

**GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION AS A DEVELOPMENT TOOL IN GOKWE SOUTH RURAL
DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my wife, Macmillan and my parents, Jobe and Rhoda Tasaranago.

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the role of government communication as a development tool in Gokwe South Rural District (GSRD) of Zimbabwe. Different paradigms have explored the development trajectory in the developing world, yet developing third world countries remains a challenge. The study evaluates the applicability of different approaches of development communication from modernisation, dependency to participation. Also, it adds a decolonial perspective to both the theorisation and the practice of development communication for rural development. The communication dimension has remained relevant in the cause since the era just after the second world war, assuming that mass media would usher developing countries into development. For several decades, governments and development agencies interpreted development and modernisation as synonymous, but third world countries continue failing to modernise. Rural areas, including Gokwe South District, have been the worst affected. Messages and communication channels were for long the centre of focus throughout the modernisation and the dependency eras. The participatory epoch saw a deviation from the focus on communication content and channels as the most powerful means to bring about social change to a focus on people as instrumental in development. The trajectory of growth is increasingly placing much emphasis on the people who are the beneficiaries of development. Recognition of their participation value has increased, which calls for people to participate more in development initiatives.

However, to reap the best out of the people's active involvement in development initiatives, their present and past circumstances remain vital and relevant. History explains the lives of the people in third-world countries; hence, it is critical to understand their current lives and conditions. Most third world people's history was greatly influenced by years of domination through colonialism. The effects of colonialism pose severe limitations to development, such that development agencies and governments cannot address the development question without addressing the impact of colonialism. In light of this, the decolonial perspective attempts to unsnarl and dislodge the people in developing countries from the injustices of their past and their systemic exclusion as it focuses on the people who can bring about development.

The study explored government communication by focusing on three key government departments in GSRD: health, education, and agriculture, critical for rural development. This study also focused on the main communication process components: the sender, channels,

messages, and recipients. This approach aimed to effectively analyse the whole communication process to gain complete insight into the role of communication within government departments in rural development. The study employed a mixed-methods research approach (MMR), comprising qualitative and quantitative methodologies to bring about a reasonable amount of data. Quantitative data for questionnaires were analysed using simple descriptive statistics. Qualitative data from focus group discussions (FGDs), interviews and content analysis were analysed using the reflexive thematic analysis approach.

The findings from the study were that the government was making attempts to utilise Modern Communication Systems (MCSs) to communicate with the people. Most people did not have adequate access to the MCSs to make meaningful contributions to rural development. Communication remained largely one-directional: from the top down to the public. The study identified the limitations of such an approach, one of which was reduced participation. The study also found out that participation was limited to involvement in implementing development programmes that were unsustainable. The research also discovered that Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) have an immense potential for improving government communication, but there was a need to work on the infrastructure. Indigenous Communication Systems (ICSs) were still relevant, as many people could access and utilise them for development purposes. Broadly, the study observed that decoloniality has a considerable potential of positioning the people in GRSD for sustainable development to improve the people's capabilities and empower them to participate in development programmes fully. The research produced a framework that governments could use as a reference in development communication. The framework considers the social realities of the people in GSRD. It helps in understanding them so that government departments can communicate effectively and get the best from the people not only as beneficiaries but also as owners of rural development.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
BAZ	Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe
BBC	British Broadcasting Cooperation
COTRAD	Community Tolerance Reconciliation and Development
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom Government)
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GCIS	Government Communication and Information System
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GSRD	Gokwe South Rural District
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ICSs	Indigenous Communication Systems
ICTs	Information and Communication Systems
MCSs	Modern Communication Systems
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
SABC	South African Broadcasting Cooperation
TPS	Transitional Stabilisation Plan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund

UNISA	University of South Africa
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Party
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Cooperation
Zim Asset	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social Economic Transformation
ZTv	Zimbabwe Television
ZUNDAF	Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study aims to investigate government communication as a development tool in Gokwe South Rural District (GSRD) focusing on the departments of agriculture, health, and education. Government communication is all communication by government executives or representatives of government institutions in conducting its duties (Canel & Sanders, 2012). Through its various departments and institutions, the government's mandate is to ensure development in the country's rural areas. In doing so, the government must work closely with the citizenry, communicate its programmes (development communication), and encourage participation in development interventions within societies (De Beer & Swanepoel, 2000). The efficiency of participatory communication strategies (Moemeka, 1999; De Beer & Swanepoel, 2000; Quebral, 2002), including the involvement of the citizens, is essential for the success of development initiatives. Such participation ensures the transformation of a society from a poor one to one with dynamic socio and economic growth (Quebral, 2002). Development programmes conceived in consultation with the citizenry who participate and own these projects have a high proclivity for success (Ascroft and Masilela, 1994; de Beer and Swanepoel, 2000). Also, the development programmes will respond to the development needs of the people, thereby yielding the desired development in rural areas.

The building blocks of this research also include that a well-implemented communication approach can transition rural communities from a state of underdevelopment to being developed. Gokwe South Rural District (GSRD), like most rural areas in Africa and Zimbabwe, is faced with development challenges needing attention. This district is in dire need of development, and government institutions continue to grapple with the problem. It is, therefore, imperative to explore how government departments are employing communication in rural communities to address development issues, taking cognisance of the above.

This chapter begins by providing the background of the study, which depicts the overall context of the research. The following section addresses the backdrop regarding the academic context *vis-à-vis* the context of the study, painting a holistic picture of the current social, political and economic state of the area. Following this is a presentation and discussion of the problem statement. This section highlights the necessity for a study that explores how the Zimbabwean government departments communicate with the rural public for developmental purposes. The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of these communication approaches,

identify shortfalls, and determine the possible government communication improvements in rural development programmes. The next section outlines the research objectives, which provide a roadmap of how the study achieved its goals. Additionally, this section states the research questions, defines the scope of the study, and provides guidance to the investigation (Cohen et al., 2011).

Moreover, the chapter presents the sub-questions and assumptions to assist in maintaining the focus of the study. Next, the section briefly discusses the research methodology, and the part which follows provides definitions for key terms in this research. Following definitions of keywords and phrases is a discussion of limitations and delineations and the ethical considerations of the study. The final section of this chapter concludes the first chapter and presents the overall structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background

Development communication is a phenomenon that has transitioned through various stages of refinement and changes over the years until it has become what it is today. Scholars, development practitioners, and development organisations (UNICEF, UNESCO, FAO, World Bank) have significantly contributed to the refinement and changes of development communication (Mefalopulos, 2008; Melkote & Steeves, 2001; Organ 1982; Quebral, 1973; Waisbord 2005). For years, communication has been at the centre of development programmes. The importance of communication in development activities has grown and progressed over the years post the 2nd world war through three dominant theoretical paradigms: modernisation, dependency, and participatory (Manyozo, 2006; Mefalopulos, 2008; Melkote, 1991; Servaes, 2003; Servaes, 2008). The lesser explored crucial paradigm in development communication studies is the decolonial theory (Chapter 2 explores these paradigms in detail).

During the modernisation period, the developed world saw the necessity of developing the less developed world for political and economic mileages. Communication, mainly through mass media, was considered useful in disseminating development information. Development scholars and practitioners believed that development would trickle down from the developed and modernised countries and communities to the less developed countries and societies (Melkote, 1991; Moemeka, 1994). Therefore, mass media tools were crucial in disseminating development information at a significantly faster rate to a widely dispersed audience. Development during this era was primarily seen in economic terms and measured by economic indices. According to the modernisation paradigm, successfully mimicking

developed countries in terms of lifestyle, economy, and infrastructure would develop less developed societies.

There was the use of extension officers whose role was to impart knowledge to the villagers in agriculture. Although this happened in person (face-to-face or interpersonal communication), the assumption was that knowledge would trickle from the extension officers to the villagers who had less or none of it. Societies did not attain the hoped-for modernisation as anticipated. This setback led scholars and development practitioners to probe why the developing world was not modernising. The significant reasons lay in dependency (Matunhu, 2011; Rodney, 1972; Scott, 1995) and post-colonial praxis and coloniality, which saw an extension of colonialism in a different format (Mignolo, 2005).

The arguments were that the developed world was draining resources and stifling the development progress of the developing countries and communities. Also, the western centred approaches to resolving the development question were impractical as they lacked an appreciation of the development needs of the people in third world countries. Development communication scholars identified solutions to development problems within the developing nations. Solutions included working directly with the people in target areas to define their development needs (Moemeka, 2002; Servaes, 2003). Decoloniality is currently part of the broader set of the panacea to the development woes, capable of exploring the full potential of the people. Decoloniality is the school of thought which challenges western states dominance over the developing world in terms of development knowledge production and its universal application in third world countries (Bhambra, 2014).

The continued review of development challenges has prompted scholars to change their opinion on overreliance on mass media for development and the assumption that advancement would diffuse to the developing communities as what Roger's diffusion of innovations theory avers. There is a growing interest against the notion that knowledge is predominantly Eurocentric (the developed world). Eurocentric involves a predisposition of placing much focus on the culture and circumstances of the western countries (European nations) without regarding the rest of the world. According to Pokhrel (2011), eurocentrism is the ideology that ascribes superiority to European ideas over the rest of the world, including the developing countries. The approach and associated studies judge experiences of developing countries according to those of the west (Mills et al., 2013), including what nations regard as development and possibly the means to attain it. Mignolo, (2011) challenges this episteme in favour of indigenous and local approaches to the development question, the same view expressed by Quijano, (2007) and Vallega (2014) in Latin America.

Development practitioners are beginning to recognise indigenous forms of communication as crucial for development. The other factor that makes indigenous ways of communication accepted as useful in rural development is that progress is not only measured in economic terms. However, other social indices such as freedom, equity, social justice, and the capacity to participate in development matters are also determinants of development. All these standards summarise the decolonial paradigm (Mignolo, 2011; Quijano, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Tactical and strategic integration of all communication is increasingly becoming a viable solution to the development challenges. A consideration of the human resource (the people) as crucial in development has also meant that communication approaches would appeal more if communicators consider the society in the development communication process. Human involvement and participation are increasingly becoming central to contemporary development approaches.

Over the years, the transition of development communication led to a realisation that developing countries, particularly in Africa, should develop communication approaches and, however, empower and involve the people in a dialogic and two-way symmetrical communication process. Communication should also encourage and promote people's participation throughout the development programme process, from the needs' analysis, crafting development programmes, and implementation to their evaluation. If the beneficiaries of development establish and define their development needs in what is termed the locus of enunciation (Grosfoguel, 2007; Mignolo, 2007), development programmes and their communication will effectively respond to development needs in third world countries and their rural communities such as GSRD. The decolonial paradigm is vital in ensuring that the development responsibility is not exclusionary and does not relegate the locals to the periphery. Instead, decoloniality ensures that the local people are actively involved in development initiatives by employing indigenous communication channels that appeal more to the locals and rally all previously disenfranchised minorities like women and the poor into actively participating in development programmes. Fundamentally, taking cognisance of the importance of communication in development, this research sought to explore the role of government communication in Gokwe South District. The next section discusses the background of Gokwe South which is the area in which the study occurs.

1.2 Contextual background

Zimbabwe is a Southern African nation with a population of 14 439 018 (World Bank, 2018), with the majority pegged at 67.62 % residing in rural areas (ZimStat, 2017). The rural regions of Zimbabwe have development issues that the government should address. Gokwe is one of the rural areas lagging in terms of development. It has a population of 326 918 people (ZimStat, 2017), and the district needs development in health, agriculture, and education areas. Optimising the performance of these critical departments ensures the betterment of the lives of people in Gokwe.

Gokwe South District is in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. The district is rural, and the nearby town is Gokwe which was granted its town status in 2006. Part of the district lies on the Zambezi Valley to the south, and the other part to the north lies on the Mapfungautsi plateau. The district comprises a mixture of Ndebele, Shona and the *Shangwe* people, who are the natives of the district. The Shona and the Ndebele, often called *Madheruka*, settled in the area for two reasons. First, they did so involuntarily after being evicted from their land taken by the colonialists supported by the Land Husbandry Act of 1965. Second, they relocated voluntarily to grow cotton which had proven to do well in the area and paid relatively well on the market. The formal administration of the district began in 1957 with the assignment of the Native District Administrator (Nyambira, 2002).

Before then, the *Shangwe* people sparsely occupied the area that was not desirable in terms of climate and was tsetse infested, especially the Zambezi valley (Ranger, 1982). They survived on hunting, gathering, and gathering subsistence farming. Resettlement policies and the growing of cotton led to the exponential growth of the population in the district. The terms *Shangwe* and *Madheruka* are derogatory terms to refer to poor and primitive and evictees who came to settle upon the land, respectively. The immigrants were more modernised than the natives of the area, so they practised better farming methods and built better homes (Nyambira, 2002). Presently, the population in the district survives mainly on subsistence farming and the growing of cotton. Other crops grown in the area are primarily maize, groundnuts and other grains such as millet, sorghum and rapoko. People in the district also keep small herds of animals, mostly cattle, sheep and goats (Ranger, 1982). However, due to irregularities in rainfall patterns, agriculture production is increasingly becoming insufficient. Climate change, coupled with other factors, have also significantly affected the quality of life amongst the people of Gokwe South.

In terms of health facilities, the district has a government hospital in Gokwe Town, one missionary hospital, and 30 clinics tackling health matters. Gokwe lies in tsetse and mosquito-infested region, and as such, diseases like Malaria and Sleeping sickness are prevalent. Moreover, Gokwe is vulnerable to Cholera, and the district reported the most recent outbreaks in 2008 and 2009 (WHO, 2009). The area is also affected by HIV/AIDS like the rest of the country. Abjectly, Gokwe South Rural District (GSRD) is among the highest in terms of the number of people with HIV and the highest number of new adult and child infections (Ministry of Health and Child Care and the National Aids Council, 2018). The health challenges mentioned above negatively affect rural development and hence the necessity to investigate government communication as a development tool within GSRD.

With regards to education, there are 141 primary and 65 secondary schools within GSRD. The schools are distributed all over the district as per the former president of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe's post-independence education policies, which declared education a fundamental human right. In light of this policy, the government established schools across the country for easy access. In 2014, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) reported that Zimbabwe had an 88% literacy rate, one of the highest in the region. However, the country could not meet the education-related Millennium Development Goals,

mainly due to the economic challenges faced by the state (UNDP, 2015). Other reasons could be the withdrawal of girl children from school due to cultural and religious reasons, early marriages and pregnancy, and lack of funds. The department of education also addresses issues of child abuse and adult literacy. The country may have a high literacy rate, but the level of education amongst rural people is still low. To address all these challenges, the government, through the department of education, uses communication. This study, therefore, sought to assess government communication as a development tool in GSRD.

The whole nation of Zimbabwe is also facing grave economic challenges which directly affect the rural population. The national economic problems result from a synergy of many factors, including political issues like poor governance, international sanctions and corruption, and natural factors, including drought and climate change. Zimbabwe's economy was doing well until the early late 1990s, when the country made some bad economic decisions that had a severe impact on the economy. Zimbabwe participated in the Democratic Republic of Congo war, compensated war veterans and engaged in the fast-track land reform programme. All these followed the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP),

which seriously impacted the economy. Political problems accompanied all these challenges, and the government received a backlash from the international community regarding the abuse of human rights. In response to the aforementioned issues, western countries imposed sanctions on the government and key political leaders, rendering the country into dire economic woes. Violence was a characteristic of the elections held, and there was general political instability in the country. For instance, the opposition contested the results of the 2008 election, which accused the government of rigging the vote during the election re-run and tensions further increased in the country.

The country experienced severe hyperinflation as the local currency began to lose value. The finance ministry attempted to deal with this challenge by slashing zeros from the hyper-inflated currency. Still, its importance continued to fall to unprecedented levels. During that same period, there was a poor harvest throughout the country, leading to severe food shortages. The political players formed a national unity government (GNU) which ran until the 2013 election in response to the political problems. In 2009, the government shunned the local currency favouring the multi-currency system to tackle the soaring inflation rates. There was reasonable economic stability in the country, but the respite resurfaced after the subsequent contested elections of 2013 and 2018. The economy continued to deteriorate despite government attempts to gradually bring back the local currency through the bond currency by introducing bond coins and later bond notes, all smaller denominations. Amidst all this, Zimbabwe continued to lose its economically able population and suffered brain drain. People left the country searching for greener pastures abroad and neighbouring countries, which further harmed the deteriorating economy.

Under this economic and political background, the government departments had to continue to serve the community and usher the nation into development effectively. It is also crucial to acknowledge several Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that continued to operate to mitigate the challenges that Zimbabwe's people were facing. Other NGOs worked independently, and others partnered with the government by providing food aid or educating the community on dealing with the current economic challenges. The reason for discussing Zimbabwe's economic and political background is that it illuminates the economic and political environment in which the government departments operate and how the government development communication process occurs in government development programmes.

Media players accused the government of abusing the legislation to control the media. The government of Zimbabwe has legislated freedom of speech as a human right. This assertion is met with discontent by human rights activists and media practitioners in and out of the

country. Media players, human rights activists and western countries continue to accuse the Zimbabwean government of having a stranglehold on the media, a system inherited from the colonial government. Media regulations are taking away the freedom of speech which has significant effects on media and communication within the country. These media regulations include the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). Under strict media regulation, all broadcasters and media practitioners are supposed to register with the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ). The media regulation requirements limit the entrance of private media players into the Zimbabwean media industry such that the country's operational broadcasters are mostly state-owned. There are few independent broadcasters in the country, and these always complain of being harassed by the government. Zimbabwe currently has about three national television stations and 16 radio stations, among which 14 are state-owned except for the two owned by independent players. However, these changes occurred towards the end of the study, and some participants may still refer to one prominent television station. The privately-owned radio stations belong to people affiliated with the government. There are ten regional radio stations in the country out of these. Only one (Midlands FM) was supposed to serve the Midlands province. Unfortunately, Midlands FM is inconsistent in its operation. There is no functional community radio station serving the Midlands Province and Gokwe South Rural District. In terms of print media, the state-controlled publisher, Zimpapers controls most of the newspaper publications in the country, and there are few privately owned newspapers. Most independently owned publishers are online. The above discussion sums up the mass media options available in the country and explains the people's perceptions of the media. From a development communication perspective, the people's perception of information and news sources has a significant influence on the success of communication, reception of the content, and information capacity to influence change.

1.3.1 Communication in governance

Communication in governance is considered the best governance practice. A government that effectively communicates with the civil society has a significant likelihood of leading thriving communities (FAO, 2010; CommGAP, 2009). According to the department for international development (United Kingdom Government) (DFIDs) principles of good governance in CommGAP (2009), governments can use various means and channels of communication to share government policies, information and plans with the people. These include:

- Modern Communication Systems (MCSs) involving mass media like broadcast and print possess several advantages of reaching a widely dispersed audience in a short space of time.
- The ubiquitous Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) are also promising new avenues of sharing information.
- On the other hand, a renaissance of Indigenous Communication Systems (ICSs) purports to redress errors development practitioners made due to the over-reliance on MCSs and bringing benefits, especially when development agencies explore ICSs' potential and capacity and integrate them with other forms of communication.

Government agencies and departments should communicate government programmes objectives clearly and aim to achieve their goals in a way that is responsive to the citizen's needs while being open to feedback through a two-way communication system.

1.4 Major Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) development initiatives

During this study, the Zimbabwean government was engaged in significant attempts to deal with crucial issues within the three departments (health, education and agriculture) focused on by this study. As a symbol of the GoZ's commitment to the critical sustainable development goals (SDGs) and to attain its vision 2030, it launched the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social Economic Transformation (Zim Asset) (October 2013 - December 2018). This crucial agenda covered areas within the departments of health, education and agriculture. Therefore, the government of Zimbabwe introduced policies and programmes to support the critical items within the areas mentioned above. This section shall introduce these policies and programmes (ZUNDAF, TSP).

Development programmes within the department of health

In terms of health, GoZ committed itself to the following:

- reduce maternal mortality and morbidity rate
- double immunisation rate
- reduce mother to child HIV transmission rate to less than 9%
- provide access to HIV treatment for all
- reduce sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- provide adequate medicine for family planning and essential drugs
- mitigate environmental pollution, poor water, sanitation and hygiene

GoZ Development initiatives in education

The government of Zimbabwe committed itself to the following:

- access to education for all (non-formal education, deal with failure to enter the education system and dropouts) by financing vulnerable and orphaned children through the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) programme
- introduced a one-to-one pupil to textbook ratio
- empower girls and women to participate in social, economic and political spheres

The government launched a competency-based curriculum termed the ‘New curriculum’, emphasising Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Sustainable Development and provision of life skills.

GoZ Development initiatives in agriculture

- food and nutrition security
- establish self-sufficiency and food surplus

The government introduced the Command Agriculture under the Special Agriculture Production Programme to deal with financial challenges experienced by farmers, including the Presidential Vulnerable Inputs Scheme and the Cotton Input Scheme, which involved giving input packs to rural farmers.

However, GoZ notes challenges in terms of reducing poverty, food and nutrition security inequalities and employment. The challenges revolve around the economy such that in 2018 the GoZ launched a Transitional Stabilisation Plan (STP). The other reason for the STP was to ensure that the GoZ was in line with its Vision 2030 objectives. Key to all these programmes was promoting broad-based citizenry participation in development initiatives (TSP, 2018), which substantiates that the government values public participation in development initiatives.

1.4.1 Application of communication in development

Communication aids the sharing of information, and this has earned its credit and status as essential in development programmes. The information shared is also empowering and encourages people to participate in development programmes. Communication also allows people to share their knowledge, seek knowledge and provide feedback on some of the programmes and development initiatives. There is an expansive realisation of the value of people as a critical human resource in rural development, as well as the importance of the

public's involvement and participation (Castello & Braun, 2006). For so long, communication that could bring rural development has been informed by the Eurocentric episteme. Proponents of modernisations saw communication as an invaluable tool to modernise less developed societies. First, the geo-historical location informed the conception of development programmes that did not factor in the third world countries. Fundamentally, development and its communication were Eurocentric, designed to spread modernity from the European perspective, hoping that uncivilised communities would follow Western modalities and become transformed. The assumption was that development would diffuse and trickle down to the less developed countries and societies (Rogers, 1991). This perspective informed the top-down forms of communication that did not leave room for the people to participate in the development communication process instead of further alienating them from development. According to the decoloniality school of thought, coloniality continues despite the abolishment of colonialism, and most governments policies are still Eurocentric and failing to bring development in third world countries (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, Mignolo, 2007, Ndlove-Gatsheni, 2013).

1.5 Problem statement

The scholarship of government communication is dominated by public relations literature, focusing on organisational communication management and political communication (Clyde, 2004; Avery & Graham, 2013; Muhingi et al., 2015; Macnamara, 2018) and less emphasis on development communication. The government's less attention to development communication but focusing on political communication and public relations seems to absolve rural development as a government's responsibility. Government communication is dominantly consumed by self-interest publicity and one-way communication (Muhingi *et al.*, 2015), thus contravening Grunig's (1989) two-way symmetrical communication model canons. The two-way symmetrical communication model argues for a balanced approach to communication (participatory) where both the communicator (government) and the audience (citizens/public) mutually benefit through negotiation and mutual understanding. The dominant top-down approach of government communication is increasingly considered less effective in bringing about development, especially in rural areas where it is needed. As such, there is a need to examine the use of communication as a development tool.

There is little documented research on government communication as a development tool. Very little research has examined the merging of various communication areas for rural development (political communication, organisational communication, government

communication and public relations). There is a need to fill such a gap and establish a framework of government communication for rural development. The failure to converge government communication and development communication within the participatory parameters of the rural folk will continue to mean the absence of meaningful rural development. Besides, the inability to examine the rural people's (participants) underlying circumstances entrenched in their history, which makes them perennially disempowered to address their development matters, will make the decisive dealing with the rural development question a challenging undertaking.

This research accepts that theories to solve the development problem abound but most significant is the paradigmatic origins. So far, the study observed with concern that the paradigms discuss Africa's development from an external perspective. In contrast, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, (2013) argues for exploring African problems from an African standpoint in his concept of enunciation. Dastile, (2015) echoed the same view stating that the primary location of studying the realities of the Africans should be Africa. Appreciating the argument put forward by Dastile (2015) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), this study gathers that research should place the local people's social realities at the centre for rural communities to develop of the development discussion. The study accepts that the government communication scholarship makes little specific reference to the decolonial paradigm position, which this study assumes is a trajectory to social transformation of the less developed societies. Therefore, the significance of the rural folk prompts this study to explore the decolonial paradigm and its relevance in government communication for development. Against this background, this study seeks to investigate government communication as a tool for rural development.

1.6 Research objectives

This research's main objective was to explore how the departments of agriculture, health and education employ communication as a tool for rural development and develop a model that government institutions can apply for rural development communication. The research objectives thus follow:

- To evaluate the role of government communication as a developmental tool
- To determine if the government communication approach is aligned to the decolonial praxis.

- To establish the extent to which government communications apply the two-way symmetrical communication to facilitate participatory communication necessary for rural development.
- To develop a government communication framework for rural development

1.7 Research assumptions

Assumption 1: Government development programmes have not yielded much about bringing about the desired social change in third world countries. While there may be several possible reasons, the efficacy of government communication becomes one of the factors to be interrogated. The researcher assumes that government communication for social change or development programmes is ineffective in Zimbabwe due to unqualified communication professionals. Key development communication is relegated to other professionals in various government departments such as health workers and teachers, and agricultural extension workers. The other reason for the lack of success in development initiatives is that communication approaches have not evolved from being Eurocentric to include decoloniality that empowers and inclusive of effecting development.

Assumption 2: The western or Eurocentric praxis influences that were inherently inherited during colonialism communication for development in third world countries which third world countries. These approaches, meant to deal with a development question in a Eurocentric way, were applicable in the west. Consequently, instead of solving the development challenge, the situation did not improve, prompting development practitioners to use a different approach. In line with this, decoloniality emerges as a panacea; hence exploring its parameters in government communication for rural development is paramount.

Assumption 3: Communication in government is a broad mandate that other aspects of government communication cross boundaries rendering development communication by government departments a challenging undertaking. Government communication straddles across political communication and public relations and experiences political interference. The challenges also include the failure to delineate development communication mandate and other government communication responsibilities. This misconception potentially excludes the rural public from effectively participating in development initiatives considering that acceptable standards in development communication hail the participatory theory where the citizenry participates in their development instead of being passive actors.

Assumption 4: There is no framework to guide government departments' communication, focusing on rural development as scholarship on government communication is predominantly concerned with public relations and political communication with less emphasis on development communication. A clear development communication framework has the propensity of providing an appropriate starting point in line with the social realities of the rural people for government officials to reference.

1.8 Research question

This research seeks to answer how communication can be used as a tool for growth in the GSRD of Zimbabwe by government departments. The research also aims to establish how government departments redress the Eurocentric approaches to development communication and employ decolonial approaches capable of rallying the people to fully participate in the communication and implementation of development programmes necessary for rural development.

1.8.1 Research sub-questions

Research question 1: What is the role of government communicators in selected government departments?

Research question 2: To what extent do their purpose or responsibility match a participatory developmental agenda?

Research question 3: Does the government apply communication approaches consistent with decoloniality to empower the people to participate in development programmes?

Research Question 4: What procedures do government institutions implement in communicating their developmental programmes?

Research Question 5: What are the features of rural development communication?

1.9 Key definitions

This section provides operational definitions and explanations of key terms in this study.

Government communication

Government communication involves the interaction between government organisation executives or people acting or representing the government during the execution of its duties and the public or citizenry or within government departments and between different government organisations or departments.

Rural communication

Rural communication is the interaction process involving the sharing of information, ideas and skills for development. Rural communities and government agencies or non-governmental agencies, and other interested parties offering extension and advisory services share information through face-to-face interactions, media (radio, print or TV) and information and communication technologies (ICTs). Development communication practitioners can simplify the process to exchange helpful information within the rural communities and rural dwellers.

Development communication

Development communication is a planned and systematic use of communication involving the use of Indigenous Communication Systems (ICSs), Modern Communication Systems (MCSs) and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) to transform societies from poor ones to ones with dynamic socio and economic systems. The people and development agencies are at the centre of the interaction process. The former and latter bi-directionally share development-related information.

Development

Economic advancement and modern infrastructure often characterise development. However, development scholars call for a rejection of the Eurocentric definition of development characterised by industrialisation, civilisation and modernity (Escobar, 1995) favouring endogenous narratives. Therefore, in the context of this thesis, development refers to the extent to which the people are empowered to attain more significant standards of livelihoods as they would wish. This definition of development involves freedom to participate in development initiatives, social equity, and the right to decide the pathway of progress they would want to pursue. This thesis, however, does not pretend to disregard the connotations of modernisation and economic growth reflected through the available infrastructure but adds the issues of freedom and justice, social equity, empowerment and involvement, and the participation of the people in matters affecting their livelihoods as development. Development, therefore, encompasses issues of health, agriculture and education, among others. Freedom to access these services, adequate information, access to communication channels, freedom to communicate and privilege to participate in health, education and agriculture programmes are fundamentals for development. Sen (1990), in his capability approach, interprets development as the enablement of people to reach their highest level of

ability, and he equated development to freedom. From the explanation above, development involves expanding human capabilities without totally disregarding some economic aspects of development and being limited to modernisation.

Development is a process rather than an outcome with different dimensions, which, according to Bellù, (2011) are economical, human, sustainable, and territorial. The first dimension, economic development, focuses on the balance between productivity, consumption, and the generation of income within a society measured by economic indices like the gross domestic product (GDP) *per capita*. Bellù's (2011) second concept, human development, is concerned with the welfare of a community and its improvement in matters of education, health, gender equality, inclusion, and empowerment, among other factors. The third dimension, sustainable development, is development concerned with the present and future abilities of a society to remain sustained. Lastly, the territorial development dimension limited to a specific area explains progress and growth within a society and its relationship with the outside world.

In this study, development shall be interpreted from the human development perspective and will incorporate aspects of development from other development archetypes by Bellù (2011). The purpose of this is to have a robust and all-encompassing definition of development that ensures no exclusion of other vital aspects. Therefore, development is the process of growth and positive change indicated by society's improved quality of life, measured by social and economic indices.

Rural development

Rural development is a positive change in the social and economic well-being and the quality of life of the people residing in rural areas that are usually isolated and sparsely populated (Moseley, 2003). Agriculture is an economic driver for rural development, and good health mainly influences the wellbeing of rural societies. Education contributes to both health and agriculture; hence the three aspects are interrelated for rural development. As such, this study focuses on the above mentioned three-tier aspects of rural development. Rural development programmes require the participation of rural people for them to come to fruition. The rural people themselves can do rural development programmes better because they are the ones who understand their needs, values, culture, language and other subtle aspects peculiar to their societies.

Rural development in Africa

The African rural population constitutes about 63% of the total population, and development lags in these areas (World Bank, 2018). The rural regions of Africa face challenges of underdevelopment and poverty. According to the World Bank, 41% of the people in the Sub-Saharan are poor (World Bank, 2018), and most of these people reside in rural areas. From the statistics above, governments in Africa need to address the development issue. Cazorla et al., (2013) suggested various approaches to address rural development like the Bottom-up Approach, Working with the People, Rapid Rural Appraisal, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). The capability approach is also another approach that researchers have put forward to deal with development issues (Sen, 2005). In Africa, government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have played a significant role in dealing with development matters, but the challenge persists. Development communication scholars have suggested that communication can also play a key role in development (Melkote, 2001; Manyozo, 2006; Mefalopulos, 2008).

Indigenous Communication Systems (ICSs)

Indigenous Communication Systems (ICSs) are all communication approaches and channels native to society and often referred to as traditional communication channels. In the African context, the natives used these channels before the colonial era. These provided different means of communication to the locals. ICSs are native to the African people and native to societies. Outsiders may regard these as peculiar, but they are part of their culture, tradition, and heritage to locals. ICSs include songs, dance, poetry, folklore, drama and traditional ceremonies, among others.

Modern Communication Systems (MCSs)

Modern Communication Systems (MCSs) are contemporary to African societies. As opposed to ICSs, they were imported into African communities by missionaries and colonialists and through globalisation. Included in MCSs is mass media in the form of print and broadcast (radio and television). Information communication technologies are also part of MCSs but are often classified separately.

Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)

These are modern forms of communication involving the use of new technologies brought by computers and the internet. Social media, in the way of communication applications like

WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, are often classified under this section due to their use of the internet and other information technologies.

Participatory development communication

Participatory development communication is a dialogic interaction whereby all stakeholders in the process play an active role. Participatory development communication does not prejudice anyone from playing an active role based on social status, income, level of education, expertise, or political affiliation. Every part involved in the process of development communication and programmes has an equal right to contribute. The people's contribution empowers them and increases a sense of ownership of development programmes. Participatory development communication is associated with two-way symmetrical communication where all parties benefit.

Empowerment

One other crucial concept in development communication is empowerment. It draws from various dimensions and mainly involves the aspects of the power of decision making in aspects affecting one's life Narayan, (2000). From another perspective, empowerment entails the right bestowed on the people living in a community to engage in development programmes fully. Receiving adequate information and having the right to have a say on what they want to attain and their right to chart the way of achieving development goals can fully engage the public. The elimination of fear and negative consequences for being actively involved in specific programmes also results in the empowerment of individuals. Historical domination of the African people left them powerless in various aspects, making it difficult for them to address contemporary development issues adequately (Sen, 2001). Multiple forms of domination eroded the people's right to chart their development, leaving them weak, helpless, and lacking the confidence to address their development challenges. The Eurocentric episteme implies that all wisdom to African problems hails from the west, leaving people in developing countries disempowered (Mignolo, 2007). The reversal of the effects of domination (colonialism) as what the current decolonial paradigm suggests has the potential to position the rural folk as agents of their development, is a form of empowerment.

Decoloniality

There are many decoloniality explanations; for example, Mignolo defines decoloniality as the concept that refers to a form of critical theory including analytical and functional "options for

addressing and delinking from the imperial structure of power” (Mignolo, 2011). Al Kassimi also states that the decolonial perspective emphasises Eurocentrism's dominance in modernity and development narratives by revealing how particularised European knowledge establishes itself as normative to exclude and reject other knowledge (Al Kassimi, 2018). Decoloniality can also be interpreted as a deconstruction of imperial institutions and hegemonic forces on a theoretical level. Decoloniality refers to a set of liberation projects originating in ex-colonized epistemic locations. Maldonado-Torres alludes that decoloniality is the abolition of power structures and concepts that encourage the continuation of ethnic, gender, and geopolitical hierarchies that emerged in the early colonial world or took on new and more influential types (Maldonado-Torres, 2006:117). The colonial nature of influence identifies and explains the colonialism's lasting legacy in the context of information structures linked to the legal, cultural, and economic structure of hierarchy that outlived formal colonialism and were absorbed into succeeding social orders, long after formal colonialism has ended (Quijano, 2000). By synthesising the various attributes in the explanations put forward, decoloniality can be simplified constructively, rejecting the Eurocentric epistemologies and re-learning the indigenous knowledge that was displaced by colonialism.

Locus of enunciation

Mignolo, (2000) and Grosfoguel, (2007) describe the locus of enunciation as articulating development needs by previously disenfranchised subjects in the periphery where development projects are carried out. The best explanation in terms of needs can be provided by the one in need chiefly because they understand their circumstances better. As a result, clashes between acceptable and unacceptable aspects will be reduced, and the public owns and participates in the interventions they decide to engage in.

Epistemic disobedience

Episteme disobedience is a criticism of these macro narratives Euro-centred naturalizing claims that European epistemologies contribute to modernity/development (Al Kassimi, 2018; Mignolo, 2011). Epistemic disobedience also entails reconstructing something, taking or removing those who control knowledge and aesthetics and denouncing totalizing reality. This includes re-examining the learning approaches (pedagogical methodologies) and the content in terms of universality or umbrella approach and questioning the ideology that what is applicable in the west will be applicable everywhere. For example, the diffusion of

innovations through mass media that was meant to bring modernity to third world countries can be replaced by other alternatives to development.

1.10 Research methodology

This thesis employed a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research methodology, sometimes referred to as triangulation. Triangulation entails combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods (Bryman, 1988; Dawson, 2002). There are several types of triangulation, and these are methodological or methods triangulation, triangulation of sources, analyst triangulation, theory or perspective triangulation and environmental triangulation (Denzin, 1978). According to Cohen *et al.*, (2011), triangulation endeavours to map out or fully explain phenomena from more than one standpoint. Epistemological pluralism underpins the philosophy of this research. The research takes cognisance of the value of both positivism and constructivism approaches to enquiry. The researcher chose triangulation as the most appropriate method for this study because it allows for data validation through cross verification (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). The employment of a variety of ways contributes to the trustworthiness of the findings. The multiplicity of methods can offset the weaknesses and biases inherent in single strategies. In addition to that, triangulation is also best for “corroborating findings” and helping to produce a “rich, robust, comprehensive and a well-developed” study (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

This study sought to investigate government communication as a tool for rural development in Gokwe South Rural District of Zimbabwe employed data triangulation and methodological triangulation. Data triangulation involves the use of many data sources. Therefore, the present study employed data triangulation in the form of focus groups, interviews, a questionnaire, and content analysis. Methodological triangulation involves the use of different data collection methods, which were qualitative and quantitative.

Content analysis is another research method used in this study. The research analysed all publications in brochures, newspaper articles, and posters by agriculture, health, and education departments. The analysis focused on GSRD from the 31st of July 2018 to the 31st of July 2019. Content analysis is a systematic reading of the text and symbolic content to indicate the presence of unique and meaningful patterns (Krippendorff, 2004; Hodder, 1994). According to Holsti (1969), content analysis allows a researcher to make inferences about the antecedents of communication, describe and make inferences about characteristics of communication, and make inferences about the effects of communication. On these bases,

content analysis was critical to this research, which was a study of the communication process seeking to investigate the use of communication by government departments in rural development. Through content analysis, the researcher studied government department messages and all their communication content.

1.9.1 Sampling methods

The units of analysis for the study were the selected departments of agriculture, health and education in Gokwe South Rural District (GSRD), people from the district and publication by the selected departments between the period of 31st of July 2018 to the 31st of July 2019. The researcher chose government departments due to their relevance in rural development and operations in GSRD. The research applied a non-probability sampling technique combining quota, expert and various sampling methods to a total population of about 326 918 people in the district (ZimStat, 2016). The district is sub-divided into wards, the total number of wards in the district is 33. Each ward consists of a group of villages, and a village comprises a group of homesteads. The participants for the interviews were government officials selected based on their expertise, hence expert sampling. The research applied heterogeneous sampling to select focus group participants and respondents to the questionnaire. This sampling intended to represent people from separate locations within the district for extensive coverage. As such, the researcher selected respondents from the categories (wards). As per gender and age groups, quota sampling methods ensured that all people have a fair gender representation at a ratio of 40:60. The study purposively selected data for the content analysis from all publications by the selected departments. The focus was on GSRD from the 31st of July 2018 to the 31st of July 2019.

1.9.2 Research Instruments

The research instruments used in the study were a questionnaire, one-on-one semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). To gather adequate data, the researcher employed FGDs in the district with the public, who are the recipients of government communication. The assumption was that these people frequently work with government departments in rural development programmes. The researcher conducted a questionnaire on the FGDs participants to have a better appreciation of findings from FGDs. A survey was suitable for this research because it is easy to administer, allows collection of substantial amounts of information within a short space of time and data obtained using a questionnaire is easy to analyse using computer packages. The questionnaire sought to identify the different

communication practices employed and how the public appreciated them and was used to ground and corroborate the findings from the FGDs. The purpose of FGDs discussions was to solicit information about attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions (Gibbs, 1997) regarding government communications as a tool for rural development. The discussions yielded more information due to their small group sizes. The researcher or research assistants were also available to facilitate the discussion, clarify unclear terms, and keep the conversations on track (Gibbs, 1997). Other advantages of focus groups in this study were that they allow people to disagree or agree with each other, providing insights into how the participants thought about the issue. They also collect various local descriptive terms, and participants are comfortable interacting with others (Kitzinger, 1995).

The researcher conducted one-on-one semi-structured telephonic interviews with government top-level executives and officials in the agriculture, health, and education departments. These assessed the government organisation approaches to communication as well as organisation policies and strategies. The objective of one-on-one interviews was to match the practices and procedures of communication with their impact on the public. Individual semi-structured interviews facilitate collecting detailed information (Cresswell, 2003) and therefore were a suitable choice because the researcher has direct control over the data collected. Besides, the researcher is available to clarify unclear terms to the respondents or answer any of their questions (Currie, 2005). According to Grix, (2010) the researcher can also ask interviewees further questions so that they clarify unclear explanations. All these helped get much data from government executives and officials who are the senders of information, a crucial element of the communication process.

The study obtained content for content analysis from all publications with a particular interest in GSRD. The researcher also analysed publications by the departments under investigation from the 31st of July 2018 to the 31st of July 2019. The information was collected by the researcher and systematically analysed by making use of a coding system or labels, as suggested by Hodder (1994).

1.9.3 Data analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaire completed by the FGDs participants were analysed automatically by an inbuilt system on 'Google forms.' The researcher uploaded the survey on google forms, an invaluable tool for collecting data. Descriptive statistics, which summarise data providing measurements in the form of percentages, averages, means, and modes, were

immediately generated. The generated statistics allowed the researcher to make conclusions and inferences from the data.

Qualitative data from FGDs and interviews with government officials were content analysed using the reflexive thematic analysis. The approach is ideal for interviews or FGDs to understand people's opinions, knowledge, and experiences (Clarke and Braun, 2006). Reflexive thematic analysis was suitable in this study because it identifies themes through analysing patterns. The process is widely applicable when addressing people's experiences, ideas and perceptions, especially concerning perceptions on government communication for rural development, which was essential in this research. The analysis followed stages starting with data familiarisation, data coding, delineation of emergent concepts, conceptual coding, refinement of conceptual coding schemes, clustering of concepts, identifying core categories and ended with revision.

The study also employed a content analysis approach that analysed media publications by government departments and analysed the data by assigning codes. Content analysis allows the researcher to categorise data (text, audio or videos) and develop themes and concepts to explain phenomena.

1.11 Delimitations

This research set out to investigate the government departments communication approaches in GSRD. The researcher chose GSRD because it is one of the poorest districts in Zimbabwe. It is afflicted with underdevelopment and associated challenges. The study selected departments of health, education and agriculture because they deal with development challenges in the district daily. As a communication process focused study, the government officials representing the selected government departments, different forms of communication systems, messages, and the public became the study focus. The study did not go beyond the boundaries of GSRD. All development related messages communicated by the government departments in GSRD or concerned with the district were part of the study.

1.12 Limitations

The study encountered an array of challenges, and the researcher had to contend with these. The following are the limitations of this study:

- **Financial constraints**

This study was self-financed and had budgetary constraints. The researcher had to set aside resources from a constrained budget to fund the research in terms of transport, money for data and mobile phone credits to communicate with the research participants, as well as other sundry requirements. The researcher had to do all this in a country facing severe economic challenges, which had weighing implications on the research.

- **Bureaucracies**

Another limiting factor was dealing with bureaucracies. In the research of this magnitude and its focus, dealing with government officials was inevitable. However, this was not an easy endeavour since most requests to get approvals and authorisations to research within the different government departments took too long to be processed and granted. Some government officials were sceptical of the intentions of the research and were not willing to participate in the study.

- **Political tensions**

The timing of the research was problematic as the country was fresh from the disputed 2018 national elections. As a result, most people were not willing to participate and openly express themselves. Soon after the 2018 elections, the researcher attempted to test the research instruments, but this was unsuccessful because the political atmosphere was tense. The researcher suspended the research to allow the environment to get back to normal.

- **Data collection**

Conducting FGDs is usually a challenging endeavour. People are not typically available simultaneously, and most people are preoccupied with other different chores at home. The challenges associated with organising people to get together for FGDs delayed and disrupted the research process.

- **Erratic power supply**

The electrical power supply was a considerable limitation in this study. The country had erratic power supplies. As a result, at most times, interviews had to be rescheduled and even conducted late at night when electricity was available. It was also challenging to prepare for FGDs. These had to be recorded by electronic devices which needed to be power charged. Much time was also lost trying to contact interviewees whose mobile phones would be unreachable as they would be off

because of the lack of electricity to charge them. It, therefore, meant rearranging FGDs, cancelling and rescheduling appointments for FGDs and interviews.

1.13 Ethical considerations

Ethics in research is one of the essential aspects not to be overlooked or underestimated. Although social research is not like pure scientific experiments with a high potential of harming the subjects physically, social research can psychologically affect study subjects. However, the researcher cannot overrule the possibility of physical harm. Therefore, the researcher put all measures possible to avoid causing any physical, emotional or psychological harm to the participants as recommended by Tayie, (2005). Most academic institutions ensure that there is strict adherence to ethical rules. At UNISA, the Communication Science Ethics Review Committee scrutinised the research and granted the researcher approval to go ahead with his research (See Appendix H). The researcher followed the ethical guidelines of the University of South Africa (UNISA) in conducting this research. The study observed three main principles of analysis: informed consent, confidentiality, and avoiding harm and doing good (Israel & Hay, 2006). Informed consent entails avoiding tricking people into participating without entirely informing them about the research, its aims and purposes. The researcher respected the participants' willingness to participate or not to participate in the study, and a consent form was issued (See Appendix G).

Furthermore, the researcher assured participants of the data's confidentiality and gave and explained the guidelines to the research participants (See Appendix E) who signed the consent forms agreeing to participate in the research. As a cautionary measure, the researcher informed the participants that they could withdraw from the study at any given point if they felt uncomfortable.

1.14 Structure of the thesis

The full thesis comprises eight chapters, and these chapters are as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides the introduction, background and overview of the research.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework and discusses the relevant theories informing this study.

Chapter 3: Government communication and communication in government

Chapter 3 is the first literature chapter, and it deals with the communication process within government departments. It discusses the different communication fields and illuminates different communication purposes within government departments, and further exhibits the importance of communication in rural development.

Chapter 4: Communication in Zimbabwe and rural development communication in Gokwe South District

Chapter 4 is the second literature chapter in this thesis which discusses communication with a particular focus on Zimbabwe as well as Gokwe South Rural District (GSRD). It explores the communication context, explaining its bearing on rural development.

Chapter 5: Development communication in government institutions (agriculture, health and education)

Chapter 5 is the third literature chapter and discusses development communication as it applies to the selected government departments in GSRD.

Chapter 6: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter presents the research design and methodology employed in this research. It offers a detailed account of the utilised research design, the scope of the study, population and sampling methods, and data analysis methods.

Chapter 7: Findings and discussions

This chapter presents the research findings, the study results and provides an analysis of the findings.

Chapter 8: Framework, recommendations, and conclusions

Chapter 8 sums up the thesis with a presentation and discussion of the developed framework. It further provides recommendations for future studies and concludes the research.

1.15 Conclusion

Chapter 1 provided the study and contextual background and the overview of this research which investigates the role of government communication in rural development. The chapter opened with an introduction as well as the background and contextual background to contextualise the research. The section which followed was a presentation of the problem

statement, research objectives, and the research questions which this research sought to address to chart the way forward. It further provided operational definitions for key concepts. The chapter briefly discussed the research methodology, followed by presentations of the delimitations and limitations and the ethical considerations in the study. The final section of the chapter outlined the thesis structure. The submitted information provides a solid base and foundation on which to lay this research. The upcoming chapter presents the study's theoretical framework by discussing two key theories (participatory communication and decoloniality paradigms) related to government communication and rural development. From this discussion, the researcher developed the research's theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

The study's main objective is to explore government communication as a development tool in Gokwe South Rural District (GSRD), evaluating its role and establishing the extent to which government communication encourages public participation. There is an adequate emphasis that development communication revolves around the application of communication for purposes of social change (FAO, 2010). When communication is intended for social transformation, either by government departments or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), it transcends, without excluding information dissemination and other outreach activities. This is done to include impactful participants' mobilisation, participation and empowerment, and other key aspects of decoloniality (capabilities, empowerment, epistemic freedom, indigenous knowledge, and social justice). Without disregarding the strides made in development communication, which account for access to invaluable information through various forms of communication that, despite their vitality, transformation for rural communities in rural development is yet to be seen. Key aspects explaining why the recipients of the information are yet to live in developed societies as advocated by Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), whose 2030 target is fast approaching is a contentious matter needing address.

Consequently, as traditionally advocated, development is explored in terms of its relevance and applicability and concern for beneficiaries of development. The above standpoint raises questions on whether development should be defined by those creating development projects (experts) and communicating them to the rural people or the people themselves. The turn of the 20th and the 21st century has seen another trajectory placing the recipients of development at the centre of development, entailing the importance of their participation in development initiatives and authoring development themselves. Development communication experts in NGOs and government departments should pay attention to the beneficiaries of development's needs and valuable input in the development equation. On these bases, the researcher theoretically frames this thesis using participatory development communication and the emerging decoloniality paradigms. This chapter explores the theories mentioned above, discussing their pertinence to this present study. It concludes by elaborating how they relate and complement each other in guiding the study towards attaining its objectives.

2.2 Participatory communication and decoloniality paradigm

This study refers to the participatory development communication and decoloniality paradigms (Figure 2.2). Following the dependency paradigm as illustrated by the progression of development communication theories in figure 2.2, in which communication was largely one-directional (top-down) was the participatory communication paradigm also referred to as the multiplicity paradigm (Servaes, 1996, Huesca, 2000). The multiplicity paradigm was more inclined towards people's participation and based on cultural realities than the modernisation and the dependency paradigms that were more inclined towards the political and economic issues (Mefalopulos, 2008). Attributes of the participatory development communication and decoloniality paradigms are similar. They both advocate for participation, two-way communication and self-reliance in development initiatives. The participatory paradigm became significant as it gained recognition worldwide and in the development communication field from the 1970s. In the participatory communication paradigm, communication was a central aspect based on a two-way communication model. The participatory development paradigm allows for people's interaction and is sensitive to subtle cultural issues. Over the past few decades, participatory communication has gained popularity amongst development communication researchers (Kothari, 2001, Mefalopulos, 2003, Servaes & Malikhao, 2005). Its principles of grassroots participation and two-way communication make it ideal in rural development as development is by the people for the people. Participatory communication is gaining ground because it pays attention to the message, message recipients (public), and communication channels.

Communication functions by government institutions, especially those aimed at rural development, can be successful if they increasingly allow for participation. The extension approach should also incorporate the principles of participatory development communication to bring about meaningful development in rural areas. Although its dialogic principles, two-way symmetrical communication should be applied in government communication to establish trust between the people in the rural areas and government institutions. This study entrenched in development communication is based on the participatory communication paradigm (multiplicity paradigms). It stresses human behavioural change in agriculture, health, and education as one of the missing links for development to be easily attainable.

Furthermore, the human factor is crucial, as well as the present and historical circumstances. In this regard, the effects of colonialism become central and redressing them can be helpful in improving participation and, in turn, bring about rural development. Total emancipation of all

previously colonised states is a possible solution to the development question. Colonialism has ended in the form of physical, political domination of other states by other states, but the system has taken another form through coloniality. Coloniality entails that the previously dominated countries continue being dominated economically, looking up to the west for development and other informational solutions (Quijano, 2007). Based on the above-stated arguments, proponents of decoloniality suggest that the developing world should be allowed to devise its mechanisms of dealing with their challenges. Developing nations should do this without external influences that continue to hold the reigns of progress through neo-colonialism and other political influences (Ndlovu & Makoni, 2014; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). The decolonial paradigm, just like the participatory paradigm, propounds an alternative solution to the development question within the involvement and empowerment of the public framework. The decolonial paradigm emerges as a possible way forward in dealing with the development issue taking cognisance of the impact developed countries have had on the developing ones. The decolonial paradigm counteracts the notion that development solutions are Eurocentric and accept the indigenous solutions to address the development in third world countries.

Quijano (2007) and Mignolo (2011) discuss the decolonial paradigm as a solution in Latin America. Dastile (2015) and Ndlovu-Gatheni (2013) raise the same notion in Southern Africa. The common argument from proponents of decoloniality is that they acknowledge the past injustices and seek to dislodge the idea that western knowledge is superior. In this manner, they allow the recipients of development to be at the forefront (Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2011; Dastile, 2015; Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2013). Figure 2.1 below illustrates the paradigms of development as they progressed over the years. The figure lands on the most recent paradigms on the timeline. While the theories are the most recent, their potential to address the development communication question is immense; hence, they constitute the theoretical framework of this study. The upcoming sections shall present the two paradigms in detail and elaborate on their relevance to this study.

Progression of paradigms of development communication

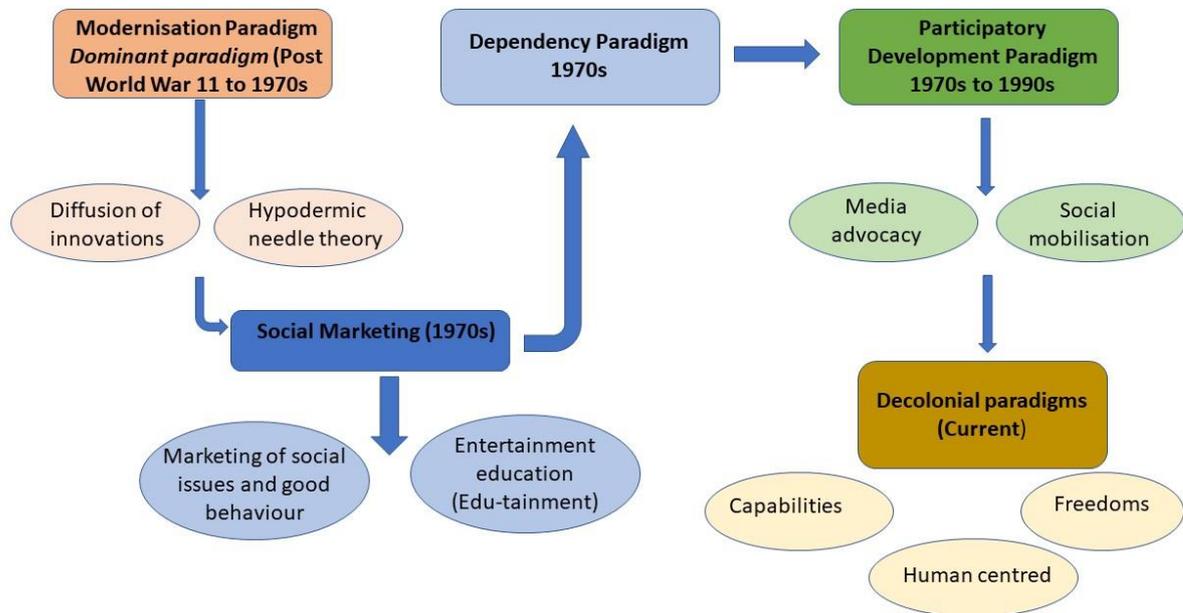


Figure 2:1 The chronological progression of development communication paradigms (Adapted from Waisbord, 2001 and Melkote, 2003)

Considering that this study explored all theories that sought to address rural development communication, the above diagram expands the paradigms by Waisbord, (2001) and Melkote, (2003) with the current decolonial paradigm added. The expansion includes the value of capabilities, freedoms, and the focus on the recipients of development as crucial in the efficacy of the role of government communication in rural development.

2.3 Discussion of the participatory communication paradigm

One of the leading theories guiding this research is the participatory communication theory which emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. According to Moemeka, (1999), development is attainable if it is “by the people, not for the people”. The people who are the recipients of the development must participate during the planning, dissemination, execution, and evaluation of the development programmes. Most development communication scholars agree on the essence of participation in meaningful development communication and sustainable development (Manyozo, 2012; Servaes, 2016; Mody 2003; Tacchi & Lennie, 2013; Moemeka, 1999; Melkote & Steeves, 2015). Vehemently opposing its predecessor models of

modernisation /dominant and the dependency paradigms, the participatory communication paradigm did not only stand in stark contrast with the premises of communication that were inherent in the former paradigms but suggested promising vistas based on egalitarian principles (Huesca, 2008). The participatory communication paradigm further advocated for equity and empowerment of the participants in development programmes. The ideal participation is the one that can occur when the people are empowered by being given the right information, through the proper channels, in a manner which they can understand and be allowed to access channels of communication without any difficulty.

The participatory communication paradigm sought to address the shortfalls of the earlier theories, which included insensitivity to culture and the view of development in economic terms. The participatory communication paradigm redefined development as not only limited to economic indices but in much more human terms. Also, failure to reach the necessary common ground in third world countries results from conflicts between traditions, behaviours, and beliefs in modern development projects, which meant a failure of these projects. Tenets of the participatory communication paradigm also drew from Paulo Freire's (1970) 'dialogical pedagogy', which meant the involvement of the people in the dialogue. According to Freire, development problems were 'communication, not information as assumed by earlier development theories. The manner of communication that was foreign to the people in developing countries alienated people from development; hence participatory communication sought to redress the problems regarding exclusion. Another essential principle of participatory theory entails sensitivity to culture, and the theory advocates for the use of traditional forms of communication. The participatory communication paradigm parameters ensure that the grassroots people develop messages that appeal to the people, and the medium used can be accessed by people at the grassroots.

Despite the participatory communication paradigm addressing the preceding theories' shortfalls, some critics identified some deficits in the participatory theories (Arnstein, 1969; Rahnema, 2007; Arboleda, 2014). They argue that the participatory models were more theoretical and lacked in terms of measures for application. Arboleda (2014) identifies the recurring themes in the criticism of participation. These include that participation is an undemocratic process, tokenistic and placatory as well as manipulative. He argues that participation is rhetorical and innocuous and often restricted to higher members of social groups. Another shortcoming of the participatory communication paradigm, which warrants its criticism, is that it disregards the community's unwillingness to be involved and to

participate in development projects. The participatory theory gave the impression that people are always available and ready for development programmes, which is not the reality on the ground. Participatory models require a lengthy process that consumes much more time. This might not be ideal when the results are urgent, like the outbreak of diseases and hunger issues. The participatory theory suggests participation where people should be involved in all stages of development projects as alluded to by Bessette (2004). However, the reality on the ground is aberrant from the ideal form of participation.

In most cases, development projects are developed elsewhere and brought to the communities for execution. The participatory theory also disregards the influence of mass media in terms of its capacity to reach widely dispersed audiences in a short space of time, favouring traditional and interpersonal forms of communication that are slower. Another weakness of the theory is that people are not given the free will to choose to participate but are introduced to pre-conceived projects and made to adopt and execute them as sources of labour, posing a danger of subjugation.

However, the shortcomings mentioned above have been accepted as genuine and causes of concern. Measures have been suggested to ensure effective and genuine participation and, ultimately the success of development projects (White, 1994). These include negotiation with communities; although time-consuming, the investment is worthwhile as people will effectively back the projects and own them after commencement. Integrating mass media and ICTs with traditional communication can be done to realise their combined strengths. Moreso, selecting the most appropriate media channel depends on the message, context and accessibility by the audience. Consulting with the people on the grassroots for the best media to use remains one of the attributes of the participatory theory. When determining the choice of projects to embark on, one must consider their length and need for sustenance. Melkote (2003) suggests Participatory Action Research (PAR), which evaluates the level of participation and encourages collaboration. It emerges that for people to participate in the whole process of development projects effectively, they should be empowered (Melkote, 2003). Empowerment entails equal treatment and involvement of all the parties involved, thereby ensuring mutual benefit. Such involvement is possible through two-way symmetrical communication, the same view echoed by Grunig in his two-way symmetrical communication model (Grunig, 1989). The measures above indicate the flexibility of participatory theories and the determination and commitment to ensure the success of development projects and ultimately positively impacts rural development.

2.3.1 Participation in development communication

The concept of participation in development has gained much recognition as ideal in sustainable development (Swanepoel & De Beer, 1994, Servaes, 2008; Servaes 1995; Mody, 1991; Melkote & Steeves, 2015; FAO, 1994). If people participate in the whole process of development communication, development programmes have a significant likelihood of being successful. First, people's awareness of their needs (Servaes, 2003) and consciousness of the potential social and cultural impacts of development programmes on their lives are the basis of the success of development programmes. Hence, their involvement avoids contradictions and misunderstandings. Second, by involving people in the development of their projects, they are likely to actively participate in their implementation because they will be having a sense of ownership. Third, the involvement in the communication of development programmes by the people implies that they believe and accept development messages as they will have been constructed and disseminated in a culturally and socially subtle manner. Culturally sensitive messages can influence behavioural changes in sensitive matters like HIV/Aids in health communication and girl child education and adult literacy in education communication. Participation is, therefore, a broad aspect that involves participation in the development of projects and the communication of development-related messages.

For participation to be effective, it should not be selectively applied when it suits the development planning agents. However, it should be broadly applied and incorporated into the whole development programme planning spectrum. Failure to do this will be mere involvement which most development agents have recorded as participation (De Beer & Swanepoel, 1998). In Bessette's (2004) view, there must be a dialogue among the people and development communication agents, which helps them reach common ground regarding development programmes. There is a notable tendency by development agents that they plan their projects and impose them on the public whom they will expect to provide a workforce for these projects (Melkote & Steeves, 2015). These have often failed when it comes to sustainable societal change, and as a result, Melkote & Steeves (2015) advocate for genuine participation from the grassroots. A project of adult literacy launched as a campaign by the Zimbabwean government soon after independence resulted in massive dropouts and registered lack of participation from the people (Grainger, 1987). The failure of this project could have been because the people were not involved in the planning process to determine

their needs and the underlying cultural and societal factors that could inhibit the success of the campaign.

As a result of the extensive emphasis on participation in development, participation has widely been established and promoted by development communication scholars and change agencies. Government communication should operationalise involvement at the rural community level. Participatory development communication is a carefully planned approach that involves a productive dialogue between the government development agencies and the public. Bessette, (2004) introduced a typical participatory development communication model (Figure 2.2). The process effectively entails planning, communication, implementation, and the evaluation stages as simplified and synthesised by Cadiz, 2005 (Figure 2.3).



Figure 0:2 Participatory Development communication Model, by Bessette 2004

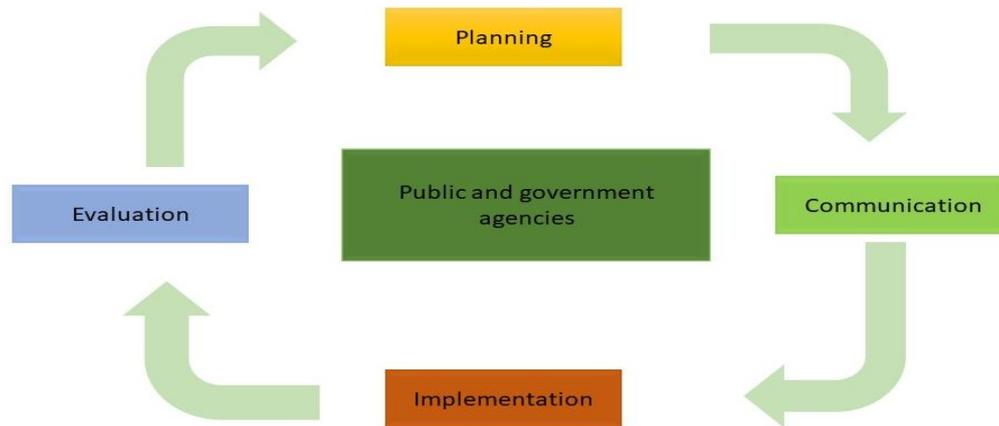


Figure 0:3 Synthesised participatory development communication process adapted from Cadiz, 2005

Planning: The planning stage involves carrying out the needs analysis and coming up with specific, purposeful goals within a specified period. The first step is establishing a relationship with the community and creating an excellent platform for them to stipulate their own needs and how they think they can achieve those needs. The role of development agencies is to act as facilitators, allowing the people to identify their needs, set out goals, and measure how to achieve them.

Communication: The next stage is communication, and it stipulates the need to identify the communication tools and channels to be used. The people must participate in determining the channels to use, assign roles and even get involved in the designing and production of the communication content. The identified channels should be accessible, usable and relevant for the public (Servaes & Malikhao, 2008). Government agencies' responsibility is to ensure adequate training and assist in ensuring that people can access the information. Telecentres are one way of accessing information sent via modern technologies. The establishment of bulletin boards also provides access to news and posters. Crucially, the relevance of information content can be guaranteed by involving people in producing the communication content. It becomes imperative to avoid information redundancy and overload and promotes sharing of timely messages.

Implementation: During the implementation stage, communication remains crucial because there should be an ongoing dialogue between the development agencies and the people. Participants can identify irregularities or problems and rectify them or make the necessary

adjustments. Some programmes can be short, some long term, while others are continuous or ongoing.

Evaluation: This stage involves the assessment of achievement and shortfalls in development programmes. The evaluation stage may have different purposes. It can be an evaluation for purposes of concluding short term programmes or evaluation for developmental and identifying loopholes and weakness on continuous programmes. However, evaluation in all forms assists in ensuring that the established development becomes sustainable. The participation of the people during programme evaluation remains crucial, just like in all other stages. Two-way symmetrical communication should continue between the government development agencies and the public. Public participation in evaluation allows the people to give their feedback and chart the way forward regarding the next project or the next stages of the development projects. The assessment of communication approaches and their impact on success or failure is essential during the evaluation stage. This process can determine the overall success of the project.

The normative media theories establish that communication should be for the greater good, and the development communication theory reinforces the assertion with much emphasis on social change. However, the participatory development communication theories argue that the people at the grassroots level should equally participate in the development programmes and the associated communication throughout the development programmes' lifespan and beyond for sustainable development. Effective participation condemns pseudo participation and advocates for genuine participation of all the people, regardless of their social status. By and large, Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed argues that the previously oppressed people must free themselves and advocate for their equal treatment in the process of development (Freire; 1970; 2005). The same sentiments are shared by Bordenave (1994), who firmly believes that the freedom of the oppressed and previously disenfranchised are primarily essential in participatory development programmes and communication.

Participation, despite its gratification, has its downsides, and these include:

- Participation is too procedural and takes a long time to be instituted, which might be dangerous when urgent responses are required, like in emergencies and crises, e.g. disease outbreaks.
- In undemocratic societies where people feel that they are not at liberty to be involved in development programmes by the government, the form of participation might be

involuntary participation which is not the ideal participation that can lead to sustainable development.

- It is usually challenging to get people involved in development programmes as people are primarily disinterested and lack alacrity. People might not be willing to leave their day-to-day jobs, chores and responsibilities and might be looking at the immediate benefits, which may even be money for them to participate.
- The participatory theory tends to discredit the potential of modern media in development programmes while ascribing too much potential to indigenous forms of communication in development approaches.

The upcoming section discusses the critical aspects of the ideological forms of participation crucial for rural development and development communication for social transformation.

2.3.2 Critical aspects of participation in development communication

Participation is a complex phenomenon, and White, (1994) has described it as elusive, and the reason is that different people and groups interpret and apply it differently. However, from a myriad of definitions of participation and its contextual applications, one can deduce some critical working concepts and approaches to participation. The proponents of participation widely accept the idea of involvement as capable of making development communication effective. They view participation not just as mere involvement but as empowerment and capacitation and freedom and equity. The next section explores the importance of behavioural factors in the development and how participation in development communication can help attain behavioural change.

2.3.3 The essence of focus on human behavioural factors

Childers, (1976) suggested a shift from the focus of development communication on economic factors to human behavioural factors in the construction of development projects and the identification of development purposes. The scholar, as mentioned above's proposition has remained vital to date such that scholars like Rico, (2008) have incorporated the idea in health communication of issues related to HIV/ Aids. The significance of Childers' (1976) proposition keeps emerging in participatory development communication proponents who argue that meaningful development is by the people and not for the people. This stance essentially means that development projects must not be tailored for the people but by the people themselves to cater to their needs. Primarily, communication comes in to share information with the people, advocate for behavioural change, gather information about

what the people need and rally them to participate fully in development programmes. Most of the development issues and their progress are mainly behavioural, such that a change of behaviours is a panacea to such problems.

In health, a change in people's sexual behaviours can resolve the challenge of HIV/Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases. Communication without the involvement of the people can serve to inform the people about the dangers and consequences of these diseases but cannot influence people to change their behaviours. With this in consideration, Rico (2008) suggested the involvement of the people in the communication process and the use of indigenous communication systems that are sensitive to cultural factors. The understanding is that some cultural factors are possible inhibiting factors in addressing some health-related challenges. A culturally sensitive communication approach is much more suitable for solving the problem. Some sensitive issues that behavioural change can best address are family planning. In education, aspects of girl child education and adult literacy are also behavioural issues that are culturally sensitive. People can adopt innovative and relevant agricultural methods if people are willing to change traditional behaviours. Communication approaches involving the people and encouraging them to participate from the grassroots can help attain behavioural change and ultimately the desired development.

2.3.4 Participation as more than mere involvement

As the need for participatory approaches grew, and international organisations emphasised participation, some agencies working with the people began to involve people, but the involvement was limited. Development agencies would make decisions and all essential planning then invite people to participate during the implementation stage. This form of participation is limited and only suits the interests of the agencies, not the people who are the intended beneficiaries. The people's participation is only as a source of labour or for the reports to reflect that people participated (Arnstein, 1969). This weak form of involvement does not address the needs of the people, and development programmes will not sustain themselves after the agencies leave (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2000). Arboleda, (2014) postulates that participation is mere tokenistic without the full involvement of the people.

2.3.5 Participation as empowerment and capacitation

Participation should go beyond the mere involvement of the people to the extent of empowering people and capacitating them to run and continue development programmes on their own. Empowered people make decisions about the nature of development programmes

they need based on their needs from conception through implementation and evaluation. After the officials leave communities, this approach can institute sustainable development programmes and are capable of impacting the livelihood of the people. Communication is central to empowerment and capacity building (Sen, 2001). The capacity building involved equipping the people with the necessary skills, tools and other resources to be competent in any responsibility (Potter & Brough, 2004). It can ensure that people are given adequate information and can share their information through various channels whenever they want to, as well as send feedback at any given time. The locals can institute development programmes with government officials or development agencies acting as facilitators. Therefore, capacity building or enhancing human capabilities have an interrelationship with rural development. The capacitated public is capable of instituting and tackling rural development on their own. In other words, capability building is related to empowerment hence a crucial aspect of rural development.

2.3.6 Participation as freedom and equity

The whole essence of participation is understanding that people should be free and treated equally, regardless of their social, economic and financial status and even political affiliation. People should enjoy the freedom of accessing information at any given time and communicating when they want to.

The participatory communication paradigms frame several previous studies. The importance of participatory approaches in influencing change was also demonstrated in a paper by Patt, Soares & Gwata (2005). In the study, farmers in Zimbabwe who reported adapting their farming methods to seasonal climate forecasts significantly increased their harvests over baseline amounts, according to a controlled study (Patt, Suarez and Gwata, 2005). The same study also discovered that farmers who attended a brief workshop and heard more about the forecasts were also substantially more likely to use them than farmers who learnt about the predictions through non-participatory networks. This study demonstrates the significance of participation in farming in different villages of Zimbabwe as those who participated used and applied the provided seasonal forecasts without difficulties in comprehending and applying the information. As a result, in framing this analysis, a participatory creation communication model becomes aptly important. This research will look at weather forecasts in farming and other agricultural issues and how government communication uses participatory methods in rural development.

Mefalopulos (2003) references the participatory communication theories in a dissertation, comparing its theoretical conception in literature and practical application in a development project. He concludes that participatory communication is an approach capable of promoting people's involvement in decision-making. It is a vital component of democracy as enshrined in the international development vision. Mefalopulos (2003) study's theoretical framing based on a participatory approach coupled with its focus on participation within the international organisation FAO project life cycle in Zimbabwe makes it an invaluable resource to this current study. However, the study was not based on government departments as this research endeavours to explore. The importance of participation was also highlighted in another study by Kesby (2000) as crucial in promoting communication on HIV and other health-related matters, and participatory theories have emerged through the participatory extension approach (PEA) (Kesby, 2000). Haggmann *et al.*, (1998) developed a booklet for workers in Zimbabwe's agriculture extension department that emphasized social mobilization through joint insider-outsider situation studies, community-level action planning, operation execution and farmer discovery, and monitoring and evaluation through sharing experiences and ideas. This study placed a strong focus on participatory extension, which represents an understanding of the value of involvement in rural development (Haggmann *et al.*, 1998). Makamba *et al.* conducted another study that is theoretically applicable to the participatory development communication paradigm (2019). This study is interesting as it focused on the Ministry of Health within Masvingo province of Zimbabwe and involved public participation in video production through participatory video projects in rural districts of Masvingo (Makamba *et al.*, 2019).

The above-discussed studies emphasise the importance of participatory communication approaches however another study focusing only on an NGO (Organisation for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara) Ali, (2017) identifies the misconception of participation. Ali (2017) finds out that participation is often perceived as actively contributing labour and materials. Such an act of contributing labour in materials directly contravenes the ideal form of participation where the public is fully empowered. This is one typical evidence that development communication, be it governments, NGOs or recipients of development, misinterpret the ideal form of participation. Ali concludes his study by observing that the development communication element was missing in promoting full participation. It, therefore, becomes imperative for this study to be framed by the participatory communication

paradigms as Ali affirms that the perceptions and practice of participation should be fully aligned with participatory development communication.

Despite the strengths of participation alluded to and presented above, Kesby, (2003) raises some concerns of participation in development issues, particularly health. These include that participation's notion of inclusivity can exclude and delegitimise those who refuse to participate. The second reservation of the emphasis on participation is the fear of creating compliant subjects leading to subjugation. Another concern is that participation is more about talking instead of doing things. (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). However, despite the shortfall of the participatory development communication paradigm, it remains one of the most powerful frames with potential and ensures government communication rural development. As the study attempts to delve deeper into the rural public, the decolonial paradigm that offers insight into the rural public regarding them as valuable resources is another equally important paradigm in this study. The above section has elaborated on the role of participatory theory in rural development, pointing out its strengths as well as its shortcomings. The next sections discuss the decoloniality paradigm as a theoretical framework in this research.

2.4 Decoloniality paradigm in development communication

In the African context, participation and decoloniality are in tandem. For full and genuine participation to be realised, fundamentals consistent with decoloniality should be in place. These include capabilities, empowerment, epistemic freedom, indigenous knowledge and social equity. Also, merely expunging colonialism from the African people is inadequate to warrant development among the previously disenfranchised societies. Government development communication should aim to obliterate the colonial mindset of the African people (decoloniality of the mind) Thiong'o, 1986). The modernisation and dependency theories reveal how developed nations contributed to the underdevelopment of Africa. Researchers promote participatory theories as a possible panacea, and further incorporation of the right fundamentals enshrined within decoloniality will yield the desired level of participation. As a result of coloniality and its vestiges, the west has taught Africans to regard everything African as bad and undesirable. In addition, there is a notable reincarnation of Fanon and Markmann's black man's struggles to deal with development issues (Fanon & Markmann, 1986). As explained through the Eurocentric lens, development can be addressed using western economic systems, communicated through the western forms of media using the language of the west. This approach inarguably affects the esteem of indigenous people,

further disenfranchising and disempowering them. Years after the official abolishment of colonialism, coloniality continues to survive with a significant impact in addressing the rural development question. However, decoloniality seeks to change the narrative, guiding people to seek solutions to their problems within their communities, believing in themselves and relying on the indigenous forms of communication for a broader hands-on approach to dealing with development matters.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) relates the failure of many development efforts to a disregard of the African colonial history, indigenous culture and the quest towards universality. Humanitarian organisations, international bodies and governments still grapple with development issues which pose a significant call to approach development matters from a different perspective. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) suggests decoloniality as an alternative that could lead Africa on a development course. While the era of colonialism has ended, and almost all countries are free from the colonial masters, the task of total emancipation is still incomplete. It will only be complete when Africa starts defining its development as opposed to the Eurocentric or western view of progress.

While most Afrocentric development proponents and radical Afrocentric politicians seem to be grounded on the perspective that Africa does not need Eurocentric ideas, this is somewhat catastrophic and rather simplistic. However, Africa should welcome Eurocentric ideas if they can put them on the pathway to development in the global sense. What seems to be missing is the opinion that no one should impose western beliefs of development on Africans. Instead, Africans should play an active role in charting their progress.

According to Crewe & Harrison (1998), culture impedes development. This notion is an imperialist and evolutionist view which scholars have since expunged (Sen, 2001; Sen, 2005; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Sen (2001) considers human freedom as the extension of development, the same view within the post-colonial and critical theories whose many aspects are relevant. The people should be at the centre of development. On these bases, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), argues for decoloniality, whereby people define development from an Afrocentric view, separate from the Eurocentric perspective. The Eurocentric view reifies Africans as objects and passive victims who should rely on the all-knowing West to solve their problems.

The preceding section discussed the importance of development recipients in terms of their culture and context in the process of theorising and implementing development approaches.

The present study resolves to implement grassroots approaches to realise meaningful development, as Willis (2005) suggested. This study is also theoretically backed by the decoloniality paradigm where communication by development agents facilitates the engagement of the people and their empowerment at the grassroots level and unlocks their capabilities and tapping into their indigenous knowledge.

2.4.1 Capability approaches to development in the decolonial perspective.

The capability approach is another approach for development which, according to Heeks (2009), is a crucial avenue to poverty alleviation. Developed by Sen, (2001), the capability approach revolves around the people's development as the freedom and capability to act effectively. The approach hinges on the premise that people cannot wholly rely on development agencies or the government to sustain their livelihoods hence the need for capacity building. Thus, leveraging from what people are capable of doing and have the potential of being. Capability is defined by the World Bank (2018) as the practices, institutions, and people's abilities to achieve development goals. Included in these abilities are the skills, procedures and systems in place for development. In this regard, communication should serve as a vehicle for capacity building within rural areas. Capability is also linked with sustainability, whereby the people can implement development projects on their own. Communication should link people with all the development projects related information which is adequate to enable people to run their development projects.

Government communication draws from the capability approach, and there is a symbiotic relationship between the two, particularly when it comes to addressing rural development. For a society to develop, they do not just need information. Change agencies should package information in a way that makes the people capable of implementing development ideas or projects by themselves (Sen, 2001). Of most importance is their ability to use the media themselves, especially the modern forms of communication and information and communication technology (ICTs), media literacy, and ICT literacy. Another critical angle to which the capability approach talks to that is key to development is the people's freedom which also concurs with the decoloniality perspective. Gender is also a pivotal aspect of development, also reflected in the capability approach. While no research links government communication and the capability approach, it was a fundamental frame of reference in Grunfeld's (2011) study as a construct of empowerment and sustainability in the usage of ICTs for development. In the same vein, all other forms of communication are also crucial in

promoting rural development. Hence referring to the capability approach is likely to explore the uncharted area of capabilities in government communication for rural development.

People in third world countries, especially in rural areas, are incapacitated and disempowered to participate in development initiatives fully. Colonialism, like modernisation, did not only dominate people in developing countries but also personalised knowledge and snatched the confidence and resources from the people. This move left the people unable to deal with their development challenges. According to the capability approach, for meaningful development to occur, it is necessary to focus on what people can do and have the potential to be (Heeks, 2009). The approach is considered a viable boulevard to poverty alleviation and, ultimately, development. Within this framework, human capabilities such as literacy as well as the ability to use media, information and communication technologies are vital to unlocking human potential (Sen, 2005). Capability approaches accept that humans should not be at the mercy of development agencies and governments but should be allowed to participate actively in their development, leveraging their potential. This perspective also concurs with the decoloniality notion, which states that development should be on the terms of the people as alluded to by critical and post-colonial theories. Equally important is the capability approach linked to salient matters like gender issues which are crucial in rural development. Societies can realise significant growth if previously disenfranchised groups, particularly women, whose contribution is vital in development initiatives, have a say in development initiatives. The bottom-up pyramid substantiates the same idea and argues against the treatment of people as victims and instead suggests leveraging on their strengths (Pahad, 2006).

The impact of differences between men and women and their contribution to rural development remains a contentious aspect of research. For so long, women have been discriminated against and kept on the periphery when it comes to development issues compared to men, a perspective that is arbitrary as they can equally contribute to development. Cultural aspects remained a contributing factor to side-lining women, a similar observation made by Braitenbach, (2013) when he studied the usage of Telecentres in Southern Africa. In this present study focusing on the role of government communication for rural development, the role of communication towards gender equality in terms of involvement and empowerment should be part of the study. While rural development is a broad aspect which in this study is explored from the communication by three different

government institutions, focusing on gender alone would be illogical, the same way it would be to negate the aspect.

2.4.2 Empowerment in development communication

Empowerment of the people is essential in development communication. An empowered community is likely to be active participants in development programmes (Cadiz, 2005; Grunfeld, 2011). Cohen, (2006) suggests capacitating people so that they take charge of their development programmes. Capacitating people can happen through adequate information and regarding each other as equals, and having trust, as suggested by Paulo Freire in his dialogue model. People should be empowered to communicate through the ability to use communication channels to broadcast or receive messages. Empowering people can happen through training and the provision of facilities. According to components of empowerment include training in communication, getting adequate information through a relevant channel, messages tailored explicitly for the people and use of appropriate technologies, among others.

Creating a platform for the people to take charge of their development through equal distribution of resources like land as well as capital and education within the parameters of political and social equality amounts to empowerment (De Beer & Swanepoel, 1998). Empowerment can yield tremendous benefits in development by promoting independent decision-making and confidence amongst the public. Fear of intimidation based on political grounds is one factor that disempowers people in terms of participation; hence, eliminating all forms of intimidation in society can yield a community willing to participate in development initiatives.

Basic education and adult literacy also enable people to access and decode information from all channels, leading to an empowered community that is also beneficial to development projects. Challenges of people in societies who cannot read and understand have been notable in immunisation projects where there has been resistance to immunisation because people were failing to understand the essence of being immunised when they were not feeling sick. The above is an example showing the link between empowerment and development initiatives. On these bases, Melkote & Steeves (2015) argue that there is a need to do away with social, political and economic inequalities to promote the full participation of the people in development programmes at the grassroots.

Melkote & Steeves, (2015) also advocate for equality of all social classes, minority groups and the previously disenfranchised groups in societies like women, the disabled and even the

poor. Pahad, (1998) echoed the same sentiments when he spoke about giving a voice to the voiceless as key to development. Makumbe, (1996) also argued that there should be an equal distribution of resources for participation to happen. Access to resources is another form of empowering people to participate, and one essential resource is information that should be available for people whenever they need it. The purging of social prejudices ensures that all classes and groups bring their valuable contributions to development initiatives. Through their involvement, the people can effect and sustain development.

2.4.3 Epistemic freedom

Since the era of domination, the Eurocentric perspective considered Africans as lacking in knowledge. The African values and knowledge were, therefore, dominated by the west. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018), argues for ‘epistemic freedom’ in the academic sphere, which transcends rural development. People in the developing world should be allowed space to think about solutions to their problems. Granted the opportunity, Africans can come up with modalities to address the development question once and for all because Africans had their useful education and knowledge systems before the coming of the Europeans (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Sen, (2001) states that development is an extension of freedom which constitutes the building blocks of development. Another perspective from which the aspect of freedom is denoted is through capabilities, where Grunfeld, (2011) argues that capabilities constitute individuals’ and groups’ freedom to achieve valuable ‘functionings’. Government communication approaches must attempt to reclaim and restore to the African people a central position as independent actors in their development Ndlovu-Gatsheni, (2018). A study by Grunfeld, (2011) conceptualises that there is a virtuous spiral relationship between capabilities, empowerment and sustainability in the use of ICTs for rural development. Framing her study through such a model crucially informs this present study, which not only looks at an ICT project (IREACH) as in Grunfeld’s (2011) study but at government communication in health, agriculture and education in GSRD. Identifiable freedoms relate to access to information, capability to communicate using different forms of media and confidence to engage in development matters fully without any form of fear.

2.4.4 Indigenous knowledge

Eurocentric perspective through colonialism eroded indigenous knowledge and rendered it worthless, useless, and incompatible with the western systems they were introducing. Autochthony knowledge in the third world was developing but lagging in the Eurocentric

view when Western countries were imposing civilisation on the African people (Quijano, 2007). In addition to the psychological effect which this had on the Africans, it made them depend on the west. The Eurocentric episteme was considered superior over indigenous knowledge, a retrogressive notion in contemporary rural development.

2.4.5 Social justice

Before the colonial era, social justice did not significantly impact livelihoods in the third world political and social structures. People's lives were relatively at the same level, following a definite social structure, with local leaders and their subjects living in harmony. When traditional leaders were facing challenges, they consulted their religion for guidance in social, political and economic matters. After colonialism, the levels of social injustice in the developing world increased to alarming levels, pushing people to the periphery in terms of actioning development and participating in the process. People with a significant amount of wealth, access to opportunities, and privileges are empowered and capable of producing the knowledge necessary for their development. Injustices of the past take away these from the people in third world countries. Addressing social injustice can position people for development. Addressing inequalities has tremendous potential for solving the development challenge (Morvadi, 2008).

The aspects discussed are fundamental in rural development, and the decoloniality perspective calls for rural development, and as such, government communication should pay attention to those aspects.

2.5 Decoloniality paradigm retrospect

Key questions arising include what sort of studies frame their studies using the decoloniality paradigm, the fundamental reasons why researchers are applying the decoloniality and under what circumstances. Many studies, particularly in education in Southern Africa, psychology, theological studies and media, are strengthening their reference to the decoloniality paradigm. Crucial areas, chiefly emanant from how the developing world which was previously under colonialism, have been pushed to the periphery, regarded as inferior and subjected to look up to the west for western and Eurocentric solutions to their problems. The stated approaches have not worked but instead resulted in psychological effects on the people. The idea of looking elsewhere for solutions instead of within has proven fatal to development. This section discusses the decolonial paradigm as it frames vital studies related to rural development.

Ndlovu & Makoni (2014) explore the impact of Local Economic Development (LED) strategies in developing local economies in South Africa using the decoloniality paradigm. They put forward the idea that the economic development strategies implemented resulted in divided societies and produced economic inequalities instead of the desired development (Ndlovu & Makoni, 2014). Discussing the matter through the lens of the decoloniality paradigm, the resultant failure of development in South Africa, just like in most third world states, results from epistemological dominants of third world countries on solutions from the west creating a dependency syndrome. However, these solutions lack an appreciation of local realities, making them impractical in third-world countries' communities. A good example is the Bretton Woods economic reforms which failed in Zimbabwe when they were applied through the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in the early 1990s but yielded no result instead exacerbated the economic inequalities. Ndlovu and Makoni (2014), turning to the lens of decoloniality, advance the argument put forward by Mignolo (2000) that development universal, therefore, cannot be dealt with in the same way using Eurocentric ideas. Eurocentric ideas alienate the people who should be at the centre of development, creating passive recipients and sources of labour and prone to exploitation. Mignolo, (2000), Grosfoguel (2007) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012) argue that development needs can be clearly articulated by the people whose development is meant for under what is termed the 'locus of enunciation'. Therefore, local knowledge cannot be undermined at the expense of Eurocentric ideas, thus the essence of decoloniality. It liberates local episteme where development is defined from the third world's social and epistemic positions. The application mentioned above of the decoloniality methodology issues of gender and racial marginalisation can be eliminated promoting full participation in development programmes. Therefore, Ndlovu & Makoni (2014) suggest that development programmes like the local economic development strategies must be place-based, which is equivalent to devolution, creating aspects of situatedness and locus of enunciation. Here, the public can participate in the definition of development in a way that suits their traditions, culture, economic realities, and indigenous knowledge.

The decoloniality paradigm was a frame of reference in many studies in education and higher tertiary institutions in most previously colonised states. Here, the researchers note that study content, manner of delivery, and research practices and methods at universities were highly dictated by the western hegemonic praxis. Many researchers were calling for reforms to give room for local epistemologies. Local epistemologies were deemed appropriate through the

locus of enunciation (Chilisa, 2012, Gracia, 2017). Due to colonialism and which evolved into coloniality as most developing states are experiencing now, Eurocentrism created geo-cultural and socio-cultural classes Quijano, (2000) and connotations of the developed or modernity and underdeveloped, civilised and uncivilised, the right and the wrong, the centre and the periphery. Decoloniality approaches development by disrupting the Eurocentric established structures. In other words, decolonial epistemology aims to abolish the colonial matrix endured by the previously colonised states. In terms of epistemological approaches, the western systems are deemed correct, while the indigenous way of knowing is considered wrong. Epistemological disobedience comes in as a decolonial disruption and places the locus of enunciation among the previously side-lined groups on the periphery. Additionally, the established epistemological methodologies become subjects of contestation (Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2007; Garcia, 2017). Another disruption brought about by decoloniality is an exclusion based on gender, education, tribe, language and political affiliation. The result is increased participation in development initiatives without any form of prejudice.

In a research article published in 2017, Noguchi aptly argues that the United Nations reconsiders the value of informal education in community development in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), position his arguments within the decolonial paradigm (Noguchi, 2017). Informal education is inclusive; it involves the poor, the socially, economically, and politically marginalised members of society and values local and indigenous knowledge. What is learnt and how it is learnt has been determined by the government, institutions and experts who are often aloof from the third world communities or some many years a Eurocentric approach that fails to respond to the local needs. This has trickled to learning about development issues in informal settings leading Noguchi (2017) to turn to decoloniality as a possible path towards attaining the 2030 SDGs. Decoloniality criticises the Eurocentric superiority and all-knowing tendency allowing the public in third world countries to determine their epistemologies and 'pluriversality' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015). The formal education system is designed based on the western epistemologies, which deny the episteme of locus of enunciation from the previously disenfranchised. In this manner, indigenous knowledge, traditions and language are re-centred as a possible panacea to the development questions in a structureless society that is not discriminatory and allows for full participation of all members of society.

The decoloniality paradigm is widely being referenced in the decolonisation of tertiary institutions, particularly in South Africa, where there have been many movements to confront

the Eurocentric epistemologies. The point is that higher education institutions are intended to form knowledge in the form of skills and capabilities for the communities in which they are based, not to acquire skills that can be applied elsewhere (Kessi, 2017). The idea of locus of enunciation is salient in Kessi's article and further highlights epistemic justice which can happen through a better interpretation of community psychologies. The effectiveness of addressing matters of community psychology that address the historical experiences in the form of oppression can delink the traditional mentality instilled by colonialism which saw Africans as incapable of any form of development but an ignorant people that can only provide labour. Ngugi wa Thiongo talks about 'decolonising the mind', which involves undoing all forms of mental oppression and reconstructing a belief that good things can also grow out of African communities as an alternative for Africans to realise development. He suggests that Africans should detach from such an episteme collective self-reliance and community cooperation (Kessi, 2017).

In communication studies, the decolonial paradigm has been referenced extensively in education (pedagogy) and media and research methodologies (Agboka, 2014). Western-centred approaches continue to be a bone of contestation. Most researchers favour alternative praxis, favouring dialogues giving a voice and platform to previously colonised societies and the subaltern classes. Communicators are further challenged to align their media work to advocate for social justice, egalitarianism and freedom of self and community (Moyo & Mutsvairo, 2018). There has been significant emphasis on the importance of using indigenous languages in communication to influence positive social change. This episteme is divergent from the Eurocentric approach that has dictated the use of foreign languages (Mpfungu & Salawu, 2018). Within the decolonial praxis, there are a noticeable renewal of traditional ways and indigenous communication systems (ICSs), whose value had been eroded by the colonial epistemologies in favour of western communication systems. As a result, one of the most important aspects of the diversity of decolonial education is the prioritization of indigenous culture and indigenous knowledge-generation and teaching traditions, such as talking circles and storytelling, folklore, poetry and theatre (Fellner, 2018; Hendrick & Young, 2018). This is welcome as it brings a component of diversity and pluralism, allowing the subaltern to be active participants in development communication.

The discussed studies noted that the decoloniality paradigm has been acknowledged and well referenced in psychology, education focusing on pedagogy and epistemological methodologies and indigenous languages in communication. However, a specific focus on

government organisations communication for rural development has been on the fringes in terms of research, posing a gap which this study seeks to fill. This research comes at an appropriate time to explore the area of development communication studies with a particular focus on rural development in Zimbabwe, framing it using the decoloniality paradigm.

2.6 Misconceptions of the decoloniality paradigm

The nature of decoloniality as a radical shift from the norm attracts lots of criticisms from various avenues. Its approach, which seems to be a direct confrontational of colonialism, elevates a debate, especially when the matter of development in subaltern countries is concerned. It is normal for no one to accept responsibility. Still, it should also be clear that decoloniality's intentions seek to extricate the negative remnants of colonialism that appear through coloniality for purposes of unlocking the potential of the people in third world countries. A good example is by Woods, (2019), who says decoloniality is not focused on the radical communalisation of the third world communities but aims at conscientisation of the communities of the opportunities they missed due to colonialism and the best ways to unlock those indigenous opportunities. The misconception of decoloniality poses a danger of denigrating, villainization and oppression of persons perceived as anti-communality. Decoloniality urges third world countries to seek solutions from within, but this does not necessarily mean shielding other anti-progressive traditions, resulting in the oppression of other groups just like the (patriarchy) as cited by Escobar (2018). However, it is a rational manner of seeking development from within (Escobar, 2016). This entails keeping some practices, transformation, and modifying others to create new and timeous interventions to current challenges (Escobar, 2016).

Another shortfall of the decolonial paradigm is that it is centred around the practicality of indigenous approaches. Indigenous approaches have become so foreign after a long time has passed. In contrast, the colonised societies have existed under subjugation. Eurocentric approaches have become entrenched among locals due to how they were introduced through religion and education over a lengthy period. Now decoloniality faces the challenges of globalisation's influence on culture and identity, a Eurocentric episteme that dictates the standards. It would be a lengthy and challenging endeavour to entrench decolonial models among the people who might feel being detached from the global standards. The decolonial approaches eloquently exist among the intellectuals and do not transcend to the locals who lack a clear awareness of the praxis.

From discussing the limitations associated with decoloniality, particularly its misconceptions and application, it becomes clear that decolonial models should be approached with care to bring about development. The researcher firmly believes that clear and courteous communication of development programmes that place the people in rural areas at the centre of development can yield the desired results.

2.7 Reasons for the participatory development communication theories

This study is framed by the participatory development communication paradigm chiefly due to the following reasons:

- participatory development communication subscribes to two asymmetrical communication (FAO, 2010) in which the voice of government departments and the public equally important to effect progress in GSRD.
- tenets of the theory advocate for active participation, which has been previously misunderstood as mere involvement or passive participation to active participation in which the public is fully engaged in development projects.
- participation development communication can be fully realised if there is public empowerment, capacity building, freedom and two-way symmetrical communication.
- the participatory development communication explains what people should do concerning social change issues (practical aspects) and how government communication promotes public responses in the development process.

2.8 Reasons for the decoloniality paradigm

The second equally important paradigm is the decoloniality paradigm. This study references this theory because:

- its connotations are a digression from the dependence paradigm, which have not worked in rural development for many years.
- decoloniality paradigm explains the subtle aspects surrounding the people that influences their full participation in development matters, included the injustices of the past, which have been carried forward into the present times requiring redress to emancipate the previously disenfranchised public.
- in this paradigm, the rural people are seen as valuable resources as opposed to the Eurocentric ‘episteme’ who can and can instigate solutions to their challenges (Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2011)

2.9 Connections between participatory development communication and the decoloniality paradigms

The main reason for referencing the two paradigms in this study is their perceived interconnectedness in rural development communication. The importance of participation is recognised as well as the detrimental effects of its lack in rural development. One reason for the lack of participation is the detachment of development solutions from the rural public. The modern solutions are crafted and imposed on the people who do not participate in failing development initiatives. The decoloniality paradigm advocates for the redress of the colonial perspective and approach to promoting locally-oriented development solutions through locally understood and subtle communication means. The decoloniality approach talks of the empowered rural public who then become active participants in development initiatives. It is such a linkage between these two theories that this research deliberately refers to both in tandem. This research enjoys the epistemological freedom to refer to both these two theories, which is odd in government communication for rural development. However, the approach has an immense potential to provide insights into the rural public, explain the role government communication plays in empowering them, and promote their participation in communication and in turn development communication initiatives.

2.10 Conclusion

As discussed in this chapter, the two paradigms, participatory communication and decoloniality, offer a judicious framework on which to base this study. The theories shed light on the critical aspects centred on the role the public should play in development. If government communication critically fosters participation through empowerment, capabilities, tapping from the indigenous knowledge, promotion of epistemic freedom and social justice, development in rural areas like GSRD can be realised. Informed by the participatory approaches located within the alternative paradigm of development, the framework constructed an appreciation of the essence of cultural factors, empowerment and decoloniality in which development is explained and implemented by the people who benefit from it. Furthermore, the framework establishes that executing development communication with a substantial appreciation of various factors at play (which include social realities, human capabilities, cultural factors) is helpful in achieving development goals. Based on the above discussion on theories, their relevance, it is entirely plausible that they complement each other and warranting their combining application as the study's theoretical framework. Overall, this thesis draws from both theories to enlighten the crucial aspects of the research.

The participatory theory and the decolonial paradigm are, however, indispensable. Therefore, they provide a robust theoretical framework for this study on the role of government communication in rural development.

CHAPTER 3: GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

Researchers have studied different subjects within the school of communication and come up with various communication functions and purposes, resulting in multiple communication fields. These include political communication, organisational communication, public relations, government communication and development communication (Seitel, 2004; Quebral, 2006; Pasquier, 2012; Norris; 2004; Grunig & Hunt, 1984). These different arms of communication can be categorised depending on the communicator or the primary purposes of communication. Organisational communication or government communication are termed as such because communication occurs within organisations and governments. Political communication, public relations and development communication have communication functions based on their titles. However, all these forms of communication can fall within government communication and be executed by government institutions to achieve different government mandates.

Literature concerning government communication for development dates back to the period after the second world war, and that is a period in which a need for social transformation was realised. Literature suggests that government communication for rural development, embedded in development communication, moved from modernisation paradigms to the participatory paradigms of development (Rogers 1962; Moemeka, 1989; Melkote, 1991; Huesca, 2000; Melkote & Steeves, 2015). This study draws the literature from the extensive scholarly works focusing on Africa and Zimbabwe, in particular, to broadly exhaust the literature for discerning a more detailed understanding of government communication in rural development. The era of the research literature shall not be limited to the present but considers previous studies as they were crucial in painting a somewhat holistic picture of the field.

There is a vast amount of literature on development communication and how it should be applied. However, there is limited research on how government institutions apply development communication for rural development. There is little available literature focusing on government communication and rural development in Zimbabwe, bearing in mind that the rural parts of Zimbabwe are in dire need of development. Literature on government communication for rural development or social change connected with the decolonial praxis is on the fringes despite the

growing influence of decoloniality and its relevance in third world countries. It is imperative to focus on government communication as a tool for rural development. In agriculture, the extension approach has emerged as the primary form in which rural development communication manifests itself, although mildly applied in education and health communication. Aspects of participation and involvement also appeared in the 1980s as crucial in development and development communication. This chapter shall discuss government communication and other communication fields before delving more into development communication, exhibiting their role and importance to rural development in Zimbabwe.

3.2 Government communication

Government communication is the interaction that occurs within the government institutions and or with the public or other institutions using an assortment of communication means. Government institutions regularly interact with the people and other stakeholders, which influence their daily operations. According to Pasquier, (2012) government communication is all communication activities by public sector institutions whose purpose is to disseminate information, explaining and justifying government actions and plans. Canel & Sanders (2012) add that government communication involves top-level executive communication. They also say that communication by government representatives and institutions established to do government work at national, regional and local levels constitute government communication. Through executive politicians and officials of public institutions, government institutions communicate with the public (the governed) and the public are the people they serve or the citizenry.

For government communication to be successful, governments must carefully think about the nature of messages, whether they should be written or oral, the media or channel to be used whether mass media, interpersonal communication or traditional media or integration of all and the content of the messages. There is a wide variety of communication channels available to government institutions, depending on the nature of messages, the size of the audiences, and the speed at which they want the messages to reach the audience. While these factors are crucial for communication to be successful, all involved parties must participate in the communication process (Servaes, 2003; Mefalopulos, 2008) if the aim is societal change. The next section discusses the various purposes and functions of government communication.

Purposes and functions of government communication

Government communication serves the purpose of informing, persuading and motivating the public. The functions of government communication span from information sharing, explaining government policy, to facilitating dialogue with the citizens (GCIS, 2018). The purposes of government communication transcend disseminating information to ensuring that government programmes run smoothly and successfully. In times of crisis, governments communicate to make people aware of the crisis, e.g. war, natural disasters etc. In such circumstances, governments alert citizens of the coming dangers and advise them on what to do, preventing panic and saving people's lives. Good governance expects government institutions to be open and transparent in their operations as they serve the public (CommGAP, 2009; Canel & Sanders, 2012).

The public is entitled to receiving information; hence governments share information as part of the resolves of accounting to the public constituency in fulfilling the requirements of democracy. Democracy stipulates that the citizenry is entitled to receiving information and compels governments to communicate with the public. Over and above, for government programmes to be successful, communication is vital. Governments can share their plans and purposes with the people or other involved parties to rally the people's support in these programmes.

Apart from government communication functions mentioned above, there are other communication functions like those for public relations, political and development communication. It is important to note that the spectrum of government communication cuts across public relations and political communication in government institutions (Quebral, 1973; Pasquier, 2012; Hansson, 2017). Canel & Sanders (2012) echo the same view, asserting that government communication's theoretical bases are difficult to separate or identify within communication areas, including political, organisational, or public relations. The next sections discuss the functions and manifestations of government communication within different communication fields to clarify the above standpoint.

3.2.1 Public relations in government

According to Grunig & Hunt (1984), public relations involve managing the flow of information between organisations and the public for building, maintaining and preserving a positive image of an organisation. Public relations officials use the media through press releases, press conferences and speeches to maintain a good public image. ICTs and social media are also available tools for public relations. According to the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) (Cited in Elliott, 2012), effective and strategic execution of public relations helps organisations maintain the right public image, making them efficient and profitable. An ideal public image makes it easy for the government to function since they work with the public. Public relations results in mutual benefit for both organisations and society (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

Communication in government communications serves the public relations role whereby it seeks to create the right image of the government by explaining the government policies to the people. There is a consensus among public relations scholars that public relations are the function of communication that seeks to establish and maintain mutual understanding between the organisations and the public (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Hunt & Grunig, 1994; Grunig, 2001; Wilcox et al., 2006). The same applies to government institutions and the public. Grunig (2001), also points out the aspect of relationship-building and ensuring mutual benefit between organisations and the people in his two-way symmetrical communication model. Government communicators always try to maintain goodwill among the citizens; in this manner, they will be fulfilling the public relations function in government communications.

3.2.2 Political communication in government

Political communication involves all communication whose intention is to influence political decisions in the political climate. Political communication is when communication is strategically employed to influence people's political actions and beliefs (Swanson & Nimmo, 1990; MacNair, 2003). In Norris's (2004) view, political communication can be between politicians and the citizens or among the politicians. According to CommGAP (2009), political communication is inevitable in government organisations in many ways, and government communicators also somehow engage in political communication in several ways.

Communication in governance also serves an executive function which involves persuasion and influence of what the public know and believe and, ultimately, their actions concerning political matters (Swanson & Nimmo, 1990; MacNair, 2003). Government organisations operate in a political climate, and heads of government communications are politically appointed. As a result, their communication is politically inclined (Norris, 2004; Canel & Sanders, 2012). When communication focuses mainly on persuasion through campaigns, propaganda or diplomacy intending to get people to support a particular political ideology, government policies or party, it serves the political function. Although against the professional dictates, government communicators find themselves fulfilling the role of political communication instead of government communication (Norris, 2004; CommGAP, 2009), which is a public service where serving the public is paramount.

Government communication straddles the political and administrative function, which might reflect some form of political alignment to the ruling party since the ruling party is responsible for creating policies. However, one cannot overemphasise the public function of government communication. The above discussion locates political communication within government communication and the reasons or purposes of communication, including communication for rural development.

3.2.3 Development communication in government

Development communication is the process of using communication to promote development. Development practitioners should consider human behavioural factors in development programmes, and deal with social injustices, aiming to bring freedom so that people can effectively contribute to their development. Development communication considers the local realities, beginning from planning to the execution of a programme meant to better the lives of the people in a society.

For this reason, the intended beneficiaries for development are central to the whole process. There is a consensus among development communication scholars that communication for societal transformation that fulfils human potential must be participatory. Human involvement is crucial in helping to attain sustainable development (Quebral, 1973; Manyozo, 2006; Quebral, 2006). This aspect of communication is inherent in government institutions whose aims are to bring about the betterment of societies.

Communication with the purpose of societal transformation from a poor economic state to a better one or the betterment of the livelihoods is development communication. Central to the overall functions of government communication in developing countries is rural development. Consequently, the South African government communications handbook cites the essence of two-way communication with the citizens (GCIS, 2006; GCIS 2018). Considering that one of the critical mandates of governments in developing countries, particularly in rural areas, is the transformation of rural lives for the better, government agencies in agriculture, education, and health institutions inevitably engage in development communication within the communities.

All communication with the purpose of social transformation from a state of poverty to an economically and socially developing society where all people are equal and can realise their potential (Quebral, 2001) executed by government institutions or on behalf of the government is government development communication. The social ills which result in poverty are food shortages, leading to malnutrition and no economic benefits from agriculture. The department of agriculture seeks to address this by educating farmers through extension officers. Extension officers teach people how to be more productive and avert food shortages, culminating in malnutrition and other related problems. They also help farmers produce a surplus in agriculture which they can sell for income to help end poverty, thereby empowering the people economically.

The department of health addresses health-related issues like mortality due to many diseases, including HIV/Aids, STIs, Cholera, Malaria and other diseases. Such illnesses threaten development in the sense that they rob the countries of economically able-bodied people who can work for national development. Also, diseases such as HIV/Aids kill parents and leave orphans without anyone to fend for them, which exacerbates poverty. Sourcing, the medicine required to treat these diseases, also cripples the economy of the nation. Family planning is also another critical aspect of health which is a development issue. If there is proper family planning, people can have children whom they can afford to look after. Parents can have children they can feed, send to school, and give adequate health care, empowering society. The above explanation chronicles how health issues are development matters.

Education is a development issue because a well-educated society can work and develop communities, societies and nations. Education means a better comprehension of health issues

which has a significant influence on development. Also, an educated society is employable, which means that they can provide for themselves and their families. Adult literacy is also linked to development in the sense that educated adults can even understand health issues and how to take care of themselves and their families better. They can also comprehend agriculture issues better and improve in terms of agriculture productivity.

Communication as a development tool

As explained earlier, all communications with the purpose of social transformation are development communication. Social change is brought about by proper education and health systems and a productive agricultural sector. The potential of media to influence education was recognised by the pre-colonial governments, which went to the extent of funding the Dutch Reformed Church to include educational content in their religious publications. The pre-colonial government firmly believed that these publications could civilise the natives by educating them and helping them improve in terms of their health and agricultural production.

Development communication has evolved through stages from the modernisation era, which ascribed much power on mass media to participatory development communication. This evolution came after a realisation that if people are not involved in the communication of their development, that development is meaningless and unsuccessful or unsustainable. Conceiving development programmes elsewhere and transmitting them to the people does not yield the desired outcome. As a result, the mode of communication used must be capable of empowering people. Such an approach renders the indigenous communication systems relevant.

In his work, Choudhury (2011) identifies various media used in development communication in India but unfortunately argues that the ideas have been excellent in theory and not yielded significant results in transforming the lives of the poor. In assessing the use of various forms of media in development communication, Choudhury, says that a failure to stick to the social responsibility role has diluted the newspapers' role. Instead, the media focus on the need to make profits. He argues that radio has done well due to its ability to reach a wider audience and played a significant role, especially with the introduction of community radio, where people were encouraged to participate. According to Choudhury (2011), radio was used in education to promote adult literacy in the 1980s, and NGOs have also helped to broadcast programmes on

women and legal rights. Television has also been significant through popularising modern methods of agriculture and the programming of educational programmes.

To be visible on the ground, the government has agents like extension officers in the field of agriculture, local health officers or caregivers known as (*Mbuya / Sekuru Utano*). Critical advantages of employing locals in the process of communication are that they can communicate with the people using interpersonal methods and hold functions where they use educational dramas, songs and poetry to educate the masses. Besides, it is easy for them to work with people to produce development content within traditional communication systems. They are also part of the communities, and their involvement counts as valuable participation.

3.3 Intersections within government communication

The intersection which exists within government communication makes the functions of government communication to be broad and cumbersome. Fig 3.1 below illustrates the breadth of government communication responsibilities and purposes. The absurdity of government communication responsibilities frustrates development communication and professionalism, causing government communication inefficiencies for rural development. The illogical government communication responsibilities are a result of political influence, lack of structure and professionalism. Government communication also requires consideration of cultural nuances and is still largely influenced by the modernisation approaches to development, making it problematic.

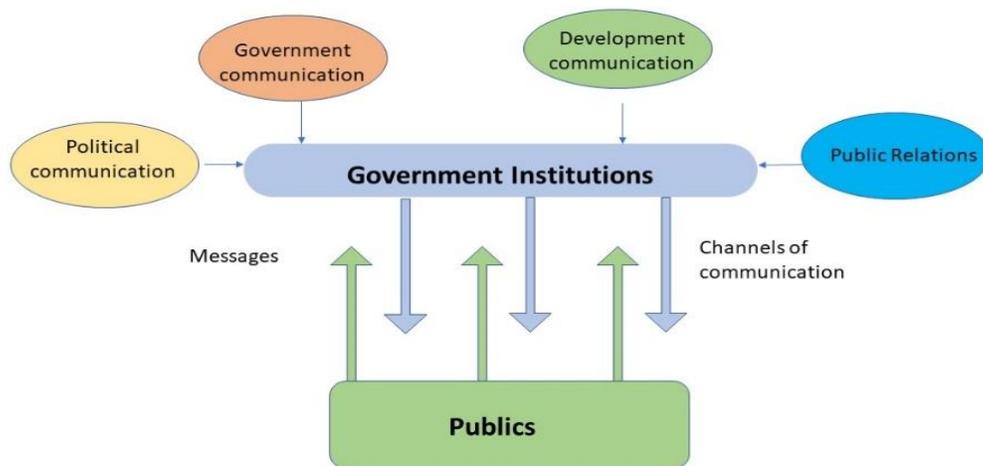


Figure 0:1 Communication responsibilities of government institutions (Designed by author)

Communication Spectrum

Quarry, (2006) in FAO, (2010) suggested a gamut of ways governments should communicate. Figure 3.2 below illustrates the government communication spectrum. Communication starts with public relations functions which involve the preserving of government organisations' image. On this, communication is one-directional and on the other end of the spectrum is participatory approaches of communication in which the people participate in development initiatives. Awareness campaigns and social marketing are just like public relations in terms of the flow of information. Towards the participatory end, we have communication for behavioural change, which is contextual. From the spectrum, communicators should strategically apply communication depending on the purpose or function of communication.



Figure 0:2 The Communication Spectrum FAO, 2010

3.4 Government communication in Zimbabwe

The government organisations communicate with the people and vice versa or with various stakeholders. The Zimbabwean government has a ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting chiefly responsible for the communication activities within the government. The logic behind the introduction of dedicated ministries of information and communication in governments is to ensure that there is a smooth flow of information from the government to the public to maintain legitimacy and influence public opinion in South Africa. In the United Kingdom, the ministry of information is there to ensure good governance and the success of all government programs. Zimbabwe has a similar structure where a minister heads a ministry and works closely with the press secretary in the president’s office. The ministry has information officers stationed in towns. Information officers assist government departments with communication matters. In Zimbabwe, various government departments do most of their communication work apart from the department of health, which has District Communication Officers responsible for communication within their districts. Within the department of education and agriculture, the district heads are responsible for all the communication within their departments.

Government communication in Zimbabwe is mainly concerned with information sharing (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2010; Tshabangu, 2013). Tshabangu, (2013) confirms this observation in his study, which focuses on one of the state-owned publications, “*The Chronicle*”, upon a close analysis of its editorial policy. The government recognises the value of communication which is reflected by the setting up of a dedicated ministry within the Zimbabwean government. The government has significant vested interests in print and broadcast media. In print media, the government owns the majority of shares through a company called Zimpapers (Mukasa, 2003; Moyo, 2003). The media and the public accuse the ministry of information of wielding too much power within the

broadcast media industry, particularly television which the state highly monopolises and regulates (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2010). However, there is not too much monopoly in the radio industry, but it is highly regulated. The government uses print media and broadcast media to promote information sharing in the fields of agriculture, education and health, among others. The post-colonial government adopted the value of media in this field and used it in programmes focusing on the fields mentioned above. The government mainly dedicates media space in both the print and broadcast media to justify its actions (MISA-Zimbabwe, 2010). This practice was, however, inherited from the colonial administration (Moyo, 2003). During the colonial era, the government believed that mass media had the potential to educate the natives about civilisation. The above stand as evidence that government communication operations are still broadly influenced by Eurocentric ideologies introduced through colonialism. At this juncture, the researcher begins to be concerned with the appropriateness of government communication approaches to the development question of this era in the rural parts of Zimbabwe.

Government communication also occurs through government representatives working for government institutions in Zimbabwe. The ministry of information has also set up offices around the country from where information officers operate. The idea behind the government information officers is to serve as agents of communication for other government institutions. However, in Zimbabwe, the information minister report directly to the office of the president. Within the different departments, which are the focus of this study (agriculture, health and education), officials working in these departments communicate on behalf of the government institutions they represent. In agriculture, there is agriculture extension (AREX) officers, also known as *vana Mudhumeni*. Nurses, community nurses and local health officers communicate on behalf of the health department, and school heads and teachers represent the department of education.

Internet and the online presence of the government are noticeable (Makiwa & Steyn, 2016; Dondo et al., 2014). The government also makes use of ICTs and social media to communicate with the people. The government-controlled publications and the Zimbabwe broadcasting authority also publish content on the internet and social media sites. This practice indicates the government's recognition of the essence of ICTs and their potential. The internet helps in the distribution of government information and counters the opposing narratives in the media. While

there is a significant growth of ICT and social media usage in the country, it is also necessary to assess this growth in the rural parts of the country, and their use in rural development, focusing on health, agriculture and education.

3.4.1 Perspectives and approaches of government communication in rural areas of Zimbabwe

The body of knowledge on government communication for development in Zimbabwe, especially with a focus on rural development, is non-existent. Limited available research focuses on rural development, eliminating its implementation by government institutions, and applying the communication component. For instance, the available studies focus mainly on NGOs and development through community participation without government involvement (Chifamba, 2013). Other studies were only concerned with development through foreign remittances (Ndube & Gomez, 2011; Nzima et al., 2016). The different angle approaches rural development from the extension dimension in agriculture (Moemeka, 1989; Leeuwis, 2004; Moyo & Salawu, 2017) and also from political communication. Most of the available literature is drawn from the region and beyond the African continent, especially the United States, Europe, and some parts of Asia. It also emerges that these studies have delved much on development communication and less on government communication for rural development, which is an essential area in a country like Zimbabwe lagging in terms of development (Makumbe, 1996; Matewa, 2003; Matunhu, 2011; Moyo, 2010; Murisa, 2010; Dondo et al., 2014; Ngwenya, 2016). While available studies have addressed the concept of development communication, this research dwells much on communication for rural development by government institutions.

Government institutions approach communication from various angles for several reasons and purposes, and these could be political communication, public relations, government communication or communication for rural development (Figure 3.1 above). Political communication and public relations tend to dominate government communication (Tshabangu, 2013; Sanders & Canel, 2013). This domination is mainly because the government communication professionals fail to separate their roles from political communication due to a lack of professionalism and influential political figures (Pasquier, 2012; Hansson, 2017). Effective government communication should include communication structures and processes

guided by communication purposes that consider the people's interests (Sanders & Canel, 2013:279).

Sanders & Canel. (2013) believe that government communication should be strategic, incorporating the principles of public relations, which allow the people to equally benefit, placing measures to assess their communication activities and employ ICTs to facilitate citizen participation. The researcher accepts that it is challenging to separate government communication from political influence. However, it will be beneficial for government communication professionals not to be influenced by politics and seek to serve the public, as suggested by Hansson (2017). In their book, Sanders & Canel identify Zimbabwe amongst the countries lagging in terms of strategic communication (2013:279). There is a lack of financial support, pressure from political influence, a lack of a conducive legal framework and the limited or no incorporation of e-governance and e-participation in government communication. Dondo et al., (2014) also cite lack of public training, poor accessibility and high costs as limiting factors of ICT usage in Zimbabwean governance. Limited studies assess the impact of government communication approaches on rural development, which is a gap this research intends to fill.

In disseminating information, governments use interpersonal approaches involving indigenous forms of communication or mass media, making use of modern communication and an integrated approach that combines both traditional and contemporary methods (Moemeka, 1989). There is a burgeoning use of ICTs, which are also at the disposal of government institutions for communications (Graham, 2014). Research proves that governments and institutions can leverage the available and emerging forms of communication networks without relegating traditional and indigenous communication to the periphery. However, for ICTs to benefit rural development communication by government departments, the rural people must be empowered and capacitated to participate in the communication spectrum. The study notes that, while ICTs are a western concept, there are a force to be reckoned with. It should also be noted that people's failure to participate when these modern forms of communication are used could be due to poverty, which is reinforced by coloniality and other societal limitations like patriarchy and traditions (Breitenbach, 2013). Therefore, there is a need to recognise such challenges and empower the rural public to benefit from ICTs through initiatives like IREACH mentioned by Grunfeld (2011) and establishing information centres, an initiative already gazetted by the

Zimbabwean government which was in the process of being rolled out during the time of the study.

Regarding the Zimbabwean government perspective on communication for rural development, one can posit that the government does not attach much importance to it. The limited amount of resources allocated to government communication for rural development is clear evidence of the government's half-hearted perspective on communication for rural development. For instance, the 2017 Zimbabwe budget statement by Hon Chinamasa (Minister of Finance) and the preceding statements did not mention resource allocation for government communication for rural development (ZimGov, 2016). Research has found that governments only invest in public relations and political communication (Sander & Canel, 2013). The authors explain that some governments are beginning to realise the importance of communication such that legal frameworks and resources are being put in place to support government communication. Zimbabwe is yet to show any significant advances in this regard. Political interferences using loyal party cadres as communication officials is a setback to the realisation of the benefits of government communication. In a recent study by Ho & Cho (2017), examining the link between government communication effectiveness and public satisfaction with police performance in the United States, they found out that effective open communication directly influences general satisfaction. They discovered that many governments do not pay attention to public communication but invest their resources for service delivery. The authors advised against overlooking public communication as it ensures government accountability and democracy, which are both critical aspects of service delivery. Effective communication is therefore crucial in aspects of rural development, which include agriculture, health and education. The concerned government departments should communicate effectively.

3.4.2 Factors affecting effective rural development communication in Zimbabwe

Hansson, (2017) says the UK government follows codes and operational guidelines to avoid blame. He further identifies the challenges faced by government communication professionals which include the interference and abuse by politicians. These challenges affect professionalism and the discharge of duties by government communication professionals as civil servants. Maqeda & Makombe, (2013) also highlights that political interference in government communication in Zimbabwe. Mhlanga, (2017) identified the same challenges in his newspaper

article in *The Standard*. His observation is essential to this research because it illuminates the atmosphere in which government communications professionals operate and the challenges they face in their profession. These challenges can be a limitation to the effective use of communication for development purposes by government institutions.

Unfavourable government media policies also pose a challenge to rural development communication. It can be complicated to use the available media channels to communicate with the public, and the public might detest the media channels used by the government. This situation was observed in Zimbabwe when the then minister Jonathan Moyo passed the 100% local media content on all state media. While it was an excellent move for promoting locally generated content, the people reacted unexpectedly. The observation was that many people began to install satellite receivers to access international media and resorted to compact discs (CDs) and digital versatile discs (DVDs) for entertainment. The government also passed the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) law, making it challenging to use media for communication. The above situation elaborates how government policies can be a challenge to communication for rural development.

Another challenge that stifles rural communication is the poor infrastructure for various modern means of communication and the growing ICTs (Dondo et al., 2014). Most third world countries have poor infrastructure, as reflected by the difficulties in distributing print media. Radio and television reception is weak in the rural parts of most third world countries, and Zimbabwe is no exception as most of its rural areas do not have access to the signal. The same applies to telephone and wireless mobile networks. The unavailability of an effective communication network poses a severe challenge in terms of access and distribution of developmental information. Most of the rural folk cannot afford to acquire modern forms of communication like a radio receiver, a TV set and a mobile phone. These are a status symbol to most people, which widens the information gap, keeping the rural folk behind in terms of development.

Moyo & Salawu, (2018) carried out a qualitative survey of communication between extension officers and smallholder farmers in the Gweru District of Zimbabwe. The authors found that extension officers lacked qualifications and expertise, which impacted the knowledge, information, and skills passed to the smallholder farmers. Moyo & Salawu (2018), also found that there was a dearth in terms of stakeholder analysis in designing agriculture communication

projects. The article identifies the absence of multimedia communication approaches which meant low adoption of agricultural innovations. They highlighted the importance of integration in agricultural communication and developed a model for smallholder agriculture stakeholder mobilisation for effective agriculture communication.

3.5 Contribution of organisational communication to government communication for development

Literature drawn from various schools suggests a diversion from the top-down approach in dealing with situations involving the public to more democratised horizontal approaches, which also entails engaging the public and treating them as participants instead of recipients of ideas, innovations or programmes. Grunig (2000), who hails from the school of public relations, castigates organisations' which put their interests without consideration of the importance of the public. Instead, he suggests a two-way symmetrical communication model which balances the interests of both the organisation and people. It is critical to consider the public relations role when examining government communications. There is a link between public relations and the functions of those who communicate on behalf of the government. Essentially, the present study draws from the strengths of Grunig's symmetrical public relations model. Development communication practitioners have adopted the model and applied it in development communication. The model states that public participation is essential to achieve meaningful development.

3.5.1 Boundary spanning in the symmetrical communication model

Government communicators attempt to create a favourable image of the government in the eyes of the public. As public servants, government communicators' mandate is to serve the people, and as such, there should be a balance in terms of the benefits. In this regard, the two-way symmetrical communication model by Grunig applies to government communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Grunig, 2013; Grunig, 2001). The two-way symmetrical communication model is a model in Grunig's Theory of excellence in public relations. The model postulates that communication must originate from both organisations and the public, a position serving the interests of the parties involved (Grunig, 2001). In this manner, communication occurs both ways, thus a two-way symmetrical communication.

In line with this, pursuing a two-way symmetrical communication model is crucial in government communication. The two-way symmetrical communication model proposes that all parties involved, the government and the public, should benefit equally. The participation of both the public and the government is required to ensure mutual benefit. The two-way symmetrical communication model resonates with the principles of participatory development communication, which states that the audience should be active players whose involvement makes them own the development programmes meant for them. For this reason, this study captures the essence of both the symmetrical and participatory development communication in a quest to design an integrated government communication model suitable for rural development. The model will include a review of 'context' (positionality) as a significant concept in decolonial studies.

Boundary spanning is an organisational leadership and management approach that involves individuals who link the organisation with external sources of information (Tushman, 1977). It is applicable within the organisation between different departments or externally beyond the boundaries of an organisation. Government organisations do not work in isolation, so there is a need for them to connect to external sources of information. This strategy considers that development meant for the people must be tailor-made for that particular social group. Such an approach, in turn, helps with the adoption of different kinds of development innovations in education, health or agriculture. Using the boundary-spanning approach emanated from the need to encourage the adoption of innovations within organisations. However, it is significantly applicable to adopting innovations within sectors working with government organisations, particularly in rural development (Tushman, 1977). Boundary spanners distribute government information and gather relevant information for the development of innovations for different communities.

The participation of people in the crafting of development initiatives remains a contentious issue, with some scholars arguing that locals are not able to craft their development programmes due to various reasons, among these being education and the dependency attitude (Ardebola, 2014; Uphoff & Cohen, 1977; Cohen and Uphoff, 1980; Nanda, 1999; Shortall, 2008; Dadvar-Khani, 2012). Identifying different factors causing lack of participation, Arnstein cites the lack of power amongst the intended beneficiaries of participation and the need to maintain power structures by

those who run development programme (Arnstein, 1969). In addition, those running development are mostly far detached from rural communities such that they lack comprehension of the social realities. In such situations, working with boundary spanners can assist in getting information from rural communities to identify their needs and concerns when crafting development programmes. Tushman, (1977) posits that it is the responsibility of government communication to collect and gather all the necessary information. Figure 3.3 below demonstrates how information flows within the departments and outside organisational boundaries, which can be extrapolated to the movement of information in government departments when crafting development programmes for rural development.

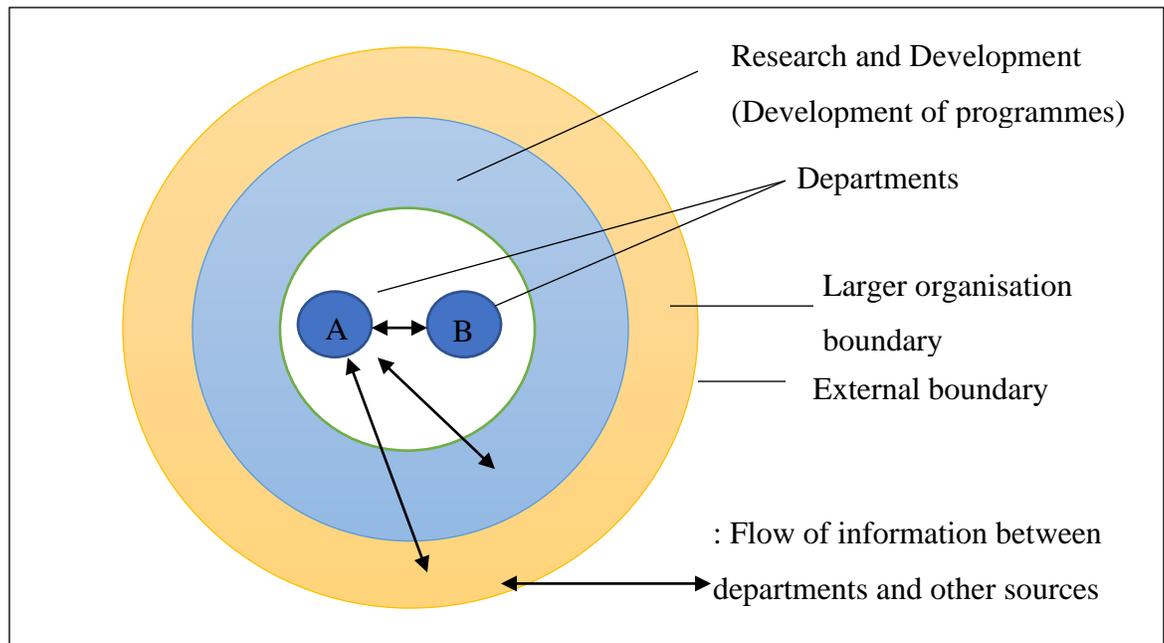


Figure 0:3 Illustration of boundary roles by Tushman, 1977

3.5.1 Public participation in government communication

Public participation and involvement are *leitmotifs* in public relations, organisational communication, agriculture communication (extension) and development communication as suggested by scholars in the fields (Moemeka 1989; Grunig 2000; Leeuwis 2004; Graham 2014). Therefore, its importance is paramount in rural development communication by government institutions. There has been a diversion from the dominant top-down or linear communication to

horizontal and down-up approaches in development communication. Linear communication approaches facilitate the diffusion of innovations as detailed in the diffusion of innovations and modernisation theories. In contrast, down-up or horizontal communication encourages the involvement of the people as propagated by the participatory theories (Moemeka, 1989). Research points to the promotion of dialogue, participation and collaboration as the ideal approaches to successful government programmes in rural development, covering key areas including agriculture, health and education (Grunig, 2000; Leeuwis, 2004; Graham, 2014). Communication enables the involvement of the people in government programmes.

Communication functions by government institutions, especially those aimed at rural development, can be successful if they increasingly allow for participation. The extension should also incorporate the principles of participatory development communication to bring about meaningful development in rural areas. Although it hails from the public relations field, Grunig's two-way symmetrical communication should be applied in government communication to establish trust between the people in the rural areas and government institutions.

The suggested participation is necessary for the whole communication process from the planning to the execution and the participation in the programmes themselves (De Beer & Swanepoel, 1998). These forms of participation relate to each other. If people are involved in the communication process, their involvement in executing and implementing development programmes is easily attainable. The development programmes must address the needs of the people since governments can only know the people's actual needs by involving them and allowing them to communicate freely. In the quest to engage the public and identify their needs, employment of strategies like boundary spanning, whereby some members of the government departments cross the departmental and organisational boundaries to gather the relevant information from the communities, can be employed. Societal solutions and development programmes must not always originate from the governments, but communities must develop them, which makes them appropriate and relevant. Public participation, although faced with challenges, is ideal in rural development communication. Arnstein (1969) developed the ladder of participation see figure 3.4 to illustrate various levels of participation.

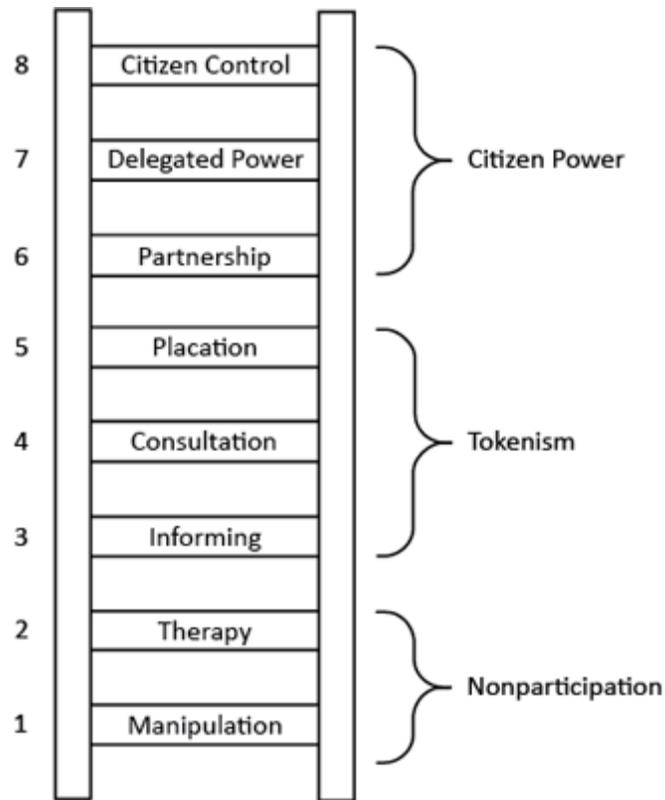


Figure 0:4 Ladder of participation by Sherry Arnstein (1969)

Arnstein highlighted various levels of participation, placing them on a ladder from the first rung, which is manipulation to eight rungs, citizen control. The bottom two rungs (manipulation and therapy) are what she termed nonparticipation followed by tokenism (informing, consultation and placation). The last three rungs are citizen power with partnership, delegated power and citizen control. The various levels of participation are what can be regarded as participation by government agents in rural development programmes. A clear understanding of these is insightful to demonstrate that the ideal forms for participation are the ones up the ladder under citizen power. What is notable is that the public treated as partners in development programs share some sense of power, which makes development programs successful. Development agents must always avoid manipulation and including the rural public for documentation purposes in reports and rubber stamping. This procedure saves wastage of time and resources, and as such, government communication should foster the ideal forms of participation where citizen have control in their development. To this end, the rural public is still treated as not wielding much wisdom to be relevant in development, a canon of the modernisation approach to development.

In contrast, the decoloniality approach has debunked this retrogressive assumption calling for considering indigenous knowledge and its application in development programs. This demonstrates some level of citizen control where the public has power and control. Grosfoguel (2007) highlights some key aspects that need liberation for people to be empowered enough to participate in development programmes effectively. Figure 3.5 presents these key areas.

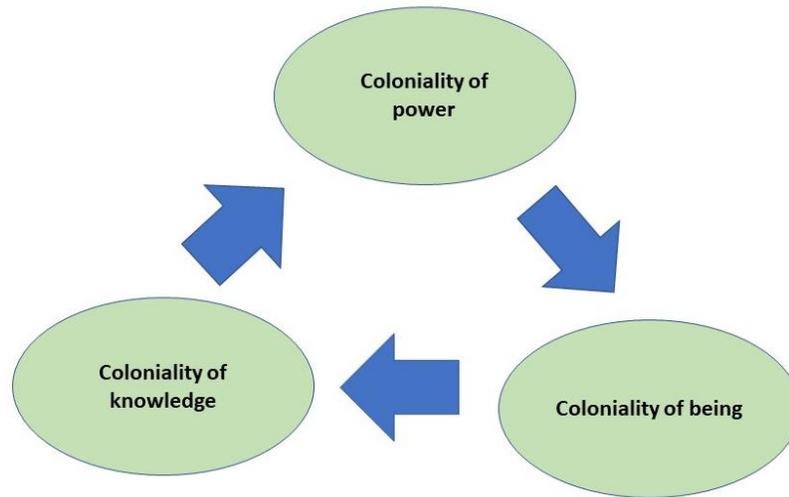


Figure 0:5 Model of coloniality by Grosfoguel, 2007

According to Grosfoguel (2007), the critical areas of the colonised people are knowledge and power. If these areas are addressed the rural people can participate in an ideal way, high up the ladder of participation by Sherry Arnstein, where they exercise citizen power. An insight into the role of government communication regarding empowering citizens to participate in rural development fully will chart a way forward regarding the best communication approaches for rural development by the three departments (health, education and agriculture), which are a major focus of this study.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explained different communication fields the government is engaged in, clarifying their purposes and functions in government communication. The role of government communication in Zimbabwe has also been explained focusing on the present era but drawing from the pre-colonial era. Zimbabwe recognised the importance of communication in education, health and agriculture since the pre-colonial era. However, this recognition has evolved,

acknowledging the essence of participation, empowerment, and social justice to development. The ladder of participation model has also become central in providing attributes of participation that could be beneficial in the communication and execution of development programmes by government institutions. The upcoming chapter will dwell on government communication channels and the government communication climate and discuss the proposed approach for government communication. The proposed approach is the integration of the communication channels and methods based on their appropriateness and relevance for communication in the rural parts of Zimbabwe, particularly Gokwe South Rural District (GSRD).

CHAPTER 4: THE ZIMBABWEAN MEDIASCAPE

4.1 Introduction

An array of communication tools is available for use by the different government institutions of the Zimbabwean government. Selection is determined by the nature of the information to be shared as well as the intended audience. Amongst these communication channels, there is print media, broadcast media (thus radio and television), information communication technologies (ICTs), as well as indigenous communication systems (ICSs). Most of the communication activities by the government departments are influenced by the media landscape in the country, the political, socio and economic factors. The following section shall discuss the communication media for rural development in rural areas. The researcher shall further evaluate the aspects of communication presented here regarding their relevance to the rural parts of Zimbabwe and Gokwe South in particular. To achieve this, the history of the communication environment, as well as the district, shall be discussed. The study shall also consider the present social, political and economic state of Zimbabwe and GSRD. While there is a plethora of communication media available for use in health, education and agriculture, it is essential to ascertain their relevance and appropriateness to the GSRD of Zimbabwe.

4.2 Communication flows within government organisations

Communication flows or patterns represent the direction in which information or communication takes within and outside government departments. Scholars often explain communication flow in organisations with less reference to development communication (Shajahan, 2007; Devito, 2009; Kaul, 2014). Emphasis on organisational communication makes communication primarily viewed as a management function in governments, neglecting government communication in rural development. However, understanding communication flows in development communication is essential. This understanding is necessary because, in government departments, communication extends to the public. Therefore, government communication for rural development occurs as both internal (within government departments) and external (between government departments and the public).

4.2.1 Top-down or downward communication

Top-down or downward communication involves the hierarchical and the methodological transfer of information from executives occupying top posts within the government departments to their subordinate officials. It then extends to the ordinary public whom they

serve. The role of executives is to disseminate instructions and information to the officials and the public, whose responsibility is to execute and implement the instructions and act upon the information. In government departments, the dissemination of such information is through various channels. These channels include print media like circulars, memos, brochures, newspapers, broadcast media via radio and television, and ICTs like social media, websites, and podcasts to the government officials at the local level. Government officials, in turn, disseminate the information to the public through the same or other means. Other forms in which top-down communication takes place can be at meetings and through folk media. A clear structure and hierarchy in organisations enhance efficiency in clarity of information, specific objectives and goals.

The setback of the above approach is that it is authoritarian, and the levels of satisfaction on the part of the officials and the public are often low. In addition, the local officials and the people only work on instructions that do not regard their abilities, skills, and needs and interests. In development communication, top-down communication emerged during the modernisation era as organisations used mass media to disseminate information to develop underdeveloped societies. Top-down communication survived this era until the social marketing era where it was considered vital to market development matters on a commercial basis. This move was a significant attempt to shift from the dominant information paradigm engrained within the hypodermic needle theory or the silver bullet perspective (Melkote & Steeves, 2015; Rogers, 1962; Rogers, 1975; Rogers, 1995). The application of the social marketing approach (top-down) proved successful in health matters, especially in family planning issues. However, social marketing critics accused it of taking the top-down approach to communication, its inclination to the commercial aspects, and failure to address other subtle issues rooted in societies' cultural and religious aspects. Instead of social marketing, social mobilisation can be a possible intervention.

Social mobilisation is a strategic intervention applied in rural development programmes. It attempts to redress the weaknesses of top-down communication by placing the responsibility of development amongst the locals. However, the social mobilisation approach was evaluated in a study by Obregón and Waisbord (2010), who made significant observations in Polio Eradication Initiatives (PEI) in Africa and Asia. According to them, top-down and bottom-up communication approaches were insufficient in the Polio Eradication Initiative communication. They, therefore, argued against using top-down communication to disseminate pre-established goals. Successful social mobilisation approaches are those that

are collaborative, allowing for the participation of all the involved parties and can be at global, regional, national and local levels (Obregón and Waisbord, 2010). Given the importance of collaboration, communication should not only be top-down but be bi-directional or symmetrical to address development matters successfully. Also important is the communication which comes from the public going up to the government organisations as upward communication. The upcoming section discusses bottom-up or upward communication in detail.

4.2.2 Bottom-up or upward communication

Bottom-up or upward communication is when messages and information originate from the public or the local officials, going up to the executives or when information takes the opposite direction of the top-down communication. This type of communication is often in the form of suggestions or feedback, and the media channels that the public can use include face-to-face meetings, letters, and suggestions. With the growth of the internet, most governments are establishing social media platforms where they can get simultaneous and timeous interactive feedback from the public. Favourable social media sites are WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and WeChat and Weibo, among others, depending on the regions and places. According to Pan, (2019), some of the big cities in China established the ‘*Fabo*’ or information release accounts on WeChat for the city governance to share information with the public. These were successful in encouraging a simultaneous exchange of information, dispelling rumours and identifying information gaps. Through social media sites, the public can send information up the channel without the hindrances of hierarchy and bureaucracy. The advantages of this form of communication are that the public is aware of the pertinent matters affecting them and can inform the executives about these issues as well as suitable approaches to addressing their specific needs.

4.2.3 Horizontal communication

Another flow of communication within organisations is horizontal, which occurs between people at the same level of authority. Horizontal communication could be executives communicating among themselves, department officials with other officials or among the rural public as peer communication. Such a form of communication promotes better coordination, collaboration and responsibility-sharing, resulting in attaining objectives. Another advantage of horizontal communication is that information travels quicker due to the reduced need of following protocols and procedures (Griffin & Moorhead, 2013) and is less

formal, meaning that government officials and the public can seek help from their peers with much ease. Involved parties equally feel responsible for development programs and therefore, in a position to effectively contribute to the success of the programs.

4.2.4 Multi-directional communication

The fourth organisational communication approach is a multi-directional approach encompassing bottom-up, top-down, and horizontal communication. This approach is most useful when it is contextual, and people communicate when it is necessary. The disadvantage of this approach is that communication may be chaotic and is suitable when the communicating parties are aware of their responsibilities. On the other hand, the aspect of diversity is vital in approaching different challenges in various ways. With an increase in the number of communication and the growth of new vistas brought about by versatile technologies, multiple approaches promote the timeous transfer of information in various directions.

4.2.5 External communication

External communication refers to communication that occurs between government departments and the public or any other stakeholders. Government departments can communicate with other government departments for purposes of coordination to ensure their efficiency in what is called boundary spanning. A practical approach can involve boundary spanners who operate across the departments, facilitating the exchange of information across the different government departments, taking cognisance of the need for coordination within these departments. In rural development, boundary spanning is essential because different departments can benefit from established infrastructure and community networks, as alluded to by Obregón & Waisbord (2010). They stated that the infrastructure and networks built for polio immunisation were also used for other health campaigns. In this case, infrastructure and networks developed for one department can be used to support other development programmes by other departments in GSRD.

Bi-directional communication is also known as lateral or two-way symmetrical communication. Within this pattern, communication is bilateral, from the executives within the government departments to the public via the local government officials and vice-versa. According to Grunig (1989), this form of approach ensures mutual benefit and respects the interests of all the parties involved. If communication within government is bi-directional, possibilities of participation are greater. The aspect of participation is within the alternative or

participatory paradigm of development. Also, in support of this approach are the Freirean and the decoloniality perspectives. The Freirean view supports the notion of dialogue for the greater good and the decoloniality perspective advocates for people’s freedom to be actively involved in the process of communication for their development.

The discussion above elaborated on different patterns and directions that communications can take within government organisations and departments. The sections which follow present a discussion of controlled and uncontrolled media, the government department structures and how communication concerning development issues in GSRD takes place.

4.3 Controlled and uncontrolled media

The state of media in Zimbabwe was succinctly presented by Moyo (2003), taking into account the Zimbabwean colonial history. This history is part of the economic, political and cultural factors which immensely influenced the media’s development and continues to play a role in its operations (Manoim, 1985; Dombo, 2018). Presently, Zimbabwe has a total of 10 State newspaper publications *The Herald*, *The Sunday Mail*, *H-Metro* and *Kwayedza* from Harare, the capital city and, *The Chronicle*, *The B-Metro* and *Umthunywa* from Bulawayo, the second capital city. Publications like *The Midlands Observer* and *The Gweru Times* are from the Midlands province. There is also *The Manica Post* from Mutare in Manicaland Province. Table 4.1 below illustrate more on government-controlled media.

Table 4:1 State Media Publications adapted from Moyo, L (2003) and updated by author

Name of Paper	City and Province	Language	Type of publication
The Herald	Harare	English	Daily
The Sunday Mail	Harare	English	Weekly
The Chronicle	Harare	English	Daily
Umthunywa	Bulawayo	Ndebele	Weekly
B Metro	Bulawayo	English	Daily
H Metro	Harare	English	Weekly
Kwayedza	Harare	Shona	Weekly
The Manica Post	Mutare	English	Weekly
The Midlands Observer/ Gweru Times	Gweru/ Midlands	English	Daily

There are also private media operating in the country, and these include *The Daily News*, *Business Weekly*, *The Financial Gazette*, *The Zimbabwean Independent*, *The Zimbabwean Standard*, *Newsday*, *The Mail*, *iHarare.com* and many more. The Zimbabwean government has highly regulated the media since the pre-independence era. The laws which were used include the Official Secrets Act, Public Order and Security Act (POSA), and Access to

Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). The AIPPA was recently replaced by the Freedom of Information Act which is yet to be fully evaluated to assess its impact on the mediascape. The media accused the previous laws of frustrating their operations. Reports of threats and intimidations are frequent and the media arena in Zimbabwe is highly politicised. Table 4.2 below illustrates private publications and their ownership in Zimbabwe.

Table 0:2 Private publications Adapted from Moyo, L (2003) and updated by author

Name of Paper	City and Province	Owner	Language	Frequency
The Daily News	Harare	Associated Newspaper of Zimbabwe (ANZ)	English	Daily
Business Weekly	Harare	Alpha Media Holdings	English	Weekly
Bulawayo News 24	Harare	Private	English	Daily
The Financial Gazette	Bulawayo	Modus Publications	English	Weekly
The Harare Tribune	Harare	Private	English	Weekly
The Mail	Mutare		English	Weekly
Newsday	Harare	Alpha Media Holdings	English	Daily
Southern Eye	Harare	Private	English	Daily
The Standard	Harare	Alpha Media Holdings	English	Weekly
The Zimbabwean	Harare	Alpha Media Holdings	English	Weekly
Zimbabwean Independent	Harare	Alpha Media Holdings	English	Weekly

There is significant online presence of media in Zimbabwe with more than 50 online publications. These are free from government control and often unleash scathing attacks on the government. However, the online publications often target the diaspora community but are marred with quality and lack of professionalism. From tables 4.1 and 4.2, both government-controlled and private media mainly target big cities in the country. The observation is worse among private media. This means that the few publications with the potential of penetrating the rural areas are state-regulated. The little information which the rural folk is likely to receive is prone to be unbalanced. In terms of government communication for rural development, this might not matter much. However, the primary concern is that much of the information might not be relevant to rural communities because the media is far from and disconnected from these areas. There are no community publications available in rural areas of Zimbabwe. As such, development-related content

might not be available in rural areas and in cases where they receive publications, the information would probably be less relevant.

4.4 Media Relations (in government communication for development)

The upcoming section discusses how the government relates to the media. It is crucial to paint a holistic picture of the relationship between the media and the government. A clear picture helps give an understanding of how the government uses or can use the media for rural development. Therefore, this section briefly discusses the Zimbabwean media from the colonial period to date.

4.4.1 Brief Zimbabwean colonial history

The History of Zimbabwe during the colonial epoch is key to this literature review as it illuminates the environment which influenced the government communication practices. Like most African countries, Zimbabwe is a former British colony and survived under British rule until 1980, when the country obtained its independence. Zimbabweans faced oppression, which resulted in the armed struggles for freedom. Grievances among the natives included taxation (hut tax, cattle tax, etc.) and the loss of fertile land and their relocation to less productive land in reserves. The colonial government passed other oppressive laws post the 1st Chimurenga, and these included the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 and the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951. These laws resulted in the resettlement of many natives in reserves, including Gokwe. Gokwe had an unfavourable climate and was malaria and tsetse infested (Ranger, 1982; Nyambira, 2002). The resettlement of the natives removed them from their fertile lands, thereby making room for the settlers.

There were a series of wars, beginning with the Anglo Ndebele war in 1893. The 1st Chimurenga followed this war in 1896 and then the 2nd Chimurenga (1964-1979), which culminated in Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. During the colonial era, the governance of present-day Zimbabwe was under the British South African Company (BSAC) until 1923. The Southern Rhodesia government took reigns from 1923 to 1953, and the Federation of Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland ruled the country between 1953 and 1963. There was a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) in 1964 when the state declared itself independent from Britain, which dissolved the federation. The country became the Republic of Rhodesia. The native government renamed the country the Republic of Zimbabwe when it attained independence in 1980 after the war of liberation (2nd Chimurenga 1966-1979) from the white minority rule.

The natives fought for an end to minority rule and the right to vote, amongst other grievances which included inequality in terms of jobs, education and health services. One other crucial complaint was freedom of the press and access to information. The colonial government passed repressive laws, including the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) of 1960, which prohibited people from expressing themselves and association. This law meant the muzzling of the media and resulted in the banning of the *Daily African News* publication. The focus of communication during this era by the government was self-service rather than serving the public. The main objective was to prevent citizens from rising against the government. The aspect of rural development was far from being the objective of the colonial government to warrant a substantive discussion. Still, the colonial government communication approaches can provide the bases of understanding development communication post-independence. The following section will focus on broad government communication during the colonial era.

4.4.2 Communication media in Zimbabwe

Diffusions of innovation theories (Rogers, 1989) formed the basis of communication during the pre-independence era, which ended with the attainment of independence by Zimbabwe in 1980. The government believed in the power of media to transform the natives from traditional (uncivil) to modern (civilised). Fair (1989), made the same observation and considered the media as capable of multiplying the benefits of development. However, the communication was not concerned with the livelihoods of the natives such that media was generally used for public relations and political communication to maintain control over the natives. The next section shall discuss communication channels during the colonial era. The section covers the following issues; newspaper publications, broadcast media (Radio and TV) and indigenous communication methods or systems (ICSs).

Newspaper publication before independence in Zimbabwe

There were different publication categories, some for the white minority like *The Rhodesian Herald* and *The Chronicle* and others for the natives. Publications for the natives included *Rhodesian Native Quarterly*, *The Native Mirror*, *The Harvester* and *The Recorder*. The government later merged the publications for the natives to form *The African Daily News*. *The Native Mirror* or *The Mirror* had vernacular versions; *Isibuko in Ndebele* and *Chiringiro* in Shona. Ownership of the publications meant for the natives revolved around private players, e.g., Bertram and Cedric Paver and the missionaries (Dutch Reformed Church and

the Catholic Church) (Chinembiri 1988; Moyo 2003). While the missionaries in the country were producing reading material focusing on Christianity, they also assisted in getting the natives educated. The government, however, maintained some level of control through funding the publications and later passing regulatory laws, which culminated in the banning of the publications, which promoted resistance among the natives.

Most importantly, the power of media had been realised, the realisation of the importance of the use of local language whose significance continues to be discovered by development communication scholars. The scholars based their argument on the premise that the use of local language is empowering and relevant for sustainable development (Salawu, 2006, 2018). The newspaper publications used local dialects (Chikaranga, Chindau and Chizezuru), merged into a unified language, Chishona, the rationale being that the local languages were empowering and appropriate for sustainable development. Despite the little concern for the societal transformation of the lives of the natives in Zimbabwe by the colonial government, some issues covered by publications in Zimbabwe during the colonial era were to do with education, health and agriculture. However, they had little significance to rural development. The approach of communication for rural development purposes during the colonial era is difficult to ascertain as it was piecemeal and sought to protect the interests of the colonialists.

The publications and all communications sought to ensure enough education for the natives to take up clerical jobs and other jobs that were deemed not essential and appropriate for the settlers. There is no recorded information on the government communication approach regarding health matters during the colonial era. Available limited records provide limited information on agriculture and education. In terms of agriculture, the government encouraged missionary publications to include agriculture matters, culminating in a dedicated publication called *The Harvester or Mukohwi*. The *Harvester's* thrust only served to help natives produce just enough for survival. After the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965, the government began to make use of demonstrators who served as extension officers. This was to teach farmers better production methods, especially cash crops such as cotton. Nyambira, (2002) opines that the primary purpose for this was to increase production to boost the national economy and sustain the nation in the wake of sanctions that had crippled the export of tobacco. The focus on teaching farmers better methods of cash crop production might have had little to do with rural development from the government's perspective but was coincidentally beneficial to the lives of the rural dwellers.

The colonialists had occupied much of the native's productive land and grew high earning crops and rearing animals in these areas. They relocated natives to less desirable parts of the country, including Gokwe, which is the focus of this thesis. Publications like the *Home Teacher* or *The Recorder* serviced education, mainly targeting teachers. The missionaries were the ones who were more concerned about the education of the natives. The government welcomed this aspect as it kept the natives educated enough to take up clerical jobs and assist in the administration. The colonial government felt a need for monitored publications that provided the natives with guided information that did not encourage them to be subversive.

Broadcast media during the colonial era

During the colonial era, the government introduced TV in Zimbabwe. The country was one of the first in Africa to have a television in the 1950s. Television was only used by the rich. The natives were starting to get educated to be able to take up well-paying jobs to afford luxuries like TV. Only a few natives had adequate education to be employed in high earning positions. Even so, in most cases, they were not paid at the same level as their white counterparts. In terms of radio, the government strictly monitored the content of the only two radio stations which were in operation. The Broadcasting Services Act, passed in 1960, prohibited broadcasting by private players, reserving broadcasting rights to the government. Radio was mainly for entertainment among the natives. Like print publications, radio was used primarily for public relations and political purposes by the colonial government. Besides attempting to prevent any form of an uprising, very little can be spoken about in terms of rural development communication on radio or TV in Zimbabwe during the colonial era.

Indigenous communication during the colonial era

Traditional aspects of communication are an indigenous cultural aspect of the Zimbabwean culture, and this takes the form of music, poetry, dance, masquerades, and theatre (Moyo, 2003). The indigenous people used these for sharing information, education and entertainment during traditional ceremonies before the colonial era. Traditional leaders, as well as religious leaders and spirit mediums (*Masvikiro*), officiated these functions, guiding their people. Despite these being the centre of tradition, the colonialists, through missionaries, castigated these beliefs and regarded them as uncivil and evil. As a result, they were not used effectively by the colonial administration. However, the colonial administration recognised traditional leaders and worked with them. This recognition might as well have been an attempt to pass their information to the masses. The first indication was by Cecil John Rhodes

seeking concessions from the Ndebele leaders like Mzilikazi and Lobengula. Traditional leaders were valued to ensure control over the natives, and this had little or nothing to do with the betterment of the livelihood of the people residing in the rural areas of Zimbabwe. Indigenous forms of communication were dominant amongst the natives during the liberation struggles. They were used to boost morale, entertain and inform the public of the developments regarding war.

4.5 Government communication: Post-independence Era

Under the leadership of President Robert Mugabe and Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), the government of Zimbabwe sought to redress the injustices of the colonialists when they assumed power in 1980. The nation witnessed improvements in agriculture, education and health. Agriculture was an essential economic driver in the country. The use of agriculture extension officers, initiated by the colonialists, continued. The new government redefined the policy of increasing productivity for sustenance and commercial purposes. The government deployed resources towards improvements in these areas. The government established schools, hospitals and clinics in rural areas of Zimbabwe. In education, the plan was to encourage parents to send their children (both boys and girls) to school. The government used print and broadcast media to inform parents about the importance of education (basic education and adult literacy). The upcoming section shall discuss communication post-independence. First, the section shall discuss the media regulations in relation to the regulation pre-independence and then government communication concerning rural development. The section shall conclude with a discussion of the use of modern communication technologies (ICTs)

4.5.1 Regulation of media after independence

Government communication post-independence era was characterised by heavy political influence, resulting in the use of regulations to control the media. The same pre-independence media challenges regarding repression still existed post-independence. The mischievous media laws included the Broadcasting Act (2001), The Public Order and Security Act (POSA) (2002), Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) (2002) and the Criminal Defamation Act. The above acts have caused many challenges in the media environment. These included the intimidation of media practitioners publishing anything against the government. The new Freedom of Information Act enacted in July 2020 is yet to be assessed to prove whether it brings absolute freedom or is simply the same oppressive law

with a new name. The appointment of government loyalists to editorial and executive positions in media institutions and on media regulatory boards also compromised professionalism. The government soon acquired publications in print media which would act as its mouthpiece, and monopolised broadcast media backed by the Broadcasting Act. The consequences of these factors to development communication are that the local print media became an untrusted source of information perceived to be a government tool for political dominance. Room for private media became limited in the nation due to political control and repressive laws. The other drastic effect was the shunning of local media, resulting in the increased use of international channels for entertainment and news accessed through DSTV and other pirate radio stations broadcasting from outside the country.

4.5.2 Broadcasting for development: Post-independence

State monopoly is visible in broadcast media in Zimbabwe. The airwaves are not open for private players. There were only two state-controlled television stations, the *ZTV1* and *ZTV2*. During the study, there were new changes at ZBC, and new stations became operational, replacing ZTV. New stations are ZBC Tv, ZBC News 24 and ZBC JIVE. However, this thesis references ZTV in most circumstances in the study as the changes came after data collection. According to Moyo, (2001) the Broadcasting Services Act of 2001 protects entry into this market. The country has six government radio stations: Khulumani, Central Radio, Radio Zimbabwe, Power FM, National FM, and *Classics 263*. There are about 15 private radio stations in the country. These include *ZiFM*, *Star FM*, *Nehanda Radio*, *Diamond FM*, *YA FM*, *Skys Metro FM*, *Nyaminyami FM*, *Breeze FM*, *Capitalk FM*, *Radio Voice of the People*, *SW Radio Africa*, *Zimbo FM* and *(Voice of America) VOA Zimbabwe*. Two new radio stations *95.8 Central Radio* and *98.4 Midlands*, would complement Power FM Zimbabwe in the Midlands province.

There has been a noticeable opening of airwaves with regards to radio stations in Zimbabwe. Their survival is because they are inconsequential to the existence of the government and mainly deal with music and entertainment. Politicians aligned with the ruling party own some of the radio stations. In avoidance of state influence and regulation, some radio stations operate from outside the country, e.g. the *Voice of the People* and *Voice of Africa (VOA) Zimbabwe*, which operates from Netherlands and America.

However, despite the Zimbabwean government's iron handedness and several complaints against its regulations, the media also addressed critical life issues, especially in the period

before the 2002 elections. The government of Zimbabwe funded the Media for Development company, whose role was to produce developmental films and saw the production of films such as *Yellow Card*, *Neria*, *Consequences* and *More Time* (Moyo, 2003). These films were broadcasted on national media to address societal issues and challenges. They dealt with health matters, domestic violence and education, among others.

4.5.3 Use of ICTs in government communication.

Information and communication technologies are growing in the country, just like in many other nations. According to CIA World Fact Book (2018), about 3 363 256, which is 23.1% of Zimbabwe's total population, were active internet users in 2016. The government presence on the internet has also grown. The national president and other government principals have active accounts on social media sites like Twitter and Facebook. Government-controlled media is also present online. For example, *The Herald*, *The Chronicle* and *The Sunday Mail* post their news on their websites. People can listen to radio stations on the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) website. Online broadcasting is an indication and appreciation that there is a sizable audience available online. However, issues with regards to financial challenges have culminated into a digital social divide. Limitations of ICTs usage in Zimbabwe, particularly in rural areas, are costs, technology literacy, accessibility and affordability. Dombo et al. (2014), identified these challenges in their study, adding that training, reducing tariffs and improving accessibility have the potential of helping the nation benefit from ICTs.

4.5.4 Social media usage in Zimbabwe

There has been an increasing presence of Zimbabwean citizens online over recent years, mainly to keep in touch with relatives and friends in the diaspora Dombo et al., (2014). Social media usage depends on access to the internet and the ability to use the internet effectively. Lacking these may have negative effects on society, which include the creation of a digital divide. According to the World Bank (2014), internet usage in Zimbabwe stood at 15.7% in 2011, steadily growing from 0.8% in 2000. Potraz (2017) recently recorded 49.5% active internet users in the country. Now many people have phones which support web browsers and WhatsApp applications. This exponential growth of ICTs and social media usage in the country provides a channel for the government and its institutions to communicate with people and print and broadcast media. ICTs and social media have several advantages, including combining text, audio, and video in the sharing of content. They also allow people

to send immediate feedback, unlike print and broadcast media which are one-directional. Social media usage sparked interest among academics in Zimbabwe. Most of these studies focused on social media and politics or democracy, discussing how social media allowed people to voice their concerns (Mpofu, 2013; Mhiripiri & Mutsvairo, 2014; Mare, 2016; Gukurume, 2017). Other studies on social media usage in Zimbabwe focused on education, notably higher and tertiary education (Zanamwe et al., 2013; Mbengo, 2014; Mabweazara, 2014).

4.5.5 Media technologies for rural development

Africa is on the path of development, and communication has been a vital asset in health, education and agriculture Mago & Mago, (2015). Crucially, its strategic application has helped in sound, value-laden communication, which has assisted in information sharing and education of the rural populace. The media application has been capable of changing behaviour and mobilising people towards social change. The same way the use of media technologies has improved education in higher and tertiary learning as what Mbengo (2014), Zanamwe et al. (2013), and Mabweazara, (2014) observe in their separate studies, is applicable in education in rural development. If government departments fine-tune media technologies and include them in the communication strategy and implementation, development goals become a possibility. Researches identified opportunities offered by development communication in rural development (Ugboajah, 1986; Leeuwis, 2004; Choudhury, 2011; Imoh, 2013; Melkote and Steeves, 2015 & Servaes, 2016). Progress, in terms of technologies, also helps make communication more accessible and effective.

Development communication researchers in Africa have also identified the efficiencies of indigenous communication in rural development (Salawu, 2004; Salawu & Crowder, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Dastile, 2015). Early research into development communication relegated indigenous communication to the periphery. However, recent studies suggest its strategic employment and integration with other forms of communication (Imoh, 2013; Wilkins et al., 2014; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). Integrating ICTs and indigenous forms of communication is becoming prominent in some African nations and yet to be incorporated and tried in-depth in Zimbabwe. Van Stam, (2014) suggests integrating ICTs and traditional forms of communication to create teachers for the coming generations. Masinde (2013), and Jiri et al. (2016), discuss the importance of ICTs integration and indigenous knowledge

systems in agriculture. This study deduces that indigenous knowledge systems and means of communication are highly useful in rural development.

4.6 Appropriateness of media in rural areas of Zimbabwe

The preceding sections unpacked much on the media of communication and particularly for rural development. The sections also illuminated the communication climate in Zimbabwe. This section will further explore the suitability and relevance of various media, taking cognisance of the social, economic and political factors in rural areas. A study in India by Banerjee, (2011) concluded that ICTs were useful in the marketing of agricultural produce, increasing profits. ICTs allowed the overriding of go-betweens who often underpaid farmers. ICTs linked farmers directly with the market and sources of inputs and provided a vital source of knowledge and information. Another study in India observed that TV and radio were crucial sources of development information in agriculture and education (Das, 2010). However, the use of ICTs and modern forms of media are suitable in countries with developed communication infrastructure. Infrastructure is an essential aspect of modern communication systems. Nonetheless, its inadequacy in Zimbabwe is a critical impediment in the use of modern forms of communication and ICTs for rural development in rural areas.

Scholars who have debunked the hypodermic needle effects of mass media accepted that TV and Radio could not change human behaviour. On the other hand, they acknowledged fusing educational, awareness and informative programmes on social issues with entertainment as useful in social and behavioural change. This practice is called edutainment, and the South African government established Soul City Institute to address social ills through entertaining TV and radio programmes. Issues addressed are HIV/Aids, gender violence and education, among others.

Sadly, in most rural Zimbabwe, there is poor or no TV and radio reception such that developmental programs might not be able to reach the intended audience. Some areas may have access to TV and radio reception or make use of podcasts, audio or video CDs, but they would still face the challenges of affordability. Many people in rural areas survive on less than \$1 per month, and it is difficult for them to afford media gadgets. China introduced connected speakers (Zhao, 2005), which is the cheaper alternative to communicate over short distances. If the distance between households is long, it would require longer cables which makes the option expensive, and this is the case with the arrangement of homes in rural areas of Zimbabwe. Most African countries established community telecentres, but their usage,

according to a study by Breitenbach (2013), was limited. This limited usage was due to long distances to telecentres and social factors. For example, men did not allow women to go and use the facilities. Another limiting factor was computer literacy which is low among rural dwellers. Such factors can limit the use of ICT's, social media and ultimately, e-government and e-participation in development programmes by the rural populace.

Poor road network links in rural areas delay the delivery of daily newspapers in remote regions of the country. The delay inhibits the effectiveness of newspapers in rural development. Governments are, however, working towards improving the communication infrastructure of most rural parts of their countries. As a result, cell phone reception is significantly improving.

Community radio has received much acknowledgement as useful in the development and promotion of participatory communication. Notable achievements were by Sutatenza radio in Canada (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001). Radio allows marginalised sections of the society like women to participate in development communication, as observed by Matewa in a study carried out in Zimbabwe Matewa, (2003). Baccarani et al., (2012) on community radio found out that community radio is closer to the communities and promotes participation, as in the case of Forte Community Radio in South Africa (Manyozo, 2010). Community radio enables the two-way symmetrical model of communication where all involved parties benefit. Community radio stations employ locals who get involved in content production and the communication process. In Zimbabwe, the establishment of community radios has not been successful. The lack of success might be due to the absence of political will and the unavailability of financial resources.

Current studies in development communication are increasingly acknowledging the indigenous forms of communication as vital in rural development. This acknowledgement stems from the argument that they are capable of bringing behavioural change Rico, (2008).

Exclusion of rural people by media

Media consciously or unconsciously excluded people, preventing their active participation in development initiatives. There are many factors by which the media subconsciously pushes people to the periphery. These exclusionary factors include the following:

- **Poverty**

The colonial history of the country and the injustices of the colonial era remain a significant impediment to the application of communication for rural development in several ways. In Zimbabwe, the colonial era relocated many people from their prime land to areas like Gokwe with a bad agricultural climate and insufficient rainfall. In the process, people lost their wealth in the form of livestock, leaving them impoverished. Poverty itself disempowered people and placed them in a state where they could not afford modern communication gadgets like television sets and radios.

- **Poor infrastructure**

Apart from that, Gokwe is far from areas with developed infrastructure like roads and other amenities. The television signal is not available in most parts of the district, and the radio signal is poor. The weak signal makes it difficult for most people to access rural development communication on electronic media.

- **Affordability**

Most people in the district cannot afford ICT gadgets, let alone the highly-priced internet and data packages. Despite the promises offered by ICTs, most people in the rural parts of Gokwe can't afford the technologies. Community radios are not available in the district, and those who can access the problematic signal are only able to access national radio stations. There are also no available telecentres to mitigate the lack of ICT gadgets and the high costs of data packages. Government agents also experience all these challenges, just like the public. AREX officials, veterinary officers, teachers, nurses and health care providers cater for people who are in remote parts that are difficult to reach as a result of poor roads. They need ICTs and other electronic gadgets to communicate with rural folk easily.

4.7 Gokwe south media diet

This section discusses the media preferences of the people of Gokwe South in the wake of available media options. As a result of colonialism, western media like radio and television have seen significant growth in Gokwe South. However, the economy's downturn limits consumption of these forms of media as people cannot afford radios and television sets. Another significant challenge is powering these gadgets. Most households in the district are not connected to the electricity grid and can barely afford solar panels and batteries to power the devices, especially television. Those who can afford solar and batteries resort to radios

that require less expensive equipment to power them (Matewa, 2003). A few of those who manage to afford the radio sets listen to the radio stations and play music on CDs or memory cards for entertainment. There is a growing need for entertainment in the district and affording mass media gadgets is a status symbol.

The consumption of print media is the one suffering the most as most people lack the disposable income to buy newspapers regularly, including a few employed civil servants. All media houses and publishers are in cities. There is only one functional radio station called 'Power FM' within the province. The rest are broadcasted nationally from other provinces (Tables 4.1 and 4.2). Television reception for the sole television station is also problematic within the district. There is also no functional local newspaper such that newspapers are published and transported from the other cities. The government has indicated an interest in introducing community media, but that has not happened in the district.

Information centres were in the process of being rolled out during the time of the study. At the present moment, there is no study or report on their usage or their impact within GSRD. However, cell phones are also seeing an increase in use. The rise in cellphone usage could be probably due to affordable smartphones and the need to communicate with family members in cities or abroad. It is, however, the desire of most people to own a smartphone to be able to use them for social media. There are no available statistics on media or ICT usage, and this discussion is based on general observations. Therefore, this study will attempt to collect data on this to substantiate data collected through the FDGs and interviews. Traditional forms of media remain another form of entertainment. Still, the value continues to dwindle, not many opportunities are created for indigenous forms of media, and the impact of western cultures is a significant threat to indigenous forms of media. Also, indigenous forms of media are often regarded as evil due to the influence of Christianity to the extent that many people would want to disassociate themselves from most traditional practices. The impact of colonialism and colonality is noted in this area such that decoloniality becomes essential to remind the rural people that their culture, tradition, beliefs, values and ways of communication and entertainment are not evil. Studies on the essence of decoloniality in rural development are still on the periphery and this research shall attempt to explore this aspect further.

4.8 Conclusion

The above chapter discussed the communication climate in Zimbabwe during the colonial and post-colonial era. It also presented an exploration of the different ways in which

communication occurred in Zimbabwe. It further revealed ways in which colonisation had a bearing on the present-day communication for rural development. Also, the chapter elucidated the appropriateness of different communication approaches to rural development communication in Zimbabwe and the factors resulting in the exclusion of the rural people by various forms of media. From the arguments presented, the study can conclude that redressing past injustices empowers the rural people to be involved in the process of rural development communication.

CHAPTER 5: DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION IN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS (AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND EDUCATION)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores literature related to development communication for agriculture, health and education. The chapter also further presents development communication in government departments responsible for rural development, focusing on agriculture, health and education. Crucially, the study selected these three areas of focus because of their perceived high level of relevance and importance in development in Gokwe South Rural District (GRSD). This section explores how communication occurs within these departments regarding the flow or patterns of communication and the directions that communication takes. The chapter considers who communicates, in what circumstances and the way communication takes place. This consideration will incorporate the departments' organisational structures and communication flow with the public and other departments. The final focus will be the impact of communication on the operations of selected departments in GSRD development. Notable communication patterns are top-down (downward), bottom-up (upward), horizontal, bi-direction and multi-direction. These flows occur within organisations or also externally with stakeholders. Edutainment is also one key aspect employed in Africa for purposes of rural development in education, agriculture and health development. The chapter further explores social marketing and clarifies the misconceptions existing between infotainment and edutainment as development communication strategies with government institutions. Also, a concern of the insensitivity of top-down communication to cultural issues and its failure to influence social, behavioural change and promote participation, particularly through mass media, are raised and discussed. In addition, the unaffordability of ICTs as channels for the public to access and share information remains a limiting factor that has resulted in ICSs becoming recognised as a useful alternative in rural development. The suggestion to integrate all communication channels and the necessity for strategically applying them in the process of communication in development initiatives is worth noting. The chapter concludes by discussing integration as the strategy which could incorporate the various forms of communication, providing an alternative to development communication. This alternative can assimilate the strengths from different communication approaches to provide

a much more effective communication strategy for rural development by government institutions.

5.2 Development communication within the department of agriculture

The government’s ministry of agriculture runs agriculture matters in the country. The department of agriculture and rural development extension (AREX) mainly oversees crop production and the veterinary and technical services that deal with livestock matters. AREX has extension officers known as *Madhumeni* or *Abomdhumeni* in Shona or Ndebele, respectively. These officials are at different places in the district for the administration of agriculture activities. The veterinary technical services department has veterinary officers across the district, just like AREX. In a discussion of government communication, these are government representatives doing government work in agriculture-related rural development in the rural parts of Zimbabwe.

Governance in Zimbabwe takes the three-tier system, and these are national, provincial and district, as illustrated in figure 5.1 below. The national level comprises the minister, secretary, and directors. The provincial-level consists of regional heads of departments and staff. At the district level (local level), there are department heads as well as the local staff.



Figure 0:1 Department of Agriculture organisational structure

Figure 5.1 illustrates the structure of the department of agriculture, and within these, different patterns and flows of communication can occur for rural development purposes. The following section elaborates on communication between the department of agriculture and the public and the different communication systems.

The communication occurs between the department of agriculture and the public and is mainly through government officials known as extension officers. These make use of indigenous forms of communication during meetings or face-to-face with the farmers within the communities. Special functions like field days are a platform for addressing farmers on crucial agriculture issues. During these functions, indigenous forms of media like drama, plays and songs by local groups and individuals educate farmers on important agricultural matters. Extension officers can meet farmers at business centres, through village farm visits, or specific requests by farmers to share relevant information. The department of agriculture adopted ICTs for educational purposes. Extension officers can share information with farmers, and the latter can ask questions via ICT channels like mobile phone calls, SMSs, social media chats and chat groups etc. Thus, broadcast media thus TV and Radio are used at the national or regional level to educate farmers through educational programmes. These programmes can be initiated by the ministry or radio stations, just like within the ministries of education and health. In these programmes, experts are invited to the stations to share information, and farmers can call in to ask questions or to share their experiences. Examples of such programs are *Kugona kurima* which is on ZiFm radio station, *Murimi wanhasi* and Talking farming on ZTV.

Many people residing in rural areas rely on agriculture for survival, mostly subsistence farming for survival. As such, agriculture is a crucial aspect of rural development. The use of extension officers was another critical method in which communication in agriculture manifested itself. The continued existence of the phenomenon means that there are noticeable benefits. The following section explores in detail extension as part of communication in agriculture.

5.2.1 Extension in agriculture

Over the years, there has been a ubiquitous use of extension to educate farmers on innovative farming methods to increase productivity. According to Swanson et al. (1997), extension progressively structuralised from the period before the 18th century across Europe, first as an

extension of universities meant to spread literacy and information to societies until the idea began to focus more on farming as it is presently known.

Extension in agriculture is a continuous process of educating people and helping them with the required information and techniques regarding using modern knowledge and technologies in farming to increase agricultural productivity (Swanson & Claar, 1984). Over the years, extension passed through stages of modification until recently when there was a shift in approach from a traditional style that focused on disseminating information to a more interactive and participatory-based approach as suggested by Swanson & Claar (1984) and Leeuwis (2004). Leeuwis, in his book, suggests a shift from the traditional “extension” to the uses of modern communication practices (2004:11). He also believes that participation and communication should allow people to influence the government organisations’ decisions, thus effecting two-way communication or two-way symmetrical communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

The use of extension officers is one of the Ministry of Agriculture's strategies to promote agricultural growth in Zimbabwe. However, there have been changes in the form of challenges faced by farmers, including lack of information on good farming practices, access to improved technologies and information on markets and climate change, amongst others. One other example extension farmers interaction with the rural areas in Nigeria was through a study by Falaki & Adegbija (2013). They investigated the use of media to disseminate information on climate change to farmers in North Central Nigeria. Their study employed a quantitative survey through a self-administered questionnaire and reported findings through descriptive statistics. They found out that farmers received inadequate information through extension agents and battery-powered radios. Such a challenge is likely to be an issue in Zimbabwe, where many people cannot afford radios and energy to power them. Those who have radios may not benefit if adequate information is lacking on the radio, which in most cases, is a dominant channel of mass media in the rural areas. According to Falaki & Adegbija (2013), the chief constraints on information dissemination were low literacy levels amongst rural farmers and inadequate information for extension agents to disseminate. Moyo & Salawu, (2017) made the same findings in their study of communication by extension officers in Gweru, Zimbabwe.

In response to these challenges, Falaki & Adegbija, (2013) suggest the establishment of adult literacy classes to improve the usage of print media, which is another source of climate

information. They further indicate that more information on climate change should be disseminated through the radio as many people can access it through their battery-powered radios or shared listenership. Zimbabwe might adopt this and capacitate extension agents with enough information on climate change to pass to the farmers. The same issue of capacitating the extension agents was echoed by Moyo and Salawu (2017) in a more recent study conducted through a qualitative survey.

Besides these challenges faced by extension officers, they prompt their *modus operandi* to adapt to the changes. Considering this, (Leewis, 2004) suggests the reinvention of extension. Based on this call, this study sought to explore the employment of modern forms of development communication in extension work in the rural areas of Zimbabwe. These would include the participatory approaches to communication and the integration of different communication channels to ensure that information is disseminated effectively to the rural communities.

5.2.2 Broadcast and print media in agriculture communication

In its capacity to reach a widely spread heterogeneous audience, mass media can carry crucial agriculture information needed by the farmers in rural areas. Endeavours to take advantage of radio, television and even newspapers to disseminate important information in agriculture have been noticeable across the globe. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), the use of *Farm Radio* in Ghana recorded successes. The success of *Farm Radio* in Ghana is due to the accessibility and affordability of radio by farmers (Fiafor, 2014). Like most forms of mass media, radio is mainly one-directional. However, *Farm Radio* in Ghana has attempted to use participatory radio programmes where farmers get to participate in farming programmes on radio. In its operations, *Farm Radio* tries to help farmers improve productivity in terms of quality and quantity and link farmers with formal markets to sell their produce. Farmers in remote areas are also educated about sustainable production and post-harvest storage of their agricultural produce when working with national broadcasters. Channel Africa also has a programme called *Agro Africa* in South Africa. The channel targets the African continent, and it is informative in dealing with issues that can maximise production, creating food security on the continent.

Most people in Africa, especially in rural areas, cannot afford television sets, but TV plays a crucial role in agriculture as a source of information. In East Africa, Kenya, for example, has a reality programme called *Shamba Shape-Up*. In these reality shows, experts work with local

farmers to remodel their farms for maximum utilisation and production. Experts come from international organisations like the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (WFO, 2014). Agribusiness TV is also another initiative in Burkina Faso. Although the focus of this programme is promoting interest in agribusiness. Zimbabwe can emulate the idea of educating its rural farmers. Owing to its integration of both audio and visuals, TV can help disseminate agriculture information to the farmers and cannot be limited by literacy levels like print media.

Poignantly, with regards to the above, not much has been seen on the Zimbabwean media, particularly on the sole television station in the country (ZTV), except for a programme called *Talking Farming*, where guests discuss issues of farming in a talk show. However, this TV programme is accessible in the cities. The rural folk do not benefit from it because most of them cannot afford television sets, and there is no sound signal reception for the few who can afford TVs.

Radio or TV broadcast is often one-directional from national stations, limiting their success in rural development communication. Getting them to be more participatory and closer to rural communities to enhance their effectiveness has been explored, resulting in the establishment of community radio stations. These broadcast locally and are manned by local people. Employing the locals accords them an opportunity to participate in the process of communication. Radio Sutatenza in Columbia is one example of the success of community radio stations in rural development (Manyozo, 2010). South Africa has established community radio stations to cater to the local communities' informational needs (Tacchi, 2002; Olorunnisola, 2002; Madamaombe, 2005; Manyozo, 2009). Amongst these is the Forte community radio station established in collaboration with the University of Fort Hare and serves the people of Nkonkobe rural community Manyozo, 2009; Osunkunle, 2013). The people are familiar with the language used on community radio stations, and the approach resonates with their cultural expectations. This approach positions them for tremendous success in matters of rural development (Tyali, 2012). As a result of advances in technology, community radio stations can now also be listened to on simple mobile phones or smartphones via the internet (Megwa, 2007).

However, with all the benefits that community radio promises, they are not in operation in Zimbabwe. The possible reasons for not establishing community broadcasting and media could

be the lack of financial resources and legal constraints (Chuma, 2004; Olden et al., 2012). However, this makes rural communities lose on beneficial forms of communication closer to them and can facilitate local participation (Olorunnisola, 2002; Mhlanga, 2009; Manyozo, 2009). Print media is also crucial in the communication of agriculture information. Crucially, printed material can be used and kept for use at another stage (Fourie, 2007; Fourie, 2010; McQuail, 2010). Print media, be it newspapers, pamphlets, brochures, flyers, can be shared by different users and used at different times. Print media, especially newspapers, is essential because it can share information about markets and announcements on weather forecasts. Brochures and flyers can share agricultural information on seed varieties, animal breeds, how to grow or raise different breeds or varieties. FAO, (2001) posits that communicators must recognise that different communication channels are helpful for various purposes. Some are relevant when sharing knowledge, especially those that are one-directional, like print and radio. A study by Deshmuck et al. (2011) in India revealed that some peasant farmers adopted the techniques of farming presented in the Shetkari magazine. The study results are a clear sign that print media can be a valuable source of agricultural information. Although mainly used on commercial bases by companies selling agricultural inputs and equipment in Zimbabwe, print media remains useful in sharing farming information (Tshabangu, 2013; Dombo, 2014). In terms of information sharing by the government, print media seems to be constrained by financial resources. So, there are limited investments of print media for agriculture communication by the government in a country battling economic woes.

5.2.3 Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) in agriculture

There is a burgeoning usage of ICTs in Africa. While ICTs promise immense benefits and opportunities, it is necessary to match the growth in their use and that of agricultural production. ICTs can link farmers with information, agriculture innovations, financial services and fair markets Yonazi et al., 2012; Ugbuaajah, 1986). ICTs merge audio, text and video and, as a result, collect the benefits of all communication methods, thus offsetting the inherent individual weaknesses. They also allow people to access crucial information, mainly on computers or mobile phones. Fears are that ICTs can widen the gap between those who have and those who do not have. However, many people in rural areas own these devices. Some countries have established information centres or telecentres for farmers to access the computers connected to

the internet, such as South Africa's case (Breitenbach, 2013). In India, the use of ICTs managed to increase production and help farmers make profits because ICTs linked farmers directly with the market, overriding the middlemen who were underpaying them (Basu & Banerjee, 2011).

Farmers in villages can access crucial agriculture information on mobile phone platforms like *DrumNet* in Kenya. Mobile phones allow farmers to share information that helps protect the environment. *mFarmer*, introduced in most east African countries, is another way of successfully using mobile phones in this regard. *Esoko*, a digital platform that East African countries frequently use to share market data with farmers, is also a way to access fair prices for their produce. Zambia uses SMSs on mobile phones to share crucial information with farmers and another example of applying ICTs in rural development. The emergence of social media has also allowed farmers to join social media groups on WhatsApp or Facebook to get information and share their experiences. It is crucial to acknowledge the challenges of affordability among the rural folk because this might widen the gap between the rich and the poor instead of closing it, as what rural development aims to achieve.

In Zimbabwe, according to TechZim (2018), Econet, the largest mobile phone company, introduced the *Eco-farmer* programme, which services farmers. The objective is to allow farmers to access farming services via their mobile phones. The company also introduced *dial-a-mudhumeni* service where farmers could contact AREX officers by merely dialling a standard number. Eco-farmer also has the *mubatsiri* service, where farmers call a veterinary officer if they have livestock health-related problems. Issues of affordability and network infrastructure in rural parts of Zimbabwe limit the success of such ideas. While other African countries have established telecentres to afford the rural folk to access the internet, Zimbabwe is lagging with a few available government-commissioned internet centres only available in cities and towns.

Key GoZ development initiatives in agriculture

This section discussed key development programmes with the department of agriculture in GSRD. The government introduced the Command Agriculture, a nationwide programme under the Special Agriculture Production Programme alongside the Presidential Vulnerable Inputs Scheme and the Cotton Input Scheme giving input packs to rural farmers to deal with financial challenges experienced by farmers.

However, GoZ notes challenges in terms of reducing poverty, food and nutrition security inequalities and employment. The challenges revolve around the economy such that in 2018 the GoZ launched a Transitional Stabilisation Plan (STP). The other reason for the STP was to ensure that the GoZ was in line with its Vision 2030 objectives. Key to all these programmes was promoting broad-based citizenry participation in development initiatives (TSP, 2018), which substantiates that the government values public participation in development initiatives. These programmes were ongoing during the time of the study.

5.3 Rural development communication in health

The ministry of health is responsible for health issues in the country. The communication structure mostly occurs within the organisational structure illustrated in figure 5.2 below. Gokwe South Rural district has a general hospital and clinics spread across the district. These clinics are isolated, which makes it difficult for the rural population to access health care. However, the ministry also has community nurses within the department of health who visit the communities for health service provision. Community nurses and nurses stationed at clinics also work with local health caregivers known as *Vana Mbuya* or *Sekuru Hutano*, or *Utsanana*, depending on their gender. These would receive basic training for about six weeks to act as health extension workers and supplement the limited number of trained nurses. The next sections discuss the manner of communication within the department of health and how it occurs in rural areas.



Figure 0:2 Department of health organisational structure

5.3.1 Development communication for health within the health department

Health covers many related issues in societies, including child mortality, malnutrition, family planning, diseases (malaria, cholera, cancer, etc.), and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/Aids and other preventative measures such as male circumcision. These are development issues because they impact the betterment of the livelihoods in societies in many ways. These include the following: first, diseases require financial resources which could be allocated to other sectors to deal with them; for example, the purchase of anti-retroviral medicine (ARVs). Second, diseases such as HIV/Aids can lead to an increased number of orphaned children resulting in children and the community at large, encountering economic problems. Third, the country loses economically active people. Lastly, health issues reduce the number of people able to work, fending for themselves and their families, resulting in children withdrawing from school. All these have a severe impact on the social wellbeing of societies and the country’s economy.

Health-related challenges are problems that the government must address, and communication is one of the tools at its disposal. When employed well, such challenges have a minimal impact. Rico, (2008) suggested participatory communication research in focusing on health issues,

particularly HIV/Aids issues. Mass media are communication tools that can create awareness, but that is not enough to tackle health problems. An example of this is HIV/Aids, where sex discussion is taboo in most cultures. Most health issues like family planning and some diseases are culturally sensitive issues. Government and development agents should employ culturally appropriate communication approaches like local media, participatory and interactive strategies. Rico, (2008) argues that most interventions only promote social change and do not influence behavioural change. However, this approach is less sustainable compared with appealing to both behavioural and social change in health issues.

Social marketing involves the use of marketing principles for social good instead of profit. Although hailing from the commercial front, development communication practitioners have embraced and applied social marketing during an era between the modernisation and dependency paradigms. It was useful, particularly in matters of family planning in developing nations. Zimbabwe continues to apply social marketing in promoting the use of condoms to prevent the spread of STIs and HIV/Aids, as well as unwanted pregnancies. In this regard, it is common to see posters on beerhall walls, clinics and various adverts on radio and television, encouraging people to use a brand called protector plus condoms. It is companies seeking to boost their sales that engage in social marketing and not the government. The ministry of health has attempted to implement social marketing to promote family planning. This promotion is yielding significant results in the use of contraceptives but suffers financial challenges and resistance due to some cultural and religious factors. For instance, the Johanne Marange Sect, which practices polygamy, avoids using contraceptives, and members can have as many children as possible. Social marketing can reach a widely dispersed audience and encourages the use of products to benefit society. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Mozambique, Ghana and Kenya have already recorded success stories, according to Deep Kumar Tyagi (DKT) International, a non-governmental organisation. Governments in most developing countries continue to face financial challenges running social marketing programs. However, these can be useful when integrated with other means of communication in matters of health.

Edutainment is a strategy of educating while entertaining, attracting an audience and eventually changing their behaviour (Singhal & Rogers, 1999). This approach has been primarily employed in HIV/Aids issues to influence behavioural change among the audience. Rico, (2008) also

suggests the incorporation of entertainment in health programmes in edutainment. This strategy incorporates health issues in entertainment programmes on radio or television such as soaps, drama and sitcoms. Traditional forms of media such as theatre, songs, poetry and puppetry can also carry key health issues. While other researchers argue that edutainment is much more helpful in creating awareness, its efficiency in terms of reducing the spread of the disease has been less than anticipated (Petersen et al., 2006; Tufte, 2008; Smoot 2009). Treffry-Goatley *et al.* (2013), in their study on the use of edutainment in South Africa, argue that the perceived impact could be minimal because of the detachment by those involved in the packaging of entertainment-education from the social realities of the people. As a result, their messages do not speak to the key underlying reasons for the spread of HIV/Aids. *Jiving with Science* is an edutainment approach employed in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, discussed in a separate study (Tufte, 2005). Edutainment involves participatory and collaborative techniques and action media, advocacy communication, communication for social change, and integrated communication. These are aspects involved in higher dimensions of edutainment.

In *Jiving with Science*, playlists of famous songs mixed with HIV/Aids information voice-overs were professionally created and recorded on CDs given to the commuter omnibus drivers to play. Actors in these were drivers and members of the community advisory board. The project managed to reach a wide audience of commuters. There was a significant level of collaboration by various actors even though the researchers did not undertake a summative evaluation. Adopting *Jiving with Science* and replicating it in Gokwe South Rural District can be useful. However, this strategy can be supplemented by also playing music on CDs at shopping centres and in beerhalls to target the rural folk and reach a wider audience effectively. The rural folk can also share audio tracks on WhatsApp with those who have the application on their phones or transfer them to secure digital (SD) cards to be played on compatible radios by others.

Another example of edutainment introduced in South Africa was *Soul City*, whereby the South Africans got involved in creating mass media content to educate their fellow citizens about HIV/Aids. Zimbabwe also introduced edutainment through a *Yellow Card* programme produced by Media for Development and recently *Wize-up*, produced in collaboration with Action, a non-governmental organisation. While the programs attempted to reach a wider audience focussing on HIV/Aids, STIs, and teenage pregnancies, they were effective in cities where most people had

radios and TVs but did not reach rural folk. The above challenge could be one of the reasons why Parker *et al*, (2000) suggested the integration of diversified forms of mass media, including stickers, posters, CDs, badges and graffiti, to reach the audience.

Infotainment is media content that carries both entertainment and information (Demers, 2005). The approach is helpful to media houses interested in large audiences, as many people are likely to be attracted by entertainment. Infotainment is often erroneously used as a synonym of edutainment, but the two have a different function in rural development altogether. The researcher locates infotainment's relevance within the modernisation paradigm of development. It exposes the people to modern aspects of life and expects them to adopt the modern elements to develop or modernise passively. However, there was a diversion to this approach, and its significance to rural development has not yielded the desired results. Infotainment, in its manifestations, seems to threaten local media engaged in public service in a variety of ways. It involves the use of entertainment-oriented programming in mass media. According to Thusu (2000), the emergence of global infotainment dominated by western transnational media institutions and necessitated by the growth of satellite transmission and market-oriented policies by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) significantly impacts the local media. However, some countries have sought to protect their local media, an idea not received as democratic.

On the other hand, the global infotainment in the transnational western media promotes dominance of the local media at the same time undermining their public service role for development and education. According to Fisher, (2000), transnational media institutions continue to threaten real development issues through the commodification of information and news. They address matters in ways that seek to gain an audience without delving deeper into real development matters, especially in East Asia. Infotainment is an aspect that can reach a widely dispersed audience and entertainingly share information but disconnected from social realities. Therefore, it would be unrealistic to expect rural transformation and development from such an approach. However, some of its attributes can be assimilated to edutainment and integrated with indigenous communication approaches to reach a wider audience for health, education or agriculture communication.

5.3.2 *Mass media in health*

Mass media entails disseminating messages to a large and widely dispersed homogenous audience using print (newspapers flyers, brochures) and electronic media (mainly radio and television). Due to the capacity of the media to inform and transform societies for the better, as propounded by the effect theories (McQuail, 2010), development agencies use the media for development purposes in a variety of ways. In health, programmes on radio and television inform people about diseases and how to protect themselves. This awareness happens through various information, as well as entertainment programmes. Radio and television outlets are awash with information on disease outbreaks and STIs. Media outlets also share such stories in news programmes and follow up discussions that promote in-depth discussions on the stations. Some researchers question the impact of the information on behavioural changes amongst the recipients of such content (Ojoboh, 2015). According to Ojoboh, the Nigerian government used radio and television to share information on cholera outbreaks in 2015 in the country, informing citizens on how to protect themselves through handwashing (2015). The broadcast media also shared information on HIV, Polio vaccinations, among other health-related issues.

Communication at the national level is mainly through newspapers, radio and TV. Newspapers often carry announcements and adverts, and informational programmes are on TV and radio. The ministry of health in Zimbabwe initiates some of these programmes while different TV or radio channels introduce others. However, these can only go as far as informing the people about health matters without any significant impact in addressing the problem. Rico, (2008), however, suggested using local community media, which can empower the public as its communicators are aware of the cultural issues. This approach communicates health messages in a culturally subtle manner that is easily acceptable by the locals.

5.3.3 *Print media in health*

Brochures, flyers, leaflets and posters are common print media that share health messages with the people. Health information can assume various forms from preventative measures, symptoms to management approaches. Health officials can make announcements and warnings about disease outbreaks via newspapers. Print media has many advantages, which include using and keeping information for reference or future use. Different users can share information at different times and places. There are no expensive electronic devices needed to be able to access print

media, but one must be literate. The language used in print media should be the language that users understand. Health information is related to literacy levels in development communication because only the literate public can comprehend health information disseminated through print media.

Most of the communication which occurs between the department of health and the public is through print media. Messages generally originate from the headquarters at national and provincial levels and are shared within the district by clinics and health representatives. Print media materials in the form of posters, brochures and flyers are commonly used. These often carry campaign messages that encourage healthy behaviour, conscientise people of disease outbreaks and advise them on protecting themselves. Health officials place posters on clinic walls and notice boards, in shops and around shopping centres and hand out flyers and brochures to patients who visit the clinic. In cases of outbreaks, the word is spread to village heads by health officials and schools so that school children can share the information with their parents at home. Village heads call meetings on behalf of health officials who will address the people at local clinics or meeting places in the communities. The upcoming section further discusses these examples of ICSs below.

5.3.4 Application of ICSs in health

The challenges inherent in different media makes the use of indigenous forms of communication relevant to health communication. These challenges relate to distance between sources of messages and the people, accessibility due to costs and lack of infrastructure. In addition to that, most modern forms of media were instituted to address the communication needs of the western world by the people stationed at western institutions who lacked a grasp of the social realities of the people in the developing countries. In terms of addressing development communication needs in rural areas, messages are developed by people who also lack grasp realities on the ground, using the media that already have limitations. Considering the reasons mentioned above, the indigenous forms of media become more practical and relevant in terms of rural development communication (Meribe, 2015). This relevance is mainly because indigenous communication systems are credible, reliable, accessible and do not require any forms of expensive equipment. They are close to the people, and in most cases, they are culturally sensitive.

Most importantly, traditional forms of communication allow people to participate in the process of health communication. Indigenous communication channels are entertaining, and as such, they educate people while entertaining them. Scholars in development communication raise this same argument supporting the practicality and relevance of the use of indigenous communication (Ugboajah, 1986; Wilson, 2009; Salawu, 2015). The setback of indigenous forms of communication is its inability to reach a broad audience at the same time due to its interpersonal nature. Such a challenge is, however, not applicable to traditional meetings where people are together. Planning for meetings takes time, and in cases of disease outbreaks, the damage would have worsened by the time messages reach the people.

5.3.5 ICTs in health

An emerging trend in health communication is the use of ICTs, as well as social media. In the health fraternity, there is also e-health which provides an alternative or supplement to mass media and interpersonal forms of communication. ICTs and social media for e-health provide a platform where the public can actively participate in the process of communication by asking and giving their feedback. The opportunities provided by ICTs can help solve inefficiencies in communication which often result in delays in the flow of information between the healthcare providers and patients and the policymakers (e-transform, 2012). The delays in the movement of healthcare information are the usual case in rural areas of Africa.

Additionally, ICTs can also facilitate the spread of information about disease outbreaks which in turn helps prevent severe effects of such diseases, for example, cholera, typhoid and malaria outbreaks, among others. ICTs can also facilitate the sharing of preventative measures in diseases like HIV/Aids and STIs and constant reminders. Tasaranago & Salawu (2013) acknowledge the value of traditional forms of communication and suggest integrating these with mass media to improve the speed at which messages reach a widely dispersed audience while packaged in a culturally subtle manner that the people can understand.

According to e-transform (2012), e-health can involve the use of ICTs to support and provide health care services to people and communities. ICTs can leverage technologies such as mobile phones, the internet and computers to deliver e-health services. The improvement of efficiencies in the health sector can, in turn, result in rural development. Rwanda adopted a comprehensive e-health system. It helped streamline tracking patients record, monitor infectious diseases, assist

the supply chain of medicine, and train healthcare providers through e-learning (WHO, 2015). In Botswana, the *KITSO* Aids Training programmes conducted by the Ministry of Health in partnership with the Harvard Medical School introduced the use of a mobile phone application called *COMMCare* to share HIV/Aids-related information (e-transform, 2012). This application used pictures and voice prompts to cater to those who could not read, which is quite a significant innovation to involve all sectors of society (the literate and the illiterate) on HIV/Aids health matters. *MDNet* is another innovation that included ICTs in health communication. Although meant for medical practitioners, it significantly helps healthcare providers get the necessary health training and information from the trained doctors without necessarily leaving the rural areas where they reside (Sokey *et al.*, 2018).

Zimbabwe has not fully participated in the electronic health system, a phenomenon currently executed in most Southern African Developing Community (SADC) countries. Applying electronic services, including e-health, has benefited other states in terms of electronic data capturing and recording (e-transform, 2012). E-health also improves the sharing of information and takes away the burden of manually doing tasks. Health care providers can dedicate much of their time to delivering health services.

Another notable example of the use of ICTs in public health promotion is the Praekelt Foundation's Masiluleke Project in South Africa (Odendaal, 2002). The project facilitates sharing health information via SMSs and allows people to call back for further assistance and more information. A good number of people who called back for additional information was recorded, which shows the efficiency of the project. Uganda also makes use of mass SMS to inform people about HIV/Aids. Regarding communication, ICTs provide platforms for health practitioners to communicate with their patients and the public in the communities they operate. ICTs facilitate information exchange between both parties, the health institutions, and the people. As a result, the public can participate in the communication process and health projects, not as mere recipients but as equal partners. ICTs can be integrated with other forms of communication and used as forms of extension where they keep messages on radio or TV circulating. Images, audios and videos can continue to circulate via social media, thereby widening the impact of the messages (May *et al.*, 2007). Skits or short videos can also keep circulating on social media, and as such, ICTs facilitate the creation and sharing of crucial health content. Most people in

Zimbabwe continue to share *Kapfupi or Sabhuku Varazipi's* funny videos on male circumcision in partnership with the ministry of health and on peaceful elections, sponsored by Community Tolerance Reconciliation and Development (COTRAD) in Zimbabwe.

Key development programmes within the department of health in GSRD

Programmes by the health department were broad and mostly initiated at the national level and implemented in the district on an ongoing process. The department works with international organisations like UNICEF, UNFRA, UNDP UNAIDS, WHO among others. The areas of focus, as per the United Nations SDGs which the government committed itself to achieve include the following:

- reduce child and maternal mortality as well as morbidity rate
- double immunisation rate
- reduce mother to child HIV transmission rate to less than 9%
- provide access to HIV treatment for all
- reduce sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- provide adequate medicine for family planning and essential drugs
- mitigate environmental pollution, poor water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in partnership with UNICEF.

A healthy society is a society that can progress in terms of development. Some of the health matters impact development by robbing the district of economically able members of the population, causing many children to be orphaned and vulnerable and misdirecting resources that could have been used for other developmental programmes in health.

5.4 Development communication within the department of education

Education is essential for social, political and economic development and is inseparable from rural development. Education, in general, is directly linked to development, but there are also particular focus areas, including adult literacy, girl child education, and technological/digital literacy. The department of education is mainly responsible for advancing these key areas, primarily using officials in the education sector for its communication. These include teachers stationed at different primary and secondary schools within the district. The main forms of communication are face-to-face at meetings, as well as one to one. Messages can be from the education department, but at times, they also communicate on behalf of other departments upon

request. Communication and messages can originate from the headquarters at the national level and can be through broadcast media like TV and radio. Print media often carry announcements, adverts and campaigns. Educational programmes on TV or radio can be initiated by the ministry of education or by the radio or TV stations. Communication can be for specific campaigns like girl child education, the value of education and adult literacy. For example, Zimbabwe initiated an ambitious literacy campaign soon after independence in 1983 (Grainger, 1987). However, the project suffered many challenges like low enrolment and dropouts, among other factors. The communication approach used in the campaign could be responsible for the failure. Communication was mainly top-down without allowing people to participate in the development and communication of the programmes. In an ongoing bid to educate society, there are educational programmes on TV in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe has two ministries responsible for education. These are the ministry of primary and secondary education, as well as the ministry of higher and tertiary education. The department of primary and secondary education is the one active in the district. The communication flows occur in the organogram reflected in figure 5.3 below, from the national to the local (district) level. In Gokwe South Rural District (GSRD), the department is administered by an education officer (EO) who leads headmaster, as well as teachers at primary and secondary schools spread across the district. These are government representatives responsible for doing government education-related work in the rural parts of the district.

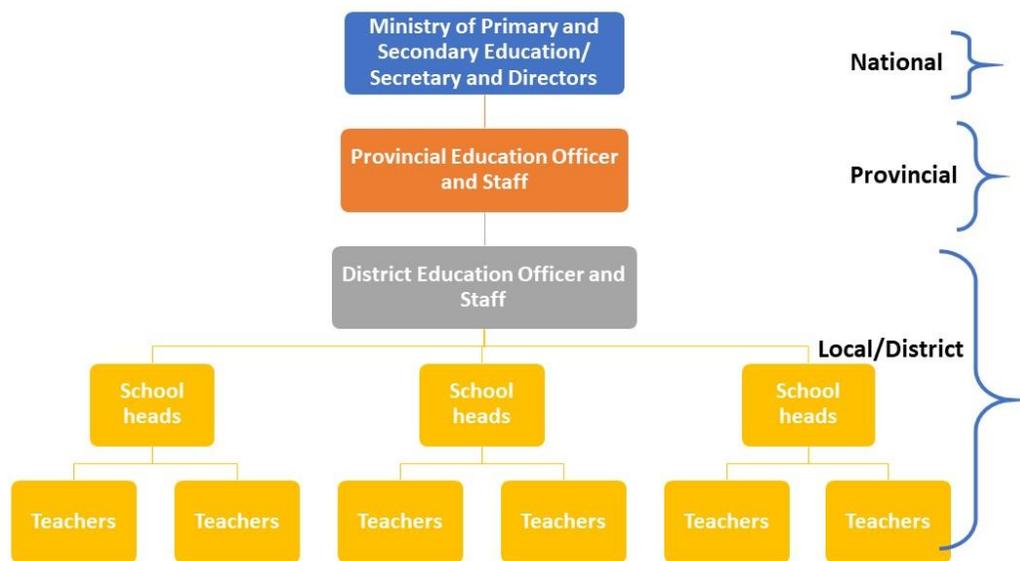


Figure 0:3 Department of education organisational structure

Key programs by the department of education

This section discusses the programs implemented by the department of education with Gokwe South District during the study period. While some programmes are ongoing and some are intended for the district and the nation as a whole, this section will highlight the new competence-based curriculum whose implementation began in 2017 by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE, 2017). The programme's purpose was to innovatively improve the quality of education in the country in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The objectives of the new competency-based curriculum include encouraging learners to learn and value their culture and tradition, enhance awareness of the indigenous economy, be participatory citizens and prepare them for a globally competitive environment, among others. The objectives of the programme are in line with the decolonial canons as well the value of participation as the means to enhance education in Zimbabwe. This study is, however, interested in the communication of this programme in terms of public involvement. The ministry states that approximately a million people around the country participated through public consultation before the launch at meetings. The ministry claims that meetings were held at both primary and secondary schools, and other stakeholders like interest groups and teachers' unions

were engaged in developing the curriculum framework. Some programs that supported the overall principles of competency-based education were in operation, like financial support for vulnerable and orphaned children through the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) and the Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) support program operation. Apart from the daily running of the education department, the programmes highlighted above were vital in this study.

5.4.1 Rural development communication in education

Hunt (2007) says that communication in education works at three interconnected levels: macro, meso and micro levels. The macro-level is when communication occurs among policymakers, meso is when communication occurs between policymakers and implementors at both national and regional levels. At the same time, at the micro-level, communication occurs between schools and the communities in which they operate. However, this study is concerned with the communication between government representatives in education at all levels (macro, micro and meso). The focus is on all communication related to rural development. Education and rural development are interlinked, and education is vital to rural development in several ways.

An educated community can contribute effectively to the economy by being the working class. Also, an informed society can appreciate development programmes, action them effectively and participate in these development initiatives (Atchoarena & Sedel, 2003). Thus, basic education and adult literacy are essential aspects of education. Moreover, education is complementary to other development issues like nutrition, hygiene, family planning, agriculture, and health, in terms of rural development. Hunt, (2007) also asserts that communication between education institutions is often one-directional, top-down. This approach to communication is not sufficient, and hence a balanced approach to communication is required.

5.4.2 Mass media and education

Mass media has been central to the development of communication in education. Television and radio educational programmes can educate people by offering lessons to students outside the physical classroom. Mass media can also encourage parents to send their children to school, regardless of their gender. In addition, it encourages adults to seek education and attend vocational training centres. Media can explain the importance of education and share available

opportunities with people. The challenge in developing countries is that most people do not own electronic media gadgets, especially television sets. As such, educational content is only available to those who can afford the appliances. A few people can afford to have mass media gadgets in rural areas, and in some places, the reception signal is not available. Signal unavailability makes mass media a less relevant source of educational information. In South Africa, where the number of people with television sets and reception is better across the country, television programmes on South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) like *Takalani Sesame* help educate young children (Bulbulia, 2005).

5.4.3 ICTs in education

As technology continues to grow, ICTs are becoming accessible by many people via their handheld devices and computers. ICTs are an excellent source of helpful educational information for learners at various levels, those in conventional programmes and those supplementing their education. Internet is becoming accessible in most rural parts of the developing world, and government communication in education can leverage this in rural development. Adults who may not be interested in attending regular schools can participate in online classes, improve their literacy levels, or even earn educational qualifications. Students can also make use of mobile phones or computer applications to supplement what they learn in classes at their schools. Issues of affordability remain a limiting factor regarding the use of ICTs for educational purposes in rural areas. Considering the above, for government communication to occur, the use of indigenous forms of communication remains the cheapest available source of information that rural people can access.

5.4.4 Indigenous Communication Systems (ICSs) in rural education

Indigenous forms of communication are significant in communication in rural areas, owing to their capability to be regarded as a credible source of information that can influence behavioural and social change among the people. Most of the education issues like girl child education and adult literacy challenges are rooted in the culture and traditions of societies. As such, addressing them is appropriate through culturally sensitive communication approaches. Traditionally, girls were regarded as less valuable to their families as they would get married and go to their husbands' families. Because of this notion, families considered educating girl children not essential. The use of ICSs through theatre, dance, music, poetry and other traditional means of

communication can be incorporated to do away with this kind of traditional belief and influence parents to educate their children, irrespective of gender. These can influence social change, which also applies to adult literacy.

5.4.5 Integrated communication

The preceding chapter discussed the strengths and weaknesses of various communication channels in development communication. As a strategy to offset the weaknesses and amalgamate the advantages within the multiple communication channels, integrating these communication methods is suggested in the previous chapter. This integration, however, does not mean just merging the communication methods and channels but strategically applying the process after considering the target audience and the purposes of communication. According to FAO (2014), rural development projects can benefit through integration as it can increase participation and coordination and collaboration. The integration of communication channels has its basis on the appreciation of the strengths of indigenous forms of communication's abilities to promote the engagement of the rural people and, ultimately, their participation. Integration yielded positive results in China where, according to Zhao (2005), mass communication facilitated national integration, thus creating an environment conducive for development. Indigenous and face-to-face forms of communication served the local needs.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored government communications in agriculture, health and education in developing countries. Various forms in which communication takes place, thus mass media, ICTs and ICSs were discussed. The extension also emerged as an intervention in government communication in agriculture. One of the main arguments in this thesis is that extension agents are essential to rural development. The availability of adequate training, information and transportation to reach the people will make them much more effective. The government should also capacitate the health and education officials with the information to communicate and the communication skills and approaches to employ. The use of extension services in agriculture could be a government communication model encompassing the decolonial connotations applicable to rural development as espoused by integrating modern and indigenous communication tools (integrated communication) that is symmetrical and participatory. Edutainment is also another technique in which essential issues related to development, be it in

agriculture, health or education, are infused in entertainment programmes to educate societies and transform them for the better. The discussion elucidated the advantages and challenges of employing various forms of communication, indicating considerations that government institutions can make to strategically apply different types of communication and their relevance to rural development. This chapter concludes the review of related literature. The next chapter discusses the research methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

6.1 Introduction

This section of the thesis presents the research design and methodology employed in this study. A combination of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, also referred to as mixed-methods or triangulation, was used (Denzin, 1978; Dawson, 2002). According to Dawson (2002), qualitative methodology explores aspects like attitudes, behaviours and experiences of the people, essential aspects when investigating the role of government communication in rural development. Quantitative research methodology, on the other hand, gathers statistical data, and these are essential in explaining people's behaviours, attitudes and possibly their experiences. These two methodologies are applied, considering that they can complement each other and offset the weaknesses inherent in each methodology. There are several types of triangulation, and these are methodological or methods triangulation, triangulation of sources, analyst triangulation, theory or perspective triangulation and environmental triangulation (Denzin, 1978). According to Cohen *et al.*, (2000), triangulation endeavours to map out or fully explain phenomena from more than one standpoint. This study investigates government communication as a tool for rural development in Zimbabwe (Gokwe South Rural District). The research employed data and methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation involves the use of different data collection methods, which are qualitative and quantitative. The research method employed was mixed methods research (MMR), whereby the study used a questionnaire, focus group discussions, one-on-one interviews and content analysis. The research used quantitative data that answer the quantitative aspects of the research questions and qualitative data, which provide an in-depth understanding of the critical elements of the research. Therefore, there was both data and methodological triangulation in this research. This chapter further explores the research instruments for qualitative and quantitative studies: a questionnaire, focus group discussions, and one-on-one interviews. The first section discusses the research methodologies and research methods employed in rural development communication research and related research in general. The second section of the chapter explores the suitability of the chosen research design and methods as they were applied in this research and addressed the research questions.

6.2 Methodologies and research methods in rural development communication

This section of the research will discuss the employment of various methodologies and research methods related to rural development communication by governments. Methodology in research refers to the systematic procedures used in a study as well as the theoretical justifications of their application in research (Wilkinson, 2015). The methodology can be specific to a field of research or span across various subjects or areas of study but generally refers to a strategy that can be followed in research, depending on the problem the researcher seeks to address. While the research draws from various communication schools, the researcher made a careful attempt to select those studies focusing on communication for development. In social sciences and communication for development, the most preferred research approach is qualitative methodology emanating from the constructivism perspective. Researchers seek to develop meaning by being part of the societies and observing human behaviours from within (ethnography) (Servaes, 2016). To better understand human behaviour, it is essential to gather the concerned people's narratives. As such, case studies, focus groups, interviews and open-ended questions gather much of the qualitative data (Cresswell, 2014). Qualitative approaches to research have gained momentum over the quantitative approaches informed by the positivists in social research (Taylor et al., 2015) and development communication. Also, qualitative methodologies are a methodology of choice because they are empowering in nature, giving a voice to those directly affected by development communication and its policies, especially those who were previously relegated to the periphery (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Taylor et al., 2015; Kerrigan & Johnson, 2019).

On the other hand, quantitative approaches that use scientific methods to gather data like experiments and surveys remain useful in development communication research. This strategy is mainly applicable when the objective is to assess matters concerning attitudes and when the study seeks data that can be statistically analysed (Servaes, 2016; Bjorkman, 2019). The contribution of quantitative methodology in providing measurable data remains vital in development communication. In this present study, the statistics and numbers were essential as they offered the basis for validating the findings from qualitative research. There were no available media usage statistics, particularly on Gokwe South Rural District, so it was necessary to gather the statistics through a survey and have a statistical insight of the FGD participants.

During the modernisation paradigm, most studies in development communication were quantitative, making use of surveys and experimental methods to prove or disprove hypothesis against media usage and their effects on the public (Jensen, 2013; Servaes, 2016).

Western scholars based at western institutions conducted most studies during the modernisation era, and because of that, the studies did not address the problems faced by the developing world. However, the designing of quantitative instruments makes quantitative studies less objective and more subjective as the researcher's level of intervention in selecting areas of focus is high. In addition to this, decolonial methodologies treat recipients of messages as active participants in the process of communication, whose voice must be heard just like the voice of those who conceive and send information. As research progressed, post positivists and constructivists began to emerge. A dimensional shift towards the analysis of the message content and its impact on societies occurred, advocating for qualitative methods in social studies. A contentious debate exists concerning the constructs of reliability and validity in qualitative research, with positivists questioning these aspects in qualitative studies.

However, according to Merriam (1998), the trustworthiness of qualitative research can be established by ensuring that the study is credible, transferable, dependable and conformable. Merriam adds that qualitative research is much more flexible, offering dense and in-depth descriptions of phenomena and allowing for triangulation. Domegan & Fleming, (2007) point out another critical strength of qualitative data, arguing that the method uses soft data to gather rich data. However, most research began to favour qualitative methodologies that drew from the message content and analysed trends in themes and the manner of interpretation of the messages by the recipients of the message. The view that recipients of messages were not passive in the communication process and constructivism became important in development communication research. Most research in the field of development communication is qualitative, mainly taking the ethnographic approach, participatory action research, and content analysis. Studies that focused on the content and composition of messages made use of discourse and content analysis. Some studies that emerged focusing on the participation of the people in communication continued to use qualitative research methodology with researchers investigating the people's participation through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. While most researches are qualitative, researchers may quantitatively analyse the data gathered. The paradigm shift from the modernisation and dependency theories in media to participatory approaches has equally prompted researchers to be more inclined towards qualitative methodologies. In Denzin & Lincoln's (2000) view, in qualitative studies, the researcher is immersed in the research, and the study further seeks to address the

'how' and 'why' aspects of phenomena, making the studies robust and much more applicable in real-life issues, including development and development communication matters.

Most scholars, using the pragmatic worldview, favour merging both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Combining both research approaches helps strengthen research validity. The rationale is the realisation of the importance of epistemological pluralism and pragmatism in research (Cresswell, 2014). Researchers strategically merge two approaches for purposes of complementing each other, cross-validation and corroboration. The mixed methods research approach hails from the pragmatic world view (Cresswell, 2014) and epistemological pluralism (Kirsch & Sullivan, 1992), a philosophical standpoint that is also the basis of this research's theoretical framework. Ambiguities exist between what is mixed methods research and triangulation. Nonetheless, some scholars argue that they generally refer to the same thing, merging more than one methodology in research. What often determines the choice of one's method is the nature of research questions, with the primary objective being to adequately address the research questions (Grinfeld, 2011; Cresswell, 2014).

Few available studies focused on the role of government communication for rural development. The few available related studies, which were primarily quantitative, keyed on the statistics of the media usage without tying it to the behaviour and experiences of the people and its possible contributions to the development efforts and development communication initiatives by governments.

Development communication researchers mostly incline towards qualitative research methodologies as their primary research approaches. One related study by Moyo (2017), which focused on communication by extension officers, employed a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews as the research instruments. While the study touched on the critical aspects of development, a single government agency (agriculture) was the subject. This present study was a step forward, incorporating a holistic approach, studying more than one government department (health, agriculture and education). Moyo's (2017) study focused on only the communicator/s, who are the agriculture extension officers but did not consider that communication is a two-way process involving the recipients of the information.

Given the above, this study investigates all components of the development communication process. Giving recipients (public) a voice is vital for successful communication. This research involved the community, who are the recipients of development communication, to

accord them an opportunity to be heard. Governments should typically engage rural people in the whole communication process, hence considering the community in this study. Unlike Moyo's (2017) study, which employed a qualitative methodology, this study used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and multiple research methods.

Another study by Grunfeld, (2011) took a case study approach, investigating a single project and only focusing on ICTs, which was also the case in Netshitomboni's, (2007) study. While both these researchers had their opinions and justifications for following such approaches, their research methodologies were localised and could not explain the communication approaches of a body like government. Breitenbach, (2013) employed a constructivist approach using ethnography, participant observations and case studies which are qualitative approaches. He used a qualitative evaluation of a case study to evaluate the effectiveness of a telecentre in improving rural people's lives. Grunfeld, (2011) also used an ethnographic research approach with participatory observation, studying the use of ICTs in rural development. Another example of research that drew from qualitative methodology was a study by Makwambeni and Salawu (2018). The study employed a Focused Synthesis Approach (FCA) and qualitative content analysis to close the variations between theory and practice in entertainment education for development. Qualitative studies exemplify an appreciation that people who are the recipients of development should be at the centre of research. They must be part of the conceptualisation of development programmes and the development process of the content meant for their development or social change.

A considerable number of studies made use of qualitative methodology were, in most cases, ethnographic (Huesca, 1996; Netshitomboni, 2007; Grunfeld, 2011). Ethnographic research is ideal for uncharted areas of research where little is known. The researcher intends to gather as much data as possible directly from people's experiences and behaviours by being part of them. While this research did not directly take this route, the researcher gathered in-depth information about people's experiences through focus group discussions with the public and in-depth one-on-one interviews with the communicators (government executives and other officials).

Most researches in the modernisation era focused on modern mass communication channels. The concern was the statistics of usage by the different number of people at various locations and the statistics on contentment with these different kinds of media (Servaes, 2016). These findings would translate into the usefulness of such media channels in transforming societies.

However, studies revolving around this framework were mainly quantitative, based on scientific methods supported by positivists.

Pragmatism is emerging and vital in fully addressing research questions considering the importance of merging both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in research as it brings together the strengths inherent in both methodologies. A much more recent example of a mixed-methods approach is a study by Bjorkman (2019). He used a mixed-methods methodology to study communicating change within organisations. In this study, qualitative methodology in the form of interviews was followed up by quantitative methodology in the form of a survey to understand themes and messages better and address the research questions fully. Another example of mixed methods research approach and triangulation was a study by Tasaranago, (2012) which focused on non-governmental organisations. The study yielded significant results such that the replication of the same methodology on government organisations would also generate substantial results. Of course, the methodologies applied in other development communication researches are relevant to this study. However, the choices of methodologies and research methods used in this study were much informed by their perceived relevance in providing answers to the research questions.

The study also applied decolonial methodologies. For long, the quest for knowledge has been Eurocentric. The researchers and research approaches did not originate from third world countries. Although in ethnographic studies, researchers attempt to be part of the societies, observing from within. The essence of decolonial methodologies is crucial in strengthening the findings of the research. If researchers are from a Eurocentric superiority perspective (Mignolo, 2011), they are prone to disesteem indigenous knowledge systems with a disregard for indigenous knowledge. In this way, they miss valuable indigenous contributions which are likely to provide answers to research questions. Also, such researchers are susceptible to pay less or no attention to culturally subtle and peculiar elements of indigenous societies (Datta, 2018). Indigenous or Afrocentric research methodologies become useful, considering the above weaknesses of the dominant (colonial) or Eurocentric methodologies. The indigenous research methodologies can unearth indigenous knowledge from the Afrocentric position, which Eurocentric research methodologies are likely to denigrate and fail to understand or explore. This approach benefits the researcher and the body of knowledge and the indigenous participants (Cochran, *et al.*, 2008). Smith, (1999), avers that the approach mentioned above affords the locals an active voice (locus on enunciation) and puts indigenous epistemologies at the centre of the study. The researcher worked with research

assistants who are locals from GSRD. Together with the researcher from GSRD, the research assistants had the advantage of understanding the social realities better, and this had an immense potential of strengthening the research approach in the study.

6.3 Methodology for the present study

Philosophy entails a world view, including questions and mechanisms of finding the answers to the crucial questions and the aspects that shape those views (Mills & Birks, 2014). This section elaborates the philosophical grounding of the study, providing a rationale for the choice of methodology. As briefly discussed in the previous section, this study conforms to the epistemological connotations grounded in post-positivism and constructivism. However, the study does not pretend to do away with positivism as its strengths have the potential of contributing to the research. It is on these bases that epistemological pluralism is helpful in shaping the philosophical grounding of the study.

The method chosen for this study was mixed methods research (MMR) methodology, also referred to as triangulation. This section presents the employment of various methods within the triangulated methodologies and the justification for their use in attempting to answer questions related to rural development. According to Cohen *et al.*, (2000), triangulation endeavours to map out or fully explain phenomena from more than one standpoint. Data triangulation is the use of many sources of data (Denzin, 1978). Thus, the present research drew data through focus groups, interviews, questionnaire, and content analysis. Methodological triangulation entails employing varied data collection methods, which were qualitative and quantitative (Denzin, 1978). The research used quantitative data that answered the quantitative aspects of the research questions, and qualitative data meant to provide an in-depth understanding of the crucial elements of the research. The researcher selected triangulation as the most suitable method for this study because it allows for validation of data through cross verification (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006) which was highly crucial in the study. The employment of a variety of methods contributes to the trustworthiness of the findings. The reason for this is the capacity of a variety of methods to offset the weaknesses and biases inherent in single methods. The mixed methodology was vital in this study as the study focused not only on the statistics of those who have access to the communication media and their ability to use them but also further delved into their perceptions and experiences in using different communication media.

Furthermore, it was key to get the people's voice uninterruptedly, and for this purpose, the quantitative methodology was useful. Through the questionnaire, the study also got to understand the appreciation and usage of different communication methods by the same people who participated in FGDs. Figure 6.1 below illustrates the research design for this study.

Research Design

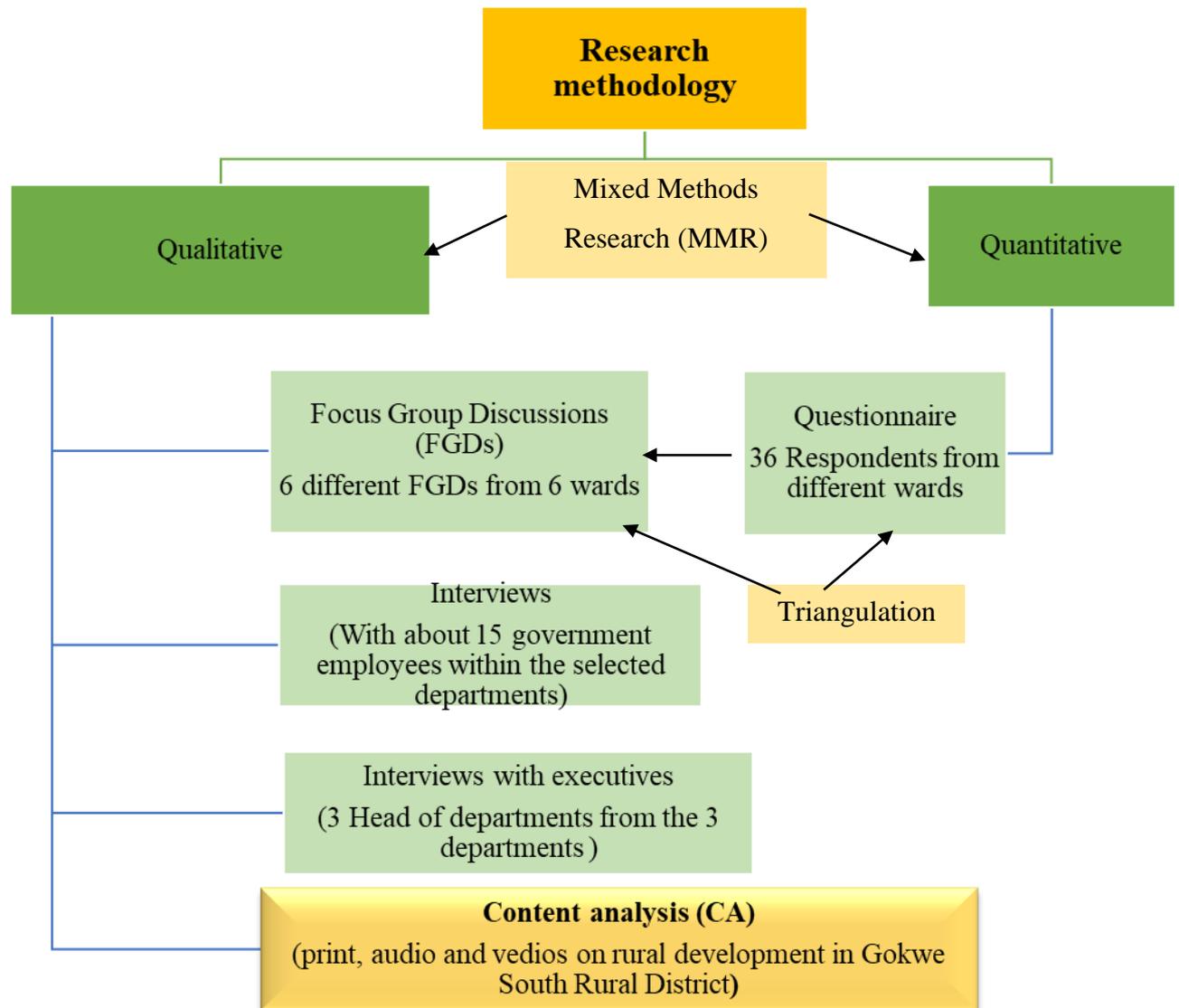


Figure 0:1 The Research Design of the study

6.4 Instruments and instrumentation

The study selected triangulation as the research methodology, taking cognisance of the available resources and time as well as the importance of adequately addressing the research questions in this study. As previously explained, this study derives from epistemological

pluralism and pragmatism. These philosophies revolve around the idea that no single approach is adequate in explaining a phenomenon. Instead, a variety of facets could contribute to understanding the role played by the government in rural development communication and derive possible theories and approaches that enhance effective government communication. Therefore, the study made a deliberate and careful attempt to investigate all the parties involved in the process of government development communication in rural Zimbabwe.

Based on the theory of pluralism, varied research methods or instruments to gather data, a questionnaire, focus group discussions (FGDs), semi-structured one-on-one interviews, and content analysis were indispensable in addressing the study's research questions. A questionnaire for the public who were also participants in the FGDs sought quantitative data. The questionnaire comprised closed-ended questions, as well as a few open-ended questions.

To further gather more data, the research conducted FGDs, and the participants in these discussions were people from the communities within the district. In addition, semi-structured one-on-one interviews were also carried out with the executives to elicit information about the official approaches to communication and the executive perspectives within the government departments.

Questionnaires have several advantages in research. They are easy to administer and seek relevant data. In addition, data gathered through questionnaires are easy to analyse using computer packages like Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). While this approach can only yield relevant data, it prevents participants from providing much more useful information which the researcher might not know. The questionnaire included some open-ended questions to counter the above limitation. Those who completed the questionnaire further participated in the FGDs. FGDs are perceived to help gather in-depth and detailed information because participants can freely discuss, reminding each other of the critical data, which in turn helps to yield comprehensive information. However, their shortcoming is that some participants might be shy to contribute. In this regard, the researcher attempted to ensure that participants were free and comfortable sharing their views and opinions. The researcher also assured them that the discussions were a safe platform to express themselves freely.

The purpose of semi-structured telephonic interviews with the executives within the departments of health, education and agriculture was to gather in-depth, primary data

concerning the government communication approaches based on policy and practical perspectives and experiences. Just like focus group discussions, the data yielded was qualitative. Qualitative data is not easy to analyse but is rich and comprises information about perspectives, opinions, behaviours and experiences.

The research collected secondary data, apart from the primary data obtained through interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires for content analysis from the texts, audio and video materials produced by the government departments. The research analysed publications including newspaper articles, posters, adverts, flyers and all content produced by the departments of health, agriculture and education.

The people of the community, officials from the selected government departments (health, education and agriculture) were units of analysis. The researcher chose these units taking cognisance of the fact that communication is a two-way process in which the parties involved participate in the process of development communication. These parties included officials within the government departments as development communicators and the people within the community, the recipients of development communication while also assuming the role of sending messages as active participants. This undertaking was, therefore, a balanced approach to studying development communication.

6.4.1 Research assistants for a questionnaire and focus group discussions (FGDs)

Due to work constraints and limitations in terms of time to be physically in different parts of the district, the researcher put up a research assistant team. The researcher selected the research assistants based on their experience in academic research and willingness to assist in the research. Another influencing factor for their selection was a need to be consistent with the decoloniality research methodology perspective (Mignolo, 2011). It stipulates that the locals and not outsiders best do research, especially whose aim is to understand rural development issues. Their duties were to assist the participants in completing an online questionnaire and facilitating focus group discussions (FGDs). The researcher trained them on how to use the online platform (Google forms questionnaire) and familiarise them with the questions on the questionnaire. He also prepared the research assistants on how to conduct focus group discussions effectively. Considering the available resources in terms of time and finances, the researcher decided to take advantage of technology and uploaded the questionnaire on Google forms. Research participants completed the questionnaire with the assistance of the research assistants.

6.4.2 A questionnaire in the study

The researcher shared a link with the online questionnaire with the research assistants who, in-turn used their mobile phones to have participants complete the questionnaire with their assistance. The assistants gave participants documents with terms and consent forms to sign before participating in the research. The terms were explained to the participants by either the researcher or the research assistants. Upon agreeing to the terms as per the stipulations of the UNISA Research ethics policy (see appendix H), the participants signed the consent forms. The improvisation of the online questionnaire uploaded on Google forms helped save paper and time, which made it time and cost-effective and environmentally friendly.

6.4.2.1 Population and sampling

The researcher drew a sample for this study from the total population of Gokwe South Rural District (GSRD), which was 326 918 at the time of conducting this study. According to official data from the latest census conducted by Zimstat, Gokwe South District has a total population of 326 918 people (ZimStat, 2016). This population is spread across the district, divided into wards which are groups of villages. The researcher used purposive sampling from 33 wards in the district to identify the communities to include in the research. The study selected wards spread across different parts of the district to ensure broad district representation. More comprehensive district representation was purposefully done, bearing in mind that places in different areas have varying media environments regarding infrastructure, distance to the nearby town, and proximity to government departments. Six different wards were selected using this criterion. Typically, a sample for a population of 326 918 people would be higher than the one used for this research at around 384 people, according to online sample calculators and statistical formulas for sample size (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). This research, however, deviated from this norm, considering that the survey meant to get an insight into the statistical aspects of media usage to substantiate the findings from other research methods.

Furthermore, sampling for qualitative data collection does not emphasise population representation but theoretical representation. In this regard, the selected sample of six FGDs from a total of 33 wards was adequate for this purpose. The participants of the FGDs also completed the public questionnaire, which could yield a total of 36 respondents. The questionnaire meant to be completed by 36 respondents had 27 successfully recorded responses. The possible reason for this could be technical glitches in saving the information

on Google forms due to unstable internet connections at some centres or areas around the district. Therefore, there was a percentage of 75 completed questionnaires. Since the questionnaire was for triangulation purposes, mainly to get an understanding of the FGDs' participants and verify their information, the number of respondents were more than enough to represent the total number of the FGDs participants.

6.4.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs are a form of group interview between the researcher and the participants where they interact to generate information (Kitzinger, 1995). In FGDs, the researcher prepared questions to guide the discussion (guiding questions). During the discussions, the research assistants' direct questions to the whole group, and the participants discuss, comment on each other's viewpoints, and contribute their standpoints regarding their experiences, perceptions and feelings concerning a matter. Due to the discursive nature of focus group discussions, the approach did not exclude participants based on their ability to read or write. FGDs are an effective technique that gathers a lot of information from many people at the same time. Participants can express their views, listen to other people and comment. According to Ritchie et al., (2013), this form of participation triggers more responses, thereby generating more interrogated, improved and perfected information.

For this study, focus group discussions (FGDs) occurred in a natural setting as ordinary conversations. The research assistants took the role of facilitators who directed and continuously guided the conversations to remain within the research parameters as per the guiding questions. There is no prescribed size of a group or number of participants within a group, but many scholars recommend six to eight people (Ritchie *et al.*, 2013). Other factors that determine the size of groups include the desire to gather as much information as possible, the sensitivity of matters discussed, and the need to engage all participants as effectively as possible. In this study, the engagement of participants was crucial, and as such, a group of six participants was fair as it was easy to allow every participant to contribute. The sensitivity of matters under discussion and the cultural and societal norms and values determine gender group composition. Given the issues discussed, gender separation was not necessary. The culture in the area is not strict on gender separation as group participants already know each other and live within the same community. Bringing different genders together was, therefore, not an issue. The study based the selection of group participants on a fair representation of both genders; hence a 50:50 ratio or a 60:40 ratio was used for a relatively

balanced gender composition. The 60:40 gender ratio was the same gender composition of group participants, and the same who people completed the public questionnaire.

The researcher chose six different centres across the district to enable the equal representation of the whole district, and research assistants conducted focus group discussions at these centres. The study carried out FGDs between the 1st of May and the 30th of July 2019. Due to time and financial constraints, FGDs were facilitated by trained research assistants who recorded the discussions using their smartphones for further data analysis by the researcher. The research assistants chose convenient times and places for people to meet. In most cases, they used school classrooms on weekends for the discussions. It was easy for the research assistants to organise places which were comfortable for a group of six people to conduct their discussions as research assistants had access to classrooms at schools or suitable places at local clinics.

Each participant signed a consent form as per the requirements of the University of South Africa (UNISA) ethics committee (Appendix G). The research assistants gave each participant a copy of the terms (Appendix E) and further explained these terms before signing the consent forms. After getting the participants' consent to participate in the research, the research assistants briefed the participants on their expectations during the discussions. The researcher and his assistants assured participants that they were in a safe place, and they would not be judged based on their contributions as there were no right or wrong answers. The duration of each FGD was from 45 minutes to an hour, which was adequate time to fully exhaust all the critical aspects without taking much time from the participants who had other duties at home.

The research assistants employed strategies propounded by Ritchie *et al.* (2013), which include probing further elaboration on emerging issues, dealing with dominant members, and encouraging reticent participants to speak out. They made every attempt to create opportunities for every participant to speak. The research assistants recorded the FGDs using mobile phones. Participants are usually uncomfortable when recorded, but the assurance that the purpose of the recording was for data analysis and the research was for academic purposes put them at ease. The research assistants used local languages for these discussions, depending on the participants' preferred language. Most people can speak either Ndebele or Shona in the district, so there were no incidences where participants did not understand each other in terms of language. The discussion guide (see Appendix C) was in English, but the

research assistants translated the topics and questions for discussion into either Shona or Ndebele so that everyone could understand.

The discussions were smooth, and people felt free to contribute because they already knew the facilitators (research assistants), teachers or nurses who worked in the selected areas. This familiarity with the research assistants contributed to a free flow of conversations among the people. Furthermore, the researcher carried out the study when people were facing economic hardships in the country. As a result, many people felt that the study was in their best interest and had something to say, especially in development matters.

6.4.4 In-depth interviews with executives

The interviewer (researcher) identified and conducted in-depth interviews with executives from the three departments (agriculture, health and education). He based the selection of interviewees on selective stratification, based on responsibility. Since the focus of the interviews was on executives, the researcher was confident of the quality of information regarding government communication approaches and policies. Taking this into consideration, determined the number of interviews and that of interviewees (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). The researcher gave the interviewees the interview guide (see appendix D) beforehand so that they would prepare their responses. This idea also helped the researcher get the most out of the discussions. The interviews were telephonic because they are convenient and cheaper than setting up a physical interview. The researcher set an appointment with the interviewees for the interviews. However, the downside of telephonic interviews as Gunter, (2002) puts it, is that such interviews have no visual prompts which the interviewer might use during the interview and are usually short. However, due to the problem of distance, telephonic interviews were ideal, and more money and data were committed for airtime credit to ensure that the interviews lasted long enough to gather all the necessary data.

6.4.5 Semi-structured interviews with government officials

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with government officials or employees working within the district. These included nurses, teachers, extension and veterinary officers. The idea behind these interviews was to obtain data from those working directly with the public. These interviews verified the effectiveness of the policies by the executives. Semi-structured interviews, as stated by Britten, (1999), cited in Mays & Pope, (2006), consist of a list of crucial questions which are given to the interviewee before the interview to

prepare for the session. The interview guide does not restrict the interviewer to the prepared questions. He can diverge and pursue some ideas and responses to get more detailed information. Before the interview, the researcher informs the interviewees that he will further explore some ideas with them (see the interview guide for government officials on appendix D).

The approach employed, followed the ideas from the grounded theory, which meant that the interview questions continuously evolved to ensure a detailed exploration of the critical areas until reaching a saturation point. In grounded theory, researchers conduct interviews without a specific sample size until the point of saturation or redundancy is reached, *i.e.* a point when no new theoretical insights emerge from the interviews (Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Morgan, 1996; Morgan, 1996; Glaser & Corbin, 1994; Charmaz, 2006).

6.5 Data analysis for FGDs and interview data

Qualitative data collected through focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews were analysed using the reflexive thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method primarily based on identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns of meaning known as themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The approach is theoretically flexible, allowing the researcher to engage with the data, always thinking, reflecting, learning and evolving (Braun & Clarke, 2019) to learn more from the data. The choice of reflective thematic analysis in this study was based on three fundamental bases. First, the thematic analysis goes beyond simply analysing content in terms of words and phrases but explores explicit and implicit meanings within a qualitative data set. Second, the method allows for an organisation and detailed description of the data set, facilitating theoretically informed interpretation. Third, it is a flexible approach in terms of framing theory, research questions and research design.

Most importantly, the thematic analysis goes as far as getting close to the rural public regarding exploring their experiences, thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that shape particular phenomena. This attribute is aligned with the cornerstone connotations of the decolonial praxis of the story's accuracy told by the owner. It is noteworthy that quality reflexive thematic analysis is about the researcher's reflective and deliberate engagement with their data and their reflexive and thoughtful engagement with the analytic process, not about following protocols "exactly" (or about "exact" and "reliable" coding or establishing

consensus between coders). There is a lot of focus on developing, generating, and constructing insights (Braun, Clarke, & Weate, 2016; Braun et al. 2018).

The researcher treated the data collected through FGDs and interviews differently, so there were different analysis procedures. The researcher followed Braun and Clarke's six phases of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2016) to analyse the data for FGDs (Figure 6.2). The first step was becoming familiar with the data, so the researcher transcribed the data into simple word documents. Following this, was generating codes by identifying items of interest from the data and assembling similar ideas into simple units and labelling or tagging them within the transcribed documents. The next step was to develop initial themes. The researcher synthesised concepts according to their similarities and differences, searching for themes and considering what worked or did not work within the themes. He further reviewed the themes against the coded data and the entire data set, re-examining unallocated concepts and sought explanations to justify why they were standalone. Sorting this data was not an easy process due to the broad nature of the study, which investigated three different government departments. The step that followed was defining and naming the themes, and finally, the researcher produced the detailed report. Despite that, the process was time-consuming, reflexive thematic analysis as a method of choice because of its flexibility as an inductive approach which facilitated generating a detailed report from the data.

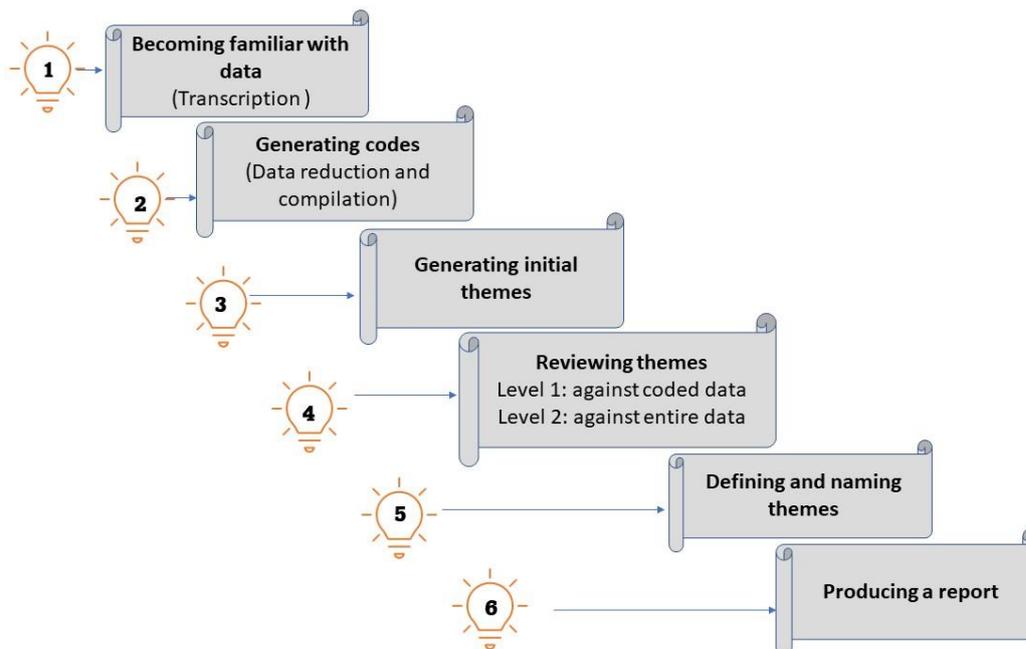


Figure 0:2 Braun and Clarke's six phases of reflexive thematic analysis

Writing a reflexive journal or memo was an invaluable exercise during the analysis. The reflexive journal provided a point of reference and reminders of other vital aspects which emerged during the process. The researcher noted the positionings, values, choices and judgements explicitly and reconsulted them as the research progressed (Cresswell,1994, 2007). He attempted to eliminate the researcher subjectivity by ensuring that concepts and categories were exhaustive. In reflexive thematic analysis, Saldana, (2009) advises researchers to keep detailed records of the development of codes and themes and any adjustments. The upcoming chapter presents and discusses the findings from the analysis of qualitative data from FGDs and interviews.

6.6 Content analysis

Another research method used in this study was content analysis. Content analysis is a systematic reading of a text and symbolic content to draw meaningful findings (Hodder, 1994; Krippendorff, 2004). According to Holsti (1969), content analysis allows a researcher to make inferences about the past incidences in communication, describe and make inferences about the effects and characteristics of a communication. The researcher analysed publications (brochures, newspaper articles and posters) by the departments of agriculture, health, and education, focusing on GSRD between the 31st of July 2018 and the 31st of July 2019. (See the summary of content analysed Appendix J) The researcher scouted for posters put up by the different departments around the district and requested any materials from government officials and the general public in the district. Posters were identified clinic walls, shop walls and noticeboards. The materials that were either posted by the concerned departments or carried information related to agriculture, health, and education qualified to be part of the analysis. Poster and other materials were collected from the clinics, business centres or schools from the wards where FDGs were conducted (See appendix J). Songs and drama content was mostly obtained at gatherings like field shows and dry and green shows conducted by the department of agriculture. Content analysis was key to this research as it sought to investigate the use of communication by government organisations in rural development. Content analysis can be qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative analysis is quantifying content for statistical analysis.

Content analysis is the analysis of texts, documents and content related to the subject of study (Neuman, 1980). The approach was ideal as it investigated the actual content being communicated by the government departments using different channels. According to Wimmer & Dominick (1983), the kind of research questions determines whether the content

analysis is applicable or not. In this research, the research questions sought to investigate what information the government departments communicated and determine the developmental impact which the content had on the public in GSRD.

6.6.1 Suitability of content analysis

This section discusses the main reasons why the content analysis was suitable for the study. First, the research focuses on the whole communication process. In this study, the communicator, target audience, medium, and content are subjects capable of providing a complete insight into development communication by government agents. According to Downe-Wamboldt (1992), content analysis is also concerned with meanings, intentions, consequences and the context of communication about the background in which it occurs. The above factors made it useful in meeting the objectives of this study. Content analysis was also necessary to understand what the government departments, through officials or agents, communicated, which further aided in addressing the research questions adequately. Also, this study was mixed-methods research based on pragmatism and epistemological pluralism. Therefore, it was helpful to include content analysis in the study in line with the epistemological pluralism philosophy. Content analysis is also an unobtrusive and non-invasive method of inquiry as it only focuses on the content under investigation. Such an attribute means that the study is free from bias as it is uninfluenced by the subjective opinions of the research participants or the researcher. In addition, content analysis is a flexible method, and it takes place at the pace determined by the researcher within the study time frame.

Content analysis involves but not limited to the following process, as suggested by Weber (1985). This study followed the basic steps and procedure below.

- Selecting the unit of analysis
- Creating and defining categories
- Pre-testing categories
- Assessing reliability and validity
- Revising the coding rules
- Pre-testing revised categories
- Coding all data

- Reassessing reliability and validity

6.6.2 Data collection for content analysis.

The researcher collected data for content analysis. The process involved requesting printed materials or any other content designed for the public in GSRD for rural development purposes. Such material came from the three government departments. The researcher and research assistants also took pictures of posters placed on public noticeboards at clinics, schools, business centres or any other public place. The researcher also searched newspaper articles from printed or online versions of newspaper publications. However, the study could not identify programmes with a specific focus on Gokwe despite the anticipation that he would scout for radio and TV programmes and record relevant content sections whenever possible. However, only a few programs on national broadcasters dealt with the central issues in the study, although without a specific focus on Gokwe. These included agriculture programs like *Talking Farming* and *Agro Talk* on ZTV, now ZBC Tv and well as the *Murimi wanhasi/ Umlimi wanamhla*, which are no longer airing on ZBC Tv. The current affairs addressed both health and agriculture matters on both TV and Radio stations like Radio Zimbabwe and National FM. *Isiqokhoqela sendaba*, a current affairs program, addressed a wide range of matters, including health issues on National FM and *Live Well* dealt with health matters on Capitalk. In terms of education, some programmes directly served school-going children through lessons on both TV and radio. It was important to note that there were programmes on national broadcasters which addressed pertinent development matters. The researcher, however, placed much focus on printed content in newspapers and posters that qualified as meant for Gokwe by being in Gokwe or had Gokwe which was a key search word in scouting for relevant content. Songs and dramas identified within the district with agriculture, health and education-related content were also part of the content analysed. Gatherings like field shows and green and dry shows in the wards, particularly those from which FDGs were conducted, were sources of this content. The content collection was from the 31st of July 2018 to the 31st of July 2019 (See Appendix J for specific dates).

6.6.3 Population in sampling technique

To properly conduct content analysis, the researcher sets a workable parameter of the subject of study, which entails describing the study population. This study selected publications, text, video or audio related to rural development relevant to GRSD or targeting the district by the government departments of health, education, or agriculture constituted the sample of the

study. These were materials published between the 31st of July 2018 and the 31st of July 2019. First, the researcher scouted and identified content that referred to rural development and was relevant to GSRD. Key search words for newspaper articles were Gokwe South. The researcher then tagged the articles according to the area they addressed or the government department from which the article originated. The researcher mostly identified posters and flyers within the district at different government department centres and business centres around the areas where FDGs were conducted. Getting the audio and video materials shared by the departments was a challenge, especially those on live programmes and those shared via social media. The researcher attempted to visit online achieves or requested the content from the participants who had the content on their mobile phones. After determining the study's parameters, the next stage in the content analysis was the identification of categories, which are simple units of analysis. The units of research, in this case, were, therefore, news articles concerning Gokwe South from the departments of agriculture, health and education or printed materials issued by these departments targeting the people within the district. All measures were put in place to ensure that the categories were comprehensive, exhaustive and reliable (Krippendorff, 2004; Lune & Berg, 2016). According to Wimmer & Dominick (1983), each unit of analysis must be placed in one exclusive category. Furthermore, the categories chosen must be exhaustive, meaning each unit of analysis must fit within the selected category. After reassessing the reliability and validity of the completed categorisation and coding, the researcher reported the findings.

6.6.4 Categories and coding

Under each department, the categories chosen were the communication channel used, topics/issues addressed, source of the message, targeted group, directive language, public involvement, participatory, and language encouraging feedback. The criterion set must be exhaustive and cater for variations where researchers can assign additional codes. Wandboldt, (1992) adds that categories should also be distinguishable from other categories and should neither disqualify nor exclude other schemes in the process. The coded content can be manifest or latent (Krippendorff, 2018). Manifest content refers to elements which are obvious, visible and physically on the surface, whereas latent content is an underlying subtext that can be read by discerning and interpretive approaches. The manifest content is accessible to code and made the basis of analysis, moving into the hidden elements, as suggested by Krippendorff (2018). A clear and consistent criterion can guarantee reliable and consistent results, even if the same procedure were to be conducted by a different researcher. In addition

to this, the categories should ensure that all the essential units stand an equal chance of inclusion. The next sections provide explanations of different categories and their relevance to the research.

Communication media/channel used.

In development communication, it is essential to have an insight into the channel or media of communication used. Therefore, this category sought to gather the information on which the government departments chose media for their different messages as well as the frequency of using the selected media.

Topics or issues addressed

In this unit, different topics, themes, and issues addressed are identified, providing an insight into what the government organisations communicate with the people of Gokwe South Rural district concerning development issues.

Source of message

The third category was the message's source to determine whether the content originated from the national, district, local government agents or the community. Again, this determination would provide an insight into the role involved parties played in communication.

Target audience

The fourth category was the targeted audience or groups which received messages from or communicated with different departments. Identifying the targeted audience would provide information on which methods were used for different target groups, thereby determining their appropriateness and usefulness.

Language (directive, involving and promoting participation)

The last category was language, further divided into three sub-categories: directive or authoritative language, as well as involving and the language that encouraged participation. The focus was to establish the frequency of directive words and those which enabled the people to participate and be involved in development programmes.

6.6.5 Data analysis method

This section discusses the data analysis and the reliability of the procedure and measures put in place to ensure the reliability of the findings. The section goes on to explain the challenges and limitations of content analysis. According to Krippendorff, (2018), researchers make valid inferences from the content. They analyse data through a systematic and nonarbitrary process (Krippendorff, 2004; Lune & Berg, 2016) which follows a guide moving from texts (content) to the answers to the research questions. Researchers quantify data after the coding process and make inferences after statistically analysing data using computer statistical programmes.

Researchers can either quantify data from the content analysis for statistical analysis or use interpretive approaches. Statistical analysis can either be descriptive statistics, providing simple counts, frequencies, mean, median and modes or inferential statistics, depending on the hypothesis tested. Simple counts and frequencies can be useful for indexing, arranging and collecting the coded data (Lune & Berg, 2016) and making simple conclusions and generalisations. Interpretive approaches mainly deal with the descriptive data from which, after coding and organisation, the researcher can make conclusions based on categories, emerging themes and patterns (Lune & Berg, 2016). Following this pattern, the researcher can link the explanations to the literature and eventually answer the research questions. The interpretive approach was a method of choice, and it was appropriate for this study.

According to Krippendorff (2018), the inference process begins during the coding process and continues into the interpretation of statistical findings. There are three kinds of inferences, and these are deductive, inductive and abductive. The first is deductive inference, where researchers apply generalisations to events, incidences or people. The second is inductive, which is the opposite of deductive inference, whereby researchers make generalisations from events, incidences or people. The third inference type, which is abductive, involves logic when making generalisations. Researchers take into consideration differences in circumstances and variables. Krippendorff, (2018) says that abductive inference is more useful in content analysis. It allows consideration of all other variables in government communication for rural development.

6.6.6 Reliability

In content analysis, it is essential to employ measures that ensure the reliability of the findings. For the research results to be reliable, researchers draw the sample from a specific

population, and the coding instructions must be clear to guarantee reliability (Krippendorff, 2004). Wimmer & Dominick, (1993), also say that different researchers should arrive at similar conclusions to regard the findings as reliable. The researcher submitted a sub-sample to an independent coder after data analysis in line with the above assertions. After the interchange of coders, there were no significant differences in the findings. Another measure to ensure reliability suggested by Krippendorff, (2018) is that content analysis should also consider both manifest and latent (observable and non-observable) content. Involving other research methods from both qualitative and quantitative methodologies (triangulation) in the form of a questionnaire, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions also helped validate the findings from the content analysis.

While the content analysis was instrumental in strengthening the findings of this study, it has its challenges. The process requires more time and patience, which are not always available during the research process. Another problem was access to the content, which were publications, text, audio and video. Gathering all the information was complicated and was also a time-consuming process taking into account the time which was needed and spent on analysing the data.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research methodology and research methods in the study. The research methodology was quantitative and qualitative (triangulation) and the research methods, mixed research methods spanning across qualitative and quantitative methodologies. These included focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, a questionnaire, as well as content analysis. From the discussion, methodological and data triangulation was a technique to corroborate, strengthen, and validate the research findings. Epistemological pluralism provided the philosophical grounding of this study to ensure answering the research questions adequately. Additionally, the chapter discussed the decolonial methodologies in line with the value of the locals as sources of information for development. The upcoming chapter presents the results and conclusions of this research.

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

7.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to present the findings and the results of the study. The first section, part one, presents the findings from the survey. Next, part two discusses the findings from the focus group discussions based on the reflexive thematic analysis approach. Following this is part three, based on reflexive thematic analysis, presenting the results from the one-on-one semi-structured telephonic interviews with government officials. Then the section which follows is part four, presenting the findings from the one-on-one in-depth interviews with executives. Finally, part five presents the results from the content analysis. The order followed in this analysis is in line with the dictates of participatory communication approaches, which encourage bottom-up communication (Lie & Servaes, 2015). The study's main objective was to investigate the role of government communication in rural development in Gokwe South Rural District (GSRD). Since communication involves the sender, message, channel used, and recipient(s), the findings explore all aspects of the development communication process and their role in promoting development in the district. On the part of the message communicated, the leading framework which investigated this aspect was content analysis. The findings from this analysis shall be presented and then dovetailed to the role of government communication for rural development. This section discusses findings concerned with all content (print, audio or video) by the concerned government departments, addressing development matters in GSRD.

7.2 Part One: Findings from the public questionnaire

As a preface, the researcher notes that the same people participating in the FGDs also responded to a public questionnaire. This section presents the findings from this survey. The questionnaire meant to be completed by 36 respondents had 27 successfully recorded responses. The possible reason for this could be technical glitches in saving the information on Google forms due to unstable internet connections at some centres or areas around the district. Therefore, there was a percentage of 75 completed questionnaires. However, this percentage of response provided reliable data, especially considering that the purpose of the survey was to give an insight into the FGDs participants' appreciation of different forms of media, helping the researcher understand their responses in the FGDs.

7.2.1 Demographic characteristics of the questionnaire respondents or FGDs participants

Based on the survey, the study obtained the following demographic characteristics. These include gender, age, marital status, level of education, employment and language. All these aspects are essential in rural development because they represent the character of the population of GSRD. Furthermore, the discussion reveals how the same characteristics have a bearing on rural development and their impact on government communication. Below is an explanation of the demographic characteristics of the questionnaire respondents or FGDs participants as they emerged in the study.

Gender

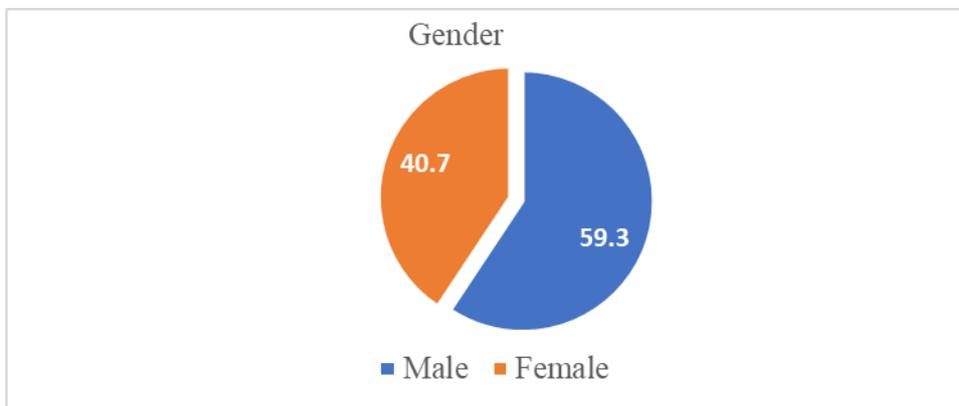


Figure 0:1 Gender representation

As shown in the pie chart in figure 7.1, of the 27 people who responded to the questionnaire, 59.3% were male, and 40.7% were female. Although males were more than females, the ratio was within the 60: 40 range which is a recommended gender ratio in Zimbabwe, a national approach followed in the country since the Beijing Declaration of 1995 and the requirements of international organisations. While different organisations encourage raising this ratio to 50:50, the fact that women availed themselves within the recommended proportion is crucial and reveals that women are keen on development matters. The willingness of women to partake in development matters means that government departments can also take this advantage and work closely with disenfranchised women. In most societies, women's exclusion in development programmes frustrates development efforts. The women, just like their male counterparts, are equally relevant in advancing development goals, considering that they are mostly at home while men are away in towns and cities. Therefore, their active role can successfully drive development programmes.

Age group

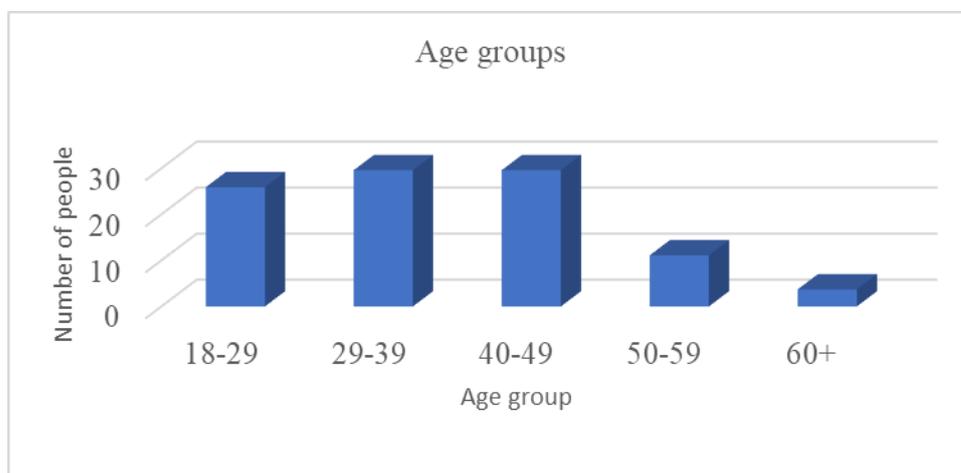


Figure 0:2 Age groups of the questionnaire respondents or FGDs participants

As shown in the graph in figure 7.2, most participants were the economically able or active part of the population, the group of participants aged between 18 and 49. The researcher might attribute this to the fact that they were readily available to participate in the study because of their youthful energy. It also shows that young people are keen on development issues. They also have a future for themselves and their young children to build. Therefore, they are willing to play an active role. Considering this, the various government departments in the district can take advantage of the readily available human resource to work with for development programmes.

Marital status

From the survey, 63% of the respondents were married, and the rest were single, divorced or widowed. A higher percentage of married people participating in the study is tied to the age group, mainly comprising young parents and other active members of the population. These are concerned about their future and that of their children. Government departments could benefit if their development communication targets this group which is prepared to pay attention to the content. It is always on the lookout for information that could help their current circumstances for better.

Level of education

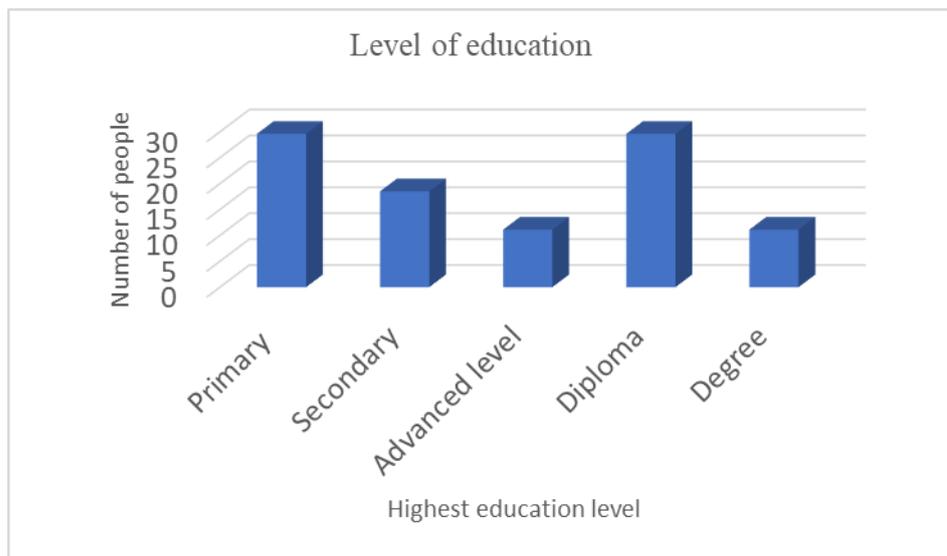


Figure 0:3 Level of education

As depicted in the graph (figure 7.3), most respondents (60 %) did not have a college education. About 30% had primary as their highest level of education. The researcher ascribes relatively low levels of education to the fact that the government implemented an education policy, making it easy for people to attend primary and secondary schools. The policy dictates that there should be a primary school within a five-kilometre radius and a secondary school within a 10-kilometre radius. For most people, as soon as they attain secondary level education and pass their advanced levels, it is easy to access colleges and obtain diplomas. Most of these people are nurses or teachers working and living in the district or have retired. The fact that most study and job opportunities for people with advanced level and degrees are in cities and towns explains why these people leave the district. Zimbabwe's literacy levels are higher than most developing nations, which directly impacts government communication approaches. However, in Gokwe, a significant percentage of the people, as reflected in the survey, has lower levels of education, which also determines the appreciation of certain forms of communication, employment and standard of life. People with low levels of education have less income, cannot afford mass media gadgets and are less technologically exposed. In contrast, those with higher levels of education have good jobs with good salaries to afford mass media and technological devices from where they can access a wide variety of communication content. The levels of education ultimately separate the people in a society, creating distinct classes of the less informed and the informed.

Employment

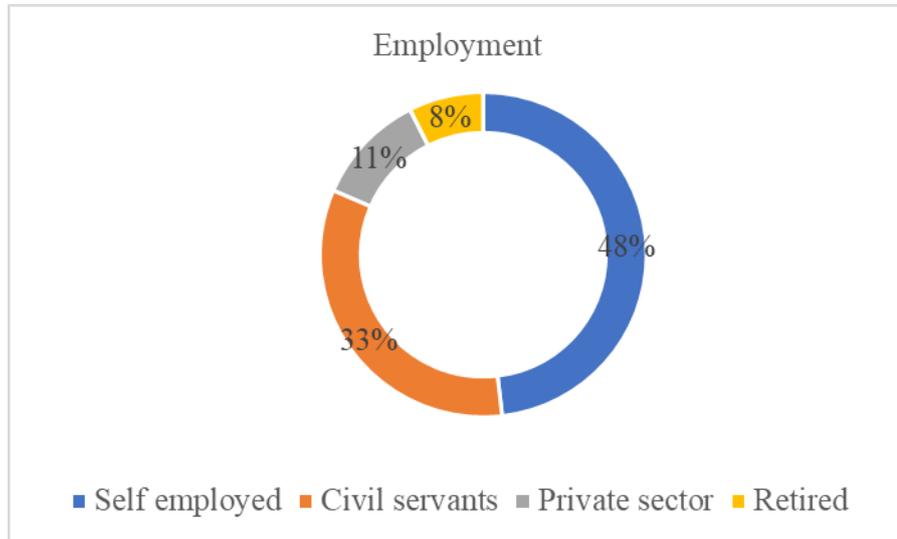


Figure 0:4 Employment distribution amongst the questionnaire respondents or FGDs participants

The pie chart in figure 7.4 shows details of employment. The graph demonstrates that 48% of the participants are self-employed. Including the retired, there is a cumulative percentage of more than 50% of unemployed people. The percentage of the unemployed means that most rural people are poor, relying primarily on indigenous farming methods for their livelihoods. People are self-employed also because of the economic situation in the country, which is in a bad state, and as such, it is difficult for most people to find jobs. Teachers, nurses and department of agriculture employees working in the district constitute 33% of the employed. The level of participation by the self-employed is a result of the fact that they are primarily looking for opportunities to develop themselves and have better family lives. Crucially, these people are likely to pay more attention to government communication on development.

Major sources of income

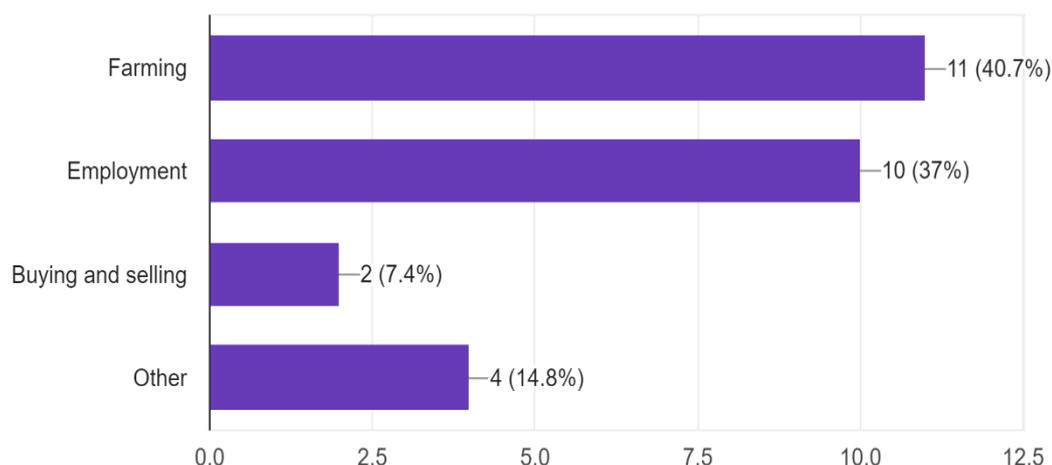


Figure 0:5 Major source of income of the questionnaire respondents or FGDs participants

From the graph in figure 7.5, 40.7% mentioned farming as their primary source of income, 7% said buying and selling, and 14% mentioned others as their sources of income. Also, considering that 48% indicated that they are self-employed, the same people are likely to have farming as their source of income. On the other hand, only 37% are formally employed and have employment as their source of income, and the rest rely on their farms for a living. As mentioned above, the country's economic situation is the main reason why many people are not employed; however, these people need government and development communication to help them improve their livelihoods.

Languages

The pie chart in figure 7.6 shows information about participants' first language. The first language for most participants is Shona at 77.8%, followed by Shangwe, at 14.8%, and the least is Ndebele at 7.4%. Some people who are Shangwe were likely to record Shona as their first language, which is because most people, especially the young generation, are beginning to assimilate and adopt Shona as their language. Moreover, many schools teach Shona instead of Shangwe or any other dialect in the country, particularly in most areas in Mashonaland and various parts of the Midlands province, including Gokwe. Other possible reasons for the popularity of Shona could be that some people are ashamed of being Shangwe due to the

stereotypes associated with the language. The other reason is that Shona has assimilated most dialects which are now officially regarded and taught in schools as Shona. Also, the popular language for interaction among the district communities is Shona hence the need to know the language and its popularity. A clear picture of the first language is essential in determining the clarity of the development communication messages and how the language or languages used had a potential of promoting participation in development communication.

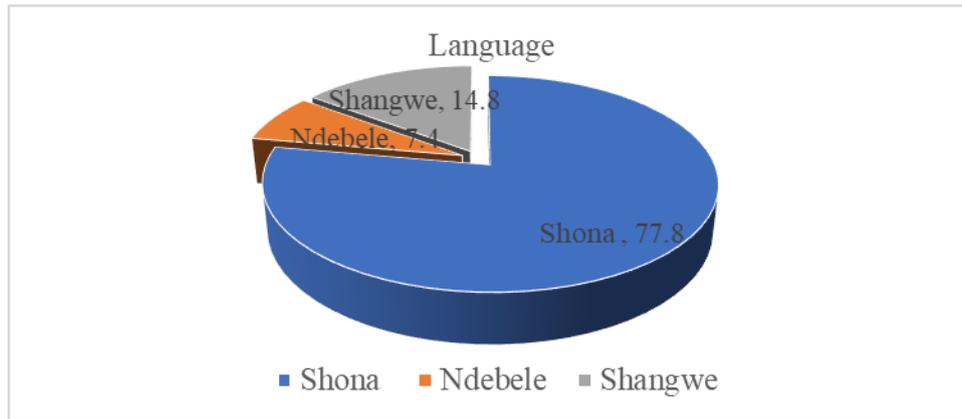


Figure 0:6 Language distribution among the questionnaire respondents or FGDs participants

7.2.2 Popularity and usage of different forms of Modern Communication Systems (MCSs) or mass media

This section focuses mainly on modern communication systems (MCSs), which are primarily mass media in the form of radio, TV, and print (newspapers). The popularity and usage of different kinds of media illuminate the potential impact of development content when disseminated using various channels by government departments. The frequency of usage determines media popularity. For example, if people use particular media more often, they are likely to receive helpful development information through it. It also chronicles the amount of trust and value people ascribe to that medium and its disseminated content. Therefore, the study set out to explore the popularity and frequency of using these forms of media by the participants. Below are the findings:

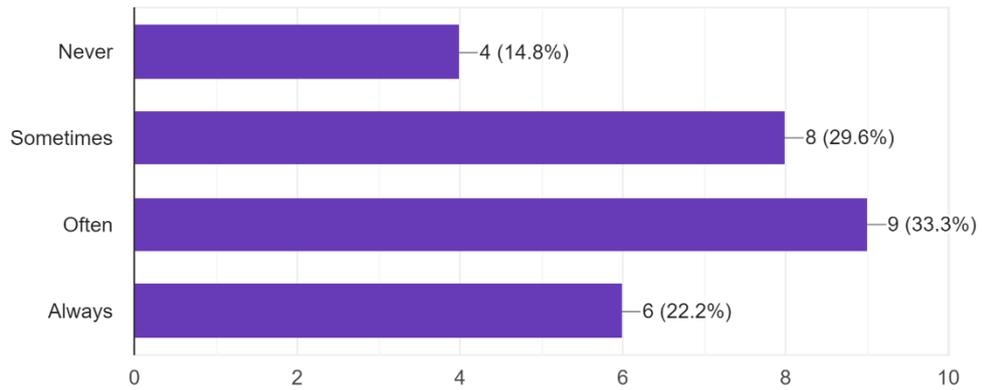


Figure 0:7 Usage of radio by the questionnaire respondents or FGDs participants in GSRD

The graph in figure 7.7 demonstrates the frequency of radio usage by the questionnaire respondents or FGDs participants in GSRD. The respondents who reported that they often or always used the radio were 55.5%, and the rest sometimes or never used radio. The radio stations frequently mentioned were *Radio Zimbabwe*, followed by *Studio 7*. A few people said that they listened to *Star FM* and *Power FM*. Radio is the most popular form of mass media frequently used compared to TV and newspapers, which is because radio is a cheaper form of modern media. It is cheaper to acquire and operate as it uses affordable batteries and can be charged by solar, considering that the district does not have electricity. Radio is highly entertaining and can be listened to while doing other activities like working in the fields, gardens, or other chores. Furthermore, mobile phones can also play radio channels, making radio more accessible for use by the people in GSRD. Another crucial factor is that radio is a medium that can be listened to by the illiterate, and many users can share it simultaneously.

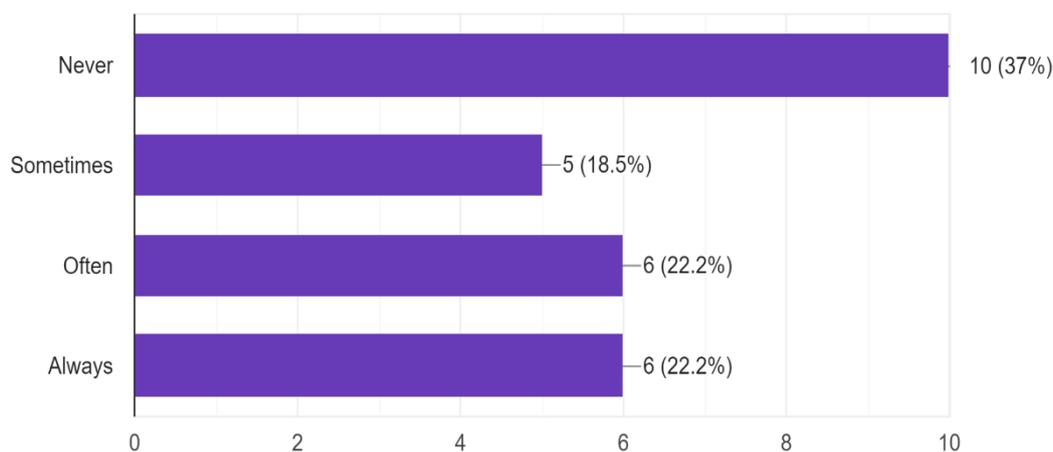


Figure 0:8 Usage of TV by the questionnaire respondents or FGDs participants in GSRD

Less than half the participants, 44.4% said they often or always watch television, 37% said they never watch TV, and 18.5% said they sometimes watch TV. Only a few people mentioned that they watched Zimbabwe television station (ZTV), the nation’s only television station. Some mentioned satellite-based stations like Zee world, an Asian drama station and other news source channels like the British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC) and the South African Broadcasting Cooperation (SABC) stations, which are all international. The TV is a medium for the rich as buying the gadgets and powering them, even with solar power, requires a lot of money that most people in the district cannot afford. The TV is mostly watched in cities or at a few households that are wealthy enough to afford the systems. Those who can afford the systems are either the elite or have children in cities or abroad who can buy the equipment and subscribe to the satellite service providers. The viewership of the nation’s ZTV channel was low, and the decline was as a result of issues of programme quality, poor reception and mistrust of content because the people accused it of being highly politicised. Regarding development information, using the TV in GSRD by government departments might not be valuable, considering that most of the people in the district do not have the equipment and generally have a negative attitude towards the sole state television station.

Number of times participants read newspapers in a week

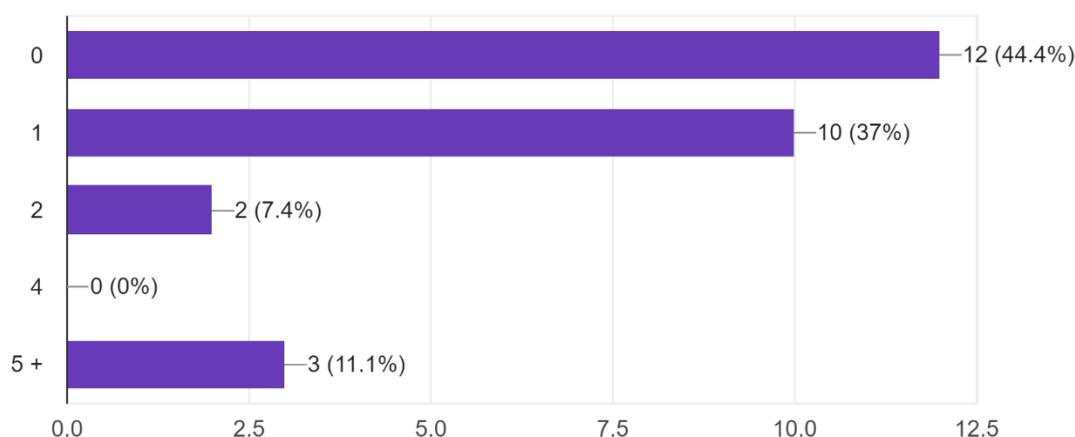


Figure 0:9 Newspaper reading by the questionnaire respondents or FGDs participants in GSRD per week

Figure 7.9 shows the number of times the participants read papers in a week. The frequency of reading newspapers was shallow. Almost 90% of the respondents read a newspaper less than two times a week. Low newspaper reading could be because most areas in Gokwe are remote, and not many people can afford to get newspapers from the town because of low incomes. Publications such as *The Sunday Mail* and *The Daily News* were slightly popular among the few respondents who said that they read newspapers. Other newspapers that participants mentioned were *Newsday* and *Kwayedza*. In addition, participants listed online publications in this category, for example, *Zimlive* and *NewZimbabwe.com*. About 10% who reported that they frequently read newspapers could be the professionals in the civil service who could access the newspapers through mobile devices. Newspaper reading was, therefore, very low among the participants. The research can extrapolate the minimal newspaper readership from the findings above to the district's population.

From the above findings, the radio was the most popular at 73%, followed by TV at 44.4% and the least popular was the newspaper at 14%. As explained in the sections above, the main reasons were affordability, convenience, and ease of access, among other factors. In summing up the popularity and usage of modern communication systems, the discussion has revealed that radio was the most popular and frequently used mode of communication. Therefore, in terms of development communication, it would be much more beneficial for government

departments to invest much of their energy and effort on using radio for development communication purposes.

7.2.3 Information and communication technologies (ICTs) usage

The upcoming section discusses the findings concerning ICT usage and its popularity amongst the questionnaire respondents or FGDs participants. A picture painted by this section demonstrates the forms of ICTs that can potentially be utilised by government departments and their effectiveness in rural development communication in GSRD. Considering that the most prominent types of ICTs are mobile phones and computers, this section will discuss these, including social media usage as social media works on ICT platforms.

As depicted in figure 7.10 below, 96% of the respondents who reported possessing mobile phones, 70.4% had internet on their mobile phones. It is crucial to have a phone with internet access because if one has such a phone, they can access social media content and other e-platforms. The survey discovered that the same percentage of those who had the internet reported that they had WhatsApp.

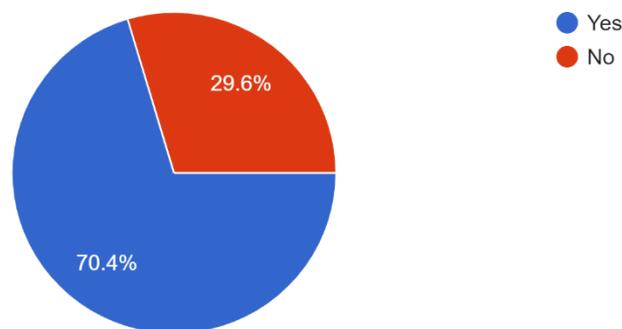


Figure 0:10 Internet access on mobile phones

More than 60% of those who had WhatsApp reported that they either often or frequently used WhatsApp and the same people said that they were in WhatsApp groups. Compared to Twitter and Facebook, WhatsApp was the most popular amongst respondents. Only 33% and 22 % reported that they had Twitter and Facebook accounts, respectively. More than 85% reported that they had never used both Facebook and Twitter. From these findings, the study noted that WhatsApp was the main reason for internet usage, which could be probably due to the need to communicate with relatives within the country and abroad easily. This main

reason for internet usage explains that the effective utilisation of internet among the people of GSRD was low, which could be because of low incomes, affordability, inability to use the internet and lack of other reasons for using the internet beyond accessing WhatsApp.

Only 11.1% reported that they had personal computers, and the rest did not have them. Of the 88.9% of the people who reported that they used personal computers, only 44.4% said they sometimes accessed computers, and 55.6 % had never accessed them. Just over 15% reported that they often used computers and the rest never or rarely used computers. The district does not have a telecentre (community information centre), so not many people had access to computers, leading to low computer usage. Most people reported that they were able to use WhatsApp more than Twitter and Facebook, mainly through their mobile phones. A few participants recorded computer usage and access. However, more than three quarters reported that they did not have computers or access to computers. All participants reported that there was no telecentre nearby where they could access computers. The absence of these centres explains why only mobile phones and WhatsApp were the prominent ICTs used by the participants.

7.2.4 Usage of different media by different departments

The next section presents and compares the usage of different forms of media by the three departments (agriculture, health and education). The study asked the participants to select the different kinds of media through which they received messages from the various departments. The respondents were free to choose many options. Giving the participants many options enabled the research to gather as much information as possible regarding the forms of communication or media channels used for rural development communication.

Agriculture

From the graph in figure 7.11, the participants reported that radio was the highest source of information from the department of agriculture at 59.3%, followed by extension officers at 40.7%. Newspapers were 40.7 %, TV stood at 25.9%, 33.2%, and 18.5% reported that word of mouth and religious gatherings were also sources of information about agriculture. As already explained in section 8.1.3, radio is much popular in the district. The department of agriculture is likely to be aware of that, hence the frequency of its usage. The percentage of participants who reported the department of agriculture officials as a source of agriculture information was 40.7 %. Although below average, this reflects that agriculture officials are present and working with the people in the district, which is positive. The percentage of

agriculture officials as a communication channel could have been higher. However, the country's economic challenges limit the number of agriculture officials within the district, as well as their mobility since they do not have reliable transport to reach as many people as possible. Another significant finding was that people received agriculture information through face-to-face and religious gatherings. Precisely, 18% of the respondents also highlighted that the teachers from schools also acted as a channel for communicating agriculture-related information as extension officers also ask schools to help spread the news on important information. Additionally, people regard teachers as sources of knowledge, so they often ask agriculture-related questions, especially from those teachers teaching agriculture in schools. Therefore, the government can exploit the influence and potential of extension officers and officials from other departments like education to disseminate development information to better GSRD.

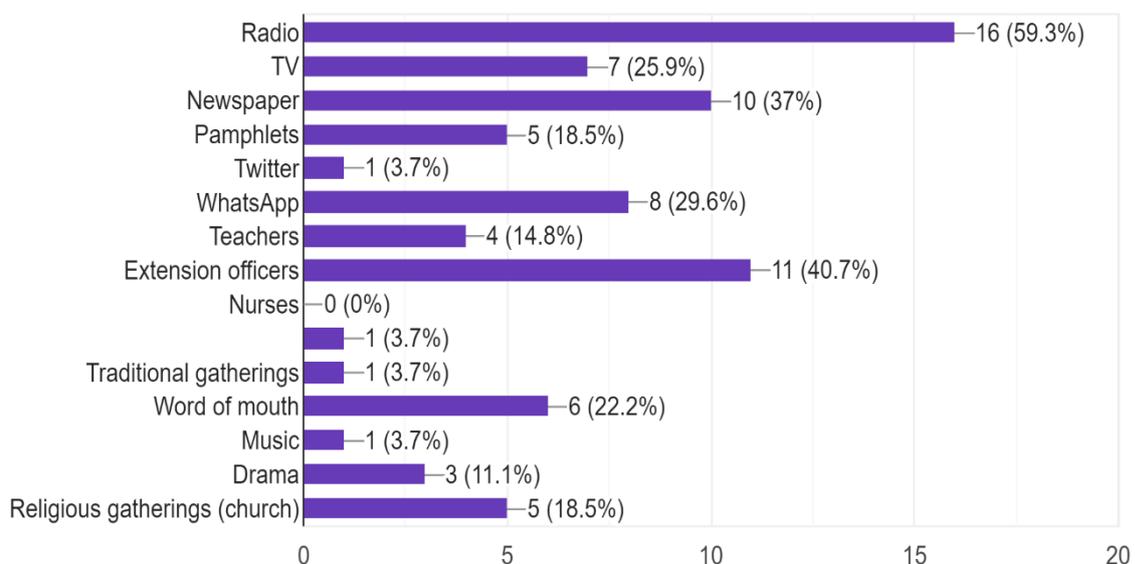


Figure 0:11 Forms of communication channels used by the department of agriculture

Health

Figure 7.12 shows the sources of messages from the department of health. Just below three-quarters, 74.1% of the respondents reported that radio was the major source of health information followed by health officials at 44.4%. WhatsApp also recorded a significant percentage of 40.7%. The percentage of respondents who recorded pamphlets as a source of

health information was 33.3%. Traditional forms of communication, including traditional or religious gatherings, music and drama, recorded low percentages of less than 15%.

The most popular means through which the participants received development information from the three government departments were through Radio at 59.3%, followed by extension officers at 40.7%. Newspapers were also popular at 37%, followed by WhatsApp and word of mouth, which stood at 29.6% and 22.2%, respectively. Religious gatherings were also significantly relevant as a source of development information at 18.5%. Other indigenous means of communication were low at 3.7%, but the drama was slightly higher, at 11.1%. People did not associate health matters with development, probably due to a lack of understanding of the relationship between health issues and development. However, extension officers and teachers were more linked to development due to the people's understanding of the relationship between agriculture and education with development. Therefore, it is likely that the participants assumed that extension officers and teachers disseminated development matters more than nurses.

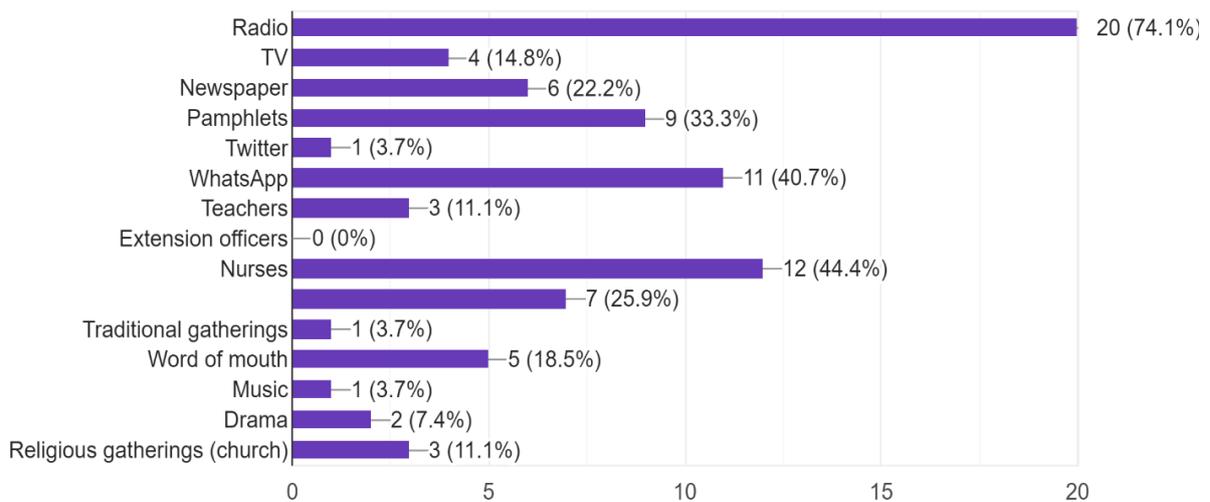


Figure 0:12 Forms of communication channels used by the department of health

Education

Figure 7.13 illustrates the forms of communication which the participants reported the department of education used in GSRD. Radio was the primary source of information on education at 70.4%, followed by teachers at 55.6%. WhatsApp was below teachers at 37%. Less than a quarter of the respondents recorded TV, newspapers, and pamphlets as sources of

education information. The least number of respondents reported traditional forms of communication. The possible reasons for this are that people see no link between traditional communication and education methods based on a presumed lack of appreciation of the connection between the two. Also, people have contempt for traditional forms as sources of development information. Radio remains highly popular as a source of educational information, above all other forms of communication, due to its reputation and capacity to reach many people in GSRD. Teachers are the ones in the district and hence remain popular. They fell below the radio because the participants who are no longer school-going do not interact with teachers as much as the young who are school going. However, based on their expertise, teachers remained a vital source of development information. Participants considered other professionals from agriculture and health as sources of education information, although reported by just 3.7% and 7.4%, respectively. It was crucial to learn that the participants thought that government officials from other departments could share information concerned with other departments where they are not directly involved.

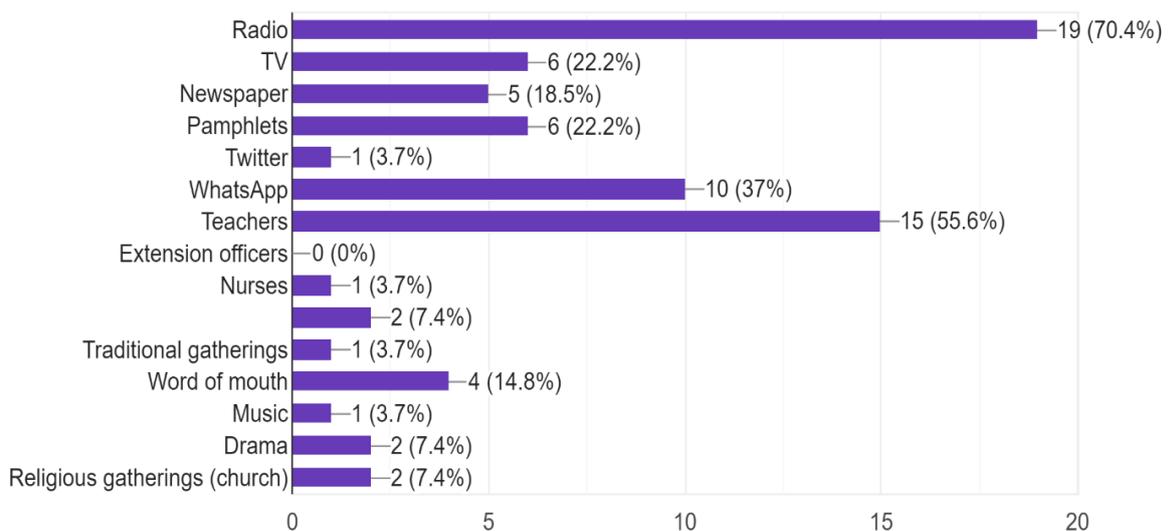


Figure 0:13 Forms of communication channels used by the department of education

7.2.5 Comparison of the communication approaches by the government departments in GSRD

The discussion on the different forms of communication employed by the three departments observed some similar and different trends discussed below. First, the study noted that radio was the primary source of information in all three government departments. Being the

primary source of information means that radio remained an essential and highly utilised source of development information by the three departments, as well as the people in GSRD. Although the use of radio for development communication was considered high in all the three departments, the level was different. The use of radio was highest within the department of health at 74.1%, followed by education at 70.4%, and was lowest in agriculture, at 59.3%. Another similar trend observed was that responsible government department officials followed radio as sources of development information although, at different percentages. Teachers in education were the highest at 55.6%, followed by nurses at 44.4% and the least was agriculture officials at 40.7%.

The difference observed was that newspapers were top in agriculture at 37%, compared to health at 22.2% and education at 18%. From this, the researcher deduced that usage of print media, particularly newspapers, was generally low. The people in GSRD have no access to newspapers published in cities that are far away from the district, and it takes time for newspapers to get to the area. In addition to this, people do not buy newspapers due to low or poor incomes and a generally low disposable income to purchase newspapers. However, another reported source of print media within the district was pamphlets. The study revealed that government departments used pamphlets at varying percentages. Health pamphlet usage was slightly higher at 33.3%, followed by education at 22.2%, and agriculture was at least 18.5%. Overall, the usage of pamphlets was generally on the lower side, an approach that can be improved. Low pamphlet usage could be due to the prohibitive cost of printing and distribution of such materials. Economic challenges in the country have made government departments cut down on their expenditure, and that could be a reason for the limited use of pamphlets and other print materials. Printed materials within the department of health were also supplemented by non-governmental organisations, who are, in most cases, partnered with the department of health. Hence the respondents reported pamphlets usage high within the department of health over the other two departments.

In all the three departments, WhatsApp was also an essential source of information reported by respondents at 40.7%, 37% and 29.6% in health, education and agriculture, respectively. Therefore, health information was shared and communicated more on WhatsApp than education and agriculture information. WhatsApp is a quick medium for sharing information and can reach many people instantaneously. However, the challenge is that the information shared via the platform is not filtered, making its credibility questionable.

A few participants reported traditional forms of communication as sources of information from all three departments. The few participants' reports could indicate the low utilisation of traditional sources of information by the three departments or a general condescending attitude towards them by the people of GSRD as important sources of information. However, word of mouth was an important source of information, although reported by a few respondents. The percentages were 40.8% in education, 22.2% in agriculture and 18.5% in health. It is important to note that people were sharing information among themselves, which is an essential alternative source of information in cases where others may not have received information via other channels or do not have access to other forms of media.

Participants reported teachers as sources of agriculture and health information, meaning that the other departments can benefit if there is some level of boundary spanning in terms of sharing information, and this saves resources and time.

Responding to the question of what the people perceived to be the most useful source of information, most people responded that mass media were the most valuable forms of health information followed by government officials within the department, as well as traditional forms of communication through gatherings. It is worth noting that the other programme mentioned as useful was roadshows. In education, many respondents said that mass media and traditional forms of communication through gatherings were the valuable primary sources of information. Government officials were also mentioned as useful sources but by less than the average number of respondents.

7.2.6 Frequency of visits to the villages

The question on the frequency of visits by government officials sought to investigate the physical presence of government officials in GSRD. In the survey, 52% of the participants reported that health officials, nurses or caregivers, visited and taught them about health issues. Only 23.3% said that they were frequently or very often visited by education officials to talk about education issues. Comparing the physical presence of government officials from the three departments in GSRD, the department which the respondents reported that frequently visited them was agriculture, talking about agriculture issues, and this was 65.7%. The higher percentage means that the department of agriculture interacted more with the people through their extension officers than the other departments. Therefore, people in GSRD might be seeing agriculture extension officers more than those in other departments. Agriculture officers visit them more, unlike education officials who interact more with the

school going children and health officials interacting more with those who visit clinics for either health-related issues, specific campaigns or programmes. The physical presence of officials from all three departments can be improved to increase the impact of their messages since section 7.2.5 noted that officials are considered an essential source of vital information, second to the radio. The three government departments, particularly health and education, can also increase the frequency of their visits in the district to address all their related programmes and issues, which the upcoming section (section 7.2.7) discusses.

7.2.7 Information received per channel

The study asked respondents to share more details about the sources through which they received vital information. Respondents also identified some relevant areas which the government departments dealt with and selected the sources through which they received such information. These sources were from the Modern Communication Systems (MCSs), Indigenous Communication Systems (ICSs) and the Information Communication Systems (ICTs).

Health

Figure 7.14 below depicts the primary sources of information on nutrition, reproductive health and disease awareness within GSRD. From the graph, the radio was the primary source of nutrition, reproductive health and disease awareness information. Disease awareness information was shared more via radio, followed by nutrition and then reproductive health. TV, although lower than radio, was reported to have been used more to share reproductive related information. Government officials were third in reproductive health, second in nutrition, as well as disease awareness. Newspapers were recorded second as a source of nutrition-related information and were the least in terms of reproductive health and disease awareness. From this, the study deduced that radio was the highest source of some of the significant issues essential to development in the health department. WhatsApp emerged as a source of information, although reported by a few respondents. Nonetheless, this shows that it can complement the other main sources of information.

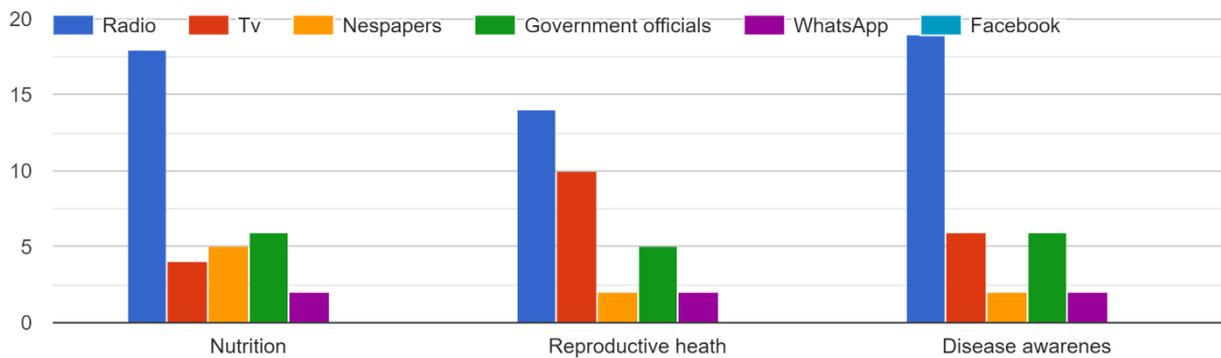


Figure 0:14 Sources through which people received health information

Education

Figure 7.15 below shows channels or ways through which the people of GSRD received education-related information such as early childhood education, education in general, adult literacy and girl child education. The graph shows the radio as the primary source of information among all given categories. About 20 participants said that they received information related to early childhood education via the radio. An equal number of people, which was around 18, reported that they received information about education in general, adult education and girl child education information via radio. Radio remained a dominant source of education-related information over all other channels and sources which were reported by less than 10 participants. Participants who said they were receiving education information via other sources (TV, newspapers, government officials and WhatsApp) were just above five. None of the respondents considered Facebook as a source of education-related information. Therefore, it is conclusive that all the other sources of information still need to be developed so that they have a significant impact on education-related issues.

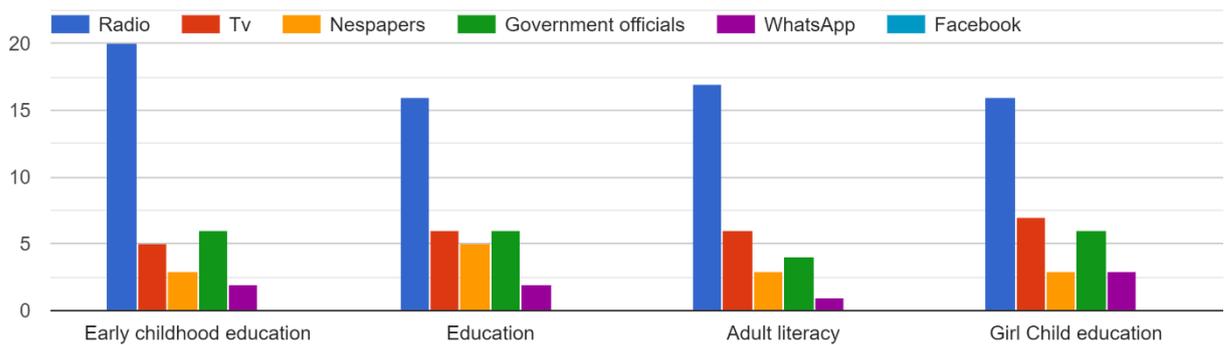


Figure 0:15 Sources through which people received education information

Agriculture

The graph in figure 7.16 shows the primary sources of information through which the people of GSRD received agriculture information. The study categorised the information under some of the issues that are concerned with rural development like sustainable farming, environmental protection, and high yields. Most participants reported radio as the primary source of this information, with sustainable farming retaining the highest number of respondents (20) and environment protection and high yields were lower with around 15 respondents, which was five respondents less than environmental protection. Ten or fewer respondents reported TV, newspapers and government officials as sources of agriculture-related information. There was a considerable discrepancy between all other channels, and sources of information and radio remained a dominant source of agriculture-related information.

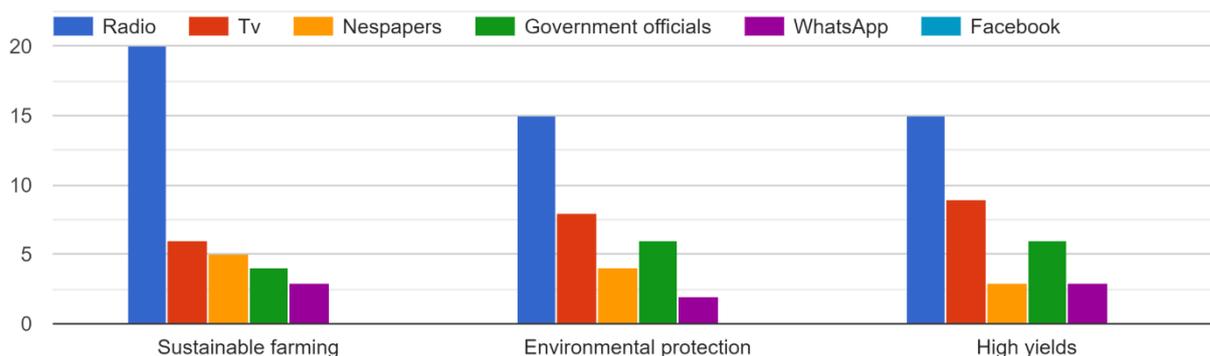


Figure 0:16 Sources through which people received agriculture information

Radio emerged as the primary source of information after comparing and contrasting all the sources of information within the three departments. Although there was a presence of government officials representing the three departments within the district, their impact as sources of development-related information was less felt as compared to radio. All other sources, including TV, newspapers, WhatsApp and Facebook, were utilised by a few people hence a less number of respondents reported them as sources of development-related information.

7.2.8 Satisfaction

Satisfaction with the information received via specific channels explains the messages' impact on the people. If people are satisfied with particular sources of information, they are likely to use them more and value the information shared via those channels. This section presents findings and discussions on how the respondents reported their satisfaction with different sources of information. Sources of information are grouped and discussed as MCSs, social media and interpersonal forms of communication to be succinct in this presentation. The discussion also explores the possible reasons for the varying levels of satisfaction.

7.2.9 Satisfaction with MCSs

The study asked participants to respond to a question about their satisfaction with the MCSs as sources of rural development information which included radio, TV, newspapers and pamphlets or brochures, and the graph in figure 7.17 illustrates the findings from the survey. The chart shows that 44.4% of the respondents reported that they were satisfied with the radio. Radio had the highest percentage of respondents who said they were satisfied or very

satisfied with it, followed by TV at 40.7% and pamphlets at 33.3%. Newspapers had the least percentage of respondents who reported satisfaction at 25.9%. Almost half or just over half the respondents said that they were neutral with nearly all media channels. The highest percentage of the respondents who reported that their neutrality was for newspapers with 59.7%, followed by TV at 51.9%. Radio and pamphlets had an equal number of neutral responses, which was 40.7%. The possible reason participants selected neutral could be because they did not access much information via those channels. The reason for their neutrality was either the channels' inaccessibility or failure to relate development to information obtained via those channels. Those who reported dissatisfied or very dissatisfied were indicating that the information received did not have any relevance or contribution to development. The source with the highest number of respondents who reported that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied was pamphlets at 25.9%, followed by both radio and newspapers at 14.8% each and the least was TV at 7.4%. This low percentage for TV could be because a few people have access to it and therefore cannot be satisfied or dissatisfied with it and its content, which was the same reason for newspapers. Issues of political influence affecting the radio content quality and might have resulted in many people being dissatisfied with radio. The political pressure could have had a significant effect on radio's development content by taking up most of the airtime. There was also considerable low use of pamphlets and brochures. Additionally, all these sources of information are too far detached from the people of GSRD to articulate their development needs sincerely. The absence of mass media proximity and participation of the locals are factors at play in the levels of dissatisfaction with the medium and content disseminated by the prominent media forms of communication or MCSs.

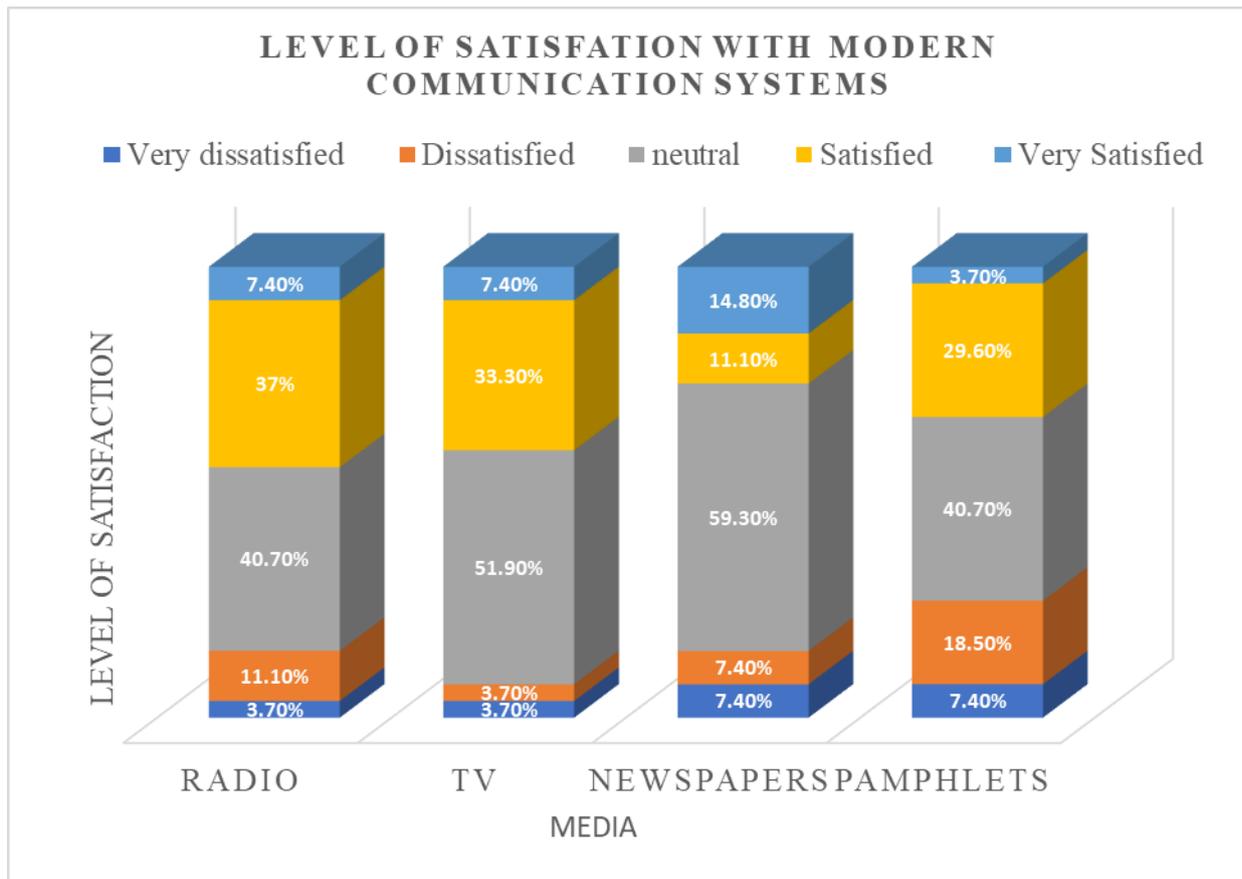


Figure 0:17 Satisfaction with MCSs as sources of rural development information

7.2.10 Satisfaction with interpersonal sources of information

The research analysed satisfaction levels, mostly with interpersonal forms of communication within the government departments and traditional or local leaders. Figure 7.18 shows the findings.

The graph shows that participants were satisfied with the information they received from government officials with health officials being the highest among the three government departments under study. Participants were generally satisfied with the information which they received from government officials of the three departments. The respondents who reported satisfaction with the information they received from the departments were 74.1% for health, 55.5% for education and agriculture had 51.8%. Thus, the health department had the highest number of respondents reporting satisfaction with information from the officials. Participants who reported satisfaction with the information which they received indicated their level of trust in those government officials or the quality of information which they received. Also, the respondents may have been more comfortable with the manner these government officials shared information with them.

Traditional or local leaders, although not experts, were included in this analysis because they are an interpersonal source of information in indigenous societies. The graph shows that a quarter of the participants were satisfied with the information they received through traditional or local leaders. This satisfaction arises from the fact that people in traditional societies trust their leaders as they have a significant influence which can be capitalised on by government officials for rural development. In addition to that, these leaders are easily accessible and routinely interact with the people face-to-face. These are issues of proximity which are vital in rural development communication because they facilitate two-way symmetrical communication whereby people can receive and send feedback or other crucial information immediately. However, a significant percentage of participants, 40.7% reported that they were dissatisfied with the information which they received through their traditional or local leaders, and 33.3% were neutral. The main reason could be that some people do not trust them on the bases of lack of expertise, which also poses a question on the selection criterion of traditional or local leaders. Smaller percentages of respondents were dissatisfied with the government officials within the three departments. Health had 11.1 %, agriculture had 22.2% and education had 29.6%. The research can deduce from the above statistics that the respondents were mostly satisfied with rural development information received from health officials, compared to the other two departments. There is, therefore, room for the department of agriculture and education to improve their influence in GSRD.

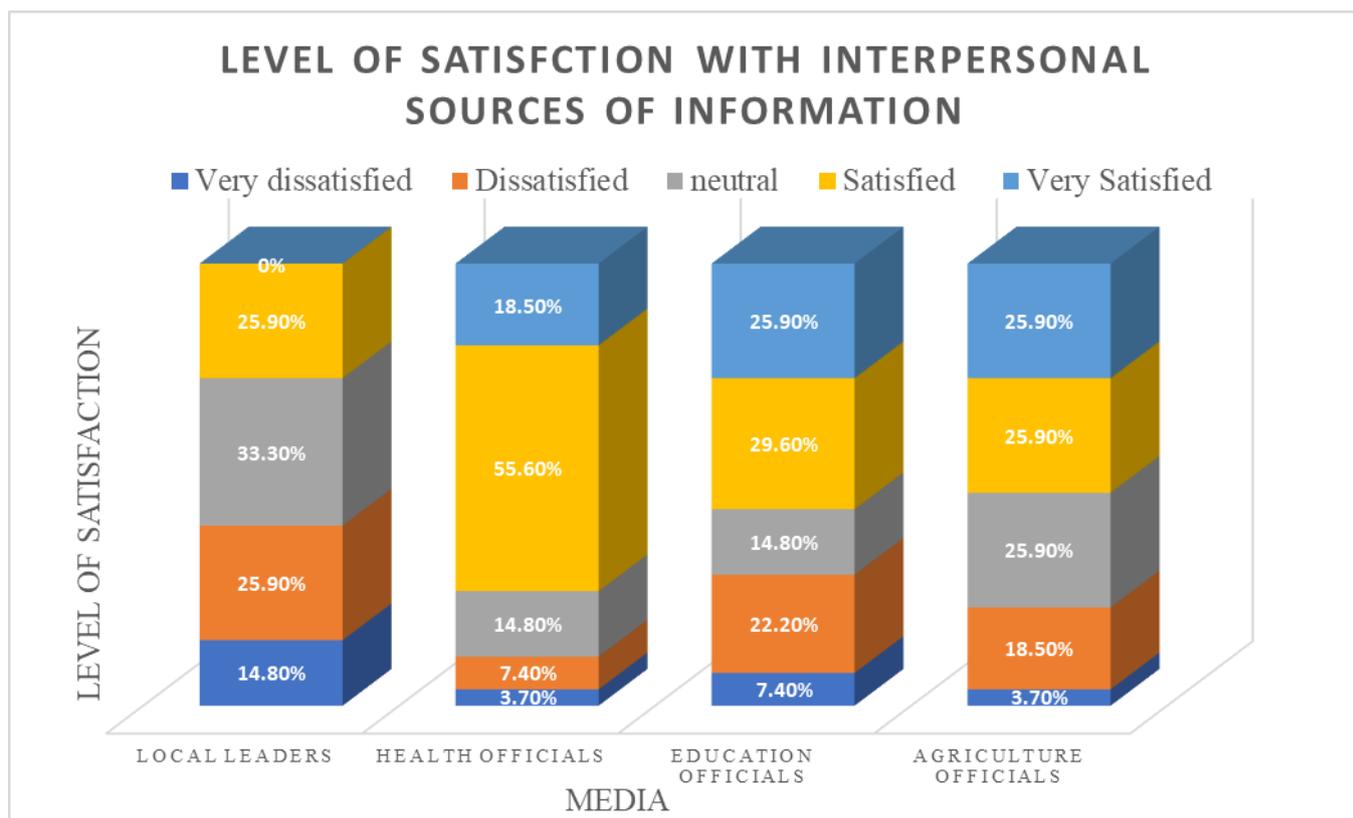


Figure 0:18 Satisfaction with interpersonal sources of rural development information

7.2.11 Satisfaction with social media

The graph on figure 7.19 below presents the respondents' satisfaction with the information received through social media. Participants selected Facebook and WhatsApp as part of the ICTs, which are prevalent in GSRD. The percentage of respondents who reported dissatisfaction with rural development content on WhatsApp was 47.1, and 29.6 were neutral. The possible reasons more than half the respondents were dissatisfied or chose to be neutral with WhatsApp could be that many people do not have WhatsApp on their mobile phones, and a few of those who had it found the information unsatisfactory. WhatsApp content is often not regulated and flooded with unverified, as well as irrelevant content. The percentage of participants who chose neutral with Facebook was 48.1, and 22.2 were satisfied. The rest were dissatisfied with Facebook and the information received through it. Just like WhatsApp, a few people in GSRD have Facebook, and generally, social media is a platform for less important things. People in GSRD do not afford gadgets that can run the social media applications and the data required for the applications to function. That is why many respondents chose to be neutral. ICTs are yet to fully develop for the effective use of social media in development communication purposes in the district. Moreover, economic

challenges, creating a digital divide, remain a setback in the full utilisation of ICTs and social media.

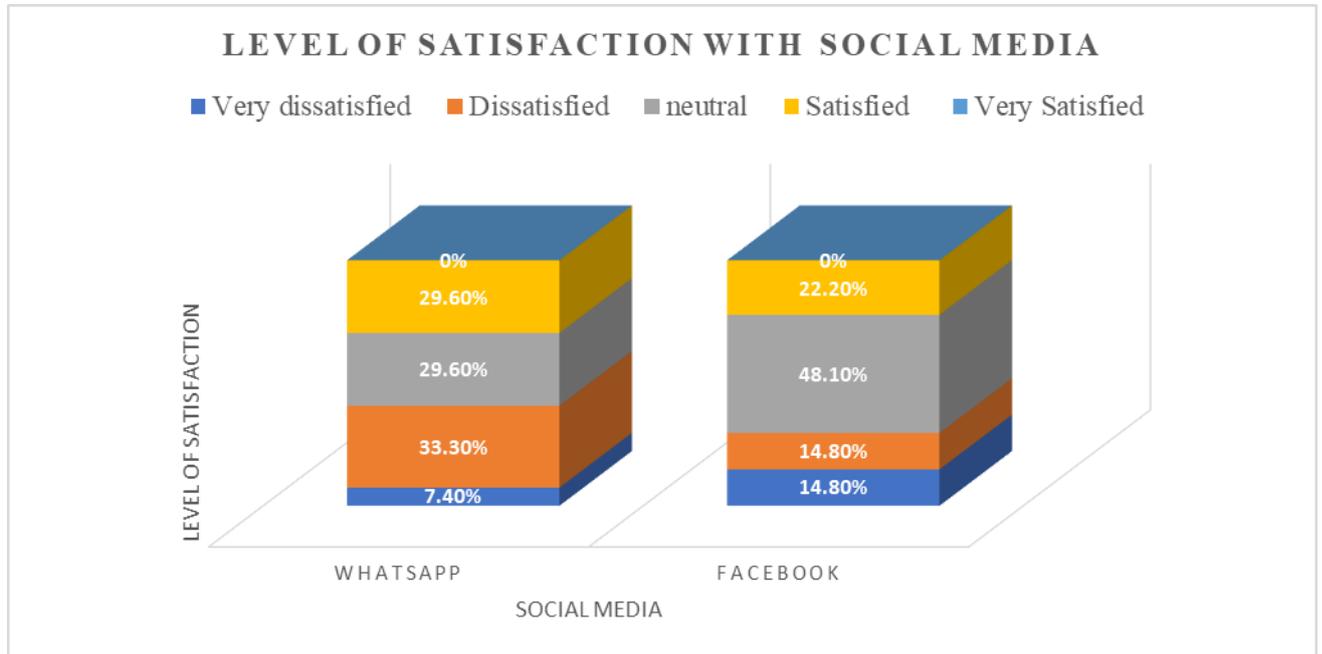


Figure 0:19 Satisfaction with social media

7.2.12 Satisfaction with Indigenous Communication Systems (ICSs).

The graph in figure 7.19 depicts the respondents’ satisfaction with indigenous communication systems (ICSs). The chart reveals that the percentages of satisfaction with rural development information via the selected indigenous communication systems were less than half. Respondents were mostly satisfied with drama, which had 47.3%, followed by religious gatherings with 44.6%. Dramas are often entertaining, and at the same time, share valuable information, which is essential for rural development in a way that people appreciate. The rural folk enjoy dramas, and as a result, they become a satisfactory source of rural development information. With regards to religious gatherings, 44.6% reported satisfaction. Most people hold religion highly such that it has an essential influence on rural people. People are therefore confident with rural development information shared at religious gatherings. The percentage of participants who reported satisfaction with music was 33.3. Music is entertaining and has a lasting impact. Songs remain in the minds of the people who continue singing them, which keeps reminding them of the critical information. These attributes are likely to explain why about a third of the respondents reported satisfaction with music. The percentage of respondents who said that they were satisfied with the information received through traditional or local leaders was 25.9 and both traditional gatherings and

word of mouth had 21.2. Traditional or local leaders are often looked down upon when it comes to expert knowledge. Hence a few respondents reported satisfaction with them as a source of essential rural development information.

The possible reason traditional gatherings were not considered satisfactory in terms of rural development content could be their diminishing value, with Christianity and modernity overtaking tradition. Word of mouth, although crucial, was generally less associated with rural development, which could be due to a lesser understanding of how important word of mouth spreads essential information. Nearly half the participants chose to be neutral regarding their satisfaction with the indigenous sources of information. Traditional gatherings, word of mouth and music had 40.7% participants each, who selected neutral. Religious gatherings had 48.1% neutral respondents, and drama had 37%. Traditional or local leaders had the least participants who chose neutral at 33.3%. Respondents did not relate these media or channels to development due to a lack of an understanding of how they applied to rural development.

Additionally, the age group of respondents likely to have chosen neutral were those that do not have time to attend traditional gatherings where these activities happen as they will be preoccupied with fending for their families. Traditional or local leaders had the most significant percentage of participants who reported that they were not satisfied with them as a source of rural development content. The percentage was 40.7, and both word of mouth and traditional gatherings followed with 37%. Music had 25.9%, and the next was drama with 14.8%. The media, which had the least percentage of the people who said they were dissatisfied with it, was religious gatherings with only 7.4%. The probable reason for the dissatisfaction with traditional or local leaders could be the attitude of the people. People look down upon traditional or local leaders due to their lack of expertise. The disregard for the value of word of mouth as useful also yielded 37% of the respondents who reported that they were dissatisfied with them. The respondents lacked an appreciation of indigenous communication systems as useful in rural development as per the presented statistics. Nevertheless, the intrinsic significance of rural ICSs remains valuable, and they are, however, a cheap and readily available resource that government departments can capitalise on in their rural development communication activities.

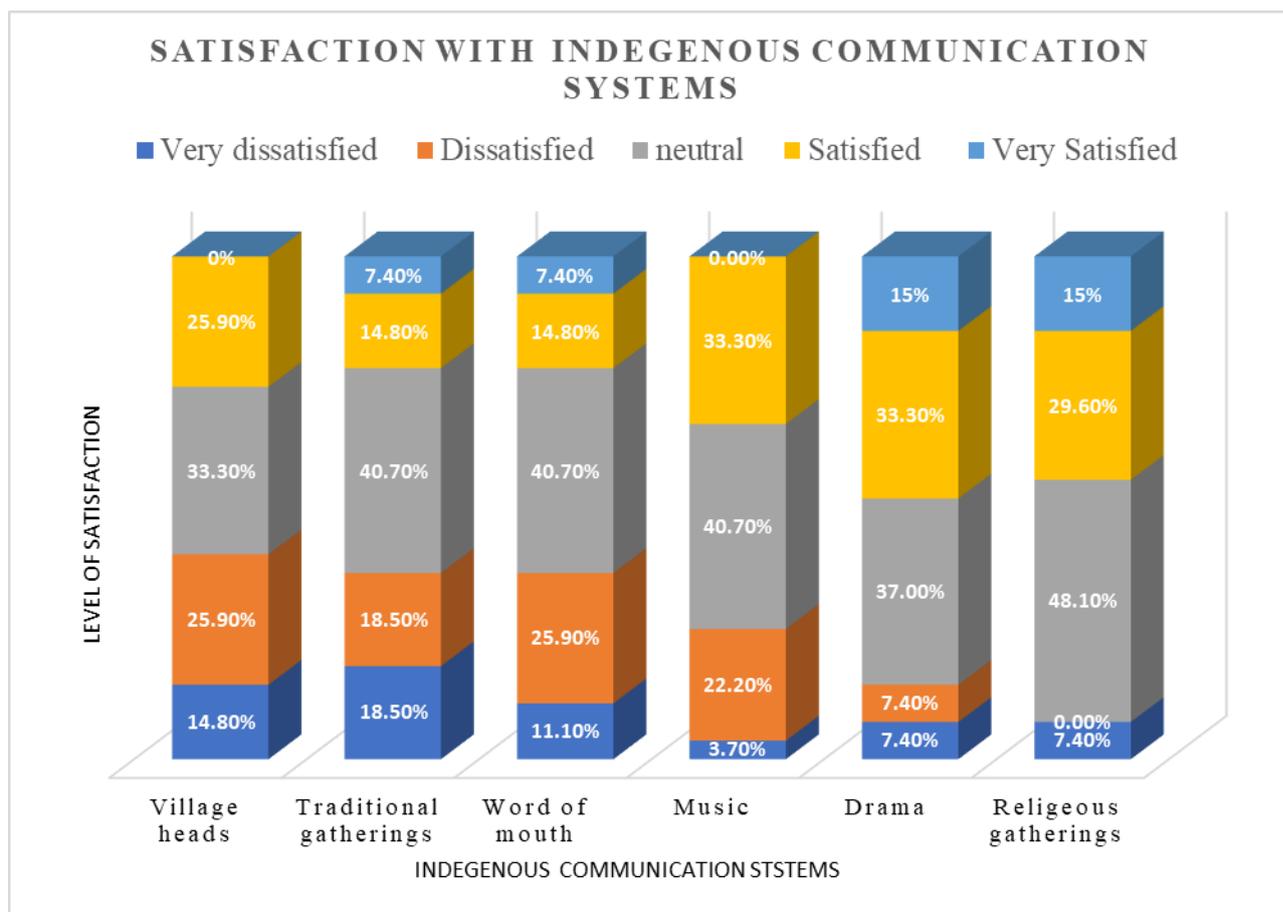


Figure 0:20 Satisfaction with traditional forms of media

Comparing modern communication systems (MCSs), interpersonal forms of communication and ICTs in the form of social media, it can be deduced that many respondents were satisfied with radio and its shared content. Government officials from the three departments followed radio, in terms of satisfaction. Radio is much more applicable in GSRD because it is entertaining, and people can use it while doing other duties. In addition to that, people can afford the gadgets powering them. Those who cannot afford radio can still listen to other people’s radios; hence its shared use remains vital. Based on the above reasons, the radio was satisfactory as a source of rural development content, compared to other forms of mass media. Participants reported satisfaction with responsible government officials as a source of rural development information. This could be due to their credibility as experts and the fact that they were much closer to the people. The fact that they could communicate face-to-face with the people made government officials much more reliable, and this facilitated a two-way flow of information. Government officials from the department of health had the highest presence in the district, which means that the other two departments still need to improve their influence and impact in GSRD.

7.2.13 Participation in development communication

Most respondents (81.5%) reported that the available communication channels allowed them to participate in development programmes. See figure 7.21.

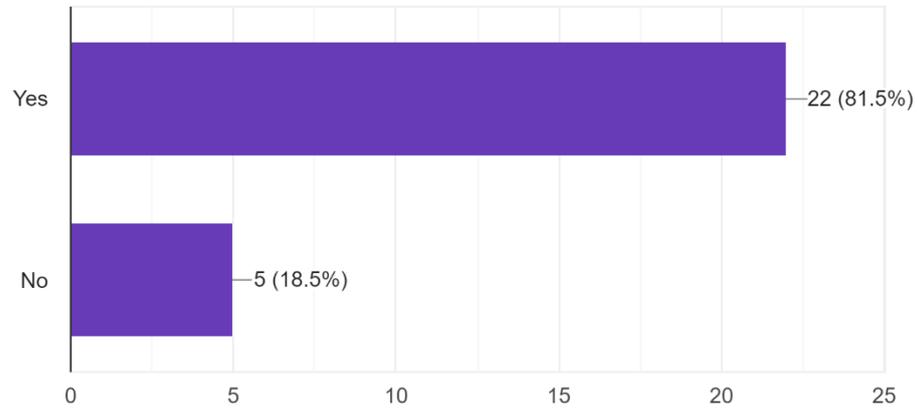


Figure 7:21: Promotion of participation by information channels in development communication

However, more than half the respondents said that they did not consider themselves involved enough in development programmes. In terms of getting enough opportunities to communicate with government agents and officials, figure 7.22 illustrates that only 33.3%, which is less than the average number of participants, reported that they had an opportunity to communicate with government officials. The reason could have been that they expected the information to come from the experts themselves and did not have the means and courage to communicate with government officials. This view by the rural folk indicated that communication within GSRD is mainly top-down, which is more linear and authoritative with fewer opportunities for two-way symmetrical communication and participation by the rural public in development programmes.

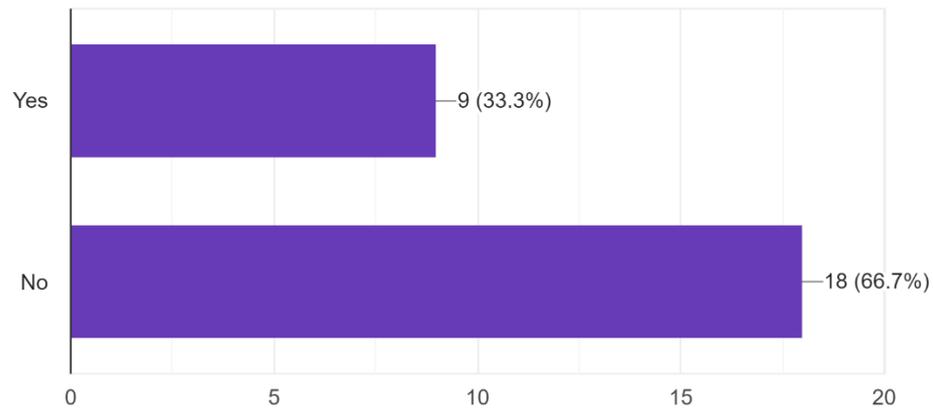


Figure 0:22 Opportunities to communicate with government officials

In response to the means by which people interacted with government officials, the majority said that they talked with government officials on mobile phones (WhatsApp or calls) at meetings and workshops. A few people mentioned letters, and just one person mentioned face-to-face and WhatsApp, and another participant mentioned phone calls. Looking at the nature of the meetings, which many people mostly attend, little opportunity is available for the people to share their feedback with government officials. Letters are questionable, and the concern was that the government officials take a long time to respond to them, and 66.7% said they do not get feedback from government officials. Furthermore, 77.8% reported that government officials do not act on the feedback which they give.

When asked why people do not participate more in development activities, prominent responses were fear of being politically victimised and the political interferences in development programmes. In addition, lack of resources, knowledge and education were also randomly mentioned as causes of limited participation in development activities.

7.2.14 Development and modernisation

As shown by the pie chart below (figure 7.23), development was associated mainly with modernisation by the participants. More than 70% said that they believed that the district could not develop without following a western-style of modernisation. Most participants agreed that development content comes mainly from cities, and the message content encourages them to follow the Western-style development. The material was regarded as contradictory to values and norms by around 40%, while the other 40% preferred to be neutral. About 20% disagreed with the assertion. Approximately 60 % said that they strongly

agreed that the locals are fully capable of developing their district. More than 70% said that the government is not giving the locals space to chart their development programmes.

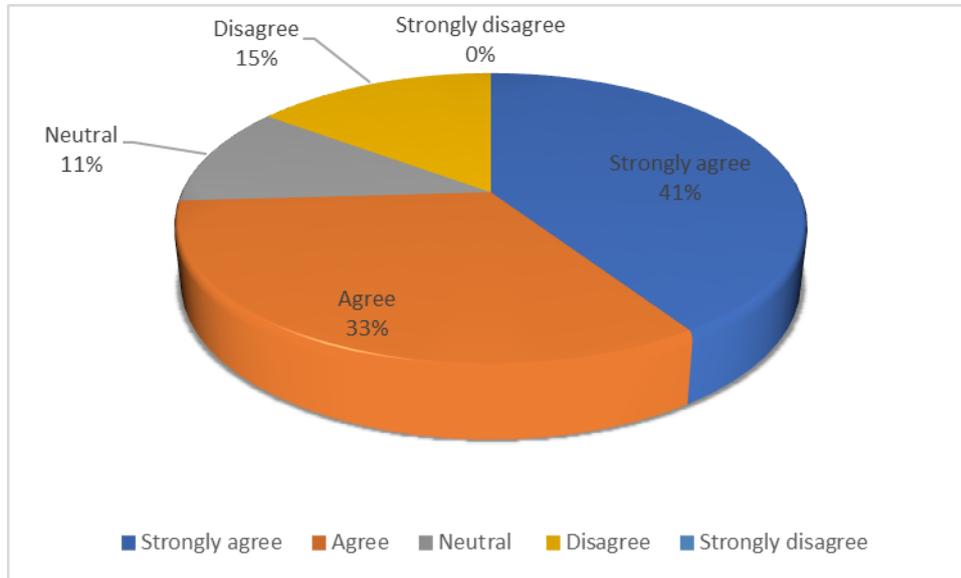


Figure 0:23 Participants thoughts on development and modernisation

Figure 7.24 shows the findings of the respondents' opinions about where they thought development content mainly originated. As shown in the pie chart, a total of 63% agreed or strongly agreed to the assertion that development content came from the cities and the modern world. However, 11% were neutral, and 15% disagreed. From these statistics, the study can deduce that content sources did not originate from the people within the district, which means they did not contribute to crafting their development initiatives based on their actual needs. Someone else was responsible for this, which could have adverse effects on the participation of the people and, ultimately, the success of the development initiatives.

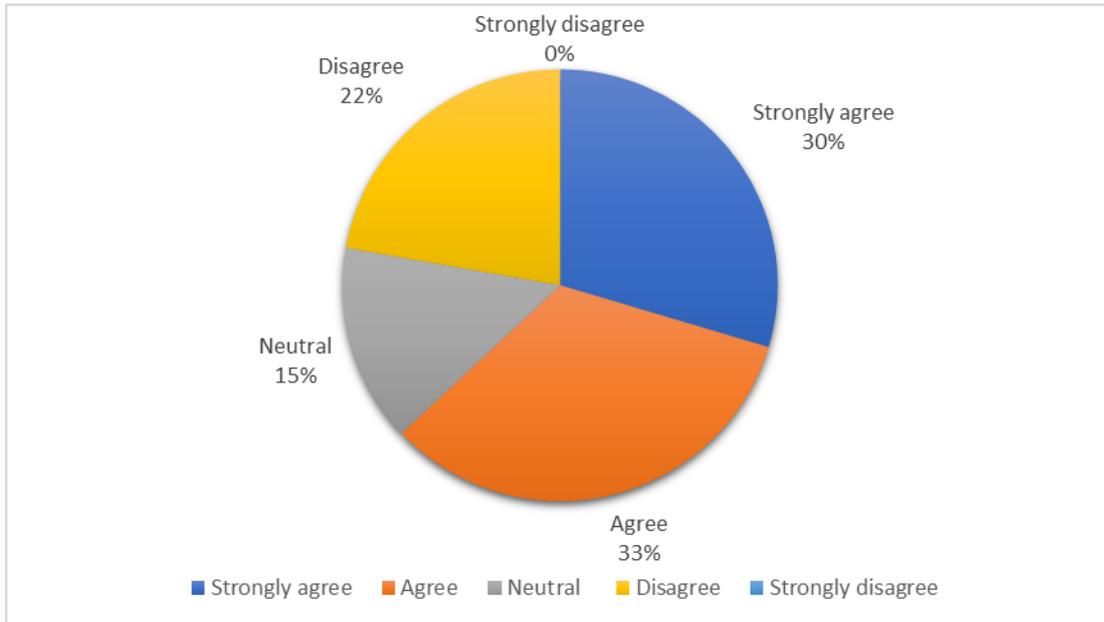


Figure 0:24 Development content primarily comes from the modern world and not from the people of GSRD?

The study set out to establish if the respondents were confident that the people of GSRD should be allowed a chance to chart their development, and figure 7.25 depicts the findings. The pie chart shows that more than three-quarters of the respondents believed that the people of GSRD should map out the development of their area. The same percentage reported that the people of GSRD could facilitate their area’s development. Top-down communication from executives and administrators outside the district only frustrates the capacity of the people to be innovative and be actively involved in their development.

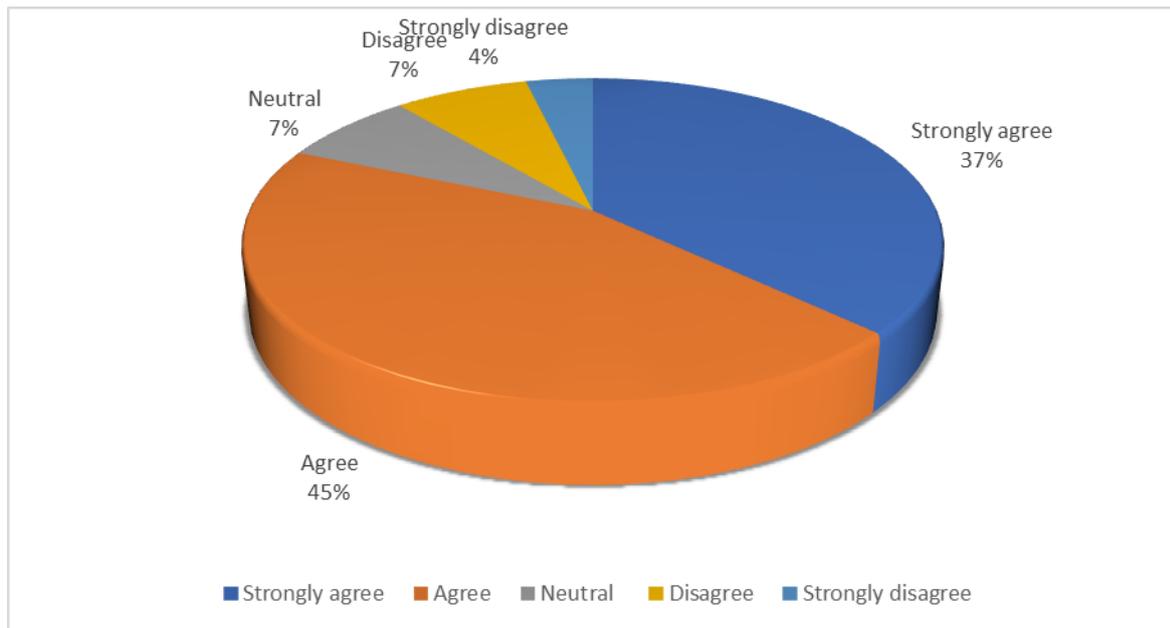


Figure 0:25 The people of GRSD should chart their development

To conclude part one of the analysis, the study observed that the causal links and degrees of association between the number of mass media channels and the evidence of development (Jensen 2013) are a phenomenon that still needs further exploration. However, the more the channels, the higher the probability that the message may get to the respondents. Recipients also have an opportunity to compare messages from different sources. On the other hand, many sources of content can create noise, confusion and affect the consistency of messages, particularly in circumstances where listeners do not understand the functioning of the media. The above part of the discussion and findings has presented the survey results and analysis conducted on the questionnaire respondents or FGDs participants from the six selected wards within the district. The next section discusses the findings from FGDs as they were analysed using the grounded theory approach.

7.3 Part Two: Findings from the focus group discussions (FGDs)

As already stated in the previous chapter, the study used the reflexive thematic analysis method to analyse qualitative data collected through focus group discussions. The research conducted six separate focus group discussions (FGDs) with six participants each, at six different centres within the district. The FDGs were held at Musita, Masakadza, Njelele, Kana, Manoti and Mateta which are different centres spread across the Gokwe South district. The upcoming section presents the findings and provides a detailed analysis based on the results relevant in this study. Reflexive thematic analysis is a method that can be applied to analyse qualitative data following an accessible and theoretically flexible approach of

analysing qualitative data. Reflexive thematic analysis is suitable for large qualitative data and follows a six-phase procedure with allowance for continuous reflexivity. The flexibility of the approach with the use of a reflexivity journal with explanations to justify the inclusion or exclusion and the determination of labels, codes, and themes was adequate to guarantee the validity and credibility of the results.

In development communication, the significant challenges which limit government departments are broader than what is generally assumed. These challenges can be either micro or macro. Micro problems are those limiting factors within GSRD, for example, religion, poverty, education levels and access to the communication channels. Macro factors are external to GSRD and are mainly within the general environment, for example, politics and governance, the national economy and media legislation and policies. However, all these have significant implications on communication for rural development. The fundamental purpose of this section is to present the findings of the study, answer the primary research questions, thereby meeting the objectives of this research, as described in chapter 1.

As a first step in the reflexive thematic analysis approach, the researcher transcribed the focus group discussions into word documents and grouped the information from the discussions as per the guiding questions. Grouping the discussions going by the guiding questions facilitated the easy analysis of data that did not mix up the data. It also became easy to develop relevant concepts, themes and categories.

In the process of analysing the data from focus groups, the researcher identified themes which are phrases or sentences which identifying the meaning of data. Braun & Clarke (2006) describe themes as those phrases or sentences in the data related to the research questions. Some themes are semantic, directly linked to the research questions, and some are latent, meaning that they emerge after exploring the whole data set. Furthermore, the researchers explored the inductive aspects of the analysis. In an inductive study, the researcher explores themes directly associated with the data without necessarily ruling out the theoretical and epistemological frameworks, but the themes emerge from the data. Also, the study explored latent and explicit themes. Latent themes are not easily interpreted or observable but go beyond what the participants say, whereas explicit themes have surface and easily identifiable meanings.

The researcher generated concepts from the actual data as per the guiding questions. Recurring incidences, themes and arguments were observed, noted and collected into

different labels. Concepts were also *in vivo*, which are actual words said by participants unless it was necessary to devise related concepts or codes.

7.3.1 Areas addressed by each of the three departments

The researcher asked participants to identify the areas which the three government departments were addressing within GSRD. The participants agreed that the department of agriculture dealt with high yields, conservation agriculture (CA), promotion of small grains and nutrition gardening. The participants also mentioned that the department of education addressed the new curriculum, girl child education, school dropouts, and children's rights, particularly the right to education. Participants also stated that the department of health was dealing with issues of HIV/Aids, Cholera, hygiene, Malaria, Elephantiasis, STIs, family planning and male circumcision. It was clear from the discussion that there was a general awareness of the programmes championed by the three departments within the district. This indicated a general awareness of government development programmes across the three departments. However, the public's depth of understanding of the government programmes differed from that of the government executives and officials.

7.3.2 Channels and media through which the public received rural development messages

This section categorised findings from participants' discussions according to MCSs, ICSs and ICTs. The grouping of these communication approaches emerged from the emerging themes.

7.3.3 Modern Communication Systems (MCSs)

Participants mentioned radio as a prominent media through which they received information from the three departments. The participants indicated that they either had radios themselves or listened to other people's radios. Like a lady from the Mateta FGD who said '*tinozongonzwa nhau kubva kunevanawo maradio*' meaning "we will get the news from those who have radio' Many participants were reporting that they listened to the radio, and this was due to shared listening, which is a positive attribute of radio. The radio stations which the participants said they mostly listened to were *Radio Zimbabwe* followed by *National FM*. The reasons for listening to those stations were that they were entertaining and played interesting local songs in between programmes. '*Radio Zimbabwe kana National FM dzine ma programme anonakidza chizvo*' Other participants, however, mentioned that they listened to *Studio 7* on *Voice of America*. For instance, participants stated they listened to a foreign broadcast as the local stations did not fully report on issues. '*Isu tinoterera studio 7 zvemuno*

hazvina news chaidzo'. Implying that there was some form of censorship of the local station which avoided criticising the government. To support this assertion, the participants said that *Studio 7* broadcasted accurate, relevant and politically unbiased news. However, the participants said they listened to the radio, referring to music played on CDs or SD cards. There is, therefore, a need to take much care when discussing radio listening amongst the people in GRSD, and researchers need to be clear that they mean listening to the radio station or stations received on the radio frequencies. This study attempted to emphasise this, as this could affect the findings regarding the choice of radio on radio stations as a channel for communicating development content. The participants who said they listened to music on CDs or SD cards justified themselves by saying they found it better to listen to music which they liked, unlike having radio DJs selecting songs for them. It emerged from this discussion that participants mostly looked for entertainment, relevant and accurate information from the radio. Therefore, there is a need to understand the audience's needs and customise the content according to their interests.

In only two FGDs, only two participants said they had a TV and that they watched TV. Still, all the participants did not mention receiving information from the government departments through TV. Another reason for many participants saying that they did not receive information through TV because they did not have the gadgets and could not afford them. Participants from Musita FDGs said '*hatina mari dzekutenga ma TV*' meaning we do not afford buying TVs a lady from the same FDGs added, '*handitorina kana mari yekutenga sugar zwayo*' meaning she does not have money to buy basic needs like sugar. Therefore, economic factors did not permit people to acquire television sets.

Newspapers were not so popular among the participants, and many said that they could not afford to buy them from the nearby town, so it was infrequent to come across newspapers. The other forms of print media which the participants mentioned were pamphlets, brochures, flyers and posters. Participants from the Manoti FDG had this to say, '*...tinomboona mapepa asi mazuva ano zvaakuita zvichidzikira, kare aiuya akawanda chaizvo*' meaning that we used to get many kinds of documents, but they are becoming rare. The participants indicated that they saw posters at the clinics and on walls of shops at business centres. The themes of production costs on the part of the government departments, affordability, especially regarding newspapers, access and availability of content emerged in this section of the discussions.

7.3.4 Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

Participants mentioned simple mobile phones, smartphones, social media like WhatsApp and Facebook as the forms through which they received development content. Participants said that they did not have computers or anywhere where they could see or use them. A male participant from Musita FDG said, *'zvemacomputer tinotongozvinzwira kune vamwe'* meaning that *'they only hear about computers from others far off'*. However, many said that they had simple phones, and through these, they could receive information. Some mentioned that they had received SMSs about health, but it later emerged that the SMSs did not originate from the department of health but NGOs. Most participants mentioned WhatsApp as a source of information from the three departments. A few participants who had WhatsApp on their phones said that they were in WhatsApp groups led or created by the local government officials where they received or discussed issues regarding their relevant departments. Some participants, however, mentioned that they could get information from those who had WhatsApp on their phones. They, however, said that it was vital for them to be part of those social media groups because they received helpful information.

Social media improved the level of participation and social inclusion. It also helped reduce social isolation as most people were getting connected to other people and others around them. Those without social media on their devices knew some people who had access to them. These people would contact those near them for social media updates. Going to talk to other people who had social media on their devices reduced social isolation. People were empowered by having access to information, knowing details of what was going on and informing them of where they were supposed to be. There was an improved level of participation by those who usually missed information, working on their farms or at home. They were now able to access information easily. One female participant said, *after my chores in the afternoon, I go to my neighbour who has WhatsApp on the phone, and I look at some of the messages on what is currently trending.*

Another participant said that *when my friend receives interesting videos, he shows them to me when he comes to my house in the evening.*

In another study, Doner (2004) reported that participants said they now felt much connected to the world because of their mobile phones.

Another female participant said, *mazuva ano taakungo tsaapura nekugugula* meaning that nowadays we are now using WhatsApp and Google. The implication was that WhatsApp

eased access to information and empowered them. They could also participate in topical issues, which made their lives comfortable and bearable. Duncombe & Heeks (2001), further asserted that being connected helped people by including them in all stages of development projects.

The themes which emerged in this discussion were a less developed ICT environment, poor digital literacy and digital divide, social media groups and information sharing.

7.3.5 Indigenous Communication Systems (ICSs)

Participants mentioned that they received informative information about agriculture, health or education through music, drama and poetry at important events and school functions. They also mentioned that the department of agriculture has green shows, dry shows or field days. There are slots for entertainment at these events where local groups or at times, school children perform dramas, poetry and songs. Apart from entertaining them, the participants said these programmes taught them various crucial aspects of agriculture and farming. The participants also stated that these were useful as they would not forget the messages. Others said that they continued to sing the songs even after the functions, which would keep reminding them of the critical information. The participants said they did not consider traditional or local leaders or traditional meetings as a way through which they received development information. A man from the kana FDG said, *'okhunye sokungokwakudhala lokho'* meaning *'some of the things are from a long time ago and now out of fashion'*. They, however, accepted that traditional or local leaders created platforms for government officials to share information through calling meetings and encouraging the people to attend the meetings and other events. The participants also said that government officials from the three departments also shared information verbally or face-to-face. Also, the participants noted that they received information orally from other community members who would have obtained the information before them. According to the participants, these methods did not require them to spend money, as all they needed to do was to attend the events and get the information themselves. The participants, however, cited inaccuracies of the information they received orally from other people and suggested that in most cases, such information needed to be verified. In almost all FDGs, participants indicated that some traditional forms of communication and ceremonies were out of fashion. Two ladies from Manoti FDGs said that some kind of traditional ceremonies were not acceptable at their church, indicating that they were associated with ancestors, witchcraft and other unacceptable beliefs by the Christian

faith. This clearly indicated remnants of colonialism that had infiltrated the society through religion. The African traditional ceremonies were presented as evil, bad and unacceptable among Christians.

Furthermore, the participants also said that they received information face-to-face from their children who receive the information from education officials. Education officials share information with school children at their assembly addresses and ask them to share the information with their parents at home. This information could be meeting announcements and other announcements from different departments like health and agriculture.

The themes which emerged in this section of the discussion were the lasting impact of messages shared through indigenous forms of media, the slow transmission of information by ICSs, cooperation amongst government departments and traditional or local leaders as useful in assisting government officials in sharing information. Another theme that emerged was the effectiveness of ICSs, and participants discussed the usage and effectiveness of indigenous communication systems (ICSs). They considered ICSs being used effectively and adequately by government departments. The main reasons the participants found the indigenous communication systems effective were their accessibility due to low costs, local nature, as well as their entertaining attributes. They also mentioned that some of the indigenous forms needed verification and did not trust traditional leaders' lack of expertise on developmental issues. The participants also stated that they would believe the messages if they knew that the people who shared them had qualifications in those areas. Another point discussed was the slow rate at which indigenous forms spread messages. The additional emerging themes were the traditional leaders' lack of expertise and the entertainment value of ICSs.

7.3.6 Communication with government officials

The participants said that they mostly communicated with government officials at meetings and face-to-face when the latter visited the communities. One participant from *Mateta FDG* said, '*mikana yekutaura nevamiririri vehurumende tinayo chose, tinogona kunavaona kuzvikoro, kumaclinic kana varimisi vanosvika munharaunda*' meaning that opportunities to interact with government representatives were available, we can go and see them face to face at schools or clinic, and sometimes AREX officials come around. When they had problems or issues which needed immediate attention, participants said they would go and talk to the responsible government officials face-to-face. A few of the participants said they would call

them on their mobile phones on rare occasions. They acknowledged that they had government officials mobile phone numbers. Some of the participants in a few groups mentioned that they communicated via WhatsApp. One participant at Kana FDG said, *'siyakwazi ukum'bamba masinyani umlimisi ngeWhatsApp'* meaning that 'we are able to contact the AREX officials on WhatsApp if there is need' The participants said the government departments provided an opportunity for them to interact with the officials at meetings, face-to-face and on WhatsApp and WhatsApp groups. From this, the study noted few opportunities for bottom-up communication, a lack of participation in the communication activities and a wide gap or distance between the experts and the public as emerging themes.

7.3.7 Involvement and participation in rural development communication

The participants submitted that government departments involved them in the development programmes. They added that they were involved mainly through acting upon the information which they received from government departments. A participant from FDGs Masakadza said *'kana hurongwa hukauya tinoita zvinenge zvataurwa'* meaning that *'if the programmes come from above the people will do as instructed'* The participants said that they understood the essence and value of doing what the officials or government departments asked them to do in transforming their livelihoods. One lady from FDG Masakadza said *'Hurumende inahwo hurongwa hwakanaka hwebudiriro'* meaning that *'the government through the key departments had great development plans.'* Even so, they were not privy to other sections of the development programmes like the research or consultation, planning and evaluation phases. The participants mentioned that they had participated in most of the government programmes. The themes developed from this section were a lack of confidence and an understanding of the potential the locals must have to improve their livelihoods. The participation by the public was on the lower rungs of Arnstein's ladder of participation (Arnstein, 2007). This means that there is need to elevate the kind of participation to the upper rungs of participation which entail citizen power.

Limitations to participation

The interviews and FGDs had a question that focused on the limitations of the involvement in development communication. Most people responded that they participated but felt they could do more. Another definitive cause of lack of participation was political interference. Most people responded that people who had close ties to the ruling party participated more in development programmes. A discovery that some form of participation which occurred was

forced participation due to the fear of political persecution and transactional participation for fear of withdrawal of government freebies, especially in agriculture programmes, was made. From almost all FDGs, participants shared the same sentiments that they would avoid by all means not to be involved. One participant from Njelele FDGs said, *'zvehurumende zvinongoda kuti munhu ave mukati mazvo kuti zvisazonetse mangwana'* meaning that one must just be involved in government programmes to avoid future problems. Being involved in government programmes appeared to be a sign of loyalty and patriotism, and there were people taking note of who got involved or not. Those who did not participate in specific programmes risked being the last on the list when it came to receiving government donations. While it was beyond the scope of this study, the source of political intimidation could not be associated with government departments or anyone. It was also risky to delve deep into this discussion, but when people are not involved fully in development programmes, suspicions are inevitable and have detrimental effects on rural development. This is mentioned as a limitation to participation as it is simply 'tokenistic participation' on the lower rungs of the ladder of participation which is not ideal for rural development where citizens are empowered and participate out of free will (Arnstein, 2007).

Other factors limiting participation included lack of resources, time due to chores at home, lack of information, and the necessary education. In terms of lack of resources, these zeros down to general poverty. One lady during an FDGs discussion at FDG musita said, *'chimwe chinoritadzisa kuenda kumisangano kushaya matenesi nezvipfeko dzimwe nguva sipo yekuwacha inenge isipo kuti munhu asvike panevamwe vine chiremerera'* meaning that *'the inhibiting factors which limits attendance to gatherings is lack of simple things like footwear and decent clothes or even washing soap to wash clothes.'* As simple as that might be, these issues affected the people's confidence and limited participation. Before thinking about the benefits of involvement others felt that their involvement would constrain their limited available resources therefore, whenever they could avoid being involved, they would take a back seat. The majority of the participants indicated that they basically expected the government departments to come up with development programmes, and they would participate during the implementation stages and not vice versa. It turns out that there was glaring evidence of the influence of colonialism and colonality. Where the idea of dependency had become rooted such that the public regarded themselves as inferior without any ideas to bring to the table. There was a need to address this perspective through decolonial approaches. However, most people generally felt that they participated in

development programmes. However, this participation was only during the implementation stages of government programmes. The themes noted in this discussion as factors that limited effective participation included a lack of resources/poverty, political interference, and poor education.

In conclusion, the above section discussed the findings based on the reflexive thematic analysis of the data from the six FGDs conducted in GSRD. Central themes emerged from this data analysis. The upcoming section, part three, presents the findings from the interviews with government officials.

7.4 Part Three: Findings from the interviews with government officials

This part of the study mainly followed the reflexive thematic analysis method, which allowed the researcher to carry out about 16 one-on-one semi-structured telephonic interviews with government officials from the three departments. The interviews only stopped when the researcher noted significant levels of redundancy, which meant that he had reached the point of saturation. By the time the researcher stopped the interviews, he had conducted a total of 16 interviews. Six officials were from the department of education, five from health and five from agriculture. Considering that the information was different, depending on the departments, the data were analysed separately. The study aimed to investigate the role of government communication in rural development, and this section provided insights from the lens of government officials operating in the GSRD community. After the interviews, the researcher transcribed the interviews into simple word documents for easy analysis. These transcripts were carefully scrutinised and coded according to critical aspects of the communication approaches by the departments in GSRD. Finally, the themes were generated from the data through a six-phase reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The principal theme categories which emerged included rural development communication fixed programmes, rural development ongoing programmes, internal communication channels, communication channels used to communicate with the public, communication selection criteria, impact and effectiveness of the communication approaches and methods, perceptions of government officials on public participation, limitations to effective communication; defining public participation in development programmes and government communication and limitations to participation. These categories were further reorganised into recurring themes and then into concepts. The process was ongoing with constant

comparisons of the themes and concepts. The next sections present the findings from the interviews with government officials operating in GSRD.

7.4.1 Department of health

The first part of the interviews sought information about the programmes the department of health was engaged in or had recently done in GSRD. These programmes included vaccinations and immunisations of epidemics like Trachoma and Elephantiasis, Rubella (Measles), child immunisation, family planning, HIV/Aids prevention and treatment, male circumcision, family planning, as well as Malaria and Cholera prevention and treatment. Some programmes are ongoing, and others launched as per need or circumstances where outbreaks are suspected or occur. It was clear that there were several programmes in which the department of health was involved in. The study noted that the department was very active in addressing critical rural development issues related to health.

Local health officials mentioned that there were internal communication channels, as well as external communication processes. Internal communication systems involved receiving information from their superiors at the district, provincial and national levels. The participants reported, *'we receive instructions and information in the form of memos and circulars'*, and another respondent said, *'I think there are only a few opportunities for us to communicate with those from higher offices it is usually the other way round'*. The few opportunities for government health officials to communicate with their superiors were in the form of reports. This indicates that local officials did not contribute a lot in terms of programmes creation and instigation but got involved in the execution process. The interviewees reported that communication amongst peers occurs face-to-face, via mobile phones and social media, mostly WhatsApp.

The interviewees said they communicated with the people in GSRD primarily through face-to-face, at meetings and on mobile phones and WhatsApp. They also noted that they worked with other departments like education to communicate important information in the form of announcements to school children at assemblies so that they would share the information with their parents and families at home. Added to that, health officials said they also asked schools to do dramas, poetry or sing songs tailored to inform, conscientise or educate the public about health matters. All these approaches were believed to have an impact on societies and effectively address development issues.

Health officials at the local level said they did not use mass media to share any health-related information, but this was done mainly from the headquarters at the national level. Adverts, announcements or other necessary details are broadcasted on the radio, TV or published in newspapers. The interviewees also reported that the department of health used other forms of print media. Their role at the local level was mainly to distribute the materials to the public and put up posters in public places where the people would have easy access to, for example, at clinic noticeboards, business centres and other sites.

The interviewees said that the public communicated with them face-to-face at meetings or visited them at the clinics. Also, health officials reported that they used WhatsApp as a medium of communication. Members of the community who had WhatsApp were also members of WhatsApp groups where they asked questions and received some information. Those who received the information would, in turn, share the information with other people. Comparing the two genders, health officials said that the women were equally involved and participated, just like their male counterparts. Some interviewees noted that women were more engaged in the health department's programmes than their male counterparts.

7.4.2 Department of agriculture

Officials within the department of agriculture who participated in the interviews outlined some of the programmes in place. These programmes include master farmer programmes, conservative agriculture (CA), nutrition gardens and promotion of small grains. In addition, extension officers and veterinary officers were concerned with increasing agriculture productivity in both crops and animals, respectively. In doing so, the interviewees said they did community visits and ran functions like green shows, field days, dry shows, and demonstration farms.

The interviewees reported that the department of agriculture used mass media, newspapers, radio or TV at national, just like the other departments. Their role at the local level was only to distribute printed materials that came from the headquarters. They reported meetings, face-to-face and WhatsApp being used, depending on the convenience and circumstances, to interact with the people of GSRD.

The participants said the people of GSRD participated in development programmes ran by the department. In terms of gender proportions, participants reported women as actively involved as their male counterparts or even better. The interviewees also said the same people were active in almost all programmes and others remained in the background. Other people

got involved through performing dramas, plays, songs or poetry at functions organised by the department.

7.4.3 Department of education

The following section discusses findings from the interviews conducted with government officials within the department of education.

First, the interviewees mentioned the programmes which their department was currently running in GSRD. These were the new curricula, right to education for both boys and girls, children's rights, and adult literacy, added to their day-to-day responsibilities.

Second, the interviewees mentioned the communication methods that they use in the district include face-to-face, meetings and social media (WhatsApp). They reported that they used traditional forms of communication like drama, poetry and music at school events. They said they also addressed themes from other government departments upon requests by those departments.

Third, government officials in the department of education reported that they received information in the form of memos and circulars and shared the information with their colleagues, depending on the nature of the information. For example, if the intention was to direct the information to the community, they announced to school children so that they would share the information with their families at home. Local education officials also reported that they did not use mass media for communication, but the department utilised these at the national level.

Insights obtained from these interviews pointed to the direction that communication within the education department mainly was top-down and took the linear fashion. There were, however, fewer opportunities for bottom-up communication, and such an approach does not encourage participation. Instead, it takes away the responsibility of participating in development programmes from the local government officials who are much closer to rural people.

The presentation of the analysis conducted using the reflexive thematic analysis method and the discussion above succinctly presented the emerging insights and themes. The next section, part four, discusses findings from the interviews with the government executives or heads of government departments in GSRD.

7.5 Part Four: Findings from interviews with government executives

The interviews with the executives in the key departments were analysed using the reflexive thematic analysis approach. The interviews were semi-structured, following a set of prepared guiding questions. However, the researcher asked follow-up questions for further clarification. The interview sessions with the heads of the three departments are discussed separately in this section. The researcher identified the themes as they emerged from the data and noted them on a thematic map that was further narrowed down to key emerging themes. However, comparisons to ascertain differences and similarities between the three government departments were made at the end of the analysis to help obtain a picture of the role of government communication in rural development. The next section discusses findings from one-on-one interviews with government executives at the district level.

7.5.1 Interview with the head of agriculture

The head of the agriculture department highlighted vital development areas that the department was involved in and programmes that are currently running. Some of these programmes are command agriculture, master farmer programme, nutrition gardening, conservative agriculture, promotion of small grains and biofortification. This information corroborated what the local agriculture officials said in their interviews.

- Command agriculture programme seeks to boost crop and livestock production by entering contracts with farmers. In crop production, the government gives farmers inputs in the form of seed, fertiliser, herbicides and pesticides, and fuel to cultivate on a minimum of five hectares of land. In livestock production, the government gives farmers vouchers worth \$3000 to buy at least three heifers for breeding. These farmers will then submit a minimum tonnage to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), and those in livestock production would then sell some of the animals and return the funds to the government. The head of agriculture noted that this programme is run in the district and countrywide, to guarantee food security.
- The master farmer programme involves training farmers for two or more years, during which time extension officers and veterinary officers facilitate lessons about farming and or raising livestock. The master farmer graduates can progress to advanced master farmer programmes. Other farmers can enrol in a general training programme in which the local extension or veterinary officer identifies their needs and trains farmers.

- The department of agriculture conducts nutrition gardening in collaboration with the department of health. In this programme, farmers run gardens where they grow vegetables to improve their nutritional diets.
- The other programme is conservation agriculture, meant to mitigate the challenges of climate change and to conserve the environment by training farmers to use farming methods and techniques which help them realise high yields even during times of low rainfall. For example, farmers are taught and encouraged to grow drought-resistant crops or plant their crops in holes that collect a significant amount of moisture and water such that when it does not rain, plants will continue to thrive.
- Promotion of small grains is also another programme by the department of agriculture; small grains are drought resistant and can thrive despite low rainfall due to climate change. Also, they have better health benefits compared to the dominant maize variety.
- Biofortification is also another programme within the department of agriculture. This programme by the department of agriculture, in collaboration with the department of health, aims to improve people's health by adding foods with sufficient nutrients to their diets. Examples of these are orange maize with vitamin D and bean varieties with zinc and iron, introduced and promoted in the community.

7.5.2 Communication approaches

In response to the question of operational guidelines of communication for development communication programmes, the head of agriculture highlighted the following: the department makes use of information communication technologies, using mobile phones and social media (WhatsApp). The department also uses locally based structures at village and ward levels, which helps with information dissemination. The department works with schools, giving messages to school children who will then share the information at home. The department regards traditional or local leaders like village heads, headmen, local chiefs, and councillors as entry points through which extension officers and veterinary officers can get to the locals. It is also easy for traditional or local leaders to cascade the information to their communities. In this regard, traditional or local leaders are essential in the communication activities of the department.

7.5.3 People participation

The head of agriculture within the district reported that people communicate with the department. There is a good relationship between farmers and extension officers such that farmers are free to share even personal issues. Face-to-face, social media (WhatsApp), phone calls and meetings are channels and forums through which farmers can communicate with the representatives of the department of agriculture. Agriculture shows (green and dry shows) and field days are other platforms in which people participate by entering competitions within the wards. During these gatherings, people have an opportunity to communicate and share their views with the extension officers. The extension officers' personality is also crucial in encouraging people to interact with them. It is easy for people to communicate with open, free and warm individuals. Extension officers receive communication training at workshops and in-service training with regards to interaction with the people. The executives and extension staff emphasise the importance of communication and friendliness, and interaction with the local community to succeed in the department's programmes. The department of agriculture creates competition categories to increase people's participation and allow different people at their different levels of development to participate, ensuring inclusivity. Examples of such groups in field shows are senior and accomplished farmers, young household farmers and traditional or local leaders.

7.5.4 Limitations to participation

The head of the agriculture department in GSRD revealed several factors limiting the participation of the people of the district in rural development programs. These limiting factors included a lack of aptitude towards adopting innovations, other livelihood alternatives, lack of information and poor access to the people by the extension officers. Different people adopt innovations at different rates. Some are early adopters, and others are late adopters so it would take a long time for late adopters to participate in development programmes. The differences in the rate of acceptance of new ideas and programmes were also alluded to by Rogers (2010). The head of the agriculture department observed these characteristics among the people of GSRD. While this may be the case, it was not clear from the head of the agriculture department in the district what efforts they were taking to quickly encourage the late adopters to adopt development programs. When transmitting ideas from the top, people are likely not to adopt the programmes soon enough, unlike when they assume the responsibility of crafting the approaches to development.

Another reason stated as a reason for not participating in development programmes was having other livelihood alternatives. People in GSRD might have appeared to have different options because they saw less value in government development programs. This indifference to development programmes could have been due to a lack of understanding of their importance. When people are not involved in development programs from the grassroots, but government departments impose these on them, people are likely to see no value in them, hence poor participation.

Lack of information was another factor that caused limited participation among the people of GSRD. People received information through the channels employed by the department. However, this information might not have reached them. Failure of the information to get to all the people could be due to a lack of variety in communication approaches used, a lack of understanding of the audience and the most appropriate channel for them.

Additionally, extension officers do not have transport to be able to reach everyone as quickly as possible. The weak economy meant that the ratio of extension officers and the people served is too high to reach all people adequately. In addition, the weak economy caused the department not to have transport in the form of vehicles for their officials to reach all the people. The transport infrastructure in the district is also poor, so these challenges require a macro-level approach at the government level.

7.5.5 Interview with the head of education

The head of the district's department of education highlighted the main programmes the department was implementing. These included the new curriculum, children's rights, access to education for both girl and boy children, and encouraging adult literacy. The executives mentioned the same programmes pointed out by the local education officials. This showed a smooth flow of information from the executives to the local officials. Furthermore, local officials and executives were elaborate on the programmes which the department was running in the district.

- The government of Zimbabwe introduced the new curriculum whose agenda is inclusivity and equality in education and improving the quality of education. The new curriculum programmes re-align education with the changes in skills and innovations required in the modern world. The head of the education department revealed that the department communicates and cascades such information to the public.

- Although aligned to the new curriculum, the other important programme involved children's rights to and in education. Thus, the right to education and equality was also implemented together with the new curriculum in GSRD.
- Adult education is another programme alluded to by the head of the education department in GSRD. This programme promotes adult education to unlock their potential in the modern world despite failing to complete their studies due to various reasons.

7.5.6 Communication approaches by the department of education in GSRD

From the perspective of the district executive, he communicated with the local officials and the people in the district, using indigenous methods of communication like face-to-face or through meetings. The government executive also highlighted that there was much emphasis on the use of entertainment folk media like drama, poetry and music infused with critical education-related content. The executive also noted that the department was taking advantage of technology and using mobile phones and social media for both internal communication and communication with the public. Besides using the indigenous forms of communication, the executives also said the department uses mass media at the national level to communicate with the people. The department shares educational programmes and critical information on radio, television and newspapers. The headquarters and the national level directly control the information shared on these platforms.

7.5.7 Participation in education-related development programmes

In response to a discussion on the public's participation, the head of education said there was a reasonable level of participation in the district, although there were some challenges. One of these was the influence of religious beliefs amongst some members of the public, for example, the *Johane Marange*. This sect does not believe in the necessity of education and prioritises early marriage over education. The other challenge was a traditional belief of not educating girl children. The head of the education department highlighted that they were gaining ground in dispelling this notion. However, remnants of such beliefs were still contributing to limited participation. According to the government executive another contributing factor to limited participation was poverty and lack of resources, which caused some children to prefer marriage over school or some parents to withdraw some of their children from school and marry them off. While the above problems affect both boy and girl children, it is the latter who is most affected.

7.5.8 Interview with the head of health

The head of the health department reported that they were engaged in several programmes, some ongoing, some monthly and others introduced as per need. These included vaccinations against trachoma, rubella and elephantiasis. There were also awareness and prevention programmes on diseases like cholera, malaria and HIV/Aids and STIs, and hygiene, among others. The study noted that the ministry informed locally based health officials about such programmes. This observation reflected efficiencies in the manner of communication between the executives and the officials operating within the district.

Communication approaches by the health department in GSRD

The head of the health department in GSRD highlighted that the department has a protocol that they follow. When the local health officials received information from the executives about the launch of a programme in the district, the department official would first contact local traditional and religious leaders and then proceed to share the information with the public. This flow of communication illustrates that specific channels of communication between the department of health and the locally-based health officials followed a linear fashion. The local head of the department and local officials are not responsible for developing any content, but they receive the information and share it with the public. The head of the health department noted that they made use of letters, memos, circulars, and mobile phones to share information with the locally-based health staff. He highlighted that they mostly used mobile phone calls, texts, and WhatsApp to contact the staff at their respective centres in some parts of the district where mobile network reception and internet connection are available.

Participation in health-related development programmes in GSRD

In terms of participation, the department of health head reported that the community registered a reasonable level of participation. Comparing the levels of participation based on gender, the executive reported that women participated more than men and were much more cooperative and involved in health-related development activities. The women's participation and involvement could have been more had it not been for the weight of household responsibilities which seems skewed towards them. Traditional values confined most women to their homes, taking care of the children. Meeting venues are usually centralised, meaning that some people have to travel long distances to attend them. Such distances discourage women from attending development meetings. Ensuring that development programmes are

closer to the people and taking place during convenient times and venues countered the limitations mentioned above in GSRD. In all departments, the level of participation of women was considered higher as compared to men.

7.6 Discussion of the findings from the interviews

Some similarities emerged from the interviews with the heads of departments in the district. For example, all the departments make use of religious and local leaders, elders, contacts and influential people. In all three departments, it was encouraging to note that locals were engaged. The department executives and government agents cited women's willingness to better their family lives as the main reason for their high participation. Men's lower levels of participation could be due to migration issues, which makes them absent from home most of the time, either working in the cities or neighbouring countries. Some men also leave homes to engage in illegal gold panning. As a result, women's presence makes them participate more as compared to men. This kind of separation has other implications for government development issues, particularly in health. The fight against the spread of diseases is challenging as a result of the fact that men are always absent, missing out on crucial information and knowledge. While away, they engage in unhealthy behaviours, which cause them to contract HIV/Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases. When they eventually come home, they pass these diseases to their wives, which could be the reason why GSRD has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the country.

The department of health makes use of local health caregivers and environmental health technicians (EHTs). The department of education engages out of school adults and parents by sending messages to them through the children at school. The department of agriculture also works with local traditional leaders. Added to that, they work with farmers whom they recruit to join the master farmer programme. The above demonstrates that the three departments engage locals to participate at various levels.

The study notes that the departments used meetings that took a different format from the traditional '*Dare*' '*Indaba*' format. Sessions done by government officials are increasingly taking the form of just platforms to disseminate messages, which is different from the traditional '*matare*' in Shona or '*Indaba*' in Ndebele. Traditionally, problems would be identified and discussed at these meetings until the people agreed on solutions and their implementation. The format which modern meetings take does not promote participation.

Meetings held turn out to be informative meetings whereby government officials distribute messages, and the locals receive the information. The modern meeting format is somewhat different from the essence of the traditional meetings '*matare*' or '*indabas*'. The format which these meetings took was participatory and identified solutions to problems in robust discussions. The meetings happening in GSRD have turned out to be gatherings to receive information, contrary to the traditional meetings. In the African context, traditional meetings identified problems, discussed solutions, as well as their implementation. These meetings recognised the value of the people who participated in coming up with solutions to their problems. As a result, people found it comfortable to implement the resolutions agreed upon at the meetings. The nature of meetings that this research observed had a disempowering effect on the people because they were just a platform for receiving both information and donations that did not adequately address the problems faced by the people. In the African context, colonialism is guilty of taking away the power which the people had when dealing with their development problems at the local level. If the modern meetings take the traditional form, issues of participation and involvement and empowerment can be resolved.

The depth of knowledge of the programs currently taking place in the district appeared to be concentrated more at the executive level. This decreased as it cascaded down to the public. These were direct effects of the top-down communication approaches, a recurring theme in the interviews with the heads of government departments in GSRD. Top-down communication approaches have a danger of disempowering the public, reducing participation and failing to respond to the actual development and communication needs of the people of GSRD.

Just like development programmes within the government departments, communication for development strategies is developed and conceived by the top management stationed at the headquarters based in the capital city, Harare. From the data gathered through interviews with government agents and executives, it was evident that the government agents had knowledge of the importance of participation by the people in development projects but had challenges operationalising full involvement at the local level. Considering the manner development projects were conducted by government departments, the study concludes that the public has no decision-making powers regarding the development of the communication approaches but only gets involved during the implementation stage. The study noted participation which was on the lower rungs of Arnstern's (2007) ladder of participation. The danger with this approach is that people who are passive recipients of information get socialised to this

approach. When the programmes officially end, people will not be able to continue doing what makes their lives better (sustainable development). It instead creates a dependency syndrome, which further impoverishes them as articulated within the dependency theory and castigated by Freire in his text 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' (Freire, 1970). Therefore, pursuing this approach in development programmes is *passé* and only stifles progress.

Government agents at the district level are concerned with the implementation and distribution. The latter entails distributing the information by holding meetings with locals and distributing materials like posters and leaflets. Of the three departments, the study observed that only the department of health had limited autonomy to make decisions on how to distribute content. However, within the other two departments (agriculture and health), most of those decisions were restricted to the top management, mostly at the provincial or national levels. The centralisation of decision making, however, seems to be a common trend in the African context. This is a system adopted from Western countries' modernisation approaches, thus glaring coloniality in the modern-day. It sees information from elsewhere as superior while local indigenous approaches to development as inferior. It is the approach that the decoloniality scholars continuously debunk and see a retrogressive in the development of third world countries (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, Mignolo, 2011). One study by Netshitomboni (2007), observed that the top management developed South African Imbizo communication strategy at the Government Communication and Information Systems (GCIS). This approach of excluding the public and confining the decision making regarding the development of the communication strategy to the management, far detached from the society, has a danger of failing to respond to the communication needs of the locals and address the real development issues affecting the rural population.

In the process of communication with the rural folk in GSRD, local government officials confine their responsibilities to delivering messages from the headquarters (HQ). In addition to their designated duties, their communication responsibilities involve putting up posters and distributing flyers and brochures and delivering messages received from the HQ via circulars in memos at meetings. This flow of information is more of top-down communication, which is not ideal in rural development communication. The study also noted that local governments officials were not involved in the decision-making process but were only involved in implementing decisions already made at the HQs.

The findings from the interviews with executives implied that their departments carried out consultation procedures whereby local officials would consult the locals. In contrast, local government officials cited a lack of consultation by their superiors, an accusation the public also levelled against the local officials. This lack of consultation also reduced satisfaction and motivation with work and made it challenging to implement government programmes effectively. However, top-down communication and job satisfaction within government organisations are not part of this study, but the study notes with concern the effects this has on rural development.

On the other hand, the study discovered some differences in the way the three departments communicated with the people of GSRD. First, the department of health has EHTs equipped with motorbikes to be able to access most areas around the district. The department made more attempts of health to reach out to societies, something which seemed to have been lacking in the other two departments. The department of education had many officials stationed at different schools within the district. In contrast, the department of agriculture was understaffed with the officials lacking transportation means to access areas and the people in the district.

Second, the department of health made use of print materials more than the departments of education and agriculture, and the respondents confirmed this in the questionnaire and the FGDs. The departments of education's and agriculture's inability to use print materials more could be due to scarce funding. Increasing the use of printed materials by the departments mentioned above will help cater to people who cannot access newspapers due to their cost. Additionally, people can use printed material several times and even share it with other people. The public can use printed materials as points of reference in the absence of professionals.

Another notable concern is that there is a lack of a communication strategy to be followed within the government departments. Communication is on an ad-hoc basis, without any stipulated objectives and frameworks to be pursued. The danger of such an approach is that the communication programmes cannot be evaluated or assessed. If there is no communication appraisal, it means government departments cannot identify and possibly rectify the weakness of the failing approaches, rendering the communication approach less efficient.

Local government officials were aware of the importance of participatory approaches and horizontal communication and applied this only during the implementation stages, where they played a more significant role. It emerges that when people, even government officials, are involved in the development of programmes, they participate more with adequate support in development programmes, and there is a notable level of satisfaction. This enthusiasm for development projects also applies to the public. Therefore, involving all stakeholders in all the stages of the development communication process is highly crucial for the success of development programmes. A notable example was the implementation of the new curriculum program by the department of education. Most local officials felt that their superiors imposed the programme on them. However, like the public, they were supposed to be involved from the beginning until the implementation stage. While the new curriculum had a range of benefits, the fact that the local government officials had mixed feelings makes the communication of such programmes less effective. Had it been that local education officials were fully involved in the development communication of the project, they would be happy to communicate the programme's aspects to the public and effectively implement it.

Officials from the department of health echoed the same sentiments. Most interviewees said they received directives from their superiors without consulting or even being allowed to consult the locals. However, some interviewees expressed that their superiors' reports indicated consultation as having been done. Selective consultation by department executives due to limited time and financial resources could be possible for the interviewees' lack of knowledge regarding consultation. This problem could be averted if department executives ascribe the responsibility of carrying out the consultation process to the local officials through the decentralisation of responsibilities. Such a move has a higher probability of allowing the local people to participate in the initial stages of development programmes effectively.

It also emerged that indigenous knowledge was becoming valuable, but the effects of colonialism had ruined its value, and there were attempts to return to indigenous knowledge. A good example was the promotion of small grains, which are mostly traditional foods, over the popular maize, which was introduced to the people by the colonialists. There is a need for a diplomatic reversal of colonial policies as espoused by the proponents of decoloniality. The values of the once undermined indigenous knowledge have immense potential in rural development. Therefore, there is a need to restore confidence in indigenous knowledge through indigenous communication approaches.

7.7 Part five: Content analysis

Content analysis involves analysing texts, documents, audios and videos with content related to a subject. In this case, the subject was rural development in GSRD by the government departments. The literature has established that development communication is a process that involves the sender, message, channel and recipients. However, the process has evolved, and it is no longer linear as per Harold Lasswell's (who says what, to whom, and with what effect) definition of the communication process (1948). Instead, it has become a complex process that can be two-way or bidirectional with sending the messages alternating between the sender and the recipients. This section presents the findings from the content analysis. It presents the findings of the analysis of all content about rural development in GSRD by health, education, and agriculture departments. This section focuses on the messages, and the content analysis approach seeks to evaluate the role of government communication as a development tool. The section also seeks to determine the extent to which the government employs two-way symmetrical communication to facilitate participatory communication and the extent to which content empowered the locals in rural development.

7.7.1 Results from the content analysis.

The analysis of content gives an insight into the messages and how government departments communicate them. This section of the thesis presents content analysis results from materials collected from the 31st of July 2018 to the 31st of July 2019. The analysis of print and broadcast media used in rural development helps determine the effectiveness of the communication approaches used *vis-à-vis* people's appreciation of these messages and how they are delivered. Ideally, practical communication approaches allow people to participate in the communication process. Their participation guarantees their understanding of messages received. Furthermore, effective communication should be bi-directional or symmetrical to create an opportunity of hearing all voices in the process. The analysis of content sheds light on how communication was effective in addressing development issues by government departments in Gokwe South Rural District (GSRD).

7.7.2 Content from printed materials

The study conducted an analysis of content from printed materials such as brochures, flyers and posters concerned with GSRD development from the government departments and results below were obtained.

- **Language**

The languages people in the district speak are mainly Shona, Ndebele and English. English is one of the nation's official languages and the language used in education and printed materials by the government departments. Although a range of printed materials originated from the department of health and carried health-related information, the study noted the employment of indigenous languages, which reflects consideration of the audience in designing the materials. The use of indigenous languages in rural development communication content is laudable. The same proposition emerged in Salawu (2006; 2012; 2015) as a reinforcement to the argument presented by Wilson, (1987), with further evidence pointing to the importance of indigenous languages in communication.

- **Presentation of content**

The presentation of content on printed materials was colourful, clear and appealing in large visible fonts. This presentation made the posters eye-catching, attracting people to get useful information. Some of the posters had pictures of celebrities; for example, there were posters with a famous musician named Jah Prayzah (See photograph 3 on Appendix J) declaring that he had been circumcised and encouraging other men to follow suit. People like to listen to famous people who, in most cases, become their role models. Seeing them on posters draws them to want to know more, and seeing them encouraging the public to take essential steps promotes and motivates the people to do the same. The use of prominent people was a useful and practical approach in the male circumcision campaign, and other development issues in GSRD can replicate the same strategy.

- **Placement and distribution of printed materials**

The concentration of the department of health posters was mostly at clinic walls and noticeboards. Posters were strategically positioned next to the entrances or in front of the public sitting areas (See photographs 1 and 2 on Appendix J). People could read them when entering or as they waited for their turn to get treatment. However, because most posters were at health centres, those who were not visiting them would miss out on important information. Most posters dealt with crucial health issues, the importance of taking preventative measures and awareness. At the district hospitals, several posters, which almost doubled the posters at the clinics, were identified. The posters and both the district hospital and the clinics were mostly identical carrying similar content. Some posters were aged and had lost their lustre but remained on the walls. This is one advantage of printed materials, but some people may stop paying attention to them when they cease to be appealing, thereby losing valuable

information. When posters and other printed materials on walls and noticeboards are not regularly refreshed, they become boring, and some people will stop paying attention. The failure to change and keep old materials can be attributed to the country's economic hardships, meaning that the government might not have the resources to devote to printing new materials.

The researcher did not obtain as many posters or any other printed materials from the department of education and agriculture as compared to health. The ministry of health receives support from NGOs like UNICEF, World Vision, etc., which could explain why there were more printed materials in the district. Low poster presence in the other two departments suggests the need to improve printed material usage. They can do this by working more with NGOs. Also, the government should avail these departments more funding as they are equally addressing critical development issues. As such, their content through printed materials should be available in the district. Another way to produce cheap content is by allowing people to participate in the communication process by artistically producing content using simple and accessible materials. While the public will benefit as content producers, the departments will have creatively and cheaply produced materials with a huge potential of communicating useful messages.

7.7.3 Content from newspaper publications

The study identified eleven articles in the five-state newspapers, *The Herald*, *The Sunday Mail*, *The Chronicle*, *H-Metro* and *Kwayedza*, which were concerned with development. Out of these articles, four articles were about health, and two were about education. The other articles straddled between weather, health (safety) and agriculture (effects of bad weather on agriculture) to not be allocated and associated with the three departments under study. The correspondents responsible for the Midlands Province wrote all the articles with comments from public figures like the MPs and the District Council's Chief Executive Officer. There were no private media articles concerned with or relevant to the three departments under study, with a particular focus on GSRD.

The analysis found two health articles about the outbreak of Cholera, the first article was published in *The Herald* on the 18th of September 2018 with a headline, "*Spread of Cholera to Gokwe*", and the follow-up article was released the following week on the 26th of September 2018 with a headline, "*Cholera: Gokwe takes preventative measures*".

The Herald published another article on health which had the following headline “*More clinics in Gokwe South*” on the 25th of October 2018. In the article, the district’s Chief Executive Officer spoke on the need to increase the number of the district’s clinics. However, there were no comments from the health department itself or the locals. The absence of their input is evidence that communication was largely top-down, with no opportunities for the local voices to participate in the communication of health issues in their area.

Another newspaper publication was an article by *The Herald* on the 29th of April 2019 with a headline, “*Gokwe to build clinic and pre-school*”. This article spanned education and health. The report was about a Gokwe South District’s plan to build a clinic and pre-school at Chiwara Village. The article emphasised the challenges villagers faced regarding the distances they had to walk to access the services. It also encouraged the youth and women to participate in community development.

The Sunday News published another article focusing on education on the 7th of October 2018. The article’s headline was, “*President donates computers to a Gokwe School*”. It reported that the president had donated 20 computers to Marimasimbe Secondary School, and there was an emphasis on the importance of education and improving the quality of education countrywide. The article linked education with the president’s wish to enhance the quality of infrastructure and the attributes of education espoused by the new curriculum. The MP, Mr Owen Ncube, the Gokwe South District Administrator, Mr Edwin Mushindi and the Gokwe South School’s Inspector, Mr Tavelani Moyo, made comments in the article.

In all the articles, there was evidence that people did not get an opportunity to participate in the communication approach. Further away from the departments, politicians and government officials made comments in the articles, revealing that communication was more inclined to the traditional linear top-down approach. The preceding observations show the politicisation of development communication which has a detrimental influence on rural development. There was little room for two-way symmetrical communication. However, the government attempted to communicate with the people in the district as espoused by the DFIDs standards. Be that as it may, the government communicated so that it did not allow the locals to participate in development communication. Added to that, the level of communication was low. During the time under study, there were just a few articles related to health, education and agriculture in GSRD. This little content shows that the level of importance ascribed to

these key significant development issues was low. If the government is serious about development, the communication content should resonate with the level of significance.

7.7.4 Content from broadcast media (radio and television)

Through the process of content analysis and interviews with government officials and executives, the study noted that the source of messages transmitted via mass media (radio, TV and other forms of print media) was the HQ. Netshitomboni's (2007) study made a similar observation about the development of the Imbizo communication strategy. The centralisation of communication in development programs has few benefits in terms of development communication. The concern is that even local government officials within the district were not fully participating in development communication but only distributed the information. The absence of full participation affects the distribution of messages, among other factors. However, the government officials within the district, who are supposed to be working with the local people for whom development programs benefit, were not involved in developing communication materials or approaches. This study contends that the centralisation of development communication across the three departments does not help with promoting active participation and addressing real development problems at the local level. It further alienates and disempowers the people from crucial development issues.

7.7.5 Video or audio content

The study obtained short videos circulating on social media which were relevant to rural development. The health department had most of the videos on male circumcision, HIV/Aids and hygiene. While it was not easy to determine whether these originated from the ministry of health, there were some which were clearly from the department of health in partnership with other non-governmental organisations. This study considered these because they were in circulation during the data collection period, even though it was not clear to determine the time of their production. Examples of these were a short comic video about male circumcision by a popular comedian called Kapfupi. Another video was about washing hands using a simple technique of tilting a water container placed on a wooden structure next to pit latrines and 'blair' toilets to wash hands. The last popular video was of a choir singing a song encouraging people to use toilets instead of bushes. The song clearly explained in the local language how the process could lead to the spread of diseases. The department of health was dominant in such content, and the other departments were lagging.

It was difficult to determine the production time of the content. However, its timelessness made the content valuable, as it kept engaging and drawing the public's attention to important issues. Another significant factor about video content that was in circulation on social media or kept by those with phones was that villagers could share it. The primary purpose of sharing such content was for entertainment, but the intrinsic value of educating the people remained inherent in these videos or audio content.

The use of community radio has a laudable potential in promoting rural development, a view mainly supported by many researchers (Madamombe, 2005; Manyozo, 2009; Megwa, 2007; Nyareza, 2012). Establishing community radios will potentially reduce the distance between content producers and the people in GSRD. Additionally, the locals will be allowed to participate in development communication, producing their content and delivering it through their relevant means at the local level. Community radios could augment the poorly staffed local government officials through sharing development content in a language understood by the locals (Nyareza & Dick, 2012). Support for local officials is necessary, considering that they also do not have transport and lack motivation and skills.

The study recorded eight different songs three dramas performed by locals at dry shows and green shows held across the selected FDG locations during the department of agriculture's dry and green shows. The names of songs included *Matura phacha phacha*, *Kudya kanonaka*, *Mudhumeni vakatrainer*, *Dhiga udye* and other church songs with agriculture-related lyrics. Other songs performed at the dry and green shows had to do with the importance of handwashing and using toilets to prevent the spread of cholera and other water-borne diseases. A group of village women also performed songs on domestic violence and child abuse. Short untitled dramas were performed, one by a group of village women and the other by comprised of both men and women. The dramas performed encouraging conservation agriculture (CA) approach of digging holes on the ground and adding manure before planting and promoted the growing of traditional crops such as millet, rapoko and sorghum and making them part of the diet. Evidence from the songs and drams proves that people possess extraordinary levels of creativity and can apply them when given a chance. The songs and dramas produced were so entertaining that they can also be allowed on community or local radio stations to share the messages to a wider audience. The creativity in songs and drama could also be translated in the development of other artistic and printed materials for the department of health, which relied on donations and other departments that lacked promotional materials. Public participation, in this manner, is in accordance with the

participatory approach and decoloniality. Also noteworthy was that entertainment on agriculture gatherings did not only confine themselves to agriculture-related content but some songs with information on health and education were shared. Therefore, indigenous knowledge and indigenous communication systems should not be side-lined but strategically promoted by government development practitioners in rural development communication.

- **The top-down direction of messages**

From the analysis of content, the study can conclude that the way communication occurs is one-directional, from top to bottom, without giving a voice to the locals. This top-down communication is arbitrary because those at the top lack an appreciation of the reality on the ground. It has also become evident that even local government officials, who are much closer to the public, are also not involved in the communication strategy development but work on instructions from the top as passive implementors, just like the public with whom they work. However, the lack of a two-way symmetrical communication approach is a cause for concern regarding how the government departments conduct development communication. Government departments should implement devolution of communication powers to ascribe the designing of communication approaches to the district levels. The devolution will see much content originating from the local level, allowing the people to participate in the generation of content and possibly, in the process of sharing it. The other benefit of this will be that the content will be relevant to the people's actual needs and conveyed appropriately for GSRD.

- **The proximity of the content developers to the audience**

The process of developing communication media and all other materials is centralised within the three government departments and done at the headquarters in Harare. The issues of proximity are critical with regards to the time the materials are produced and then distributed. Proximity is also crucial in determining content relevant to the local needs. Production of content at the headquarters has many setbacks. Government departments will first need to get information about the requirements from their agents within the district, who will also gather information from the public. The same information is then relayed back to the headquarters through various channels, which leaves room for distortions and takes a lot of time. Based on this argument, this study contends that there is a need to do away with the bureaucracies and assign

departments the responsibility to design and develop their materials at the district (local) level.

- **Frequency of production of materials**

Another notable concern was the generation of new materials. During the period of content collection, there were not many new materials produced. This lack of new materials could have been a result of the economic challenges experienced in the country. However, it is useful to point out the implications which this has on development communication. It can either explain that no changes are happening or that the government is not paying attention to the pertinent development matters.

7.7.6 Reliability and validity of the research

Going by Strauss and Glaser's (1967) definition of the grounded theory, the study followed a structured system to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings from the grounded theory. The following were some of the employed approaches to ensure the validity and reliability of the results.

- Non-subjectivity of the researcher

Despite that, GSRD is the researcher's home area, and development issues are particularly of significant interest he made concerted personal efforts to ensure that this did not influence the study in any way.

- Memoing

Another technique that the researcher used to ensure that the research process flowed smoothly to guarantee reliability was memoing. Memoing involves writing notes and memos throughout the research process. These notes were further developed or used as points of reference in the study

- Constant comparisons of the categories throughout

To ensure the accuracy of the study results, the researcher made constant comparisons of categories and identified aspects of conflicts and points of interest. Additionally, the researcher invited independent evaluators to compare and evaluate the content within categories throughout the study.

- Use of *in vivo* coding

To avoid bringing new and irrelevant ideas to the findings, the researcher developed concepts and categories from what the participants said in their actual words through the process called *in vivo* coding

7.8 Conclusion

The chapter presented the findings and, subsequently, the discussion of the study results in five different parts. This strategy acknowledges the importance of all the various elements of the development communication process. As a deviation from the unworkable dominant approaches to development, the rural public (beneficiaries of development) were central to the discussion. The findings confirmed the importance of the locals and the indigenous knowledge systems in dealing with development issues, as espoused in the participatory and decolonial approaches. In summing up, it emerged from the quantitative and qualitative data analysis that there was a high degree of corroboration in terms of the findings. Findings from different research methods in this study allowed for validation, thereby granting confidence and credibility, which were vivid benefits of triangulation. Finally, the chapter presented findings and discussions from the analysed data using simple descriptive statistics and the reflexive thematic analysis method. The coming chapter concludes the thesis by presenting a framework and recommendations.

CHAPTER 8: FRAMEWORK, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapters succinctly explored the literature related to government communication in rural development, identified some points of interest, areas of concern and loopholes. Therefore, this research was instituted to investigate the role of government communication as a development tool in Gokwe South Rural District (GSRD). Government communication for rural development is an area that was not adequately explored and lacked enough literature on which to reference. The research sought to analyse government communication approaches to structure and configure a framework to use as a reference for rural development communication by government agencies. This chapter presents the framework for government communication for rural development and discusses its applicability, based on the findings from this research, the literature and the theoretical framework. It also goes on to provide recommendations, as well as suggestions for future studies and concludes the research. In conclusion, the chapter recasts on the results, evaluates the study methodology, outlines how the study adds to the body of knowledge, and its significance in the field of government communication for rural development.

8.2 Addressing the research questions

This section discusses how the research addressed the research questions in the study. The findings from the data analysis, grounded by the main theories, answered the main points of enquiry in this study. The study had three main research questions which it sought to address.

Research question 1: What is the role of government communicators in selected government departments, and to what extent do their purpose or responsibility match a participatory developmental agenda?

The first research question dealt with how government departments communicated with the people in GSRD and how the communication approaches are two-way symmetrical and encourage participatory communication. The observation was that much of the communication activities assumed a top-down approach with content trickling from the headquarters to the public, making them agencies for only disseminating messages. While this had its advantages, especially in terms of information sharing, cutting costs, and ensuring the consistency of messages, there were several limitations associated with the approach, as noted in this study. A lack of opportunities for feedback, which defeats the whole process of

two-way symmetrical communication, was not ideal for rural development. At the district level, considered as the operational level, communication was still inclined towards the top-down approach. However, it was evident that government agencies were aware of the benefits of the horizontal two-way symmetrical communication process and the importance of public participation. They somehow opened channels for two-way symmetrical communication by employing indigenous communication approaches. The advantages of the Indigenous Communication Systems (ICSs) included that they are readily available, entertaining, affordable and appreciated by the public. However, rural people did not benefit much from Modern Communication Systems (MCSs) and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The government departments employed MCSs in the form of radio, TV and print, far detached from the masses. Considering that government departments produced them at the national level, this lessened their influence on the public in GSRD.

The communication approaches mostly promoted the forms of participation, which were on the lower rungs on the ladder of participation (manipulation and therapy) which are non-participation. The reason being that communication which had assumed the modernisation approaches was lagging in terms of revolving to promote participation. There was an awareness of the importance of participation across all government departments, which was mostly misinterpreted. What they called participation through consultation occupied the middle rungs of Arnstein's (2007) ladder of participation, these being informing, consultation and placation described as varying degrees of tokenism. The public lacked knowledge of how they were expected to participate. The government departments lacked the capacity to elevate the people to the upper rungs of participation which are 'partnership, the delegation of power and citizen control' where the public had power. It is at this point where empowerment proved to be necessary to promote the right forms of empowerment. The emerging question was, why were the rural public disempowered? Coloniality's dark influence was still looming. The system has survived for a long time applying colonial approaches such that total decolonisation of the system was required to transform the approaches to development programmes. The transformation is also required among the public, which still felt too inferior to bring any valuable contribution to the development agenda. Therefore, the extent to which the purpose or responsibilities of government communicators match a (participatory) developmental agenda was to a lesser extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent do government organisations employ the principles of two-way symmetrical communication to engage the people to participate in rural development programmes fully?

The two-way symmetrical communication existed but had a less significant impact. The growth of ICTs was still limited; hence people communicated mostly at and or during meetings through face-to-face with government agents or got information from their peers who had mobile phones. The study observed that the government was aware of the importance of two-way symmetrical approaches, but it was applied just to a lesser extent. The government departments and officials remained the sole sources of content to the extent that the public became socialised as recipients. They saw the government department executives or officials as having the superior know-how which could transform their societies. Seeing government executives in such a way is consistent with the domination entrenched in the traditional modernisation paradigms of development. Understandably so, the system inherited from the colonial Eurocentric approaches hardly perceives indigenous (local) people as capable of positively contributing to their development. Government communication approaches should be capable of instituting the decolonisation of the mind, as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), alludes. Reversing the Eurocentric or dominant approaches will allow people to participate in development initiatives effectively.

Research question 3: Does the government apply communication approaches consistent with decoloniality to empower the people to participate in development programmes?

The study noted that the government demonstrated an awareness of the importance of decoloniality approaches as capable of empowering the rural public. However, the operationalisation of these proved to take a slow pace. For instance, the devolution programme had already been approved and accepted in the national constitution, but its operationalisation was taking long. Coloniality was still dominating in the system from the government communication process right into the rural people such that undoing years of such fossilisation needed specific and targeted approaches to undo. The rural people were still viewing themselves as ‘nobodies’ who had been pushed to the periphery as mere recipients of development initiatives, not contributors. The people lacked power and control. There was a need to move them up the continuum regarding self-awareness, literacy level, social equity, independence and capabilities, which are all development enablers.

Research Question 4: What procedures do government institutions implement in communicating their developmental programmes?

The study observed that apart from the government organogram, there was no other framework that the government officials referred to in terms of rural development communication. Local government agencies and officials were not free to use other mass media communication methods. However, they mostly received memos on instructions from their superiors at the province and national levels. In terms of using ICTs, government officials were using social media, mainly WhatsApp, but this was based on individual initiatives so that they could easily interact with the people. Communication done in this manner was not official, and there was no policy on social media usage. Also, this communication approach has a disregard for the locals and treats them as recipients and not active participants. Locals become further disempowered and incapacitated to be at the centre of development. Regarding indigenous communication approaches, government agencies from the three departments made use of traditional or local leaders as the latter had regular contact with the people. Local leaders arranged meetings for them. This role merely indicates their insignificance and leads to further incapacitation. Traditional or local leaders' relevance in rural development can go beyond contacting people who set up meetings for government officials. Such an approach has been allowed to continue for far too long under the westernisation paradigm. The decolonial perspective seeks to emancipate and place the local leaders and their people at the centre of development initiatives. The lack of communication approaches meant a lack of systems that addressed gender imbalance regarding the previously disenfranchised groups like women, youth, and the poor. Paying attention to such salient matters can help improve active participation. Another way government instituted rural development communication was by organising events that involved people participating in acting dramas, performing songs, and poetry. ICSs were the most communication approach which saw significant levels of participation by the public.

Research question 5: What are the features of rural development communication?

The study noted that rural development communication was being applied through the indigenous communication systems (ICSs) as well as modern communication systems (MCSs) and information communication systems (ICTs). There were limitations regarding the capacities of the development approaches in fully rallying the public to participate in development programmes. The desirable level of participation required decolonial

approaches to be applied to the whole process of development communication from the government departments to the rural public. Integration of the communication approach remained desirable in strengthening the communication process but would work effectively with an empowered community.

8.3 Recast on the results

The study made some noteworthy discoveries, and this section revisits these main observations and explains how relevant they are to this study. In as much as there were several crucial findings, some of the results stood out, and this section highlights them.

- The top-down communication remained useful in meeting the informational needs of the people in the district. However, horizontal two-way communication was ideal in encouraging people to participate in development programs. Some fundamental aspects needed attention to improve participation by the people within the government departments. These include empowerment, social equality, capabilities, self-awareness and actualisation, developed infrastructure and critical literacies.
- The study observed that messages originated from a source far detached from the realities of the people. The messages resembled the modernisation approach, which disregards indigenous people as sources of useful information. As such, it was crucial for devolution, a move that was already constitutionally approved to be fully implemented, an approach consistent with decoloniality, to be implemented and bring the origin of messages closer to the people of GSRD.
- It also emerged that the government departments introduced boundary spanners for better interaction and coordination among government departments.
- Establishing mass media outlets like community radio, TVs, newspapers and bulletin boards closer to the people could meet their timely informational needs and widen the communications spectrum.
- The responsibility of content generation lay with the government officials and not the locals. Therefore, there is a need to reverse this approach to allow locals to generate their content, working in collaboration with local government officials.
- The government was in the process of establishing information centres or telecentres to service the people of GSRD. The process should be sped up, ensuring that the established information centres are well equipped to be able to fully service different parts of the district and meet the informational needs of the people.

- The use of e-governance was non-existent, and there was a need for the government to pass ICT policies. The new plans could accelerate the establishment of e-governance platforms and the development of the ICT infrastructure.
- The study observed that ICSs were being modestly utilised in GSRD but integrating them with MCSs and ICTs was lacking. However, this study noted that the integration of ICSs with MCSs and ICTs could have an immense potential in promoting active participation, considered fundamental in rural development.

Modern Communication Systems (MCSs) in rural development

MCSs used to disseminate development content did not directly target GSRD. Information originating from the far detached HQs at the national level did not meet the needs of the people of GSRD. One of the emerging development themes from the content analysis was that communication was mainly through radio and TV. The concern was that the level of usage of these media channels in GSRD was limited, which could have impacted message delivery. As already elaborated, in most cases, less radio, newspaper and TV usage could result from their perceived irrelevance due to remoteness or lack of mass media gadgets since many people could not afford these. To counter the perceived irrelevance of mass media content, instituting local content produced by the locals and disseminated via local channels which are closer to the people can be a plausible panacea.

Indigenous Communication Systems (ICSs) in rural development

The significance of ICS in rural development communication in GSRD remains a priority. The study observed that the government departments were utilising the ICSs and were aware of their benefits. Integrating ICS into the mainstream mass media and ICTs can result in a broader transformation of the lives of the people of GSRD. Poignantly, economic challenges and political willpower posed a blockage to the effective utilisation of these critical communication systems.

The traditional top-down communication approach is still prevalent in the government departments in GSRD, particularly for information sharing purposes. While this is acceptable in terms of democracy, where it is essential to share information with the public, a two-way symmetrical communication approach has become utopian. The main reason is that if the communication is horizontal, government departments in GSRD can get all views and adequately respond to the public's needs. There is a need to enhance opportunities for people to communicate with the government in a bid to widen the demographic space. The study

observed that government officials were aware of the importance of two-way symmetrical communication, but the challenge was operationalising it. Concerns were that the executives at the national level at the headquarters are far from the people's experiences, such that decentralising the communication decision-making and roles effectively to the district will bring the government departments closer to the people. At the policy level, this might also widen the communications spectrum by increasing local communication outlets in community radio and newspapers. Establishing information centres across the district has benefits that can manifest in three ways: timesaving, proximity, and promotion of participation and two-way symmetrical communication.

- Timesaving

The study observed that the headquarters is responsible for developing communication content and disseminating it to the district via mass media (radio, print and television) and leaflets, posters and flyers. All this requires more time. Decentralising the roles mentioned above to the district level can save the time it takes for this process to go through the bureaucracies involved.

- Proximity

Officials at the district level are closer to the people, and this will make their communication humane and respond to the latter's information and development needs. Local people will, therefore, easily associate with the content.

- Promotion of participation

When government departments institute communication at the district level, it becomes easy for people to be involved. The involvement of the public naturally encourages them to participate in developing communication content, send feedback and review the development communication approaches and programs.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in rural development

ICTs offer various advantages if utilised efficiently and effectively. They are also empowering, involving and compelling. While the study observed that their utilisation was still at lower levels, it also found that the public had higher expectations which means that if they had access to the ICTs, adoption rates would be higher. In turn, government departments would soon reap the benefits of the investment made in this regard.

Regarding good government communication, the government appreciated information sharing, but its preferred degree of democratisation of the media space contradicted transparency. The study observed a low utilisation of state media due to issues of its mistrust by the public. As a result, people were not accessing beneficial messages disseminated via these channels. The study also noted that participation occurred mainly at local levels and not at the headquarters where messages originated. Non-participation at the national level was perhaps because there were no opportunities for participation or giving feedback directly to the HQs. The departments mainly used the radio, newspapers and TV to disseminate messages to the people.

On the other hand, ICTs offer opportunities for participation and two-way symmetrical communication. However, the infrastructure in the district is less developed to promote enough utilisation of ICTs for participation. Another limiting factor could be the financial constraints due to the economic challenges and could be discouraging people from having ICT devices. However, the study also found out that people were keen to see mass media and ICTs infrastructural development within their district. This enthusiasm indicates that people could quickly adapt and utilise ICTs. It could also not have been a challenge for the government to introduce e-governance and digitise government services in the district.

Failure to use integrated data capturing systems based on e-governance which can be shared by government departments and other development partners like NGOs results in time wastage by both parties, the public and government agencies. People spend most of their time registering names for government services, for example, getting agricultural inputs. Some people even travel long distances to have their names written on a beneficiaries list. By doing so, they lose valuable time which they could spend on other essential duties at home. Time wastage could be averted by having people registering via e-government platforms electronically. Most countries have taken this route in their governance; for example, Saudi Arabia has a platform named *Absheer*, where the public can access government services. The system keeps the data for future uses. People need to log on from home or any other place and subscribe to any service, meaning that government agencies will not have to travel to manually collect the data, saving a lot of time, money, and energy.

The government could implement E-governance within the health department, and some countries have come up with e-health services. On e-health platforms, patients can access their medical history at any clinic by just producing their identification. In the case of GSRD,

clinics require people to produce their clinic cards or booklets. In most cases, people would have misplaced them, making it difficult for nurses to access their medical data. E-filing on e-health platforms can be a solution that can save lives, time and resources. On the part of health officials, this will also help with data analysis and reduce the effort and time required to produce reports and share them. Also, this will quicken making essential health decisions at both local and policy levels.

In education, the government can keep students' records and other related information on such platforms. For example, teachers can record students' absences and share any concerns with parents via automated SMSs. The sharing of such information will prompt parents to act, thereby reducing incidences of children absconding from school to engage in activities that can lead to unwanted pregnancies.

Some people may argue that establishing e-governance can be challenging because of a lack of resources by both the government and the public, but the benefits far outweigh the investments. E-governance involves the creation of online platforms and providing access to them through telecentres. The establishment of these public information centres in different parts of the district will help serve the people without devices and provide access to the internet. Some people already have mobile devices which they can use for essential purposes like access to e-government platforms. Presently, other people see no reason why they need ICTs. One male FGDs participant said that *"I don't need a mobile phone. It wastes my time. Funny and useless messages keep distracting me from my productive work"*. And his submission was valid, considering that just having a mobile phone for social media, which keeps receiving unsolicited forwarded messages, is not essential. In cases where someone needs a phone to access vital services, having it then becomes a basic necessity. At the policy level, the government might need to institute policies that direct departments towards e-governance and roll out the services to the people. The government also needs to develop telecommunication infrastructure and set up information centres in the rural parts of GSRD to ensure a seamless implementation of ICTs and e-governance. The government can also leverage the high literacy levels, which means the public will find it easy to learn, adapt and use ICTs. Some of the information centres already established by the government were even regarded as internet cafes because people viewed them as leisure hubs. On the other hand, if people get to understand that they can access essential government services at these centres, they will see their value and treat them with respect.

The reviewed literature substantiates this discussion on government communication regarding public empowerment (citizen power) on participatory communication. Two-way symmetrical communication chronicles the value of allowing people space to participate in their development initiatives. Therefore, it is compelling that decentralising the communication roles to the district level can improve the people's participation, leading to better chances of success in development initiatives.

8.4 Evaluation of objectives

Research objectives set out the aims of research at the end of the study, and it is always crucial to carry out an evaluation and check whether the goals were met or not. This study went into detail in assessing government communication as a development tool in GSRD and discussed the weaknesses and strengths of the approaches employed. It was beyond the scope of this study to offer a summative evaluation but rather a formative assessment. The conclusions point to ways of reinforcing and reworking out the identified strengths and limitations. The researcher accomplished this by considering the critical aspects of the framework, depending on the context and circumstances.

Furthermore, the study identified the possible causes of a failure to implement two-way symmetrical communication and participatory approaches in rural development communication. It discussed the drawbacks and potential benefits of sound governance principles related to information sharing and two-way symmetrical communication. Participatory approaches and transparency were some of the salient matters which emerged from the literature, theories and findings in this study. The study also discussed the framework, which at this stage still requires further testing before consideration by government departments and policymakers. In summing up, the researcher took all the necessary measures to meet the study's objectives. Although it was a rigorous process, it led to reliable and dependable results.

8.5 Theory and the framework

This section links the formwork with the study's theoretical framework. The study notes that there is some transition from data to theory and theory to the ideal and revolutionary framework in this study. However, this does not imply a total disregard of previous research, but the researcher incorporated valuable insights into developing a robust framework. For rural development communication to be successful, there is a need to directly tie participation to government policies. It is also crucial to note the underlying factors for lack of

participation and address them. In this case, westernisation perspectives were the leading causes for lack of participation. Decolonial approaches can restore and empower rural people to participate fully.

Linking participation and development of government policies could be empowering to the stakeholders involved, government officials and the public. Empowerment consists of unlocking the potential of local officials through training and allowing them the autonomy to utilise a variety of channels of communication. In this regard, the study suggests the government expedite the independence of local government departments by way of devolution so that local governments can implement autonomous communication strategies. A concerted effort to fully establish the idea of devolution since GoZ has already obtained the constitutional mandate to do so will be beneficial. In terms of policy interventions at the macro level, the government should continue with its plan to establish information centres and local media like community radio stations. In the process of establishing these, the development enablers should also be addressed so that the introduced infrastructure will be fully utilised in rural development. These will enable the public to access content that is much closer to them and allow them the opportunity to participate in the communication process fully. The public should be allowed to access media channels and get training to communicate and employ a variety of these channels in a manner that they can fully comprehend. Empowered citizens or the public understand that development is for them and for themselves. The government should increase the people's capabilities through policy address at government and micro levels. Recognising people's potential is one way of addressing incapacitation problems and counters the effects of colonialism and dependency syndrome. Decoloniality can, therefore, become the new direction for the development of underdeveloped nations.

8.6 Framework for government communication in rural development

The researcher developed this framework to respond to the need to address rural development and promote sustainable development in rural areas, a task that has been the responsibility of governments and development organisations. While noting that there were complexities in effectively addressing development issues, this research set out to identify the fundamental aspects in rural development to frame a structure that explains these aspects and their effective application throughout the rural development communication process. In relation to the related theories and literature, the findings that emerged in this research helped develop the framework. The attempt was not to create a template to be replicated but a structure for

reference. The development of a framework was a response to an appreciation of the fact that not all contexts, situations and problems are identical. The study, nonetheless, attempted to come up with something closer, which stakeholders could refer to and customise to suit different scenarios.

As depicted in figure 8.1, the framework begins with the baseline fundamental aspects for rural development communication, which are also rural development enablers as the foundation on which the three central communication systems rest. On top of the three main structures is a joist that integrates the communication systems and is supported by participatory development communication beams. This study contends that without deliberate and careful consideration of all the involved elements which are interrelated and, in most cases, support each other, rural development will be challenging to attain.

Framework for government communication for rural development

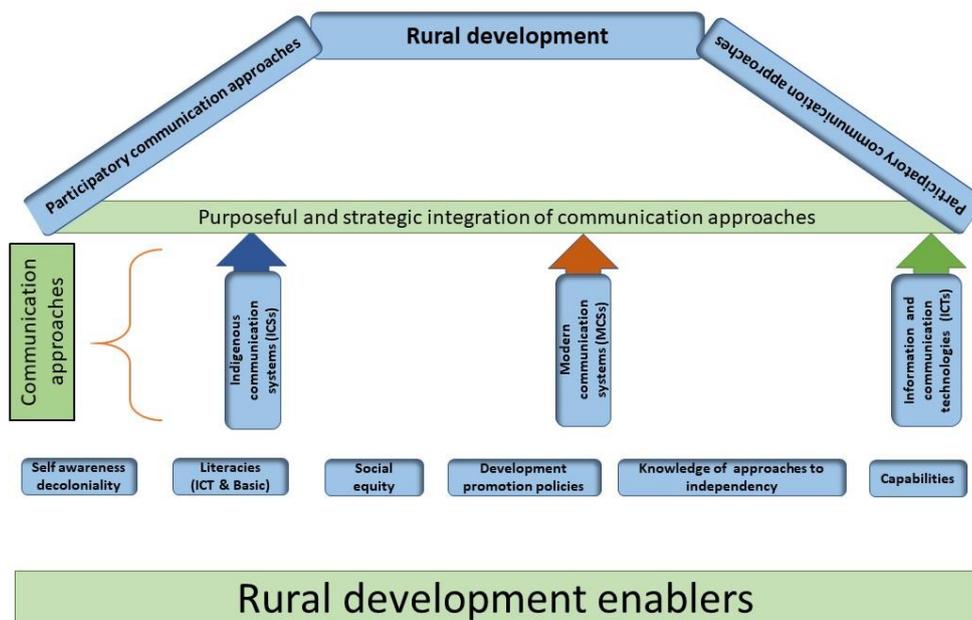


Figure 0:1 Framework for government communication for rural development

The development of this framework considered aspects of the framework for rural development by Castello & Braun’s (2006) (See figure 8.2). Some of the critical elements became part of the fundamental baseline features of the rural development enablers. While Castello & Braun’s, (2006) framework was primarily concerned with agriculture, this framework attempted to address rural development from a broader perspective (Figure 8.1).

The researcher notes that the study’s general findings informed this framework. He also embraced concerns and matters participants raised and those discovered through content analysis and the grounded theory procedure used in this study. The literature also accumulatively qualified or disqualified some aspects in constructing the framework for government communication for rural development communication. The researcher does not make pretence that the framework is complete and functional but accepts that verifications and tests still need to be conducted on the framework. Below, in figure 8.2, is Castello & Braun (2006) framework.

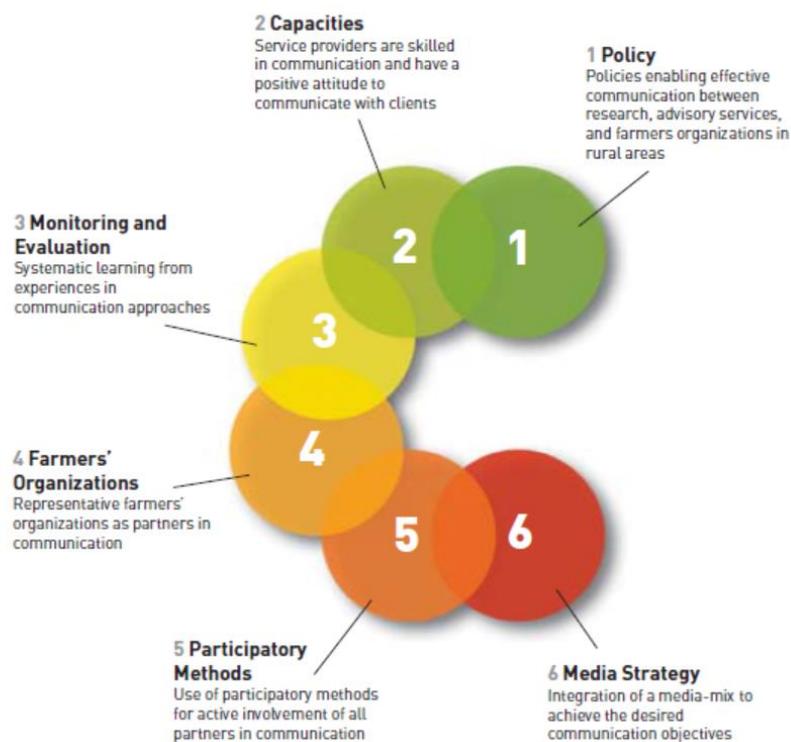


Figure 0:2 Framework for effective development communication by Castello & Braun (2006)

Framework for effective rural development

Some critical factors for developing a communication framework emerged in Castello & Braun’s (2006) framework for effective rural development communication, as shown in figure 8.2. However, the framework mainly addressed agriculture and placed much emphasis on top-down communication approaches. The framework regards the public as partners, but capacitation is focused more on extension officers. The incapacitated partners (the public) are

mere recipients with nothing to contribute to their development. They become passive recipients by default is not far from the unworkable Eurocentric perspectives for development. Improvements were, therefore, necessary for the framework to value the indigenous knowledge found among the locals, as argued by the decolonial paradigm (Mignolo, 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsgheni, 2013; Vallega, 2014). While the framework is astute, this study further adds other features relating to identifying the causes of underdevelopment that needed addressing. These included the underlying factors limiting participation centred on the public who are the recipients of the development initiatives. In that regard, the framework needs to be broadened and inclined more towards the public.

A conceptualisation of the rural public in this study's framework

The public is central to rural development, and their full participation is fundamental. However, there is a need to develop a better understanding of the public. Such an understanding enables government officials to appreciate the public circumstances to get the best from them as active participants in development initiatives. In terms of understanding the rural populace, the framework locates the different characteristics of the public on a continuum, from the least exposed to the highly exposed (see figure 8:3). The least exposed describes members of the public who have less access to information, whose literacy and education levels are low and rely mainly on information from the highly exposed members of the public. The highly exposed describes the members of the public who are much more connected to information and have access to various means of communication. These can utilise different methods or modes of communication and have better literacy and education levels.

Additionally, these members of the public can also afford to travel to cities to sell their products and buy inputs from time to time. Communication approaches should attempt to move the people up the continuum as much as possible. Table 8.1 depicts the characteristics of rural publics in terms of exposure. Understanding the different characteristics of the public can help gauge participation. For example, some members who are mainly at the lower end of the continuum remain confined to those positions and the possibility of moving up the continuum is very low.

Moreover, some cannot participate in development programs not because they do not want but lack the necessary means. Simple things like decent clothes to wear at meetings exclude

them from participating in development programs. The framework attempts to avoid excluding such members of society and endeavours to move them up the continuum.

Understanding the rural public



Figure 0:3 Continuum of the level of exposure

By classifying people and understanding their positions on the continuum, government departments can be able to move the people up the continuum from the least to the highly exposed. In the process of doing this, the government must push back along the continuum to accommodate the least exposed, tap into their know-how and empower them to move up the continuum. Government departments should do this classification without making people feel inferior or superior over others. Understanding different characteristics of the people can assist in identifying the best approaches when dealing with them in terms of their potential and the necessary development interventions.

Table 8:1 Characteristics of members of the rural public

Stage on the continuum	Characteristics	Development potential	Necessary communication interventions
Least exposed	Poor No access to media gadgets No access to ICTs and can not afford them Poor literacy and education levels Less confident Often self-exclude or excluded from development programmes Very vulnerable	Are willing to change their circumstances. Appreciates ICSSs	Access to cheap forms of media Improving their basic literacies Improvement of their digital literacies Development agencies must reach out to such members of the public
Moderately exposed	Not very poor Can read and write Have limited access to media gadgets Have limited access to ICTs gadgets	Can share their limited information with the least exposed	Continue to improve literacy and education levels

	Can travel to the cities from time to time Have limited incomes		
Highly exposed	Possess significant levels of wealth Have better literacy levels Can afford media gadgets Confident Have income or get support from their family members who are employed Participate more in development programmes Can afford ICTs gadgets Can travel and travels to cities and towns to get inputs and have access to markets	Are keen on development issues Understand development issues and can easily take up interventions Are innovative and can communicate well with all stakeholders	Develop intergroup cooperation

8.7 Application of the framework for government communication in rural development

As alluded to in section 8.2 above, the development of this framework was a response to the need to address government rural development communication and promote sustainable development. This section explains the critical elements of the framework and their relevance to government communication in rural development. The section acknowledges the challenges and complexities in effectively addressing development issues and discusses the critical elements in this regard.

8.7.1 Development promoting policies

Policies with the potential to promote rural development directly or indirectly are related to ICTs, media, and public service. This study observed that aligning the strategies for development is crucial in GSRD.

- Development policies are essential in improving the livelihood of all community members in a sustainable approach, leaving the people empowered to chart their development independently. Therefore, development policies should deviate from the unworkable modernisation approaches of development to participatory approaches. In doing this, development policies should consider the effects of the Eurocentric

canons, which placed indigenous people like those of GSRD to the periphery for an extended period, denigrating the indigenous knowledge systems.

- ICSs policies should also pave the way for ICSs, considering their value, proximity and usefulness in rural areas. ICSs should be integrated with MCSs and ICTs and given space to utilise cultural aspects, indigenous languages and indigenous language systems for rural development purposes. The government can leverage the empowering and capacitating value of the ICSs and entrench them in government communication for rural development.
- ICT policies should promote the development of infrastructure, the establishment of ICT centres and the development of ICT skills among the people of GSRD.
- Media relations policies should also allow for media pluralism and establish community media that is not state-controlled. Liberal community media is likely to be trusted by the public. A variety of locally-based media outlets also affords government departments access to the media channels to use to communicate with the public. Moreover, government departments will also have a wide range of options from which to choose. Local media is much closer and more intimate to the rural public. This means that it can facilitate the easy distribution of information that the locals will readily accept. Besides, the public can participate in local or community media content production, which is in line with the participatory development communication approaches.
- Government communication policies can be useful if they clearly stipulate the communication responsibilities of government officials with regards to development. The distribution of adequate information, transparency, and serving the public as public servants are crucial aspects that public service-related development policies should address.

8.7.2 Self-awareness and actualisation

Another development enabler is self-awareness which contends that when the public is aware of their strengths, weaknesses, beliefs and desires, their societies can develop. They can determine their own development goals, paying attention to their environments, the people around them, and how they can take advantage of their circumstances for progress. Since the study observed passiveness among the public of GSRD, self-awareness can improve their active involvement and participation in rural development. Sustainable development is dependent on the realisation of the strengths inherent in the people. Hence, exploitation of

those potentials is vital in developing GSRD as self-awareness and actualisation are also enablers that propel the public to move forward through the exposure continuum.

8.7.3 Literacies

The study noted that one factor which excluded the people of GSRD from participating in rural development initiatives was literacy. Literacy has different and various levels and these include basic and ICT or digital literacy. Lack of basic literacy excluded people through:

- Lack of access to written forms of media and messages, especially messages and information disseminated via print media.
- People lacking basic literacy and associated skills and abilities found themselves self-excluding because they were embarrassed about being illiterate and avoided exposing themselves to other people for fear of being stereotyped.
- Literacy based technology is also not accessible for them to utilise. If one cannot read and possibly write, it is complicated for one to use mobile phones or computers to access the internet and social media sites.

ICTs or digital literacy is significantly lacking among the people of GSRD. ICTs are not familiar, so not many people can use and benefit from them. Despite their level of potential in rural development, not many people benefit if there is no training conducted. South Africa has a useful example called the Thussong, whereby the public is allowed access to ICTs facilities and provided with digital skilling to use the facilities effectively.

8.7.4 Infrastructure

Another critical development enabler cited by many participants in the study was infrastructure. Poor infrastructure in the district limit progress in a variety of ways. Poor roads make most parts of the district inaccessible, especially during the rainy season for government agents. This makes it difficult for people to access fair markets for their produce. They cannot also have access to inputs needed in farming and other development activities. In cases of disease outbreaks, it can take long for help to reach these areas. Severe cases of illness resulting in loss of lives is avoidable if patients could reach hospitals in time. Better roads, schools and health facilities are crucial for rural development in that they can allow rural people, who are mostly dependant on farming, to access markets for their produce. Newspapers can also get to the rural parts of the district on time, allowing the people to have access to essential information related to health, agriculture and education. For example,

people will be able to timeously access information about weather, which will help them plan their farming activities accordingly.

8.7.5 Knowledge of approaches to independence

The issues of cooperatives whereby resources and social capital can be combined can help communities realise development. People sharing interests, values, traditions and identity have the potential of effectively working together to develop their society. Therefore, the knowledge of coordinating themselves and running targeted development initiatives is essential.

8.7.6 Capabilities

For development programmes to be successful, government departments should widen the capabilities of rural folk. Education, financial and technological capabilities need to be enhanced to reduce the disparities between the rich and the poor. Such potentialities place the people on a springboard of success. Moreover, increasing people's capabilities promotes the use of various communication approaches and their integration, and the people will, in turn, be able to participate in the communication process.

8.7.7 Social equality

Another component of the rural development enablers is social equality, which is concerned with the aspects of justice and fairness. Fairness in distributing resources in a non-partisan manner, religious or gender bases, is critical in rural development. Justice in applying the law and equal treatment has an immense potential of promoting participation in rural development. While the study did not observe religious discrimination, partisan issues were rampant, but gender-based discrimination issues were low. Still, the aspect of social equality remains a substantial factor in rural development.

According to Rico (2008), social equality is one of the approaches which can lead to rural development. There might not be any direct relationship between equality and development. However, social equality is one of the fundamentals of development. People will feel free to participate when they are equal. Social, financial and gender status can define equality, and all these have implications on rural development. On the development and the level of participation in development initiatives, this factor is somehow related to empowerment, which is a panacea to the rural underdevelopment malady. In GSRD, government communication should attempt to empower people to participate in development initiatives.

During the FGDs, the study found out that people felt excluded due to their financial status. In this regard, some FGDs noted cases of some people as better placed to be involved in development communication and initiatives than others.

Government agents and executives emphasised that people were equally treated and equal chances for participation and involvement. However, different opinions emerged in FGDs. Education is one other aspect which affects equality and excludes people and making them unwilling to be actively involved in rural development programmes. The study observed that the modestly educated had the opportunity to benefit and participate more in ICT initiatives as compared to the poor and lowly educated.

The development of content by the locals is useful because it creates a sense of ownership and increases the level of engagement with development programs. In addition to that, it empowers the locals and makes them feel valued and will continue to expand their knowledge in areas of development. The creation of content is a form of participation that can aid in sustainable development; for example, when people create content, they become creative and innovative. The public will feel valued and willing to continue doing what they would have shared. This way of active participation is likely to sustain their livelihoods and development (Day & Greenhood, 2009).

8.7.8 Integrated communication approaches

Government departments should integrate different communication approaches to harness the benefits of each communication approach. They should also consider the audience, purpose and feasibility of communication approaches.

8.7.9 Participatory communication

Development is likely to be realised if people are allowed to participate in the communication of their development. People can develop content and share it via a variety of media approaches. To be actively involved in the communication process, the people of GSRD should be at the centre of the development of communication. Also, communication should be two-way symmetrical, allowing all stakeholders to receive and share information, thereby benefitting equally in the process.

To sum up, the framework does not only resonate with (Ascroft & Masilela, 1994; Bessette, 2004; Bordenave, 1994; Manyozo, 2010; Mefalopulos, 2008) who advocate for full participation by the public in development initiatives but also incorporates Freire's (1970)

dialogical principles as capable of empowering people. Moreover, the framework stresses the identification of essential root causes of underdevelopment and the rural development enablers. Approaching rural development from this foundation has a high propensity for capacitating the public to engage in sustainable development initiatives.

8.8 Suggestions for future research

The thesis discussed the facets of development communication and various approaches over time and their impact on the government communication approaches in rural development. The next section discusses the future paths of research in the field.

- The first suggestion would be to improve the developed framework further and apply it to different contexts and circumstances over more extended periods. However, this implies that more time, human and financial resources would be required for this process to be successful.
- The second suggestion is that researchers conduct pilot studies on how the government can employ e-governance throughout all its departments. This study recommends e-governance as crucial in rural development, and it is the future of effective governance. Therefore, it would be ideal to gradually test it through pilot studies before fully implementing it in GSRD.
- Further researches should evaluate participation and social change involving control groups. This approach might convince the government and policymakers to operationalise the implementation of participatory communication approaches in rural development.
- A direct relationship between people's participation and development programmes' success is an area that needs further exploration, mainly in GSRD. This exploration will entail measuring the achievements and successes of development initiatives *vis-à-vis* people's level of participation. However, the prevailing viewpoints of the notion of involvement in development communication are not robust enough to guarantee the success of development initiatives. It can be concluded that an increase in the level of public participation will directly increase the levels of achievement in development initiatives. Therefore, making plausible research-based recommendations in this regard can convince the government to take public participation more seriously.
- The last suggestion for future studies will be for researchers to establish the extent to which the modernisation approaches and the Eurocentric perspectives affected the

people of GSRD regarding taking initiatives and tapping into the indigenous knowledge systems for charting their development. Crucially, researchers should explore ways of speeding the reversal of the effects of modernisation approaches and restore the people's confidence (decoloniality of the mind) to begin to contribute to their development effectively, instead of waiting for the expertise and know-how from elsewhere. Future research must further explore the decolonial paradigm of development communication as this area has immense potential in addressing the rural development question.

8.9 Study methodology strengths and limitations

Research methodologies are bound to have their weaknesses and strengths. Researchers decide to choose a specific method or methodologies, based on their advantages in relation to the literature, research objectives and the available financial and time resources. The researcher may choose longitudinal research or one which lasts for a short period. On the other hand, a researcher may approach a study using a single research methodology or multiple methodologies, which was the case in this study.

This research draws its reinforcement from its subscription to the epistemological pluralism philosophy. Various approaches employed had a high propensity for strengthening the findings through corroboration and verification. Approaching a widespread phenomenon like government communication in rural development can benefit from using various approaches, which came as an asset to this research.

While communication is a process with various elements, its components should be studied to understand the process fully. The methodology in this present study allowed the analysis of all the aspects involved in the process of communication. This approach was crucial in the development of a framework in development communication. Government departments, through their executives and officials as communicators, communication methods, content and the rural public were all part of the study meant to paint a holistic picture of the development communication process in GSRD. Incorporating all these on the role of government communication in rural development was pragmatic in this research.

The field of study illuminated the role of government communication approaches by studying the elements involved in the process of communication. However, the procedure was time-consuming and required more financial and human resources. Research assistants were

helpful in this regard, but as a cautious approach, the researcher had to be responsible for all the aspects of the research.

Despite taking all measures to ensure the accuracy of data collected, for example, from the FGDs with the public, the researcher administered a questionnaire to have a picture of the participants' circumstances *vis-a-vis* their appreciation of communication approaches, possibilities of inaccuracies are inevitable. Respondents and participants might have submitted information which they felt was being sought after by the researcher. The same might have occurred with the government executives and officials. It is always natural that those in positions of power will be biased towards justifying their approaches. On these bases, the research strongly considered epistemological pluralism as a philosophical backstop to potential direct and indirect methodological limitations.

Furthermore, the use of content analysis though not interpretative, focused on the actual content in the discourse between the government and the public. Through this approach, there was no potential bias on the part of the respondents, and the procedure was unobtrusive. However, potential biases could only be brought in by the researcher, so all possible measures were put in place to ensure that emotions, concerns and other personal sentiments did not influence the study. Overall, despite the limitations and potential effects, the methodological approach had its strengths and potential to offset possible weaknesses and ensure reliable findings.

8.10 Impact of the study on the body of knowledge

This study contributed to the understanding of the field of government communication in rural development with regards to addressing development problems in GSRD in an array of ways. These include the following:

- developing a development communication framework for rural development. A framework that could be referred to or customised according to the different circumstances or situations was not available, particularly regarding how government departments should employ communication in rural development programs.
- identifying the drawbacks and implications of the failure to implement active participation in rural development.
- demonstrating how the implementation of e-governance, if instituted by the government departments, has potential development benefits in rural development which outweighs the investment in this process.

- providing a robust introspection of how government communication in GSRD occurred and outlining how it has failed in empowerment and ultimately in dealing with development challenges, leading to a closer search for development solutions within the decoloniality perspective.
- clarifying the way forward in terms of integrating ICSs, MCSs and ICTs and drawing from their strengths, pulling all the strands together to encourage participation and sustainable approaches to rural development.
- revealing the need to do away with the dependency syndrome among the people of GSRD and prompting them to realise the power within collaboration and social capital in dealing with development challenges.

8.11 Significance of the study to government communication for rural development

Considering that the study focused only on GSRD, an area plagued with development issues, it directly responded to a real problem. The researcher had personal sentiments as a resident of the district. Therefore the priorities and intentions of the study were clear. Dealing with matters of underdevelopment effectively, through engaging the communication approaches by the significant government departments fully involved in key development areas on a day to day basis, presented several advantages. Reactivating the discourse was worth noting and timely. Added to that, going from theory to practice and then practising to theory to construct a reliable framework was immensely crucial in the research and meeting the research objectives.

The framework's associated findings and reference points provide a useful reference to policy formulation. In addition, the results are much easier to implement in governance policy formulation since the study was already within the parameters of government operations.

Crucially, this study had a fulfilling effect on the researcher's part, mainly because the research sought to address development problems afflicting his home area. However, more effort should be directed towards this discourse and creating robust debates is highly essential.

8.12 Recommendations

As a result of a long-time misrepresentation of development, people in the rural parts of Zimbabwe have lost an understanding of what it constitutes. Therefore, people often misunderstand all attempts at addressing development. There is a need to go back to basics

and help people accurately conceptualise development and its essence in their societies. These explanations seem to be valid for all government officials who understand development in the chaos of their operations and lack a clear strategic development path that they should follow.

Another plausible recommendation emerging from this study relates to research on rural development communication. Research in this field in Zimbabwe is scant and, in its infancy so academics, as well as intellectuals, should start having robust discussions on pertinent matters, documenting the information and creating a database to use for reference. Funding single comprehensive research on rural development in GSRD could be costly. However, if academics and intellectuals focus on different bits of issues and bring them together, they can build a solid reference database. Other academics, intellectuals, development agencies and government departments could use this database as a reference source in the future.

8.13 Conclusion

This thesis emanates from a chaotic atmosphere in which government communication agencies are unclear about their communication responsibilities and who they should serve in the process. Be that as it may, this study established that for all communication to effectively address rural development, there are necessary fundamental factors to be put in place. The chapter explained these and established that the essential aspects are ingrained in decoloniality and post decoloniality, empowerment and participatory communication. This study determined the importance of ICTs, not only through social media but also through e-governance and the need to make a deliberate and concerted effort to establish ICTs infrastructure by the government. ICSs also emerged relevant, retaining immense value due to their potential of empowering the locals and taping from their strengths in line with the decolonial paradigm. The paradigm argues against denigration of indigenous people and their knowledge systems in rural development communication. The study, therefore, placed the public at the centre of development. The importance of the rural public made them feature in the rural development framework, which discussed their attributes and how they can effectively contribute to rural development. The study also concludes that the developed government development communication framework should be further modified and tested over longitudinal studies. The framework could help address development woes once and for all and relieve the burden of poverty and underdevelopment borne by the people in GSRD.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE PUBLIC

Dear participant

I am a PhD student at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and carrying out a research titled “**Government communication as a development tool in Gokwe South Rural District of Zimbabwe**”. The objective of the study is to investigate the government communication practices in rural development. Your contribution to the study will help develop a better understanding of the communication approaches in place and help make government communication more effective in rural development. Your participation in this study is voluntary, you are free to withdraw at any stage, and your information is anonymous and confidential.

Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire below. Your honesty is of utmost importance to assist the study in reaching valid and reliable conclusions.

Yours faithful

Collet Tasaranago

UNISA

Section A: Biographical information (*Please select or on the correct option*)

1. Gender	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>			
2. Age	18-28 <input type="checkbox"/>	29-39 <input type="checkbox"/>	40 -55 <input type="checkbox"/>	56- 64 <input type="checkbox"/>	65+ <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Marital Status	Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/>				
4. Level of education	None <input type="checkbox"/> Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Post-graduate <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____				
5. Employment status	Never employed <input type="checkbox"/> Self <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector <input type="checkbox"/> Retired <input type="checkbox"/>				
6. Employment status of spouse (if	Never employed <input type="checkbox"/> Self <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector <input type="checkbox"/> Retired <input type="checkbox"/>				

any)	
7. Number of dependent	0-3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4-7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8+ <input type="checkbox"/>
8. Major source of income	Farming <input type="checkbox"/> Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Buying and selling <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
9. First language	Shona <input type="checkbox"/> Ndebele <input type="checkbox"/> Tonga <input type="checkbox"/> Shangwe <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Section B To check the popularity and usage of different forms of media

Which of the following do you use? (*Please select ✓ the correct option*)

Mass media

1. Do you have a radio? Yes No
 - a) *If yes*, how much time do you spend listening to the radio in a day?
Never Rarely Sometimes Always
 - b) *If no*, do you listen to other people’s radios? Yes No
2. If yes, how much time do you spend listening to the radio in a day?
Never Rarely Sometimes Always
3. Do you have a TV? Yes No
 - a) *If yes*, how much time do you spend watching TV in a day?
Never Rarely Sometimes Always
 - b) *If No*, do you watch to other people’s TVs? Yes No
4. If yes, how much time do you spend watching TV in a day?
Never Rarely Sometimes Always
5. Do you read a newspaper? Yes No
 - a) How many times do you read a newspaper in a week? 1 2 3 4 5+

Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)

1. Social Media

- a) Do you have a mobile phone? Yes No
- b) If yes does your mobile phone have internet? Yes No

- c) Do you have WhatsApp on your phone? Yes No
- d) Are you on any WhatsApp group? Yes No
- e) Do you have a twitter account? Yes No
- f) If yes, how often do you use twitter?
 Never Rarely Sometimes Always
- g) Do you have a Facebook account? Yes No
- h) If yes, how often do you use Facebook?
 Never Rarely Sometimes Always

2. Computers

- a) Do you have a personal computer? Yes No
- b) If yes, how many times do you use a computer in a week?
 Never Rarely Sometimes Always
- c) If no, do you use other people's computers? Yes No
- d) If yes, how many times do you use a computer in a week?
 Never Rarely Sometimes Always
- e) Is there a nearby telecentre? Yes No
- f) If yes, how many times do you visit the telecentre in a week?
 Never Rarely Sometimes Always

3. Describe your ability to use the following (*Please indicate with a or on the correct option*)

	Not able	Not good	good	Very good	Excellent
a) Computer					
b) Mobile phone					
c) Internet					
d) WhatsApp					
e) Twitter					

Section C: Usage of different media by the departments (education/health/agriculture)

1. Do you receive information from the three departments through the listed channels?

(Please indicate with a or the correct option)

Media	Education	Agriculture	Health
Radio			
TV			
Newspaper			
Pamphlets			
Twitter			
WhatsApp			
Facebook			
Teachers			
Extension officers			
Nurses			
Local health care givers			
Traditional leaders (village heads/headman)			
Others (NGOs/other people)			

2. How often do these agents visit your area? (Please indicate with a or the correct option)

Agents	Never	Rarely	Not sure	Often	Very often
Health					
Nurses					
Local health caregivers					
Traditional/local leaders					
Others (NGOs/local groups)					
Education					
Teachers					
Traditional/local leaders					
Others (NGOs/local groups)					
Agriculture					
Extension officers					

Traditional/local leaders					
Others (NGOs/local groups)					

3. Please indicate the media channel used to communicate the following messages.

(Please indicate with a or the correct option)

Messages	Radio	TV	Newspaper	Government Officials	WhatsApp	Facebook	Other
Health							
Disease awareness							
Reproductive health							
Nutrition							
Education							
Early Childhood Education							
Adult literacy							
Girl child education							
Agriculture							
Sustainable farming							
Environmental protection							
High yields							

Section D: Satisfaction

How satisfied are you with the information on the following mediums? (Please indicate with a or the correct option)

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Radio					
TV					
Newspaper					
Pamphlets					
Village heads					

Health officials					
Teachers					
Extension officers					
WhatsApp					
Facebook					
Twitter					

Section E: Participation in development communication

1. Do the available communication channels allow you to participate in development programs? Yes No
2. Do the available communication channels allow other people in the community to participate in development programs? Yes No
3. Do you consider yourself involved enough in development programmes? Yes No

Section F: Appropriateness of communication methods

To what extent do you agree with these statements:

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Gokwe cannot develop without western style modernisation.					
Development messages come through modern channels.					
Development content is mainly from the modern world in cities and not from the people of Gokwe.					
The content encourages us to follow the western style of					

development					
Messages are not relevant to our needs					
It's better if the people of Gokwe South develop their own means of dealing with development problems.					
The locals are fully capable of developing their own development programmes					
The government is not giving locals space to chart their own programmes					

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROFESSIONALS

Dear participant

I am a PhD student at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and carrying out a research titled “**Government communication as a development tool in Gokwe South Rural District of Zimbabwe**”. The objective of the study is to investigate government communication practices in rural development. Your contribution to the study will help develop a better understanding of the communication approaches in place and help make government communication more effective in rural development. Your participation in this study is voluntary, you are free to withdraw at any stage, and your information is anonymous and confidential.

Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire below. Your honesty is of utmost importance to assist the study in reaching valid and reliable conclusions.

Yours faithful

Collet Tasaranago

UNISA

Section A: Biographical information

10. Gender	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>						
11. Age	18-28 <input type="checkbox"/>	29-39 <input type="checkbox"/>	40 -55 <input type="checkbox"/>	56- 64 <input type="checkbox"/>	65+ <input type="checkbox"/>			
12. Marital Status	Single <input type="checkbox"/>	Married <input type="checkbox"/>	Divorced <input type="checkbox"/>	Widowed <input type="checkbox"/>				
13. Level of education	None <input type="checkbox"/>	Primary <input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary <input type="checkbox"/>	Advanced <input type="checkbox"/>	Diploma <input type="checkbox"/>	Degree <input type="checkbox"/>	Post-graduate <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____
14. Communication related training	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>						
15. Years of experience	Less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	2-5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6-9 <input type="checkbox"/>	10+ <input type="checkbox"/>				
16. Type of contract	Temporary <input type="checkbox"/>	Permanent <input type="checkbox"/>						
17. First language	Shona <input type="checkbox"/>	Ndebele <input type="checkbox"/>	Tonga <input type="checkbox"/>	Shangwe <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____			

Section B ICTs

Which of the following communication channels do you use for work related purposes

Communication Channel	Please select the correct option ✓ or ☒
Mobile phone	
WhatsApp	
Facebook	
Twitter	
Computer	

Describe your ability to use the following

	Not proficient (Not able)  Very proficient (Excellent)				
	Not able	Not good	good	Very good	Excellent
Computer					
Mobile phone					
Internet					
WhatsApp					
Twitter					

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP GUIDING QUESTIONS

Dear participant

I am a PhD student at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and carrying out a research titled “**Government communication as a development tool in Gokwe South Rural District of Zimbabwe**”. The objective of the study is to investigate government communication practices in rural development. Your contribution to the study will help develop a better understanding of the communication approaches in place and help make government communication more effective in rural development. Your participation in this study is voluntary, you are free to withdraw at any stage, and your information is anonymous and confidential.

Below is a list of some of the questions which will guide the discussion. Further questions may be asked depending on the participants ‘responses. Your honesty is of utmost importance to assist the study in reaching valid and reliable conclusions.

Yours faithful

Collet Tasaranago

UNISA

Focus group guiding questions which will be repeated for the departments of education, health and agriculture.

1. What key areas does the department (*education/health/ agriculture*) address in the district?
2. In what ways are these areas beneficial to the community?
3. In what ways do you receive messages from the department (*education/health/ agriculture*)?
4. Would you consider the department (*education/health/ agriculture*) involving the people in all the stages of development programmes (from research, planning, implementation and evaluation)?
5. Do communication approaches allow for involvement? In what ways?
6. In what ways do you communicate with the department (*education/health/ agriculture*)?
7. Are there any programmes which you have been involved in within the departments?

8. How often do you participate in the programmes by the departments (*education/health/ agriculture*)?
9. What are the possible factors limiting people from participating?
10. Are there any social media groups specialising in education/health and agriculture?
11. Do you participate in any social media group specialising in *education/health/ agriculture*?
12. In what ways do you send information to the departments (*education/health/ agriculture*)
13. Provide the ways through which the departments can make it easier for you to communicate with the department (*education/health/ agriculture*)?
14. Do government departments use indigenous channels for development communication?
15. How do you consider these channels effective in disseminating development information?
16. How much do you get to participate in these traditional indigenous means of communication?

Research conducted by:

Mr Collet Tasaranago STUDENT NUMBER 55662641 in fulfilment of the Doctor of Philosophy in Communication degree

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Dear participant

I am a PhD student at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and carrying out a research titled “**Government communication as a development tool in Gokwe South Rural District of Zimbabwe**”. The objective of the study is to investigate government communication practices in rural development. Your contribution to the study will help develop a better understanding of the communication approaches in place and help make government communication more effective in rural development. I recognise the value of your time, and I would appreciate your contribution to this study. Also, take note that your participation in this study is voluntary, you are free to withdraw at any stage, and your information is anonymous and confidential.

Please take note that the researcher will ask follow-up questions depending on the responses, but below are the main questions for the research. Your honesty is of utmost importance to assist the study in reaching valid and reliable conclusions.

Yours faithful

Collet Tasaranago

UNISA

Interview Guide Questions for government officials

1. What are the key areas of development addressed by your department?
2. Name some programmes and the key issues of intended benefits to the people?
3. Do you have a set of operating guidelines of communication for development programmes in rural areas?
4. Would you consider the department involving the people in all the stages of development programmes (from research, planning, implementation and evaluation)?
5. Do the people participate in the development of the development programmes?
6. What are the possible factors limiting people from participating?
7. What challenges do you experience, which limit the success of the development programmes?

8. What measures can be put in place to improve communication for the success of the projects?
9. In what ways do you send relevant messages to the people in the district?
10. How do the people in the district communicate with you?
11. What measures do you put in place for people to communicate with you?
12. In what ways are the communication methods able to promote key areas of development in your department?

Research conducted by:

Mr Collet Tasaranago STUDENT NUMBER 55662641 in fulfilment of the Doctor of Philosophy in Communication degree

APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Ethics clearance reference number: 2018-COMMSCINCE-CHS-55661641

Research permission reference number: Rec-140816-052

20/08/2019

Title: Government communication as a development tool in Gokwe South Rural District of Zimbabwe

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is **Collet Tasaranago**, and I am doing research with **Dr Rofhiwa Mukhudwana**, a lecturer, in the Department of Communication towards a Doctor of Philosophy in Communication at the University of South Africa. This is a self-funded study. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled **Government communication as a development tool in Gokwe South Rural District of Zimbabwe**.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

I am conducting this research to find out about government institutions communication approaches in rural development.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You have been selected to be a participant in this study because you are a government official in the selected government institutions in Gokwe South Rural District.

Your contact details were either obtained from the district office of the department that you work for or they were requested from you because the researcher thinks your contribution will be valuable to the research. There will be around 60 people who will also participate in this study.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire will take about 15-20 minutes to complete online (a link will be sent to you), and it shall be comprised of dichotomous, rating scales and Likert-scale questions. The semi-structured interviews will be telephonic and will take about 30 minutes. The interview shall be audio

recorded for purposes of data analysis. You shall be provided with a list of guiding questions or topics before the interview.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without providing a reason. The questionnaire or any other information you submit will remain anonymous.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Your participation in this study will assist in reaching reliable conclusions about government communication approaches. The findings will be forwarded to relevant government institutions for reference making rural development communication decisions or policy development.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

There are no any foreseeable negative consequences of participating in this study. However, the researcher takes it upon himself that you are in a safe environment during your participation in this study.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

You have the right to insist that your name is not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research. Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your responses will be given a code number or a pseudonym, and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics

Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

Please also note that your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings. Your privacy in all these will be protected. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but participants will not be identifiable in such reports.

You may be required to participate in small groups of about 5-6 people where you will discuss a few points on government communication. While every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat the information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, I advise you not to disclose personal sensitive information in the focus group.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

The researcher will store hard copies of your answers for a minimum period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet at the University of South Africa (UNISA) for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Hard copies will be shredded, and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer using a relevant software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Please take note that you have been requested to participate in this study for academic purposes and there shall not be payments or rewards, financial or otherwise. You are also not expected to incur any costs as a result of participating in this study.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact the researcher via phone or email. The results will be accessible in published documents which can be accessible at any given time.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact **Collet Tasaranago** on +966 55 795 0205 or email address blessedtas@gmail.com or 55662641@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact **Dr RF. Mukhudwana** by email mukhurf@unisa.ac.za, or phone number +27 12 429 4379. Contact the research ethics chairperson **Mr Gibson Chauke** of the University of South Africa Ethical Research Clearance by phone on +27 12 429 4379 or by email at Chaukg1@unisa.ac.za if you have any ethical concerns.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

Collet Tasaranago

APPENDIX G: CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the <insert specific data collection method>.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname..... (please print)

Participant Signature.....Date.....

Researcher's Name & Surname..... (please print)

Researcher's signature..... Date.....

APPENDIX H: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



UNISA COMMUNICATION SCIENCE ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date 6 December 2018

Dear Mr Collet Tasaranago

Decision:
**Ethics Approval from 6
December 2018 to 6 December
2023**

NHREC Registration #: Rec-
240816-052
ERC Reference # :2018-
COMMSCIENCE-CHS-55662641
Name: Collet Tasaranago
Student #:55662641

Researcher(s): Mr Collet Tasaranago

Supervisor (s): Dr R. F Mukhudwana
Department of Communication Science
mukhurf@unisa.ac.za
+27 12 429 4379

Working title of research:

**Government communication as a development tool in Gokwe South Rural District
of Zimbabwe.**

Qualification: PhD

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by Department of Communication Science Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for five years.

*The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by a Sub-committee of URERC on 6 November 2018 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision will be tabled at the next Committee meeting on 11 January 2019 for ratification.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:



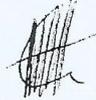
University of South Africa
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1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the **Communication Science Ethics Review Committee**.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (**6 December 2023**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2018-COMMSCIENCE-CHS-55662641** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature: 

Mr Gibson Chauke

Chair of Communication Science Ethics Review Committee

E-mail: chaukg1@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-6843

URERC 25.04.17 - Decision template (V2) - Approve

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APPENDIX I: CODING SHEET

Interview subject A

Main category	Emerging Categories	Similarities	Differences
Rural development communication fixed programmes			
Rural development ongoing programmes			
Internal communication	Top-down Bottom-up Horizontal		
Communication channels used to communicate with the public channels	Mass media ICTs ICSs		
Communication selection criteria	Accessibility Availability Affordability		
Impact and effectiveness of the communication approaches and methods			
Perceptions of government officials on public participation	Programme stage Consultation Planning Implementation Evaluation		
Limitations to effective communication	Political Social (education and		

		cultural) Economic factors/ poverty		
Defining public participative in development programmes and government communication				
Limitations to participation		Political Social (education and cultural) Economic factors/ poverty		

APPENDIX J: SUMMARY OF CONTENT ANALYSED

Newspaper publication	News article headline	Area of focus	Date published
The Herald	<i>"Spread of Cholera to Gokwe"</i>	Health	18 th of September 2018
The Herald	<i>"Cholera: Gokwe takes preventative measures"</i> .	Health	26 th of September 2018
The Herald	<i>"More clinics in Gokwe South"</i>	Health	25 th of October 2018
The Herald	<i>"Gokwe to build clinic and pre-school"</i>	Health and Education	29 th of April 2019
The Herald	<i>"Denying kids education to attract jail"</i>	Education	27 th of July 2019
The Sunday News	<i>"President donates computers to a Gokwe School"</i>	Education	7 th of October 2018
Kwayedza	<i>"Gokwe yovakisa chikoro"</i>	Education	31 st August 2018
Daily News	<i>"Gokwe embarks on road rehabilitation programme"</i>	Agriculture and Health	15 th April 2019

Posters and printed materials 1st check

Department of health	Maternal health	Circumcision	STIs/HIV	Hygiene	TB	Pre-post-natal health	others	Number of posters identified	Date checked
Gokwe hospital	4	6	7	5	4	5	6	37	06/09/2018
Msita clinic	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	17	10/09/2018
Tachi clinic	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	18	12/09/2018
Chemahororo clinic	3	2	3	2	4	3	2	19	06/09/2018
Njelele clinic	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	17	12/09/2018
Mateta 2 clinic	3	3	3	1	2	2	2	16	17/09/2018
Manoti clinic	2	2	4	2	3	3	2	18	17/09/2018

Posters and printed materials 2nd check

Department of health	Maternal health	Circumcision	STIs/HIV	Hygiene	TB	Pre-post-natal health	Diarrhoea, Cholera & Typhoid	Others	Number of posters identified	Date re-checked
Gokwe hospital	5	5	6	7	5	5	4	5	42	06/06/2019
Msita clinic	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	18	13/06/2019
Tachi clinic	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	1	19	14/06/2019
Chemahororo clinic	3	2	3	2	4	3	2	1	20	17/06/2019
Njelele clinic	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	1	18	17/06/2019
Mateta 2 clinic	3	3	3	1	2	2	2	1	17	20/06/2019
Manoti clinic	2	2	4	2	3	3	2	1	19	20/06/2019

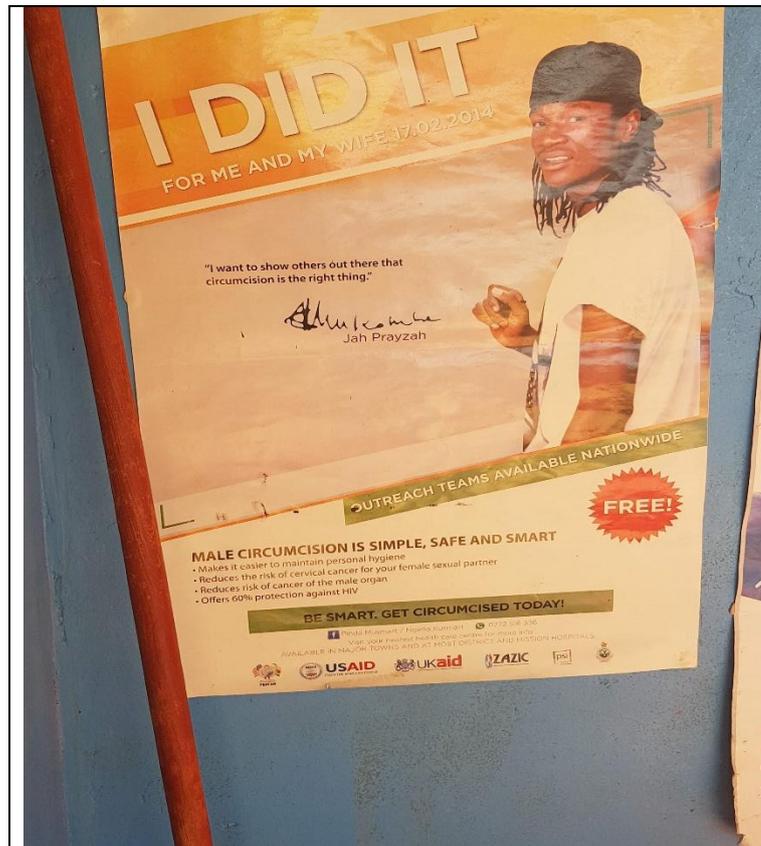
POSTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph 1: Typical poster display at clinics: Posters at Njelele Clinic, Gokwe South



Photograph 2: Posters in front of a waiting area



Photograph 3: Celebrity, Mukudzei Mukombe (Jah Prayzah) on posters pasted around the district



Photograph 4: HIV Poster in the local language



Photograph 5: Department of agriculture flier on fall armyworm awareness



Photograph 6: Photograph of Manoti Business Centre in Gokwe South