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COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND FOOD SECURITY IN RURAL ZIMBABWE:

The case of Marange area in Mutare District

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Abstract

The chief purpose of this study was to determine the role of the rural communities in the food security initiatives of the government in alleviating food shortages in the Marange communal area of Mutare district in Zimbabwe. The focus was on local community empowerment; ownership of food security initiatives by the communities; communities' independent analysis of needs and priorities; their involvement in designing food security programmes and the role of the government in linking with the communities. The data was gathered using a case study research design with the qualitative method being the main research approach. The primary data was obtained from focus group discussions held in three wards of Marange area and some in-depth interviews conducted with selected key informants. The findings indicate that the government designs food security strategies without considering the input of communities. The communities are introduced and expected to adopt these pre-conceived food security plans at the implementation stage. The results also show that poor community participation in the food security initiatives of the government, specifically during the initial stages, is a significant contributing factor to the continual shortages of food in the communal lands of Marange. It is the view of this study that unless community input in decision making at the planning and designing phases is given preference in the food security interventions of the government in rural Zimbabwe, food security will seldom be achieved. While the government has a significant role to play in food security measures, such interventions can make an important contribution if the use and development of community participation is made central to food shortage alleviation strategies. The principal conclusion of this study is that if food security is an intended ultimate goal in

rural Zimbabwe, the communities must participate fully in the conceptualisation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the government-initiated food security programmes.

Key words: community; participation; community participation; food security; conventional approach; participatory approach

Declaration

I, Chiedzwa Swikepi, do hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is entirely a product of my own original work with the exception of such quotations or references which have been attributed to their sources and that all illustrative figures, maps and tables are made or drawn by me save where I have acknowledged that another is the author. I further declare that this dissertation has not been previously submitted and will not be presented at any other university for a similar or any other degree award.

Signature:

Date: 11th April, 2011

@ April, 2011

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None of the above can be blamed for any deficiencies in this work as those rests wholly
on my shoulders.

Dedication

This work is an inspiration and dedication to my cherished and treasured spouse
Tandiwe and two lovely children Vision and Mission.

List of acronyms

AGRITEX-	Agricultural Technical and Extension Services
CARE-	Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere
CFU-	Commercial Farmers' Union
DDC-	District Development Committee
DDF-	District Development Fund
ESAP-	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FAO-	Food and Agricultural Organisation
GMB-	Grain Marketing Board
ICRISAT-	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
ICT-	Information and Communication Technology
IDS-	Institute of Development Studies
IMF-	International Monetary Fund
LSCF-	Large Scale Commercial Farmers
NGO-	Non-governmental organisation
PAAP-	Poverty Alleviation Action Plan
SDARMP-	Small-holder Dry Areas Resource Management Programme
VIDCO-	Village Development Committee
WADCO-	Ward Development Committee
ZFU-	Zimbabwe Farmers' Union

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1. Introduction

This thesis seeks to determine the role of the rural communities in the food security initiatives of government for food shortage alleviation in rural Zimbabwe. There is poor community participation in decision making in the food security measures of the government particularly at the initial stages of planning and designing. This poor community participation is a significant contributing factor to the continual food shortages in rural Zimbabwe. This thesis is prompted by the socialist proclamations issued by the Zimbabwean government in the 1980s where they vowed to place the needs of the people first in all their intended development endeavours in providing for education, shelter, food security, water and sanitation, sponsorship for local projects and employment. This study therefore attempts to look at the question of the position of the rural communities in relation to the food security initiatives of the government.

1.1 Historical and social contexts of the study

Since independence in 1980, the government of Zimbabwe has striven to tackle the ethnic, cultural, racial and other forms of discrimination and unfairness in the country. During this period, the major focus was to engage the Zimbabwean people in the course of running and owning their natural resources.

However, in the 1990s, the government shifted away from its socialist philosophy and people-oriented development to the neo-liberal perspective. This standpoint was attained through the signing and adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment

Programme (ESAP) package of policies from 1991 to 1995. The intention of implementing ESAP was to change the balance of forces in the economy from an important degree of state involvement to the greater dependence on market forces. According to Mwanza (1992), the plan sought to achieve more efficiency in the operating private enterprises, to stop the declining terms of trade and to curtail inflationary pressures. Mwanza further states that the government had assured its population that after the execution of ESAP, there was going to be reduced unemployment, less bureaucratic red tape, higher productivity and rapid wealth creation. Five years down the line, it was noted that the direct opposite of what was promised was happening. The fact that the policies were reversing the role of the state of subsidising crucial basic commodities like food; increased the threat of food insecurity particularly in rural areas. In Marange communal area, many workers which were initially employed by the state were forced to travel to the countryside to engage in agriculture or subsistence farming projects which were either partially funded or not funded at all by the government. Balleis (1993) points out that the central myth and misconception of ESAP lay in its inability to integrate social planning as an essential part of the planning process. In short, the poor had to bear the burden of this economic transformation programme through payment of user-fees in education and health systems (Chinake, 1997).

The endorsement of ESAP in Zimbabwe came as a great shock to the majority of ordinary citizens who were never given the opportunity to analyse this economic development initiative. Its implementation was done without the consultation of the

people. Yet the harsh effects of ESAP were greatly felt by the majority of ordinary citizens, especially rural dwellers who were never consulted for its implementation (Mlambo, 1997). Only the rich could afford to pay for services being provided by the private entrepreneurs and this heightened the susceptibility of the poor. Clearly the government was supposed to have sought the cooperation and consensus of its majority population rather than be satisfied with the views and opinions of a few elites at the expense of its majority.

According to Chinake (1997), the government realised the shortfalls of ESAP and consequently implemented the Poverty Alleviation Action Plan (PAAP) in 1994. Chinake states that this development strategy represented a comprehensive view of the government's efforts aimed at alleviating food shortages, poverty and unemployment and increasing income generating activities. She further maintains that PAAP's focus was to build the capacity of communities in order to generate income and to broaden the people's base for sustenance by improving income-generating capacity through the community action programmes. The PAAP also had a theme of creating alternative means of livelihoods to rural communities. However, critics of this approach maintain that the plan failed because of the central government's resistance to decentralise its power to the local communities. Makumbe (1996) points out that although the PAAP was viewed as a people-centred plan, it missed its intended beneficiaries because it was an imposed strategy used by some authorities to gain popularity and win people's votes. He further argues that instead of the PAAP taking a more socialistic stance;

valuing collective community participation, it was over-politicised. The PAAP lacked substantial community input and when it was implemented, the rural communities had no sense of ownership to it. The communities viewed it as a government initiative detached from them. This was because this pre-conceived food security plan was introduced to the communities at the implementation stage; creating a gap between the government and the communities since the government neglected the communities' contribution during the planning and designing stages.

As a sequel to the failure of PAAP the government also adopted the second phase of the land reform programme hailed as the "fast-track" land resettlement programme as a food security initiative aimed at addressing social injustice and food shortages in 1998. Just like the PAAP, this strategy did not have the full consent of the communities. The policy framework was not taken to the beneficiaries for scrutiny and input. It was introduced to the communities as a fully completed document ready for implementation with all critical decisions made elsewhere. The communities were expected to back-up the policy without contesting it. According to Moyo (2000), the "fast-track" land resettlement programme was based on political reactions of the ruling party to win votes from the rural populace in the forthcoming general elections of 2000. Moyo further states that most of the acquired farms for redistribution were given to government ministers and other senior officials rather than the landless rural peasants. This implied that most rural Zimbabweans continued to suffer from starvation since there was lack of community input in this government-initiated and pre-determined policy, particularly at the scheming and planning phases.

Although some few rural poor were resettled in Marange communal lands under this programme, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)'s 2002 report reveals that since the resettled people were poor and never consulted in this plan, they lacked capacity in terms of technical skills, resources, access to credit and what they required from the government. The report clearly indicates that without properly laid out food security measures that take into cognisance the significance of community input at the planning and designing stages, it will not be feasible to achieve the first millennium development goal of eradication of poverty by the year 2015. If policy is not formulated appropriately, programmes will continue to fall short of the needs of the people. Todaro and Smith (2009), insist that by re-establishing an appropriate equilibrium and creating the provisions for comprehensive popular community participation in food security intervention efforts, third world countries will have undertaken a huge challenging move toward the understanding of the real meaning of development. The implication of this is that the act of ignoring community input in food security initiatives of the government, mainly at the planning stage, will lead to projects that are unfocused in direction, ineffective and consequently a waste of time, money and resources. This is because the intended recipients will automatically lack a sense of ownership due to the treatment meted out on them as decision takers and not decision makers.

The most recent food security measures implemented by the government are the crop inputs and Farm Mechanisation Programmes of 2005. The crop inputs programme had been run by the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) - a government entity that sells seed, chemicals and fertilisers to farmers at affordable prices since 2005. The GMB is the

federal governing entity that usually controls producer prices, access to agricultural inputs, the delivery and selling of all grain crops, and consumer prices. It is ranked as one of the various examples of government-owned corporations or state-owned enterprises greatly involved in Zimbabwe's economy. The GMB in Marange area sells maize, round nuts and groundnuts seeds only. The Marange farmers have no choice but to purchase maize; a drought intolerant grain crop which is not suitable for the harsh climatic weather conditions in the area; hence the persistence of food insecurity. Richards (1987) states that rural citizens need less a standard of package of seed crop varieties and more of a basket of choices because they have experience of the prevailing conditions and have learnt the coping food security strategies in their communities. If the government had consulted the Marange residents at the planning stage of this food security measure, they would have cited some of the seed crops and inputs they needed that suit their area better. Instead, the government came up with its own predetermined crop inputs programme and expected the Marange communities to adopt it.

The Marange communities are still under the threat of chronic food insecurity due to poor participation in decision making at the planning stage of the food security measures of the government. It is the view of this study that if the communities are fully incorporated at all phases, starting from planning up to evaluation stages of the food security interventions, where they are permitted to decide on what they need, there will be no reason why the Marange communities – who are inherently farmers – can fail to

produce adequate food supplies for domestic consumption in order to live an active, healthy and productive life.

From the above exposition, it is clear that the government of Zimbabwe has failed to address the problem of food insecurity in communal areas mainly because the food security plans are pre-conceived, often failing to appreciate the expertise, intuitions, knowledge and aspirations of those whom the programmes are designed to assist. To date, the lack of incorporation of the rural communities at the planning and designing phases is the chief constraint to the efforts of food shortage alleviation in Marange. The role of the rural communities in the food security initiatives of the government is hampered by the lack of community input at the preliminary stages; hence the hope of this study to address this anomaly.

Devereux and Maxwell (2001) note that approaches to food security that fail to value and accommodate the rural inhabitants' intuitions, knowledge, needs and aspirations have failed to alleviate the problem of food shortages, specifically in the communal areas. The two authors further state that even though the poorest groups constitute the greater population, they are the least influential and rarely able to articulate their opinions. The poorest groups' powerlessness is habitually accredited to passivity and indifference but the genuine problem is the lack of opportunity for their direct participation at the initial stages of food security measures that respond to their real local needs. Ironically, instead of the government augmenting rural participation in food

security strategies, it decreases the effort by concealing the expressions of community concerns. In fact, the government plans the food security initiatives with few top elites and brings the defined strategies to the rural people for implementation. To this effect, Swanepoel and De Beer (2006) maintain that while community participation at the planning stage is a desirable objective for the success of the food security strategies of the government, the extensive involvement of the government at the planning phase of these food security interventions is weakening the liberty of the ordinary people and their privileges to design and own food security programmes that respond to their real needs and result in local community empowerment.

In conclusion, it needs to be reiterated that the significance of community contribution to food shortage alleviation in rural Zimbabwe, specifically at the planning phase, is a necessity. There is a low level of community input by the rural poor. Past experience has shown that even though the ultimate stakeholders in the food shortage alleviation process are the rural poor, all too often they are denied a voice in the formulation and even the execution of food shortage alleviation programmes. Too little attention has been given to strengthening the negotiating capacities of the rural poor, to enhancing their power to participate meaningfully in any initiated food security programme. Therefore, priorities should be demand-driven rather than supply-driven so as to respond to the particular needs and potentials of the rural poor. The scenario described above clearly shows that the rural communities have been sidelined at the planning phase of the food security initiatives of the government.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Although many resources have been injected into research and development in order to improve the level of participation by the rural communities in the food security initiatives of the government in the rural sector, most of these efforts seem not to yield positive results (Marumisa, 1997). Rather, the gap of community participation in the planning of food security interventions appears to be broadening. The problem that this study seeks to address is the poor community participation in the food security initiatives of the government for the alleviation of continual food shortages in Marange area. The food security interventions put in place by the government to alleviate food shortages in Marange are predetermined and planned by government officials. The Marange communities are only introduced to the government's pre-conceived food security plans at the implementation stage. This clearly creates a gap in the food security initiatives as the plans overlook the input of the communities before implementation. Scholars from various disciplines have revealed and reiterated that the democratic process works best when communities actively play a part in the decision-making process and their views are represented. Contrary to this preceding statement, the Marange citizens are expected to adopt the preset food security strategies without questioning or giving their own input. This scenario is what Panday (2008) terms "representation without participation", where the Marange communities' representation in the decision-making process is still not ensured as they face challenges which hinder their proper participation. The main reason associated with the sidelining of the rural communities' input at the planning stage is the assumption that the rural populace cannot provide any significant contribution to the food security initiatives undertaken by the government.

Another reason is the implicit notion that the rural citizens lack sufficient knowledge, experience and insight to distinguish their problems and consider possible solutions.

The major cause of this problem is the government's failure to value the local people's perceptions, needs and knowledge. This poor participation by the target groups (rural inhabitants) is one of the main detrimental constraints to the success of government food security initiatives resulting in the continual food shortages in Marange area. Although the rural folks form the majority of the target population of the food security initiatives, they are often denied a voice to participate fully in the initial planning stages of the food security programmes.

Therefore, given this predicament, the study seeks to find the role of the rural communities in the food security initiatives of the government in redressing the persistence of food shortages in Marange. In undertaking this study, the major research questions that this study seeks to answer are: to what extent does the government dialogue with the intended beneficiaries to find out their needs and priorities for the success of its food security measures; are essential decisions being made by the local communities at the planning phase of the food security initiatives or are they merely being brought in to back-up the decisions predetermined somewhere else? Of interest also is the issue of ownership of the food security measures and how the local communities are being empowered by the government to curtail food shortages in their areas. What is of great concern here is that while there is an assumption that there is widespread community participation in the food security measures, the problem of food

shortages has worsened. More to this, the food security inequality gap between the poor and rich has not shown any change for the better. Thus the proposition in this study is that unless community input at the planning phase of food security interventions is given preference, food security in Marange will seldom be achieved. Community input is essential for community empowerment and food programme ownership. For that reason, it should be the people within the targeted communities who ought to identify their needs and priorities, not the government.

1.3 Objective of the study

A major objective of this study is to determine the role of the rural communities in the food security initiatives of government for alleviating food shortages in Marange communal lands. This is done in view of the virtual absence of the input of the rural communities at the initial planning stages of food security strategies of government. Such absence of community input in planning is a negation of government's main aim on food security initiatives of bringing fairness among the rural citizens by empowering and promoting people's participation in decision making which would accordingly, lead to a sense of ownership. Therefore, this study seeks to find out the degree to which this aim of the government has been attained. The focus will be on local community empowerment; ownership of food security initiatives by the communities; communities' independent analysis of needs and priorities; communities' participation in designing food security programmes and the efforts of the government in linking with the communities.

1.4 Significance of the study

This research is of significance to the domain of rural development particularly on issues of food security as it extends the knowledge base that currently exists in this field. It is also a crucial study on issues of governance and democracy, looking specifically at participative democracy in terms of state decision making for development in the area of food security. Undertaking this study is also critical as it provides the much needed evidence-based facts that will enable policy makers to review their policy positions within an open discussion. Some policy makers who have chosen to embrace the concept of community participation in food security measures have welcomed the benefits it has to offer. Therefore, this research which explores the role of community participation in food security measures will assist to raise awareness of its potential benefits within the rural setting. The study has a potential to assist policy makers to re-orient their approaches to food security policy formulation towards one that values the decisions and inputs made by local communities especially at the initial stages of designing and planning.

Apart from policy makers, development administrators and non-governmental stakeholders- who are also key drivers in ascertaining food security in the communal areas- can as well benefit, as they also have to re-align their operational plans with developments in the national food security policy.

Furthermore, although the primary focus of this study was Marange, other rural districts in Zimbabwe may also draw some valuable lessons and experiences learnt from the outcomes of this study, which in turn may be adopted into their own food security

programmes. The results from this study will raise awareness to the rural communities in Zimbabwe on the importance of their decisions and inputs in development initiatives that affect them.

Moreover, though much has been done on community participation in Zimbabwe, few studies have been done during the current post 2 000 economic crisis period particularly in rural areas. This study, therefore, contributes to the limited literature on community participation and food security in decision making at the planning stage in the food security measures of the government in rural Zimbabwe. To this effect, this study can serve as a future reference for other researchers on the subject of community participation and food security in the rural areas.

Finally, this thesis differs from other studies that have already been done. Many studies on community participation and food security in Zimbabwe deal with this issue using nationwide and provincial surveys which do not go into detail in terms of specific contexts. In contrast, this thesis' concern was with remote rural areas of Zimbabwe and has used a case study design that makes the results more accurate as it is detailed and directed at a specific context or case. With a survey, the researcher will be contented with what respondents say in the structured questions whereas in a case study that uses unstructured questions to solicit information from respondents, the researcher has the freedom to elucidate on questions and responses and explore further with the respondents in order to acquire precisely what the respondents mean.

1.5 Limitations of the study

This study determined the role of the rural communities in the food security initiatives of the government for alleviating food shortages in Marange communal lands, in the context of malfunctioning social policy and food shortage crisis. It was limited to the government-initiated food security interventions in Marange. The study only considered the government's food security strategies used from 1991 to 2009. The study did not consider the whole population in Marange but relied on a representative sample of community participants (men, women, youths and ward leaders). It also used a key informant from the Ministry of Lands and Rural Development to acquire relevant information related to the problem of poor community participation during the preliminary stages of designing and planning of the food security measures of the government.

The study was limited by its focus in a single district due to financial constraints, limited time and mobility. However, the study can be a useful starting point for determining reactions of the rural citizens to their participation in decision making and specifying their role in the government initiated food security programmes.

On the other hand, in view of the fact that the study used in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as part of the research method, these needed considerable time with the respondents in order to get in-depth information. As a result, the respondents in the community wards were expecting to get some rewards for their participation in the focus group discussions. However, this constraint was overcome as they were informed in the

initial stages that the study was for academic purposes. The researcher also assured the respondents that they would receive feedback on the findings of the study and more significantly, that the study was to be used for their benefit through finding ways of making their voice heard in food security decision making.

Furthermore, the prior assumption was to get 100% turn up of respondents for focus group discussions. This did not prove to be so. The smallest group had 7 participants. This constituted 70% of the targeted sample. The overall participation rate for focus group discussions was 91% which is satisfactory and renders the sample findings accurate. The intention of the study was not to generalise to a larger population but rather to obtain a profound understanding of the phenomenon under study. This is part of the reason why the study used purposive sampling.

Lastly, the interview guide with research questions was translated into Shona for all the respondents except for the administrator of Mutare rural district who preferred to be interviewed in English.

1.6 Ethical considerations

The fact that in any human phenomenon under study human beings are the objects of study brings unique ethical problems to the fore (De Vos *et al.*, 2002). Anyone involved in social scientific research needs to be aware of the general consensus shared by researchers about what is proper and improper in the conduct of social scientific inquiry (Sumbulu, 2005; Babbie, 2010).

Based on this knowledge, the study took high cognisance of human rights. The study ensured that appropriate steps were taken to protect the human rights and welfare of individuals who were acting as subjects in the research by observing ethical procedures governing research with humans. These included among others; voluntary participation of the respondents; establishing good rapport; confidentiality and anonymity. To ensure voluntary participation of the respondents, this study informed the participants that they were not under obligation to participate and that they could do so at their own will and could withdraw at any point if they so wished. It was made clear from the onset that participation was on voluntary basis and no financial or material rewards were to accrue to participants who chose to take part in the research. The study guarded against making assumptions about the participants' willingness to participate, therefore those willing to participate were asked to sign a consent form. This was in line with Creswell (2003:201), who states that primarily and principally, "... the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informant(s)". The format of the participation information sheet, English and Shona consent forms used in this study are attached as postscripts 1, 2 and 3 respectively, in Appendix C of this dissertation.

The researcher established interpersonal relations with the participants to neutralise initial mistrust. In this regard, the researcher produced evidence in the form of a reference letter from the university that showed that he was a student and assured the respondents that the study was exclusively being carried out for academic purposes as shown on the reference letter. This helped quite a lot to counteract the initial mistrust.

Although Mouton (2001) maintains that it might not always be practical to automatically win trust from the informants and interviewees have a tendency to be hesitant and unwilling to take part in a study because they may regard the study as an invasion of their confidentiality, the production of written evidence from the university assisted the researcher to gain trust from the participants.

Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained and guaranteed. Real names of respondents and the institutions to which they were attached were not used or mentioned in the interviews. Respondents were well informed of the purpose of the study of determining the role of the rural communities in the food security initiatives of government for alleviating food shortages in Marange communal lands. The respondents were informed that the study outcomes may be published at any public or private level. They were also informed that, in this regard, they would also receive feedback of the findings on request.

Considering the unfavourable political atmosphere in the rural areas of Marange, any gatherings unauthorised by the security forces, in this case, the police, were disrupted. This was according to the laws of the government of Zimbabwe under the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) of 2002 that stipulates that unlawful gatherings should be prohibited as they may lead to public disorder. To ensure the safety of the respondents in focus group discussions and the smooth running of the research, the study sought permission to hold the group discussions from the nearby Zimbabwe Republic Police

station and permission was granted. The samples of the application for police clearance and the reply are affixed as addenda 7 and 8 respectively in the Appendices Section C of this thesis.

1.7 Structure of the study

This study is divided into six major chapters. Chapter 1 gives a background to the study by first introducing the main purpose of the study and the problem that the thesis seeks to address. The chapter further explores the historical and social contexts of the study where the government's food security attempts from 1980 to 2005 are reflected on. The same chapter also attempted to show how the adopted food security measures left challenges to the rural citizens due to failure to value and accommodate the rural populace's input in decision making during the planning phase. Chapter 2 deals with the review of literature where an overview of community participation and food security in Zimbabwe is reflected on. The important concepts used in the study are also clarified in the same chapter. The theoretical framework, levels of community participation in food security decision making and a review on the participatory approach are considered as well in this same chapter. Chapter 3 is an analytical chapter that looks at the food security policy in Zimbabwe. Much attention is put on the government's food security guiding principles in the rural communities. Chapter 4 considers the methodology used to gather primary data for this study. Chapter 5 outlines the body of the research where the collected data is presented, discussed and analysed. Finally, Chapter 6 gives the conclusions and recommendations regarding the problem of poor community

participation in decision making in the food security measures of the government especially during the planning stage.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter created the framework of this dissertation by outlining the background to the research problem where the level of community participation during the planning phase in the food security measures of the government has been explored. This has been done through exposing the historical and social contexts which entail how the government had attempted to address the problem of rural food insecurity by adopting various predetermined interventions that left challenges to the ordinary people. The major intention of revealing these contexts was to locate and interpret the problem of poor community participation at the planning stage in decision making of the implemented pre-conceived government food security measures. The level of community input in these food security plans is low and this poses challenges including food shortages to the rural citizens. The rural communities are only introduced to these defined food security plans at the implementation stage where they are co-opted to endorse the decisions made elsewhere.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

This chapter outlines the role of rural communities in the food security measures of the government. The purpose of this review of literature is to provide an overview of community participation in food security measures in rural Zimbabwe. Central and fundamental concepts that are used throughout this study are defined. The chapter discusses related and competing ideas and theories on community participation and levels of community participation in food security decision-making are deliberated upon. Lastly, empirical evidence on the participatory approach is discussed, highlighting how the use of the participatory approach can bring benefits to the local communities' concerns whereas the conventional approach negates and counteracts the community benefits.

2.1 Overview of community participation and food security measures

The past rural food security plans have fallen short of raising living standards significantly in African rural communities (Binns, 1995). The food security plans in Zimbabwe have routinely followed centrally driven, conventional methods, often failing to appreciate the expertise, intuitions, knowledge and aspirations of those for whom the programmes are designed to assist. It has been assumed in the past that food security interventions related to food shortage alleviation would be achieved through the process of 'trickle down' from richer to poorer regions and communities. However, to date, there have been many instances of such programmes failing to reach the poor, specifically those living in remote rural areas (Easter, 1995).

While the idea of community participation in food security initiatives is indebted to the efforts of colonial administrators, much acknowledgment needs to be rendered to African societies as well. The issue of community participation and food security is not a new phenomenon in African traditional societies. African communities from long ago have been distinguished to be concerned with community participation and community food security initiatives. An important point of reference is the rural Zimbabwean culture that demonstrated this through a practice known as “Zunde ramambo” in the Shona culture or “Isiphala senkosi” in the Ndebele culture – both meaning the Chief’s Grain Reserves. The practice entailed setting aside a community field where all community households had to converge and cultivate; sow; weed and harvest the crops. The produce was then kept in the grain silos located at the chief’s homestead. If any member of the community failed to harvest enough grain, he or she would get assistance from this strategic grain storage. The widows, widowers and orphans also benefited from the Chief’s Grain Reserves in times of need. Even during times of bereavement of a community member, the grain reserves were utilised as food sources. The principal aim of such an initiative was to improve the well-being of community members, promote community togetherness and more significantly, increase food security at local community level (De Beer & Swanepoel, 2000).

It needs to be understood that this African traditional practice involved the whole community. The chief would call all members of the community and seek their views and opinions in relation to food security concerns. The communities’ input and decisions were taken into consideration by the traditional leaders. When the households came

together to work the community field, a sense of ownership was engendered to such an extent that even those families that never needed assistance from this strategic grain reserve sacrificed to offer a hand. The reason for such sacrifices was rooted in the feeling of ownership the community shared.

One of the main causes for the collapse of many rural food security measures of the Zimbabwe government emanates from the fact that they are derived from unsuitable and improper methodologies which have fallen short of completely comprehending the dynamics of rural life. For instance, the government plans pre-determined food security strategies with few government technocrats who hold top positions without consulting communities' inputs. The government officials who plan do not have a firm background of how the rural livelihood food security systems operate. The rural communities are introduced to the pre-conceived food security plans at the stage of implementation. One wonders how a political figure with a strong history of armed struggle, less theoretical aspects of agricultural production and food security, can run or manage such a strategic ministry.

However, Scoones and Thompson (1994) state that in recent years; in national and international food security research centres, universities, government agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), there has been a growing acceptance of the need to involve local people as active partners in all aspects of the research and development process. According to Motteux *et al.* (1999:262), "A positive trend in recent years has been a notable shift in the focus of rural development strategies, from the

rather dictatorial 'top-down' approaches of the past to locally-based and more democratic 'bottom-up' strategies". The authors point out to one major reason for this typical shift. They claim that the chief reason is the development of recent, more progressive and responsive rural investigation methodologies, especially the participatory approach. While the Zimbabwean government has a significant role to play in food security measures, such interventions can make an important contribution if the use and development of community participation in decision making is made central to food shortage alleviation strategies. This study will examine this issue in the specific context of vitally needed food security initiatives in remote rural areas of Zimbabwe, where past strategies have ignored rural communities.

2.2 Conceptual issues

2.2.1 Community participation

The term "community participation" has been conceptualised in a variety of ways. It has been under scrutiny for some time in the field of development. The definition of community participation is both controversial and debatable. As a result, the World Bank (1996) has maintained that community participation is a loaded phrase that means different things to different people in different settings. Several academics and authors have attempted to conceptualise this term in different ways. Before delving into details in attempting to define this term, this section will first delineate what a community is, and what participation entails, after which a more relative definition of community participation will be given.

The term “community” can be understood clearly if one views it from a particular contextual perspective. According to MacQueen *et al.* (2001) a community refers to a group of people who share generic varied interests and perspectives; are commonly connected by societal links and participate in cooperative actions in a geographical locality. Though this definition highlights the issue of a collection of people, it needs to be plainly stated right from the onset that not every group can be termed a community. This is so because some people find themselves in a group not by choice but by chance. In such instances where some individuals find themselves belonging to a group by chance, the individuals usually do not share permanent common interests with the rest of the original group. It is only when people within a group share permanent common interests, perspectives and aims that they may qualify to be called a community. Absence of such a relationship of shared mutual understandings and goals leads to the qualification of the term “community” to such groups questionable.

Additionally, a community can be defined in terms of geographical locality within defined boundaries. Following the definition given by MacQueen *et al.* (2001), a community is seen as operating permanently within set geographical boundaries. Though people in a community may share the same locality, it is crucial to understand that such people may have deep-seated differences. The differences may be temporary or permanent. The differences may have variations. They may be as a result of varied religious perspectives, ethnicity, political affiliations or social background history. Having diverse differences does not mean that people can not work together to find solutions to

commonly shared problems. For instance, the people in Marange, having complex differences, generally come together to find solutions to their food insecurity concerns.

Whichever the case might be, a key issue that builds up a community is the extent to which such diverse groups of people living in the same geographical setting have the potential to establish common understanding on their interests and perceptions for achieving set goals. Once such a group of people manages to have a shared common vision and mission to follow its own proposed strategies or plans, it can be called a community. From the definition of a community given by MacQueen *et al.* (2001), there are five underlining core elements that build a community. The five key elements are *locus* – a sense of place; *sharing* – common interests and perspectives; *joint action* – a source of cohesion and identity, *social ties* – the foundation for community; and *diversity* – social complexity within communities. A community works together utilising these five principal elements in order to accomplish set goals.

For the purpose of this study, the term community will be conceptualised in terms of all the five key elements articulated by MacQueen *et al.* (2001) which comprise locality (physical boundary), common interests (sharing), working together, (joint action), interpersonal links (social ties) and social complexity within communities (diversity). The view of this study is that Marange possesses an inseparable combination of a community defined by all these five core elements. Also, a community will be taken to refer to the rural citizens of Marange who are beneficiaries of the food security interventions of the government of Zimbabwe.

Pertaining to the concept of “participation”, Lankshear and Knobel (2006) define it as involvement in some kind of shared purpose or activity. They believe that participation entails becoming involved in some kind of effort in which others are engaged. On the one hand, the two authors point out that the kinds of activities one might participate in may be things that are already more or less established, with recognised norms and criteria. On the other hand, they also state that the endeavours might be things that are evolving and being developed, such that one’s involvement grows into part of developing a tradition or community that may continue to evolve. For purposes of this study, participation will be understood as increased involvement and responsibility on the part of the Marange rural citizens to make critical decisions during the planning and designing phases of the food security initiatives of the government. Participation will similarly be comprehended in terms of the extent to which the Marange citizens’ input in the food policy framework will be respected. As a result, having defined what a community is, and what participation involves, it is now fairly possible to conceptualise community participation in the development process.

Zadeh and Ahmad (2009:13) conceptualise community participation as occurring “... when a community organises itself and takes responsibility for managing its own problems”. What is of interest to note in this definition is the issue of “managing own problems”. Chopra (2005) is of the view that any rural community has the potential and capacity to define and manage its own local concerns with limited influence from outsiders. As such, rural communities are able to win benefits for themselves if they have strong local organisational capacity.

Following the same definition by Zadeh and Ahmad (2009), Cheetham (2002: 4) adds that taking responsibility in this case comprises recognising the problems, developing actions, positioning them into place and monitoring through until set goals are accomplished. Therefore, what this entails is that community participation in the context of food security in Marange refers to a phase where the Marange communities are involved in identifying food security problems, developing their individual action plans, implementing the finest plan and supervising the solution. In this regard, Chambers (1997) argues that community participation means destroying the top-down authoritarian knowledge transference and communication styles which are forced on communities by outsiders. With reference to the Zimbabwean rural communities, Chambers' argument is that for community participation to be realised, the government should avoid formulating food security policies without the intended beneficiaries' input in the final food policy plan. In other words, the partially completed food security policy (after conducting a rapid needs assessment) must be taken back to the rural citizens for contesting, verification and evaluation before it is made into a final document for implementation. Following Chambers' conceptualisation of community participation, Brown (2000) is of the view that in this dismantling process, the policy makers should come down to the ordinary rural citizens and interact with them, equipping them with sufficient knowledge and charting their future together till they reach a consensus in decision making. If what Brown suggests can be implemented in Zimbabwe, the government would have taken a giant step towards the realisation of the true meaning of community participation in the development discourse; particularly on issues related to food security.

In a more related dimension, Nel (2009:143) defines community participation as "... the collective activity of interested and/ or concerned group of people in achieving a jointly determined goal". In the food security framework, this definition implies that community participation takes place when a group of people who share common interests come together and put forward their input in the food security plans of the government so as to jointly achieve set objectives. It is the contribution of the community in decision making that is essential in making set food security goals accomplished. In this particular instance, even if the government would have set goals to be accomplished with the communities in the rural areas, the residents view the government's pre-conceived food security policies as efforts totally detached from them. Such food security plans fall short of the communities' input; as a result, the communities view them as government initiatives which do not concern them. To sum it all, the preceding definitions of community participation advanced by the authors do not apply to the practical scenarios happening in Zimbabwe. To put it succinctly, the rural people in Zimbabwe are not participating in the formulation of food security policies that have either a direct or an indirect impact on their lives.

For the purpose of this study, community participation as defined by Nel (2009) will be adopted and utilised as lens to think through the issues to be debated on community participation and food security in rural Zimbabwe. The definition seems to embrace most of the community participation aspects that are necessary for food security to take place. The definition also indicate that community participation is about empowering

people to mobilise their own capacities, be social actors who manage their resources, make decisions and control activities that affect their lives.

2.2.2 The concept of food security

The term food security is not a rigid concept. It has been defined in several ways depending on the explicit meaning one intends to draw from it. It is an important idea to always look carefully at this concept every time it is included in the topic of a study or its objectives. This can assist greatly to ascertain the implied meaning of the concept. Failure to scrutinise this term in a study may result in assigning an incorrect implication to it.

According to the Food and Agricultural Organisation [FAO] (2002), the debates held in the mid- 1970s of international food problems at a time of global food crisis enhanced “food security” to originate as a crucial concept. FAO goes on to point out that these talks led to the re-definition of food security which emphasised that the vital characteristic in food security was the behaviour of susceptible and affected people in the food security matrix. The concept of food security has been conservatively viewed in terms of food as a principal lower-order need in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Following this line of thinking, Hopkins quoted in Devereux and Maxwell (2001:18) correctly articulates this view when he claims that “...food security stands as a fundamental need, basic to all human needs and the organisation of social life. Access to necessary nutrients is fundamental, not only to life *per se*, but also to stable and enduring social order”. In current years, the assumptions underlying this view have been questioned

leading to numerous definitions being advanced by several scholars. The multiplicity of definitions in recent years makes the use of the concept difficult and it is revealing the diversity and complexity of the problems of the food insecure people. However, a great number of academics have advanced various definitions to the term.

In one dimension, the most frequently cited definition of food security is derived from a World Bank policy study that was issued in 1986. Thus, the World Bank (1986:1) conceptualises food security as "... access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life." In this case, the emphasis is on individual access to enough food in all seasonal times of the year without fear of food deficit or starvation. More so, this access to enough food by all people is not just for survival purposes but for active participation in society. Referring to this definition from the World Bank, most of the rural areas in Zimbabwe and Marange in particular do not have access to enough food that can be consumed throughout the year. These rural residents live in fear of starvation. Though there are ways available that they can use to have enough food at all times for an active healthy life, they are inhibited by various factors that undermine and sideline them from the food security matrix. One of the main factors that hinder them is their inability to articulate their food insecurity concerns in the national food security policy. In other words, the government does not give them space to participate fully in the planning and designing of food security strategies that take into consideration their local needs. In addition to the lack of consultation in the formulation of food security

initiatives, the state has failed to decentralise its food security programmes, leading to continuous food shortages in the rural areas of Zimbabwe and specifically Marange.

FAO (2003) indicates that the concept of food security was acknowledged as a major concern by the mid-1990s. It was now covering a wide continuum from the individual to the global levels. During this era, the meaning of food security was widened to include food safety as well as nutritional balance so that an active and healthy life can be realised. In order to incorporate food safety and nutritional balance at household level, the definition of food security was broadened. Thus, Jonsson and Toole cited in Devereux and Maxwell (2001:16) define food security at household level as "... access to food, adequate in quantity and quality, to fulfil all nutritional requirements for all household members throughout the year". This definition reveals that it is the qualitative nature of the food that makes household members to be active, healthy and productive. Another important element embedded in this definition is the issue of the duration that household members can spend with adequate quality food. Referring back to the Marange community, this group of people hardly possesses enough food throughout the year. They live in fear of starvation year in year out. The reason is that they are forced to adopt the government's pre-conceived food security measures which hardly speak to their real local needs. The Marange community, if given the chance, has the potential to choose what they can do as a way of curbing the recurrent food shortages in their area. The residents are not new in their area of habitation; hence they have the expertise to select cautiously the food security activities suitable for their region.

In contrast to the questions of access and quality of food, Sen (1981) introduces a third dimension that moves concentration away from total food supply in the economy to food entitlement that each person enjoys, that is, the commodities over which one can establish ownership and command. According to his view, people suffer from food insecurity when they cannot establish their entitlement over an adequate amount of food.

In addition to Sen's viewpoint, other scholars believe that food security has three main facets that must be satisfied for it to be met, namely, availability (supply), affordability (pricing) and accessibility (demand) (Mukute *et al.*, 2002). Mukute *et al* further assert that what these three aspects caution against is that on one hand, food may be available in a community but be unaffordable to people due to high costs, while on the other hand, food may be available and affordable in a community but not meeting the nutritional and qualitative nature of providing all household members with energy needed to live active, healthy and productive lives. These three components of food security have been commonly dubbed the food security equation. A household is considered food secure when its occupants do not live in hunger or fear of starvation.

The seminal work by Amartya Sen is credited for having initiated a shift away from looking at food security only in terms of food supply in the economy towards food entitlement as a central concern. His "entitlement theory" sheds light on the significance of demand crisis in food insecurity. Sen points out that the food insecure people over and over again lose the ability to command food because their entitlements are at risk. In the context of food security, he claims that entitlements may be defined in different

ways, including, as a direct command of food by those who produce the food they eat; or as a trade food entitlement as in the case where agricultural workers acquire food through trade, using their real wages. Moreover, Sen upholds that entitlement failures could be two types, namely, endowment failures when, for example, crops fail due to drought in subsistence agriculture; and trade entitlement failures, when market rules change suddenly, for instance, rapid increase in prices. In both cases the access to food by some sectors of society is weakened. According to his line of reasoning, it is no longer credible to talk of food security as being a problem of food supply only. It is these contributions of Sen which motivated new definitions of food security and shifts in policy initiatives from the macro to the micro level.

For the purposes of this study, the definition of food security as advanced by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (2002) will be adopted as it appears to contain all the necessary aspects that delineate food security. FAO (2002) quoted in the United Nations' *Technology and innovation report* (2010:37) conceptualises food security as "... a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have social, economic and physical access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life". A major focus of concern in this definition is on household food security at family level with specific focus on individuals within the households. By **social access** to food, it means that provisions of food need to be fairly obtainable to people of varied cultures and beliefs. One significant issue on social access is evaluating which food products are receivable in various societies and

check if there are any gender variations. Thus, for the Marange communities, certain religious sects like Johanne Marange Apostolic Faith and other denominations that keep the Sabbath as a Holy day, do not allow the rearing of pigs and/ or the production of tobacco; yet these are viable projects with great potential in the alleviation of food shortages.

Regarding the issue of **economic access** to food, this implies affordability and that financial costs related to food are not as great or high as to threaten the enjoyment of other basic rights or services. Moreover, economic access occurs when households have the capability to generate sufficient income or obtain credit facilities to purchase the food they require. A shortage of money has a direct effect on the economic access to food. For instance, the Marange people with low earnings who reside in distant areas with poor transport services result in them buying in expensive local shops where there may be less choice of reasonably priced healthy food.

Following the issue of **physical access**, FAO (2006:57) defines it as implying that "...adequate food must be accessible to everyone, including physically vulnerable individuals, such as infants, young children, elderly people, the physically disabled, victims of natural disasters and other people living in isolated areas and situations that require special attention". In this definition, the new emphasis on the issue of access by vulnerable people to food is most closely related to the influential study by Amartya Sen (1981). Whilst avoiding the use of the concept of food security, Sen focuses on the entitlements of individuals and households, as discussed earlier on.

2.3 Theoretical framework

The question of community participation in development is analysed through two main approaches, namely; the conventional and participatory approaches. The following sections reflect on the main foci of the conventional and participatory approaches to rural food security and the advantages and critiques of each approach.

2.3.1 The conventional approach

The conventional approach to food security initiatives in rural areas involves the provision of information on food production methods and technologies from the food security policy makers to rural residents designed to increase food security with little or no consultation with the beneficiaries. This entails the flow of innovative technological information from the government's food security policy makers through policy implementers (field officers) to the end-user, the rural dweller or food insecure (Coetzee *et al.*, 2001; Stark, 2005).

The main objective of this top down approach is the transfer of food production knowledge and technology without adequately incorporating the subjects of the research process; the rural inhabitants. In Zimbabwe, under all kinds of rural food security systems, policy makers are developing technologies, initiatives and knowledge for the food insecure (rural populace), and rural policy implementers are attempting to persuade communal residents to adopt them. However, Rogers (1992) is quick to disclose that in many instances, these efforts of trying to influence the rural residents to adopt the pre-conceived technologies and knowledge are inadequate in amount,

unfocused in direction and consequently ineffective. One thing for certain is that, for the adoption of the government food security initiatives by the citizens to be successful, the rural citizens need to be made aware of the existence of such programmes and their characteristics and must be convinced that the adoption and use of the programmes will contribute to alleviation of food shortages. If the rural citizens are sidelined right from the inception of the food security idea, the government is bound to miss the mark. Generally in Zimbabwe and particularly in Marange, the communities usually take a passive type of resistance by not adhering to the requirements of such pre-determined food security policies. The consequence is acute food shortages which bounce back to the government which should find means and ways of assisting its rural populace.

As shown in the illustration on Figure 1 in Appendix B, the main focus of the conventional approach is characterised by the downward flow of pre-conceived knowledge and plans from the food security policy makers to the ordinary rural dwellers for implementation with no feedback. Only those occupying top positions have a say in the process of decision making. They assume that the rural inhabitants cannot provide any meaningful input to the development of their daily lives. The policy makers generate food security technical information, which is disseminated by field officers to rural citizens. Rural inhabitants are expected to adopt and adapt to the new information about the initiative(s) to be implemented (Stark, 2005). The assumption here is that the rural citizens lack adequate knowledge and insight to recognise their problems or to think of possible solutions. Whatever knowledge they might have, it is assumed that it is based on incorrect information because of limited experiences, upbringing and other cultural

factors (Van Den Ban & Hawkins, 1988). The preceding assertion by Van Den Ban and Hawkins is therefore, a lucid challenge to contemporary practices in Zimbabwe to create actual room and liberty for the rural poor to express their opinions and perceptions independently in terms of their local food insecurity concerns.

2.3.1.1 Criticism of the conventional approach

According to Franzel and Houten (1992), rural citizens may refuse to accept modern technology or knowledge because it is not compatible with their objectives, resources or environment and not because of their backwardness, irrationality or management mistakes. According to the authors, nothing can be achieved by reorganising rural citizens' existing activities because they already administer their food security projects competently. They further suggest that, as an alternative, the government should concentrate on bringing in modern technologies and knowledge to food security projects that have been agreed upon by rural villagers. In this regard, the Zimbabwean government must be just a partner in the food security measures agreed upon by the rural citizens. The role of the government in this instance should be to provide an enabling and favourable environment through the provision of a comprehensive and dependable grassroots-designed food security policy, the provision of expertise, infrastructure and financial backing for the rural citizens to start and facilitate food security measures best suited to their diverse localities.

According to Rogers (1992), a chief stumbling block to all learning is that a lot of rural field workers do not consider that the rural citizens are competent without their

assistance. Siziba (1996) is of the view that food security policy makers are aware of better food security systems, but then, the knowledge of involving the rural inhabitants at the planning phase of these food security plans has up to now not been given very much emphasis. Rogers further argues that knowledge cannot be transferred and that it is continuously an undertaking of self-exploration and discovery; one may be inspired and helped but cannot be taught. Therefore the job of rural field officers should not only be of transmitting knowledge, but also of supporting rural dwellers to discover for themselves, to aid them to come up with their own sustainable food security mechanisms. What this entails is that the rural people in Zimbabwe should therefore take responsibility for their own development through making critical decisions and do the planning of food security initiatives themselves without any direct or indirect influence from the government. The ordinary rural citizens in Zimbabwe need to be given real space to articulate their viewpoints and manage their own food security needs.

The conventional approach has been linked to the problems of poor management which is reflected in the poor interaction between field staff and headquarters and vice-versa. These problems include lack of backing and regulation of field works and the non-existence of comprehensive practical plan of work (Adams, 1982). This leaves the field workers with the dilemma of resolving the problems of what to put emphasis on and what not to.

Furthermore, there is also a problem of poor communication within this approach. The downward decisions are carried out by representatives who do not have diplomacy to modify the food security initiatives to the specific socio-economic and natural conditions in the areas under their jurisdiction (Arnon, 1989). This is exacerbated by routine, ritual, impracticable, unused and unread reports. Arnon further states that education disparity compounds the problem, where the staff at headquarters (policy makers) is made up of certified professionals with university graduate degrees working from well-built offices with well laid out food security plans, while the rural policy implementers do not obtain sufficient instruction or receive a remuneration that is a portion of their superiors' stipends. These implementers are also not acquainted with what is anticipated of them.

Moreover, food security policies based on downward transmission of information without considering community participation are a waste of time and are likely to do away with the indigenous learning systems (Rogers, 1992). Without community members taking part in the activities of food security programmes, there is bound to be a division among the members and lack of sense of ownership among the participants since they will view themselves as decision takers as opposed to being decision makers. After all, the food security policies are planned from above and lack grassroots contribution. Intrinsicly, they are top-down in nature, henceforth the need to rethink, reformulate and refocus the food security measures in Zimbabwe so that they can be community-driven in nature.

Rogers goes on to maintain that impractical target setting is another problem linked to the conventional approach to food security. He stresses that the setting of targets is done by top management, leaving out the junior field staff who are immediate contact

persons for the rural communities. Therefore, this lack of methodical work scheduling for rural field personnel thwarts the purpose for which rural food security initiatives are aimed at achieving. In this regard, it is a challenge for the Zimbabwean government to set goals together with both policy implementers and intended beneficiaries of the food security plans. The involvement of these three parties in the formulation of food security initiatives will have the potential of creating a lasting bond hence the trio need to work together towards the accomplishment of commonly set goals.

The overall argument is that the conventional approach to food security in Zimbabwe has often suffered from the drawback of not adequately incorporating and taking cognisance of the subjects of the research process. This criticism can be levelled at many research studies in the past and even today, which tend to be of a rapid and superficial nature, leading to shallow and insignificant findings (Hill, 1986). Furthermore, such a top down approach to food security that fails to accommodate the communities that is being practiced in Zimbabwe is often characterised by a wide range of biases, such as age, gender and profession. This implies that some of the food security projects streamline and consider certain attributes like one's age, gender and profession. Such biases usually lead to division among the rural communities in which the food security projects are implemented. Following this view, Maxwell and Smith (1992) assert that these biases regularly preclude the true identification and assessment of third world rural development problems, as well as marginalising the views of the rural people. These authors further maintain that through inappropriate methodologies with their attendant biases, the true nature and extent of rural food insecurity is, in essence,

frequently concealed from the policy makers. With reference to Zimbabwe, this consequently makes appropriate measures of support and funding for food security interventions fail to reach the hidden poor, specifically those who live in marginal lands, like the Marange communities.

2.3.2 The participatory approach

On the other side of the spectrum, the participatory approach is premised upon the continual involvement of the communities to express and analyse the realities of their lives and conditions, to plan for themselves what action to take, and to monitor and evaluate the results (Chambers, 1997; Theis & Grady, 1991). With reference to the Zimbabwean context, this approach emphasises the direct involvement of people in any initiative that directly or indirectly affects their lives and conditions so that they can plan for themselves what action to take and to monitor and evaluate the results. This issue of giving rural people freedom to plan for themselves is lacking greatly in Zimbabwe. The government's failure to consult intended beneficiaries of food security programmes, inability to decentralise the administration of the food security programmes and the frequent practice of politicising the initiatives have led to the policy measures yield few outcomes. In a study conducted by Masi (2000), he discovered that people remember 20% of what they hear, 40% of what they see and 80% of what they discover for themselves. Following this assertion by Masi, the IDS (1996) maintains that the participatory approach emphasises processes which empower local people to discover for themselves solutions to their problems in their confined social contexts. If the IDS' assertion is true, the best practice which must be enacted in Zimbabwe is that of

permitting people to discover on their own. The assertion by the IDS does not prescribe a person's social standing in a society. This means that even people who live in peripheral areas of Zimbabwe have the capacity to discover their own food insecurity problems as well as finding solutions to the problems.

According to Chambers (1997), the participatory approach recognises that indigenous people are capable of identifying and expressing their needs and aspirations in their own way, such that the role of the helper is reduced to that of a listener, learner, catalyst and facilitator. The preceding contention by Chambers provides the Zimbabwean government's current dictatorial practice with a challenge to create authentic room for the rural citizens to voice their views in terms of food security concerns that affect them. In a way, the state should be just an associate whose responsibility is to provide a supportive environment in skills, knowledge and monetary support where the rural citizens encounter challenges. In concurrence with Chambers' statement, the IDS adds that the participatory approach also emphasises on processes which empower the local people. This is directly the opposite of the conventional approach, in that it is the rural people, (with the assistance of outsiders) who identify the problem and suggest possible solutions, rather than receiving prescriptions from people who do not have experience of the prevailing conditions and have not learnt the coping strategies in the communities.

Regarding the position of food security and the participatory approach, Maxwell and Smith quoted in Devereux and Maxwell (2001:21) affirm that "...food security must be treated as a multi-objective phenomenon, where the identification and weighting of

objectives can only be decided by the food-insecure themselves". This implies that in order for food security to bear fruits, (particularly in Zimbabwe's rural areas), the food vulnerable ought to identify, decide and express their needs and aspirations in their own way that suits their lives and conditions. Accordingly, it is the people within the targeted communities who must define their needs and not the government or any development agent. To seal it all, Maxwell cited in Devereux and Maxwell (2001:21), has this to say, "Importantly ... food security will be achieved when the poor and vulnerable, particularly ... those living in marginal areas, have secure access to the food they want". The issue of valuing community participation comes in again in this quotation, with special emphasis being put on susceptible food insecurity groups in isolated areas to be makers of their own destiny.

According to IDS (1996), the participatory approach has been used since 1990 by non-governmental organisations in almost every domain of development and community action. Chambers (1983) holds the view that the approach empowers rural citizens whereby the analysis of needs and priorities is done by rural citizens assisted by outsiders. To Chambers, the participatory approach offers a means of empowering the poor, the marginalised and the disenfranchised in societies in the design and implementation of programmes without much external influence or pressure.

In another dimension, Townsely (1996) claims that the participatory approach is a means of uncovering realities and priorities of the poor people. In his argument he highlights that the main focus of this approach is responding to the needs of communities and target groups. The use of the participatory approach in rural

Zimbabwe holds the potential of assuring that planners are responding to real needs among local people, whether for increased income, employment creation, food security, asset procurement or management. Where local people have had more say in the design of programmes, they are also more likely to design activities which make full use of existing resources and improve them rather than design activities which fit into the current livelihood strategies (Ndou, 2007).

The participatory approach is intended to encourage ownership of food security interventions by communities themselves. The outsiders do not do it for them; but rather they do it with them. The rural villagers in Zimbabwe have to come to identify their problems in terms of what they want to change in their communities. In this regard, Ndou further asserts that the outsiders do not come up with solutions for the villagers but they (villagers) provide the solutions to the problems. She insists that the outsiders will be there to facilitate and offer assistance where the rural villagers lack capacity, for instance, financing, access to credit and technical knowledge in the implementation of their desired initiatives. This is the ultimate desire of this study to quiz the position of the Zimbabwean government in terms of the role that the rural communities play in its food security initiatives.

In a meaningful participatory approach process, as indicated in Figure 2: Appendix B, the policy makers come down to the ordinary rural citizens and interact with them, equipping them with sufficient knowledge and charting their future together till they reach a consensus in decision making (Brown, 2000; Stark, 2005). From the Zimbabwean contextual point of view, this type of visioning trusts that when you connect

people, set goals are easily attained. Unfortunately, the direct opposite of what Brown and Stark envision to be the best approach of ascertaining food security in rural Zimbabwe is what is being practised by the government. Stark believes that this increased level of community participation will deepen and sustain the gains from food security initiatives thereby achieving alleviation of food shortages and also making the rural residents less susceptible to external shocks. In this instance, rural dwellers work jointly with the government so as to accomplish set goals. Whichever achievement or drawback incurred, everyone is held accountable. According to Barker (1989: 64), there are three things to remember about the participatory approach. First, that vision and mission without community participation is merely a dream. Second, that community participation without a vision and a mission just passes the time. Third, that a vision and mission which value community participation can definitely transform the world.

There is need for interaction among policy makers, policy implementers and the ordinary rural dwellers in order to facilitate adoption of food security measures and to enhance alleviation of food shortages. Figure 3, in Appendix B, demonstrates how food security messages from the policy makers and the platform for adoption can be made possible as rural policy implementers act in response to identified needs for rural residents. Besides the need for interaction among the policy makers, implementers and the rural communities, another vital element in community participation in the food security measures of the government is communication and feedback among the players. As illustrated in Figure 4 in Appendix B; in the participatory approach to food security, there is limitless communication, collaboration and feedback amongst all

players. There are no restrictions. Any food security initiative that the policy makers may require to execute in a village or ward is explicitly communicated either to the rural policy implementers or directly to the communities.

In such an environment, when the communities discover an area that they want to develop as part of a resolution to their identified problem, they are uninhibited to convey such a vision either to the rural policy implementers or directly to the highest top management without encountering any difficulties or hurdles. Anybody has an input in the decision making procedure and on the execution of food security measures to assist in the alleviation of food shortages. Any feedback on the successes, threats or failures of a shared vision is openly communicated among all players in the food security forum. This is exactly the reverse of the conventional approach being practiced in Zimbabwe, where the communication and feedback among players take a bureaucratic character and where some players may not enjoy the liberty of interacting with other players but have to adhere to conventional principles in order to communicate any noted success, threat or failure.

The value of the participatory approach was recognised as far back as 600-531BC by one of the great ancient Chinese philosophers called Lao Tzu, whose work was embraced by various anti-authoritarian movements. He wrote extensively in response to the social, political and philosophical spheres of life and also on techniques for governing societies. During his life time, Tzu learnt that in any society, there are two distinct and popular groups of people – the rulers and the ruled. Most of his work on social life of the society was based on educating how these two groups can live

harmoniously and attain set goals. Tzu was against any form of dictatorship and oppression of the ordinary people by leaders and believed that if ordinary people are permitted to participate in decision making in any development, productive outcomes are realised. He further believed that leaders are there only to accept their subordinates' perceptions, foresights and needs. At this time, Tzu was of the view that the participatory approach encourages leaders in development to go to the people, stay with them and learn from them. He further stated that the leaders should begin with what the communities know and build on what they have. When this is done, Tzu trusted that the communities will take pride in what would have been accomplished and say they have done it themselves (Tzu, 600-531BC).

2.3.2.1 Advantages of the participatory approach

The participatory approach forms better linkages between communities and development institutions (Townsend, 1996). The interaction between communities and outsiders can have lasting effects in breaking down the barriers of uncommunicativeness (reticence) and suspicion which often characterise these relationships. According to Hubbard (1995) the advantages of the participatory approach are cost-effectiveness, building close working relationships with communities and a high level of reliability of the information generated.

While the policy makers generate food security packages, resource-poor rural dwellers engage in food security projects as a continuous process (Richards, 1987). Rural citizens need less a standard of package of food security practices and more of a

basket of choices. In the participatory approach, the role of rural policy implementers is less of transferring food security projects and more of assisting rural dwellers to adapt to these changes. These rural field officers are not so much researchers as the rural residents themselves.

According to Townsely the participation of local development workers (NGOs, government, donors and other agencies) in the participatory approach can greatly increase the motivation and level of mobilisation of the community in support of food security measures of which it is part of. Where changes in development approaches are being introduced, such as a shift to a more integrated development planning mechanism, a participatory approach type of activity which illustrates how these new mechanisms will work on the ground can assist to ensure better understanding and commitment by local workers. This explains the reason for the involvement of people from different administrative and organisational levels. There is clarity and understanding of the priorities of workers from other disciplines as well as those of members of the community.

Development of rural areas, specifically food security, requires substantial investments in economic and social infrastructure and farming support programmes. Successful and cost effective implementation of these programmes require the mobilisation of the skills, talents and labour of the rural population, through decentralised administrative, fiscal and political systems conducive to their genuine participation and encompassing the private sector (Binswanger, 1994). In this regard, the participatory approach process has the potential to transform the policy makers and implementers of programmes or

projects into learners and listeners, respecting local intellectual and analytical skills, and thus promoting visual sharing and avoiding imposing external representational conventions.

Townsend further points out that the participatory approach can greatly improve the efficiency of development work and eliminate many of the problems regarding proprietorship and development activities at community level. He goes on to state that trials carried out in communities with projects governed by outsiders are frequently plagued by problems of mismanagement and theft. This is usually linked to the fact that the communities do not feel any responsibility for the activity and regards it as a temporary benefit to be exploited for as much as possible while it is there. Any activity generated by a participatory approach will usually be managed by the communities and the benefits will be clear to them. A sense of programme ownership will be instilled among the community members.

According to The World Bank Participation Sourcebook (1996), the following are some of the key tenets or principles of the participatory approach to food security initiatives:

- **Participation:** Local communities' input into participatory activities is essential to its value as a research and planning method for food security measures and as a means for diffusing the participatory approach to development in general.
- **Teamwork:** To the extent that the validity of community participatory data relies on informal interaction and brainstorming among those involved, it is best done by a team that includes chiefly local people with the perspective and knowledge

of the native area's conditions, traditions and social structure. Moreover, either nationals or expatriates with a complementary mix of disciplinary backgrounds and experience maybe involved in the collection of useful information. Such a well balanced team will represent the diversity of socio-economic, cultural, gender, and generational perspectives related to community participation and food security.

- **Flexibility:** The participatory approach does not provide blueprints for its practitioners. The combination of techniques that are appropriate in a particular development context will be determined by such variables as the size and skill mix of the participatory team, the time and resources available, and the topic and location of the work.
- **Optimal returns:** To be efficient in terms of both time and money, the participatory approach intends to gather just enough information to make the necessary recommendations and decisions.
- **Triangulation:** The participatory approach works with qualitative data. To ensure that the information is valid and reliable, the participatory approach follows the rule of thumb that at least three sources must be consulted or techniques must be used to investigate the same topics.

2.3.2.2 Critique of the participatory approach

The participatory approach has a problem of raising expectations within the communities which frequently cannot be realised given the institutional or political context of the area (Townseley, 1996). The high expectations are a result of genuine

feelings raised by the analysis of many areas of local life (Cornwall & Pratt, 2003). The problem of prioritisation is generally accepted as a priority of expectations.

Linked to the problem of raised expectations, Townsely claims that there is a danger of drafting development plans which the participatory agencies cannot address, especially in the technical sense, thus disappointing the already raised expectations. The facilitating organisation must do its best to support, if requested to do so, the actions that local people have decided on. He further points out that the poor are only experts in surviving under their specific circumstances. As such, the poor know very little about all the mechanisms surrounding food security at the next person. Thus, the rural people have the right of choice and self-determination, but are not experts. Additionally, the prioritisation of problems can be influenced by the participatory approach team, emanating from the inclinations of the outsiders.

As Cornwall and Pratt (2003) point out, the participatory approach uses aggregate or collective participation. It fails to represent every person in the community. Questions such as, who defines what and whose words are important, are not taken cognisance of. There is failure to take into account stratification in communities whether by wealth, social status, gender or ethnic group. This is usually obscured or ignored. The authors further state that the poor participate in the generation of the information, which is then owned by scholars and researchers with little credit going to those who generated the information.

Following the same line of argument, Cornwall and Pratt continue to affirm that there is a danger of distortion of “community participation” versus the opportunity to advocate for change among the powerful. In the same vein, Townsely notes that by devolving decision-making responsibility to the communities and leaving the identification and planning of activities to the rural communities, there is a real risk that particular elements in the communities, especially the most educated, the wealthiest and those with authority may find it easier to “capture” the activity and monopolise its benefits. Accordingly, the implication is that poor people in the communities may support community decisions which will not benefit them at all because they are supported by their wealthier and more influential patrons.

Despite the shortcomings associated with the participatory approach as outlined above, this study will adopt it for a number of varied reasons. To begin with, in view of the nature of the title of this study and what it envisages to accomplish, the approach will allow the study to learn about the communities’ perceptions on the role that they play in the food security measures of the government. This will assist in the development of appropriate food security interventions through the use of methods that are flexible and highly responsive to individual differences, situational changes and emerging information from the food insecure themselves.

Moreover, since this approach forms better linkages between rural communities and development institutions, the interaction between rural communities and outsiders can have lasting effects in breaking down the barriers of uncommunicativeness and suspicion which often characterise these relationships.

Furthermore, the participatory approach can greatly improve the efficiency of development work and eliminate many of the problems regarding proprietorship and development activities at community level. For that reason, the results to be obtained from this study will inform the government, development agencies and policy makers on how the utilisation of community input in decision making at the initial stages of planning and implementation may contribute to food security in the rural areas of Zimbabwe.

In addition, just as food security is a long term phenomenon, so is the participatory approach. Through the use of community participation, participatory processes provide a sense of ownership and empowerment which are key to food security. Consequently, this study will in the long run offer intuitive insights on how the government of Zimbabwe can utilise the participatory approach in its food security interventions so that a permanent sense of empowerment and ownership can be realised among the rural citizens of Zimbabwe.

Finally, the study will adopt this approach as it is better to use as a lens for data analysis. Through the utilisation of the participatory approach, it is more likely that a high level of flexibility to situational changes and emerging information from the direct participants of this study will be attained; an advantage that the conventional approach falls short of.

2.4 Levels of community participation in food security decision-making

Community participation in decision-making is one of the most important components in the improvement of food security in the communal lands. Community participation at different levels raises accountability and reliability of decisions, lessens risks of possible conflicts and inconsistencies and facilitates implementation (NCEIA, 2004).

There are different forms of community participation in decision-making in the field of development, according to the size of participation and degree of actual influence of the community on decision-making. The following section explores each type of engagement in food security measures. The section explains the underlying principles of the different forms of community participation in decision-making. Figure 5 in Appendix B illustrates each form of community engagement in decision-making in the food security initiatives of the government.

2.4.1 Informing

The lowest form of community participation in food security measures implies informing the community about the decisions. The fundamental goal of this form of community participation is to provide the stakeholders (rural residents) with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions. The icon in the illustration in Figure 5 shows a one-way flow of information from the instigating organisation (government) to the stakeholders (community). Informing is used when a decision has already been made and the

objective is to ensure that information is transmitted clearly to those who might be affected (EPIC, 2009). In short, the general aim of this form of community engagement is to communicate information to the community when all critical decisions have been made elsewhere. This type of community participation is too conventional and raises risks of possible conflicts and inconsistencies in the implementation of the food security measures.

EPIC further maintains that even though information is indispensable for all participation, it is not in itself participatory. It may not be directly interrelated to the adoption of such information. EPIC goes on to point out that the people who are expected to implement change should be involved in the development of the knowledge right from the onset. This link is the strongest and it has the potential to capacitate the people to act. Frequently the solutions given by policy makers throughout the informing process, by means of top-down knowledge and skills transference, have a tendency to be too scientific. This may not allow for a full understanding of the complexity of the problem to be addressed on the part of the ordinary citizens.

2.4.2 Consultation

A higher level to informing involves consulting the community in decision-making on food security measures of the government. The chief aim of consultation is to seek advice from stakeholders on food security draft plans or issues. Feedback from beneficiaries has an influence on decisions. The icon in the illustration in Figure 5

shows a one-way flow of information from the stakeholders to the instigating organisation (government). According to EPIC (2009), consultation is utilised in decision making "... when the objective is to gather information from a variety of stakeholders that the instigating organisation will use in making its decision". The government's administrative agencies, responsible for decision-making, are obliged to take into consideration community comments and opinions that assist them to make their own final decisions on food security measures. In other words, consultation searches for community opinions and contribution into policy plans and decisions. The responsibility for the decisions remains with the government or the organisation doing the consulting (EPIC, 2009; NCEIA, 2004).

Consultation is an effective process in community participation. According to NCEIA (2004), the anticipated levels of participation and commitment are articulated and complemented with the prospects of all pertinent interested parties. However, it is important to make sure and show that the viewpoints of those consulted are taken into consideration in the final outcome and used to make a difference. In fact, the government ought to fulfil the promise of providing feedback on how this input by the community members has influenced the decisions; otherwise stakeholders may not take up ownership of the decisions.

2.4.3 Involvement

According to EPIC (2009) the aim of this method of engagement is to work directly with the community throughout the planning and policy processes to ensure that community

concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. The icon in Figure 5 shows a two-way flow of information between the initiating government and the community. Consultation and involvement have a difference. The difference between them is the level of participation expected of the community and other stakeholders. What this means is that while consulting calls for the facilitator to seek feedback at a given point in time, involving means to intentionally put into place a method to work directly with stakeholders all the way through the process (NCEIA, 2004).

However, while involvement assumes a greater level of participation by stakeholders as they work through food security issues and alternatives to assist in the decision-making process, the government generally retains responsibility for the final decision. Nevertheless, the intent is to have active participation from the community in developing solutions to food insecurity issues.

2.4.4 Collaboration

The purpose of this type of community participation is to partner with the community in each aspect of the food security initiative decisions, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solutions. This method of community participation further extends the level of participation and, consequently, the impact upon the community. Ownership is shared between the government and the community (EPIC, 2009). There is a greater level of delegated decision-making. While the establishment of these delegated decision-making entities devolves management at a

local level, responsibility for final policy, legislative frameworks and overall budget decisions in the food security measures to be adopted is still retained by the government (NCEIA, 2004).

It is crucial to note that the icon in the illustration on Figure 5 shows a flow of information not just between the instigating government and the community, but among the beneficiaries of food security initiatives themselves. Collaborating is used when the government wishes to work together in a joint process with the community throughout the whole decision-making process on food security measures to be initiated.

2.4.5 Empowerment

Empowerment is viewed as a process that makes power available so that it can be used for manipulation of access and the use of resources to achieve certain development goals (Burkey, 2000; Max-Neef *et al.*, 1991). The objective of this method of community engagement is to place final decision-making of the food security interventions in the hands of the community (NCEIA, 2004). Empowerment entails actively supporting the community in developing their own processes and structures necessary to identify issues and to implement solutions. Burkey is of the view that empowered communities share responsibility for making decisions in food security initiatives and accountability for the outcomes of those decisions. He further mentions that legislative and policy frameworks give authority to communities to make decisions. The community may have

the power to make a limited range of decisions (for instance, on a specified issue or for a limited time), or it may have extensive decision-making powers (EPIC, 2009).

In order for the rural people to participate in food security measures of the government, there is need for the empowerment of the participants so that the initiatives can be prosperous. Max-Neef *et al.* (1991) believe that the empowerment of the community refers to an increase in its strength and development in its capability to achieve its goals. For the food security interventions of the government to succeed, the community members need to be capacitated through skills development such that when they are left on their own to manage the initiatives; they will do so devoid of hurdles. It is also imperative to note that for food security measures of the government to be viable they should adhere to the principles of participation, empowerment, ownership and sustainability (Burkey, 1993).

The icon in Figure 5 illustrates no difference in status between the organisations involved in the process. The government devolves power into the hands of the community so that they can come up with their own food security plans and suggest possible solutions to their food shortage problems that suit their own setting. At this point empowerment is exercised when there is a real partnership that is “owned” by the community. The initiating government may be in a position to support that partnership by providing skills, training or resources, but has no greater voice in decision-making than any of the other stakeholders.

EPIC (2009) asserts that empowerment is the most challenging approach to community participation, but provides the utmost rewards in developing capacity. The initiators of the engagement portray total commitment to participate as interested parties and agree to share authority in decision making in order to accomplish collaborative action. The guarantee by users of this process is to maintain a high level of active community participation during the development, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the food security initiatives. There is a big chance of endangering the values of inclusiveness, transparency and faith for those who do not participate to this extent. In relation to the rewards of a community empowerment approach, Max-Neef *et al.* (1991:36) mention that these include "... more innovative results that incorporate the knowledge of all participants as well as reduced conflict, greater ownership of outcomes and commitment to ongoing action".

2.5 Community participation as a means and/ or an end

Community participation in food security measures need to be considered as an *end* as opposed to a *means*. According to Oakley, in Kumar, 2002, considering community participation as an *end* to a *means* entails that it is a social learning process which is deemed necessary for the success of an initiative or intervention. The participation of the community is essential to improving the outcomes of a programme or project through cost sharing, increased efficiency and effectiveness. According to De Beer and Swanepoel (2000) when dealing with community participation as a *means*, it is taken as **informing** (*weak* community participation/ co-option/ mobilisation/ a top-down decision-making process/ an anti-participatory and manipulative mode of participation) whereas

community participation as an *end* entails **empowerment** (*strong* community participation/ social learning process/ builds capacity/ a bottom-up decision-making process).

The following table provides a summative comparative analysis of community participation as a *means* and/ or an *end*.

Comparative analysis: Community participation as a means and/ or an end

<i>Community Participation as a means</i>	<i>Community Participation as an end</i>
Implies the use of participation to achieve some predetermined goal or objective.	Attempts to empower people to participate in their own development more meaningfully.
Attempts to utilise existing resources in order to achieve the objective of the programmes or projects.	Attempts to ensure the increased role of people in development initiatives.
Emphasises achieving the objective rather than the act of participation itself.	Focuses on improving the ability of the people to participate rather than just achieving the predetermined objectives of the project.
More common in government programmes, where the main concern is to mobilise the community and involve them in improving the efficiency of the delivery system.	Finds relatively less favour with government agencies. NGOs in principle agree with this viewpoint.
Participation is generally short-term.	Participation is a long-term process.
Participation as a means, therefore, appears to be a passive form of participation.	Participation as an end is relatively more active and dynamic than participation as a means.

Source: Oakley (in Kumar, 2002: 26)

2.6 Empirical evidence on the participatory and conventional approaches

This section explores some case studies that reveal food security initiatives implemented using either the participatory or conventional approach in three different African countries (Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe). The case studies for food security were carried out by different NGOs and the results show the strengths and weaknesses of the approach employed.

Plan International is an NGO that works in four districts of Uganda (Kampala, Luwero, Kamuli and Tororo) which are located in the central and eastern rural regions of the country. More than 80% of the families in these four districts rely on subsistence agriculture (Culbertson & Kalyebara, 2005). These four districts had frequently recorded low agricultural productivity and had limited access to modern agricultural technologies and markets. Culbertson and Kalyebara point out that these factors reduced families' household incomes and it was very difficult for families to raise enough food for survival, let alone additional food to create an income base. Plan International Uganda shifted its programme approach away from one based upon top-down delivery of services towards one that was more participatory and community-based. It carried out a participatory approach survey in the four districts to find out from the locals what they required so as to ascertain food security. The outcomes of the survey indicated that villagers in the four districts wanted training and support in coffee and vanilla production to supplement for their household income. Moreover, they needed improved seeds for planting traditional food crops such as nutrient-rich beans, finger millet (rapoko) and sorghum.

In response to these needs, Plan developed various projects and programmes related to the needs of these rural poor. The interventions were fully supported by the communities because these measures were responding to the real needs of the locals. By the end of the first year in 2005, Culbertson and Kalyebara noted three positive outputs and impacts which were realised. Firstly, over 1 000 local farmers were earning extra cash from the purchases of their quality coffee. Secondly, there was an improvement in terms of market channels. The rural farmers were no longer living in fear of starvation since they possessed multiple sources of ascertaining food security. Thirdly, farmers in Luwero and Tororo districts diversified their sources of food beyond crop production by engaging in horticultural and livestock management.

Contrary to the positive impacts, the project for traditional seed production did not receive maximum support from the local communities particularly in Kamuli and Kampala districts since the citizens did not show their interest in this area during the initial planning stage of the project (Culbertson & Kalyebara, 2005).

As can be seen, the participatory approach that Plan Uganda utilised valued community input and decision making at all the stages from planning up to evaluation and this led to the fruits of the approach being realised through the reassurance of household food security in the four districts.

Following the same trend of utilising the participatory approach, another NGO known as Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE) initiated a community-based seed multiplication and distribution system in Zambia's drought prone areas of Kazungula and Kalomo districts to meet the seed needs of farmers from season to season (FAO, 2001). CARE carried a series of community participatory approach activities to determine the activities the local people in the districts needed. The rural farmers ranked seed insecurity and inadequate water supply as highest priorities. They also required seeds of early maturing and drought resistant varieties. CARE formulated community-based programmes to deal with the farmers' needs.

The programme assessment showed that many farmers in Kazungula and Kalomo districts who planted early maturity seeds from CARE harvested enough food for an extra six months compared with their neighbours in the same wealth category who did not (FAO, 2001). The annual impact assessments of the project also demonstrated that it had the following positive results, namely, increased seed supply at low cost; rapid farmer-to-farmer spread of seed crop varieties; increased food availability and affordability; community empowerment through enhanced capacity to engage in developmental activities; increased farmer participation in the planning of food security projects; community participation in decision making; efficient flows of information; and enhanced capacity for other opportunities (FAO, 2001).

In Zimbabwe, an NGO called Smallholder Dry Areas Resource Management Programme (SDARMP) conducted a participatory approach survey in the Gwanda

district (Matabeleland South Province) with the notion that the food security projects in the area, with their fragile environment, required a strong mix of increased agricultural productivity (Rivera & Alex, 2004). This district is located in the remote rural areas of Matabeleland South Province. The participatory approach results indicated large water projects as the priorities for the rural communities so that they could use the water to irrigate their crops during times of drought. However, the NGO rejected the participatory survey results and considered those submitted by the Gwanda District Council identified from the council's rolling plans.

The pre-determined council projects that included the rehabilitation of garden projects previously funded by another NGO and an irrigation scheme, lay dysfunctional in the district for a couple of years. The reason for this scenario was attributed to the community's lack of interest in the pre-conceived and imposed food security projects. They had no sense of ownership to the initiated projects since they viewed themselves as decision takers as opposed to decision makers. Two years down the line, the rehabilitated irrigation equipment and fencing on the gardens were stolen by the villagers. This satisfies Townsely's argument that projects administered by outsiders without community participation in decision making are regularly plagued by problems of mismanagement and theft.

Contrary to the conventional approach that SDARMP used, another NGO named International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) conducted a participatory approach survey in the rural areas of Matabeleland North Province in the

district of Tsholotsho (ICRISAT, 2001). The participatory outcomes showed that the communities in Tsholotsho required training in millet and sorghum seed production since the district is prone to erratic rainfall and drought. ICRISAT received the participatory results and implemented what the communities needed. This NGO reported that in the 2002-2003 agricultural season, 45 of the rural subsistence farmers who engaged in millet and sorghum seed production confirmed fetching twice the price of the grain crops. The Tsholotsho rural farmers failed to harvest all the increased grain they had been able to grow. The Director General of ICRISAT had to donate a new threshing machine to the rural farmers for them to cope with the harvest. This assisted in the enhancement of food security among the community farmers since they had a lot of grain in store for consumption; including millet and sorghum seeds for sale to boost their income. Community participation in the growing of small grain crops was seen as fundamental for high agricultural productivity, food security and household economic development (ICRISAT, 2001).

From all the case studies cited and considered above there are four major lessons and conclusions that can be drawn. To start with, food security in rural areas at both household and community levels can be realised if the use and development of community participation is made central to food shortage alleviation measures. This entails engaging the communities in decision making from the planning stage up to the final phase of evaluation of food security plans. Secondly, if the local communities are given an opportunity to identify their food security priorities in an effort to curb food insecurity, they are likely to support any intervention and the projects they engage in

tend to be sustainable. This is because when assisting organisations conduct participatory approach surveys, the interventions they employ will be responding to the genuine needs of the communities. Thirdly, food security goes beyond crop production. Rural farmers have the potential to diversify their operations into horticulture and livestock production to generate income. Finally, the rural dwellers are not new in their areas of habitation. They possess expertise in defining their aspirations and problems that affect them better than outsiders. As a result the participatory approach represents a momentous type of visioning that believes that when you connect rural people, set community aims are easily achieved (Brown, 2000; Stark, 2005).

2.7 Conclusion

Unless the gap of improper community participation in the food security measures of the government is bridged between the government and those living in remote rural areas, the latter will not benefit from the participation opportunities presented to them. If the sidelining gap of community input at the planning stage in the food security measures of the government continues broadening, the role of the rural communities in these initiatives will remain blurred, indistinct and distorted.

An extensive review of available literature in terms of conceptual issues, theories, research findings and related work on community participation and food security has been discussed in this chapter. This has assisted in understanding the need for community participation in decision making in food security initiatives of the government at all phases from planning to evaluation as a matter of concern locally, nationally, regionally and globally.

CHAPTER 3: FOOD SECURITY POLICY IN ZIMBABWE¹

3. Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of food security policy framework in Zimbabwe. It reveals the government's historical food security guiding principles; tracing them from the attainment of political independence in 1980. The chapter also considers food security policy formulation and implementation; commodity interest groups or organisations in the food system; the legislative framework; political access and influence by the poor and food vulnerable groups. The chapter closes by taking a closer look at some food security strategies impacting food production, trade and marketing in Zimbabwe. One other important point to take note of is that this chapter is mostly based on a 2003 *"Zimbabwe Food Security Issues Paper for the Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa"* which was prepared by Godfrey Mudimu of the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare. To augment Mudimu's article, other authors were also incorporated to come up with this chapter so as to produce an overall outline of food security policy context in Zimbabwe.

3.1 The history of food security in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's economy is largely comprised of agriculture, mining and manufacturing activities. However, agriculture played a critical role in the overall development of the country in the early 1980s. In a nutshell, agriculture formed the backbone of the

¹ This chapter is based on a 2003 "Zimbabwe Food Security Issues Paper for the Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa" prepared by Godfrey Mudimu of the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare, pages 1 – 14. Available online at: <http://www.odi.org.uk/work/projects/03-food-security-forum/docs/zimbabwecipfinal.pdf>

Zimbabwean economy soon after independence. In the early 1980s, Zimbabwe accomplished what was extensively described as an "agricultural miracle" in the field of food security, setting a firm example for the whole of the African continent where such security was more often losing ground (Stoneman & Thompson, 1994). Such a success in food security consequently earned the country the name "the bread basket of Africa". This achievement was not unintentional and it owed little to market forces. It was a deliberate success which can be credited to meaningful policy planning on the part of the government. Unfortunately, this one-time success account was under some threats from the ESAPs that resulted from Zimbabwe's increasing engagement with international financial institutions of the IMF and World Bank; including haphazard land reform policies as well as ignoring the rural small-scale farmers in the food production system.

Soon after the attainment of political independence in 1980, the new government pursued a policy of helping and supporting small-scale farmers in the communal areas whilst at the same time continuing motivational prices and easy accessibility of credit for the large-scale commercial farmers (LSCF) sector (Rukuni & Eicher, 1994). The small-scale farmers inhabited approximately 42% of the total land area in the worst regions where little land was arable and rainfall erratic (Mudimu, 2003).

Rukuni and Eicher point out that in the communal areas agricultural extension services increased significantly, with support in the form of improved seeds, increased utilisation of fertilisers and irrigation. For instance, over 90% of all Zimbabwean farmers used

hybrid maize seed which had been constantly developed in the country since the 1930s (Stoneman & Thompson, 1994). To augment the developments mentioned above, Stoneman and Thompson also report that the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) multiplied its depots to more than one hundred by 1985 to help in the distribution of farming inputs and collection of yields from rural farmers. Prior to this development, the few GMB depots which were operational exclusively serviced the commercial farmers. Credit was also made available to the rural farmers for the first time in 1985. These agricultural reforms and food security policies that came after independence had a very positive effect on communal farming. By 1990, the GMB stated that overall grain stock increased threefold (Zimbabwe GMB Report, 1991). Following these improved services by the government, Stoneman and Thompson (1994) assert that the rural farmers yielded around 60% of the marketed maize by 1986; up from below 10% before independence. They add that over the 1980s, the growth rate of maize production for peasant farmers was 9% and the harvest per hectare rose to 6.7%.

Owing to the stiff competition that was coming from the rural small-scale farmers sector in the production of food crops, the LSCFs progressively decreased their maize production and started to diversify into cash crops such as tobacco, cotton and flowers (Kaseke *et al.*, 2000). Regardless of this shift by LSCFs, Zimbabwe, with the development, promotion and growth of peasant food production, managed to uphold its food self-sufficiency by building up a stock of maize of between one and two years' supply from which it was able to export grain to neighbouring countries for many years.

During this era of food security excellence, the country's GMB administered a guaranteed price for maize that was on average 12% above the world market prices (Mudimu, 2003). This policy necessitated the production of maize to be in excess. The maize could not be all exported but at a loss. Nevertheless, the preservation of a stockpile amounting to roughly more than a year's supply was considered crucial for reasons of food security. Thus, Zimbabwe was given the responsibility of food security, agriculture and natural resources coordination in the then Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC); transformed into Southern African Development Community (SADC) in August 1992. Throughout the 1980s, Zimbabwe helped in satisfying the regional food security objectives laid out by SADCC by regularly exporting its surplus maize to deficit countries like Malawi, Mozambique and, at times, Zambia. It also frequently supplied maize to famine prone countries such as Ethiopia. Donor agencies time and again bought maize from Zimbabwe, and sent it as aid to other African countries in need of food supplies (known as triangular transactions).

In sum, food security – conceptualised as “... a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO, 2002) – was by and large accomplished by Zimbabwe in the 1980s. According to UNICEF (1993), the rate of malnutrition of children in Zimbabwe in 1990 was the lowest in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. Due to all these achievements accomplished by the Zimbabwean government in the early 1980s, this one-time success account was regarded as “the Zimbabwe miracle” or the “Green Revolution” of

that time. However, this model termed the “Green Revolution” started to display flaws in the mid to late 1980s. There is evidence that this favourable trend that Zimbabwe enjoyed in the early 1980s has already been overturned. To reverse it once more will need an ever more effective programme of land redistribution, relaxation of structural adjustment policies and re-engagement of the communal small-scale farmers to participate fully in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of food security measures of the government.

3.2 Food security policy formulation and implementation

Community food security cannot be accomplished outside a policy framework. Policies are the articulation of goals to address issues identified by governments, businesses, social groups, and individuals (Howlett & Ramesh, 1995). According to Kalina (2001), policies provide a framework within which decisions are made and actions are taken. Usually decisions are made within the context of existing policies. Howlett and Ramesh (1995:102) define a food policy as “... any decision, programme or project endorsed by a government, business, or organisation that influences how food is produced, processed, distributed, purchased, protected, and/ or disposed of”. It is crucial to understand that food policy can function at various levels: institutional, local, provincial, national, regional, and global.

According to Mudimu (2003), food security policies were made by civil servants in the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement since independence. Mudimu further points out that the policies were made in close consultation with the politicians

and farmers' organisations. This proclamation by Mudimu has been supported by Kaseke *et al.* (1998) who state that the policy formulation agents in Zimbabwe consist of government technocrats, politicians, churches and to lesser extent non-governmental organisations. Kaseke *et al.* go on to expose that the government technocrats constitute one of the most powerful influential agents in food security policy formulation in independent Zimbabwe. Most of the policies were formulated following matters conveyed by the politicians or activities required by the cabinet. Moreover, Kaseke *et al.* disclose the fact that the extent to which politicians participated in formulating food security policies seemed to be limited to parliamentary debates. However, there were instances when politicians initiated food security policies but left the finer details of policy formulation to technocrats. In a nutshell, policy for food security in Zimbabwe is dominated by political figures from the ruling party. What this clearly depicts is that ordinary people are never given space to present their views for inclusion in the final food policy document. All critical decisions are made by the top management and the ordinary citizens are introduced to the food policy at the implementation stage as a completed document ready for execution. There is no room given to the ordinary public to contest the prepared food security policy manuscript.

Mudimu, (2003) continues to reveal that The Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement had the administrative capability to formulate and put into practice food security strategies until 1990. However, after Zimbabwe adopted the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1991, the influence of donor groups increased considerably. Donors became more involved in the implementation of the

structural adjustment document; leaving the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement with its organisational capacity but with no financial muscle to execute its own food security policies. Several consultative meetings were funded by donor societies and that eventually led to the crafting of the Zimbabwe Agricultural Policy framework (1995–2000).

Since independence, one key drawback in the implementation of food security policy in Zimbabwe had been political intrusion. Politicians looked forward to benefiting either politically or financially or both. For instance, Mudimu discloses that politicians would purposefully command government food aid to be distributed on a political podium with the intention of winning votes from ordinary citizens. This practice happens in Zimbabwe generally towards parliamentary elections and the most targeted communities are especially remote rural areas with ordinary citizens already at the verge of starvation. There is no way that the poor rural dwellers can resist the temptation of exchanging their crucial votes for a bag of grain that lasted them hardly a month's consumption. With reference to the issue of financial benefits, Mudimu notes that some food security programmes and strategies were implemented devotedly with full backing from political leaders since the concerned bureaucrats stood to profiteer monetarily. For example, meetings were well attended by the political members for the reason that participants were given stipends. The full attendance by political members was not aligned to having the majority at heart but it was the issue of fiscal gains accrued after the meetings.

3.3 Commodity interest groups/ organisations in the food system

The stakeholders and commodity interest groups in the food system in Zimbabwe were largely divided into six key groups. These were government ministries, farmers, consumers, NGOs, local rural leaders and agribusiness. According to Mudimu (2003), the major crucial interested parties for agricultural production and food security in Zimbabwe were both large and small-scale holder farmers up until 2000. However, the large scale commercial farmers had influence on government policy and could endure shocks without difficulty because of their sound resources and productivity expertise. Mudimu notes that the commercial farmers produced the largest part of the tradable export commodities such as tobacco, horticultural and meat products that were the mainstay of the country's economy. This automatically gave them the leverage to influence the country's economic management because the economy had direct impact on their everyday business ventures. The Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) had been one of the leading lobbying groups in Zimbabwe and had dozens of subsidiary interest groups promoting the interests of large-scale commercial farmers. This group, according to Mudimu, sometimes made direct petitions to the representatives of the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement in order to protect and promote the interests of the commercial farmers. Kaseke *et al.*, (1998) and Mudimu (2003) list some of the subsidiary commodity interest groups and organisations affiliated to CFU as including the following: Zimbabwe Tobacco Association; Commercial Grain Growers' Association (for maize and sorghum); Commercial Cereal Growers' Association (for barley and wheat); Oilseed Growers' Association (groundnuts, sunflower and soya bean); Commercial Cotton Growers' Association; Cattle Producers' Association; Dairy

Producers' Association; Horticultural Promotion Council and Wildlife Producers' Association.

When the government of Zimbabwe came to power in 1980, it had an agenda to include peasant farmers in the food security and national development plan. One significant point to note is that, like the CFU which represented the interests of large scale commercial farmers, the small-holder and peasant communal farmers were represented by the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU). Mudimu (2003) precisely discloses that this commodity interest group was very vocal but to a large extent very weak managerially. In terms of influencing the food security policy formulation process, the ZFU did not have political influence or the respect formerly commanded by the CFU.

According to Kaseke *et al.*, (1998), since independence in 1980, two major sets of policies have dominated the food security agenda in Zimbabwe. First was the drive to enhance domestic food production, both to make food available at household level and to support farmers' incomes. Increasing farm output and incomes in rural areas was a key aim of the new government since the main part of Zimbabweans lived in the communal areas on small-holder farms. The support formerly enjoyed by the large-scale commercial farmers was now extended to small-holder communal farmers by state-owned agencies. This was done so as to expand maize production in the communal areas. For example, Zimbabwe's state-owned Grain Marketing Board (GMB) increased its coverage of collection depots into the communal areas, from just three in 1980 to more than one hundred by 1985 (Stoneman & Thompson, 1994); a service provision previously relished only by the large-scale commercial farmers before

independence. By 1991, the GMB had also established some additional seasonal collection centres in the communal areas.

The second set of policies was the overall economic and social development policies designed to promote economic growth and improve social welfare that affects people's access to the food available. In this regard, the Ministry of Agriculture, through its extension service department, encouraged a maize production package centred on high-yielding hybrid varieties. To capture the yield potential of the hybrid varieties, fertiliser and chemical application were promoted as well. To promote this development from the Ministry of Agriculture, the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) provided credit to small-holder communal farmers to purchase fertilisers, chemicals and hybrid seeds. The principal objective of all such efforts was to ascertain increased grain reserves that would make the country self-sufficient in terms of food security. This goal was more than achieved through increased amounts of grain brought in from small-holder communal farmers. Zimbabwe's GMB silos had more than one hundred thousand metric tonnes of maize in store by 1986. This was enough for a whole nine months of normal usage. In addition, Kaseke *et al.* point clearly to the fact that retail prices of roller milled maize meal were controlled and subsidised from independence to 1993. Accordingly, food was easily available and affordable to nearly every Zimbabwean. With the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), this changed drastically. The subsidies were removed and the market forces were given room to determine prices for goods during the ESAP era and that became the beginning of serious food problems in the country.

3.4 The legislative framework

Mudimu (2003) gives a clear picture of the institutional environment in independent Zimbabwe from 1980 to 1999. He presents the responsibilities of various ministries, councils and committees that had direct impact on food security issues in the country from the period 1980 – 2000. According to him, the role of policy formulation relating to food production, marketing and pricing of agricultural inputs and produce was assigned to The Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement. This ministry was the custodian of agricultural policy and had the final say regarding agriculture and food security policy. With reference to social protection aspects such as drought relief and food distribution, The Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare got the mandate to deal with such issues.

Mudimu further states that the duty of coordinating concerns on nutrition was allocated to The Food and Nutrition Council. Its chief responsibility was to supervise the implementation of food security and nutrition programmes.

The examination of proposed strategies that had an impact on the access and affordability of basic commodities like food was allotted to The Cabinet Committee on Incomes and Prices. Another institutional body of the government whose function was to investigate matters and concerns related to food, agriculture, and natural resources was The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Land and Agriculture. This body inspected The Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement's functions that comprised policy formulation and execution.

Following Mudimu's presentation, Moyo (2007) also draws our attention to the role played by print media on food security in Zimbabwe from 2000 – 2005. He indicates that legislative framework during this period was seriously marred and interfered by political considerations. According to him, the era before 2000 saw a variety of print media (newspapers and magazines) reporting freely on the agriculture and food security issues. The newspaper dailies included The Herald, The Daily News and The Daily Mirror. The Sunday papers comprised The Sunday Mail, The Sunday Tribune, The Daily News on Sunday and The Sunday Mirror. The weekly papers included The Financial Gazette, The Independent, The Manica Post and The Weekly Times. Moyo further states that even though all the papers reported without facing restrictions on agricultural and food security issues, they tended to reflect political perspectives on the issues and gained political points for the political side they were affiliated to. In short, Moyo confirms that the print media that was associated with the government tended to be non-critical whereas independent print media were very analytical.

This period, as Moyo points out, was marked by dramatic scenes after the crafting of the "Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act" passed in March 2002. Since the government had initially used the print media to campaign for its agrarian reform programme, this meant that, according to the passed Act, any media acting against the campaign was to face closure. For three consecutive years, some independent newspapers were banned for campaigning against the government's agrarian reform programme (Moyo, 2007). The Daily News and The Daily News on Sunday were both

banned in September 2003; The Sunday Tribune in June 2004 and The Weekly Times in January 2005.

The “Zimbabwean Newspaper” of 14 June 2008 shows how electronic media was also influenced by politics. Both the local radio and television stations were used to campaign for the government’s land/ agrarian reform programme. The newspaper depicts one of the dramatic scenes on electronic media that shocked the world. This was the government’s launch of an operation called “*Operation Dzikisai Madhishi*” – which means “Operation remove satellite dishes”. This simply meant that all households with satellite dishes had to remove them so that they would have no option but to watch local television productions. This was an intentional move by the ruling party aimed at closing all spaces through which information on poor governance being enacted in Zimbabwe could be disseminated to the general local public. All these draconian steps undertaken by the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO); police; army and youth militia had a negative bearing on the food security situation in Zimbabwe.

3.5 Missing the poor and food susceptible groups

According to Mudimu (2003), the presentation of food security concerns and interests to food security policy makers by the rural poor and food vulnerable groups was done following a bureaucratic protocol of set political party structures represented by elected councillors. Mudimu goes on to state that the traditional leaders and councillors were also supposed to act as means of expression for conveying local concerns and interests regarding food security. These traditional leaders’ other key responsibility was to lobby for and obtain publicly disseminated resources from the government and distribute them

to the communities under their respective jurisdictions. What this meant was that the more organised and influential the leaders were, the more they were able to haul out more benefits for their local communities. No wonder why some rural communities remained backward while others enjoyed steady progression in Zimbabwe. One crucial issue to note is that the whole institution of traditional leaders in Zimbabwe has been politicised by the government. The traditional leaders are now widely involved in the planning process. What this entails is that in any food security initiative, the rural poor are only introduced to an already finished food security policy document as implementers. In view of that, such pre-designed food security measures are bound to be unsuccessful because of the inadequacy of beneficiary input and participation from the planning to the execution phases. In addition, food security initiatives directed by Zimbabwean traditional leaders are subject to discriminatory participation due to political affiliation. If a rural citizen is not inclined to the ruling party, participation in decision making on any issue becomes impractical. This scenario happening in Zimbabwe is a real drawback to food security accomplishment since proper community participation knows no political boundaries. Rather it entails total involvement of all people irrespective of political inclinations.

The political access and influence by the poor and food susceptible groups in Zimbabwe is both questionable and debatable. For example, the level of community participation of having representatives acting as mouthpieces for local concerns in Zimbabwe's rural areas has failed to improve the level of participation by the food vulnerable groups. De Beer and Swanepoel (2000) vividly point out that the rural people lack access to

substantial information, political influence and access to resources, which cause them to be prone to food insecurity. The two authors insist that rural people are deficient in the authority to effect decisions of allocating resources in their favour. In several instances, they are less organised than other groups in the society. It is for that reason, hard for them to articulate with a persuasive voice so that the government and other people who have power over resources can pay attention to their demands and react more encouragingly to their difficulties.

Moreover, frequently rural people do not possess meaningful access to property such as land entitlements and financial resources due to improper participation; yet people's participation and empowerment are fundamental elements to food security. According to De Beer and Swanepoel, authentic community participation signifies that people ought to have command to influence the decisions that have an effect on their lives. Without empowerment, participation turns out to be unsuccessful. All the different facets of empowerment (political, physical, social, human, economic and institutional) ought to be there for participation to be meaningful.

3.6 Food security plans impacting food production, trade and marketing

3.6.1 Gaps and discrepancies in agricultural and food security plans

According to Mudimu (2003), until 2002 Zimbabwe did not have a clearly articulated agricultural and food security policy. The country is said to have come up with its first food security framework for presentation at the FAO World Food Summit in 2002. As indicated in the prior sections of this chapter, past food security policies were centred on

political moves to unfolding circumstances. Mudimu further points out that as a result of this anomaly, there were gaps and irregularities whereby one strategy contradicted the other with regard to food security. Owing to lack of a clear and well-articulated food policy, the policies implemented failed to expand into a dependable framework for addressing the problem of food insecurity in Zimbabwe. The sub-sections below delineate and show how gaps, irregularities and the lack of a comprehensive food security policy framework had an influence on overall food security at domestic and national levels in Zimbabwe.

3.6.2 Homogeneity treatment of small-holder farmers

The biggest problem with food security strategies adopted in Zimbabwe rest in treating small-holder farmers as a homogenous group. Unless small-holder farmers are treated as different entities, food security will rarely be achieved in Zimbabwe's rural areas. Rohrbach (1988) and Mudimu (2003) concur that food insecurity remains highly prevalent in the low rainfall regions (communal areas) of Zimbabwe. Rohrbach and Mudimu go on to state that there is no doubt that food grain production and marketing had been concentrated in high rainfall regions. Nonetheless, most of the marketed surplus was produced by a small percentage of the rural households. Using such information, it is very amazing to note that food security strategies adopted in the country tended to treat the small-holder farmers as an identical group. Proper care must be taken on the government's food security approaches. Small-holder farmers have distinctive technological and socio-economic needs in their varied areas of habitation. More so, the agro-ecological zones in Zimbabwe are different, hence, there is no way

small-holder farmers can be treated as a homogenous group. In fact, the treatment of small-holder farmers as a similar group must be avoided at all costs as it has negative impacts on rural food security.

3.6.3 Limited food security sources

Mano *et al.* (2003) give a very vivid and lucid explanation on the lack of diversification of sources of food security in Zimbabwe. The authors provide a well-grounded analysis on this subject. According to them, there has not been much diversification from maize as the major source of food security in Zimbabwe. Small grains such as sorghum, millet and finger millet (rapoko) play a very diminutive role in household food security, not only in the rural areas of Manicaland province, but in Zimbabwe as a whole. Areas such as the two provinces of Matabeleland are suitable for growing small grain crops which are drought resistant but their production is not fully supported in the country's food security policy document. Surprisingly to note is that in the communal areas where rainfall is very erratic, maize is regarded as the foundation of household food security despite its drought intolerance nature. Regarding root and tuber crops, Mudimu (2003:7) reveals that tubers like sweet potatoes, cassava and yams "... play very little role as regular sources of household food security even in areas where they are produced". He reiterates that these crops only become indispensable when there is a deficit and an underperformance in maize production. Mano *et al.* additionally depict that small grain and root crops production in the communal areas of Zimbabwe are constantly being weakened and held back by the absence of formal, consistent and foreseeable market outlets for surplus production. In essence, the GMB does not take root crops and small

grains seriously in its Strategic Grain Reserve policy. Moreover, in rural Zimbabwe, root crop production is now very limited and those who have tried have given up due to poor post-harvest training on the processing and utilisation. This lack of diversification of sources of food security is one significant factor impacting on food availability at all times of the year.

3.6.4 Implications of the agrarian reform on food security in Zimbabwe

The agricultural sector in Southern Africa in general and in Zimbabwe in particular remains the backbone of driving economic activities. Regrettably, this sector has been marred by heated controversies and debates on land reform particularly the equitable distribution of land between the white minority and black majority groups. It is unfortunate that the land reform in Zimbabwe has proved to be less effective due to the way it was administered. The negative impact it had on food security in Zimbabwe cannot be over-emphasised. Going back in history, the Zimbabwean government had limited funds to enact the first phase of the land reform programme as specified in The Lancaster House Agreement of 1979 which was solely based on the willing-buyer willing-seller principle. Due to lack of funds to prompt the programme, the government implemented the second phase of the land reform usually dubbed the “fast-track” agrarian reform in September 1998. This phase saw forcible occupation and compulsory purchase of white-owned farms. Consequently, the commercial agricultural sector, which formed the backbone of food security in Zimbabwe, started to collapse as ineffective and ill-capacitated new black commercial farmers took over this critical sector.

Mudimu (2003), Moyo (2000) and Kaseke *et al.* (2000) point to some food security implications of the land and agrarian reform programme. The authors state that the agrarian reform possessed both short-term and long-term implications on food security. In the short-term, the programmes disturbed food and cash crop production. For instance, the land that could have been put to maize, wheat, sunflower, and cotton in the large-scale farming areas was confiscated out of production during the process of redistribution. The authors concur that the agrarian reform ousted farm workers. This consequentially increased the population vulnerable to food insecurity because the dislocated workers had no access to land for food production.

In the medium and long-term, the authors agree that the land reforms had the following effects:

- The remaining farmers felt insecure and discontinued farming actions leading to a decline in food output.
- It would take time and extraordinary support efforts for the new farmers to deal with their environments. In the meantime, there will be a continuing deficit in food and cash crop productivity.

In relation to the agrarian reform and its implications on food security in Zimbabwe, Van Wyk (2010:21) concludes, "It is imperative for government to invest in agricultural research and development. At the same time they need to provide a policy framework that supports emerging and existing agriculture as well as prioritise international and multilateral negotiations around trade regulations. Doing this could help the sector

support higher returns on agricultural activities and will provide a policy framework that will serve to promote profitable and sustainable agricultural practices.”

3.6.4.1 Post-settlement support for recipients of “fast-track” land reform (1999 to date)

The support mechanism for the beneficiaries of the “fast-track” land reform programme can be argued to be weak and in some cases non-existent because of a variety of reasons. As elsewhere in Africa, the adoption of the structural adjustment programmes of the IMF and World Bank, has led to the state’s role as a frontier for socio-economic development being reduced. The pressure for economic reform which was exerted on the Zimbabwean government after embracing the ESAP meant that the state had to reduce its social expenditure and its role in the provision of basic resources to the citizens.

These new developments had serious implications on the newly settled farmers as the government could no longer provide necessary post-settlement support as it had done during the First Phase of the Land Reform (1980-1998). Thus, the newly settled farmers were expected to be more self-reliant in mobilising their own finance and training as well as other service requirements, particularly refresher courses to develop new enterprises and training in water and irrigation management (Moyo, 2007). However, many farmers did not have the experience, and had to find themselves in a very difficult situation, that is, to support themselves and they were open to unpleasant market forces without the protection from the state.

International isolation and economic sabotage facing the country has also contributed to the deepening socio-economic crisis that has impacted negatively on every sector of the economy, hence, crippling the government resource base to provide post-settlement support to newly settled farmers. Accordingly, the training needs of the new settlers in areas such as agronomic and animal husbandry have hardly been met since 2000.

Though facing such a development impasse, the Zimbabwean government has never withdrawn from its responsibility. In each of the past agricultural seasons, the government provided diesel, farming inputs and tractors for the newly settled farmers in an attempt to boost food productivity. Unfortunately, such efforts by the government were used inappropriately by the settled farmers. Instead of using the farming inputs for their intended use, most of the farmers ended up selling the inputs and the diesel so as to earn cash to purchase food stuffs. Though this act by the beneficiaries may be argued to be logical given the socio-economic crisis and its impacts which were felt by those at the margins especially the resettled farmers, this compromised food production as these newly settled farmers ended up using non-hybrid seeds for farming and without fertiliser.

3.6.5 Zimbabwe's macro-economic policies and implication on food security

According to Mano *et al.* (2003), a fairly stable macro-economic environment was experienced by Zimbabwe in the 1980s. This period was sustained by international capital inflows, mining, industrial and agricultural growth. The inflationary rate remained very low and the local currency remained stable at parity with the US dollar. The

positive macro-economic situation during this era gave the government all the monetary resources it desired to finance some of its huge socio-economic development programmes such as its subsidised agricultural input support schemes and free health and education for all.

Rukuni and Eicher (1994), note that this agricultural support provided by the government made small-holder agriculture to grow rapidly so that it competed with the modern large-scale farming sector in the production of maize, cotton, sunflower and groundnuts. Rukuni and Eicher further maintain that Zimbabwe managed to reach remarkable levels of food security in the early 1980s. The country at one time had a surplus of three years' food security requirements at a time when other African countries were battling to fend for themselves. According to Mano *et al.*, these one-time agricultural successes of the early 1980s did not continue for long. The authors plainly point that towards the end of the 1980s, the economic burden of agricultural market subsidies and provision of free services were dragging the fiscal growth towards zero.

After much debate in 1990, Zimbabwe embraced the IMF and World Bank inspired ESAPs. However, despite the elimination of all price controls on basic goods and reversing the role of the state of subsidy provision, there was no improvement on agricultural production. This was pointing towards a decline in smallholder agricultural production – worsening the food insecurity situation of the nation. The gap created when state agencies pulled out of credit and agricultural input provision could not be closed by the private sector. Mwanza (1992), states that ESAP brought untold food

insecurity, human misery and little economic recovery in Zimbabwe throughout its era in the 1990s.

Mano *et al.* (2003) further claim that the government adopted a “fast-track” land reform programme (discussed earlier in section 3.6.4) because it was constrained by economic hardships and political unrests. Implementation of this agrarian programme without much domestic resources and international support resulted in the government resorting to controversial political conquest and obligatory acquisition of white owned farms. According to Mano *et al.* (2003:20), when the resettlement procedure failed to reach its intended agricultural development aims, “... the agricultural production base was further hampered”.

Moreover, the severe macro-economic situation in Zimbabwe reduced the ability to respond to famine through importation of adequate food grains to counterbalance the deficit in domestic production. Moyo (2000) posits that the lack of international support due to poor international image also contributed to the unwillingness of international donors to offer emergency humanitarian food relief to Zimbabwe. Mudimu (2003) is of the view that rapid increase in inflationary rates, severe shortages of basic commodities and foreign exchange contributed to the rising of prices of basic commodities and services. He adds that this negatively affected low-income households who reacted to this sudden change by reducing the quality and quantity of their purchased food commodities as a coping mechanism. Although the government tried to control prices of all basic commodities from 2000 – 2003, the consequence for this move was considerable shortages as producers withheld production. Due to this shortage of basic

commodities, the prices increased also, impacting negatively on affordability of the basic goods such as food especially by low-income earners. Mudimu however highlights that addressing Zimbabwe's macro-economic policy (which will require significant resources) is a prerequisite to attain long term food security. The government's macro-economic management strategies affected food security unconstructively.

3.6.6 How to promote food security in rural Zimbabwe

Food security in Zimbabwe is wholly based on maize and wheat. Mudimu (2003) is of the view that there is a need to come up with approaches to expand and encourage other food-stuffs to broaden the horizons of food security sources. Residents of Zimbabwe's rural areas possess the capacity to grow millet, sorghum, finger millet (rapoko), sweet potatoes, yams and cassava which are all substitutes to maize. Such capabilities are being under-utilised due to the government's myopic and blinkered focus on promoting maize alone as the only viable food security crop. Mukute *et al.* (2002) draw our attention to the fact that growing small grain, root and tuber crops is cheap and this makes them affordable for the consumers. Crops like sorghum, millet and finger millet are drought resistant and are the best choices for communal areas that are prone to low rainfall. Growing small grain crops is fundamental for high agricultural productivity, food security and household economic development.

There are no strategies put in place to develop alternative food sources particularly improving technologies in order to decrease production expenses. There is need for proper community participation that embraces public opinion in the food security policies of the government. The proper participation should be devoid of imposition of what rural

communities should grow. The rural residents are not new in their areas of residences and are quite aware of the indigenous crops that suit their areas of habitation (Brown, 2000; Stark, 2005).

The level of food insecurity in rural areas is not precisely addressed by any policy. It is taken for granted that the rural poor can gain from controlled prices. However, once the government controls prices, parallel food markets emerge. These parallel food markets would command even higher prices than the controlled prices thus making it worse for the rural poor. For this reason, there is a need to explore the idea of genuine community participation which stresses that the rural inhabitants can identify and express their needs and aspirations in their own way about any food security initiatives that affect their lives and conditions so that they can propose for themselves what action to take, and to monitor and evaluate the results. The decisions and input that they give during the needs assessment (planning) stage should be incorporated in the final food security policy framework.

3.7 Lessons learnt

According to Mudimu (2003), since the 1980s, food insecurity, owing to falling per capita output of food production and continual droughts, has been a key challenge for rural Zimbabwe. A number of strategies were employed to deal with both persistent and temporary food insecurity and to lessen the impacts of droughts. Mudimu alludes to two groups of approaches used. The first were approaches employed to encourage increased food production to enhance national food security. The second group

comprised of approaches employed to counteract the impacts of droughts and to address household food insecurity.

Mudimu maintains that this can be categorised into three episodes. The initial phase 1980 – 1985 was characterised by approaches which were devised to stimulate increased food production to meet the national food security needs. This was accomplished by means of preserving a central tactical maize stock in case of a drought. The focus of the 1980 – 1985 agricultural and food security policies may not have attained preferred effects on national and household food security.

The subsequent phase 1986 – 1990 could be termed as the era of re-adjustment. The focus was on household as opposed to national food security needs. This was due to the impacts of chronic droughts at the household level which were experienced. More so, this was in response to the understanding that several farming households were failing to meet their own food needs. Since the national grain stocks had increased to unprecedented levels, the government persuaded farmers to shift from food grains to non-food cash crop production in order to generate household income and foreign exchange earnings. Thus most commercial farmers branched out from growing food crops to cash crop production. During this period, Zimbabwe's small-holder communal farmers were left with the duty of staple food production and supply. One issue of concern that the government failed to consider was that most of the small-holder rural farmers had no advanced farming technologies and were farming on marginal lands which were infertile. This exacerbated the food insecurity situation in the country.

The third phase 1991 – 1995 was shaped by the economic reform or ESAP. This economic reform period saw the role of the state of subsidising basic commodities being reduced. The government, through the GMB, also upheld control of maize marketing and pricing. The maize producer price was kept at lower than export parity. The outcome was that farmers were heavily taxed. As a result, farmers began to move away from food to cash crop production as discussed earlier. This also impacted negatively on the food security situation of the country.

Mwanza (1992) brings to light the fact that the consequences of the reform of macro-economic policy on food security and agricultural development had some negative impacts. On one hand, the increased costs of food worsened food insecurity for many households. On the other hand, there was a sharp increase of input costs, particularly, fertiliser and seed prices. Moreover, there was great loss of formal employment in both the rural and urban sectors. However, a review of the effects of the ESAP on the food insecurity situation had to take into consideration other natural factors. For instance, when the government launched ESAP in 1991, it coincided with the most terrible drought the country had ever encountered in its history (Alwang, 2000).

It is apparent from the current crisis of food insecurity that Zimbabwe's dependence on preserving food supplies at the national levels was not adequate enough to guarantee food security. There was need to have sufficient reserves for exports. Even though suitable and sustainable economic and agricultural growth is the key to addressing food insecurity, there is a dire need to value community participation in decision making in the government's food security measures. Strategies such as direct food-aid and food-

for-work programmes are not sustainable. For instance, once the communities have a good harvesting season, the food-for-work programme automatically becomes non-operational. Food security measures should make sure that agricultural productivity rises over time (Rukuni & Eicher, 1994).

3.8 Conclusion

The problem with the food policy in Zimbabwe, even before ESAP, was the lack of public debates and popular consultation. Ordinary citizens were supposedly consulted through politicians who represented them in their various constituencies. Unfortunately, Zimbabwean politicians looked out for themselves. They misrepresented their communities so that they gain financial benefits. Moreover, political intrusion in food security policy implementation has always been a problem in Zimbabwe since independence. Politicians looked forward to benefiting either politically or financially or both. The lack of public debate on food policy after ESAP was also welcomed by international donors and the international financial institutions. These donors and international financial institutions dreaded that a public debate had a potential to mobilise an anti-reform coalition by reversing the already accepted ESAP in Zimbabwe. In spite of all the given assumptions, the real issue lies in the government's inability to engage the ordinary citizens, right from the inception of any food security measure which either directly or indirectly impacts on them, up to the evaluation stage of the measure. The realisation of this engagement by the Zimbabwean government can give the ordinary citizens enough space to articulate what they consider worthy to be incorporated in the final food security policy document.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4. Introduction

In this chapter, the study area and preliminary outline of fieldwork are briefly described. The research method and design utilised throughout the process of the study is also outlined. This includes the case study research design; qualitative method; the descriptive method of research, and specifically, the description of the research population; sampling procedure and size. Research instruments, data analysis, validity and reliability of the research results are discussed as well.

4.1 Study area

Mutare district is one of Manicaland Province's seven districts. It is bordered by Mutasa and Makoni districts to the north, Mozambique to the east, Buhera district to the west and Chimanimani district to the south and contains the whole range of agro-ecological regions ranging from 1 to 5. This district is well connected with road transport. Mutare rural district is also well connected with electricity supply compared to other rural districts in Manicaland Province.

This research focused on Marange rural area in the Mutare district of Manicaland Province. Mutare district has a total of thirty-six (36) wards and Marange rural area has thirteen (13) wards. While wards vary in size and scope, government authority has established a definitive range based on averages. According to the Prime Minister's Directive of 1984 & 1985, a village has about one hundred households, and a ward has six villages (Government of Zimbabwe, 1985). This research was limited to three wards

(Chindunduma, Mudzimundiringe and Nyachityu) of Marange. Figure 6 in Appendix B of this study shows the map of Zimbabwe depicting provincial boundaries and Manicaland Province showing its district boundaries with Marange communal area.

The Marange community lies approximately 80 kilometres south west of the city of Mutare. This community is situated in rural and marginalised lands. Marange communal lands are relatively semi-arid, sandier with sparse vegetation and highly prone to drought due to erratic annual rainfall. The rainfall is predominantly conventional summer type which averages 600 millimetres per annum and is poorly distributed. This means that the rainfall is rarely adequate to sustain the staple crops like maize and in some years even insufficient to sustain the drought-tolerant crops such as sorghum, finger millet and pearl millet; exposing the area to high food insecurity. Marange area has a mixed economy with agriculture being the main economic activity. Agriculture in this area is primarily for subsistence with cattle and goats being kept as assets for the family and hardly ever produced for commercial purposes. Most of the rural dwellers survive by subsistence farming and infrequently produce crops for sale.

The area is also rich in natural resources, for example, the recently discovered diamonds in 2006 within twenty kilometres of the research communities in nearby Chiadzwa ward. From August 2006, most able-bodied people spent most of their daytime digging for diamonds and this disrupted the 2006/ 2007 farming season in Marange as a whole.

4.2 Preliminary brief outline of fieldwork

The data to be presented and analysed was collected between November and December 2009. Three focus group discussions in each of the three selected wards were conducted. This study also conducted four in-depth interviews with ward leaders- three councillors and one chief. A further one-to-one interview was carried out with the administrator of Mutare rural district council – a government entity that oversees food security initiatives in Marange area. The purpose and procedure of the research was clearly written on the participation information sheet and consent form which each participant had to sign before participating. The researcher also took time to explain and clarify the research purpose, procedure and status of participation.

The primary data was collected in the form of field notes. In order to increase data capturing capacity, the study appointed two research assistants who mainly concentrated on recording the research discussions by taking field notes. A tape recorder was also used to capture the interviews. This was intended to avoid any data loss from the interviews with participants. Permission was sought from all participants, both verbally and through a written and signed consent form, to take notes and tape record the discussions. Participants were informed that they could have access to the results of the study on request. The possibility of publication of the research findings was also communicated to the participants. The direct participants were drawn from a pool of rural dwellers in villages of the three selected wards of Chindunduma, Mudzimundiringe and Nyachityu. The administrator of Mutare rural district also formed part of the interviewed participants.

4.2.1 Participants' brief profile

The research participants for the study were composed of men, women, youths, ward leaders and the administrator of Mutare Rural District Council. All participants in the focus groups and in-depth interviews were from the three selected wards; save for the administrator of Mutare rural district. Participants in focus group interviews were selected from all age groups and there was gender-equity. Chindunduma and Mudzimundiringe wards had 28 interviewed participants each whereas Nyachityu had 30. In each ward, one ward leader was also selected to participate. Two ward leaders in Mudzimundiringe ward (the councillor and chief) were both interviewed since the two conflicted on who the ward leader was. The study accommodated both in one-to-one interviews in order to obtain a balanced view of the situation. The administrator of Mutare rural district was also interviewed. A total of 87 participants were interviewed. Table 1 in the Appendices section A illustrates the actual number of focus groups and individual participants or interviewees per ward.

4.3 Research method

The main research approach utilised in this study was the qualitative research methodology. Creswell (1998:2), defines qualitative research as, "... an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem." Creswell goes on to assert that qualitative research provides a rich source of information leading to the formation of theories, patterns and or policies that help to explain and inform the phenomenon under study. In this study, the study sought to find out the role of the rural communities in the food security initiatives of the

government in the alleviation of food shortages in Marange area. The results will inform policies that seek to ensure rural community participation in food security initiatives.

Another reason for selecting the qualitative method for this study was that the topic needed to be explored flexibly with the main aim of accessing specific information rather than mere generalisation of the findings. In addition, the qualitative research methodology draws its principles from the phenomenologist and critical traditions. In these approaches, the study strove to understand the meaning people had constructed about their world and experiences. The aim was to understand the nature of that setting, what their lives were like, what was going on for them, what their meanings were and what the world looked like in that particular setting.

The goal of the qualitative research is to describe and understand rather than the explanation and prediction of human behaviour. This study sought deep understanding of the experiences of rural people and, in this regard, understanding from their vantage point in terms of what they took to be their role in food security interventions of the government.

Qualitative research emphasises the importance of the social context for understanding the social world. It holds that the meaning of a social action, statement or situation depends, to a greater extent, on the context in which it appears. Regarding the issue of the importance of social context in qualitative research, Neuman (2000:146) has this to say, "When a researcher removes an event, social action, answer to a question, or

conversation from the social context in which it appears, or ignores the context, social meaning and significance are distorted”. This definition simply implies that a social context must not be ignored when carrying out a qualitative research so that its importance will be maintained and accurately recorded.

4.4 Research design

Mouton (1996:55) defines a research design as “... a blueprint of how one intends conducting the research”. This means that a research design refers to how a researcher situates a study together to respond to a question or a set of questions. Following this definition in other words, a research design shows a systematic plan outlining a study’s methods of compiling and analysing data that will be used to arrive at a conclusion of the research problem. In another dimension, Creswell (1998:62) conceptualises a research design in a qualitative framework as “...the entire process of research from conceptualising a problem to writing the narrative”. Following Creswell’s line of reasoning, a research design is the outlined plan of action that a study uses to collect and utilise data so that desired information can be obtained from specified intended sources. The main purpose of a research design is to allow the study to forestall what suitable research decisions should be initially made so as to capitalise on the validity and trustworthiness of the eventual outcome.

This study adopted the descriptive research design. The intention in a descriptive study is to note and define some section of social reality. The main purpose of descriptive research is to examine the relationship among variables and to provide an accurate

description of the phenomenon that is being researched (De Vos *et al.*, 2002). A descriptive study believes that before solutions are sought, one needs to know what the existing facts and prevailing conditions are.

Descriptive research could be an in-depth description of specific individuals, social group, event, company or any social phenomenon. Since this study aimed to dig deep into people's perceptions and attitudes on their role as a rural community in the government-initiated food security measures, focus was put on only three wards as case studies. The reason for focusing on a small area was to get a deeper view and understanding of people's experiences and viewpoints; to explore the associated feelings and to observe the non-verbal expressions.

There are two major aspects of a research design, namely; the study should clearly specify what it envisages to find out; and it must determine the best way to do it (Babbie, 2010; Sumbulu, 2005). This study envisaged finding out the role of the rural communities in the food security initiatives of the government for food shortage alleviation through an in-depth examination of three cases. The study therefore determined the case study research design as best suited for this study.

4.4.1 Case study design

A case study is a study of social elements through a thorough description and analysis of one situation or case. Emphasis is placed on comprehending the entity and the totality of a particular case. Walliman (2006) states that in the need to study a social

group, community, system, organisation or social event; it is convenient to pick one instance or a small number of examples from the list to study them in detail nested in their own context and make considerations and judgments. These are commonly known as case studies.

According to Creswell (1998:61), a case study can be viewed as an exploration or in-depth analysis of a “bounded system” (that is, bounded by time and/or place), of a single case, or of multiple cases over a given period of time. The case being studied can refer to a process, activity, event, programme, individual or numerous individuals. The description of the cases occurs through in-depth data collection methods that involve various sources of information that are rich in context. These can comprise interviews, document analysis, observations or archival records.

Mark (1996:219) alludes to three categories of case study, all with different functions:

The first is the intrinsic case study which is exclusively focused on the objective of gaining a better understanding of the individual case. The intent is not to understand a broad social issue, but simply to describe the case being studied.

The second is the instrumental case study which is used to expand on a theory or to acquire an improved understanding of a social issue. The case study solely serves the purpose of assisting the researcher’s gaining of knowledge about the social issue.

The last is the collective case study which broadens the understanding of the researcher about a social issue or population being studied. The concern in the individual case is secondary to the researcher's interest in a group of cases. Cases are chosen so that relationships can be made between cases and concepts and so that theories can be broadened or certified.

This study adopted the collective case study approach based on the chief desire of this research to expand the understanding of the role of the rural communities in the food security measures of the government for the alleviation of food shortages in Marange area. Since the study's interest in the individual case was an expression of a wider interest in the collective group, which is, all rural people, the study and its outcome was restricted to the cases. The study chose three wards. This enabled relationships to be constructed among these wards pertaining to the same phenomenon concerning community participation in food security measures of the government to redress the problem of food shortages. This was also to fulfil the procedural obligation and guarantee validity and reliability of the results.

This study preferred to dig deeper into all linked aspects that manifest themselves in the poor community participation for food security in rural Zimbabwe. The case study approach has worked perfectly here since it offered more opportunities than a survey approach of getting into adequate detail. It assisted to determine how many parts influence one another. Case studies tend to be holistic rather than deal with solitary factors.

According to Denscombe (2003), the case that constitutes the core of a study is usually something that already is in existence. It is not a situation that is unnaturally created particularly for the objective of the research. The case is a naturally occurring phenomenon. Denscombe further highlights that a case is usually in existence prior to the research project and, it is anticipated, carries on existing after the research is completed. Therefore, this study, in its endeavour to determine the role of the rural communities in the food security interventions of the government, has chosen cases which naturally existed prior to the research and which are likely to carry on after its completion. The study's units of analysis were correspondingly chosen from groups that naturally existed earlier than the research, so as to prevent forming artificial groups which might compromise the reliability and validity of the research outcome. The units of analysis are described clearly later in this chapter.

Moreover, one of the strengths and the reasons why this study chose the utilisation of a case study design was because it allowed and encouraged the use of a variety of sources, a variety of types of data and a variety of research methods as part of the study. Methods such as interviews and secondary analysis were employed. These will be dealt with in greater detail later in this chapter.

4.5 Research population and sampling

4.5.1 Research population

A research population refers to all those cases upon which the study intends to make a scientific conclusion with respect to a certain attribute or social phenomenon (Sumbulu, 2005). According to De Vos (1998:190), a research population is defined as "... a phrase that sets boundaries on the study units and it refers to individuals who possess specific characteristics under study". Specifically for this study, the research population referred to all rural residents of Marange area who are beneficiaries of the government food security initiatives. These included men, women, youths and ward leaders. These were used as basic units of analysis and sources of information.

However, the study was unable to study the total population with respect to this attribute as it was too large, or simply unavailable for study. The study accordingly used a sample (a relatively small section) from within the population. It was out of this wide population that the study selected direct participants for the research to form the research sample based on the sampling method outlined below.

4.5.2 Population sample

A sample is a small portion of the total set of objects, events or persons that together comprise the subject of the study. It can be viewed as a subset of measurement drawn from a population in which the study is located (Denscombe, 2003). A sample is studied in order to understand the population from which it is drawn. The major reason for sampling is feasibility. Since this study was qualitative, it worked with small samples of

people, nested in their context and studied in depth. The qualitative samples were purposive rather than random. This was because the initial definition of the population was more limited, and partly because social processes have logic and coherence that random sampling may reduce to incomprehensive sawdust. Moreover, samples in qualitative studies are usually not wholly pre-specified, but can evolve once fieldwork begins.

4.5.2.1 Purposive sampling

This study made use of the purposive sampling method. This type of sampling is centred wholly on the judgement of the researcher, in that a sample is made up of elements that include the most characteristics, representative or typical attributes of the population (De Vos *et al.*, 2002). The authors further assert that the judgement of the individual examiner is evidently too outstanding an issue in this kind of sampling.

The researcher in this study chose cases with an explicit rationale in mind. Purposive sampling is most excellent when a researcher desires to discover specific types of cases for in-depth examination. The intention is less to generalise to a large population than it is to obtain a profound understanding of the phenomenon under study.

In this study, the research was driven by the desire to find out the role of the rural communities in the food security initiatives of the government than the mere generalisation of the outcome. The study's sample was made up of purposefully chosen key informants (ward leaders and the administrator of Mutare rural district) because of

their characteristics. The ward leaders are representatives of the people who fall under their jurisdiction and they are the ones who have the mandate to send local people's concerns to higher offices. The administrator stood for the government entity that oversees food security measures in the rural areas of Mutare. The study chose to make use of a non-random selection approach because the ultimate goal was access to information, not just generalisations. The key concern was to acquire meaningful understanding of the role in terms of the precise context of the purposefully chosen cases rather than making an attempt to generalise from the broad population.

Steinberg (2004:111) maintains that "... purposive samples are drawn from an available population without stratifying first". This is another reason why this study chose to use purposive sampling. Like all other non-probability sampling methods, purposive sampling does not permit generalisation, hence the outcome of this study was interpreted in terms of the specific context under study. Purposive sampling was used for the selection of the case study of three wards in Marange. The study picked the most convenient three wards with a view to proximity and financial affordability. Hence, the wards selected were Chindunduma, Mudzimundiringe and Nyachityu. Since the selected wards were close to the researcher, this allowed easy access in terms of frequent visits.

4.5.2.2 Quota sampling

This study also employed traits of quota sampling to guarantee validity and reliability of the choice of participants and the result thereof. According to Neuman (2000), in quota

sampling, the researcher primarily spots groups of people in the population to be incorporated in the sample then he determines how many to incorporate from each category. The major rationale in quota sampling is to extract a sample that is as close to a duplication of the population as possible and that stands for the population as much (Judd *et al.*, 1991). The sample size or quota to be obtained from each category is commonly chosen in relation to the category sizes and sample components are then collected at random by the researcher in the several categories until the preferred quota is accomplished (De Vos *et al.*, 2002). Thus, in this study, the direct participants in focus group discussions were selected at random from villages within the wards in order to reduce subjectivity and increase impartiality.

The most critical shortfall of this kind of sampling is that the choice of people for insertion in the sample rests entirely with the researcher and that subjectivity can inevitably play a momentous role. It is as well hard to establish what percentage of each category should be represented in the sample when a definite population does not exist (Babbie, 2010). Nevertheless, in spite of this deficit in this procedure, the study jointly utilised it with the purposive technique in order to overcome this shortfall. The study attempted by all means possible to uphold impartiality.

4.5.2.3 Sample size

Beginning field researchers should start with a moderately small group (thirty or fewer) who interact with each other formally on a frequent basis (Neuman, 2006). The study

purposefully selected a small sample size with the intention of focusing more on that small group and dig deeper into all the required information.

The study sample was therefore composed of 87 participants. There were three focus group discussions in each ward comprising men, women and youth. The direct participants for the focus group discussions were randomly selected from the different villages within the wards. A total of nine focus group discussions were conducted. The ward leaders and the rural district administrator of Mutare were interviewed on one-to-one basis. Based on the preference of this qualitative research and its desire to dig deeper into issues of community participation and food security, the whole sample of the study did not exceed thirty (30) people from each ward that participated.

4.6 Data collection methods

Descriptive research, based on a case study design usually takes place through detailed, in-depth data collection methods which are rich in context and involve multiple sources of information (Babbie, 2010). This can include interviews, documents, observations or archival records. As such, the study needed access to, and confidence of, the participants.

Data was collected through both the secondary and primary sources. Secondary data included records kept by the Mutare Rural District Council that were used to identify food security interventions of the government in Marange area and documents that identified the wards in Marange; published books from libraries; scientific journals;

dissertations or theses and the internet. Primary data included information that was gathered through the focus group and in-depth interviews conducted. The study also utilised a tape recorder and two research assistants in capturing and taking down field notes data during the interviews. The assistants were trained on how to transcribe the field notes data before the progression of field work. These two data collection techniques increased data capturing and avoided loss of any information from the interviews.

The two data collection techniques were the central means for determining the role that the rural communities play in the food security initiatives of the government for alleviating food shortages. In addition, interviews with focus groups and key informants were utilised for the collection of primary data. The study utilised unstructured interviews in conducting both focus group and in-depth interviews because this study sought to explore deeply into what the respondents thought or knew to be their role as rural inhabitants in food security interventions of the government in the alleviation of food shortages.

4.6.1 Interviews

Interviewing is the central mode of data gathering in qualitative research. Sewell in De Vos *et al.*, (2002:285) defines qualitative interviews as "... attempts to understand the world from the participant's point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences and to uncover their lived world prior to the scientific explanations". This implies that in qualitative interviews, the interviewees are provided with an opportunity to expand and

substantiate their answers and accounts of their experiences and feelings. Participants are given space to give their own viewpoints relating to the problem under study.

The utilisation of interviews denotes that the study viewed this method as the best instrument of attaining primary data which presents more of an in-depth insight into the topic, deriving from information supplied by a small number of informants. Denscombe (2003) states that the study is supposed to be able to justify the choice to go for depth rather than breadth in material as being appropriate to the specific needs of the study.

The study chose to pursue in-depth rather than breadth information on the role of the rural communities in food security initiatives of the government because of two main reasons. First, the study's desire to get hold of information in its entire contextual relevance, that is inclusive of the emotions, experiences and feelings that go together with it; rather than access to plain straight forward distant factors. The second reason was to pursue what Denscombe (2003:52) refers to as "privileged information". This is the usefulness of getting in touch with major players in the field who can provide private, confidential and restricted information. The depth of information offered by interviews in this regard can produce top value if the informants are prepared to and are capable of providing information that others could not, or the researcher could not know or retrieve without getting connected with them.

Field research utilises unstructured, non-directive in-depth interviews which are different from formal survey research in various ways. The field interviews comprise asking

questions, listening, expressing interest and noting down what has been articulated. Interviews are a combined production of the researcher and the members. Members are active participants whose insight, feelings and cooperation are crucial parts of a conversation procedure that discloses theme meanings. The presence and participation of the researcher, including how he or she listens, attends, encourages, interrupts, digresses, initiates themes and terminates responses, is fundamental to the respondent's account.

This study utilised unstructured interviews in carrying out both focus group and in-depth interviews for the reason that the research was compelled by the need to study deeply into what the respondents considered or comprehended to be the role of the rural communities in the food security interventions of the government. This permitted the respondents freedom and preference to convey their thoughts in the manner they felt and desired.

4.6.2 Focus group interviews

Krueger and Casey (2000:305) define a focus group as "... a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment". This entails that focus groups are utilised as a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher. As such, focus groups should be held in a relaxed setting.

One of the main advantages of this technique is that participant interaction assists weed out false or extreme views, thus providing a quality control mechanism. This, however, requires a skilful facilitator to ensure an even participation from all members.

Interviews with focus groups were conducted in this study to elicit information from all respondents in the research of their views, perceptions, feelings, opinions and thoughts on the role the rural communities play in the food security measures of the government. As such, three focus group discussions were held in each ward. This means that a total of nine focus group discussions were conducted with men, women and youths in the three specified wards of Marange. This assisted the researcher to identify trends in the perceptions and opinions expressed by the respondents. The interviewer acted as a facilitator in introducing the themes, guiding the discussions and encouraging all members to express their perceptions.

The following are some of the major reasons why the study opted to utilise focus group interviews with participants:

- Familiarity with the research environment of Marange.
- The advantage to elucidate on questions and responses to acquire precisely what the respondents meant.
- Taking advantage of noticeable non-verbal cues during the discussions which were explored further with respondents.

These discussions were carried out in a style that accommodated all levels of literacy, with the Shona language being the dominant tongue utilised throughout the discussions. In a qualitative study, the researcher ought to impartially adjust to suit properly into whichever condition with the respondents so as to communicate with them in their most relaxed and normal setting. This incorporates the utilisation of the language of choice of the respondents.

4.6.3 One-to-one/ In-depth interviews

One-to-one interviews are unstructured personal interviews with a single respondent that are conducted by an interviewer. They happen between only two people; the interviewer and the respondent. The purpose of one-to-one or in-depth interviews is to understand the underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings on a particular subject. According to De Vos *et al.* (2002:298), the unstructured one-to-one interview is "... used to determine individuals' perceptions, opinions, facts and forecasts, and their reactions to initial findings and potential solutions".

This study utilised unstructured one-to-one interviews with ward leaders and the administrator of Mutare rural district council because it sought to understand the underlying beliefs, attitudes and feelings pertaining to the food security initiatives of the government. Two ward leaders in Mudzimundiringe ward, the councillor and chief, were both interviewed as a result of conflict on leadership. The study accommodated both in one-to-one interviews in order to avoid being caught in the conflict. This means a total of four ward leaders were interviewed.

4.6.4 Interview guide

Data compilation in a qualitative research is normally flexible in order to ensure access to information and would be carried with instruments that search for qualitative (narrative) data (Steinberg, 2004). In this case, data collection was carried out with an interview guide. Labovitz and Hagedon (1981) refer to this interview guide as a guiding questionnaire or the schedule. The interview guide was a collection of items or questions (structured or unstructured) that were posed and filled by the interviewer in a face-to-face situation with the respondents. The respondents did not read or fill the questionnaire themselves but merely answered to the questions orally. Not more than ten questions were posed to participants in both focus group and one-to-one interviews under each section of either community participation or food security.

Questionnaires utilised in the form of focus group and one-to-one/ in-depth interview guides are affixed as addenda 4, 5 and 6 in Appendix C of this study.

4.7 Data analysis

The major purpose for conducting a qualitative study is to transform data into findings. According to Patton (2002:432), the process of data analysis in qualitative research "... involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting significance from trivia, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal". In the same vein, Steinberg (2004:120) states that "... qualitative analysis of words is referred to as content analysis and its basic task is to understand, interpret, and represent the meaning of what has been said by the

respondents”. In a nutshell, what this denotes is that qualitative data analysis is a process of attempting to make meaning through interpretation of volumes of raw data captured from interviews during data collection. In other words, Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, defines analysis of data as “... a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modelling data with the goal of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision making”.

Since qualitative field research produces large volumes of data in non-standard format, this study analysed it through becoming immersed in the data and making an intuitive attempt to identify the categories and connections of insights that simply came to the study as a matter of stimulation. This involved a process called coding and categorising of data. Coding data, in this sense, involved breaking the data down into units for analysis and then categorising the units. This study used taped and transcribed interviews and field notes data.

In this research, data was categorised according to the two major themes contained in the title of the study. These two main themes are community participation and food security. Under each main theme, several categories were developed. Under the theme community participation, the categories which were included were local community empowerment; ownership of food security initiatives by the communities; communities' independent analysis of needs and priorities and communities' involvement in designing food security programmes. Under the theme food security, the categories considered were crop production and level of food security in Marange; food security challenges

faced by the Marange communities and the role of the communities and government in the food security initiatives. These formed the main categories of data analysis.

In undertaking the analysis process as suggested above, the study utilised the model of qualitative data analysis suggested by Steinberg (2004:120). The model follows three steps. The first stage is intra-transcript analysis; that is, trying to make meaning out of each script by referring to the verbatim comments and notes captured on the tape recorder and transcribed by research assistants during the interviews. This involved playing the tape recorder and reading the transcripts in their entirety several times and trying to get a sense of the interviews before breaking them into parts. The second step is inter-transcript analysis; that is, comparing and contrasting responses from respondents. The final phase is developing a meaningful story, which was the objective outcome the study drew out of the gathered data.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the research paradigm, the research design and the methods used for data collection and analysis. The qualitative research approach used in this study helped to explore the topic of this study flexibly with the sole purpose of accessing specific information from a particular social setting. This was made possible by the utilisation of a case study design approach. The chapter discussed the qualitative case study design where in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data. The population sample of the study was comprised of men, women and youth from three selected wards in Marange. A key informant from the Ministry of Lands

and Rural Development also formed part of the research population sample. All the participants sampled for this study were able to articulate their experiences, opinions and perceptions pertaining to continual food shortages and the level of participation by the Marange communities. The qualitative field research produced large volumes of data in sub-standard format hence, the analysis process was done using Steinberg's model of analysing qualitative data which follows three steps.

CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

5. Introduction

This chapter presents; discusses and analyses the results generated through the utilisation of the methodology outlined in the preceding chapter. The results were obtained from the focus group discussions and in-depth individual interviews with the study participants. As outlined in the first chapter, the study's main objective was to determine the role of the rural communities in the food security measures of the government.

5.1 Data presentation and discussion

Two major themes were derived from the study's title and interview guides and these were community participation and food security. Under each main theme, several categories were developed. Firstly, under the key theme of community participation, the following categories were considered; level of community involvement in designing and owning food security programmes; communities' independent analysis of needs and priorities and local community empowerment in the food security initiatives. Secondly, under the main theme of food security, the study contemplated on the following categories; crop production and level of food security in Marange; food security challenges faced by the Marange communities and the role of the communities and government in the food security initiatives.

However, certain insights emerged as data was being collected and analysed. Regarding the theme of community participation, two more categories came out and these were differences in the conceptualisation of community participation and enforcement of community participation in Marange. Concerning the subject of food security, two additional categories emerged as well and these were diversification of food security activities and ensuring sustainable food security in the area. In the presentation and discussion of each of these categories, the study, in some instances, used verbatim quotations to represent and convey accurately the participants' perspectives on the role of the rural communities in the food security initiatives of the government.

5.1.1 Community participation

5.1.1.1 Conceptualisation and reinforcement of community participation

There is an enormous difference in how the term community participation is conceptualised between the government and the Marange communities. According to the respondents, community participation meant making their voice and input to be respected throughout all the stages of food security planning. They felt that the government was not respecting their inputs as indicated by the various defined food security measures that the communities were expected to adopt. Some of the food security measures that the respondents felt were imposed on them included the crop inputs and farm mechanisation programmes. The participants stated that the government never consulted them at the planning stages of these food security interventions, hence their voice and input were never considered critical. They also

pointed out that in order to reinforce participation; the government should allow them an opportunity to identify their preferred crop inputs that suit their area. According to them, if their voice and inputs were included in the food security policy framework, they would have participated. They further stated that their food security concerns which they sent to ward leaders were not considered, for instance, the crop inputs they needed from the government were not supplied.

From the government's point of view, the Mutare rural district administrator, who happened to be from the opposition party, stated that community participation is taken to refer to the total involvement of all rural people who are likely to be affected by the food security measures of the government. The administrator pointed out that issues regarding community participation in the government's food security policy were very clear theoretically but the practical part of the matter, as demanded by the Marange communities, lacked greatly. He stated that instead of taking the proposed plans to the beneficiaries, the government, due to political reactions from the ruling party, delivers its own food security plans different from those suggested by the ordinary citizens. He emphasised that the rural citizens had to adopt the plans without contesting for fear of victimisation.

According to the administrator, two things needed to be done to reinforce community participation in Marange. Firstly, the food security leaders should not be barriers to the

residents of Marange's opinions and needs. What the communities suggest should be taken seriously and be included in the food security policy of the government. This can help the communities to complement the government's food security efforts. Secondly, the food security measures should value proper participation by the locals themselves where the residents' input ought to be valued at all phases. In other words, the measures should be geared towards empowering the Marange communities to mobilise their own resources, make independent decisions and control activities that affect their lives. The administrator also said that if the top-down and prescriptive knowledge transportation style being imposed on the Marange communities was dismantled, reinforcement of community participation in decision making could be realised in the food security measures of the government.

5.1.1.2 Communities' decision making in the food security initiatives

In Marange, the communities participate in lower level management decision making. The level of community participation in food security decision making is at the informing stage (telling the communities what has already been planned). The rural citizens are only told to adopt what the government would have already planned or decided on their behalf. For instance, the crop inputs programme was initiated by the government in 2005 as a food security strategy that was meant to provide both subsistence and commercial farmers with seeds, chemicals and fertilisers at affordable prices. This initiative was started after the government noticed the high pricing of farming inputs which made few farmers able to purchase the inputs due to high inflation that the

country was experiencing. The crop inputs programme was not taken to the communities for suggestions but rather it was presented to them as a full plan ready for implementation. The same scenario also happened with the farm mechanisation programme where the government provided machines to till the soil and to harvest crops, with a view to increase farm yields and reduce the farmers' work-load. According to the respondents, the government, through ward leaders, introduced these food security projects when they were ready for implementation. The respondents also pointed out that most of the time they were called for meetings by the ward leaders who informed them of what the government knew about their food security problems.

One male respondent from Nyachityu ward stated that at one point they were told by the ward leader that the government knew that they needed seeds. According to him, though it was quite true that they needed seeds, they were not involved in the decision making on which seeds they required. He further pointed out that to their surprise they were given late maturity hybrid maize seeds which they had never asked for. From his perspective, the government was supposed to have asked from the residents the type of seeds they required. In one of the focus group discussions, one male youth was very open to associate the provision of the seeds to political gimmicks. He said:

This is all politics! How can they give us late maturity maize seeds which we did not ask for? All these are tricks.

The project referred to was about provision of seeds to the communities. It was done without taking into account to what extent the intended beneficiaries had any input. This had a very big disadvantage to the communities. The respondents said that after they obtained and planted the maize seed, they harvested close to nothing. This was because the maize hybrid seed was not suitable for the climatic conditions in their area. The respondents pointed out that their area was vulnerable to drought and the sandy soil was not appropriate for maize production.

Furthermore, when responding to the questions on decision making, most of the respondents concurred that the communities really felt that the way the food security initiatives were developed was not really their idea. This was so because from their own observations, some of the food security projects have de-motivated and disempowered them to a certain degree as they were not involved in the decision making process of what the government thought to be the solution to their food insecurity concerns. According to the respondents, they had been de-motivated because their voice and inputs were not considered. The fact that the communities also lack the power to make critical decisions on food security plans during the planning and designing phases was seen as a form of disempowerment. The participants believed that the resolutions regarding their food insecurity concerns were just dictated on them without consultation.

On the other hand, the administrator pointed out that the government believed that there was a good deal of participation in its food security measures by the rural community members. However, when he was asked how the Marange communities enjoyed the freedom of independent analysis of their needs and priorities in the food security plans of the government, he indicated that when it came to decision making, they were asked to endorse the decisions made elsewhere. He further pointed out that the communities' exclusion from decision making during the designing and planning stages of the food security plans could be attributed to lack of power and influence in contesting the pre-conceived decisions. It was difficult for the communities to refute the plans for fear of victimisation. He therefore suggested that to remedy this problem, some sections of the constitution needed to be repelled so that people could freely express their views in terms of development programmes that affect them. The administrator stated that constitution amendment was a process and could not be expected to be completed in a short space of time. This scenario whereby the government trusted that there was a good deal of community participation in decision making brought to light the differences in the conceptualisation of the term between the government and the communities.

5.1.1.3 Community participation in designing and owning food security measures

The level of community participation in designing and owning food security measures was generally low in Marange area. The respondents in the focus group discussions pointed at the “fast-track” land resettlement, crop inputs and farm mechanisation programmes as the major government initiated programmes meant to increase food

production in their area. The “fast-track” land reform programme was initiated by government in 1998 as a food security plan aimed at addressing social injustices and food shortages. The crop inputs and farm mechanisation programmes were also introduced by the government in 2005 as food security measures aimed at providing both commercial and communal farmers with affordable farming inputs and machinery in order to boost food production. All these policy frameworks were never taken to the majority beneficiaries (communities) for input during the planning and designing phases. They were introduced to the communities as completely finished documents geared up for implementation with all critical decisions made by the government. In other words, all these food security programmes were introduced to the communities at the stage of implementation. The communities were expected to support the policies without questioning or refuting them.

When the respondents were asked how they came to know about the food security programmes, they stated that it was through the various meetings they held with their respective ward leaders. The ward leaders were the ones who told them of the food security strategies. Some of them indicated that they came to know of these food security plans through electronic and print mass media like radios, televisions and newspapers. When the respondents were asked about who initiated the programmes, they all concurred that it was from the top officials who live in towns. According to them, the designing and planning of the food security plans was not done in their area but somewhere in the city. The respondents also felt that the designing of these food

security plans needed educated people who lived in towns. They pointed out that they never gave any input when the programmes were designed because that was not done in their area and they did not have the skills. From all the ward leaders who were interviewed, there was a general agreement that the designing of the food security plans was the work of the rural district administrators and their bosses. When the ward leaders were asked about villagers' input towards the designing of such food security programmes, they said the designing was done by top management using the reports they sent to them. The ward leaders stated that they compiled reports periodically which they obtained from the Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) about the local food insecurity concerns of their communities which they sent to the rural district administrator for consideration to be included in the food security policy framework.

The Marange communities do not have the privilege to come face to face with the food security programme personnel in order to design the food security plans together. According to the respondents, the food security personnel only surface after many years towards election times. Some of the respondents blamed the ward leaders for not taking up their concerns to the designers of the food security plans. The feeling was that the ward leaders who had the opportunity to meet the top leadership during their bi-weekly meetings were failing to disseminate crucial information regarding food security to the communities. Their failure to disseminate information was accredited to the fact that the ordinary community people had no authority to ask the ward leaders to give a report-

back to them about the meetings they held with the administrators, hence the ward leaders sat on the information.

The Marange communities have very limited space to offer suggestions to improve their participation in the designing of food security measures. The respondents pointed out that there were two main problems associated with inability to put forward their suggestions. Firstly, the ward leaders were reluctant to send their views to the administrators. Secondly, there was no platform set for them where they could discuss their suggestions and viewpoints with the top leadership on food security.

There was also a universal feeling from participants that there was a differential advantage being enjoyed by some groups, particularly ward leaders, who were total affiliates of the ruling party in relation to ownership of food security plans. These groups usually misrepresented the community's needs to the government regarding the designing of food security plans because they got partisan advantage at the expense of the communities. The respondents pointed out that the ward leaders did this misrepresentation through asking for food security projects which they would not have agreed upon. By doing this, the ward leaders would get projects which gave direct or indirect benefits to them. One such project which was mentioned by the respondents was the livestock cross-breeding programme where the ward leaders got more livestock breeds than the communities.

On the other side of the spectrum, regarding the issue of community participation in the designing and owning of food security measures, the administrator did not give a clear explanation. He pointed out that the government used reports that came from ward leaders to design the plans for the communities. When asked why this was done, he stated that it was the system of the ruling party that was being adopted by whoever got into office. He gave an outline of the organisational structures for popular participation in development planning as outlined in the Prime Minister's Directive on Decentralisation (1984 & 1985), which provided the basis for a hierarchy of representative bodies at the village, ward, district and provincial levels. According to him, Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) were elected bodies with a responsibility for defining local needs. VIDCOs presented village needs to Ward Development Committees (WADCOs), which covered approximately six villages and consisted of VIDCO representatives. The WADCOs supervised and prioritised local needs and forwarded them to the District Council. Each ward was represented by a district councillor.

He further stated that District Development Committees (DDCs) were planning and co-ordination committees, composed of two local councillors, together with 18 to 28 central government officials from the sectoral ministries, and the police, army and Central Intelligence Organisation. He pointed out that membership in DDCs was dominated by representatives of the central government. The DDCs were chaired by the District Administrator, who was a central government employee. The main planning functions of the DDCs were to formulate district development plans (short and long term), based in part, on the plans forwarded from the VIDCOs and WADCOs. These plans were

forwarded to the Provincial Development Committee. The DDCs permitted horizontal co-ordination of the activities of sectoral ministries and local authorities. According to him, such an organisational structure was the one still in use but he stated that it was very problematic as the members in the structures were affiliated to different political parties who possessed various views and struggled for dominance over others. He also indicated that another problem was a lack of serious effort by central government members to make use of provincial and district development plans.

5.1.1.4 Empowerment of the Marange communities

While there are several ways in which the government is attempting to empower the rural residents of Marange in its food security measures in order to curb food insecurity, the communities have varied views that they put forward regarding the issues of distributing crop inputs and training selected individuals as empowerment strategies. Although all respondents in the focus group discussions concurred that the distribution of crop inputs was a very bright idea, they pointed out that it was important for the government and NGOs to ask the recipients the type of crop inputs they needed in each particular area. The respondents gave an example of the government giving out maize seeds to the Marange communities, which they viewed as a waste of resources since the crop was not suitable for their drought-prone area. Most of the participants also agreed that they required training in the farming of small grain crops. The respondents also believed that the distribution of crop inputs and training individuals for food security could be seen as productive once the needs of the intended beneficiaries were addressed.

On the other hand, respondents agreed that the launch of a cellular network in Marange was a good empowering initiative that was now enabling them to avoid exploitation by the middlemen. The ward councillor for Chindunduma praised the government and believed that the setting up of the cellular network in Marange was a very successful undertaking towards ICT empowerment for the locals. With regards to this effort he said:

Makorokoza emu “town” haachatibiridziri. Tinongofonera hama dzirimo mudhorobha kuti tinzwe mitengo kuti yakamira sei. Tinotenda hurumende nekutiisira “Net One” mudunhu reMarange. Takapiwa masimba. (The middlemen from town cannot cheat us now. We just phone relatives in town to inquire market prices. We thank the government for providing us with Net One cellular network in Marange area. We were empowered).

Contrary to what these other respondents said, the youths were of the view that though it was a remarkable effort, setting up a cellular network was not by itself an indication of avoiding the middlemen’s exploitation. They argued that having a cellular network could not automatically make someone phone anywhere. There were costs associated with that, for instance, purchasing of cell phone handsets, Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) cards and air time which were very exorbitant.

In relation to livestock cross-breeding projects being done in Marange, most of the participants indicated that they were very happy with the benefits that they were receiving from the projects. However, women felt that the projects were not benefiting

them. According to their views, though it was true that the livestock cross-breeding projects had improved their lives because they could have an extra income base from their husbands, as women they were not much involved in the meetings where the decisions were made. They also stated that the projects were gender biased. As one of the women rightly pointed out:

Hamuonisu kuti varume ndivo vakadecider vega kuti project iyi iitwe muno? Isu sevanhukadzi hazvisirizvo zvataida kuti project iyi ive iri. (Can't you see that men were the ones who decided that this project be done here? For us as women, this is not how we needed this project to be).

When asked to elaborate what she meant, she stated that, as women, they needed food security projects to also consider the gender aspect where some projects were better-matched to women than men. She further stated that it would be good if the government could assist them in vocational training courses in managerial and technical capacity building to enable them to run their own businesses in clothing technology, gardening, handcraft work and marketing the products.

From the government's point of view, the administrator pointed out that the government's aim on embarking on the distribution of crop inputs to the Marange people was to improve food security. The government was also engaging NGOs in the programme of crop inputs distribution. Moreover, the government was taking a careful stance in monitoring some NGOs that had counter-productive motives of distributing

useless seeds to the rural citizens. The administrator cited the 2004 incident when a certain NGO distributed sorghum seeds to Marange area that never produced grains. He pointed out that the act compromised the level of food security in Marange greatly and consequently led to the rural residents lacking confidence in the government's crop inputs distribution initiative. Before distributing the farming inputs, the government, through the Agricultural Technical and Extension Service (AGRITEX) department, empowered the rural communities of Marange by training selected farmers and ward leaders in the conservation farming techniques that would enable them to optimise timing and productivity. Those trained were expected to disseminate the skills acquired to other villagers as well. The administrator believed that the envisaged empowering strategy adopted by the government of training and distributing crop inputs to the Marange communities was the best alternative aimed at producing positive food security results in this area. However, he indicated that the government should first take any food security plan to the intended beneficiaries before implementation.

The administrator also pointed out that the government had taken a giant step towards improving access to market information and infrastructure through information and communication technology (ICT) system launched in Marange in 2003. According to him, the move was done after numerous consultations with the community members and it was noted that the rural people in Marange required access to readily available relevant market information that could enable them to make meaningful production and

marketing decisions in terms of growing and selling their produce in times of good harvests.

Regarding the issue of livestock cross-breeding projects, the administrator pointed out that the government was undertaking these projects with an objective of empowering the Marange residents both economically and health wise. According to him, the projects received a great welcome and full consent from the local communities who had initially asked for their implementation. He also believed that the livestock cross-breeding projects have a great potential towards the improvement of the income base, reduction of malnutrition and ensuring food security in the area. He went on to state that considering that nearly every household in Marange kept indigenous livestock, for example, chickens, goats and cattle, they could be empowered through production of cross-breed livestock. Their indigenous livestock have poor yield in egg, milk and meat production. The administrator maintained that such empowering projects were suitable for the people of Marange taking into account the climatic conditions of the area. To add on, the residents would be using their locally available resources to kick-start the projects. In his view about these empowering projects, the administrator had this to say:

I believe these cross-breeding projects are necessary, empowering and appropriate because they lessen the government's budget of purchasing the livestock for each household. Residents use their own home-grown or native livestock and the responsibility of the government is to provide the cross-breeds. The projects received the full consent of the communities before their implementation.

5.1.2 Food security

5.1.2.1 Crop production and level of food security in Marange

In relation to crop production, the respondents pointed out that they grew maize as a leading crop in their communities. They also mentioned that it was a very unreliable crop due to its sensitivity to the harsh climatic conditions in the area. They agreed that they occasionally do grow small grain crops like millet, sorghum and rapoko; and that they had no doubt that such small grain crops were the most dependable food crops appropriate for their area. As one of the respondents pointed out:

Tinoziva kuti zvirimwa zvetsanga diki izvi zvine pundutso hombe kupfuura chibage asi hatina sarudzo. Tinorima chibage kwete nokuda asi kuti hapana dzimwe mbeu dzezvido zvedu. (We know that these small grain crops have a great comparative advantage over maize but we have no choice. We grow maize out of our will because there are no other alternative seeds of our choice).

The respondents pointed out that they grew mainly maize because they had no choice of seeds since the nearby GMB depot does not sell small grain crops. Some of the crops grown in Marange that the participants mentioned were groundnuts and round nuts. According to them, the two stated leguminous crops do not offer a staple diet for the Marange residents. They were cultivated just as top-up crops for the assurance of food security in this area. Both the respondents and the ward leaders agreed that to maximise the availability of food in Marange it was imperative to encourage the locals to cultivate small grain crops which were drought tolerant. There were mixed feelings in

the focus group discussions about growing small grain crops as other participants felt that the problem of avian (quelea birds)² could have a negative impact on their yields. However, other respondents were of the view that if all residents grew small grain crops, it would be unlikely that the devastating birds could reduce their harvests to a point of threatening food security. Their argument was that if the majority of communities in Marange grew small grain crops, the quelea birds would not eat up all their produce. At least they would be left with something for consumption. It was also observed that it would be better to plant a crop that could reach maturity than cultivating one that does not. In other words, the respondents felt that small grain crops were likely to reach maturity since they were drought resistant unlike maize.

With regards to the level of food security in Marange, it was pointed out that most of the households were only managing to provide for a single meal per day. All the respondents concurred that they have not had enough food to take them throughout the year since 1999.

5.1.2.2 Reasons for persistent food shortages in Marange

The chronically low food productivity in Marange had been attributed to a number of reasons by the respondents. The first is their inability to pay for hybrid seeds. According to the participants, hybrid seeds referred to the three seed crops available and sold at

² Quelea birds are those multitudinous flocks of tiny birds that fly together in very large groups of several fifties, hundreds or thousands and they feed on and destroy ripe small grain crops.

the nearest GMB depot and these were maize, groundnuts and round nuts. Maize was the only cereal crop offered at the GMB depot. The respondents concurred that the use of maize alone, in their sandy soils and erratic annual rainfall conditions which was poorly distributed, was an undependable alternative to solve the problem of food insecurity in the area. After all, hybrid maize seed had become too expensive beyond the reach of the rural poor in Marange.

The second reason viewed as causing frequent food shortages in Marange was the failure to engage the communities in terms of deciding on the types of the food crops they wish to grow. The participants blamed the government for cunningly deciding on their behalf which crops they should grow. Making only three seed crops available at the GMB depot was seen as an intelligent way by the government of dictating to the rural dwellers which crops to grow. In one of the focus group discussions, the youths held the opinion that the Marange dwellers ought to be given an opportunity to decide on their own which food crops to cultivate as they were not new in their area of habitation. The youths also concurred that GMB should also sell drought tolerant crops like small grain crops and legumes at all its depots. They believed that such a move would provide an opportunity for rural farmers to choose their own priority crops for cultivation that suit their area. This assertion by the youths concurred with the chief for Mudzimundiringe ward who underscored the view and advised:

Inguva zvino yokuti tidzoke kuchivanhu chedu chekare. Tairima mhunga, rukweza nemapfunde kare kare. Hazvaiita kuti titadze kukohwa chero mvura yanaye shoma sei. GMB ngaitengesewo mbeu idzi. Saka ndinoti ngatidzokerei pachikare. (It is high time that we go back to our old culture. We used to grow millet, finger millet and sorghum long ago. It was impossible for us not to harvest even if we received the least rainfall. GMB should sell these seeds. So, I say let us go back to tradition).

The chief for Mudzimundiringe ward further stated that a revisit to the old tradition in Marange of getting involved in “Chief’s Grain Reserves” practice was very important to curtail persistent food shortages. As if he required an immediate answer, he questioned:

Ko, Zunde ramambo rakaendepi? Sezvandambotaura, pakutanga, ngatidzokerei pachikare. (Where has the Chief’s Grain Reserves practice gone? As I said in the beginning, let us go back to tradition).

Moreover, two of the councillors interviewed felt that the rural poor were being neglected to offer their own perceptions and feelings pertaining to the food security programmes being initiated by the government. This sidelining of the rural residents at all levels of food security programme development was seen as a significant contributing factor to the chronic food shortages in Marange. As one of the interviewed councillors noted:

The fact that we live in the rural areas does not necessarily mean that we offer ‘rural’ or what I can term backward input and solutions to this problem

of continual food shortages. It's not by choice to be a rural dweller. We are rich in terms of knowledge generation. ... give us a chance. Don't ignore us. I repeat, give us a chance.

In contrast to the view offered by the respondents in the focus group discussions regarding the high pricing of hybrid maize seed, the district administrator held the following view:

The issue is not about the high cost of hybrid seeds. No! The issue is about the rural communities' inability to complement the government's efforts in trying to curb recurrent food shortages in Marange. Rather, some of them participate negatively.

The administrator pointed out that some rural farmers in Marange ended up selling the farming inputs they were given by the government in order to earn cash to pay for other services they required. He further stated that in some “hard-to-believe” instances, some residents participated negatively by washing and cooking the hybrid seeds they received from the government's crop inputs programme for consumption. The reason for such unproductive acts, according to the administrator, was that the residents felt that sowing the seeds and waiting for harvesting time was too long a time since their families were suffering from starvation. Though such acts by some of the rural residents may be argued to be logical considering the fact that they had no other means to obtain food, the administrator felt that it compromised greatly the government's efforts to

ensure maximum food production. He also pointed out that the rural dwellers ended up using non-hybrid seeds for farming and without fertiliser.

The third cause for persistent food shortages in Marange outlined by the district administrator was attributed to the misguided food security policy of Zimbabwe that was seen as both inconsistent and discouraging the production of food crops for cash crops like soya beans, cotton and tobacco which were very expensive and required high management expertise. He pointed out that the growing of such cash crops in an area like Marange was a waste of resources since the conditions were harsh to sustain the cash crops. According to him, when Marange residents tried to grow such cash crops in the mid-1990s, the threat of food insecurity increased significantly. He believed that there was need for policy makers to come up with a well-articulated food security policy that has a rural bias and that takes into consideration the different climatic conditions in the country. He also pointed out that the government should abandon its policy of encouraging the production of cash crops at the expense of food crops.

5.1.2.3 Diversification of food security activities in Marange

The rural communities in Marange could improve their household food security through expanding their income-generating activities to enhance food availability. According to the respondents, ascertaining food security in Marange does not only imply crop production. They argued that if they were to be given the capacity in terms of skills training and financial back-up, they could diversify their sources of food beyond crop

production, for instance, through engaging in horticultural and or livestock production programmes using their own locally available resources.

Related to this were post-harvest activities which the ward leaders believed as holding a great potential and substantive positive effect on sustainability and improvement of household and community food security; hence contributing to the alleviation of food shortages in the area. The ward leaders held the view that if post-harvest activities were practiced in Marange, food shortages will be alleviated. According to them, post-harvest activities referred to the processing and preservation of agricultural (animal and crop) products. They asserted that animal products like meat can be smoked or dried in the sun then stored. Regarding crop products, they stated that any crop can be threshed and winnowed as soon as possible after harvesting to ensure good grain quality. They maintained that early processing of harvested crops have an advantage of having few broken grains. The ward leaders believed that the processing and preservation of raw agricultural products lead to a general improvement in the shelf life, texture, taste and contamination by pests. Furthermore, the ward leaders stated that crop processing and preservation enable rural households to obtain higher returns from agriculture and in this sense they can have a positive impact on reduction of food shortages since the processed and preserved products can be used at a later stage when need arises.

Moreover, there was a general consensus in the focus group discussions that the utilisation of non-agricultural activities like carpentry, clothing technology, welding and

sculpturing could play a great role in both employment creation and expansion of the income base of the Marange communities, thereby enhancing food security. The ward councillor for Mudzimundiringe commended the good work done by the government in electrifying rural areas. He said, in an in-depth interview, regarding rural electrification:

We applaud the government for embarking on the rural electrification programme. A lot of our youths are now engaged in welding, carpentry, sculpturing and sewing in the Marange growth point and in other schools which were electrified. Our young and old people are now employed and earning extra money to help in their food, health and education needs. Gone are the days when the people of Marange had to wait for the next agricultural rainy season having nothing to do.

5.1.2.4 The government efforts to ascertain food security in Marange

According to the administrator, the government had taken various efforts to ensure food security in Marange. The first government effort outlined by the administrator was the land reform programme. Access to productive land for production purposes was mentioned as a basic prerequisite for the poor to enjoy the benefits of agricultural growth and food security. The administrator further stated that the government had since 1980, when the first phase of the land reform programme was launched, made efforts to improve access to land for productive purposes. According to him the underlying principle for the programme was that if black people were provided with financial assistance, they would be able to purchase land on willing-seller-willing-buyer basis allowing market forces to play their role and, thus, minimising the role of the

government. This was to allow the rural poor access to productive land, hence, increasing food security at national, community and household levels.

The government later felt that the first phase of the land reform programme did not live up to the expectations of quickly ascertaining productive land to the majority of the landless Zimbabweans especially the rural poor. To correct this anomaly, a new programme called “fast-track” land/agrarian reform was introduced in 1998. However, the administrator felt and concluded that the “fast-track” land reform programme was unable to target the rural poor and was unsuccessful in combining equity and efficiency.

The administrator indicated that the pace of the “fast-track” land reform had increased since 2000 in terms of the amount of land redistributed but the number of beneficiaries has declined. Statistics showed that the Marange communities had the least rural beneficiaries of this food security programme. According to his opinion, the decline in the number of beneficiaries was as a result of some powerful people in the society grabbing more than one farm. A major criticism he levelled on the “fast-track” land reform programme was that little attention had been given to the provision of post-settlement support services to the land reform beneficiaries. In his own words,

Worldwide experience demonstrates that it is unproductive to embark on a land reform programme without ensuring access to post-farmer support services.

The second attempt by the government to ensure food security in Marange was the provision of agricultural credit. The administrator believed that improving access to credit was often regarded as one of the key elements in raising agricultural productivity. The rural farmers got credit from The Agricultural Bank of Zimbabwe (Agribank). To show how the Marange residents were in dire need of credit, the administrator remarked as follows:

Comparing the rural areas in Mutare district, the Agricultural Bank of Zimbabwe's report brings to light that Marange has the highest number of communal farmers in need of credit. However, this effort has been hampered because the bank now requires collateral which the rural poor in Marange do not have.

A third highlighted endeavour by the government to ascertain food security in Marange was hinged on infrastructural development. The administrator pointed out that high transaction costs are one of the major factors perpetuating continual food shortages in Marange area and this could largely be attributed to poor infrastructure. Providing his own opinion regarding physical infrastructural development for food security, the administrator had this to say:

An examination of the experience of any nation that has productively developed its agriculture for food security will at all times single out the provision of good quality infrastructure as a prerequisite for attaining higher levels of agricultural productivity and profitability. This is accurate whether one is considering the development of American agriculture or the

Green Revolution experience of Asian states. There can be no farming development for food security devoid of the services that flow from the needed infrastructural elements. A thorough investigation of the Asian Green Revolution brings to light the fact that physical infrastructure like irrigation, roads, storage and so on was a key element in the success achieved. This, I believe, can also happen in our rural areas if physical infrastructural development is taken seriously.

The administrator stated that inadequate physical infrastructure in the rural area of Marange remained a major obstacle to communal agricultural growth aimed at ensuring food security. Due to the government initiatives to improve the quality and quantity of infrastructure in this area through the District Development Fund (DDF) programmes, the impact on the lives of many people in the area had been improved, for example, the DDF managed to construct and routinely maintain a tarred road in Marange. This development allows the rural road network to be kept in good trafficable condition throughout the year.

In the area of communal irrigation in Marange, the administrator pointed out that the government had made large investments but many of the irrigation schemes were not performing optimally. In addition, the pulling out from service provision by the NGOs that were in charge of the operation and upkeep of irrigation infrastructure, due to the unstable political situation in 2008, was threatening the viability of the irrigation schemes. In some of the wards, the government had initiated a process of rehabilitation of the irrigation schemes through DDF and intended to hand over the management of

the schemes to communal farmers once the process was completed. The administrator pointed out that the process had been slowed down due to financial constraints facing the government.

The last two government efforts to ensure food security in Marange outlined by the district administrator were the crop inputs and farm mechanisation programmes. According to him the two initiatives had often been called comprehensive farmer support services. He pointed out that smallholder communal farming for food security in Marange could not be achieved without access to farmer support services. Furthermore, that national and international experience had shown that with adequate access to farmer support services, smallholder communal farmers could significantly increase agricultural productivity and production leading to sound food security.

5.1.2.5 Sustainable food security in Marange

On the subject of sustainability, the respondents were of the view that to ascertain sustainable food security in the area residents ought to be encouraged to practice organic farming. As one of the female respondents remarked:

Divisi rechirungu rokurapa zvirimwa rodhura. Hatikwanisi kuritenga, asi maonero angu, tikashandisa zvataisiita kare zvekusevenzesa mufudze nezvidzere, tinokohwa pakuru. (Synthetic fertiliser for crops is now exorbitant. We cannot purchase it, but in my own opinion, if we utilise our traditional farming methods of using natural composts and anthill soil, we can harvest abundantly).

However, though the respondents advocated for organic farming as an alternative to sustainable food security, the three ward councillors interviewed were of the view that to ensure sustainable food security, the government should establish a special fund to assist its rural farmers to obtain fertiliser and high-yield seeds. They suggested that to augment this development, the government can even construct strategic dams or simple household farm ponds which could collect rain water to be used for emergency irrigation during dry spells. According to them, the development could make a huge difference between a bountiful crop and food shortage. The interviewed councillors further referred back to the mid-1980s when the government fully supported the rural farmers with agricultural extension services in the form of improved inputs, irrigation and credit facilities. Following that back-up, the Marange rural farmers yielded the highest percentage of grain crops sold to the GMB in Mutare District.

On the other side of the spectrum, all respondents cited the issue of supporting home-gardens (called "*matoro*"³ in most rural Zimbabwe) as a good initiative for sustainability of food security in the communities of Marange. The respondents held the feeling that home-gardens could play a pivotal role in ascertaining sustainable food security in that when the communities were no longer engaged in seasonal agriculture, they could engage in the cultivation of their home- gardens. Most of the participants appealed for

³ *Matoro* is a plural for the Shona language noun *doro*. *Doro* is a plot within a fenced household area or a site within walking distance from the home, rarely exceeding one acre and is worked by rural people. The area possesses a perennial water source and rural people grow a variety of vegetables and crops, for example, cabbages, carrots, tomatoes, okra, beans, maize and fruits all year round.

the government to give sufficient attention towards the utilisation of home-gardens as part of an alternative to sustainable food security in Marange.

Lastly, the majority of the respondents felt that active participation in the food security interventions of the government would be the most effective alternative to sustainable food security. The respondents indicated that maximum participation of the locals in decision making during planning and designing stages of food security programmes was of great importance. The councillor for Chindunduma ward, in a separate in-depth interview, backed up this view when he said:

Hakuna ma “project” epundutso yezvekudya anobudirira pasina vanhu venharaunda ino. (There are no food security projects that can succeed without the participation of people of this community).

From the government’s point of view, the issue of organic farming was supported by the district administrator who felt that although the use of synthetic fertilisers, chemicals, plant growth regulators, livestock feed additives and genetically modified organisms may seem to yield very positive results, those were just face-value outcomes. Such methods of farming could not only damage the natural soil resource base alone, but had very negative health implications on human beings. As soon as the communities stop using the synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, they harvest close to nothing because the

soil would be damaged permanently. Following this argument, the administrator commented:

Inorganic farming is not sustainable at all. To maintain soil productivity and control pests so as to have sustainable food security in the communal area of Marange, I feel the government should encourage organic farming, that is, the form of agriculture that relies on crop rotation, green manure, compost, biological pest control and mechanical cultivation; excluding or strictly limiting the use of synthetic fertilisers and chemicals.

In relation to the issue of backing up home-gardens, the administrator agreed that it was a very good alternative that could assist the facilitation of sustainability of food security in Marange. He admitted that such an intervention was never considered useful by the government and he reiterated that that was the benefit of consulting and involving the beneficiaries in the food security planning system. According to his line of reasoning, working in home-gardens could not only close the seasonal gap created but also assist to smooth household income inflow, thereby ensuring sustainable food security in the area. This concentration of labour on a small area and harvesting plentifully was deemed very important. In his own words,

It is wiser to put concerted effort on a small plot and yield abundantly than concentrating effort on a large area and eventually producing very little.

5.2 Data analysis and research findings

5.2.1 Community participation

5.2.1.1 Conceptualisation of community participation

The term community participation is conceptualised differently between the government and the Marange communities. The government sees community participation as the total involvement of all rural people who are likely to be directly or indirectly affected by the food security measures. Although this view appears to include some aspects that are necessary for food security to take place, it lacks a number of vital aspects. Participation seems to be implying that the affected members are involved totally though the administrator was not forthright on how this should happen. Rather, the communities' participation in Marange is passive instead of being an active process whereby the communities' decisions should be respected from the planning up to the evaluation phases.

This is in contrast to Brown (2000) who states that community participation should be viewed as an active process by which beneficiaries influence the direction and the execution of the programme rather than merely being consulted to endorse what would have been defined already at the implementation phase. Brown further asserts that it will be good for the policy makers to come down to the ordinary rural citizens and work together with them, providing them with adequate knowledge and planning their future together till they reach an agreement in decision making. In relation to the communities

in Marange, the definition by Brown implies that the residents' input in the measures is of great importance.

5.2.1.2 Decision making

Pertaining to communities' decision making, the study found that the communities participate in a passive manner. The level of community participation in decision making is at the informing stage where the communities are told to adopt predetermined food security plans. The government introduces the food security projects to the communities when they are ready for implementation. The government uses its own knowledge about the communities' food security concerns. The food security projects fall short of taking into account the inputs of the intended recipients. When it comes to decision making, the Marange communities are co-opted to endorse the decisions made elsewhere. This is in agreement with what Panday (2008) called "representation without participation". The omission of communities from decision making during the planning of the food security measures can be attributed to lack of muscle to either challenge or refute the pre-conceived decisions made somewhere else.

With reference to decision making at the informing level, EPIC (2009) maintains that it is utilised when a decision has already been made by the initiating organisation. According to EPIC, this type of community participation is too conventional and raises risks of possible conflicts and inconsistencies in the implementation of the food security measures. More so, there is a great chance of risking or breaking the principles of

inclusiveness, transparency and trust between the government and the intended beneficiaries of the food security programmes. This has been shown when the youth in focus group discussions associated the provision of unreliable maize seeds to political gimmicks. Clearly, what is being missed here is that an increased level of proper community participation in decision making in the food security initiatives brings about various benefits to the communities. The community benefits include control over their affairs, working, planning and deciding together with the government and maintaining the principles of inclusivity, transparency and confidence. All these benefits will lead to permanent partnership between the government and the communities, restoration of dignity to the poor and sustainability of the food security projects.

5.2.1.3 Designing and owning food security measures

Regarding the designing and owning of food security measures, this study established that the Marange communities were not involved at all in the designing of the plans. The fact that the communities are not engaged in the designing of the food security measures makes them have no sense of ownership to them. Although respondents pointed out that they do not have the skills needed for designing the plans, the reality is that they are not given the leeway and platform where they can offer suggestions to the designing of the food security initiatives. The fact that the government uses reports that come from ward leaders to design the plans for the communities is a clear indication of how the communities are being sidelined in the designing of the initiatives. The government (through ward leaders) does the designing and planning on behalf of the

communities. The communities are only introduced to the completed designs when they are ready for implementation. The sentiments offered by ward leaders on the use of reports to design food security plans concur well with Swanepoel and De Beer (2006)'s observation that while community participation is a desirable objective for the success of food security strategies of the government, the extensive involvement of the government in these food security interventions is weakening the liberty of the ordinary people and their privileges to design and own food security programmes that respond to their real needs and result in local community empowerment.

This study would therefore like to emphasise the fact that it is only through the increase and strengthening of the level of community participation in the designing and ownership of the food security interventions of the government that food security in rural Zimbabwe will become more real than just an illusive dream. This can be done in Marange through giving the residents space to articulate their views and perceptions on how they need the food security plans to be designed. Increased community participation in the food security measures of the government is a means to achieve community capacity to resolve community food shortage problems. According to Townsely (1996), food security projects which are started in response to the communities' needs show higher levels of participation and more consensual modes of decision making, hence, there will be higher levels of ownership of the food security programmes. For instance, the livestock cross-breeding projects which were suggested

by the residents as their priorities are showing higher levels of ownership although women are feeling neglected.

5.2.1.4 Empowerment

On the subject of empowering the Marange communities, the study discovered that the communities require human resource development and capacity building in farming small grain crops. Empowering the rural communities for food security is about building capacity at the community level through farmers' education, training and equipping them with skills, methods and knowledge needed to improve their lives and conditions. It is critical to mobilise people at the grassroots level to build self-reliance. The effort by the government to train the local farmers of Marange merges well with Ndou's proclamation that the outsiders should only come in to facilitate and offer assistance where the rural villagers lack capacity, for instance, technical knowledge related to community-driven development or assistance that responds to community-identified priorities and desired initiatives. Rukuni and Eicher (1994) point out that smallholder (communal farmers) in Zimbabwe doubled maize and cotton production in the 1980s when extension, finance and marketing services were provided. Similar results were also achieved in Malawi and South-East Asia when access to farmer support services was improved (Purcell, 1994). It is crucial to note that in these instances of successful efforts by governments to increase smallholder agricultural productivity, an array of farmer support services were supplied concurrently ranging from training and skills development to provision of financial back-up. To emphasise the need to view these empowerment services as a

package Mosher (1971: 101) refers to them as “elements of a progressive rural structure”.

Having the power to make decisions is also empowerment. Stark (2005) points out that the rural communities should be taken as decision makers as opposed to decision takers. The goal for any assistance in Marange must be self-sustainability whereby the communities are empowered to choose their own objectives, find their own solutions and organise their own programmes. Empowered communities share responsibility for making decisions and accountability for the outcomes of those decisions (Burkey, 2000).

According to Burkey (2000:59), the term empowerment can be taken to refer to “...a process that makes power available so that it can be used for the manipulation of access to and the use of resources in terms of achieving certain development goals”. Through the process of empowerment, people must be able to express and assert what development means to them. Without this process of allowing people to express their own conceptualisation of development, the utilisation of available resources and the fulfilment of basic needs from within can hardly ever be achieved. What this entails, therefore, is that for rural people to participate fully in the food security interventions of the government there is need for the empowerment of the participants so that community food security measures can be successful.

The empowerment of the community also refers to an increase in its strength and improvement in its capacity to accomplish its anticipated goals. In other words, community capacity building is empowerment. Community capacity building recognises that human beings, despite their education, position in society or socio-economic status, have innate capability for limitless achievement. Through the process of information transmission; training; and social and economic skills development, individuals and communities gain self-esteem or confidence and come to understand that they have the capacity within themselves to influence their own lives. For food security initiatives to succeed, therefore, the community members need to be capacitated through skills development such that when they are left on their own to manage the food security projects, they will not encounter difficulties. It is also very crucial to point out that for food security programmes of the government to be feasible they should stick to the values of participation, empowerment and sustainability in order to be in conformity with the process of development in food security issues.

Increasing community capacity in Marange must focus on helping these marginalised people to become independent and capable of dealing with the root problems affecting their lives. As Chambers (1983) notes, the participatory approach offers a means of empowering the poor, the marginalised and the disenfranchised in societies in the design and implementation of programmes without external influence or pressure. The government's move of consulting the locals first before the implementation of a cellular network in Marange can be viewed as a necessary step of allowing the beneficiaries to fully participate in this empowering programme. People contribute much if they feel a

sense of self-worth and value. As a result, sharing skills and knowledge and instilling self-confidence in the residents of Marange must be central at all points within the empowering process.

All the efforts of empowering the Marange communities can be deemed useless if the communities' input to these empowerment efforts is not taken into consideration. It is the rural communities that have the power to decide either the success or failure of the food security empowerment efforts of the government. The government must recognise that the Marange communities should not be seen as helpless victims in need of hand-outs or passive recipients of trickle-down growth. Instead they should be viewed as masters of their own destinies. The role of the government must be, therefore, to create the conditions for the Marange residents to alleviate their food shortages through the process of empowerment. Waisbord (2003) maintains that through the use of community participation, participatory processes provide a sense of ownership and empowerment which are key to food security. In short, community input in these empowerment attempts plays a critical role in ensuring their prosperity in ascertaining food security in Marange.

5.2.2 Food security

5.2.2.1 Crop production and level of food security

Maize production and consumption comprise a great part of diets in Zimbabwe. Over the past decades, maize production had been promoted in all areas in Zimbabwe to the

detriment of more suitable crops. Maize is the dominant food crop in Marange though it is very unreliable due to sensitivity to inadequate rainfall during the crucial crop development stages. This study established that due to erratic rainfall during crucial crop development stages, maize is an unreliable crop to grow in Marange (a drought-prone area). Little effort has been expended on the promotion of alternative crops, including primarily millet, sorghum, finger millet and legumes. The lack of ready producer markets and processing facilities for these alternative crops has also held back promotion efforts for these crops in Marange. While some members of the communities like to grow their traditional small grain crops, problems such as lack of ready producer markets, unavailability of the seeds at GMB depots and threats of devastating quelea birds prohibit them from cultivating these crops.

The Marange communities are quite confident that they can produce more if they are given an opportunity to choose what they need to cultivate. This argument merges so well with what Richards (1987) observed. He asserts that rural citizens need less a standard of package of food security practices and more of a basket of choices. If given the chance and freedom to decide on what they need to grow to maximise food production, the rural communities can do well since they are not new in their area of habitation and are aware of their local concerns better than outsiders. The Marange rural communities can participate positively to increase the level of food security by choosing the most appropriate crops to grow in their area.

With particular regard to the level of food security in Marange, the study discovered that shortage of food is still persistent at household level because of poor community participation whereby the government is failing to value local people's perceptions, needs and knowledge on the crops they feel should be grown in their area to maximise productivity. The efforts by the government often fail to reach and empower the socially and economically poor communities. The other cause of this trend is the over-centralised decision making and implementation process where the communities are required to endorse pre-conceived food security plans.

5.2.2.2 Reasons for continual food shortages

In connection with the continual shortages of food in Marange, the study found that several factors are at play, namely, the continual rising costs of agricultural inputs, lack of decision making by the communities and lack of input in the food security measures of the government as well as unclear food security policies. These are key reasons responsible for recurrent food shortages in Marange.

With reference to lack of decision making, it is important to take note of Rogers (1992)'s input where he stresses that knowledge cannot be transferred and it is constantly an undertaking of self-exploration and discovery; one may be inspired and assisted but cannot be taught. This implies that the job of the government through the rural field officers should not only be of distributing farming inputs without consulting the communities, but supporting rural dwellers to discover for themselves what they need to

grow and to aid them to come up with their own sustainable food security mechanisms. This means that in order to enable rural residents participate better in alleviating the persistent food shortages in Marange they need to be involved as key participants in development planning of food security programmes at all levels. This is the most appropriate way to ensure that the rural dwellers articulate their specific needs and constraints in attempts to enhance food security.

5.2.2.3 Food security policy framework

Regarding the issue of misguided food security policies, Mudimu (2003) argues that there are gaps and inconsistencies in the food policies of Zimbabwe whereby one strategy contradicts the other with regard to food security. He further points out that it is sad to note that Zimbabwe has never had a clearly articulated agricultural policy and one on food security until 2002. Following this argument, there has been a call for the reintroduction of the old traditional Zimbabwean culture of the “Chief’s Grain Reserves” practice as an alternative for curbing the continual food shortages in Marange. The view corresponds well with De Beer and Swanepoel (2000)’s observation when they state that the chief aim of such a practice was to improve the well-being of community members, promote community togetherness and more considerably, increase food security at local community level. The argument is that chronic food shortages in Marange are a result of a shift from traditional food security initiatives to modern practices which are proving to be unsustainable. Also, the national policies are missing the point because they are formulated without addressing different contextual

backgrounds for specific areas in Zimbabwe. Genuine participation by the rural citizens can help the national policy makers to consider the input from rural communities who come from various agro-ecological zones. Therefore, there is need to explore the idea of proper community participation which stresses that the rural inhabitants in Marange should identify and express their needs and aspirations in their own way about any food security initiative that affects their lives and conditions. This can allow them an opportunity to suggest for themselves what action to take, and to monitor and evaluate the results. Their input should be incorporated in the national food security policy framework.

Chopra (2005) is of the view that any rural community has the potential and capacity to define its own local concerns with limited influence from outsiders. As such, rural communities are able to win benefits for themselves if they have strong local organisational capacity. Following this view, the Marange communities, like any other rural communities elsewhere, have the capacity to define and manage their own food security problems if they are given the opportunity to do so. They also possess decision making skills to execute and supervise their own food security plans geared towards the mitigation of food shortages in their areas. The major drawback rests with the government. Food security policies are formulated by professional civil servants in the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement in close collaboration and consultation with politicians and government technocrats (Mudimu, 2003). The food security policy framework is never taken to the ordinary rural citizens for scrutiny and debate. All critical decisions that concern the rural citizens are made by the few top

officials who lack the knowledge of rural social dynamics. The policy framework is just delivered to the rural dwellers as a finished product ready for implementation. What this entails is that the food security policy plans being forced on the ordinary rural citizens for adoption do not reflect their opinions or input. Consequently, the pre-determined food security policies will be taken by the intended beneficiaries as the government's food security plans wholly detached from them. The achievement of stated aims and objectives in the pre-defined food security policy will be difficult to accomplish because in the initial planning phase, the government and the rural people will be operating as separate entities. In a nutshell, the Marange communities are provided no space to put forward their food security concerns let alone contesting the pre-determined food security policy framework presented to them by the government as food security plans ready for execution.

5.2.2.4 Diversification of food security sources

Pertaining to the subject of diversification of food security sources, the rural communities in Marange can improve their household food security through expanding their income-generating activities to enhance food availability. They can diversify their sources of food beyond crop production through engaging in various non-farm production programmes using their own locally available resources. In a bid to conceptualise the term diversification, Palmer and Markish (2004:13) say, "Diversification is a strategy designed to reduce exposure to risk by combining a variety of investments, which are unlikely to move in the same direction".

The chief goal of diversification is to reduce the risk in a portfolio. It reduces both the upside and downside possibilities and allows for more consistent performance under a wide range of economic conditions. Coming over to the issue of food security, diversification therefore refers to a way of branching out from traditional food security activities and taking on new income-generating enterprises that can smooth out unsystematic risk events in the long-established food security initiatives so that the positive performance of one investment will neutralise the negative performance of the other. In short, food security diversification usually involves a shift from habitual farming activities into non-farm projects.

Since Marange area's main economic activity is based on subsistence agriculture and livestock production, the government can utilise this knowledge to come up with appropriate income generating activities that are suitable for the area and that can utilise the locally available indigenous resources, for example, dairy farming, craftwork, seed production for small grain crops, post-harvest processing of agricultural products and improving the processing and marketing of jam from the indigenous mobola plum (*muhacha* or *mushakata*)⁴ tree. The issue of engaging the communities of Marange in decision making comes in again.

⁴ This is an evergreen tropical tree of Africa, found in various kinds of deciduous woodland most frequently in poorly drained areas and inland at moderate altitudes. It is known as the mobola plum tree because of its fruits that resemble plums. Other common English names for this tree are "cork" and "hissing" tree. Its botanical name is *Parinari curatellifolia*. The ripe fruit, which is considered tasty and sweet, is the one the Marange communities use to make jam.

Taking into consideration the rainfall pattern in this area which is predominantly conventional summer type that is poorly distributed and sometimes insufficient to sustain drought-tolerant crops, non-agricultural activities have a potential to play a significant role in complementing the subsistence farming activities. The communities can engage in non-farm activities like clothing technology (tailoring), carpentry, welding, sculpturing and hand craftwork. They can choose the non-farm activities they require that suit their area. In this way the government can use the communities' input to come up with relevant assistance to kick-start the projects designed and decided upon by the communities. The strategies for food security need to take cognisance of the fact that the skills and interests of rural residents are not the same.

Not every rural resident should be treated like a farmer and not all rural residents are interested or skilled in improving their food security through farming. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the food security interventions focus on those that are interested and/ or have the necessary skills to farm successfully on one hand. On the other hand, other rural food security strategies should be developed for those interested in non-farm activities. This can be done successfully through conducting a series of community participatory approach surveys to establish which non-farm activities are of great interest to the locals. The government is supposed to shift its food security programme approach away from one based upon conventional top-down delivery of services towards one that is more participatory and community-based. The Marange communities should not be taken as a homogenous group.

5.2.2.5 Sustainability of food security measures

To establish sustainable food security in Marange the study established that three areas are worth-mentioning and these are encouragement of organic farming, promotion of home gardens and strengthening the active participation, at all stages, of the local communities in decision making. Pride *et al.* (2009:27), use a definition from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to conceptualise sustainability as "... meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Sustainability in the development discourse takes into account the future generations and utilises the available resources in a conservative manner without depriving the generations to come. Sustainable food security entails the adoption of food security measures that have the capacity to be maintained for an indefinite period without damaging the environment, or without depleting the resource base. As indicated by Sen (1981), normally, for anyone, food security depends not only on availability of sufficient food supply, but also on sustainability of permanent access to food.

In concurrence with the sentiments articulated by the administrator and respondents in the focus group discussions regarding the support of organic farming, The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (2008) states that organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of the soils, ecosystems and people. It depends on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the utilisation of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture brings together tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality standard of life for all involved.

With particular reference to the backing of home gardens, Howard cited in Chambers and Momsen (2007) states that home gardening is relatively “invisible”, undercounted and often disparaged as “minor” or “supplemental” to agricultural production. Howard further asserts that home-gardens are often overlooked because the sizes of the plots are perceived as too small to be of significance. Well-development of *matoro* can play a crucial role in providing households with high-nutrient food items, in low input costs, through producing a diversity of food items that are consumed on a daily basis. FAO (2002) also discovered that promoting home-gardens can contribute, not only to sustainable rural food security, but also to dietary diversity, improving food supplies and incomes at the same time. The promotion of home-gardens in Marange can produce positive outcomes if community participation in decision making at all stages takes a centre stage.

According to the participatory approach, if given a chance, indigenous people are capable of identifying and expressing their needs and aspirations in their own way such that the role of the helper is reduced to that of a listener, learner, catalyst and facilitator (Chambers, 1997). If the local communities are given an opportunity to identify their food security priorities in an effort to curb food insecurity, they are likely to give their support and the projects they engage in tend to be sustainable. As Midgley (2005) notes, community-developed solutions are viable since they tend to be reasonable, realistic and sustainable. Therefore, basing on these views from the above authors and those offered by respondents, it is important to note that the Marange rural communities

can contribute much and play a significant role to the development of their societies particularly in ensuring the sustainability of food security projects. This can only be successful if the active participation of the Marange communities in decision making is strengthened.

In conclusion, to ensure food security in Marange, the communities should be taken as decision makers as opposed to decision takers. The communities must be helped to complement the government's food security efforts. The communities' power to design and own the government's food security projects should be improved. Moreover, if the communities are empowered through capacity building, they can play a very significant role in ensuring food security in the area. The communities, through their participation in the food security measures of the government, have the potential to spread risks through diversification beyond just crop production. Thus, the communities can offer more remunerative food security activities that can supplement agricultural production and income. Proper community participation in decision making in the food security measures can contribute more in lessening continual food shortages in Marange.

5.3 Conclusion

The findings indicated that there is more to ascertaining community participation in decision making at all stages in Marange than the mere provision for it in the national food security policies. The findings came up with other insights in the problem of community participation. These insights included differences in the conceptualisation of community participation between government and the communities; how community participation can be reinforced; reasons for persistent food shortages; diversification of food security activities and ensuring sustainable food security in Marange. Participants also saw the challenge of community participation and food security in Marange to be multifaceted as it involves a lot of politics from the ruling party though they felt strongly that it was within the power and ability of the Zimbabwean government to remedy the situation, but that they lack the political will to do so.

In summary, the findings of this study are suggesting that community participation and food security in rural Zimbabwe can only be effective when the factors that present barriers to food production and productivity have been attended to. At the centre of these stumbling blocks is the poor participation of the communities in decision making in the food security interventions of the government especially at the planning and designing phases. Based on these findings, the study came up with several conclusions and recommendations outlined in the proceeding closing chapter.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

The implementation of food security measures in Marange has left men, women and youths feeling that they have not been part of the planning and designing of the projects but that they were co-opted when all decisions had been made elsewhere.

In general, most rural areas in Zimbabwe (including Marange) suffer from capacity constraints linked to low training and skills development base. The transmission of skills and development of competency is critical as it ensures sustainability of food security programmes. The Marange communities need human resource development and capacity building so as to empower them. There was no training given to equip the communities with skills required for food security especially on production of small grain crops.

The food security situation in rural Zimbabwe is not clearly defined by any policy framework. If policy is not clear and well-articulated, designed programmes tend to fall short of the main concerns of the intended recipients. It must be observed that a programme like food security is just but an expression of policy. The greatest question that is of significance is to what extent the intended recipients of the programme have had any input? With regard to the Marange communities, it is clear that in terms of the designing, planning and decision making processes the current policies must shift towards a more transformative participatory designed approach. If the communities have no feeling of ownership like those in Marange, it is an indication that they were treated as inactive recipients of pre-conceived food security programmes.

The issue of sustainability is a fundamental aspect for any development project. To establish sustainable food security in Marange, the study established that three areas needed emphasis and these were encouragement of organic farming, promotion of home gardens and strengthening the active participation, at all stages, of the local communities in decision making in the food security measures.

Community participation and food security in rural Zimbabwe should be viewed as a comprehensive, coordinated and inclusive effort towards stimulating agricultural and non-agricultural productivity on the basis of connected and mutually supportive control and local activities. Food security is likely to come about in Marange as a result of diversification of food security sources. The strategies for increasing food productivity must be specific to local conditions and concerns. All food production activities and non-agricultural activities ought to be implemented with full consent from the local communities.

6.2 Recommendations

From this research, the following recommendations to the government, non-governmental organisations, donor agencies and development practitioners in Zimbabwe are important for the implementation of viable and sustainable food security measures. The recommendations can assist to maximise opportunities of community participation in decision making in the food security measures so as to increase and ascertain food security for rural residents.

6.2.1 Decision making

The food security policies and strategies in place are not favourable for alleviating food shortages, particularly rural food insecurity and do not give freedom for the rural poor to participate in decision making. For example, in terms of the Marange communities, there was far less involvement of the recipients in decision making in the planning and designing of the food security programmes. A developmental approach to food security requires that the recipients be part of decisions that are made regarding their lives. Rural communities must not be consulted to implement predetermined decisions but their proposals and views need to be given thorough consideration.

- It is therefore recommended that the government food security strategies must be set out and aimed at taking into account the input from beneficiaries. Rural citizens' voice should be respected as decision makers as opposed to decision takers.

6.2.2 Approaches to participation

Basing on the findings obtained from this study, the level of community participation in food security decision making in Marange is mostly at the lowest (informing) stage though there are some trends and elements of consultation in the decision making process. For instance, the crop inputs and farm mechanisation food security programmes were predetermined projects which were introduced to the communities as completed policy frameworks ready for adoption and implementation. The communities were denied an opportunity to participate in decision making during the planning and

designing phases of these measures. These food security plans fall short of the communities' inputs, as a result, the communities view them as government initiatives totally detached from them. The ICT and livestock cross-breeding projects were the only two cited food security projects where trends and elements of community consultations were recorded in terms of decision making during the planning and designing stages.

- The government must strive to move away from its traditional informing approach towards consultation and involvement approaches to participation since an increased level of proper community participation in decision making at the planning and designing phases of food security measures brings benefits to the communities. Gradually, the government may reach the collaboration and empowerment levels of community participation in food security decision making. This requires the government's total commitment and political will in seeing the rural areas develop in terms of food security.

6.2.3 Human resource development and capacity building (Empowerment)

Human resource development and capacity building entail training the participants in the area they are focusing on, for instance, the Marange participants would need training on farming small grain cereals. Attaining these skills under skills development would result in empowerment and self-reliance. Thus, they will be competent to do their work more effectively without waiting for external professional guidance.

- It is highly recommended that the government deploys more workers from the Agricultural Ministry (AGRITEX) to support the farmers in Marange with skills

development specifically in the production of small grain crops. Training in agricultural production and general marketing of small grain crops is important for these rural citizens to increase their food production and income generation. The government must also consider women's needs in terms of empowering them in the areas of their interest. Food security will be more successful if income-generating activities and skills development, such as extension services and community participation, are gender sensitive.

6.2.4 Food security policy framework

There is need to reformulate food security policies in a way that realise and enhance the crucially important role played by the rural communities' total participation in household food security in rural Zimbabwe. In essence, the government needs to be encouraged to come up with a clear and well-articulated agricultural and food security policy that has a rural bias and that takes into consideration the various agro-ecological farming zones or natural farming regions of Zimbabwe. The policy should be consistent and devoid of contradictions.

- It is greatly recommended that the government or programme initiators must take the food security policy framework to the intended beneficiaries so that they can articulate their own input and suggest possible solutions to their food insecurity concerns that affect them locally.

6.2.5 Sustainability of food security measures

The importance of sustainability of food security measures in the rural areas of Zimbabwe cannot be over-emphasised. The role of home-gardens (*matoro*) in sustainable household food security has not been given sufficient attention in rural food security policies or programmes. It is more intelligent to exert concerted effort on a small plot and harvest abundantly than concentrating effort on a big area and in the long run yield very little (Mutare Rural District Administrator, 2009). More to this is the promotion of organic farming. In order for beneficiaries to have that feeling of belonging, self-worth and to be motivated, they need to be involved from the inception of the idea of the sustainable food security programme. This will reinforce the spirit of belonging and ownership to the programmes.

- Therefore it is recommended that the initiators of the food security projects must consult and involve communities and other relevant stakeholders with regard to decision making and implementation of the food security programmes. Thus, all recipients must be involved in decision making at all phases so as to motivate them and make them accountable for any successes or failures of the initiatives. With particular reference to Marange communities, the suggested interventions such as the promotion of home gardens and the practising of organic farming for sustainable food security in the area must be given due consideration.

6.2.6 Diversification of food security sources

It must be noted that ascertaining food security does not only imply crop production. Rural citizens can diversify their sources of food beyond crop production, for example,

through engaging in horticultural and or livestock management programmes using locally available resources.

- There is a need to come up with approaches to expand and encourage the engagement into horticultural and or livestock management programmes through the utilisation of locally obtainable resources in order to broaden the horizon of rural food security sources. It is also recommended that food security initiators must encourage rural citizens to come up with their own preferred horticultural and livestock activities that respond to their real local needs. The idea of treating rural dwellers as a homogenous group should be avoided at all costs.

6.2.7 Stimulation of rural non-farm employment

The stimulation of the rural non-farm economy generates jobs and income for poor farmers and their families. Policies that promote non-farm development can allow the rural poor to move to new jobs. Non-farm pursuits increasingly offer greater income potential for the poor than agriculture. The Marange communities can also engage in non-farm activities and be given the capacity in terms of training, skills development and financial support.

- There is a need to create approaches to expand and encourage the engagement into non-agricultural activities in order to widen the prospect of rural food security sources. It is also recommended that food security initiators must encourage

rural citizens to come up with their own preferred non-farm activities that respond to their real local needs. Policies that promote the development of the non-agricultural sector need to be encouraged.

6.3 Summary

Although decision makers are not comfortable with the idea of community participation in designing and planning food security initiatives of the government, it offers valuable opportunities to rectify the inequality of past top-down, prescriptive approaches and improves the chances of achieving food security in rural Zimbabwe. As Mogale, quoted in Davids *et al.* (2005:129), remarks “Whatever critics may say, the notion of participation has widespread common sense, appeal and impact.” In the rural Zimbabwean context, Mogale holds the view that community input in decision making during the initial stages of planning leads to an expected transformation in the whole system of food security. This study has maintained that such transformation should involve the building blocks to food security, meaning that with the proper participation of the community at all stages from the planning to evaluation phases there will be a process of social learning, leading to ownership of food security programmes and empowerment of beneficiaries.

Community participation and food security in rural Zimbabwe will only become a reality if the government-initiated food security measures live up to expectations as interventions for democratic, grassroots decision making. Community participation is an essential part of human growth, that is, the development of self-confidence, pride,

initiative, responsibility and cooperation. Without such a development within the people themselves, all efforts to alleviate their food shortage concerns will be very difficult, if not impossible. This process, whereby the communities learn to take charge of their own lives and solve their own food shortage problems, is the essence of community participation for food security in rural Zimbabwe. Community participation and food security in the rural areas should be an educational and empowering process in which the recipients, in partnership with each other and those able to assist them, identify problems and needs, mobilise local resources and assume accountability themselves to plan, manage, control and assess the individual and collective actions that they themselves decide upon. The study has striven to understand the meaning the Marange communities had constructed about their world and experiences. The aim was to understand the nature of that setting, what their lives were like, what was going on for them, what their meanings were and what the world looked like in that particular setting.

In a nutshell, food security cannot be realised in rural Zimbabwe unless the community participates fully in the conceptualisation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the government-initiated food security programmes or projects.

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Appendix A

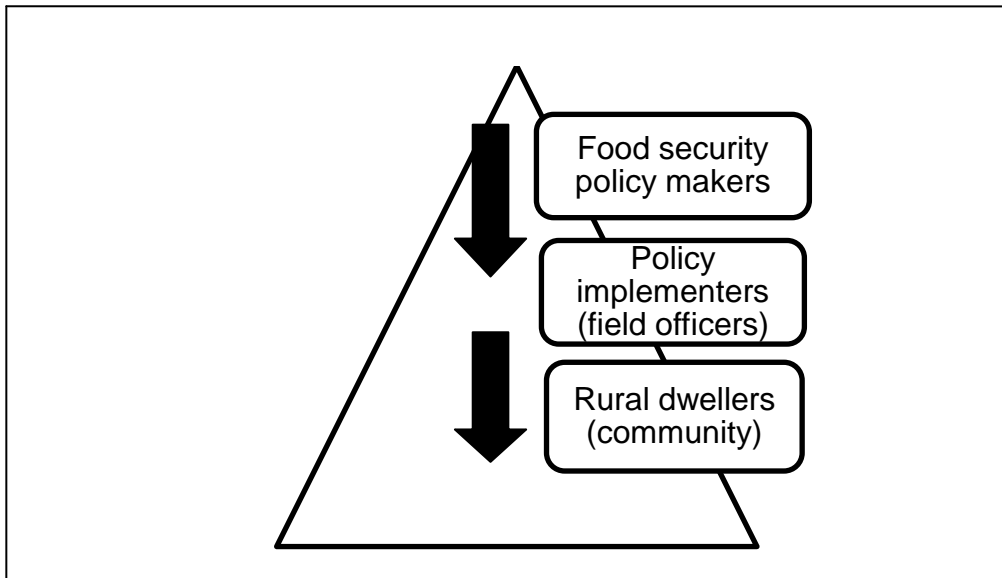
Table 1: Number of participants or interviewees per ward

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Youths</i>	<i>Ward leaders</i>	<i>Total</i>
Chindunduma	9	10	8	1	28
Mudzimundiringe	10	9	7	2	28
Nyachityu	10	9	10	1	30
Total	29	28	25	4	86

Source: Fieldwork data, 2009

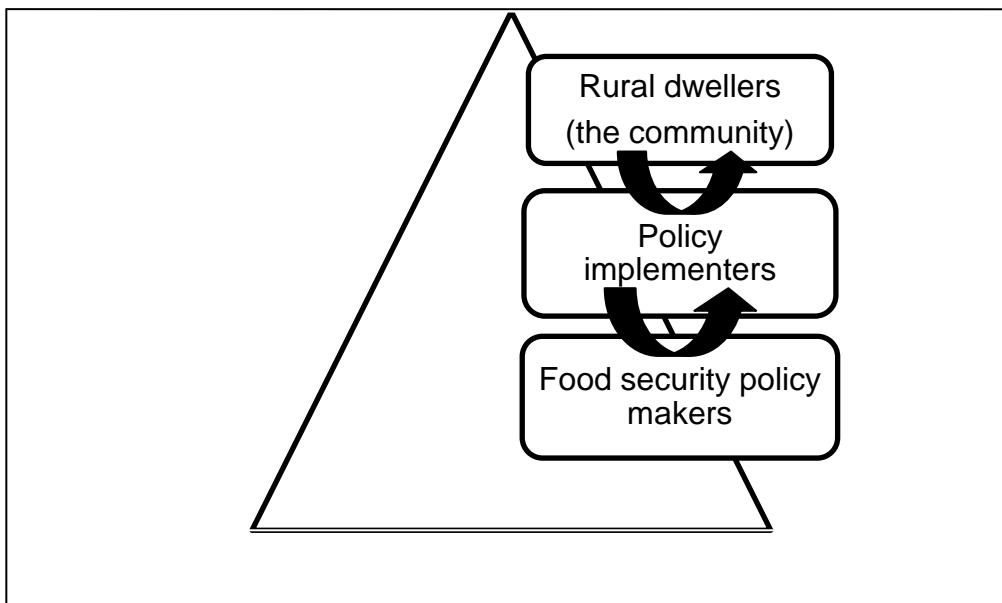
Appendix B

Figure 1: The main focus of the conventional approach to rural food security



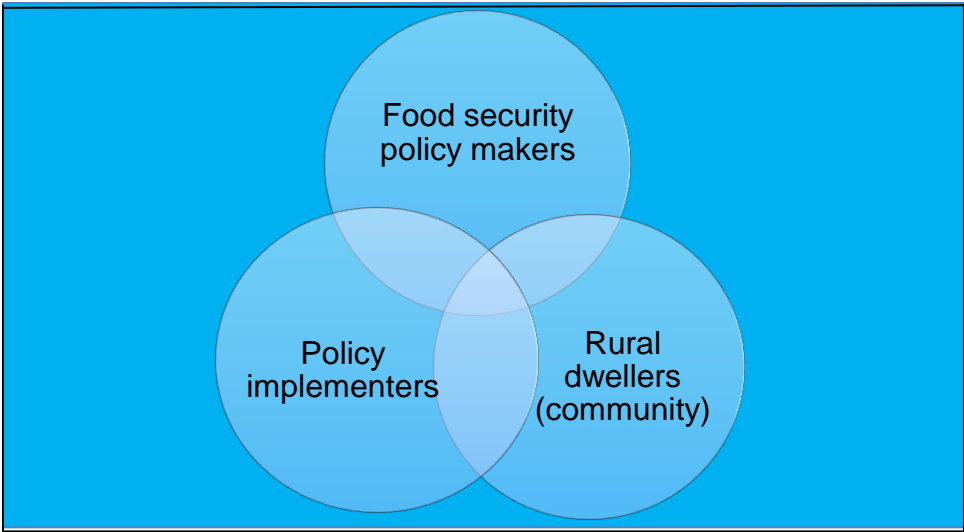
Source: Adapted from Stark, 2005

Figure 2: The major focus of participatory approach to community food security



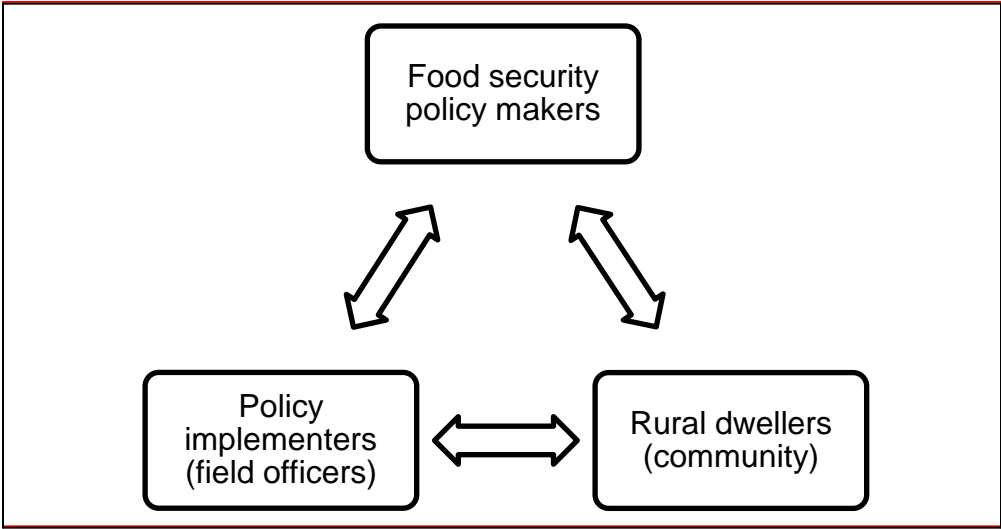
Source: Adapted from Stark, 2005

Figure 3: Interaction among players in the participatory approach



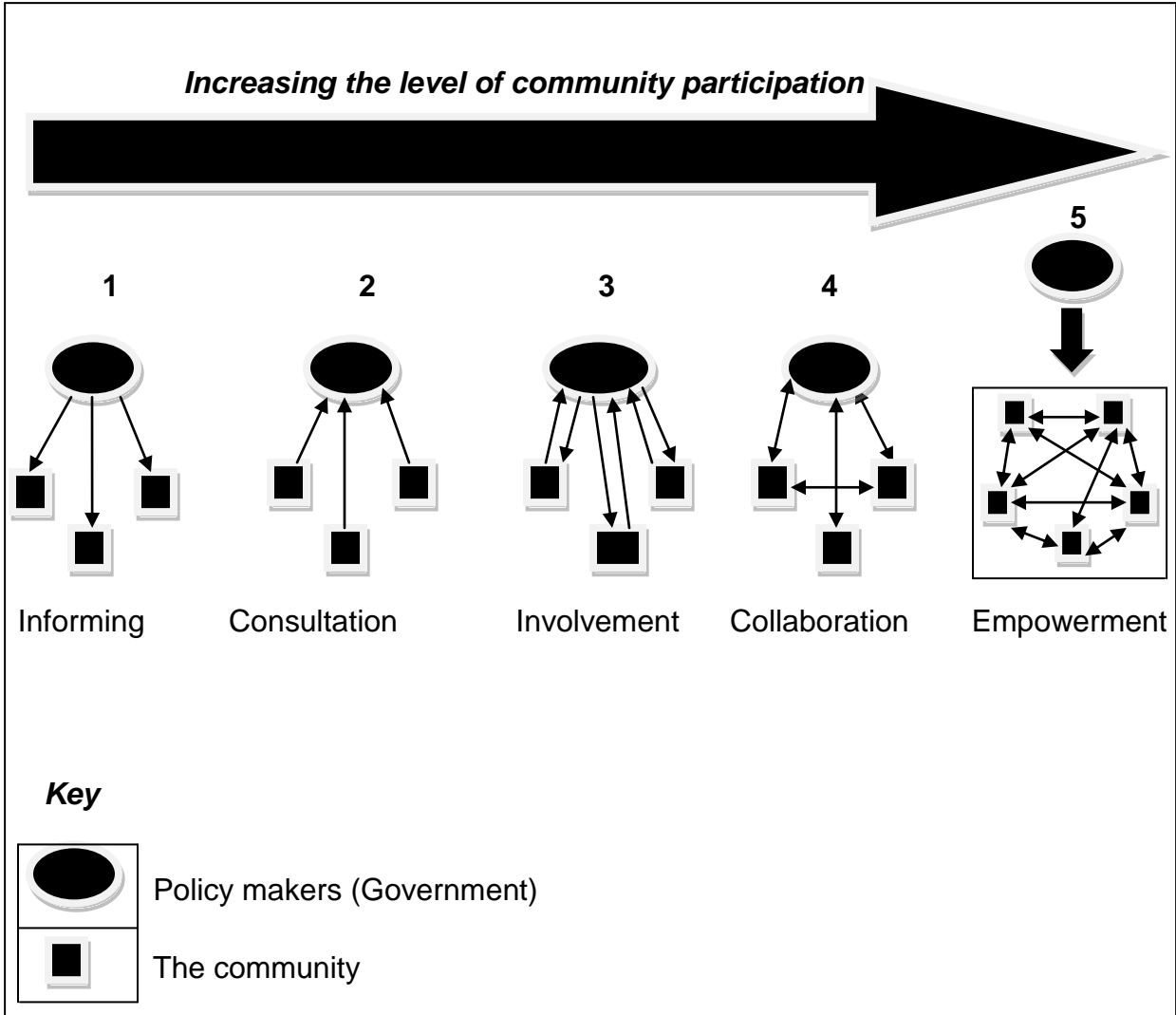
Source: Adapted from Ndou, 2007

Figure 4: Communication and feedback in the participatory approach



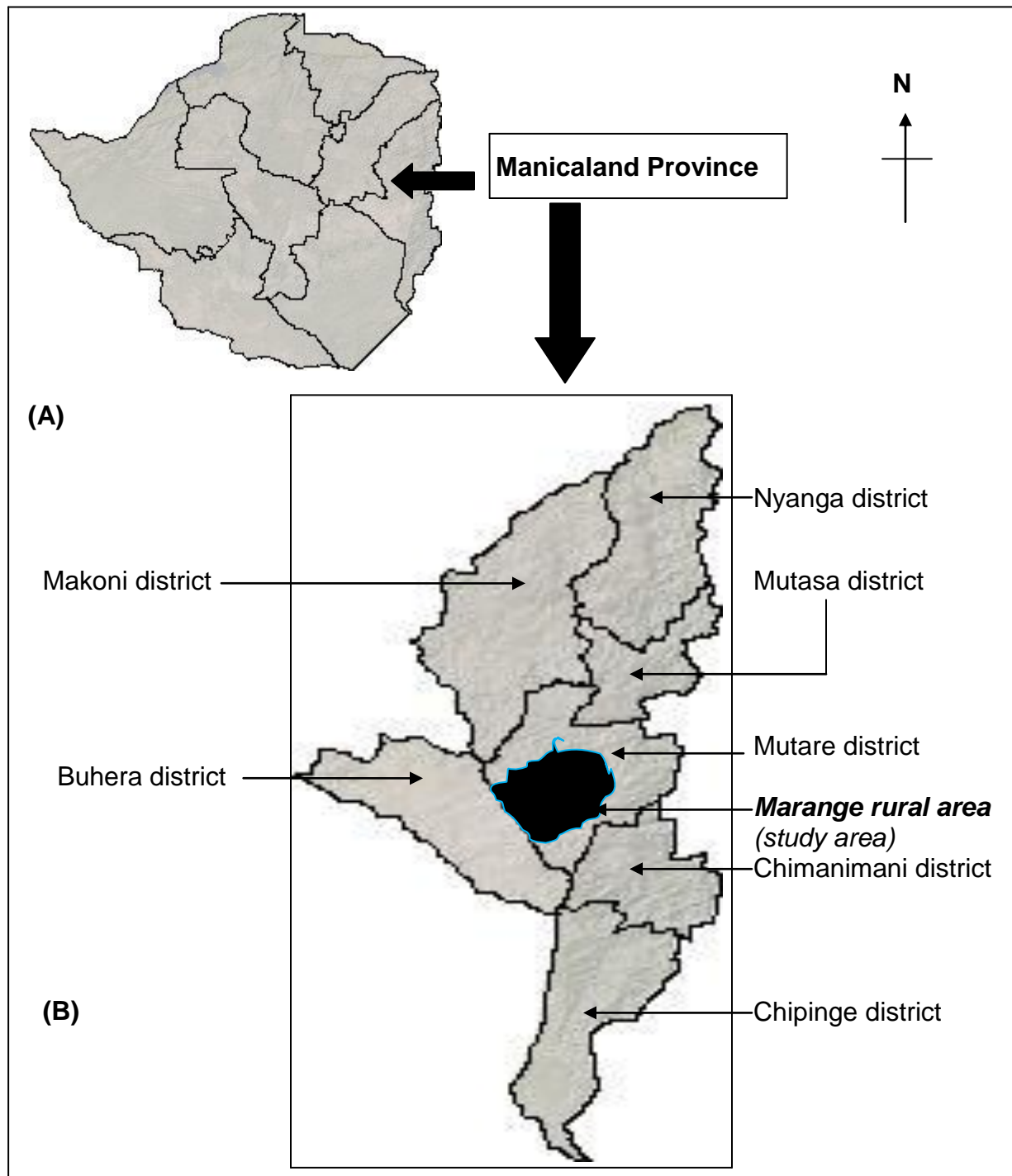
Source: Adapted from Ndou, 2007

Figure 5: Levels of community participation in decision-making



Source: Adapted from EPIC, 2009

Figure 6: Maps of (A) Zimbabwe showing Provincial boundaries (top)
(B) Manicaland Province showing its districts and the study area
(bottom)



Source: Adapted from Pesanayi, 2008

Appendix C

Addendum 1: Participation information sheet



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Dear Respondent

Thank you for participating in this study. The information you provide forms part of a descriptive research project that seeks to gain in-depth information on Community Participation and Food Security in rural Zimbabwe. The study will be done through a case study design and data will be gathered using in-depth interviews with individuals and focus groups. The interviews will be conducted in the participant's choice of language. If you choose to participate, you will be required to take part in either a one-to-one interview or focus group discussion measuring various aspects of the role of the rural communities in the food security initiatives of the government for the alleviation of food shortages in Marange area. The focus will be on local community empowerment; ownership of food security initiatives by the community; community's independent analysis of needs and priorities; community involvement in designing food security programmes and the role of the government in supporting the community efforts.

Before you show your willingness to participate in this study by endorsing your signature on the attached consent form, take note of the following:

- Participation in this study will be on volunteer basis. There will be no financial or any material rewards that will accrue to participants for partaking this research. However, all efforts will be acknowledged in this study.
- Ethical considerations will take preference in this study. Ethical principles as outlined in the research proposal will be upheld to the uttermost level possible; including the principle of confidentiality. With regard to identification of participants, this will be done only at the approval of the respondents themselves.
- You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Notes will be taken from your responses and form part of the research report.
- You have the right to access the feedback of the findings of the study.
- The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to one hour.

I hope that the results of the project will assist rural development personnel with information that may help alleviate food shortages in rural areas and re-orient approaches to food security programmes in order to save time, resources and money.

If you choose to participate in this research, please sign the attached consent form.

Addendum 2: English consent form

CONSENT FORM

Research Topic: Community Participation and Food Security in Rural Zimbabwe: The case of Marange area in Mutare District.

Researcher: Mr C. Swikepi **E-mail:** chieswikepi@yahoo.com **Phone:** +26311785353

Research Assistants: Mr B. Marova and Mr P. Tarondwa

Supervisor: Mrs P.B. Monyai **E-mail:** pmonyai@ufh.ac.za **Phone:** +274060022100

I or (We) ----- do hereby confirm that:

- 1) I or we have read the attached participation information sheet and fully understand the nature and purpose of the study and hence agree to take part in the study.
- 2) I understand that there will be no financial or material benefits to be gained from taking part in this study.
- 3) I understand that while information from this research may be published, I will not be identified, unless I consent to true identification; besides that my identity should remain confidential.
- 4) I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.
- 5) I understand that notes will be taken from my responses and will also make part of the research report.
- 6) I understand that I have the right to access the feedback of the findings of the study.
- 7) I understand that the interview will take roughly 45 minutes to one hour.

Signature(s):

Date: -----/-----/-----

Addendum 3: Shona consent form

WIRIRANO

Musoro weOngororo: Rubatso rwenharaunda nekukotsekana kwezvokudya mumaruva eZimbabwe: Dunhu reMarange maMutare.

Muongorori: Chiedzwa Swikepi **Nhare:** +263772349962

Vabatsiri muongororo: VaB. Marova naVaP. Tarondwa

Muongorori wemuongorori: Muzvare P.B. Monyai **Nhare:** +274060022100

Ini/ Isu ----- ndinobvuma kuti:

- 1) Ndaverenga nokunzwisisa mamiriro nechinangwa cheongororo iri kuitwa mudunhu muno naizvozvo ndinozvipira ndichibatikanawo neongororo iyi kuti ndiitewo rupande rwangu.
- 2) Ndinonzwisisa kuti hapana mari kana mubayiro wandichapiwa mukuisa rupande rwangu muongororo iyi.
- 3) Ndinonzwisisa kuti kanapo zvandichapa muongororo iyi zvichazoshambadzwa, handizozivikanwi, kunze kwekutoti ndabvuma kuti ndizivikanwe; pasina izvozvo zivikano yangu inofanira kuramba yakavanzwa.
- 4) Ndinonzwisisa kuti ndakasununguka kubuda muongororo iyi chero ipi zvayo nguva.
- 5) Ndinonzwisisa kuti mhinduro dzandichapa dzichanyorwa pasi uye dzichaumbawo chidimbu cheongororo iyi.
- 6) Ndinonzwisisa kuti ndine kodzero yokuonawo zvichabuda muongororo iyi.
- 7) Ndinonzwisisa kuti hurukuro yacho ichatora maminitisi makumi mana nemashanu kusvika awa imwe.

Siginicha:

Zuva: -----/-----/-----



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Addendum 4: Focus group interview guide for ordinary village participants

Good day and welcome to our session. Thank you for taking the time to join our discussion on Community Participation and Food Security in Rural Zimbabwe. My name is Chiedzwa Swikepi. Assisting me today are Mr Blessing Marova and Mr Past-tense Tarondwa. We are gathering information about the role of the rural communities in the food security initiatives of the government for alleviating food shortages in Marange rural area. We have invited you as people with similar experiences to share your perceptions and ideas on this topic. You were selected because you have certain things in common that interest us. You are men, women, and youth. We are particularly interested in your views because you are representatives of others of your age group and gender in Marange.

Today we will be discussing the role that you play in the food security initiatives of the government. This includes local community empowerment; ownership of food security measures by the communities; communities' independent analysis of needs and priorities; involvement in designing food security programmes and the government's role in supporting your efforts. There are no right or wrong answers, but rather differing viewpoints. Feel free to share your point of view, even if it differs from what others have said. Before we begin, let me remind you of some ground rules. Please speak up with only one person speaking at a time. We are writing notes on the session because we do not want to miss any of your comments. We will be using pseudo names and in our later reports, there will not be any names associated with comments. You are assured of absolute confidentiality.

Keep in mind that we are just as interested in negative comments as positive ones, and at times, the negative comments are the most important. Our session will last about 45 minutes to one hour. I am going to ask the first question differently from the remainder of the questions. I will ask the first question, and then pause to allow you to form your thoughts. Then I will ask each of you to respond to the first question. After this, anyone may respond to any question or discussion at any time.

Let us begin with the first question:

Questions related to Community Participation

1. Which government initiated programmes are meant to increase food production in your area?
2. How did you come to know of these programmes?
3. Who initiated the programmes?
4. What input did you give before these programmes were started?
5. Were you given a chance to choose what you need to do in your area that can increase the availability of food in this area?
6. What do you think should be done to make sure that what you need to do as a community is respected and implemented?

Questions related to Food Security

1. Do you have enough food to eat throughout the year?
2. How many meals do you take per day and why?
3. Which crops do you grow in this area?

4. What makes you grow these crops?
5. What other crops do you feel should be grown in this area to maximise availability of food?
6. Besides growing such crops, what other means do you use to get food in times of crop failure?
7. From the inception of the government food security programmes, how has this improved your food storages?
8. What challenges do you face as a community in trying to increase food production and how do you think these can be addressed?
9. As a community, how do you think you can help the government's efforts in trying to alleviate food shortages in Marange?

We greatly thank you for your participation and the views you have supplied.



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Addendum 5: In-depth interview guide for ward leaders

My name is Chiedzwa Swikepi, from the University of Fort Hare in the department of Development Studies pursuing a Master of Social Science Degree. I am conducting a study on Community Participation and Food Security in rural Zimbabwe. You are guaranteed that the information you supply in this study will be utilised exclusively for academic purposes. Your responses will be treated as confidential as possible. Note that no answer will be considered as right or wrong. Your cooperation determines the prosperity of this study. Thank you.

Questions related to Community Participation

1. Which government initiated food programmes meant to increase food production are in this area?
2. As leaders of Marange area, how did you come to know of these programmes?
3. How do you make the villagers know of such government food programmes?
4. What input did the villagers make towards such programmes and how did you handle their views?
5. How often do you meet with your community to discuss problems related to food shortages in this area?
6. How do you make sure that the villagers' viewpoints are incorporated in the food production programmes?

7. What are other issues do you think are important about the community's involvement in the programmes?

Questions related to Food Security

1. Do you usually face food shortages in Marange communal area?

2. How long have you been facing food shortages in this area?

3. Which crops do you grow in Marange?

4. Why do you think food shortages continue in Marange despite you growing the crops you have mentioned?

5. How does the Marange community cope with food shortages?

6. As leaders of Marange, what challenges are being faced by the community in trying to increase food production and how do you think these can be dealt with?

7. How is the government attempting to help your community to have enough food throughout the year?

8. How is your community assisting the government's efforts to ensure food availability in Marange?

9. What other things do you think need to be done for people to have enough food?

Thank you for your cooperation in this study.



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Addendum 6: In-depth interview guide for Mutare Rural District Administrator

My name is Chiedzwa Swikepi, from the University of Fort Hare in the department of Development Studies pursuing a Master of Social Science Degree. I am conducting a study on Community Participation and Food Security in rural Zimbabwe. You are guaranteed that the information you supply in this study will be utilised exclusively for academic purposes. Your responses will be treated as confidential as possible. Note that no answer will be considered as right or wrong. Your cooperation determines the prosperity of this study. Thank you.

1. Which government initiated food security measures are put in place for the Mutare communal areas?
2. Which food security measures initiated by the government are owned by the Marange community?
3. How is the Marange community involved in designing food security measures?
4. How does the Marange community enjoy the freedom of independent analysis of their needs and priorities in the food security initiatives of the government?
5. In what ways are the rural dwellers in Marange being empowered in the food security measures of the government?
6. Are there any differences in conceptualisation of community participation in food security measures of the government between the government and the community?

7. What role does the Zimbabwean government play in linking with the rural community in ascertaining food security in Marange?
8. What role should the rural community play in the food security initiatives of the government for alleviating food shortages in Marange communal lands?
9. What things do you think need to be done to reinforce community participation?
10. What things do you think need to be done to ensure sustainable food security in the area?

Thank you very much for your cooperation in this study.

Addendum 7: Application for police clearance



University of Fort Hare
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University of Fort Hare
Private Bag X1314
Alice, 5700
South Africa

The Member in Charge
Bambazongwe Police Station
P/A Bazeley Bridge
Mutare

20 November, 2009

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Application for clearance to hold academic focus group discussions

As provided by the laws of the Government of Zimbabwe, under the Public Order and Security Act, I hereby present my application to hold academic focus group discussions with some members of Chindunduma, Mudzimundiringe and Nyachityu wards in Marange communal area. It is proposed that the meeting places will be Mutimba, Muchisi and Bemhiwa primary schools respectively. The groups will consist of a maximum of 10 people. The proposed discussion week-ending dates will be 13th, 20th and 27th of December 2009 correspondingly. Forming part of the discussion will be questions pertaining to community participation in food security measures of the government in curbing continual food shortages in Marange area. It is emphasised that these are purely academic discussions whose outcomes are intended for use in the compilation of an academic research report to the effect of the award of a Master of Social Science degree by the University of Fort Hare in South Africa.

I am hoping you will consider my application.

Yours Faithfully,

Chiedzwa Swikepi (Mr.) **Phone:** +263772349962 **I.D Number:** 75-274034B-75

Addendum 8: Clearance letter from the police



Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP)
Bambazongwe Police Camp
P/A Bazeley Bridge
Mutare

November 30, 2009

Dear Sir

Ref: Clearance to hold academic focus group discussions

We hereby acknowledge receipt of your application dated 20 November 2009 for the aforementioned reference. I, Senior Commissioner **J.R. Mapaura**, in my capacity as the Acting Member in Charge at the above-mentioned police station, representing the Government of Zimbabwe, hereby declare that permission is granted to you **Mr. C. Swikepi** (I.D. Number 75-274034B-75) to freely hold academic focus group discussions only in the specified wards, places and dates with some members of the community. This institution fully backs you and assures that there will not be any disruptions that will be caused during the holding of such academic discussions. If you need any assistance from us, you are free to conduct us.

We wish you a good success in your studies.

Faithfully Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.R. Mapaura', written over a dotted line.

J.R. Mapaura

(Senior Commissioner: Acting Member in Charge)



Addendum 9: Reference letter from Departmental H.O.D. and Supervisor

University of Fort Hare

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND COMMERCE

Alice (main) Campus:

Private Bag X1314, King William's Town Rd, Alice, 5700, RSA
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University of Fort Hare
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**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

Private Bag X1314, Alice, 5700
Tel. 27 40 602 2100/2202, Fax 27 40 653 1007/1394, Cell 082 444 5982
Email pmonyai@ufh.ac.za

06 November 2009

The community leader/Project manager
Mutare District
Zimbabwe

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH

This is to certify that Mr C Swikepi is a registered student in the Department of Development Studies doing his Masters degree studies. He is doing field work as part of the requirements of the qualification and his area of interest is on community food security issues relating to the efforts of government, NGOs and the community. His research work is under the title "Community participation and food security in rural Zimbabwe: the case of Marange communal area".

As part of the method for data collection Mr Swikepi needs to have discussions with relevant people in the district office, the ward leaders and members of the community of Marange that can assist with information regarding the issues of his research. He also would need access to your libraries and archives for documentation pertaining to the history and activities around the efforts of food security in the area.

The research is purely for academic purposes and when the study has been completed a copy of the thesis can be made available to your office/organisation on request. Should you need any further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me on the details given above. We are looking forward to your kind assistance.

RESPECTFULLY

**PB MONYAI (HOD)
& SUPERVISOR**

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