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## **SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**(SPA)**

## **FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND COMMERCE**

**Research topic:** Assessing the effect of Public Participation and development communications on service delivery: The case of the department of Social Development in the Eastern Cape (2004-2010)

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for a Master of Public Administration (MPA) Degree**

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## **Acknowledgements**

I am most grateful to my supervisor Dr T. Mle of the Public Administration Department for the guidance and leadership through the period of study and through the process of fulfillment of this research project.

Many thanks to the staff of the Department of Social Development especially Communication and Liaison Directorate and particularly Sibabalwe Nkebe who has tirelessly ensured that this work is completed. I also want to thank Mr Mwangolela for his support during stressfull period when putting together this project.

I'm also gratefull for the support of Social Workers, Community Development Workers and Traditional Leadership.

## DECLARATION

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## **DEDICATION**

This treatise is dedicated to my family, in particular my wife Nomthandazo Maswana who has allowed me to take off her time to contribute to this noble idea and can be able to finish my studies.

## **Abstract**

Public Participation is a critical facet of development communication. The Republic of South Africa (RSA) Constitution 1996 promotes a set of values of good governance setting a framework for the public participation, and democratization of the public sector through instruments such as developmental communication in order to impact better service delivery. Public participation is an effective communication platform of a new democratic South Africa, as such, public participation forms part of the Constitution of the RSA Act (108 of 1996). To necessitate good governance, it is very imperative that the citizenry, being voters to take an active role in the affairs of governance. The credibility, legitimacy, acceptability, support for governance structures and sustainability of any government is dependable mostly on how citizens are participating in the affairs of government. The research topic being-assessing the effect of Public Participation and Development Communications on service delivery:the case of the department of Social Development in the Eastern Cape focused on Ingquza Municipality in O.R.Tambo District of the Eastern Cape.

The public administration has positioned financial management and human resources as critical elements for effective and efficient system. The study has identified that the omission of public participation and development communication as a gap that need to be optimally utilized to avoid communication gap that leads to unnecessary service delivery protests. The study position communication as strategic and management function of each and every manager. The importance of Public Participation is that it could help to ensure that the citizens take ownership of processes as an important democratic principle. The imbizo's as public participation tool and effective communication platform has been proven to be effective. The strengthening of development communication in the department to empower communities through development communication cadres and information dissemination is paramount important. Furthermore this will make sure that there is a continuous feedback on quality assurance programme in implementing political pronouncements that are made during imbizo's.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The study and practice of public administration have transformed greatly over the years, to include the principle of participation for improved performance of government programmes. The study is shaped by the following two key premises:

**Premise One:** Public Administration as a discipline of study is the philosophy that the implementation of service delivery oriented policies is driven by government institutions in partnership with citizens. Mattes, (2002:2) in the paper, '*South Africa: Democracy without the People*', outlines that democracy as a concept is aligned and should be allowed to the principle of public participation with citizens

**Premise Two:** Public administration, as the practice considers public participation as a critical pillar of policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. The African Charter for Popular Participation outlines that the participation of the citizens in policy decision making and evaluations of the public sector should be viewed as a human right (Economic Commission for Africa, 2004).

The RSA Constitution 1996 promotes a set of values of good governance setting a framework for the public participation, and democratization of the public sector through instruments such as developmental communication in order to impact better service delivery.

The involvement of citizens in matters of service delivery is important in a democratic society. Public participation is a mechanism for entrenching democracy and it promotes social cohesion between government and the citizens, particularly in the provision of quality and sustainable services. People,

as both citizens and consumers of services, should be allowed and encouraged to express their views on governance and service delivery matters.

The study is interested in the relationship of two variables which public participation and developmental communication. The study is informed by gaps in recent studies with regards to the question of participation and democratization.

The study in South Africa, *Media, Development and Democratization*, concluded that, media has a role to play in order to close the gap between government and populations for improved information dissemination (Bold, 1994:42).

The study, *Impact of Democracy on Development*, outlined these remarks from a participatory primary assessment in rural Limpopo, "Decisions are made on our behalf. We attend these meetings only to see decisions being announced to us, rather than asked to make inputs before decisions are taken in most cases, only people with political backgrounds are listened to. Ordinary people's inputs are ignored" (Reitzes, 2009:42).

The study, *Land, Livelihoods and Rural Development in the Eastern Cape*, had key findings including the following statement, 'many rural communities are loosely defined and poorly organised, often resulting in an inability to give clear voice through public participation to voice their needs.(Bank,2004:22)

The three studies carefully selected above, reflect realities of gaps between public institutions and local populations. The studies make recommendations that are focused on public administration principles such as improved governance, strengthening consultation and improved stakeholder management as key in improving participation. A gap remains in adding development communication, as the key driver of improved linkage democratization for improved service delivery. The study therefore aims to make an in-depth research in the role of development communication, in alignment with the principle in RSA Constitution 1996, (Chapter 10)

## **2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The need for development communication and public participation is necessary because the majority of the people in South Africa, especially the poor, do not have access to all the media, which is largely used in government communications, as well as the high rate of illiteracy and language barrier

## **3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The main aim of the study is to assess impact of the public participation approaches and development communications strategies employed by the department in order to enhance service delivery. The following key issues will be special areas of focus for the study;

Identify the various approaches of public participation employed by the department in enhancing service delivery;

Identify the development communication strategies employed by the department in enhancing service delivery; and

Evaluate the impact of the various 'public participation-development communication' approaches and methods used by the department to strengthen the service delivery objectives.

## **4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study is topical for it aims to explore the link between public participation and development communication. The discipline of public administration has perhaps acknowledge the linkage of public sector management and disciplines such as personnel management, financial management and disciplines and information management .The study partly will include communication especially development communication into the mainstream framework of public administration. Through development communication the quality of public administration will greatly be

improved, for the development communication improves information dissemination and collection in a manner that improves the implementation of social development policy. McPhail (2009:7) outlines that development communication, is as art and science of human communication linked to society`s planned transformation from state of poverty to one dynamic socio-economic growth that makes for greater equity and large unfolding of individual potential.

The study will reveal the impact of development communication and public participation have made on the implementation of social policy in the Eastern Cape. The study will produce new knowledge and shape the discipline of public administration and practice.

## **5. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **5.1 Public Participation**

Public administration has identified public participation as a critical pillar of policy implementation. The new dispensation of democracy in South Africa has also impacted on the nature and character of public policy implementation where citizens have the right to public participation. This is not simply a matter of political principle but rather, a matter of best practice in the process of policy making and implementation. Du Plessis (2008:11) identifies that public participation is interchangeable referred with the terms, stakeholder engagement and popular participation. The underlying principle in the public participation is the aspect of involvement of various interest groups and communities into the mainstream and decision making related to the policy and policy changes. These processes may result in incremental policy shifts, to radical policy shifts where new policy objectives are formulated .Asselt (2008:11) further states that public participation involves simple complex methods in which group processes, which include non experts play an active role to articulate their knowledge ,values, choices and preferences. New

Economic Foundation (2002:12) in the discussion paper 'Participation work' outlines the key benefits of public participation:

- Participatory initiatives are likely to be sustainable because they build on local capacity and acknowledge, the participants have ownership of them and they are more likely to be compatible with long term developments plans.
- Working closely with local communities can help decision maker's gain greater insight into the communities they serve, enabling them to work more effectively and produce better results. In turn, the communities can learn how the decision-making process works they can influence it effectively.
- The process of working and achieving things together can strengthen communities and build adaptive capacity to cooperate, consciousness, awareness and critical appraisal. In this way it increases people`s potential to reducing their vulnerability. It empowers people more generally by enabling them to tackle other challenges, individually and collectively.
- The process of engaging of stakeholders may take longer than conventional processes but may be more cost-effective in the long term than external driven initiatives ,partly because a stakeholder process is more likely to be sustainable.

Severin and Shahani (2009:33) argue that there is a relationship between public participation and empowerment .This parallel is drawn on a basis that empowerment is not a process of releasing power to the people rather than it is a process of letting release their power , such as knowledge ,social capital, and social assets in their control. The United Nations Research Institute (2010:3) locates that the relation of public participation and empowerment is evident in the results of particip nces, access information and resources for decision making exercise assertiveness in collective decision making, positive thinking about the

ability to make change, and the opportunity to learn and access skills for improving personal/collective circumstances.

The history of public participation in South Africa, prior to 1994, was characterized by poor involvement of the public especially the blacks, coloured, Indians, in all forms of public participation especially among the black communities. The opinions and socio-economic needs of the majority of the people were not considered important by the apartheid-led government. Access to information on social, economic and security matters were suppressed in an effort to stifle opposition and criticism of its policies of racial supremacy. As a result, black communities were least serviced by the government. Post 1994, the new elected government committed itself to and embraced a people centered development approach. With this approach, public participation became a Constitutional imperative where it is stated that “people’s needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making”. In the new democratic dispensation of the implementation of public participation should, therefore, transcend mere technical compliance to become an integral part of service delivery in the Public Service. There is need for proper public participation mechanisms, citizens are likely to find other ways to mobilize and express themselves. According to the PSC, public participation plays a critical role in deepening democracy and promoting good governance. Citizens’ involvement in governance processes ensures that their experiential and grounded perspectives inform government on their needs and how these needs can best be addressed.

## **5.2 Development Communication**

Development communication has increasingly moved towards a horizontal “two way” model ,which favors people`s active and directly interaction through consultation and dialogue over traditional one way information dissemination through mass media .Many past projects and program failures can be attributed directly or indirectly to the limited involvement of the affected people in the decision –making process.

The horizontal use of communication, which opens up dialogue, assesses risks, identifies solutions and seeks consensus of action, came to be seen as a key to the changing the way communication is conceived and applied. This means participation cannot occur without communication ,including community driven ones seem to have more attention on communication, intended as the professional use of dialogic methods needs to be based on the application of genuine two way communication principles and practices.

The Batho Pele value framework is adapted by study, for it provides the scope for citizen consultation in the implementation of programme of public policy. In addition the framework promotes the principles of access, services standards, and transparency and information dissemination to the citizens (RSA, 1997: iv)

Mamdani (2007:7) outlines that in a democracy the relationship between the state and the citizens should be informed of relationships of trust where the citizen is more than simply being a subject.

### **5.3 Legislative framework for public participation**

In South Africa there is a clear legislative framework provides scope for improved public participation and development communication.

- The RSA Constitution 1996 provides for freedom of association and choice. These freedoms guarantee an empowerment citizenship that also provides opportunities for public involvement.
- Batho Pele, the legislative framework provides for people first philosophy which is people centred in particular the principle of participation.

## 6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will make use of both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. However, the qualitative approach is going to be the principal methodology of data collection mainly because of the need to be involved more with the respondents when gathering data, since the qualitative approach allows students to talk for themselves and to pick conceptual features of Alcohol advertisements. The quantitative methodology is going to be used for converting data into numerical form in order to subject it to statistical analysis.

A research can be classified into qualitative and quantitative designs. There is an important distinction between quantitative research and qualitative research. In quantitative research, the information obtained from the participants is expressed in numerical form. Quantitative research employs mathematical analysis for the measurement of variables and places a heavy emphasis on the use of structured questionnaires (Cant, Gerber, Nel & Kotze, 2005). According to Hair, et al. (2008) quantitative research enables the researcher to validate relationships and to test hypotheses. In qualitative research, on the other hand, the information obtained from participants is expressed in descriptive form. With this in mind, ten interviews, ten focus group discussions will be conducted and 120 questionnaires will be distributed to prospective respondents in the Department of Social Development, as a means of gathering data. All respondents will be selected with the assumption that they could provide valid answers concerning the impact of public participation and development communication on service delivery, which is going to be an input to this study and that they would be interested in the talk about the role of public participation and development communication on service delivery. Interviews will be conducted in order for the researcher to get more explicit information from the respondents individually so as to know how they feel about the research questions. Focus groups will also be used in the process.

Focus group discussion is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their attitude towards a subject, idea or concept (Tshakkori, 2006). Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members. Since the data to be gathered concerns individuals in society, focus groups are a great brain storming platform for various ideas to come from the participants, which means more and detailed data will be gathered during the exercise. Questionnaires will be used in order to allow the respondents to feel free to express themselves. A questionnaire is defined as a list of questions that must be formulated, constructed and sequenced to produce the most constructive data in the most effective manner, Nachmias and Nachmias (1996).

## **6.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Thomas and Nelson (2001) a research design is a plan of procedure for data collection and analysis that is undertaken to evaluate a particular theoretical perspective. The research design is key to control the outcomes of the research study. In this study, the case design is going to be used. The process began by collecting, measuring and analyzing data. Usually the technique of observation is used by most researches carrying out case studies.

A case study is the most popular approach to field research .A case study is a thorough investigation of a single group, incident or community. Case studies can be done through intensive observation, information obtained from informants and informal interviews. Newspapers files, formal interviews, official records and surveys can be used to supplement these techniques (Leedy, 1997). The term “case study is mainly used in a qualitative research

thus this study used the case study design so as to play in enhancing services delivery in some African and European countries. In this study, the case study methodology will be used in conjunctions with questionnaires, interviews and focus groups discussions. The case study is adopted because it will examine the effect which public participation and development communication have on service delivery .The case study will use techniques such as questionnaires, interviews and document analysis.

## **6.2 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

### **6.2.1 POPULATION**

According to Uma (2003), the population of a study refers to the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate. It is the aggregate of all units that have a chance of being included in the sample to be studied. The population involved will constitute both male and female respondents from the Department of Social Development in the Eastern Cape.

### **6.2.2 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

Gray (2004) defines a sample as a set of objects, occurrences or individuals selected from a parent population for a research study. The sample of the present study will consist of 120 respondents from the Department of Social Development in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Random sampling will be used to select the sample through the use of random numbers. Random sampling will be used because it ensures representativeness and generalizability of results. Random sampling is a probability sampling method, whereby each element in the population has some known chance or probability of being selected as a sample subject (Uma, 2003). The advantage of using this sampling procedure is that it has the least bias and offers the most

generalizability. However Uma (2003) argued that, because every person or item in a population has to be listed before the corresponding random numbers can be read, this method is very cumbersome to use for a large population; hence the decision to focus on only one department and one province.

#### **SAMPLE A: CROSS SECTIONAL QUALITATIVE GROUP**

- (i) This consist of the Member of the Executive Council, Head of Department, Chief Operations,1 Senior Manager Anti –poverty Programme,5 Social work Managers ,and District Manager of the Department of Social Development in the OR Tambo District .
- (ii) In order to ensure representatively the study sample will include 5 Traditional Leaders preferable secretariat of tradition leaders called Izibonda who have repositories of collective memory on development and social issues in the department. In addition, the sample to include 5 Community Development Workers and the 2 councilors who have an insider identity to community social issues.

#### **SAMPLE B: CROSS SELECTION QUANTITAVIE GROUP**

- (i) This random sample includes 15 community members from the areas sampled in the O.R.Tambo district. The community members will include, women and men. Also in the demographic cohorts of school going children, youth and adults plus elderly. The reason for his social policy seeks to impact directly on all age groups

- (ii) The random sample of 15 social workers from the Department working and the sampled areas of the OR Tambo District. These have the department institutional memory of the development programme implementation at grassroots level.

### **6.2.3 INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS.**

Interviews will be conducted to collect data .The interviews will be done through a self-administered, questionnaire that will be circulated to the selected social workers.A questionnaire is defined as a list of questions that must be formulated, constructed and sequenced to produce to the most constructive data in the most effective manner; Nachmias (1996:22) .These self-administered questionnaire is generally faster and quantitative in orientation thereby creating scope for easier administration and analysis.

Interviews will also be administered with a structured interview schedule on a one on one basis, especially with the community leaders and community based respondents. This is to assist in provision of clarity and collection of quality data as these may be conducted in both English and Xhosa language.

Interview schedule will also be administered if focus group discussions .Focus group discussions is a form of qualitative research in which group of people are asked about their attitude towards a subject, idea or concept (Tshakkori,2010) Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other members .Since the data to be gathered concerns individuals in society ,focus groups are a great brain storming plat form for various ideas to come from the participants, which means more and detailed data will be gathered during the exercise.

### **6.3 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS**

Quantitative data from open-ended questionnaires will be analyzed using a statistical package called SPSS version 12 (**Statistical Package for Social Sciences**) and presented in the form of tables and graphs generated in Microsoft Word and Excel. Qualitative data from open-ended questionnaires will be analyzed thematically, by grouping the data into themes and sometimes quoting what will actually be written. The qualitative data will be complemented by other qualitative data from focus group discussions and interviews held with respondents. Together the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data will be summarized thematically in order to show emerging trends which will then be used to provide answers to the key research questions which summarize the objectives of the study.

## **7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

A selected group of departmental officials would be utilized as participants in the research. Their participation is voluntary. The participants will not be identified by name in the research report as indicated in research design and methods. A detailed introduction will be included in the semi-questionnaire to ensure that they are aware of nature of the research and their role in it. For individual interviews, a detailed interview guide will be presented to ensure that participants are fully aware of the nature of the research and the role they will be required to play. The researcher is aware of the possible ethical issues in this research given his role as an employee of the Department where the case study will be conducted.

## 8. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study will focus on variables of development communication and public participation in the context of the Department of Social Development only. The study will not pay attention to other departments or local government in considering the issue of development communication and public participation. The study will also be focused on the period of 2004-2010. This is key because this period will assist on empirical analysis.

### Abbreviations and Synonyms

ANC	African National Congress
COMTASK	Communication Task Team
CLO	Community Liaison Officer
COO	Chief Operation Officer
DM	District Municipality
DSD	Department of Social Development
DSD	Development support Communication
GCIS	Government Communication and information system
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOD	Head Of Department
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
LED	Local Economic Development

MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEC	Member of Exucutive Council
NFENP	National Food Emergency Nutrition Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ORTDM	Oliver Reginald Tambo District Municipality
PGDS	Provincial Growth and Development Strategy
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SAPS	South African Police Services
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

## 9. OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

The study will be structured as follow

- **Chapter One: Introduction.**

This will cover background to the study, spelling out the statement of the problem, significance of the study, aims and objectives of the study and limitations and delimitations.

- **Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature**

This chapter reviews literature on theories, which will underpin this study. Empirical evidence from previous studies from Europe, Africa and South Africa in particular will support this study. [See case studies in the body]

- **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

This will discuss the case study, qualitative and quantitative methodology to be used in course of the study. It will also explain how interviews are to be conducted and information sought after using questionnaires.

- **Chapter Four: Data Presentation and Analysis**

This chapter will present data collected on the impact of public participation and development communication on service delivery and will provide an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the data.

- **Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations.**

This chapter summarizes the whole research project. From the findings cited in chapter IV, then make conclusions and bestow some recommendations.

## **10. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

### **Development**

Development, from a communication perspective, is defined as a process that enables all people to improve their quality of life (Du Plooy 1997:345). It is referred to as a process because emphasis is placed in continual change and continued improvement on a lifelong basis. In the South African context, development would .amongst others involve the provision of education, hosing increase access to health facilities and job creation. This should be dealt with against the background of apartheid from which the country has emerged.

### **Development communication**

Development communication is defined as the overall contribution of the communication to the development of society (Bassette 1996:9) .It also highlights the use of media, to deal with development themes .At the heart of the development communication concept is the need for an example of information to contribute towards the resolution of development problems and improve the quality of life of a specific target group (Bassette1996:11)

## **Participation**

Participation refers to a social and planning processes occurring in different contexts. On the other hand, participation is a means to reach a certain goal. For example on the hand, participation may mean that all stakeholders are equally in the decision –making process to achieve a particular goal or solve a problem. On the other hand participation can be referred to as a goal in itself. In this case people be resistant to participate .As a result, getting them to participate could be the main goal of a particular process .Broadly, a participatory approach incorporates concepts in the emerging framework of multiplicity development, which places emphasis on the recognition of the role that the local people can play in decision-making on issues that affect their lives.

In conclusion the topic will assess the impact of planned communication strategy and the positive outcomes of its implementation.

The following Chapter, being Chapter two will be dealing with Literature Review.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

For the development dialogue to proceed, the development support communication (DSC) experts suggest that popular participation should involve sensitizing local people to become more respectful and responsive to development programmes (Sondering 299:36). The role of the face-to-face interaction therefore becomes necessary. Participation of the community in the identification of development needs and the conceptualization of the development communication strategies should become central to development initiatives.

The main problem with development communication is that messages are created by a community developer and are sometimes not relevant to a specific aim of creating a climate of acceptance by beneficiaries. More often, these messages focus on international or national development and are not community specific (Burger, 1999:89). According to Kasango, (1997:87), unless people are involved appropriate media are used and messages reflect the relevant variety of realities, development through communication will still remain a pipe dream.

There is an increased need to develop communication strategies that acknowledge the fact that the beneficiaries of development are people who know what is good for them. This should therefore be the basis upon which the policies and development projects should be based. This paradigm puts the audience in the lead because they assume increased control and access to communication rather than information. It is also able to deal with practical diversities because it recognizes and

accommodates the social, cultural and need diversities as opposed to the homogenized diet which mass communication offers (Kasango, 1997:87).

Given that most of the projects are imposed on the people, they do not take into consideration the context, culture, belief systems and practices of the local communities. This often results in the misunderstanding and failure of such projects. According to Robinson (1996:42-43), the following questions relating to context of development should be dealt with in dealing with development issues: from those particular developments undertaken. Whose cultural norms are respected in the way development is executed? Who is crossing into whose culture?

## **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

According to Makumbe (1996:7), popular participation is viewed as a goal of development which requires that national resources and opportunities be equitably distributed. It is also perceived as a way of facilitating and energizing the development effort by means of popular involvement in developmental decision-making. In the African context, it should be noted that the socio-economic development has largely been characterized by an over-centralisation of power and various impediments to meaningful and effective participation of the majority of the people (Makumbe 1996:3). This has often resulted in limited exposure to the required skills, which ultimately limits people's participation in projects.

According to Roodt (1996:323), a number of paradigms from conservative, to radical, have incorporated the term "participation" into their own discourse in different ways. The use of the term "participation" ranges from a legitimizing exercise to a transformative one both at a personal level and at a global level.

Participation implies a higher level of public involvement in communication systems. It also includes the involvement of the public in the production processes and also in the management and planning of the communication systems. It is also a term used to refer to a number of

social and planning processes occurring in many different places in many different contexts.

To some people participation is a means to reach a certain goal; to others, participation is an end in itself. Broadly speaking, the participatory approach incorporates such concepts in the emerging framework of municipality development. It stresses the importance of cultural identity of local communities and of democratization and participation at all levels, that is, international, national, local and individual. Paolo Freire (1983) refers to this as the right of every man (Servaes, 1996:15).

When dealing with issues around participation, the following aspects need to be taken into consideration: what do we mean by participatory development in South Africa? Is it a legitimizing exercise for top-down implementation? Is it a transformative exercise? At what level should it occur?

Over the last decades, the concept of participation has become prominent in the theories of development. Modernisation-based approaches to development postulated a top-down, economically driven view of development supposed to bring the most benefits. It should however be noted that the relationship between development and communication demonstrates that adherence to participatory ideals and practices has not necessarily brought us any closer to their affecting or understanding communicative praxis or power in development processes.

The participatory approach stresses the need to construct theory from practice, positing the researcher and his or her subjects as equally and collaboratively engaged in development processes. It stresses the need to develop the link between theory and practice in a contextual framework of social transformation (Waters, 2000:90).

In the 1950's modernists worked vigorously to produce development programmes that would solve problems of poverty, health, land and low agricultural production. These programmes attracted a lot of money which was filtered into the target and its people. In the final analysis, when the money was spent and the problem solvers retreated from the community, they left the people destitute largely because they did not impart their skills on the community. This was questioned in the 1970s and was perceived as exploitation that resulted in poverty (White, 1994:21).

One of the most important questions to be answered is, if the failure rate of participatory initiatives is so high around the world, and in Africa in particular, what makes South Africa different? (Roodt: 1996:323).

Distortion of participation is where the control of the project and decision-making powers rest with planners, administrators and the community's elite. This practice is often referred to as pseudo-participation. In this case, level of people's participation is that of being present to listen to what is being planned for them and what would be done unto them (White 1994:16). On the other hand, genuine participation involves working cooperatively throughout the decision-making process and when the people are empowered to control the action to be taken.

Participatory development communication is not free from distortions that sometimes neutralise the people's contribution to building a participative society. One of the frequent distortions is manipulated participation. In the Third World, people are frequently invited to participate in government projects. In most of these cases people's co-operation is manipulated in such a way that they have the illusion of participating of their own accord when all they are doing is in fact giving free help to carry out government projects designed without consulting the population (Bordenave, 1994:45).

According to Melkote (200:41), the term participatory development communication has been misunderstood and misused. Participation has

been defined and operationalized in many: from pseudo-participation to genuine efforts at generating participatory decision-making. While the practice of participatory development communication stresses collaboration between the people and experts, knowledge sharing between the people and experts on a coequal basis, it has not been empowerment of the people, but the attainment of some indicator of development as articulated in the modernization paradigm.

Participatory approaches have been encouraged, though the design and control of messages and the development agenda have remained with the experts (Melkote, 2000:42). The reality of the social and political situation in most developing countries is such that the urban and rural poor, women, and other people at the grassroots are entrapped in a highly stratified and unequal social and economic structure (Melkote, 2000:42).

One of the problems in the practice of development communication is that the concept participation is often not clearly defined. This situation makes it vulnerable to manipulation. There is therefore the need to define this concept and to determine the levels of participation by all the stakeholders. In dealing with this problem, this study will take into consideration that participation must be contextual. This is because as White (1994:16) indicated, even at a local level, participation varies in type, level of intensity, extent and frequency. It is therefore important to note that even in one community there are divisions and different interest groups. In order to ensure that development orientated communication attains the desired impact; the diversity that exists in a particular community must be well understood in the development of the communication strategy.

In this regard, Bordevane (1994:40) further states that if a participative society is to be established, there must be a paradigm shift with regard to power relations between all the stakeholders, including the state. This would help to ensure that all affected parties are able to participate in the decision-making processes.

Participatory decision-making in development communication requires knowledge sharing between the “experts” and the “beneficiaries” of development projects (Melkote, 2000:41). However, this strategy has never really taken root among development agencies, partly due to the inability of development workers to appreciate and operationalize true communication approaches at the grassroots level.

It is also important for development practitioners to note that people need to be involved in the conception of messages. This encourages and persuades them even more effectively to accept the given information. According to Kasongo, (1998:87), unless people are involved, appropriate media are used, and the messages reflect the relevant variety realities, the much talked about development through communication will still remain a pipe dream.

In order to realise a participatory approach to development that is inclusive and sustainable, and avoids the pitfalls in the South African context, the following analytical problems need to be investigated: What factors in other countries in Africa have inhibited genuine participation by groupings outside of a small elite? To what extent do similar conditions exist in South Africa? What makes South Africa unique in ways that could contribute to a different outcome?

In dealing with these issues, it is important to note that apart from the obvious objective of job creation, either through employment or entrepreneurship, a real need exists to integrate the previously disenfranchised into decision-making structures in a meaningful way (Roodt, 1996:321).

At the same time it is important for the organs of civil society, such as civics, development forums, committees, and political parties, to establish working relationships with formal government structures. These should move beyond mere demands of protest politics to playing both a watchdog

role and a development one, especially in terms of genuinely representing people's needs and wants (Roodt, 1996:323).

In dealing with participatory decision-making, the following questions need to be answered: Who are the significant decision-makers and influential people in a particular area? Whose interests do these influential decision-makers serve? How do these members of the population, generally excluded from the decision-making processes try to hold these decision makers in check, exert their own influence on the political process? To what extent do present structures of production, particularly land ownership and agricultural production, affect local participation in decision making?

It is relatively simple to say that participation is an important component of development and that involving the poor is fundamental to development, which leads to the eradication of poverty and injustice, but mobilizing people at grassroots to participate is not a small task. However, it is important because it helps people in raising their awareness and consciousness of what they need to do to improve their living conditions.

If people are given the opportunity to acquire appropriate knowledge, they will be in a better position to develop their own strategies to determine the course of their own lives. The concept of conscientisation is therefore central to the theme of participation. In order to activate consciousness and critical awareness of one's own situation and environment, one's identity, talents, and alternatives for freedom of action is imperative to participatory action. The consciousness can be enhanced through participatory processes that increase understanding and a sense of control necessary for making contribution to development decisions (White, 1994: 24-25).

According to Midgley (1986:146), the role of the state in the community's social development initiatives has not yet been fully explored. The existing view is that state sponsorship of community participation stifles initiative,

thus weakens local self-reliance and subverts local authority. The other concerns raised by the proponents of community participation are ulterior motives that seek to manipulate these programmes for their own political ends (Midgley, 1986:147).

Governments have in the past declared their support for community participation and in a number of cases, provided finance, staff and other resources. According to Midgley (1986:148), the support was conditional or externally imposed and did not include the ideals of self-determination and participation.

Poor communities were thus not involved in decision-making processes and they did not have the final say on matters that affect their lives. Community participation in most developing countries has been haphazard and with a few exceptions state resource allocations to participatory projects have been lost in the administrative inefficiencies of government administration. Bureaucratic indifference, procedural delays and many other administrative problems have effectively blocked the realization of authentic forms of community participation.

Proponents of community participation place emphasis on the strengthening of the community's capacity to deal with its own problems through its initiative and effort (Midgley 1986:146). The critique of the community participation approach is that it ignores the fact that the state is the major provider of social developmental services, and as a policy maker, determines how social development programmes should be implemented.

According to Midgley (1986:151), there are several alternatives that can be explored to deal with the role of the state in ensuring community participation in development initiatives. Firstly, the possibility of abandoning the concept of authentic participation. In this case, a more limited definition which recognises the realities of modern societies and the difficulty of achieving absolute popular control over local affairs and

the total involvement of all members of the community could be adopted. Emphasis could thus be placed on obtaining maximum resources and services from government agencies in order to improve social conditions.

Secondly, to completely do away with state involvement of any kind, the proponents of non-participation by the state argue that all anti-participatory tendencies by the state will have been completely done away with. According to Midgley (1986:156), a major drawback in advocating the use of non-government rather statutory organisations in community is the inability of the voluntary sector to redistribute resources. While the state on the other hand has resources and power to mobilise and redistribute resources, voluntary agencies are dependent on charity.

### **2.2.1 Public Participation**

Public administration has identified public participation as a critical pillar of policy implementation. The new dispensation of democracy in South Africa has also impacted on the nature and character of public policy implementation where citizens have the right to public participation. This right is not simply a matter of political principle but rather, a matter of best practice in the processes of policy making and implementation. Du Plessis (2008; page), identifies that public participation is interchangeably referred with the terms; stakeholder engagement and popular participation. The underlying principle in the public participation is the aspect of involvement of various interest groups and communities into the mainstream of decision making during policy formulation. Asselt (2001) further states that policy changes. These processes may result in incremental policy shifts, to radical policy shifts where public participation involves simple complex methods in which group processes, which include non-experts play an active role to articulate their knowledge, values, choices and preferences. New Economic Foundation (2002) in the discussion paper 'Participation Works' outlines the key benefits of public participation as follows:

- Participatory initiatives are likely to be sustainable because they build on local capacity and acknowledge, the participants have ownership of them and they are more likely to be compatible with long term development plans.
- Working closely with local communities can help decision makers' gain greater insight into the communities they serve, enabling them to work more effectively and produce better results. In turn, the communities can learn how the decision-making process works and they can influence it effectively.
- The process of working and achieving things together can strengthen communities and build adaptive capacity. It can reinforce local organisations; build up confidence, skills and capacity to cooperate, consciousness, awareness and critical appraisal. In this way it increases people's potential for reducing their vulnerability. It empowers people more generally by enabling them to tackle other challenges, individually and collectively.
- The process of engaging of stakeholders may take longer than conventional processes but may be more cost -effective in the long term than external driven initiatives, partly because a stakeholder process is more likely to be sustainable.

Severin and Shahani (2009) argue that there is a relationship between public participation and empowerment. This parallel is drawn on the basis that empowerment is not a process of releasing power to the people rather than it is processes of letting the people release their power, such as knowledge, social capital, and social assets in their control. The United Nations Research Institute (2010) locates that the relation of public participation and empowerment is evident in the results of participation which includes; *the ability to make decisions about personal/collective circumstances; access information and resources for decision- making; exercise assertiveness in collective decision making; positive-thinking*

*about the ability to make change, and the opportunity to learn and access skills for improving personal/collective circumstances.*

The history of public participation in South Africa, prior to 1994, was characterised by poor involvement of the public especially the blacks, coloureds and Indians in all forms of public participation especially amongst the black communities. The opinions and socio-economic needs of the majority of the people were not considered important by the apartheid-led government. Access to information on social, economic and security matters was suppressed in an effort to stifle opposition and criticism of policies of racial supremacy. As a result, black communities were least serviced by the government. Post 1994, the newly elected government committed itself to and embrace a people centred development approach. With this approach, public participation became a Constitutional imperative where it is stated that “people`s needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making”(Constitution, 1996 chapter 10). In the new democratic dispensation, the implementation of public participation should, therefore, transcend mere technical compliance to become an integral part of service delivery in the public service. There is need for proper public participation mechanism or else citizens are likely to find other ways to mobilise and express themselves.

### **2.2.2 DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION**

Development communication has increasingly moved towards a horizontal “two way” model, which favours people`s active and direct interaction through consultation and dialogue over traditional one way information dissemination through mass media. Many past projects and program failures can be attributed directly or indirectly to the limited involvement of the affected people in the decision-making process.

The horizontal use of communication, which opens up dialogue, assess risks, identifies solutions and seeks consensus of action, came to be seen as a key to the success and sustainability of development efforts. The new paradigm is also changing the way communication is conceived and applied. This means participation cannot occur without communication, unfortunately, too many development programmes, including community driven ones seem to place more attention on one way communication, and not based on the application of genuine two way communication principles and practices.

### **2.2.3 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

In South Africa there is a clear legislative framework which provides scope for improved public participation and development communication.

- The RSA Constitution 1996 provides for freedom of association and choice. These freedoms guarantee an empowerment citizenship that also provides opportunities for public involvement.
- The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, commonly known as the Batho Pele White Paper was introduced in (1997). The White Paper provides a framework through which public services are to be delivered.
- Batho Pele; the legislative framework provides for people first philosophy which is people centred in particular the principle of participation.
- Comtask report
- Report on assessment of public service participation in public service

### **2.3.1 THE COMMUNICATION TASK TEAM (COMTASK)**

The Comtask Group was mandated to examine government communications at the local, provincial, national and international levels.

Generally, the Comtask inquiry found that most government functions, structures and personnel were largely uncoordinated and inefficient. The inquiry also found that government functions were characterised by a lack of strategic planning and co-ordination at all levels of government (Communications 2000: 1996:50).

The following findings are by the Comtask Group:

- Government and media relations in a democracy are always sensitive, and occasionally acrimonious.
- Apartheid weakened the communication profession in South Africa; and there is an agreement that capacity building is needed to improve standards and to open the profession and media management to disadvantaged groups.
- The South African media, especially the press, lacks experienced journalists able to cover stories in depth and context.

Regarding development communication, the Comtask had the following findings:

- There is a fundamental need to reach out to most South Africans, especially the disadvantaged.
- There is inadequate public infrastructure in broadcasting and telecommunication to respond to development needs of the community.

- A closely co-ordinated strategy is required to extend the telecommunications and ICT infrastructure to needy communities.

Another problem regarding public participation and development communication in South Africa is the language factor. The language that is used in development communication plays an important role in the understanding of such communication. The present language situation is a barrier to meaningful social, political and economic transformation. This issue should therefore be dealt with taking into consideration the fact that in most instances development messages are communicated through the medium of English, with insignificant efforts made to translate the information into indigenous languages.

The problem with the continuous use of English is that the majority of people for whom development is meant do not understand it. It also minimises the contribution that the recipients could make in the effectiveness of such communication. Therefore, in order for transformation to take place, there is a need for indigenous languages to play a far greater public role than before (in line with Constitutional provisions).

## **2.4 GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The relationship between government and citizens is very important. Ultimately government is accountable to citizens for decisions taken – at a macro level, at a community level and at an individual level.

At a macro level public accountability is exercised through oversight by public representatives in the legislative arm of government. At a community level government should consult and involve communities in discussions about projects and programmes that directly affect them. At

an individual level citizens have the right to hold government to account, and get reasons for government decisions that directly affect them.

## **2.5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNICATION**

Public participation is a principle that is accepted by all spheres of government in South Africa. Participation is one of the cornerstones of democracy and has equal benefits for politicians, public servants and civil society.

- Consultation will help government make more appropriate decisions based on the real needs of people.
- The more informed people are the better they will understand what government is trying to do and what the budget and resource limitations are
- Public representatives can only claim to be accountable if they have regular interactions with the people they represent and if they consult and report back on key government decisions
- Government cannot address all the development needs on its own and partnerships are needed with communities, civil society and business to improve service delivery and development

Government has many institutions and structures that can be used to enhance public participation. Among the most important ones are the Imbizos.

### **2.5.1 The Executive: stakeholders and Imbizo**

The executive in each sphere of government accounts to the Legislature through annual reports, budget votes and responses to questions asked. The Executive also has to maintain ongoing relationships with key stakeholders in their area of work. For example the President regularly meets different groups like the business community, women, youth, traditional leaders, *etc.* All Ministers and MECs should maintain ongoing contact with key stakeholders in their area of work.

Wherever possible the senior public service management should also be part of stakeholder meetings.

Imbizos and public meetings are important methods used for consultation with the public. An Imbizo is meant to encourage participation and allows the public from a particular area to interact directly with the Executive. Senior public servants often attend Imbizos to provide information and follow up on issues raised.

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

The South African legislative framework which provides scope for improved public participation and development communication. The RSA Constitution 1996 provides for freedom of association and choice. These freedoms guarantee an empowerment citizenship that also provides opportunities for public involvement. The Constitution of South Africa of 1996, stipulates the object of local government, as amongst others, to involve communities in matters of local governance. The Constitution of South Africa led to the promulgation of various pieces of legislation which gave further impetus to the public participation.

The proponents of public participation and development communication also emphasize that for any democracy to be successful needs the strengthening of these two concepts.

Chapter three will deal with Research Methodology.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research methodology used to collect data for this study. One of the aspects that will be dealt with is a brief discussion of the overview of the purpose of the study. The discussion will also provide an outline of the motivation for the choice of the research methodology and the data collection tools used in this study. An outline of how the data will be analysed will be provided. This study will make use of both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. However, the qualitative approach is going to be the principal methodology of data collection mainly because of the need to be involved more with the respondents when gathering data.

The research followed scientific research methodology guidelines in order to understand the objectives of the study. The field work research was initiated by preliminary study. The actual research investigation was informed by quantitative and qualitative research methods. A total of ten senior management members, 15 community members, 15 social workers, 5 traditional leaders and 2 councillors in OR Tambo district were sampled, and participated in one on one interviews and focus-group engagements.

There is an important distinction between qualitative research and quantitative research. In quantitative research, the information obtained from the participants is expressed in a numerical form. Quantitative research employs mathematical analysis for the measurement of variables and places a heavy emphasis on the use of structured questionnaires (Cant, Gerber, Nel & Kotze, 2005; 98 ). According to Hair, et al. (2008, 41) quantitative research enables the researcher to validate relationships

and to test hypothesis. In quantitative research, on the other hand, the information obtained from the participants is expressed in a descriptive form.

### **3.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The study will combine exploratory and descriptive aspects. Firstly, as Babbie (2001:91) argues, exploratory studies occur when a researcher examines a new area of interest or when the subject of study is relatively new. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:41) further state that the purpose of exploratory research is to gain a broad understanding of a situation, phenomenon, community or person, and could arise from a lack of basic information in a new area of interest.

In descriptive studies, the researcher observes and then describes what was observed and as a result, most qualitative studies are descriptive (Babbie 2001:93). It should be noted that in most descriptive studies, the researchers proceed to go on and examine why the observed patterns exist and what these patterns imply, which is also the case in this study. As a result, it has become important to include the descriptive part of the research.

### **3.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE CHOICE OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study is qualitative and quantitative, with field research and content analysis as main research methodologies. The choice of two research methodologies was necessitated by the fact that using more methodology helps to ensure that the validity of the study is achieved. Field research was chosen because public participation through Imbizo is meant to ensure that government interacts with the people in their own contexts.

According to Arnst (1996:116) while quantitatively oriented research methods seek insight through objectivity, detachment and exclusivity, more qualitative approaches pursue participation of the intended beneficiaries of

the phenomenon that is being researched. The basic tenet of participatory research is that the planning process must be accessible to those among whom the Imbizo initiative is meant. The limitation with Imbizo at the moment is that the beneficiaries are not actively involved in the pre-campaign research and planning. Their involvement is important because they understand their circumstances better. They are therefore in a better position to articulate their problems and needs. It is for this reason that a qualitative approach which seeks that the involvement of the beneficiaries of Imbizos in the planning process is attained has been chosen for this study.

In this case Arnst (1996:119) further states that the focus of a qualitative research must be on the immediate benefits of the research to those who are the beneficiaries, rather than on a pre-formulated agenda established by the researcher, hence the choice of field research for the purpose of this study. The current arrangement with Imbizo is that the agenda is formulated before the actual Imbizo meeting. For example, an Imbizo brochure, which gives an outline of government achievement, is developed prior to an Imbizo meeting. The brochure provides these achievements from the perspective of government and not the citizens.

According to Tandon (1985:21), participatory research is partisan, ideologically biased and explicitly non-neutral. This means that participatory research must be conducted by an independent organization in consultation with the government and the intended beneficiaries. The implication for this is that organizations working closely with the community must be requested to conduct research which can be used to enhance participatory development communication strategies.

Arnst (1996:120) further states that participatory research possesses a grassroots bias, and it is a process of empowerment and conscientisation. The premise in this regard is that people are not objects to be controlled by the researcher, but individuals who can control their own destiny in the research process. Therefore, rather than agendas being set by an

academic elite, participatory research involves beneficiaries in analysing their situation as well as gaining the confidence and understanding to address it. It therefore means that in order for an Imbizo to be a genuine participatory approach, it must adopt a participatory research approach, in which the citizens will be empowered to solve the problems in their communities and to participate in taking decisions on issues that affect their lives.

The researcher in this case is consciously committed to the cause of the community that is involved in the research. This approach challenges the traditional principle of scientific neutrality and rejects the position of the scientist as a social engineer (Arnst, 1996:123). In order for participatory research to play a more meaningful role in participatory development, it is important to consider the use of language as it has the potential to either enhance or inhibit community participation. The researcher must understand the language(s) used by the beneficiaries to enhance their participation.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Thomas and Nelson (2001) a research design is a plan of procedures for data collection and analysis that is undertaken to evaluate a particular theoretical perspective. The research design is the key to control the outcomes of the research study. In this study, the case study design is going to be used. The process began by collecting, measuring and analysing data. Usually the technique of observation is used by most researchers carrying out case studies.

A case study is the most popular approach to field research. A case study is a thorough investigation of a single group, incident or community. Case studies can be done through intensive observation, information obtained from informants and informal interviews. Newspapers files, formal interviews, official records and surveys can be used to supplement these techniques (Leedy, 1997).

The term “case study” is mainly used in qualitative research and can be used as a synonym for qualitative research thus this study used the case study design so as to enable it to compare the role public participation and development communication play in enhancing service delivery in some African and European countries. In this study, the case study methodology will be used in conjunction with questionnaires, interviews and focus groups discussions. The case study is adopted because it will examine the effect which public participation and development communication have on service delivery. The case study will use techniques such as questionnaires, interviews and document analysis.

### **3.5 CONTENT ANALYSIS**

Content analysis was chosen because although Imbizo deals with unmediated communication, there is a tendency to place emphasis on generating extensive media coverage for Imbizo. It has therefore become important to conduct a content analysis of the press coverage of Imbizo to determine the extent and nature of the coverage of Imbizo. Content Analysis will be discussed.

#### **3.5.1 What is content analysis?**

Content analysis is one of the unobtrusive research methods. According to Neuman (1997:271), content analysis involves analysing documents relevant to the subject of the investigation. Neuman (1997:272), further states that content analysis is a technique for gathering and analysing content of the text.

According to Wimmer and Dominick (1997:112), there are three concepts, which characterise content analysis. This means that the content, which will be analysed, should be selected according to explicit and consistently applied rules. For example, the selection must follow proper procedures, each item must have an equal chance of being included in the analysis and only one set of guidelines for evaluation is used throughout the day.

Secondly, content analysis is objective. This means that the researcher's biases should not form part of the findings. It also means that if another researcher replicates the analysis, the same results should be found.

Thirdly, the goal of content analysis is the accurate representation of a body of messages. Quantification gives the researcher additional statistical tools that can aid in the interpretation and analysis of the data (Winner & Dominick, 1997:112).

The content in this case refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas or any message that can be communicated. The text in this case is written, visual, or spoken word that serves as a medium for communication. As Babbie (2001:304-305) indicates, the text includes books, newspapers, or magazine articles, advertisements, speeches, official documents, films or videotapes, musical lyrics, photographs, and articles of clothing or works of art. For the purpose of this study, newspaper articles on the coverage of Imbizo, GCIS Corporate strategy, video recordings of Imbizo events, the toll-free number register and the communication strategy framework will be analysed.

### **3.5.2 Why content analysis was chosen**

Content analysis was chosen because although Imbizo deals with unmediated communication, there is a tendency to place emphasis on generating extensive media coverage for Imbizo. It has therefore become important to conduct a content analysis of the press coverage of Imbizo to determine the extent and nature of the coverage of Imbizo.

The content analysis of video recordings of Imbizo meetings has also become important as this would help to determine the nature and extent of people's participation in the discussions. Given that the focus is on the management process of people's participation,

an analysis of the Imbizo communication strategy framework, the GCIS corporate strategy, Imbizo toll-free number record, will be done. The following is a breakdown of the steps used in the content analysis conducted for this study.

#### **3.5.2.1 Research question**

As Wimmer and Dominick (1983:143) indicate, a research question or hypothesis provides guidance to content analysis. They further argue that it is possible to generate a research question based on existing theory, prior research, and practical problems or as a response to changing social conditions. The other important aspect is that a well-defined research question simplifies the process of developing accurate and sensitive categories; which helps to produce more valuable data (Wimmer and Dominick 1983:143).

#### **3.5.2.2. Population**

According to Wimmer and Dominick (1997:116), a population specifies the boundaries of the body of the content to be considered which requires an appropriate definition of the relevant population. For the purposes of this study, the population is all documents that make reference to government's Imbizo programme.

According to Uma (2003), the population of the study refers to the entire group of people, events or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate. It is the aggregate of all units that have a chance of being included in the sample to be studied. The population involved will constitute both male and female respondents from the Department of Social Development in the Eastern Cape

#### **3.5.2.3 Sample**

Gray (2004) defines a sample as a set of objects, occurrences or individuals selected from a parent population for a research study. The sample of the present study will consist of a certain number of respondents from the Departments of Social Development in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Random sampling is a probability sampling method, whereby each element in the population has some known chance or probability of being selected as a sample subject (Uma, 2003). The advantage of using this sampling procedure is that it has the least bias and offers the most generalizability. However Uma(2003) argued that, because every person or item in a population has to be listed before corresponding random numbers can be read, this method is very cumbersome to use for a large population; hence the decision to focus on only one department and one province.

#### **SAMPLE A: CROSS SELECTIONAL QUALITATIVE GROUP**

- (i) This consists of the Member of the Executive Council, Head of Department, Chief Operations Officer, 1 Senior Manager anti-Poverty programme, 5 Social Work Managers, and the District Manager of the Department of Social Development.
- (ii) In order to ensure representativity the study sample will include 5 Traditional Leaders called izibonda who have repositories of collective memory on development and social issues in the department. In addition the sample will include 5 Community Development workers and 2 councillors who have an inside identity to community social issues.

## **SAMPLE B: CROSS SECTIONAL UANTITATIVE GROUP**

- (I) This random sample includes 15 community members from the areas sampled in the OR Tambo district. The community members will include, women and men. Also in the demographic cohorts of school going children, youth and adults plus elderly. The reason for this is that social policy seeks to impact directly on all age groups.
- (II) The random sample of 15 social workers from the Department working in the sampled areas of the OR Tambo District. These have the department institutional memory of the development programme implementation at grassroots level.

### **3.5.2.4 INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS**

Interviews will be conducted to collect data. The interviews will be done through a self-administered questionnaire that will be circulated to the selected social workers. (A questionnaire is defined as a list of questions that must be formulated, constructed and sequenced to produce the most constructive data in a most effective manner ;)  
According to Nachmias (1992:22), the self-administered questionnaire is generally faster and quantitative in orientation thereby creating scope for easier administration and analysis.

Interviews will also be administered with a structured interview schedule on a one on one basis, especially with the community leaders and community based respondents. This is to assist in provision of clarity and collection of

quality data as these may be conducted in both English and Xhosa language.

Interview schedules will also be administered in focus group discussions. Focus group discussion is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their attitude towards a subject, idea or concept (Tshakkori, 2010). Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other members. Since the data to be gathered concerns individuals in society, focus groups are a great brainstorming platform for various ideas to come from the participants, which means more and detailed data will be gathered during the exercise.

## **3.6 FIELD RESEARCH**

### **3.6.1 Field research will now be discussed.**

According to Whimmer and Dominick (1983:95), field observation is a research methodology which is useful when collecting data as well as generating hypothesis and theories. It is more concerned with the description and explanation than with measurement and qualification, as is the case with quantitative research.

### **3.6.2 Selecting a site**

As indicated by Neuman (1997:351), a research site is defined as a context in which events or activities occur. It is also seen as a socially defined territory with shifting boundaries because the researcher may arbitrarily select the boundary of where field research will take place. Neuman (1997:351) mentions the following three factors, which are relevant when selecting the research site: richness of the data, unfamiliarity and suitability. Although the researcher is familiar with the main research site of

this study (the Department of Social Development), this site was selected because of its potential to provide rich data, and accessibility, given that the researcher works at the Department of Social Development.

### **3.6.3 Accessing the research site**

When conducting field observation, it is important to take into consideration that there are gatekeepers who have some form of authority, formal or not, on the access that the researcher might have to the research site or a particular community. As Neumana (1997:351) indicates, the researcher needs to negotiate for access with gatekeepers. However, it is important for the researcher to set non-negotiable limits in order to protect the integrity of the research.

Once the researcher has been granted the permission to conduct the research, it is important to build a rapport with the respondents in order to secure their cooperation. In this regard, Neuman (1997: 355) states that established rapport is a step towards obtaining an understanding of the respondents, which ultimately enables the researcher to see events from their perspective. This will ultimately help to ensure that the researcher gains a better understanding of the subjects of the investigation.

With regard to this study, the researcher works for the Department of Social Development, that plans, implements and evaluates the subject under investigate (Imbizo). The researcher notified the employer about the research and permission was granted to this effect. Part of the study fees for this research was provided for by the researcher's employer (Department of Social Development). It is also important to note that the employer did not impose any conditions on what, where and how the research should be conducted.

The fact that the researcher is working for the Department Social Development provides an opportunity to interact with the people involved in the subject under investigation, to gain insight into the subject, gain access to some relevant documents and enable the researcher to observe certain organizational practices without being actively involved in the phenomena under investigation.

The following discussion of field observation provides an outline of how the research was conducted and how the data will be collected and analysed.

### **3.6.4 Field observation**

The following discussion will deal with total observation, field research interviews as techniques for data collection and data collection tools in field observation.

#### **3.6.4.1 Total observation**

As described by Wimmer and Dominick (1983:96), total observation takes place when the observer does not take part in the phenomenon that is being observed. In the observation of Imbizo, total observation will be used as one of the methods of data collection. This is based on the fact that the researcher is not directly involved in the Imbizo project team's activities.

Total observation in this case has been adopted because as explained by Wimmer and Dominick (1983:96), it helps the researcher to define basic background information needed for the study and in developing a hypothesis. It also enables the researcher to have access to a group that would otherwise be difficult to access using other intrusive methods.

This is often the case in instances where a sensitive issue is the subject of the research. Total observation is important in this regard because in interviews, there is a possibility that respondents might provide socially desirable answers. Therefore, total observation would help to deal with the challenge of socially desirable answers provided by the respondents.

As Wimmer and Dominick (1983:96) indicate, the other advantage of total observation in field research is that it takes place at the natural setting of the subject under investigation. In this case, most of the activities around Imbizo take place at the Department of Social Development, where the researcher is an employee. This provides the researcher with an opportunity to interact with people who are directly involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of Imbizo. This helps to provide insight into the phenomenon under investigation.

The researcher has also chosen total observation having considered what Wimmer and Dominick (1983:97) have indicated that it relies heavily on the perceptions, judgements and preconceived ideas and bias of the researcher. However, this study will also use field research interviews for data collection, which should effectively address this limitation. In this regard, informal discussions with colleagues who are involved in Imbizo have been held to gain insight into the process involved in the planning and implementation of Imbizo programme.

#### **3.6.4.2 Field research Interviews**

Field research interviews are given different names by scholars. For example, Babbie (2001:291) calls them

qualitative interviews, whilst Neuman (1997:370) calls them field research interviews. For the purpose of this study, they will be referred to as field research interviews.

A field research interview is described by Babbie (2001:291) as an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent where the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry. It is generally perceived to be a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction of the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondent. According to Neuman (1997:371), field research interviews are a joint production of the researcher and the interviewee. The interviewees are active participants whose insights, feelings and co-operation are essential parts of the discussion process that reveals subjective meanings.

However, as Mouton and Marais (1990:76) indicate, depending on the nature of the source of data, and the way in which it is being collected, when people participate in the research, they become more conscious of the situations and tend to react to it; a phenomenon known as reactivity. Mouton and Marais (1990:78) further state that reactivity is the main threat to the validity of the research findings when human beings are the source of data. However, in this study, this limitation to field research interviews has been countered by the use of other methods such as content analysis of relevant documents and observation of the subjects under investigation. This is because they provide an alternative approach to data collection. However, the qualitative approach is going to be the principal methodology of data collection mainly because of the need

to be involved more with the respondents when gathering data.

A research can be classified into qualitative and quantitative design. There is an important distinction between qualitative research and quantitative research. In quantitative research, the information obtained from the participants is expressed in a numerical form. Quantitative research employs mathematical analysis for the measurement of variables and places a heavy emphasis on the use of structured questionnaires (Cant, Gerber, Nel & Kotze, 2005; 198). All respondents will be selected with the assumption that they could provide valid answers concerning the impact of public participation and development communication on service delivery. Interviews will be conducted with the participants in order for the researcher to get more explicit information from the respondents individually so as to know how they feel about the research questions. Focus group will also be used in the process.

Focus group discussion is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their attitude towards a subject, idea or concept (Tshakkori, 2006). Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other members. Since the data to be gathered concerns individuals in society, focus groups are a great brain storming platform for various ideas to come from the participants, which means more and detailed data will be gathered during the exercise. Questionnaires will be used in order to allow the respondents to feel free to express themselves.

### **3.7 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS**

Quantitative data from open ended questionnaires will be analysed using a statistical package called SPSS version 12(Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and presented in the form of tables and graphs generated in Microsoft Word and Excel. Qualitative data from open-ended questionnaires will be analysed thematically, by grouping the data into themes and sometimes quoting what will actually be written. The qualitative data will be complemented by other qualitative data from focus group discussions and interviews held with respondents. Together the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data will be summarized thematically in order to show emerging trends which will then be used to provide answers to the key research questions which summarize the objectives of study. Questionnaires will be used in order to allow the respondents to feel free to express themselves. A questionnaire is defined as a list of questions that must be formulated, constructed and sequenced to produce the most constructive data in the most effective manner, Nachmias and Nachmias (1996, page 196 ).

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

The research design was an evaluative study. The study carried out a pilot study to improve the research tools and to give the student exposure to engaging in an interview and a focus-group discussion. The research sample was drawn from within the OR Tambo District Municipality, and a total of 42 participants answered the questionnaire. The data collection techniques included one-on-one interviews and focus-group discussions. The methods were complementary and allowed the voice of the stakeholders in the scientific study. The researcher also observed ethical considerations that are promoted in social science. The focus of this chapter was on the aspects which are central to the collection of data such as the site of the research, data collection techniques and procedures and data analysis. The chapter also discussed the research methodologies that will be used in this study, namely interviews and focus groups discussions cross sectional qualitative and quantitative groups.

The following chapter will discuss data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Data has been gathered from the previous chapter scrutinising, classification and analysis of this data will be the main area of focus in this chapter. The questionnaires were distributed and completed by 98, 7% of the respondents. One on one interview which is one of the basic components of communication was conducted with 100% of beneficiaries who were keen to participate. The researcher in this case has consciously used observation during interviews to establish if the respondents are realistic and genuine in their responses. In an effort to further alleviate the fears of the participants and to avoid subjectivism from the respondents, the participants were guaranteed that their anonymity will be protected and the information was just an exercise for academic research purposes.

#### 4.2 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT METHODS OF COMMUNICATION USED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

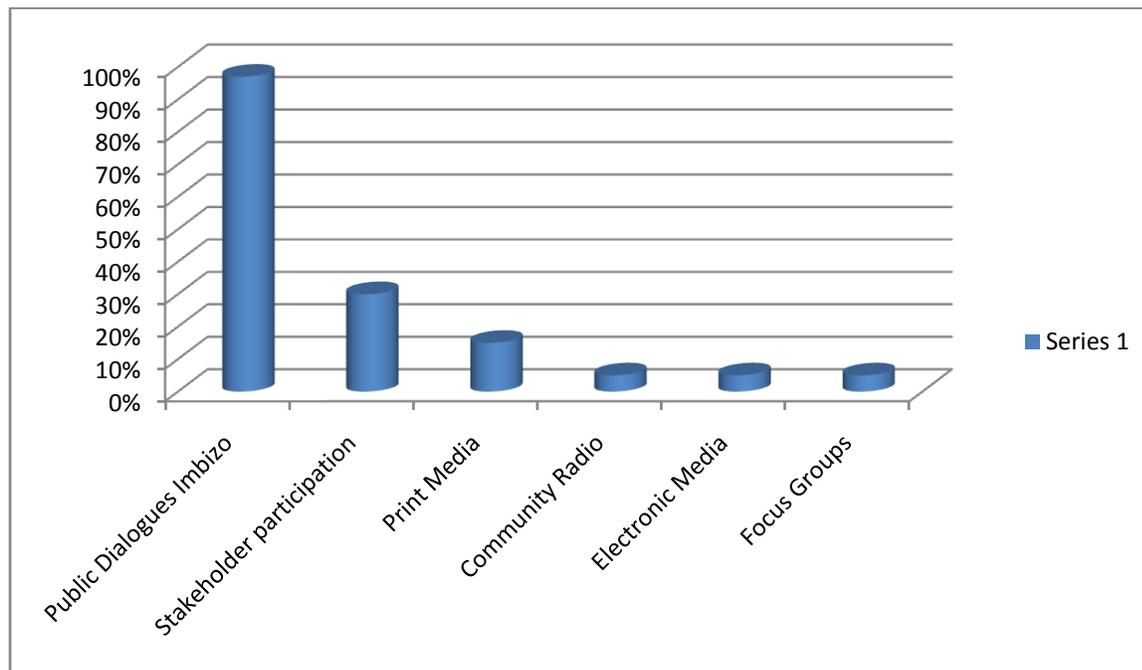
Strategic management of the Department of Social Development in the Eastern Cape is the Member of Executive Council, Superintendent General who is an accounting officer, Chief Operations Officer, District Manager and Senior Manager Anti-Poverty (which includes stakeholder and partnership management) who are well positioned, to have information on the effectiveness and efficiency on how the department can better communicate its vision, policies and programmes. Diagram 4.1 demonstrates the outcomes of the research questionnaire that was completed. The responses obtained from questionnaires that were distributed amongst members of strategic management demonstrated that

they view Imbizo as the most effective communication method to be used when communicating governmental programmes and policies.

It was also observed that from management point of view, the Imbizo is expensive but essential. The expenses are incurred through transport for political principals, officials, and community members. The mobilization of communities through radio station and procurement of logistics for success of these events also affects the budget.

The strategic management of the department was asked to identify and rank in terms of importance the methods to ensure effective communication in the Department of Social Development. These methods include Public Dialogue Imbizo, Stakeholder participation; Print Media, Community Radio, Electronic Media and Focus Groups.

**Diagram 4.1 Management View on effective method to communicate Social Development programmes.**



The management in the department which includes the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) of Eastern Cape Legislature, Head of Department (HOD), Chief Operations Officer (COO), Senior Manager Anti-poverty programme, 5 Social Work Managers and District Manager of OR Tambo District ranked Imbizo as an effective method in communicating government programmes and policies.

The communication strategy of the department is developed to ensure the effectiveness of six methods that are applied to ensure its effectiveness; these methods include community dialogue/ Imbizos, Stakeholder engagement, print media, community media, electronic media and focus groups.

These are the steps that are followed in the development of a communication strategy in a government context (specific reference will be made to its usage in Imbizo):

- Background (why do we need to communicate)
- Objectives of the communication strategy (intended objectives of the communication strategy).
- Analysis of the communication environment.
- Communication challenges.
- Development of messages and themes.
- Deciding on the audience, channels and type of event.
- Phased communication programme.
- Structures and processes.
- Strategy document
- Action plan.

This communication strategy will raise some pertinent concerns when applied to projects which are meant to be participatory. In the government context, public participation and development communication takes the form of Imbizo.

Firstly, the purpose of Imbizo is to provide a platform on which politicians interact with other people and discuss their needs with them. It also provides an opportunity for politicians to explain government policies and programmes to the people using the languages that they understand in a participatory manner.

The problem with Imbizo is that the decisions on the intended outcomes of the Imbizo communication strategy are taken with little or no input from the beneficiaries of the services. This is largely because what is finally communicated is informed by the national communication strategy of government, government programme of action with little or no input from the beneficiaries from the beginning of the project.

Secondly, if the purpose of Imbizo is to enable the politicians to gain first-hand information about the lives of the people they lead; it should be on the basis of their findings during the visits to the communities that they should devise forms of interventions to address the problems that they have identified. However, the fact that communication objectives and messages are developed before political principals meet with the citizens ,suggests that they attend these meetings with preconceived ideas about the conditions of the areas to be visited, what people had to say and what they intend to communicate. Analysis from the strategy therefore suggests that communication is not about the partnership between government and people, instead is about government and what it intends to communicate. This alone implies that government imposes to communicate a particular message irrespective of what the people might say during Imbizo.

Imbizo is supposed to be a fact finding activity. This should therefore be reflected in the communication strategy. It could therefore be argued that once the fact-finding mission is completed, it is when most communication should take place. The purpose of this communication would be to then

inform the people of how it is going to be done with regard to the issues that were discussed with politicians during an Imbizo meeting.

The strategy at the moment is that there is an extensive pre-Imbizo publicity generating communication, but not much is communicated with regard to the issues that have been identified as needing attention from government. The other concern is that there is little or no communication around the implementation time frames. This study contends that even if there is little or no progress, it is still important to communicate the situation to the people as this would help to build a culture of trust.

In this regard the researcher has identified a gap in the hosting of Imbizos by the political principal and a need to strengthen development communication that will empower communities about the programmes and projects that are identified by the government to address their needs.

Strategic Management is important because it enables an organization to be more proactive than reactive in shaping its own future and influence activities (David 1993:13). Strategic Management also helps the organization to make better strategies through the use of a more systematic, logical and rational approach to strategic choices. In the communication environment within which the Department of Social Development operates, it is important to be proactive because the communication environment is dynamic and keeps on changing.

The same questionnaire was distributed to 15 social workers who are working with communities and also understand the material conditions on the ground and who are the beneficiaries of the services that are provided by the government. This group ranked stakeholder engagement as the most effective tool in communicating government programmes. On a daily basis they work with councillors, faith-based community leaders and traditional leaders. They have also demonstrated a strong belief in the smooth operation of the organization when they worked with this group as they are

convinced that these are the people that understand the issues that affect communities on a daily basis. Stakeholder participation is a process when people that have power influence and control meet to discuss issues affecting the organization.

The observation was that the stakeholders are also used as a channel of communicating the programmes and it happened in a small group with equal level of understanding and when questions are asked they are also clarified to ensure that the key messages and objective of the department are understood.

The researcher also observed that these stakeholder engagements also make work easy for social workers in terms of access to the village, identification of beneficiaries and their assessment for quick intervention.

**Diagram 4.2 Social Workers View on effective method to communicate Social Development programme**

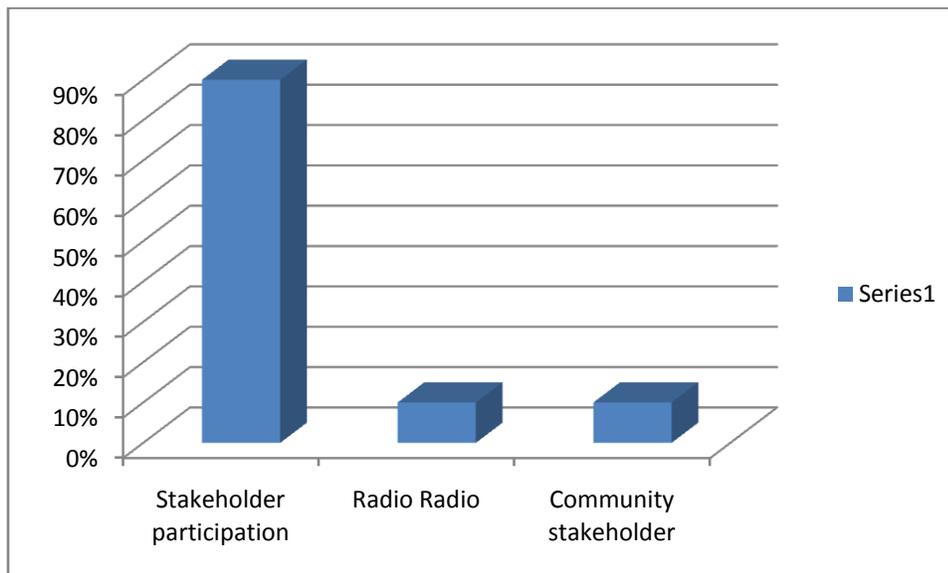
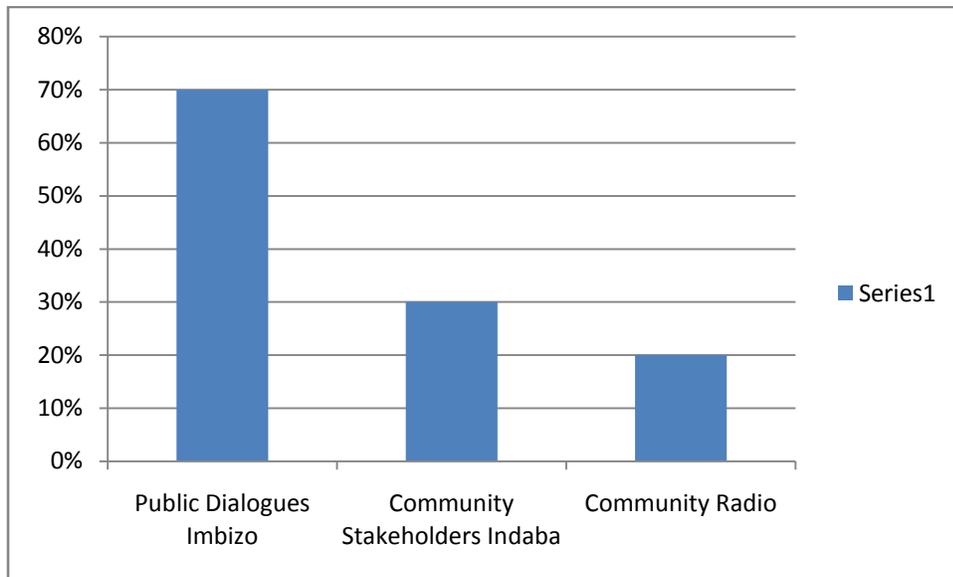


Diagram 4.2 is a demonstration of how the social workers have ranked stakeholder participation as a method of communication,80% have agreed that stakeholder participation with councillors, traditional leaders, faith based organization and NGOs has created a mutual understanding between these stakeholders and they used them to further communicate the programmes and policies to the communities.

**Diagram 4.3 Community View on effective method to communicate Social Development programmes.**



This random sample includes 15 community members from the areas sampled in the OR Tambo district. The community members include, women and men, also in the demographic cohorts of school going children, youth and adults plus elderly. This social policy seeks to impact directly on all age groups. In order to ensure representativity the study sample included 5 Traditional Leaders and Izibonda who have repositories of collective

memory on development and social issues in the department. In addition; the sample included 5 Community Development workers and the 2 councillors who have an insight in identifying community social ills. This group regarded public dialogued Imbizo as the most effective method of communicating government programmes.

This is again informed by their conviction that if political leaders attended these Imbizo, they will have the first hand information of under development in their areas and they also believe that face-to-face communication is their traditional way of communication and is effective.

### **4.3 DATA INTERPRETATION**

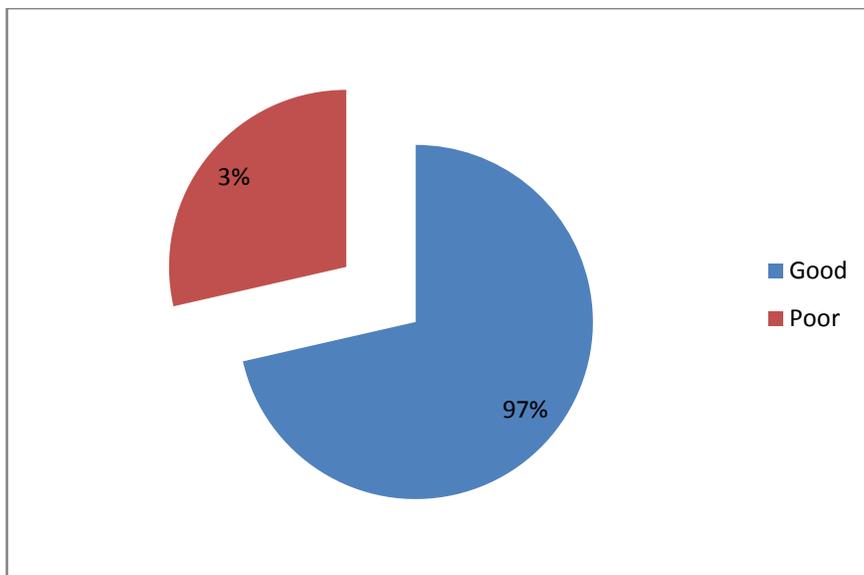
Assessment indicates that amongst its stakeholders the view of public participation remains critical and important as an effective communication tool. There is a need to increase interaction with the people. It is important to note that the ANC's position generally becomes government position because it is the ruling party. The need for increased interaction with the people has been clearly articulated in the following quotation:

“The empowerment of the people to participate in the process of governance, expressed in the concepts of a people-centred society and people-driven processes of transformation, indicates the centrality of the concepts of popular and participatory democracy to the democratic movement understanding of the functioning of a democratic state. It shows the commitment of this movement to the proclamation in the Freedom Charter that “The People Shall Govern” (African National Congress 1996:7).

The introduction of cadres of development communication will assist in ensuring good feedback as a method of communication. These cadres will also be responsible for education and empowerment programmes for communities that will assist them to be self-reliant and sustainable.

The government can also use the cadres to occupy the platform of community radio stations and traditional radio stations to educate and inform the citizens on government initiatives to change their lives for the better. The utilization of constituency political offices as building blocks in empowering communities can go a long way in ensuring that the political agenda and development communication is optimally used.

**Diagram 4.4: Stakeholder Engagement as an effective method to communicate Social Development programmes.**



Even though nowadays technology has advanced rapidly, the results of the research have demonstrated that aspects such as Imbizo and stakeholder engagements are more effective than the modernised advanced technology. This overwhelming conviction that public participation and face-to-face communication is most effective can be attributed to a number of factors which include high illiteracy rate, poverty, and unemployment and under developed infrastructure.

The area where the research was conducted is rural in nature, which predominantly is occupied by women. In this case aspects such as opinions of the stakeholders, the effectiveness of communication channel being

used, their perceptions of the organization has made it possible for the department to determine that public dialogue and stakeholder engagement, Imbizos are more effective than any other tools.

Diagram 4.4 indicates that 97% prefer stakeholder participation as an effective communication channel.

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

Imbizo is meant to provide both the politicians and the people an opportunity to interact and discuss issues that affect the people in general. However, the communication strategy framework used for the purposes of Imbizo does not explicitly make provision for people's participation in design making. It has also become evident that there are no significant differences between the Social Development framework and that developed by Steyn and Nunes (2001) and that developed by the Economic and Social Research Council. The main gap that can be identified in these frameworks is that they look at communication as a one-way process. It can therefore be concluded that the development of any communication which is meant to be the participatory, in this case Imbizos, must involve the people who are meant to be beneficiaries of such a process. The researcher has identified the non-implementation of development communication which is the horizontal use of communication that open up dialogues, assess risks, and identify solution and seek consensus of action as a key to the success and sustainability of development efforts. There is a need for government to build a strong cadre of communicators that will focus on giving feedback and introduce new programmes and empower communities in the total implementation of those programmes. The introduction of these cadres will also ensure that language as a barrier in engaging communities in their own development will be eradicated. The researcher will give more focus on findings, conclusion and recommendations in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the conclusion and recommendations of this study. Public participation enables active involvement of citizens in matters of service delivery and it is a fundamental requirement in a democratic society particular in the Department of Social Development that is mandated to provide services to the vulnerable groups and poorest of the poor. It deepens democracy and contributes towards sustainable service delivery. In this regard, Mtaka (2002:2) indicates that, participation at community level is necessitated by the fact that there is a need to move from building to consolidating democracy, hence the need for people's participation. It is therefore through building an enabling environment at community level that democracy can be consolidated.

The Department applies different methodologies to ensure effective public participation and developmental communication. The implementation of comprehensive communication strategy has six tactical approaches to ensure effective communication with both internal and external stakeholders. These are achieved through Imbizos that is Member of Executive council meeting with the stakeholders, Media mobilization and community meetings and intensive internal communication. However, looking at Imbizo as adopted by government, it is evident that the people are generally not involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the campaign. In this regard, this study

contends that lack of effective public participation compromises the democratic principles that underline democracy.

It is in this regard that Mtaka(2002:3) further argues that to sustain democracy, efforts should be made to ensure that all citizens understand the nature of their participation and what it is in which they have to participate. Access to information is therefore central to participation as it could help citizens to understand government programmes and therefore remain committed to such programmes. It also shows that there is a need to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in planning for Imbizo so that they can understand their roles and responsibilities to ensure its success. The importance of participation is that it could help to ensure that the citizens take ownership of the process; an important democratic principle.

This approach could also help to ensure that there is a buy-in by all affected parties to ensure the consolidation of democracy. However, the other concern with government' adaption of imbizo is that such meetings can only reach a small fraction of the people in a particular community. This is largely because of logistical limitations such as, amongst others, the size of the venues and limited access to the venue. The other concern is the apparent lack of mechanism to ensure that views and opinions expressed at these meetings are representative of the majority views in the community.

## **5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

- The study has demonstrated that, issues around participation and interaction are interpreted differently, sometimes depending on the context in which the participative activities are taking place.

- Imbizo as a participative approach to governance is also perceived differently in the media, community and business. The interpretations of its objectives also vary amongst others, from a genuine need to uplift the community, public relations and to legitimizing government activities.
- However it is evident that although there are aspects that may need to be improved. Imbizo is a positive approach to governance as it provides reassurance that government listens and cares for the people. It can therefore be argued that even if the promises that government makes might not be met at the expected time the fact that people are given the platform to express their views creates the sense that the people are involved in the planning and implementation of government programmes
- It is also interesting to note that there seems to be a general acceptance of Imbizo as a positive step towards the consolidation of democracy in South Africa.
- There is no administrative approach to ensure the implementation of the programmes promised during Imbizos.
- It has also become evident that there is little or no follow-up on issues that the people raise during imbizo meetings. This is evidenced by the fact that in the analysis of the press coverage of Imbizo, people who have been interviewed often raised concerns about the lack of delivery on promises that government has made in a previous Imbizo meeting. It was for these reasons that several people who have been interviewed by the press indicated that they see no reason why they should attend Imbizo meeting.
- The other concern is that there is no indication of the time frames within which the identified issues will have been addressed. This limitation has also been identified in the video recordings of the presidential Imbizo meetings analysed for the study. The problem in this regard is that this has resulted in people becoming skeptical of

government's messages and its commitment to address their problems.

### **5.3 KEY MESSAGES DEVELOPED**

- As part of the planning for imbizo, key messages are developed by the department. It is worth noting that the key messages are developed prior to Imbizo meetings. The purpose of these messages is to provide a framework within which government communicators should communicate on Imbizo related issues. This is meant to ensure that they do not send out contradictory messages, but stick to what has been prescribed
- An analysis of the key messages that have been developed to guide communication around Imbizo reveal that the messages are often not localized. This means that they do not take into consideration the interests of the target government objectives. The other aspect is that there is no involvement of the local people in the development of such messages
- The challenge with this approach is that although Imbizo is publicized as a partnership between government ,the community and other stakeholders, the process of developing such messages does not involve such stakeholders
- The problem in this regard is that given that Imbizo seeks to build partnerships with civil organizations there is a danger that government and civic organizations might not communicate from the same premise. This might at the end confuse the local community. Against this background, it can therefore be argued that in this process the government's key ideological objectives are communicated in a manner that does not give prominence to the local issues.

#### **5.4 ROLE OF THE PARTNERS IN THE PLANNING OF IMBIZO ACTIVITIES**

- The planning of Imbizo activities is highly centralized, with decisions taken at the Department of Social Development with limited or no involvement of the stakeholders who are meant to be the beneficiaries of this process (the people who supposedly have a better understanding of their circumstances and needs). The question in this regard is that if the people who are supposed to benefit from the campaign are not actively involved in the planning and implementation of the campaign activities, how is that a partnership?
- It has also become evident in this study that the development of the communication strategy, which is a guiding document for Imbizo communication, does not reflect the partnership with the community that it is meant to reach. This situation has to some extent perpetuated the perception that Imbizo is a public relations exercise than an attempt at uplifting the communities.

#### **5.5 IMBIZO AS AN IDEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE**

- It can be concluded that Imbizo is more of an ideological approach to governance than the much-publicized need for interaction between government and the people
- The creation of extensive media coverage seems to be the main objective. It also appears as if it is the measure of imbizo campaign's success and/or failure, but given that in its communication emphasis is placed on the poor communities, the question that needs to be answered is how extensive media coverage could help reach South Africa's poor people, most of whom are illiterate?

## 5.6 LANGUAGE USAGE

- One of the limitations with the use of mainstream media is the language issue
- English is the main language that is used. The problem in this regard is that the type of English used in, for example, brochures and articles written by government communicators is highly abstract, which makes it difficult to understand

## 5.7 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

- This study has concluded that the adaption of Imbizo as public participation and development communication platforms for use in government in general and the department in particular has become a highly politicized phenomenon and its main objectives highly contestable. Looking at the press coverage of Imbizo, it has become evident that in some instances people perceive it to be an electioneering mechanism for the African national Congress(ANC).This has brought to the fore the fact that there is a thin line between the ruling party, in this case the ANC and government. In this regard this study contends that this is criticism that is unavoidable. All ruling parties are most likely to be accused of using campaigns of their nature partly to reach their own political goals.
- In trying to clarify government's understanding of the role of imbizo, Mbeki (2004:5) stated that :

***“The KZN Imbizos, our last one before election has confirmed the need or ongoing interaction between government and people. It has emphasized the correctness of our view that we should not relate to the people by visiting them for a few hours by merely going to launch projects and thereafter go back to Pretoria or our provincial and local capitals”***

- This clearly demonstrates government's aims with regard to Imbizo. However, there are concerns in some quarters of society where people are skeptical about the "real" reason behind Imbizo campaigns. People have often raised concerns about the lack of delivery on promises made during Imbizo meetings
- Writing in ANC Today Mbeki (2004:5) further stated that:  
***"It produces measurable results both for the people and the government, expands the possibility for the people to determine their destiny"***.
- The other aspect is that the people who are meant to benefit from imbizo are not involved in decision making processes on Imbizo related issues. For example, they are not involved in the development of the communication strategy and on when and how issues that have been raised will be implemented. In this regard, this study has concluded that although Imbizo is branded as a participatory process, it is not completely participatory in practice. This study contends that imbizo is largely meant to create the impression that the government is still in touch with people at grassroots level. With this understanding, it can therefore be concluded that this is more of a public relations exercise. This study has also observed from the planning and implementation that there is over-emphasis on the generation of extensive mainstream media coverage before and during the imbizo campaign. It can therefore be concluded that government's bias towards the mainstream media contradicts the very essence of imbizo; which is to interact with the people in a face-to-face encounter. The role of the mainstream media cannot be seen as an attempt to reach the main beneficiaries of imbizo the poor people, it is meant to reach mainly the intellectuals, business people and opinion makers. This is meant to mainly inform them of the programme of government so that they can in some way garner support for imbizo.

- This study however contends that informing opinion makers is part of what government communication is all about. However, this aspect of government communication should be clearly spelt out. This would require that the Imbizo Programme targets different audiences, which would require that their preferred channels of communication should be used in order for Imbizo to have maximum impact.
- It can also be concluded that although Imbizo is meant to reach all the people, all factors considered, it cannot be all-inclusive in terms of planning and implementation. However, strategies that would help to ensure that the views and interests of all interest groups are taken into consideration should be developed. This is important because if this aspect is undermined, in the long run Imbizo might lose its credibility in the communities that it is meant to reach.
- The other aspect to be considered is that where government has made promises to deliver on certain things, such undertakings must be honoured, in cases where there are delays, such delays should be communicated. This will help to ensure that a relationship of trust is maintained, and Imbizos credibility as a channel of communication between government and the people is strengthened.
- It has also become evident that although Imbizo is gaining in terms of popularity, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done in this regard. This is largely because the toll-free line has revealed that there are still many people who do not understand what Imbizo is all about and how it could benefit their communities.
- The issue of language usage in government communication, and in this case, with regard to Imbizo raises some concerns. This is largely because of the obvious bias towards the use of English in the publicity material developed for the purposes of Imbizo.
- Finally, this study contends that as an ideal, imbizo is a progressive approach to governance. This is because it strives to ensure that people participate in the discussions about issues that affect their lives. However, in practice, there is a limited scope for people to be

equal role players with regard to planning and in decision making in general. The other aspects that should be noted is that the president and political leaders come from a position of power. This automatically gives them an upper hand in the discussions and in decision making. This study therefore contends that in as far as Imbizo is concerned; there can never be equal participation between the people and the President or any political leaders. The challenge is therefore for government to conduct the campaign in such a way that the views of all the people represented during the Imbizo meetings are considered.

## **5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The Department of Social Development and local government should be actively involved in Imbizo as they are the first contact that people have with government. This is also because they are the ones responsible for implementation of government policies and programmes. Their involvement will help to ensure that the issues raised during an Imbizo meeting are representative of all the people in their municipalities.
- There is a need for a shift in the mindset of government communicators: from the need to generate extensive media coverage to effective use of existing communication structures in the communities to publicize Imbizo meetings.
- Undertakings made during Imbizo meetings should be honoured. In cases where there are delays, such delays should be communicated to the affected people through the existing communication structures in the affected community. In this regard, a checklist of issues that need attention, indicating the time frames and the responsible people must be developed. This will help to ensure that Imbizo builds and retains its credibility.

- Prior to an Imbizo meeting, the different groups in the community should draw a list of concerns and comments which their leaders should present to the President. This would help to ensure that the needs and concerns presented during an Imbizo meeting are representative of all views in the community.
- An intersectoral team comprising of civic organizations, non-governmental organizations, government and all relevant stakeholders should be formed. The purpose of this team would be to ensure implementation of agreements and undertakings made during the Imbizo meeting.
- All governmental interaction with the people at national, provincial and local level should be clearly branded as Imbizo to ensure that people become well informed when such events take place.
- The content of the Imbizo brochures should be customized to the local communities which are to be visited to ensure relevance.
- A structure that deals solely with Imbizo activities should be established. The purpose of this structure will be to co-ordinate, plan, evaluate, and work on implementation of issues raised during Imbizo meetings. The structure will have to work closely with the Department of Social Development and liaise with government departments at all levels. The establishment of such a structure will also help to ensure that the issues raised during an Imbizo meeting are addressed.
- There is a need for feedback mechanisms to be established to keep people informed about the developments on the issues raised during an Imbizo meeting. This aspect is important because as indicated in the research, people would want to know about progress, even if there are challenges in the implementation process.
- Given that South Africa is a multilingual country, it is important that efforts are made to explain what the concept Imbizo is all about. This is important because it has become evident that some people

could not attend Imbizo activities because they did not understand what Imbizo is all about.

- A team which includes professionals should be set up to manage the toll free number during the campaign. This is because as this study has noted, the toll-free line could be effective in addressing issues that cannot be postponed to a later date. The report from the toll-free line should also be used in the development of the communication strategy for the next campaign as it provides an indication of the issues that need attention.
- A two-phased communication strategy must be developed. The first part of the communication strategy should focus on communication before and during the campaign. The purpose of this communication will be to generate publicity and awareness about the imminent visit by the President or political leaders and to sustain awareness during the campaign. The second phase should be on post campaign communication. In this case, after the political principal and other political leaders have visited the selected areas, extensive communication should be embarked upon.

Government and public administration has taken a strong position in strengthening financial and human resource and lifting them to a strategic and management function and the study recommends that the strengthening of public participation and development communication to strategic and management function will go a long way in ensuring empowered and well informed population that is self-reliant.

It is also recommended communicators, community development staff, social workers be capacitated with development communication and public participation course modules. It is also important that staff is capacitated with the necessary skills to work with communities and must have an understanding of ever-changing dynamics of the society. Public

participation and development communication need a particular set of skill from public servants, such as the ability to negotiate, understand community dynamics, work with rather than work for communities and conflict management. It is also recommended that for government to communicate its policies and programmes better it has to build strong working relations, partnerships with community radio stations and also train the Masupatselas, Social Workers, and Social auxiliary workers on how to communicate their programmes on radio. These Social Development cadres will enable the Department to move away from the view that Imbizos are a public relation exercise. In conclusion the implementation of comprehensive communication strategy is critical and important for department of Social Development to build mutual understanding between organization and its stakeholders. The target public for Social Development is vulnerable and poor and therefore the use of both community print and electronic media is essential.

Informed by new trends and research revelation, most of the people in each and every SA households have cellphones, meaning that the addition of use of Social media becomes paramount.

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**24 Eileen Drive  
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Port Elizabeth  
6000**

**The Municipal Manager**

**Ingquza Hill Municipality**

**Flagstaff**

**Attention: Mr Fihlani**

I Gcobani Maswana, am currently registered with the University of Fort Hare for a Masters Degree in Public Administration, my studies include research project on the following topic:

Assessing the effect of Public Participation and Development Communication on Service Delivery: The case of the department of Social Development in the Eastern Cape (2004-2010).

This is more relevant for Ingquza Municipality, given rural nature of the district, poor infrastructure development which makes it difficult to communicate using the modern technology and media platforms.

I therefore request the permission to undertake the research in selected wards, councilors, social workers, selected community members, CDW's and traditional leaders resident in your municipality.

The participation in the research exercise is voluntary and confidentiality will be a cornerstone of activity. All the information obtained will be used for the purposes of the study. It is an aim of the researcher to even table the findings to the Municipality, if that would be of interest to the Ingquza Hill Municipality to enhance local governance.

Hoping that you will find the above to be in order.

Yours truly

Gcobani Maswana

082 8217 410

[gcobani.maswana@socdev.ecprov.gov.za](mailto:gcobani.maswana@socdev.ecprov.gov.za)

MM's Comments

Approved/ Not Approved

Signature

24 Eileen Drive  
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Port Elizabeth  
6000

The Head of Department  
Department of Social Development  
Bhisho

Attention: Mr Maxegwana

I Gcobani Maswana, am currently registered with the University Of Fort Hare for a Masters Degree in Public Administration, my studies include research project on the following topic:

Assessing the effect of Public Participation and Development Communication on Service Delivery: The case of the department of Social Development in the Eastern Cape (2004-2010).

The focus of the study will be in OR Tambo District Municipality, given rural nature of the district, poor infrastructure development which makes it difficult to communicate using the modern technology and media platforms.

I therefore request the permission to undertake the research in selected top management members, social workers and selected community development practitioners, and traditional leaders.

The participation in the research exercise is voluntary and confidentiality will be a cornerstone of activity. All the information obtained will be used for the purposes of

the study. It is an aim of the researcher to even table the findings to the Department of Social Development.

Hoping that you will find the above to be in order.

Yours truly

Gcobani Maswana

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Approved/ Not Approved

Signature

**Questionnaire**

Please complete the following questionnaire. Tick the relevant block.

<b>No</b>	<b>A. Complete the following personal information. Tick relevant block</b>			
<b>1</b>	Age			
<b>2</b>	Gender			
<b>3</b>	Race			
<b>4</b>	Level of education			
<b>No</b>	<b>Answer the following. Tick the relevant box</b>			
<b>6</b>	What is your preferred way of taking part in government’s decision making processes?			
	Attend public meetings	Follow news about government in media	Take part in stakeholder engagements	
<b>7</b>	<b>How do you rate the impact of the following approaches to public participation?</b>			
7.1	Imbizo	High	Medium	Low
7.2	Stakeholder participation	High	Medium	Low
7.3	Community Meetings	High	Medium	Low
<b>8</b>	<b>How do you rate the impact of Imbizo on government information dissemination?</b>			
	High	Medium	Low	