Kariba District, which stretches along the shorelines of Lake Kariba. In addition to hydroelectricity generation, other uses of the reservoir developed like fisheries, boating, game industry and supply of drinking water. The majority of people employed in Kariba are engaged in natural resources and wildlife related activities such as fisheries (including aqua-culture), fish farming, hunting, tourism, crocodile farming and tertiary service firms (shops, banks e.t.c).

Kariba has a population of +/- 80 000. Nyamhunga suburb was estimated to have about 1 400 households, subdivided into three locations, namely Nyamhunga 1, 2 and 3. Kariba is a multi-cultural society including the Tonga, Shona, Chewa and Ndebele ethnic groups. Like the rest of the country, it has the traditional health system made up of traditional and herbal healers and the formal

health system. The burden of HIV and AIDS is high with a prevalence of 23% in 2008.

### Sampling

The study target population included local authorities, leaders of faith-based organisations, Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association (ZINATHA), community members and organisations that deal with HIV and AIDS issues. Due to constraints in resources, one suburb was selected using random sampling. Random sampling was done in Nyamhunga 1 to select 80 households out of 601, which participated in the household survey. Kariba household municipal records were used to create the sampling frame. The Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) was used to draw a randomised group of respondents. The most senior member of the household was the respondent disregarding sex. The most senior was preferred since the questions asked for experiences with traditional healers, which were more than 10 years ago. Mostly elders are the ones who visit traditional healers on behalf of the minors or family, hence their experiences were preferred. Females constituted 73% of the respondents because men were at work at time of interview, others had travelled for work in other towns or neighbouring countries and others were deceased. One representative from each of the five organisations (including ZINATHA) that deal with HIV and AIDS were purposively selected to be an interview respondent. The study recruited 8 traditional healers using convenience sampling. Convenience sampling was used for the following three reasons: there were no registers; lack of funds to enumerate the traditional healers; and the traditional healers stay in scattered locations and travel frequently travel to patients homes which are outside Kariba.

### Methods

Questionnaire surveys and interviews were used to gather data. Surveys were conducted amongst the community members, while interviews were conducted with traditional healers and organisations representatives. The study made use of questionnaires with both open ended and closed questions. The questionnaire was preferred due to the limited resources and its ability to generate data that is easily quantifiable. The questionnaires were to gather data on knowledge, attitudes, practices, clientele, satisfaction and perceptions of respondents. Traditional healers also responded to a short questionnaire that sought to explore their knowledge levels on HIV and AIDS issues.

Face to face interviews were used in the study because they allow for rapport building and further probing on questions. According to Pons (1992), interviews have the advantage that they allow researchers to gather subjective opinions as well as factual information. A checklist was prepared covering all the variables presented above. In cases where permission was granted a Dictaphone was used to record the interviews. Face to face interviews were held with traditional healers, representative of People Living With HIV and AIDS (PLWHA), Red Cross (home-based care programme), local authorities, leaders of faith-based organisations and Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association (ZINATHA). Data collected by interviews covered all the above stated variables.

The research team also did participatory observations if consent was granted. Where strict confidentiality was necessary the researchers kept a reasonable distance. A member of the research team participated as a patient and received herbs to stop diarrhoea. The research team observed things like hygiene, storage facilities, condition of patients, and performance of rituals, clientele and costs.

### Data analysis techniques

Field data were cleaned and coded before entering it into a computer package known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data were analysed using SPSS and the following analysis was done: Frequencies, significance tests, cross tabulation and generation of graphs. Qualitative data were grouped according to variables addressed. The thematic approach was used to analyse qualitative data. The transcribed data were fragmented and grouped into themes. The data were then entered into computer software called Nvivo version 9. Connections across themes were established and developed into codes. Nvivo was used to run word/phrase frequencies in order to quantify responses. The rest of the data was manually interpreted in the codes.

### Ethical consideration

The Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe ethics committee approved the study. During execution of the study research ethics were observed. Objectives of the study were described to potential respondents before seeking their consent to participate. Consent was sought before participants were recruited and participants reserved the right to withdraw from the study.

## RESULTS

### Socio-demography data

Out of the 80 community respondents engaged in the study, 58 were females and 22, males. The study respondents were between 18 and 65 years of age, while most respondents (56%) were between the ages of 25 and 40. About 66% of the respondents had completed secondary school level, 13% had never attended formal school, 13% had attended school to primary level and the remainder attended high school and tertiary education. 50% of the 80 respondents were from the middle socio-economic class, while 45 and 5% were from the low and high classes, respectively.

### Perceptions and knowledge levels of traditional healers of HIV and AIDS

Traditional healers were asked to narrate their understanding of HIV and AIDS. The most dominant account indicated that HIV and AIDS always existed in Zimbabwe, since humans settled in the country.

*“Numerous charms were used to manage the disease and it was treatable. Today, we are failing to treat it because people mix charms and western medicine. Western medicines weaken the people’s immune system. People in the past used to eat wild foods, which were in season, and some of these foods strengthen the body and diseases like AIDS could be treated.” Respondent 4*

One informant who is a traditional healer also argued that;

**Table 1.** Knowledge levels of Traditional healers on HIV related issues.

Question	Traditional healers' responses (%) n=8	
	Yes	No
Aware of HIV and AIDS	100	0
Does HIV have a medical cure	38	62
Can sex with a virgin cure HIV	25	75
Can a virgin be HIV positive	87	13
Can skin cutting or piercing objects spread HIV	87	13
Are you aware on anti-retroviral drugs	50	50
Do you know how one can access anti-retroviral drugs	0	100
Name opportunistic infections associated with HIV and AIDS	100	0

**Table 2.** Cross tabulation of socio-economic class and seeking for help from TH.

Categories	Responses	Socio-economic class			
		Low	Medium	High	Total
Sought help from TH	Yes	27	17	2	45
	NO	9	23	2	35
Sought help from TH in the last 5 years	Yes	17	8	2	27
	No	9	9		18
Frequency of visits in the last 5 years	Once	6	4		10
	2-5	6	2	2	10
	6-9	2	1		3
	10-14	2	0		2
	15-19	1	0		1
	More than 20	1	0		1

*and/or runyoka (locking of an adulterous transgressor using traditional herbs). When these STIs were not treated on time they developed to be what scientists are calling HIV and AIDS today. Management of the disease was done at early stages, before it developed into what is called currently AIDS." Respondent 6*

Not all traditional healers agree with the notion that HIV always existed in Zimbabwe. It was alleged that HIV came with the white men. When the whites came into Zimbabwe they introduced a lot of diseases to the local population. HIV was not spread at this time because of the absence of cross-racial sex, prior to 1980. More African people die from HIV than Whites because their bodies have become accustomed to the virus (Respondent 8).

The interviewed traditional healers knew about HIV and AIDS, but showed lack of adequate knowledge on issues associated with HIV (Table 1). THs were tested for knowledge on medical cure of HIV, ritual cure of HIV, modes of transmitting HIV, who can contract HIV, ARV,

access to ARV and opportunistic infections. It is commendable that all the interviewed TH were aware of at least three opportunistic infections, which were considered to be good. Although 45% of THs knew about ARVs, none of them had knowledge on where and how to access them.

### **Clientele of Traditional healers**

Kariba District only has 2 medical doctors versus a population of around 80 000, while TH are estimated to be around 250. The questionnaire survey found that 56% of the 80 respondents had sought help from a TH in the past and 44% had never sought help from a TH. In the past 5 years, only 60% of 45 respondents had sought help from TH. Low-income earners had higher visits to the TH than their counterparts with higher income (Table 2). Numerous reasons for seeking help were indicated as; medical (41%), spiritual problem (36%), barrenness (10%), divination (5%), cleansing of bad omen (5%) and good luck charm (3%).

Amongst the 8 THs interviewed the maximum number of clients per week ranged from 3 to 50. On average, the 8 TH attended to 21 patients per week. Most of these were suspected HIV and AIDS patients because of the opportunistic infections they presented. The TH clients came from Kariba, other parts of the country and from the region (Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana and other countries). Community members who sought help from TH indicated that they travelled less than one kilometre (Km) (36%), 1-10 Km (28%), 11-100 Km (18%), 101-1000 Km (15%) and more than 1001 Km (3%).

### ***The role of traditional healers in prevention, care and support of HIV and AIDS victims***

HIV and AIDS patients are increasingly seeking medical and spiritual help from traditional healers. Traditional healers were instrumental in providing care in managing illnesses associated with HIV and AIDS. One traditional healer claims to have charms that boost the immune system of HIV patients. He narrated his success story with one HIV positive patient:

*Case 1: A patient who had been diagnosed as having HIV visited me. I prepared some herbs for him. He had to drink 2 litres of the concoction. The patient recovered significantly and one cannot tell if he has the virus. The informant did not know if the patient had gone for CD4 re-testing.*

TH ranked sexually transmitted diseases as the most common type of opportunistic infection most patients present with. TH indicated that cases of STI's reported to them are decreasing. All the 8 TH interviewed claimed that their charms were very effective in treatment of STI's especially herpes, syphilis, drop and gonorrhoea. The concoction used in the treatment of STI is locally known as *guchu*. When wounds dry on the skin the TH administers another charm to make sure the infection is not hibernating. If the infection is still present the charm activates it and further treatment is done. Another TH narrated this incident in an interview,

*Case 2: A patient went to a traditional healer for help. After having divinated-using hakata (divining bones) the TH learnt that she had an STI and that she needed to get an HIV test as the ailment was said to be natural and she was to die from it. He told her that she had wounds on her private parts and that she should consider going to the hospital for HIV and AIDS testing. According to the TH she sought for help late. However, the TH treated her for STI for a week. When she recovered from the STI's she went to hospital and was put on the ARV Programme. She looks healthy and going about her life normally.*

TH claimed that herbs are very effective in the

management of tuberculosis, severe headaches, diarrhea, STI's, herpes, cancer, pneumonia and HIV. TH indicated plants and animals where they extract sections to prepare medicine to manage opportunistic infections (Table 3). Traditional healers did not disclose what they considered as special medicine, as the spirits do not allow them. Such medicine can only be disclosed to a patient. They claim that at times the charms are shown in a dream where they are advised of their location and morphology and usually the TH does not know the name of the plant. Such dreams only appear when there is a patient who wants the charm. One TH claims that at times she found charms close to her pillow in the morning without her knowledge.

Amongst those who sought help from the traditional healers, 72% improved, 23% condition did not change, and 5% deteriorated. Cross tabulation of state of patient and condition after treatment shows that those who did not recover were bed ridden when they were attended to (Table 4). Community members who sought help from TH said they sought for help when patient could hardly walk (40%), could walk but ill (30%), not showing signs of illness (17%) and bed ridden (13%). According to interviews with TH most clients come to them after having been at the hospital. Most of the cases are said to seek for help when it is late and little can be done.

THs have been reported to support people on Home-Based Care (HBC) programmes. HBC patients seek the services of TH to treat some medical conditions and to help them with spiritual problems. The commonly reported were interpretation of bad dreams. TH attended to the patients in the presence of their immediate family, which improves family cohesion and also it, has psychological function. It was observed that those patients who were detained for observation and medical treatment by the traditional healers were jovial and hopeful.

THs like all medical practitioners want to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS. All the traditional healers interviewed highlighted taking precautions like using a new razorblade per patient. It was observed that due to the high prices of razor blades THs either break the razor into four and use each piece per patient or use each of the four corners per patient. The study identified some of the tools and practices of TH and ranked their risk in spreading HIV and AIDS (Table 5). Traditional healers were also using pieces of broken glass for scarification.

TH encouraged faithfulness when in a marriage and abstinence before marriage. There were mixed feelings over the use of condoms for prevention. THs appreciate that condoms are the only option now to protect the uninfected. Most of the THs claim that the gods and spirits are not happy with the throwing away of semen, as it is life. Two THs claimed that condoms are the ones that have AIDS. Further condoms have been criticised as being responsible for increased sexual activity and infidelity. Traditional healers expressed their support for the ARV and peer education programmes.



**Table 3.** Diseases identified by community and TH and constitution of herbs used in their management.

Opportunistic known infections	Plants used in management of Opportunistic Infection	Animal used in management of opportunistic infection
Tuberculosis	Musekesa ( <i>Bauhinia thonningii</i> ), mubvamaropa ( <i>Pterocarpus angolensis</i> ), mupfura ( <i>Sclerocarya birrea</i> ), muchechene ( <i>Ziziphus mucronata</i> ), mumvee ( <i>Kigelia africana</i> ), honey, muringa ( <i>Moringa oleifera</i> ), muzunga ( <i>acacia tortilis</i> )	
Severe diarrhea	Muronda-nezvezuro ( <i>Mundulea sericea</i> ), murumanyama ( <i>Xeroderris stuhlmannii</i> ), ginger, muuyu ( <i>adansonia digitata</i> ), kanzungu ( <i>Senna sp.</i> ), garamagora, katunguru ( <i>Courbonia glauca</i> ), muzungamudiki ( <i>Acacia Sp.</i> ), mupfura ( <i>Sclerocarya birrea</i> ), mukarati ( <i>Burkea africana</i> ), acacia spp., mango ( <i>Mangifera indica</i> ), mubayamhondoro ( <i>acacia nilotica</i> )	
STI	Mupangara ( <i>Dichrostachys cinerea</i> ), gvakava ( <i>Aloe spp.</i> ), mumvee ( <i>Kigelia africana</i> ), muzungamudiki ( <i>Acacia</i> ), muuyu ( <i>adansonia digitata</i> ), banana ( <i>Musa carendish</i> ),	
Oral thrush	Mushumha ( <i>Diospyros mespiliformis</i> ), mutsvautsva, mushangura ( <i>Euclea divinorum</i> ), kanzungu kanzungu ( <i>Senna sp.</i> ), muzungamudiki ( <i>Acacia Sp.</i> ), , mubayamhondoro ( <i>acacia nilotica</i> )	
Herpes Zoster	Banana ( <i>Musa carendish</i> ), paw paw ( <i>carica papaya</i> ), pfuta, muvheneka ( <i>Cassia abbreviata</i> ), mutondo ( <i>Cordyla africana</i> ), gvakava ( <i>Aloe spp.</i> ), black jerk ( <i>bidens pilosa</i> ), maize stalk ( <i>Zea mays</i> )	
Severe headache	Chinhanga ( <i>Acacia</i> ), mhiripiri ( <i>Capsium annum</i> ), muchenya ( <i>Zanha africana</i> ), munhunhurwa ( <i>Solanum spp.</i> ), muvheneka ( <i>Cassia abbreviata</i> ), maize stalk ( <i>Zea mays</i> ), mudima ( <i>Ipomea batatas/Dalbergia sp.</i> ),	
Pneumonia	Muringa (moringa oleifera), mushangura ( <i>Euclea divinorum</i> ), muroro ( <i>Anona spp.</i> ), tsanga ( <i>phragmites spp.</i> ),	
Cancer Heart problems, swollen legs Skin diseases	Muonde ( <i>Ficus spp.</i> ) Mupfura ( <i>Sclerocarya birrea</i> ), Water lily ( <i>Nymphaea caerulea</i> ), cooking oil	Lizard's intestines, mice,
HIV	Musau ( <i>Ziziphus mauritiana</i> ), mangoe tree ( <i>Mangifera indica</i> ), muwonde ( <i>Ficus sycomorus</i> ), muchecheni ( <i>Ziziphus spp.</i> ), Muringa ( <i>Moringa oleifera</i> ), mumvee ( <i>Kigelia africana</i> ), mushangura ( <i>Euclea divinorum</i> ), African potatoes ( <i>Hypoxis hemerocallidea</i> ).	

### **Risks of exacerbating HIV and AIDS associated with traditional healers**

Practices and instruments used by traditional healers have frequently been blamed for exacerbating HIV and

AIDS. This study explored the instruments and practices of TH in order to identify possible risks posed. The traditional healers use a wide range of instruments that aid them perform certain practices (Table 5). The 45 community members who had sought help from

**Table 4.** Cross tabulation of conditions of patient after treatment and the state of the patient before treatment.

Responses	Condition of Patient					Total
	No Change	Momentary Change	Improved	Cured	Deteriorated	
Bed ridden	1	3	0	0	1	5
Hardly walk	4	4	4	4	0	16
Looks strong but ill	3	1	4	2	1	11
Not showing signs of illness	1	2	2	2	0	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>39</b>

**Table 5.** Ranking risks to HIV transmission associated with instruments and practices of TH.

Instrument	Use	Practice	Rank of HIV Risk
Bottle	Charm store, divination	Dark bottle with beads and a liquid inside was used for divination	Low
Razor	Making cuts	Scarification is usually made in pairs. This is done when treating illness or problems that are believed to be in the flesh	High
Syringe, pen barrels, reeds	To insert charms	Charms are inserted in to the vagina, anus or mouth using hands. These are used for illnesses that are believed to be in the alimentary canal.	Medium
Cup	Drinking from	Oral taking of medication	Low
Bucket/dish	Washing, vomiting container	Patients are asked to wash in charms mixed with the water In the case of mamhepo/munyama a client washes with charms and the remaining water is poured at cross roads or in the river. To contain vomits where it has been induced	Medium
Hot ash	To burn charms	The practice is called <i>kufukira</i> in shona, it's were by charms are put on hot ash and the patient has to breath the smoke while covered by a blanket.	None
Necklace (Chuma), ndarira (bangle), homo (leg bangle)	Divination	The necklaces and bangles help him in divination. A lot of the interpretations come as a dream.	None
		Kurasirira- in the case of bad luck or witchcraft illnesses the push the spirits to wonder and look for someone else.	None
Hands	Apply charms	Kukwesho nhova Applying charms on the skin or pushing charms through the mouth During washing of the womb, Inserting charms into the vagina or anus	Medium
Mouth Hakata	Biting	At time TH bite out objects from patients bodies Divination	High None
Hands, eyes	Examining and observation	In cases of STI's the nánga (even male ones) examines the wounds on vagina or vice versa a female nánga examine a penis.	High
Semen	Induce pregnancy	Sex is at times used in treatment or diagnosis of infertility Sperms are necessary in treating infertility as they are mixed with charms and have to be inserted into the vagina channel.	High

**Table 6.** TH practices to be encouraged and to be discouraged.

Practices of TH disliked by community respondents	Frequency	Practice of TH that should be encouraged	Frequency (%) N= 80
Unhygienic surgeries and utensils	10	Management of medical illnesses	18
Cutting and piercing of the skin	23	Healing of spiritual problems	17
Charms of making wealth and witchcraft	15	Hygiene	19
Lying and divination	34	Use of new razors/needles	3
Using human parts in rituals	11	Referring patients to other practitioners	1
No idea	7	None	42

were blamed for lying or giving false hope, using sharp objects irresponsibly, giving charms for luck or wealth and using human parts in rituals (Table 6).

Interviews with TH showed that 75% (n=8) have never referred any patient to the hospital. The traditional healers would administer charms before referring to hospital (see case two). Three have however referred patients to other THs for treatment. Those who have never referred anyone said they have not met conditions that they have failed to deal with that needed the hospital. Twenty six percent of the respondents who went to TH were referred to another practitioner. Out of those referred 46% were referred to another TH, 36% to hospital and 18% to faith healer. One traditional healer said a patient or the family will move their patient from one TH to another until they get one who can treat the illness or until the patient dies.

## DISCUSSION

HIV and AIDS has caused havoc in Africa; the potential of traditional medicine and therapies in the fight against the pandemic is under-utilised (Sekagya et al., 2006). Previous studies in Zimbabwe on traditional therapies have focused on toxicity (Kasilo and Nhachi, 1992), efficacy of herbs and general practices (Gelfand et al., 1985). The present study examined the role of traditional therapists in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Results of this study agree with others before it in that urban communities particularly the poor utilize TH for primary health care, treatment of opportunistic infections and management of HIV (Mhame et al., 2005). The numbers of patients attended to by TH in Kariba are significant. The respondents highlighted a number of reasons why they sought for help from TH, which include medical, spiritual, rituals, good luck charms and divination. The formal health system is often avoided because it cannot take a holistic approach to health (including spiritual problems), it is too expensive and payment terms are not flexible. The numbers of PLWHA seeking for help from TH will probably increase due to cultural acceptability, desperation created by the Home Based Care programme, efficacy of some herbs and the deepening

poverty levels.

Traditional healers play an important role in palliative care for people living with HIV/AIDS by caring for patients as complete persons within their family and community context. According to Sekagya et al. (2006), most traditional healers use herbal medication, though they may also use psychosocial therapies, cosmic and meta/parapsychic interactions, simple surgical procedures, rituals, and symbolism. Psychosocial support, rituals and symbolism have been shown to have a positive impact on the patients. The language and symbols used are usually common to the patients and their cultural setting. High satisfaction was noted amongst study participants who had sought for help from traditional healers, despite indicating poor quality of service environment. This study has proved that although THs might not be able to cure illnesses, but they make their patients believe in recovering health and it helps them psychologically. Some patients welcomed family counselling. Guidance and counselling is an area Zimbabwean HIV and AIDS behaviour change framework can tap from the THs. However, currently very little is being done to involve TH in such situations in areas that they can be useful in the health delivery system.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize the role of herbal therapies in management of sexual transmitted diseases (STD's), diarrhea and charms that increase CD4 counts. The study encountered people who had improved from STD's and diarrhea by using traditional therapies. The results demonstrate that none of those who sought for help early deteriorated, unlike those who sought for help late. About 50% of patients who sought for help from TH when bed ridden, improved to the extent of going about their normal life duties. Only 5% of the patients taken to TH for treatment deteriorated their conditions. Similar trends, where patients improve from taking traditional therapies have been noticed in Tanzania (Kayombo, 1999) and South Africa (Viall, 2005).

In conclusion, this study argues for the 'optimists' view point that traditional healers are playing a positive role in fighting HIV and AIDS as shown by accounts of patients whose conditions improved and their claimed role in treatment of STI's. Furthermore, traditional healers are important for palliative health, psychosocial support and

spiritual health especially for HIV and AIDS infected and affected people. This study has explored the role of traditional healers in fighting HIV and AIDS in Kariba. Their herbs and counselling sessions have been said to be very helpful to the patient and their families. On the other hand, the study results showed practices and instruments used by traditional healers that could exacerbate the pandemic.

Further wrong perceptions and low knowledge of HIV could disqualify the traditional healers as key stakeholders in the fight against HIV and AIDS. However, if the two sides are weighed there is more credit in believing that traditional healers are playing a much positive role in care and supporting HIV and AIDS infected and affected households.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

It should be acknowledged that the study was small but it brought out important policy issues. The study makes the following recommendations to policy makers:

Collaboration between traditional medicine and biomedical practices in health issues in general and HIV in particular can be of great benefit to the patients. However, Kaboru (2007) argues that colliding views of these two worldviews complicates collaboration. Traditional healers can be involved in counselling and some of their potent medicines can be used in the management of opportunistic infections.

Trainings and campaigns aimed at discouraging use of toxic herbs/ charms and HIV and AIDS high-risk practices should be prioritised. Zimbabwe could benefit from the experiences of South Africa, Zambia Tanzania and others where THs have been trained and collaborated with formal health systems (Kayombo et al., 2007).

More research is needed in the area of traditional medicine. Kayombo et al. (2007) have cautioned that collaboration models need to be improved because the concept is easier said than done.

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## Conflict of Interests

The author(s) have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Full Length Research Paper

# Changes in the Lifestyle of Chinese Peasants over the Past 60 Years

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The lifestyles of Chinese peasants have changed remarkably since the foundation of the PRC. More than six decades addressed in this paper: from 1949 to today. The lifestyle of Chinese peasants has undergone revolution, politicization, collectivization, and urbanization with resulting synchronicity, imbalance, and disharmony. The first 30 years after the founding of the PRC, the material subsistence of Chinese peasants was severely deficient, but their spiritual life was rich. In the following 30 years, the reverse has been true: material living standards have significantly improved, but the spiritual life has markedly declined. In recent years, backward agricultural productive forces, small-scale land operation, a surplus of laborers, limited investment, weak infrastructure, and lack of agricultural modernization has resulted in three rural issues that is, agriculture, rural, and farmers issues. Resolving these issues is the utmost priority in the Party's work along with balancing urban and rural development, boosting rural development, working to narrow the gap between urban and rural areas and integrating urban and rural development provides the fundamental solution to these issues. With fewer restrictions over their economic activities and government support, the lifestyle of Chinese peasants is experiencing unprecedented and unforeseen vicissitudes.

**Keywords:** lifestyle; material lifestyle; spiritual lifestyle; new countryside development.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the foundation of the PRC, changes in lifestyles of Chinese peasants continue to ubiquitous, and at times disconcerting. People from all walks of life talk about it, want it, oppose it, fear it, and, at times, even want to make sense out of it (Vago). They are exploring the nature underground, the change and the attitude towards it. Should the changes to the lifestyle of peasants since the founding of the PRC be seen as "warm or bitter memories"? These problems arouse severe controversy

in academia, Chinese government circles, and civil society, so much, so that it is hard to reach consensus. There are many research results in this field. The famous scholar Fei Xiaotong, 2010 was not satisfied merely to reconstruct a static past, in his investigation of the traditional background of Chinese life. He grappled fully and deliberately with that most elusive and difficult phase of life: the transformation of traditional culture under Western impact (Xiaotong, 2010). The Chinese-American

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scholar Huang (1986), focused on the agricultural involution characterized by “the law of diminishing productivity,” because of population increase, which is called “Involutionary Theory.” Those led to the peasants’ standard of living hadn’t been improved for long-term before the foundation of the PRC. Huang explained the reason systematically first time, attracted many scholarships to research further in this field. He pointed out that the production needs of peasants, who to some degree produced directly for household consumption, were accordingly shaped in part by considerations of household needs. Therefore, peasants’ life was self-sufficient, lacking marketization. In this respect, the peasants were very different from their contemporaries who were urban residents, for whom the activities of production and consumption, of workplace and home, are generally distinct and separate. Peasants’ life remained unchanged for long time. Huang (1990) probed the family and life in the Yangtze Delta of China from 1950 to 1980, people in the Yangtze Delta barely made enough of a living to feed their families in the face of collectivist and agricultural modernization. Since the 1980s, the living standard of the peasants has improved considerably. Rural industrialization has generated off-farm employment opportunities for peasants, as well as economic diversification, use of spare-time and auxiliary household labor for farming, and modern inputs like the use of chemical fertilizers. These changes have helped raise incomes significantly, have reversed involution, and have encouraged growth without the corresponding increases in time consumption that have occurred at other times (Huang, 1990). Huang only focused on changes in peasants’ life being made by economic development, ignored social and policy change impact on it.

Since the foundation of the PRC, Chinese peasants have undergone revolution, politicization, collectivization, and urbanization, resulting in asynchronous, unbalanced, and disharmonious characteristics. Changes in the lifestyle of Chinese peasants have been epitomizing the impacts of social change and state’s policy. During the first 30 years after the foundation of the PRC, the material subsistence of Chinese peasants was severely deficient, but their spiritual life was rich. During the following 30 years, after the implementation of the reforms, the reverse became true, with material living standards significantly improved but a marked decline in the people’s spiritual life. This paper reviews the changes in lifestyle over the past 60 years, analyzing their characteristics, causes, and the historical experience, exploring the impacts of social change and state’s policy besides economic factor.

#### **historical time span and METHODOLOGY**

The historical comparative way has been applied fully in this paper, covers a span of over 60 years, 1949 to 2012: land reform, the agriculture cooperative movement, the great leap forward, the

economic adjustment period, the cultural revolution, the beginning of reforms, the mid-late reforms, and the period since the sixteenth national congress of the CPC (post-2002), totaling eight periods that have characterized post-revolutionary development in China. In trying to understand the significance of historical data, the *where*, or spatial dimension, is often just as important as *when*. Thus, I have analyzed some of the events in relation to the geographical location where the events occurred.

This research is based on two sets of time-series data at the national as well as the provincial levels. Socio-economic data was analyzed from a number of different sources, including population, expenditure, revenue, consumption, and so on. These data were extracted from the following official government publications and other authoritative sources: China’s Statistical Yearbook from 1959 to 2009 and some provincial Statistical Yearbooks at the same time. Statistical data did not record the changes in peasants’ lifestyle. I made some field visits and dictation interviews to investigate it

## **RESULTS**

### **The change phases of lifestyle in china Land Reform (1950-1952)**

Before liberation, especially during Japanese rule, the overwhelming majority of peasants could barely make a living, even without natural disasters, such as those arising from extreme weather. After the founding of the PRC, the CPC and the People’s Government launched an unprecedented movement in land from 1950 to 1952, which reformed the system of feudal landlord land ownership and instituted peasant land ownership. The reforms were peaceful and orderly, carried out in accordance with the Land Reform Law formally promulgated in June 1950. Peasants with more than high end of the average amount of land were allowed to retain a little more than that, (this was called the “big average”); those at the low end of the range received a little less land, (the “small average”). In addition to land, the reform called for redistributing draft animals, farm implements, houses, and furniture; together with land, these were the so-called “five major properties” subject to redistribution.

Though implemented with little fanfare, this “peaceful” land reform wrought profound changes. It eradicated rent, equalized property differences, removed the basis for long-term wage labor, and set the stage for expanded state taxation. The equalizing of landholdings within the villages had comparatively little effect. But the impact of land reform was no less far-reaching, completely altering the villages’ relations with their outside world. The villagers became owner-cultivators, pure and simple. Instead of rent payments to landlords, they now paid taxes to the state. For the peasants, state extraction and state power penetrated directly into villages for the first time in centuries. In terms of state-village power relations, land reform and expanded taxation brought state power into villages to an unprecedented degree. The old triangular relationship among state, gentry, and landlord, was replaced by a new bipolar relationship between state and

peasants. Land reform and the new taxes represented the first steps in the massive penetration of state power into peasant's lifestyle and social contact.

Land reforms resulted in unprecedented historical change in China's rural areas. Three hundred million peasants without arable land obtained 700 million acres of arable land and other production means, relieving them from 350 Mt (million ton) in grain tax (NBSC, 1959). The reform is the most significant and the largest revolution in the thousands years of Chinese history; it mobilized the masses and spurred peasants' enthusiasm for revolution and development, while liberating and developing agricultural productivity, and promoting the advancement of rural area society. From 1949 to 1952, gross national farm production rose from 32.6 billion *yuan* to 48.4 billion *yuan* (48.5%). Grain output increased by 113.2 Gt to 163.9 Gt, and cotton production soared from 222.25 Mt (92.9%). Output of other cash crops and animal products, such as eggs, milk, sugar, and liquor, also exceeded the highest levels in history (NBSC, 1959).

### **Agriculture Cooperative Movement (1953-1956)**

After rural land reform, the average farmer possessed a mere 3 mu (one mu equals to 666.67 m<sup>2</sup>) acres of arable land, while the average in the south of China was at the most 1 mu. Isolated, scattered, old-fashioned, and laggard small-scale farming constrained the development of agricultural productivity, national economic development, and industrialization. For example, from 1949 to 1957, China's cultivated land increased by about 200 million mu, and the population increased by 200 million, so the average quantity of per capita cultivated land shrank 0.23 mu. Combined with the weak farming infrastructure and backward technology, natural disasters resulted in crop losses, causing a famine among 100 million peasants. Peasant poverty remained widespread (Runsheng, 2005). Therefore, the Chinese government launched the socialist transformation of agriculture in China, which consisted of three stages. In the first stage, on a voluntary basis and according to a mutually beneficial principle, agricultural mutual-aid teams were established, consisting of several families, up to slightly over 10 families. During the second stage, small agricultural production cooperatives were set up to combine farmers' capital, land, objectives, and labor so that the farmers would be shareholders in a jointly managed operation. In the third stage, the government organized peasants into large-scale agricultural production cooperatives based on socialist principles. These measures improved the peasants' socialist awareness and altered their lifestyle, step-by-step (En-Lai, 1957). In practice, it took only three years to accomplish socialist industrialization and socialist transformation. Peasant lost traditional family circle, began to enter social counterpart dominated by state.

Along with the agriculture cooperative movement followed the expansion of state control over commerce. On October 16, 1953, the Central Committee of the CPC adopted a resolution on the "Planned Purchase and Planned Sales of Grain," initiating the first of a series of important measures for bringing rural commerce under control. According to this resolution, serious shortages in the grain supply had developed, despite great advances in grain production. On the one hand, the demand for grain had increased with the expansion of the urban and industrial population and the improvement in living standards. On the other hand, the state had not been able to purchase what was needed because merchant and profiteers were hoarding grain in anticipation of scarcity and price rises. The party leaders therefore resolved that grain should be subject to unified purchase and unified sale. The resolution became official government policy with the State Council's "Commands on the Implementation of Planned Purchase and Planned Sale of Grain" of November 23, 1953 (ELSG, 1981).

The control of the grain trade was completed on August 25, 1955, with the State Council's passage of a set of "Provisional Regulations on Unified Purchase and Unified Sale of Grain in the Countryside," formally calling for quotas on each household's grain production (ELSG, 1981).

The fixing of compulsory purchase quotas, unified sale quotas, and production quotas together came to be known as the "three fixes in grain." The three fixes were implemented; there was no individual choice. Every household had to attend first to the state's procurement needs, and then to its own requirements for consumption, for feed, and for seeds (called the "three retains"). The policies did more than bring the household economy under control; they played a powerful role in pushing unwilling households into collectives.

The hasty formation of the agricultural cooperatives movement resulted in some problems, which were not rectified in time. Fortunately, the movement did not give rise to agricultural depression or uprisings. In this sense, the agricultural cooperatives movement was great success. In the first five-year plan, the total agriculture output value reached 60.4 billion *yuan*, at an annual average growth rate of 4.5%; the total grain production reached 195 Mt (growth rate 3.7%); cotton production reached 1.64 Mt (growth rate 4.7%); and the production rate of other cash crops, livestock, poultry, meat, and eggs rose rapidly. Between 1952 and 1957, the agricultural tax remained unchanged, but agricultural product prices rose by 22.4% while industrial product prices rose by only 1.6% during the same term. Rural household income grew by 11 billion *yuan*: income levels saw a per capita increase of 27.9%, while per capita consumption soared by 22.9%. 20~30% of peasants lived affluently, 60% lived slightly above subsistence level, and 10~15% lived below the subsistence level (En-Lai, 1957 and Gabriel, 1998).

**Table 1.** State purchase grain quotas during 1958 to 1960 and percentage of grain output

	1958	1959	1960
State purchase grain quotas (Mt)	5.5	6.8	5.1
Percentage of grain output (%)	27.3	39.6	35.7

Note: Mt: million ton

### Great Leap Forward (1958-1962)

From the winter of 1957 to the spring of 1958, the Farmland Water Conservancy and Manure Collection Projects were launched in the Chinese rural areas. Participants rose from 30 million in October, to 70 million in November, and to 80 million by December 1957, with the figure topping out at 100 million in January 1958. From this year, development in the Chinese countryside developed at a dramatic pace. In less than two months, 26,576 people's communes (accounting for 99.1%) were established, 2.65 million public canteens opened up, 4.75 million nurseries and kindergartens, 100 thousand old folks' homes, and 25,577 militias. Meanwhile, the rural population was organized to participate in small-scale furnace steel making. The number of participants reached 50 million in September 60 million in October, and 90 million by November 1958 (Pinghan, 2003). Nearly the entire male labor force participated in steel making. Agricultural production was left to the old, sick, ill, disabled and women. The labor force deficiency, however, led to a sharp decline in crop production. The compulsory institutional change and social innovation included absolute egalitarianism and a work style characterized by boasting and exaggeration. It changed the traditional lifestyle completely.

Between 1959 and 1961, a combination of poor economic policies, succession of natural disasters, and widespread famine resulted in the deaths of 36.15 million people (Guohong, 1996). The Chinese government unilaterally emphasized steel production, unduly pursued industrial growth, and ignored agricultural production, along with people's life improvement. In this period, the industrial production value increased 2.3 times; however, agricultural production value dropped by 22.8%. The agricultural labor decreased from 183.65 million people to 46.2 million people during 1957 and 1960. The land cultivation dropped 13%, and grain output decreased to that of 1954 (16.95 Mt), but state purchase quotas increased steadily (Table 1).

The dogma of the Great Leap forward—"the bigger the better," which even included pig farming—was concentrated under a single, commune-operated "factory." One problem immediately cropped up: the commune did not have access to the chaff from household consumption grain for feed. It tried burning cow dung for feed, but that did not work. Similarly, the commune could no longer rely

on spare-time household labor for its compost, made by repeatedly adding grass to pig manure. The hog "factory" on its own was not able to generate more than minimal amounts of the organic fertilizer so vital to agriculture in this area. The makeshift pens finally collapsed under rain. Thus, the entire misguided enterprise was given up within few years.

The Chinese government has forbidden uncontrolled rural-urban migration since 1958, which has prevented the vast rural population from inundating the cities, whose employment opportunities could not begin to match the population pressure in the countryside. Promulgated in January 1958, the Household Registration Regulations required every rural household to register with the collectives. Unauthorized changes of residence were strictly forbidden. The children of villagers had to follow the mother's registration, rather than the father's (*Selected Public Security Laws and Regulations, 1982*). Peasants with little opportunity to leave the rural area for the city had to live in villages from the cradle to the grave.

### Economic Adjustment Period (1963-1965)

The Great Leap forward led to severe economic depression, food shortages, and depopulation. In order to rectify the famine and the recessionary economy, the Tenth Plenary Session of the 8th CPC Central Committee passed "The Revised Draft Regulations on the Work of the Rural People's Commune," also referred to as the "60 Clauses on Agriculture." It regulated production teams as the basic organization and economic accounting unit and reformed three main fields, the first being the commune system. Workers were accredited with work points for the jobs they performed every day. At the end of a year the net team income, after deductions for state taxes, public welfare funds, and so on, was distributed according to the work points that each one had accumulated during the year (Lin, 1998). In 2005, Yao discussed the second field of reform which was the household responsibility system.

It was intended to restore the autonomy of the individual household and to replace the production team system as the unit of production and accounting in rural areas. The so-called responsibility contract was equivalent to the granting of private property rights through a state lease of land. Ownership was not relinquished by the state, but the rights to use and to obtain income were

exclusively assigned to the lessee (Cheung, 1990). In fact, decision-making became significantly less centralized under the new system, and agricultural production started to recover in 1962. The third reform addressed production team sizes, which relied on the amount of arable land and its accessibility, and labor force allocation in agricultural production. By October 1962, there were 71,551 people's communes, 713,385 production brigades and 5,468,244 production teams. Each commune administered an average of 9.6 production brigades, which, in turn, administered an average of 7.6 production teams, each of which consisted of 23.6 households, on average (Pinghan, 2003). Each commune was a self-sufficient unit, as were many of the brigades. The production team was the basic accounting unit, which was equivalent to a junior commune, which claimed most of the arable land and income. The institution promoted agricultural stability and production development.

In accordance with these regulations, the Chinese government at all levels gave priority to agriculture and rural development from 1961 to 1964, embarking on adjustment, consolidation, and substantial enhancement towards a balanced relationship between national economic and agricultural productivity. By 1965, the per capita grain consumption, vegetable consumption, and income levels reached or exceeded those of 1957 (Pinghan, 2003). Peasant went back to traditional lifestyle in material life, but they were owing to has collectivism spirit to suffer to commend by leaders.

The famine was over by the end of 1962, and by 1965, grain outputs had fully recovered to their pre-famine level (Yao, 2005). During this period, China's GDP increased by 40%. Mao's call of "more people, more power" led to a peak birth rate during this period. As a result, population growth became a strong factor in China. In the meantime, the improvement in people's consumption levels significantly contributed to the population growth.

### **Cultural Revolution (1966-1975)**

The Cultural Revolution was launched in 1966, soon after the country had recovered from the famine caused by the Leap Forward. The political campaigns that accompanied the Cultural Revolution were aimed mainly upward and outward from the villages. The work group from the upper levels was devoted to finding "corruption" in production teams or villages. Their main impact was on the cadres, not the peasants, and in the town, not the villages. Team cadres felt the shock waves first in the "four small cleans" movement in 1964. Some of them were disgruntled about the unjustness of the complaints against them, so did they. In the "four big cleans" the following year (1965), the target was not the cadres, but "class enemies." To attack them, a "mass organization," the Poor, Lower-Middle Association was established, with two representatives from each team. In the course of this campaign,

the former "rich" were mistakenly fought against.

Despite the stormy experiences of the team cadres, however, there was little change of leadership at this level. Income distribution and household sidelines were untouched. The production team, the basic accounting unit that claimed most of the arable land and income, remained the same in the Cultural Revolution. The institution promoted agricultural stability and production development. However, both agricultural product average per capita and farmer per capita net income showed little improvement. For example, the grain average per capita was only 307 kg in 1976, about the same as that of 1956. Farmer per capita net income from the production teams in 1978 was 70 *yuan*, and a quarter of a commune member's whole years' earnings was less than 50 *yuan* (Doje and Xu, 1999). Farmer households, production teams, and production brigades were confronted with difficulties in living and production. From 1954 to 1978, the average daily dietary intake of calories rose from 1985 Kcal to 2215 Kcal per person. The average daily dietary intake of fat rose from 26.3 g to 31 g, and the average daily dietary intake of proteins rose from 51 g to 57.6 g. Compared to normal nutritional needs, however, the intake of calories, fat, and protein fell short of the needed amount by 7%, 52%, and 23% respectively (NBS, 1993). At the latter people's commune years, most peasants were sitting idle because of poor organization of work. Absolute egalitarianism in income distribution was severely imposed; therefore, both the farmers' enthusiasm and their income were very low. The farmers struggled to support themselves (Xinguang, 2003). At the time, although agricultural output tripled because of the increase in the agricultural population, the average peasant's income remained unchanged and even declined over the long term. Thus, the people's communes and production team were no guarantee of successful agricultural and rural development.

Despite their lack of the material means of subsistence during the people's commune period in China, the peasants' spiritual life appeared to be rich. At first, people's communes were different from rural villages in institution. They seemed to exceed the villages in terms of self-duplication, self-regeneration, and self-circulation, encapsulating a mechanism by which organized atomized individual households, lacking a spirit of cooperation, could be transformed into a small-scale economy that would set the farmers on the path to prosperity. This seemed to be the road of Chinese modernization that could narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. At that special time, ancient village and folk traditions and customs were severely criticized and remodeled. The government attempted to root out belief in spirits, ideals, cult worship, and illusions in an attempt to strengthen morality and order in the rural areas. Decentralized administration was replaced by unified collective production. Even with little prior experience, women participated in farm work like men. The production team implemented

the principle by which men and women enjoyed equal pay for equal work. Selfish, easy-going, and desultory peasants were transformed into one with collective living, discipline, organization.

### **The Beginning of Reforming and Opening-Up Year (1976-1988)**

After the economic reforms in 1978, China's economy went through a period of unprecedented growth. Between 1978 and 1984, the average per capita net income of rural residents rose from 133.57 *yuan* to 355.33 *yuan*, an annual growth rate of 17.71%. Grain output rose from 30 Mt to 40 Mt, which created the miracle by which less than 7% of the world's cultivated farmland could feed 22% of world's population (Runsheng, 2005). From 1985 to 1988, the grain output rose and fell in successive years. However, the output value of township enterprises reached 200 billion *yuan* within a year, absorbing a 60-million-strong work force to overcome the problem of a large population with relatively little arable land (Cheung, 1990). Between 1978 and 1988, the township enterprises became the fastest-growing section in the Chinese economy, accounting for one-third of industrial output. The peasants' income from townships was 382.8 billion *yuan*, which also accounted for 75% of net income (Jian, 2000). In addition, the government raised the procurement price of farm and sideline products, reducing the price agricultural production means and agricultural tax, optimizing the investment structure and continuously improving investment returns, safeguarding the sustainable growth of the incomes. For example, between 1979 and 1981, peasants' incomes rose to 5.2 billion *yuan* as a result of the booming procurement prices of farm and sideline products and agricultural remission (Jian, 2000). With the improvement in the material life, the spiritual life also was full of vigor and vitality.

Between 1984 and 1988, the rural economy developed rapidly, grain production soared substantially, and the number of township enterprises increased remarkably. Purchasing power also rose evidently. A large number of peasants moved into new flats. A family with a moderate income could afford to buy a bicycle, sewing machine, radio, watch, and some high-grade consumer goods. Previously, these had been too expensive for most families to afford. The rural market expanded. The rural surplus labor force was transferred to other economic sectors, promoting industrial development. Between 1978 and 1988, the average per capita net income of rural residents rose from 134 *yuan* to 545 *yuan*, an annual growth of 11.8% on average, while the average per capita consumption by rural residents soared from 138 *yuan* to 508 *yuan*, averaging 9.7%. Over the same period, the average per capita deposits of rural residents increased from 7 *yuan* to 138.7 *yuan*, but the ratio of urban and rural residents' income decreased from 2.37:1

in 1978 to 1.86:1 by 1985. The ratio of urban and rural residents' consumption dropped from 2.9:1 in 1978 to 2.3:1 in 1986. Especially during the decade between 1978 and 1988, new home building reached 3.4 billion square meters in rural areas. That number was higher than the aggregate amount of construction during the 30 years before the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy as 75 of families built new houses. The average per capita living space increased from eight to 17 square meters (Jian, 2000). In addition, the peasants' diet diversified, the number of durable consumer goods owned by rural residents—like a radio, a bicycle, a sewing machine, a television, and a watch—increased considerably, and the farmers reaped the benefit from the optimization of their agricultural production resources, effected by improvements in the efficiency of agricultural production, the development in agricultural production, improvements in the farmers' living conditions, and an ensured supply of agricultural products.

The image of the farmer has undergone substantial change since the reform and the opening up of various policies. The peasants were no longer tied to the land. Off-farm work opportunities, superior salaries with benefits, and lighter working conditions enabled them live like urban residents. Women were no longer had to go barefoot or uncovered under the sun, as they were well-shod and completely protected from the sun under an umbrella. Thus, women no longer allowed their skin to darken like peasants from the past.

### **Mid-Late Reforms and Opening Up (1989-2001)**

During 1989 to 2001, rural reform and development met with a certain degree of stagnation, which was considered typical of agriculture, the rural areas, and the peasantry. For example, from 1993 to 1994, the grain prices were adjusted by the market, but it was regulated by the government from 1997 to 1998. Grain prices continued to decline over the following seven years. Since a tax-sharing system reform was implemented in 1994, the financial revenue of counties and townships made up 21% of the state gross revenue, but provided for 71% of staff salaries. For example, for rural compulsory education expenditure, the central finance subsidized only 2%, provincial finance contributed to 11%, and county finance accounted for 9%, township finance bearing the brunt of no less than 78% of total expenditure, leading to financial trouble for the townships. In addition, the percentage of funds for the development of aid-agriculture declined from 13% in 1985 to 8% by 2000. With the progress of reform, increases in farmer per capita net income nonetheless showed a downward trend, increasing 4.6%, 4.3%, 3.8%, and 2.1%, year by year, the increment being less than one-fifth that of urban residents (Xinguang, 2007). Most households' income fluctuated or even dropped. Rural social undertakings

developed slowly, urban-rural development was unbalanced, and rural social contradictions were increasingly outstanding.

Since the mid-1980s, a flood of peasants had worked in cities as migrant workers, going through changes to their lifestyles because of unfamiliar surroundings. The number of migrant workers rose steadily from 2 million in the early stages of the reform and opening-up years, to 30 million by 1989. Peasants left their land and their hometowns, but their social status remained unchanged. Since Deng Xiaoping's Southern Tour Speeches, China's economy began a new round of rapid growth, as did the rise in the number of migrant workers, up to 62 million by 1993, double that of 1989 (Changbin, 2007). The mainstream city culture changed their closed, monotonous, dull lifestyles to an open, rich, diverse, and civilized city lifestyle, and even going a step further to change the peasants' lifestyle completely. Migrant work lived city far away their family which led to family love weakens.

### **Since the Sixteenth National Congress of the CPC (Post 2002)**

Issues concerning agriculture, countryside, and farmers ("three rural issues" for short) have become a bottleneck for social development during the comprehensive construction of the affluent society. Since the Sixteenth National Congress of the CPC, a series of measures that were put into effect concerning the harmonious countryside and new countryside development were actually all about resolving the three rural issues: Firstly, carrying out the strategy of development of agricultural sustainability, accelerating the construction of New Countryside. Between 2004 and 2009, the Party Central Committee issued Document No.1 of the Central Government for 6 consecutive years, which was aimed at raising peasants' income levels, improving agricultural integrated production capacity, and bringing about an advance in the rural economy. Furthermore, the document outlines strategies and the intention to accelerate agricultural modernization, and propel the urban-rural integration forward. The Eighteenth National Congress of the CPC promoted integrating urban and rural development to provide the fundamental solution to these issues (Jintao, 2012).

### **DISCUSSION**

The paper focus on the changes in spiritual and material life of peasant, however, there are a lot of field to be investigated. The Eighteenth National Congress of the CPC promoted integrating urban and rural development to provide the fundamental solution to these issues. In striving to balance urban and rural development, boost rural development, narrow the gap between urban and rural areas, and promote their common prosperity, the government continues to encourage industry to support

agriculture in return for the latter's earlier contribution to industrial development and to encourage cities to support rural areas, giving increasingly more to peasants. A spiritual lifestyle, such as public morality, professional ethics, family virtues, individual integrity, and traditional Chinese virtues, is being resumed and improved. Lifestyle of Chinese peasants is being confronted with unprecedented vicissitudes.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The lifestyle of Chinese peasants has changed remarkably over the last 60 years and has thereby undergone an asynchronous, unbalanced, and disharmonious process. In the 30 years after the foundation of the PRC, The material life of Chinese peasants was severely deficient, but their spiritual life was inspired, even through revolution, politicization, and collectivization. However, the following 30 years, after implementation of the reform and opening-up policies, the lifestyle of Chinese peasants went in the opposite direction, with significantly improved material living standards but a marked decline in their spiritual life. In particular, the household-responsibility system stimulated the peasants' production enthusiasm, and off-farm employment increased their income. These developments helped to produce substantially better crops. For the first time in centuries, incomes began to rise substantially above the margins of subsistence, which had not been possible under the collective system. However, backward agricultural productive forces, small-scale land operation, a surplus of laborers, limited investment, weak infrastructure, and lack of agricultural modernization resulted in the three rural issues.

### **Conflict of Interests**

The author(s) have not declared any conflict of interests.

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### historical time span and Methodology

The historical comparative way has been applied fully in this paper, covers a span of over 60 years, 1949 to 2012: land reform, the agriculture cooperative movement, the great leap forward, the economic adjustment period, the cultural revolution, the beginning of reforms, the mid-late reforms, and the period since the sixteenth national congress of the CPC (post 2002), totaling eight periods that have characterized post-revolutionary development in China. In trying to understand the significance of historical data, the *where*, or spatial dimension, is often just as important as *when*. Thus, I have analyzed some of the events in relation to the geographical location where the events occurred.

This research is based on two sets of time-series data at the national as well as the provincial levels. Socio-economic data was analyzed from a number of different sources, including population, expenditure, revenue, consumption, and so on. These data were extracted from the following official government publications and other authoritative sources: China's Statistical Yearbook from 1959 to 2009 and some provincial Statistical Yearbooks at the same time. Statistical data did not record the changes in peasants' lifestyle. I made some field visits and dictation interviews to investigate it

## Results

### The change phases of lifestyle in china Land Reform (1950-1952)

Before liberation, especially during Japanese rule, the overwhelming majority of peasants could barely make a living, even without natural disasters, such as those arising from extreme weather. After the founding of the PRC, the CPC and the People's Government launched an unprecedented movement in land from 1950 to 1952, which reformed the system of feudal landlord land ownership and instituted peasant land ownership. The reforms were peaceful and orderly, carried out in accordance with the Land Reform Law formally promulgated in June 1950. Peasants with more than high end of the average amount of land were allowed to retain a little more than that, (this was called the "big average"); those at the low end of the range received a little less land, (the "small average"). In addition to land, the reform called for redistributing draft animals, farm implements, houses, and furniture; together with land, these were the so-called "five major properties" subject to redistribution.



Though implemented with little fanfare, this “peaceful” land reform wrought profound changes. It eradicated rent, equalized property differences, removed the basis for long-term wage labor, and set the stage for expanded state taxation. The equalizing of landholdings within the villages had comparatively little effect. But the impact of land reform was no less far-reaching, completely altering the villages' relations with their outside world. The villagers became owner-cultivators, pure and simple. Instead of rent payments to landlords, they now paid taxes to the state. For the peasants, state extraction and state power penetrated directly into villages for the first time in centuries. In terms of state-village power relations, land reform and expanded taxation brought state power into villages to an unprecedented degree. The old triangular relationship among state, gentry, and landlord, was replaced by a new bipolar relationship between state and peasants. Land reform and the new taxes represented the first steps in the massive penetration of state power into peasant's lifestyle and social contact.

Land reforms resulted in unprecedented historical change in China's rural areas. Three hundred million peasants without arable land obtained 700 million acres of arable land and other production means, relieving them from 350 Mt (million ton) in grain tax.<sup>6</sup> The reform is the most significant and the largest revolution in the thousands years of Chinese history; it mobilized the masses and spurred peasants' enthusiasm for revolution and development, while liberating and developing agricultural productivity, and promoting the advancement of rural area society. From 1949 to 1952, gross national farm production rose from 32.6 billion yuan to 48.4 billion yuan (48.5%). Grain output increased by 113.2 Gt to 163.9 Gt, and cotton production soared from 222.25 Mt (92.9%). Output of other cash crops and animal products, such as eggs, milk, sugar, and liquor, also exceeded the highest levels in history (NBSC, 1959).

### Agriculture Cooperative Movement (1953-1956)

After rural land reform, the average farmer possessed a mere 3 mu (one mu equals to 666.67 m<sup>2</sup>) acres of arable land, while the average in the south of China was at the most 1 mu. Isolated, scattered, old-fashioned, and laggard small-scale farming constrained the development of agricultural productivity, national economic development, and industrialization. For example, from 1949 to 1957, China's cultivated land increased by about 200 million mu, and the population increased by 200 million, so the average quantity of per capita cultivated land shrank 0.23 mu. Combined with the weak farming infrastructure and backward technology, natural disasters resulted in crop losses, causing a famine among 100 million peasants. Peasant poverty remained widespread (Runsheng, 2005). Therefore, the Chinese government launched the socialist transformation of agriculture in China, which consisted of three stages. In the first stage, on a voluntary basis and according to a mutually beneficial principle, agricultural mutual-aid teams were established, consisting of several families, up to slightly over 10 families. During the second stage, small agricultural production cooperatives were set up to combine farmers' capital, land, objectives, and labor so that the farmers would be shareholders in a jointly managed operation. In the third stage, the government organized peasants into large-scale agricultural production cooperatives based on socialist principles. These measures improved the peasants' socialist awareness and altered their lifestyle, step-by-step (En-Lai, 1957). In practice, it took only three years to accomplish socialist industrialization and socialist transformation. Peasant lost traditional family circle, began to enter social counterpart dominated by state.

Along with the agriculture cooperative movement followed the expansion of state control over commerce. On October 16, 1953, the Central Committee of the CPC adopted a resolution on the “Planned Purchase and Planned Sales of Grain,” initiating the first of a series of important measures for bringing rural commerce under control. According to this resolution, serious shortages in the grain supply had developed, despite great advances in grain production. On the one hand, the demand for grain had increased with the expansion of the urban and industrial population and the improvement in living standards. On the other hand, the state had not been able to purchase what was needed because merchant and profiteers were hoarding grain in anticipation of scarcity and price rises. The party leaders therefore resolved that grain should be subject to unified purchase and unified sale. The resolution became official government policy with the State Council's “Commands on the Implementation of Planned Purchase and Planned Sale of Grain” of November 23, 1953 (ELSG, 1981).

The control of the grain trade was completed on August 25, 1955, with the State Council's passage of a set of “Provisional Regulations on Unified Purchase and Unified Sale of Grain in the Countryside,” formally calling for quotas on each household's grain production (ELSG, 1981). The fixing of compulsory purchase quotas, unified sale quotas, and production quotas together came to be known as the “three fixes in grain.” The three fixes were implemented; there was no individual choice. Every household had to attend first to the state's procurement needs, and then to its own requirements for consumption, for feed, and for seeds (called the “three retains”). The policies did more than bring the household economy under control; they played a powerful role in pushing unwilling households into collectives.

The hasty formation of the agricultural cooperatives movement resulted in some problems, which were not rectified in time. Fortunately, the movement did not give rise to agricultural depression or uprisings. In this sense, the agricultural cooperatives movement was great success. In the first five-year plan, the total agriculture output value reached 60.4 billion yuan, at an annual average growth rate of 4.5%; the total grain production reached 195 Mt (growth rate 3.7%); cotton production reached 1.64 Mt (growth rate 4.7%); and the production rate of other cash crops, livestock, poultry, meat, and eggs rose rapidly. Between 1952 and 1957, the agricultural tax remained unchanged, but agricultural product prices rose by 22.4% while industrial product prices rose by only 1.6% during the same term. Rural household income



grew by 11 billion yuan: income levels saw a per capita increase of 27.9%, while per capita consumption soared by 22.9%. 20–30% of peasants lived affluently, 60% lived slightly above subsistence level, and 10–15% lived below the subsistence level (En-Lai, 1957 and Gabriel, 1998).

### **Great Leap Forward (1958-1962)**

From the winter of 1957 to the spring of 1958, the Farmland Water Conservancy and Manure Collection Projects were launched in the Chinese rural areas. Participants rose from 30 million in October, to 70 million in November, and to 80 million by December 1957, with the figure topping out at 100 million in January 1958. From this year, development in the Chinese countryside developed at a dramatic pace. In less than two months, 26,576 people's communes (accounting for 99.1%) were established, 2.65 million public canteens opened up, 4.75 million nurseries and kindergartens, 100 thousand old folks' homes, and 25,577 militias. Meanwhile, the rural population was organized to participate in small-scale furnace steel making. The number of participants reached 50 million in September 60 million in October, and 90 million by November 1958 (Pinghan, 2003). Nearly the entire male labor force participated in steel making. Agricultural production was left to the old, sick, ill, disabled and women. The labor force deficiency, however, led to a sharp decline in crop production. The compulsory institutional change and social innovation included absolute egalitarianism and a work style characterized by boasting and exaggeration. It changed the traditional lifestyle completely.

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The Great Leap forward led to severe economic depression, food shortages, and depopulation. In order to rectify the famine and the recessionary economy, the Tenth Plenary Session of the 8th CPC Central Committee passed "The Revised Draft Regulations on the Work of the Rural People's Commune," also referred to as the "60 Clauses on Agriculture." It regulated production teams as the basic organization and economic accounting unit and reformed three main fields, the first being the commune system. Workers were accredited with work points for the jobs they performed every day. At the end of a year the net team income, after deductions for state taxes, public welfare funds, and so on, was distributed according to the work points that each one had accumulated during the year (Lin, 1998). In 2005, Yao discussed the second field of reform which was the household responsibility system:

It was intended to restore the autonomy of the individual household and to replace the production team system as the unit of production and accounting in rural areas. The so-called responsibility contract was equivalent to the granting of private property rights through a state lease of land. Ownership was not relinquished by the state, but the rights to use and to obtain income were exclusively assigned to the lessee (Cheung, 1990). In fact, decision-making became significantly less centralized under the new system, and agricultural production started to recover in 1962. The third reform addressed production team sizes, which relied on the amount of arable land and its accessibility, and labor force allocation in agricultural production. By October 1962, there were 71,551 people's communes, 713,385 production brigades and 5,468,244 production teams. Each commune administered an average of 9.6 production brigades, which, in turn, administered an average of 7.6 production teams, each of which consisted of 23.6 households, on average (Pinghan, 2003). Each commune was a self-sufficient unit, as were many of the brigades. The production team was the basic accounting unit, which was equivalent to a junior commune, which claimed most of the arable land and income. The institution promoted agricultural stability and production development.

In accordance with these regulations, the Chinese government at all levels gave priority to agriculture and rural development from 1961 to 1964, embarking on adjustment, consolidation, and substantial enhancement towards a balanced relationship between national economic and agricultural productivity. By 1965, the per capita grain consumption, vegetable consumption, and income levels reached or exceeded those of 1957 (Pinghan, 2003). Peasant went back to traditional lifestyle in material life, but they were owing to has collectivism spirit to suffer to commend by leaders.

The famine was over by the end of 1962, and by 1965, grain outputs had fully recovered to their pre-famine level (Yao, 2005). During this period, China's GDP increased by 40%. Mao's call of "more people, more power" led to a peak birth rate during this period. As a result, population growth became a strong factor in China. In the meantime, the improvement in people's consumption levels significantly contributed to the population growth.

### **Cultural Revolution (1966-1975)**

The Cultural Revolution was launched in 1966, soon after the country had recovered from the famine caused by the Leap Forward. The political campaigns that accompanied the Cultural Revolution were aimed mainly upward and outward from the villages. The work group from the upper levels was devoted to finding "corruption" in production teams or villages. Their main impact was on the cadres, not the peasants, and in the town, not the villages. Team cadres felt the shock waves first in the "four small cleans" movement in 1964. Some of them were disgruntled about the unjustness of the complaints against them, so did they. In the "four big cleans" the following year (1965), the target was not the cadres, but "class enemies." To attack them, a "mass organization," the Poor, Lower-Middle Association was established, with two representatives from each team. In the course of this campaign, the former "rich" were mistakenly fought against.

Despite the stormy experiences of the team cadres, however, there was little change of leadership at this level. Income distribution and household sidelines were untouched. The production team, the basic accounting unit that claimed most of the arable land and income, remained the same in the Cultural Revolution. The institution promoted agricultural stability and production development. However, both agricultural product average per capita and farmer per capita net income showed little improvement. For example, the grain average per capita was only 307 kg in 1976, about the same as that of 1956. Farmer per capita net income from the production teams in 1978 was 70 yuan, and a quarter of a commune member's whole years' earnings was less than 50 yuan (Doje and Xu, 1999). Farmer households, production teams, and production brigades were confronted with difficulties in living and production. From 1954 to 1978, the average daily dietary intake of calories rose from 1985 Kcal to 2215 Kcal per person. The average daily dietary intake of fat rose from 26.3 g to 31 g, and the average daily dietary intake of proteins rose from 51 g to 57.6 g. Compared to normal nutritional needs, however, the intake of calories, fat, and protein fell short of the needed amount by 7%, 52%, and 23% respectively (NBS, 1993). At the latter people's commune years, most peasants were sitting idle because of poor organization of work. Absolute egalitarianism in income distribution was severely imposed; therefore, both the farmers' enthusiasm and their income were very low. The farmers struggled to support themselves (Xinguang, 2003). At the time, although agricultural output tripled because of the increase in the agricultural population, the average peasant's income remained unchanged and even declined over the long term. Thus, the people's communes and production team were no guarantee of successful agricultural and rural development.

Despite their lack of the material means of subsistence during the people's commune period in China, the peasants' spiritual life appeared to be rich. At first, people's communes were different from rural villages in institution. They seemed to exceed the villages in terms of self-duplication, self-regeneration, and self-circulation, encapsulating a mechanism by which organized atomized individual households, lacking a spirit of cooperation, could be transformed into a small-scale economy that would set the farmers on the path to prosperity. This seemed to be the road of Chinese modernization that could narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. At that special time, ancient village and folk traditions and customs were severely criticized and remodeled. The government attempted to root out belief in spirits, ideals, cult worship, and illusions in an attempt to strengthen morality and order in the rural areas. Decentralized administration was replaced by unified collective production. Even with little prior experience, women participated in farm work like men. The production team implemented the principle by which men and women enjoyed equal pay for equal work. Selfish, easy-going, and desultory peasants were transformed into one with collective living, discipline, organization.

### **The Beginning of Reforming and Opening-Up Year (1976-1988)**

After the economic reforms in 1978, China's economy went through a period of unprecedented growth. Between 1978 and 1984, the average per capita net income of rural residents rose from 133.57 yuan to 355.33 yuan, an annual growth rate of 17.71%. Grain output rose from 30 Mt to 40 Mt, which created the miracle by which less than 7% of the world's cultivated farmland could feed 22% of world's population (Runsheng, 2005). From 1985 to 1988, the grain output rose and fell in successive years. However, the output value of township enterprises reached 200 billion yuan within a year, absorbing a 60-million-strong work force to overcome the problem of a large population with relatively little arable land

(Cheung, 1990). Between 1978 and 1988, the township enterprises became the fastest-growing section in the Chinese economy, accounting for one-third of industrial output. The peasants' income from townships was 382.8 billion *yuan*, which also accounted for 75% of net income (Jian, 2000). In addition, the government raised the procurement price of farm and sideline products, reducing the price agricultural production means and agricultural tax, optimizing the investment structure and continuously improving investment returns, safeguarding the sustainable growth of the incomes. For example, between 1979 and 1981, peasants' incomes rose to 5.2 billion *yuan* as a result of the booming procurement prices of farm and sideline products and agricultural remission (Jian, 2000). With the improvement in the material life, the spiritual life also was full of vigor and vitality.

Between 1984 and 1988, the rural economy developed rapidly, grain production soared substantially, and the number of township enterprises increased remarkably. Purchasing power also rose evidently. A large number of peasants moved into new flats. A family with a moderate income could afford to buy a bicycle, sewing machine, radio, watch, and some high-grade consumer goods. Previously, these had been too expensive for most families to afford. The rural market expanded. The rural surplus labor force was transferred to other economic sectors, promoting industrial development. Between 1978 and 1988, the average per capita net income of rural residents rose from 134 *yuan* to 545 *yuan*, an annual growth of 11.8% on average, while the average per capita consumption by rural residents soared from 138 *yuan* to 508 *yuan*, averaging 9.7%. Over the same period, the average per capita deposits of rural residents increased from 7 *yuan* to 138.7 *yuan*, but the ratio of urban and rural residents' income decreased from 2.37:1 in 1978 to 1.86:1 by 1985. The ratio of urban and rural residents' consumption dropped from 2.9:1 in 1978 to 2.3:1 in 1986. Especially during the decade between 1978 and 1988, new home building reached 3.4 billion square meters in rural areas. That number was higher than the aggregate amount of construction during the 30 years before the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy as 75% of families built new houses. The average per capita living space increased from eight to 17 square meters (Jian, 2000). In addition, the peasants' diet diversified, the number of durable consumer goods owned by rural residents—like a radio, a bicycle, a sewing machine, a television, and a watch—increased considerably, and the farmers reaped the benefit from the optimization of their agricultural production resources, effected by improvements in the efficiency of agricultural production, the development in agricultural production, improvements in the farmers' living conditions, and an ensured supply of agricultural products.

The image of the farmer has undergone substantial change since the reform and the opening up of various policies. The peasants were no longer tied to the land. Off-farm work opportunities, superior salaries with benefits, and lighter working conditions enabled them live like urban residents. Women were no longer had to go barefoot or uncovered under the sun, as they were well-shod and completely protected from the sun under an umbrella. Thus, women no longer allowed their skin to darken like peasants from the past.

### Mid-Late Reforms and Opening Up (1989-2001)

During 1989 to 2001, rural reform and development met with a certain degree of stagnation, which was considered typical of agriculture, the rural areas, and the peasantry. For example, from 1993 to 1994, the grain prices were adjusted by the market, but it was regulated by the government from 1997 to 1998. Grain prices continued to decline over the following seven years. Since a tax-sharing system reform was implemented in 1994, the financial revenue of counties and townships made up 21% of the state gross revenue, but provided for 71% of staff salaries. For example, for rural compulsory education expenditure, the central finance subsidized only 2%, provincial finance contributed to 11%, and county finance accounted for 9%, township finance bearing the brunt of no less than 78% of total expenditure, leading to financial trouble for the townships. In addition, the percentage of funds for the development of aid-agriculture declined from 13% in 1985 to 8% by 2000. With the progress of reform, increases in farmer per capita net income nonetheless showed a downward trend, increasing 4.6%, 4.3%, 3.8%, and 2.1%, year by year, the increment being less than one-fifth that of urban residents (Xinguang, 2007). Most households' income fluctuated or even dropped. Rural social undertakings developed slowly, urban-rural development was unbalanced, and rural social contradictions were increasingly outstanding.

Since the mid-1980s, a flood of peasants had worked in cities as migrant workers, going through changes to their lifestyles because of unfamiliar surroundings. The number of migrant workers rose steadily from 2 million in the early stages of the reform and opening-up years, to 30 million by 1989. Peasants left their land and their hometowns, but their social status remained unchanged. Since Deng Xiaoping's Southern Tour Speeches, China's economy began a new round of rapid growth, as did the rise in the number of migrant workers, up to 62 million by 1993, double that of 1989 (Changbin, 2007). The mainstream city culture changed their closed, monotonous, dull lifestyles to an open, rich, diverse, and civilized city lifestyle, and even going a step further to change the peasants' lifestyle completely. Migrant work lived city far away their family which led to family love weakens.

### Since the Sixteenth National Congress of the CPC (Post 2002)

Issues concerning agriculture, countryside, and farmers ("three rural issues" for short) have become a bottleneck for

social development during the comprehensive construction of the affluent society. Since the Sixteenth National Congress of the CPC, a series of measures that were put into effect concerning the harmonious countryside and new countryside development were actually all about resolving the three rural issues: Firstly, carrying out the strategy of development of agricultural sustainability, accelerating the construction of New Countryside. Between 2004 and 2009, the Party Central Committee issued Document No.1 of the Central Government for 6 consecutive years, which was aimed at raising peasants' income levels, improving agricultural integrated production capacity, and bringing about an advance in the rural economy. Furthermore, the document outlines strategies and the intention to accelerate agricultural modernization, and propel the urban-rural integration forward. The Eighteenth National Congress of the CPC promoted integrating urban and rural development to provide the fundamental solution to these issues (Jintao, 2012).

## DISCUSSION

The paper focus on the changes in spiritual and material life of peasant, however, there are a lot of field to be investigated. The Eighteenth National Congress of the CPC promoted integrating urban and rural development to provide the fundamental solution to these issues. In striving to balance urban and rural development, boost rural development, narrow the gap between urban and rural areas, and promote their common prosperity, the government continues to encourage industry to support agriculture in return for the latter's earlier contribution to industrial development and to encourage cities to support rural areas, giving increasingly more to peasants. A spiritual lifestyle, such as public morality, professional ethics, family virtues, individual integrity, and traditional Chinese virtues, is being resumed and improved. Lifestyle of Chinese peasants is being confronted with unprecedented vicissitudes.

## CONCLUSIONS

The lifestyle of Chinese peasants has changed remarkably over the last 60 years and has thereby undergone an asynchronous, unbalanced, and disharmonious process. In the 30 years after the foundation of the PRC, The material life of Chinese peasants was severely deficient, but their spiritual life was inspired, even through revolution, politicization, and collectivization. However, the following 30 years, after implementation of the reform and opening-up policies, the lifestyle of Chinese peasants went in the opposite direction, with significantly improved material living standards but a marked decline in their spiritual life. In particular, the household-responsibility system stimulated the peasants' production enthusiasm, and off-farm employment increased their income. These developments helped to produce substantially better crops. For the first time in centuries, incomes began to rise substantially above the margins of subsistence, which had not been possible under the collective system. However, backward agricultural productive forces, small-scale land operation, a surplus of laborers, limited investment, weak infrastructure, and lack of agricultural modernization resulted in the three rural issues.

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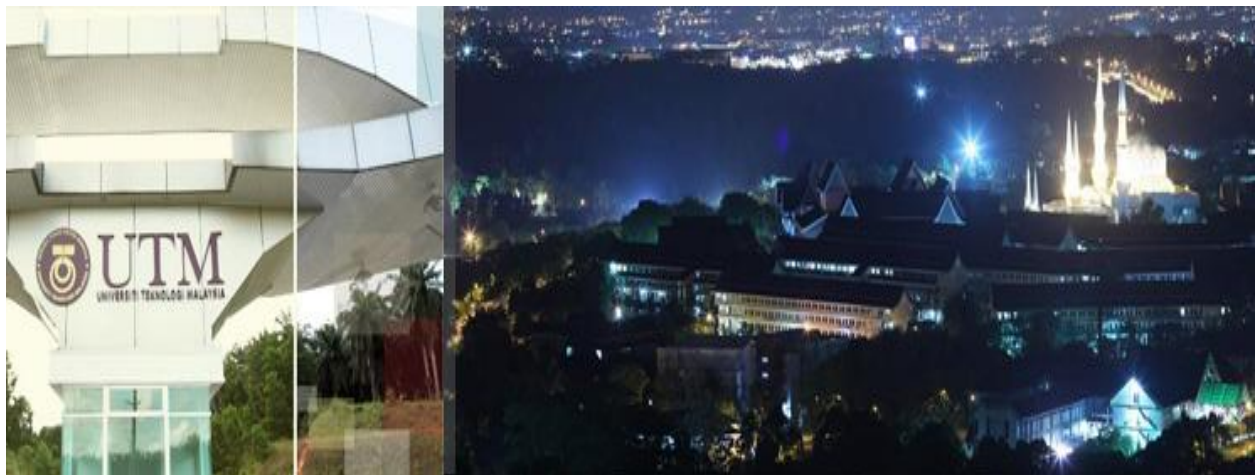
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