

**THE ROLE OF MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY CENTRE (MPCC) SERVICE  
AND INFORMATION PROVIDERS TOWARDS IMPROVING QUALITY OF  
COMMUNITY LIFE – A CASE OF SEBOKENG**

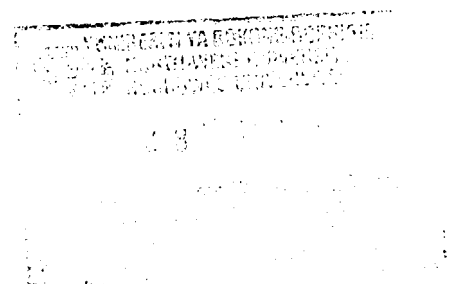
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I declare that this is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete reference.

H. Rabali

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The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul (proverbs 13:19).

***SOLI DEO GLORIA!*** (Glory be to God).

## ABSTRACT

In South Africa, certain areas are well developed with infrastructures that compare with first world standards, while in others, people live in abject poverty without basic services being rendered.

Poverty is the single greatest burden of South Africa's people. It is defined as the inability to meet a specified set of basic needs. This means that apart from low income levels, malnutrition and hunger, poverty manifests itself in poor people's lives in many other ways, including lack of access to basic social services. Poverty is characterized by the inability of individuals, households or communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living. It is perceived by poor South Africans themselves to include alienation from the community, food insecurity, crowded homes, usage of unsafe and inefficient forms of energy and lack of jobs that are adequately paid and / or secure.

Because the government doesn't want to alienate those it is trying to serve, public services are being brought closer to people, so as to improve the quality of community life. The underlying reason for the implementation of Multi-purpose Community Centres (MPCCs) is to bring government services closer to people and to provide the community with the opportunity to communicate with government. Multi-Purpose Community Centres have been identified as the primary approach for the implementation of development communication and information programmes. MPCCs also serve as a base from which a wide range of services and products can reach communities. The aim is for communities to access such services and engage in government programmes for their own empowerment. As a result, MPCCs are a necessary poverty alleviation strategy that needs to be promoted for the improvement of the quality of community life.

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## **CHAPTER 1            INTRODUCTION**

**KEY WORDS:**        Poverty, service delivery, development communication, information, services, quality of life, community, Multi-purpose Community Centre (MPCC).

### **1.1 ORIENTATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Ten years of democracy have brought major changes to the developmental role of the South African state. It is now committed to fostering development through a service-orientated culture that places people's needs at the forefront of State endeavours (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2004:10).

With the legacy of Apartheid, certain areas are well developed with infrastructures that compare with first world standards, while in others, people live in abject poverty without basic services being rendered (MPCC's - Cornerstone of the African Renaissance, 1998:2). The South African economy and society comprise a developed economy with sound macro economic management, surrounded by a second underdeveloped economy characterised by poverty and unemployment. The challenge is to integrate the two economies while meeting the needs of both (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2004: 10).

In order to achieve integration, the developmental state must be people-orientated and be capable of addressing the socio-economic needs of its entire population – especially those of the poor, marginalized and historically disadvantaged (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2004: 10-11).

Poverty is the single greatest burden of South Africa's people and it is the direct effect of the apartheid system and the grossly skewed nature of business and industrial development which accompanied it (ANC, 1994: 14).

Amartya Sen (IUCN, 2002:1) defines poverty as the “inability to meet a specified set of basic needs.” This means that apart from low income levels, malnutrition and hunger, poverty manifests itself in poor people’s lives in many other ways, including lack of access to basic social services. Poverty is characterized by the inability of individuals, households or communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living. It is perceived by poor South Africans themselves to include alienation from the community, food insecurity, crowded homes, usage of unsafe and inefficient forms of energy and lack of jobs that are adequately paid and / or secure (May & Wilkins, 1998:1).

Research has for example, shown that the poorer segment of the South African population (believed to be more than 70%) is unable to access the full potential benefit of the socio-economic programmes of government. Access to both information about services and to the services themselves has been shown as a major obstacle. Poor people are often simply unaware of the benefits and services to which they are entitled to. It is also apparent that people in poor communities lack skills required to engage with government around services, whether it is a matter of filling out forms or preparing a business plan (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2004: 14).

This urgently needs to be addressed, as government risks alienating those whom it is trying to serve. The government needs to be brought closer to people, in order to enable people to make better use of government services in order to improve the quality of their lives (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2004: 14).

One way to do this is through the provision of services and information from Multi-Purpose Community centres.

The Government Communication and Information System has in recent years been establishing Multi-Purpose Community Centres (MPCCs) in township and rural areas, which provide a range of government services on the doorstep of formerly

neglected communities (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2004: 2004:15). Multi-Purpose Community Centres have been identified as the primary approach for the implementation of development communication and information programmes as they can serve as a base from which a wide range of services and products can reach communities. The aim is for communities to access such services and engage in government programmes for their own empowerment (GCIS, 2001:1:).

Development communication is about providing communities with information they can use to change their lives for the better. This is according to “Batho Pele” principles which puts people first and uses the communication methods that are practiced in communities (GCIS, 2002:5). The main focus of development communication and information is on the poor and the disadvantaged who have little or no access to information. They are found mainly in townships and rural areas (GCIS, 2002:2).

For the purpose of the government MPCC programme, MPCCs are defined as those centres that have at least six government departments offering services to people who live close by. MPCCs should also have access to technology in the form of an Information Technology Centre (ITC) such as a Telecentre or other forms. Such services add value to those services that are offered by the NGO and business sectors (GCIS, 2001:1).

The national Communication and Information System (co-ordinated at the Government Communication and Information System [GCIS]) has among others, been tasked in the Cabinet approved Comtask Report to provide development communication and information to the public to ensure that they become active participants in changing their lives for the better. (*Comtask Report Clause 65*) To achieve this, all appropriate forms of media, including both print, electronic and other, have to be used to provide the required information as well as two-way communication services. This would also include direct communication with

communities through unmediated products and community liaison, the Internet and Telecentres (GCIS, 2001).

The MPCC approach is seen as a response to the particular historical, social and economic factors, which characterised freedom of access to information and citizen participation, in our past political system. This includes socio-economic problems such as high levels of poverty, high unemployment, low standards of living (people living below the poverty line), poor access to basic services, remote settlement patterns, lack of access to technology, lack of information, poor health services, lack of education and skills and lack of infrastructure (GCIS, 2001).

The MPCC programme was initiated in 1999 as a vehicle for the implementation of development communication and information, and to introduce government services into primary rural communities. MPCCs are one-stop, integrated community development centres that encourage community participation and offer services relevant to people's needs. They aim to empower the poor and disadvantaged through access to information, services and resources from government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), parastatals and business', enabling them to engage in government programmes for the improvement of their lives (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2004:90). MPCCs help people who could not reach government in the past to get information and services. The vision behind the implementation of MPCCs is to provide every South African citizen with access to information and services, within five minutes of their place of residence. Multi-purpose Community Centres are being set up across the country to better the quality of life for every South African citizen through integrated and accessible service delivery (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2002:60).

Multi-Purpose Community Centres (MPCCs) have been identified as the primary approach for the implementation of development communication and information as they can offer a wide range of services that communities can use for their own

empowerment (GCIS, 2001). Information and development services are crucial for the improvement of life for the majority of people in South Africa. Recent studies by the World Bank and others have highlighted that the most effective way to alleviate poverty is through effective acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. Access to information through new information and communication technologies and the capacity to use it effectively, is imperative to the progress and prosperity for all in South Africa (MPCC's - Cornerstone of the African Renaissance, 1998:2).

From the above background, it is clear that the improvement of the quality of life for South African citizens depends on the provision of access to information and services from the Multi-Purpose Community Centre service providers (departments and organisations). Multi-purpose Community Centres are being set up across the country to improve the quality of life for every South African citizen through integrated and accessible service delivery. The services rendered by a service provider of a MPCC should therefore aim to improve the quality of life for the South African citizens it is serving. It is imperative for this research to be conducted, so that it may be discovered as to how the services and information provided by service providers at the Sebokeng Multi-purpose Community Centre tend to improve the quality of life for South African citizens. The services and information provided by the service providers of the Sebokeng MPCC should aim to improve the quality for the South African citizens it is serving. This is because the core purpose behind the implementation of MPCCs, is the improvement of quality of life for South African Citizens. Also, this research aims to discover what the needs of the service providers are, so that they may use their maximum potential in rendering services and in providing information to South African citizens. Recommendations and conclusions will also be provided. Other information to be gathered through the conduction of this research will be in relation to the formulated research questions. The study focuses on the operations on MPCCs in general, but this is a case study of MPCC functions at Sebokeng.

## **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What is the extent of poverty and inequality in South African communities?
- What are the benefits and advantages of having MPCCs in communities and what are the services rendered by a multipurpose community centre?
- How do the kind of services and access to information provided by the service providers at the Sebokeng MPCC play a role in the improvement of the quality of life for South African citizens?
- How is the Sebokeng Multi-Purpose Community Centre financed?
- What are the needs of the MPCC service providers?

## **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- To provide an exposition of poverty and inequality in South African communities.
- To highlight the importance of having MPCCs as poverty alleviation strategies in communities.
- To discover how the kind of services and access to information provided by the service providers at the Sebokeng lead to the improvement of the quality of community.
- To trace the sources of finance for the Sebokeng Multi-Purpose Community Centre.
- To discover what the needs of the Service providers at the Sebokeng MPCC are, so that they may use their maximum potential towards providing services and information to South African citizens.

## **1.4 HYPOTHESIS**

- The promotion of MPCC is necessary for poverty alleviation and improvement of community life.

## **1.5 METHODS OF INVESTIGATION**

The following methods in gathering the relevant factual information were used:

### **1.5.1 Literature study**

Researchers have an obligation to acquaint themselves with any publication on major research already conducted in the researched topic of interest and take the most widely accepted theoretical positions and the most recent debates into consideration (Mouton, 1996:119). Books, journals and Internet sources were consulted in order to give a theoretical exposition of poverty and inequality in South Africa. To gather factual information about MPCCs as poverty alleviation strategies in communities, the researcher has made use of journals and internet sources.

### **1.5.2 Empirical research and design**

#### **1.5.2.1 Observation**

An observation of the MPCC building and offices, was undertaken in order to find out who the service providers at the Sebokeng MPCC are and in order to discover the needs of the MPCC service providers. Also called non-participant observation, the observation aimed to record events as observed by an outsider (Mouton, 1996: 103).

#### **1.5.2.2 Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews are a low-cost, rapid method for gathering information from individuals or small groups. These interviews are partially structured by a written interview guide. The flexible guide ensures that the interview stays focused on the development issue at hand, but that the interview is conversational enough to allow participants to introduce and discuss issues which they deem to be relevant (The World Bank Group, 2004:1). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with

at least one key informant (personnel) from service providers and with the Government Communication and information System (GCIS) communication officer. Objectives of the interview were to highlight the importance of having MPCCs as poverty alleviation strategies in communities and to identify how the kind of services and access to information provided by the service providers at the Sebokeng lead to the improvement of the quality of community. In addition the objectives for conducting the interviews were to gather information about the Sebokeng MPCC and to discover what the needs of the Service providers at the Sebokeng MPCC are, so that they may use their maximum potential towards providing services and information to South African citizens.

#### **1.6. PRELIMINARY CHAPTERS**

- Chapter one: Introduction
- Chapter two: A theoretical exposition of poverty and inequality in South Africa
- Chapter three: MPCCs as poverty alleviation strategies in communities
- Chapter four: Empirical Study of the Sebokeng MPCC
- Chapter five: Recommendations and conclusions

## CHAPTER 2      THEORETICAL EXPOSITION OF POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The distribution of income and wealth in South Africa is among the most unequal in the world. Many households still have unsatisfactory access to education, health care, energy and clean water. This situation is likely to affect not only the country's social and political stability, but also the development path it follows: countries with less equal distributions of income and wealth tend not to grow as rapidly as those with more equitable distributions (May & Wilkins, 1998:1). Although poverty has always been part of society, it affects the society as a whole.

Poverty derives from complex roots and causes. It is further aggravated by circumstances prevailing within the economy and in society. Any medium or longer term strategy to reduce poverty will be unsuccessful if the roots, causes and aggravators are not identified and addressed (World Development Report, 2002:6). It is therefore imperative for the roots and causes to be identified and addressed in order to alleviate poverty.

This chapter aims to provide an exposition of poverty and inequality in South Africa. In doing so, poverty will be defined and described. Included in this chapter are the levels of poverty, measures of poverty, chronic poverty and its experiential aspects, as well as groups of people who are categorized as chronically poor. In addition, incorporated as part of this chapter is the roots and causes of poverty, socio-economic policies since 1994 and the role of institutions in responding to the needs of the communities.

## **2.2 POVERTY**

Poverty is a condition of being in want of the essential elements required to sustain human life and human health. It means experiencing scarcity and deficiencies, and existing in a state of deprivation, or often of multiple deprivations (Feuerstein, 1997:206).

### **2.2.1 Defining and describing poverty**

The World Bank defines poverty as 'the inability to attain minimal standards of living (Spier, 1994: 1). It is characterized by the inability of individuals, households or communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living. In addition, poverty is perceived by poor South Africans themselves to include alienation from the community, food insecurity, crowded homes, usage of unsafe and inefficient forms of energy, lack of jobs that are adequately paid and / or secure, and fragmentation of the family. Poverty is not a static condition; individuals, households or communities may be vulnerable to poverty as a result of shocks and crises (uncontrollable events which harm livelihoods and food security) and long-term trends (such as racial and gender discrimination, environmental degradation and macroeconomic trends). Vulnerability to poverty is therefore characterized by an inability to devise an appropriate coping or management strategy in times of crisis. Poverty may also involve social exclusion in either an economic dimension (exclusion from the labour market and opportunities to earn income) or a purely social dimension such as exclusion from decision-making, social services, and access to community and family support (May & Wilkins, 1998:4).

### **2.2.2 Manifestations of poverty**

International studies focused on determining the perspectives of the poor themselves on poverty suggest a number of dimensions of "well-being". It follows that the lack of "well-being" deriving from the lack of one or more of these elements

serves to characterise poverty in its broader manifestation from the viewpoint of those who actually experience it.

These dimensions of well-being are:

***Material well-being comprising:***

- Food security.
- Possession of assets.

In the rural areas this takes the form of secure land tenure and possession of the necessary assets and/or capital for its cultivation. In urban areas it generally takes the form of secure employment or alternatively capital and other necessities for starting some self-employment enterprise (World Development Report, 2000:5).

***Physical well-being comprising:***

- Physical health and strength.

Their capacity to perform physical menial work is frequently the only means at the disposal of poor people to earn a living.

- Human dignity and appearance.

For many of the poor, worldwide poverty implies a loss of dignity and of self worth (World Development Report, 2000:5).

***Security comprising:***

- Protection against rising corruption, crime and violence.

In developing countries, generally, the poor do not have “connections” and thus are not able to benefit from the corrupt favouritism which characterises the administration.

- Recourse to justice.
- Absence of war and ethnic strife.
- Security against natural disasters.

- Relief from the physical fear that frequently affects the people living within a lawless subculture of poverty (World Development Report, 2000:5).

***Freedom of choice and action comprising:***

- The power to control one's own life.
- The power to avoid exploitation and other humiliating treatment.
- The opportunity to acquire skills, education and the means of self-improvement.
- The opportunity to live in "good places" where there is security and some prospect of improvement.

The poor most often live in marginal or decaying areas not suitable for human habitation. With increasing population pressure and neglect these areas are systematically degraded.

- The power to withstand sudden and seasonal stresses.

The poor have to take proportionally greater risks than the affluent to survive crime, exposure to usury ("loan sharking") and other means that place a proportionally higher price on survival (World Development Report, 2000:5).

## **2.3 POVERTY LEVELS**

Absolute poverty, relative poverty and subjective poverty, are the three types of poverty levels discussed below.

### **2.3.1 Absolute poverty**

Absolute poverty has to do with the deprivation of individuals relative to some absolute and predetermined norm(s) and standard(s) taken by society as a suitable measure of the minimum necessities of life or of a minimally acceptable standard of living (World Development Report, 2000:1). For some, being poor means lacking what is necessary for basic physical survival (Werner, 2002:1). Often this is termed

absolute poverty. Absolute poverty is based on the assessment of minimum subsistence requirements, involving a judgment on basic human needs that are measured in terms of the resources required to maintain health and physical efficiency. All perceived as necessary for a healthy life, these resources include the quality and quantity of food, clothing and shelter (World Development Report, 2000:1).

The measurement of absolute poverty has been based on a number of indicators such as the “Level of living Index,” focusing on such basic needs as:

- Nutrition: Indicated mainly by caloric and protein intake
- Shelter: Reflected by the quality of dwelling and absence or presence as well as the degree of overcrowding.
- Health: As reflected, for example, by the health status of the population, which includes the overall physical, mental and the social wellbeing of the individuals in the population. This includes other trends indicated by infant mortality rates, access to and quality of available medical facilities (Odhiambo, W., Omiti, J.M. & Muthaka, D.I, 2005:24).

The basic human needs have also been broadened beyond physical survival to include “basic social and cultural needs” such as:

- Education: As indicated by the proportion of the population enrolled in schools.
- Security: The numbers of violent deaths, relative to the population size and also cases and types of theft, mugging, rape, etc., have been taken to reflect the socio-cultural and security status of the resident populations.
- Leisure: The amount of leisure time, relative to work time has been considered as a good indicator of life consolations away from propensities towards socio-economic inadequacies (Odhiambo, W., Omiti, J.M. & Muthaka, D.I, 2005:24).

Absolute poverty is a level of poverty at which certain minimum standards of living – for example for nutrition, health and shelter – cannot be met. In other words, a person is absolutely poor if they do not have the means to procure some minimum amount of goods and services to attain some standard of living (Wikipedia, 2005:1).

### **2.3.2 Relative poverty or Inequality**

Relative deprivation or inequality, on the other hand, essentially has to do with the deprivation of individuals relative to others in the society in which they function. Relative deprivation is in this sense a universal and permanent feature of human society (*World Development Report*, 2000:1). 'Inequality' can be defined in terms of being the opposite of 'equality', a state of social organisation that enables or provides equal access to resources and opportunities to all members (May & Wilkins, 1998:3).

Relative poverty is a poverty measure based on a poor standard of living or a low income relative to the rest of society. Unlike absolute poverty, it does not necessarily imply that physical human necessities of nutrition, health and shelter cannot be met. Instead, it suggests that the lack of access to many of the goods and services expected by the rest of the contemporary society leads to social exclusion and damaging results for the individuals and families in relative poverty (GuruNet, 2005). For these individuals, their survival is not threatened, but they are placed in a position of significant disadvantage in relation to the rest of the population. Their poverty is relative (Werner, 2002:1).

### **2.3.3 Subjective poverty**

Closely related to relative poverty, subjective poverty has to do with whether or not individuals or groups actually feel poor. This is because those defined as poor by the standards of the day will probably have low self-esteem, hence see themselves as poor (Odhiambo, W., Omiti, J.M. & Muthaka, D.I, 2005:25).

Moderately-well-to-do person, who might have done much better before, but currently experiencing cash-flow problems, may subjectively feel poor. Groups or societies seen as relatively poor by majority standards may also not see themselves as poor. They may either be having different assessment standards or lower estimates of acceptable living standards (Odhiambo, W., Omiti, J.M. & Muthaka, D.I, 2005:25).

## **2.4 MEASURING POVERTY**

Poverty measurements discussed below are the poverty line and the Gini coefficient.

### **2.4.1 Poverty line**

A poverty line is a tool for measuring poverty. Most poverty lines are based on income or consumption data. People are counted as poor when their measured standard of living is below a minimum acceptable level – the poverty line (The World bank, 1993:1). It is conventional to draw up a 'poverty line' reflecting the monetary value of consumption which separates the 'poor' from the 'non-poor'. For South Africa this cut-off point can be defined by considering the poorest 40% of households (about 19 million people or just under 50% of the population) as 'poor', giving a monthly household expenditure level of R353 per adult equivalent (May & Wilkins, 1998:5).

### **2.4.2 The Gini coefficient**

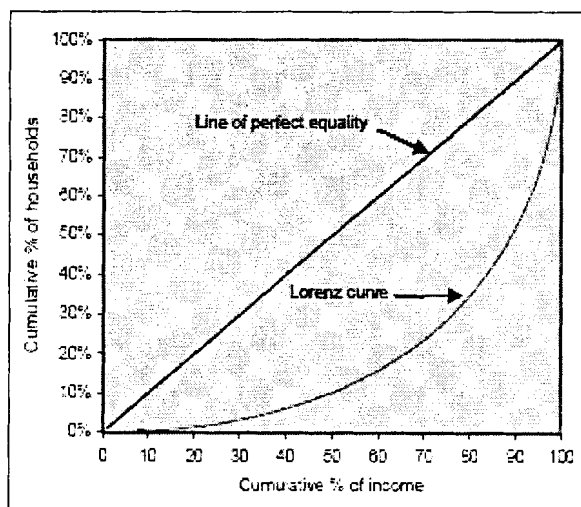
Inequality is measured by the Gini coefficient, which can vary between "0" and "1". The closer to 1, the more unequal a society, and the closer to 0 the more equal a society. The Gini coefficient measures the distribution of the national income. In a perfectly equal society 10% of the population will receive 10% of the income; 20% of the population will receive 20% of income and so on. For such a society the Gini

coefficient will be zero. If, say, 10% of society receives 30% of the income, or 20% receives 50% of the income, the distribution is more unequal and the Gini coefficient higher. At 1, being the highest possible score, 1% of the population would receive 100% of the income (Landman, 2003:3).

The Gini coefficient is calculated from the Lorenz curve that plots the cumulative percentages of total income received against the cumulative number of recipients, starting with the poorest household. The figure below shows a hypothetical Lorenz curve. The Gini measures the area between the Lorenz curve and a hypothetical line of absolute equality, expressed as a percentage of the maximum area under the line. In geometric terms the Gini coefficient is measured as:

$$G = \frac{\text{area between Lorenz curve and line of perfect equality}}{\text{total area below line of perfect equality}}$$

**Figure 1: Lorenz curve**



South Africa's Gini coefficient rose from 0.69 in 1996 to 0.77 in 2001.

Within population groups it is as follows:

**Table 1: Gini coefficient by population group**

	1991	1996	2001
African	0.62	0.66	0.72
White	0.46	0.50	0.60
Coloured	0.52	0.56	0.64
Asian	0.49	0.52	0.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.68</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>0.77</b>

:

(Schwabe, 2004:2-4.)

## **2.5 THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX**

In measures of human development such as life expectancy, infant mortality and adult illiteracy, South Africa compares unfavorably with several other middle-income countries. These indicators also vary widely by race group, gender and geographical location within the country, however. Such comparisons are supported by use of the Human Development Index (HDI), an indicator constructed to determine the extent to which people live long, informed and comfortable lives, and which combines measures of life expectancy at birth, education levels, and standard of living. The HDIs for South Africa, its nine provinces and four population groups can be compared with those of other countries. The Western Cape and Gauteng, as well as the white and Indian population groups, fall within the HDI range equivalent to 'high human development'. Northern Province falls within the HDI range equivalent to 'low human development'. The other provinces, together with the coloured and African population groups and the HDI for South Africa as a whole, fall within the 'medium human development' range (May & Wilkins, 1998:5).

## **2.6 PROVINCIAL POVERTY RATES**

Provincial poverty rates are highest for the Eastern Cape (71%), Free State (63%), North-West (62%), Limpopo Province (59%) and Mpumalanga (57%), and lowest for Gauteng (17%) and the Western Cape (28%). Poverty is *deepest* in the Eastern Cape, Free State and Northern Province, which together make up 36% of the population but account for 51% of the total poverty gap. Poverty is not confined to any one race group, but is concentrated among blacks, particularly Africans: 61% of Africans and 38% of coloureds are poor, compared with 5% of Indians and 1% of whites. Three children in five live in poor households, and many children are exposed to public and domestic violence, malnutrition, and inconsistent parenting and schooling. The child risk of poverty varies widely by province: in the Eastern Cape 78% of children live in poor households, compared with 20% in Gauteng (May & Wilkins, 1998:5).

## **2.7 TEMPORARY AND CHRONIC POVERTY**

Poverty may be chronic (long-term) or temporary (short-term). Chronic poverty is usually the more difficult to address, and is often associated with persistent inter-generational poverty. Temporary poverty may result from a one-time decline in living standards (for example following the loss of a job), from which a household gradually emerges. It may show itself in fluctuations in well-being that result in frequent declines in living standards. For example, external shocks in the form of policy changes or natural disasters may plunge a household into poverty. In contrast, seasonal variations in food security may result in some households periodically falling in and out of poverty, sometimes quite regularly, over time (Woolard & Leibbrandt, 1999:17-18).

A household or individual is understood to be in chronic poverty when the condition of poverty endures over a period of time. Chronic poverty can be understood as a household's or individual's inability, or lack of opportunity, to better its circumstances over time or to sustain itself through difficult periods. As such, chronic poverty can be a function of the individual's characteristics such as elderly or disabled, or of the environment indicated by sustained periods of high unemployment or landlessness, or very likely of both. Indeed, a common scenario in South Africa involves the coincidence of poor health, meagre education, and fractured families, on the one side, with skewed resource distribution, inadequate infrastructure, and scarce employment opportunities, on the other side. The combination is more than sufficient to trap many people in poverty, that is. to make them chronically poor. Chronic poverty is sometimes conceptualised as inter-generational poverty, meaning that children from poor households are likely to become poor adults, whose children will in turn risk remaining in poverty, and so on (Aliber, 2001:2).

## **2.8 CATEGORIES OF CHRONICALLY POOR PEOPLE**

The poor are sometimes classified into three sub-groups: the chronically poor, the borderline poor and the new poor. The chronically poor are those whose income levels remain continually below a given poverty line, defined by minimum consumption standards: they suffer from acute deprivation (Riddell & Robinson, 1995: 11).

### **2.8.1 The rural poor**

The rural areas of South Africa suffer from a legacy of inappropriate production and investment decisions by government and the rural population. For many rural people in the former homeland areas, economic and social decisions remain conditioned by their unequal and distorted access to markets, services and opportunities. In contrast, the non-homeland rural areas are characterised by an over-capitalised, over-mechanised, job-shedding commercial agriculture. Asset

ownership and distribution patterns remain those formed by apartheid; in particular, landlessness and over-crowding persist in the former homeland areas. A huge backlog in rural infrastructure persists, and urbanisation runs the risk of simply relocating rural poverty into urban slums. The high cost of delivering services to rural communities with limited economic potential results in tension between goals of fiscal discipline and those of decreasing poverty and inequality. The rural areas of South Africa have a population of about 16.9 million people, 45% of the country's total population. While poverty is not primarily a rural issue, the risk of becoming and remaining poor remains significantly higher in rural than in urban areas. Using income-based or calorie-based poverty lines, half of the households and two thirds of the people in rural areas can be classified as poor. Over 70% of rural African households live in conditions which are inadequate or intolerable in terms of their access to shelter, energy, water and sanitation, and rural women are a particularly vulnerable group (May & Wilkins, 1998:5).

Formal sector employment opportunities are scarce in many rural areas. There has been a rapid decline of farm employment, which accounts for almost one third of all rural employment opportunities. Many mine workers retrenched in the past five years are also remaining in or returning to rural areas. Other conditions that exacerbate poverty is the lack of infrastructure and poor quality of services, the relatively low levels of education, the high number of single-parent households, and relatively poor opportunities to engage in non-agricultural self-employment (Aliber, 2001:33).

### **2.8.2 Female-headed households**

From OHS 1999 (in Aliber, 2001:33) 42% of all African households, that is 2.7 million, are female-headed. By and large, these can be considered single-parent households, though they may occasionally receive remittances from absent males. In 35% of these households, the household head is the only adult (18 years and older) in the households. Around 17% are so-called 'granny households', that is the

female household head is the grandmother rather than the mother of the children. The reasons for which female-headed households have a high probability of being stuck in chronic poverty are numerous. One of the reasons is that many female-headed households rely only on the income of the mother, that is likely to be low. The female household head may rely mainly on child support grants from government, or on intermittent remittances from relatives or gifts from benefactors. If likely, the household head will have some form of self-employment or employment in the secondary labour market, meaning a low level of remuneration. Many heads of female-headed households find it difficult to pursue better employment opportunities because they must look after their children, because they do not have access to a crèche, cannot afford one, and do not have a family member such as a mother who can oblige (Aliber, 2001:34).

### **2.8.3 People with disabilities**

According to the 1996 census, 2.7 million people in South Africa have disabilities, of whom about 41% are sight disabled, 21% are physically disabled, and 14% are hearing disabled (Stats SA, 2000 in Aliber, 2001:34). Of these 2.7 million people, 1.6 million are adults between the ages 20 and 65. Disabilities can vastly reduce one's chances of obtaining a job, can impede one's pursuit of self-employment in the informal sector, and can also impose medical and other costs that one would not otherwise have to bear. Of course, being disabled does not imply that there are not other household members who earn decent incomes. Surprisingly, data from the 1996 census show that there is not such a strong link between disabilities and unemployment.

From OHS 1999 (in Aliber 2001:35) it can be discerned that around 4.6% of all households are headed by disabled people. If we compare, say, the incidence of self-reported household hunger between these households and all other households, it is clear that households where the head is a disabled person tend to be more deprived. First, of those households having a child that is 6 years or

younger (about 40% of both categories of households qualify), one third of the households headed by a disabled person lacked sufficient money to feed that child in the previous year, while this was true of one fifth of the households headed by non-disabled people. Similarly, households headed by disabled people have experienced hunger (that is for any household member) 27% of the time, versus 16% of the time for other households. A crude inference is that about 11% of disabled-headed households face hunger at least in part due to the status of the household head. These households are chronically poor in the sense that the circumstances that maintain them in poverty are not easily changed, be they the personal attributes of the household head, or the social forces that limit the opportunities available to disabled people generally (Aliber, 2001:35).

#### **2.8.4 The elderly**

Elderly people are a specific concern in terms of poverty especially if, like the disabled, they must fend entirely for themselves and for dependants. Many elderly people, who do not have others on whom to rely for support, do receive old age grants, but it is clear from Roberts 2000 (in Aliber 2001:35) that these grants are in no way sufficient to keep a household out of poverty. In other words, the widespread allocation of old age grants is not an indication that there are no chronically poor households effectively headed by elderly people. The problem with the concept of chronic poverty when considering the elderly is that one does not expect the elderly to improve their circumstances by means of finding gainful employment. Thus to the extent a poor elderly person manages to escape his or her state of poverty, it would generally be because her household circumstances have changed, for instance a daughter or son has found a good job, or some kind of financial burden has been removed.

Extrapolating from OHS 1999 (in Aliber 2001:36) some 4.2% of households might belong to the category of being poor by virtue of being dependent on a low-earning

or non-earning elderly person, or 378 000. Of course, many of these will be included amongst the other categories already considered, such as female-headed and rural households (Aliber, 2001:36).

#### **2.8.5 Retrenched farm workers**

As mentioned above, one of the critical factors contributing to households' vulnerability and lack of opportunity, is social exclusion. It has been argued that one group particularly susceptible to social exclusion is former farm workers. Having been retrenched, farm workers are usually evicted from the farms where they have resided. Many retrenched farm workers were in fact born and raised on the farm from which they are eventually ejected; thus they have no 'roots' elsewhere to which to return. (In principle, these types of evictions should have ended with the Extension of Security of Tenure Act Bill of 1997, but this has often not been the case.) Retrenched farm workers are thus severed from their existing social network – that is other farm workers in the immediate area – and forced to settle, typically with little or no savings or other capital, in townships, squatter settlements, or in communal areas (Aliber, 2001:36).

#### **2.8.6 AIDS orphans and households with AIDS sufferers**

AIDS orphans are defined by UNAIDS as children under the age of 15 who have lost their mother or both parents through AIDS. The number of AIDS orphans is set to rise as South Africa's high HIV prevalence rate among adults translates into a higher prevalence of AIDS and then AIDS deaths. UNAIDS estimates that as of the end of 1999, there were around 371 000 living AIDS orphans in South Africa (UNAIDS/WHO, 2000:3), while 50 000 AIDS orphans have already died (presumably from AIDS but also other causes, as HIV negative AIDS orphans have a higher-mortality rate than non-orphans). The Metropolitan Life model estimates that by 2005 there will be 920 000 AIDS orphans in South Africa, and by 2010 there will be roughly two million. Left untreated, adults who become infected with HIV develop symptoms of AIDS within 6 to 8 years, and most die within 10 years.

Treating HIV to delay the onset of AIDS and opportunistic infections, will mean a longer life, but in the absence of government support, this will generally be affordable only to those who are relatively well off. For everyone else, the economic effects of the infection will mainly occur when one develops AIDS, after which one might live another 3 or 4 years, on average. During this period, the economic effects on the AIDS sufferer and his or her family can be devastating. Notwithstanding the fact that many people living with AIDS will not survive beyond the 5-year timeframe used (by default) in this paper to define chronic poverty, a fair number will, and their chances of emerging out of poverty under such circumstance are remote. Household with one or more members suffering from AIDS may endure the impoverishing effects of the disease well beyond the deaths of those members, not least because they may have divested themselves of all of their assets in order to pay for health care (Aliber, 2001:37).

#### **2.8.7 Cross-border migrants**

Refugees, asylum seekers, and undocumented migrants face particular kinds of exclusion and deprivation in South Africa. The vast majority of these people are from the immediately neighbouring African states seeking economic opportunities, though asylum seekers are more likely to come from other countries as well. Some migrants indeed manage to improve their circumstances significantly over what they left in their country of origin, particularly those with entrepreneurial skills (CASE, 1998 in Aliber, 2001:38). Undocumented migrants tend to be vulnerable because they are poor in the first place and also because of their undocumented status, which makes them ripe for exploitation of various kinds. The use of child immigrants as farm labourers is also widespread, and includes both children of immigrant farm workers, and children who have come to South Africa alone in search of work, often because they are themselves AIDS orphans (RRP, 2000). The Department of Labour's own research 2000 (in Aliber 2001) corroborates that commercial farmers often prefer migrant workers over local people mainly because they perceive migrant workers to be more "obedient". The study found that of 13 519 farm workers

on commercial farms north of the Zoutpansberg in Northern Province, 70% are undocumented migrants (Aliber, 2001:38).

#### **2.8.8 The 'street homeless'**

'The homeless' is an amorphous category. This is particularly so in South Africa due to the fact that there exist hundreds of thousands of people living in informal squatter settlements who do have homes, but whose homes are obviously very unsatisfactory. More than 100 000 of these are members of the Homeless People's Federation. Many are former farm workers and wage earners who cannot afford decent housing urban in areas. Their solution may also be to pay rent in overcrowded flats. Those homeless living 'on the street' would appear to be a somewhat different category, though there may not be a clear line separating the two. These people, who are often referred to as the 'street homeless', are typically lone individuals or children rather than family units, and have severed or lost ties with social networks they may once have had. The street homeless frequently ascribe their situation to some sort of personal tragedy, such as being put in prison for a petty crime, suffering post-traumatic stress disorder due to army service, losing a loved one, or being subjected to sexual or physical abuse. The precipitating event is then often compounded by use of alcohol and drugs, and/or rejection by parents and other family members. Unlike those living in squatter camps, the street homeless are racially diverse, and are not infrequently from middle class or lower middle class families. Many of the street homeless shun missions and homeless shelters, because they do not wish to, or are not able to, conform to their rules (Aliber, 2001:38-39).

### **2.9 EXPERIENTIAL ASPECTS OF CHRONIC POVERTY**

One of the aspects experienced by those in chronic poverty is vulnerability. Being vulnerable means being exposed to potential injury and damage (Feuerstein, 1997:7).

### **2.9.1 Vulnerability and resignation**

Poor people are vulnerable to a number of harmful and potentially devastating threats, which they may not have the resources or power to avert. Among such threats are fire, such as shack fires, which destroy one's home and possessions, floods – because poorer people often end up erecting their shelters in flood-prone areas, job loss, crime, theft of money and possessions, and bodily harm, poor agricultural conditions for those who rely in part on food production for sustenance and illness and death in the family often with no resources to seek medical care. The poor experience a palpable disturbance to one's 'peace of mind'. Among the homeless, there is a constant sense of threat about being the victim of crime. For many people in South Africa, the experience of vulnerability is long-term, since the underlying threats are themselves long-term, and some are clearly becoming worse. Also, as is well known, the sense of vulnerability has an effect on people's ability to escape poverty. For example, people mitigate income risk by means of having a multiple livelihood strategy, which although being adaptive and rational, may inhibit the individual from concentrating on a single, potentially more lucrative enterprise (Aliber, 2001:26).

### **2.9.2 The migrant labour system, female-headed households, and gender roles**

South Africa's migrant labour system developed in distinctive ways owing to a combination of the singular importance of employment on mines (a 'male job'), influx controls which limited the mobility of non-employed family members, and inadequate land resources left to black people on account of the inequitable land distribution. In its 'ideal' form, the migrant labour system means that husbands earn an income in relatively lucrative jobs outside of the labour reserves (homelands), which they remit to their families back home. While this may often happen as

planned, it frequently does not. First, migrant workers may lose their work, and thus have nothing to remit. Some of these industries, especially mining, are highly dangerous, and over the years many workers have sustained disabling injuries, succumbed to occupation-related illnesses, or been killed. Second, migrant workers may find other uses of their earnings, and may send remittances intermittently and insufficiently. The history of absent partners and fathers has perhaps served to emphasise and exaggerate the role of women as care-givers and providers. This is so to such an extent that, even when men are not absent, women are often expected to bear financial responsibility for most things to do with the household, including paying for food, paying school fees, and coping with health emergencies. There are other dimensions to South Africa's migrancy patterns that can have negative consequences for households. One of these dimensions is that children are often left in the care of their grandparents, and in particular grandmothers, on rural homesteads. This reflects the increased participation of women in the formal sector, town-based workforce, and the need to have someone look after their children while they do so. While this arrangement may benefit the household economically as a whole, it may also put undue pressure on elderly people, whose old age grants end up being used effectively to support whole households rather than just themselves (Aliber, 2001:27).

### **2.9.3 Access to infrastructure, services, and amenities**

Improved access to infrastructure, services, and amenities, is of course a major challenge of the post-apartheid government. The cholera epidemic currently rampaging through KwaZulu-Natal is a vivid example of the human costs of the infrastructure backlog. The number of different kinds of infrastructure and services is of course large, including electricity, water (for home use and production), communications, education, the judicial system, health care, sanitation, housing, refuse removal, financial services, and so on. However, even when services are present, lack of access to them is still experienced by the most marginalised

members of communities. One community members' ability to access services is hampered by a range of factors, some of which have to do with the design of the services themselves, and others of which relate to the extremity of people's poverty. For example, even where a health clinic does exist in the vicinity, and where it may offer free basic care, travelling costs may still be prohibitive, and people may find it difficult to be at the clinic during the times when it is open. Employees such as farm workers may hesitate to miss work in order to visit a clinic, for fear of being retrenched. Foreign workers who are undocumented migrants may be denied access to health services by xenophobic clinic staff (Aliber, 2001:29).

#### **2.9.4 Crime and violence**

Crime and violence contribute to the experience of poverty at two levels. On one level, the exposure to crime and violence directly detracts from the quality of life of its victims and those fearful of being victimised. On another level, the high incidence of crime and violence which forms a salient feature of everyday life in South Africa, are symptomatic of a profound social malaise, wherein the cycle of poverty and the cycle of violence are indistinguishable. Crimes such as burglary and robbery can result in poor people losing what little assets they have, while the prevalence of violence adds to people's sense of vulnerability and oppression. While state-sponsored violence ended with apartheid and political violence has greatly subsided, violence among people who know one another in poor communities is rife, and is often linked to substance abuse. A 1996 study of homicide in the Eastern Cape found that 93% of all cases were linked to alcohol and drugs, while in Northern Cape, research had similar findings, and found as well that most cases were related to family disputes. Violence and crime are increasing in rural areas, and in fact homicide rates are higher in South Africa's rural areas than in its urban centres (Hamber and Lewis, 1997 in Aliber, 2001:29). Statistics show that poor people are more likely to be victims of violent crime - a poor person is 80 times more likely to be injured or killed through violent crime than a wealthy person. Women

and children are especially likely to be victims of violence. Women face abuse by partners, while women and girls are subjected to a high risk of being raped. The highest incidence of rape is in rural areas. Some studies suggest that the growing incidence of rape over the past 15 years or so, and particularly of gang rape, are aspects of a broader 'culture of violence', which in turn is a function of the protracted marginalisation experienced by many young men.

A study of perceptions of crime in Alexandra township in Gauteng (Stavrou, 1993 in Aliber, 2001:30), stressed residents' view that unemployed youth in search of an identity and status such as through gang allegiance, are the most apt to commit violent and other crime, and that this was aggravated by the rapid influx of residents in the township. Residents' quality of life was seriously affected by the prevalence of crime, not least because its perceived randomness means that it is difficult to take precautions to avoid it.

On a community or social level, the incidence in South Africa of child abuse, broken homes, violent crime, and poverty, contribute to an inter-generational cycle of deprivation and social malaise that is not dissimilar to that evident in deprived communities in developed countries and elsewhere. The fact of declining employment opportunities, especially for youth, serves only to reinforce this cycle (Aliber, 2001:30).

#### **2.9.5 Lack of voice and social exclusion**

One other aspect of the experience of poverty as revealed in the SA-PPA (South African Participatory Poverty Appraisal), is that of lack of 'voice', which is a growing area of attention internationally. Broadly, a person 'has voice' when she feels she has an opportunity to somehow participate in decisions that may affect her life, as well as having avenues to lodge grievances with relevant authorities and institutions

if she so wishes. Lack of voice was of course an acute aspect of many people's experience under apartheid, and was reversed in a significant way with the first all-inclusive democratic elections in 1994. The importance attached in the new dispensation to local government is a further reflection of the new government's earnestness to allow people these means of expression. In their study of trends in public participation, Roefs and Liebenberg (2000) in Aliber 2001:31, note that the majority of South Africans have little understanding of the role of local councils and parliament (80% and 73%, respectively), and only a minority of poor people specifically participate in any way in local councils or public hearings (23% and 22% respectively). However, 46% of poor respondents surveyed reported that they participate in some sort of community activity or organisation, and 30% of respondents indicate that community organisations are the most appropriate venue for addressing "problems in the community". While these figures are encouragingly high, they underline the fact that more marginal members of these same poor communities are apt to have an acute sense of social exclusion and voicelessness in their communities. This comes through vividly in the studies conducted as part of the SA-PPA (Aliber, 2001:31).

## **2.10 ROOTS AND CAUSES OF POVERTY**

One of the root causes of poverty discussed below is inflation.

### **2.10.1 The legacies of colonialism and apartheid**

The single most significant factor distinguishing South Africa from other African countries is its experience of colonialism and apartheid. This holds no less for the causes and incidence of its poverty. European colonisation began in the 17th century with Dutch and Huguenot settlement in the Cape. Initially, the impact of white settlement was mainly limited to the Cape, and mainly at the expense of Khoikhoi pastoralists. With the expansion of white settlement north and east, plus the arrival of British settlers in Xhosaland and Natal as an outgrowth of British

imperialism, pressure on Bantu-speaking African groups became increasingly intense. The most direct aspect of this pressure was the dispossession of land by whites, through which African farmers were forced to either retreat to other areas such as Basutoland, become sharecroppers (especially on land owned by whites of British descent), or farm labourers (especially on land owned by farmers of Dutch descent). While African agriculture continued to thrive for a time and indeed pose a highly resented source of direct competition to white farmers, it was gradually reduced by further land conquests, as well as efforts to curb sharecropping. In much of the eastern third of the country, the late 18th and early 19th centuries witnessed social and geographic upheaval due to wars between competing African polities. Livestock diseases of European origin had enormous implications for African populations, for whom livestock formed a critical source of sustenance. A lung-sickness epizootic hit in the mid-19th century, and foot-and-mouth disease and rinderpest hit with particular force in the 1890s, the latter wiping out 90% of the region's livestock. In the latter half of the 19th century, the discovery first of diamonds, and then of gold, changed the situation completely. One aspect of the new situation was the rapidly growing demand for black mineworkers to work the mines of the Transvaal. Various white governments introduced laws and policies to facilitate the supply of this labour. The Natives Land Act of 1913, in particular, formalised the distinction between the African Reserves and white farming areas, prohibiting Africans from acquiring, owning, and renting land in the latter. This had the effect of limiting their economic options so severely as to compel many to sell their labour to the mines and white farms (Hendricks, 1990; Davenport, 1987; Bundy, 1979 in Aliber, 2001). Around that same time, there were some 180 000 African mineworkers in the country, of whom around half were from South Africa, and half from Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique and elsewhere. Control of Africans' mobility remained a high priority for government through most of the 20th century. The government sought to balance the 'legitimate' demand for African workers for mines and unskilled and semi-skilled work in urban areas, with the desire to keep white settlements insulated from 'surplus' Africans. Since at least the late 19th

century, a pattern emerged whereby Africans or coloureds were relegated to 'townships' adjacent to white towns. In 1950, as Minister of Native Affairs, H. F. Verwoerd (who later became Prime Minister) introduced the Urban Labour Preference Policy along the same sentiments as - but more draconian than - the Natives Urban Areas Act of 1923. Among the more destructive effects of the system was to force many families to be split for long periods, with men working on the mines or in the cities, and women remaining in the rural reserves. Meanwhile, conditions in the reserves deteriorated as more and more people were forced to settle there. Between 1955 and 1969, population density in the reserves increased from 60 to 110 persons per square mile. Effectively, many households in so-called rural areas were and remain landless, while many others were left with tiny amounts of land. The logical conclusion of this process came in the 1960s and 1970s, when the apartheid government 'elevated' the status of the African Reserves to ten putatively self-governing homelands, of which some were declared independent states. These homelands were thus set up with their own assemblies, government departments, rights to confer citizenship, etc. The idea of "separate development" was that they would also have their own economies. However, given that these reserves comprised only 13% of the country's land area, were often geographically isolated, and had terrible infrastructure, this was not very plausible. Poorly conceptualised investments in agricultural irrigation schemes benefited mainly a few score white development experts and consulting firms. The industrial decentralisation policy made only some inroads, but disintegrated rather quickly once the wage subsidies were removed after 1994. The main source of employment within the homelands was no doubt the public service itself. The homelands thus had virtually no tax base, and so had to rely almost entirely on transfers from the apartheid government. Poor health care services and vastly inferior 'Bantu education' were among the results. Those few Africans that did receive a decent education or health care, usually did so at mission schools and hospitals. Because of the dearth of meaningful income-earning opportunities within the homelands, the migrant labour system remained one of the most important survival strategies for

African households, notwithstanding its high personal costs. Coloureds and Indians faced similar but different forms of discrimination and economic oppression. Both groups were also subject to forced removals, restrictions on movement and settlement, were denied the right to vote (except on a limited basis in the Cape Colony and then again, briefly, through the bogus tricameral parliament established in the 1980s). Per capita spending on education, housing, and services was marginally higher for coloureds and Indians than for Africans, but still significantly inferior to that provided for whites. A large fraction of coloureds, concentrated in the Cape, relied on unskilled and semi-skilled farm work for sustenance, under conditions somewhat better than those of their African counterparts elsewhere in the country. Over the course of the 20th century, Indians, most of whose forebears originally came to South Africa in the late 1800s as indentured labourers to work on the sugar plantations of Natal, diversified into a number of different economic niches, including trading, manufacturing, and professions (Aliber, 2001:6-8).

Poverty among whites was also not unknown, though it was on a different scale than that of other groups. During the 19th century, most white poverty was associated with agricultural crises brought on by epizootics, drought, fluctuating commodity prices, as well as direct competition from better capitalised farmers. At the turn of the century, the effects of rinderpest and drought were compounded by the South African (Anglo-Boer) War of 1899-1902. White tenant farmers, squatters on Crown land, and indebted landowners were especially vulnerable, and contributed to the influx of whites to mining areas and cities looking for employment immediately after the war. However, because of the semi-official policy of maintaining a wage differential between whites and blacks on the mines, only a limited number of unskilled whites were absorbed. Those that remained in the countryside became ever more dependent upon African tenants to resuscitate or maintain production, an indignity which did much to shape future policy with respect to the 'poor white problem'. The main motivation behind the founding in 1909 of what is now the Land and Agriculture Bank, was to restore poor whites to the land.

Much of Nationalist Party rule from 1948 on, can be interpreted as an effort to deal with the poor white problem, from the rapid expansion of the public service, to ever more generous subsidies to white farmers, and even provisions against the subdivision of farm land to so-called sub-economic units (Aliber, 2001:8).

Generally speaking, women's economic and social status in South Africa, both black and white, has been largely determined in relation to men, i.e. fathers and husbands. In some African societies, being widowed or failing to bear children could lead to a precipitous drop in one's welfare, depending in large measure on the forbearance of the (late) husband's relatives. In modern times, African women have struggled under the dual oppression of racism and sexism. Women farm workers are paid on average well below their male counterparts, and are often preferred over men particularly because of their vulnerability. Among white women, a gradual increase in political inclusion and workforce participation paralleled but lagged behind those of Europe and North America (Aliber, 2001:8).

Different South African communities had different social safety-nets, and these changed in different ways over the years. Among African households, the most significant safety-net was traditionally the extended family and informal social networks of reciprocity. The extended family lent a degree of resilience in the face of calamities that, for example, allowed African households to recover more quickly from the rinderpest and drought of the late 19th century. Over the course of the 20th century, however, the growing dependence on urban-based incomes and the increasingly limited agricultural resources in rural areas, meant the decline "of reciprocal and redistributive rural relationships, within which poorer households could expect cattle loans, work opportunities and other forms of assistance from better-off neighbours" (Aliber, 2001:9).

For whites, as already indicated, the state very early on assumed responsibility for addressing the problem of poverty. In addition, benevolent societies of various kinds were established in many towns, and the Dutch Reformed Church sponsored charitable programmes to help address the situation of poor whites (Aliber, 2001:9).

### **2.10.2 The economy**

Individuals and communities have access to assets in different forms and ways. It is the returns to individuals, households and communities that are generated using these assets that are the ultimate determinants of individual and collective wellbeing. Where such assets are absent or deficient or where low returns are achieved, extreme poverty is the result (*World Development Report, 2000*). Given deficiencies in the asset base of individuals and communities, poverty manifests both as an incapacity to contribute optimally to the economy and as an incapacity to benefit from it.

The primary mechanisms through which the poor participate in the exchange economy are provided by:

- The labour market
- The micro enterprise, small enterprise and informal sectors of the economy.

The main mechanisms whereby the proceeds of such participation find their way into the household are provided by wages, salaries, remittances and (employment-based) transfers. The marginal or subsistence sector provides a considerable "income" for those engaged in it. However, such persons are not deemed to be "employed" according to the classical definition nor do their activities form part of the exchange economy. The marginal sector typically provides low returns in kind, but is an important source of survival for the extremely poor, particularly in rural areas where subsistence agriculture provides a necessary, though not always adequate, source of family nutrition. Typically the rising need for cash income results in a flight from the subsistence sector to informal market economic activity or the pursuit of

jobs in the formal sector, thereby swelling the ranks of job seekers (World Development Report, 2000:6).

### **2.10.3 Unemployment and employment**

Unemployment is a main contributor to individual and household poverty. In a survey undertaken by Statistics South Africa (SSA 1998 in Mokate, 1999:189) it was indicated that 35 per cent of the households in the bottom income quintile or the poorest households had no employed people compared to 23 per cent in the top quintile. In addition, 24 per cent of households in the bottom quintile had two or more people employed, compared to 37 per cent in the top quintile and 32 per cent in the fourth quintile. Furthermore 33,5 per cent of the women in the bottom quintile were unemployed, compared to 5,6 per cent in the top quintile, while 28,6 per cent of men in the bottom quintile were unemployed, compared to a mere 4,3 per cent in the top quintile. There is thus a clear correlation between the employment rate within households and their position on the income scale (Mokate, 1999:189).

The overall unemployment rate for women was 28 per cent compared to 19 per cent for men. On the other hand, African males showed a 24,6 percent unemployment rate compared to 13,6 percent for coloured, 8,8 percent for Indian and 3,3 percent for their white counterparts. This distribution of economic fortune by race, gender and location is mirrored by the distribution of poverty (Mokate, 1999:189).

The spatial distribution of unemployment shows higher levels of unemployment in non-urban than in urban areas. Official non-urban unemployment was 26.8 percent while urban unemployment stood at 21,5 percent. In this instance, there were again more women than men unemployed in both urban and non-urban settings. Furthermore, unemployment was the highest among those with an educational level of less than matric and those with no education. The problem was most pronounced for the age group 15-30 years. Thirty five per cent of people aged 15-30 years with no education were unemployed, while 39 per cent of those with less than matric were unemployed. The unemployment rate among those with matric or more was 29 per cent. However, when the spatial allocation of unemployment is compared by

education, the striking feature is that, in urban areas, unemployment was higher among those with some schooling (26 per cent), while it was higher in the non-urban areas among those with matric or more (31 per cent) (SSA 1998 in Mokate, 1999:190-191).

#### **2.10.4 The micro and small enterprise and informal sectors**

SMME development has come to loom large as a cornerstone of participative economic growth, which will:

- Create jobs at lower cost.
- Use local resources more intensively.
- Contribute to equity by producing widely affordable and appropriate goods and services.
- Foster entrepreneurship through “learning by doing”.

Entrepreneurship is the capacity to identify needs, to gather resources to meet those needs and to implement action to satisfy those needs. Whilst it has materialised in poor societies, it requires physical resources and attributes (“assets”) such as positive opportunism, self-confidence and assertiveness that are frequently absent amongst the extremely poor. Entrepreneurs typically derive from humbler origins where pressure to achieve is significant, but generally not from abjectly deprived environments. In addition, skills and previous work experience do play a role.

The constraints upon small business development felt most acutely by the extremely poor and that militate against the generation of significant self-employment within and by poor communities include:

- The cost of doing business and unfavourable market conditions.
- The spectre and complexity of taxation and regulation of various kinds.
- Lack of finance and the collateral requirements for loans.

- Lack of training, skills, business support and advisory services and the incapacity to pay “up front” for acquiring them (World Development Report, 2000:11).

### **2.10.5 Globalisation and competition**

To the extent that globalisation opens markets and leads to the enlargement of the arena in which economic activity takes place, it has both positive and negative potential for the reduction of income poverty. In the longer term it will in theory bring about an increase in labour-intensive production on the part of those countries displaying a comparative advantage in labour. International experience has suggested that globalisation, i.e. trade and capital flows and associated market liberalisation is neither a guarantee of success or regression. Where countries have pursued sound macroeconomic policies; have maintained a reasonable balance between rural and urban development; have followed effective investment strategies both in respect of economic infrastructure and the cost-effective provision of social services; and possess effective governmental and non-governmental institutions, increased opportunities provided by globalisation have translated into rising aggregate national prosperity and an improved share for all in that prosperity. Where these conditions are not met, the opposite tends to be the case. International capital flows tend to reward success generously and punish mistakes harshly. In adapting to globalisation, organised labour can play a constructive role by promoting increased productivity; reducing discrimination on the basis of “non-economic” factors such as race and gender; and monitoring working conditions (World Development Report, 2000:12).

Many poor countries (about 2 billion people) have been left out of the process of globalisation. Many are becoming marginal to the world economy, often with declining incomes and rising poverty. As the end result, globalisation won't help to combat poverty for such a massive group of people (A world Bank Policy research Report, 2002:2).

### **2.10.6 Inflation**

The impact of rising prices is acutely felt by the poor and those of modest fixed income such as the aged and the disabled. Inflation is therefore a potential aggravator of the plight of the poor. The situation is aggravated to the extent that adjustments to statutory pensions and grants tend to “lag” core inflation, which reflects the rising cost of living (World Development Report, 2000:13).

### **2.10.7 Non-income factors**

The proximate causes of non-income poverty derive from inadequate access to shelter, nutrition, basic services, health care, and security. Whilst lack of current access to education and training is not a proximate cause of current poverty, to the extent that it in reality deprives future generation(s) of the means for self-upliftment, it serves to propagate poverty into the future. Such inadequate access results from:

- The inability of the poor to pay for goods and services or alternatively the inability to acquire private goods and services.
- The inadequacy of the provision of public goods and services.

The traditional response to poverty is the creation of “safety nets”. Of these, contributory safety nets derive from contributions made by individuals through the medium of pension and provident schemes, medical aid schemes, etc. Such contributory safety nets reduce the burden on the fiscus. On the other hand, public safety nets generally involve an element of subsidisation, and generally comprise non-contributory social spending on:

- Cash transfers, including various forms of social and family
- allowances such as pensions, disability grants, unemployment grants, poverty assistance, etc;
- In-kind transfers involving transfers of commodities (for example food) or services (for example health and education)
- Public works by way of so-called “workfare” programmes with a welfare bias

where public infrastructure is constructed by labour-intensive methods directed to benefit specifically the poor.

Sustained government expenditure to finance the subsidies inherent in the creation of extensive public social safety nets, at the expense of for example productive economic infrastructure, can compromise economic growth, slow down employment creation and effectively displace and aggravate the very poverty it is designed to address. The immediate impact of such programmes on poverty indicators can be significant, but sustainability is most often the problem. In addition, the overall medium to longer term impact of such transfers on economic growth and the creation of jobs, and thus on aggregate poverty, particularly when financed by direct taxes on enterprise, sharply progressive taxes on income, and indirect taxes on essential consumer goods, need to be carefully considered. Optimal and sustainable levels of aggregate social spending transfers relative to macro-economic growth objectives need to be determined within the context of a macro-economic model of the economy rather than on the basis of disjointed social policy (World Development Report, 2000:13).

#### **2.10.8 Population growth, density and distribution**

Throughout the world, population growth has been accompanied by urbanisation. Most frequently it is lack of economic opportunity in the rural areas in the face of an increasing population that acts as a spur for urbanisation. This is augmented by the process of industrialisation that has seen the rapid growth of large urban concentrations as centres of employment. The densification of settlement resulting from urbanisation presents unique problems for government, particularly in respect of the provision of urban housing and other essential services. Poverty is both a cause and a result of this process (World Development Report, 2000:14).

*Rural Poverty*

Rapid population growth has given rise to the following proximate causes of extreme rural poverty:

- Landlessness.
- Degradation of the environment to a point where its capacity to support the community has been seriously compromised.
- Migration, particularly of economically active males, to the metropolitan areas and the further disruption of the fabric of the family and the local production economy as economically active females also start to migrate.
- High dependency of the economically inactive upon the economically active.
- Recourse to an informal sector that is overcrowded in the face of declining local markets, with consequent declining returns.
- Increasing dependence upon transfers and remittances. The latter are a tenuous source of income since they can and do in many cases dwindle over time as successful family members develop a new and independent life in the towns and cities (World Development Report, 2000:15).

#### *Urban Poverty*

Incapacity of government to provide urban infrastructure and acceptable living space at a sufficient rate, coupled with inadequate economic performance to provide jobs for the rising urban and peri-urban population, inevitably lead to:

- The establishment of informal settlements as first-level entry points to urban subsistence for the extremely poor. The density of settlement, however, frequently precludes the application of traditional rural survival strategies for households (subsistence gardening, keeping of livestock, etc) who are under pressure to turn to other means to survive.
- Dysfunctional community life for the extremely poor and the loss of elements of "social capital" such as traditional ties and support relationships (World Development Report, 2000:15).

### **2.10.9 The regulatory environment**

The regulatory environment can play a central role in the creation and aggravation of poverty through:

- Impairing the capacity of markets to “clear” themselves. Classic examples exist of minimum wage interventions in labour markets that have in fact had little effect other than to ensure that those who remain employed are better paid, but that have also created unemployment and led to lower nett aggregate earnings for the labour force.
- Setting unrealistic and unaffordable standards in relation to housing, services, business and other areas which go beyond merely protecting the physical health and safety of individuals and the public interest.
- Unwarranted prescription and intervention in personal decision-making by individuals that is not necessitated by the need to protect the public interest.

Such regulatory frameworks may serve to introduce inefficiencies into the economy that can impact particularly heavily upon the poor through:

- Unnecessary complication of survival strategies.
- The introduction of latitude for corrupt and inefficient practice on the part of the bureaucracy charged with administering them, at the expense of the poor who are frequently not able to wield the influence necessary to advance a just cause.
- Wastage of resources and the diversion of funding that could be better applied in the fight to reduce poverty through the achievement of economic growth and other means (World Development Report, 2000:16).

### **2.10.10 Crime, corruption and inefficiency**

Crime is a cause, an aggravator and a result of poverty. Corruption and inefficiency are aggravators that serve to divert resources destined for the poor away from their original purpose or, in the case of inefficiency, that result in the wastage of

resources. Particularly regarding corruption in public administrations and enterprises, the poor neither have the resources nor have they the “connections” to induce the attention of corrupt officials. The frequently precarious circumstances of survival of the poor render them particularly vulnerable (World Development Report, 2000:16).

#### **2.10.11 Violence**

Extreme poverty is associated with degrees of erosion of social solidarity and cohesion, i.e. “social capital”. The poor are vulnerable and often have no “voice”. As a result they are soft targets for violence and various forms of extortion. The physical and social circumstances in which the extremely poor have to survive, serve as aggravators of their condition of poverty (World Development Report, 2000:16).

#### **2.10.12 Powerlessness and insecurity**

Powerlessness and insecurity on the part of the poor are the result of attitudes and approaches which seek to marginalise the problems of poverty. In reality the poor are not excluded from society itself, but essentially from contributing to and benefiting from the common good of society. Approaches that consign the poor to the role of indigent beneficiaries and perpetual dependents upon society - as part of the problem and not themselves as part of a solution within an inclusive approach - aggravate the sense of precariousness and insecurity of the poor (World Development Report, 2000:16).

#### **2.10.13 Shocks and discontinuities**

War and disruption aggravate the circumstances of the poor and frequently precipitate into poverty those who would otherwise be able to adopt marginally viable survival strategies. Disease and natural disasters also comprise

discontinuities that can have both short and long term implications for poverty through the various economic mechanisms.

Diseases like HIV/AIDS aggravate the problem of poverty primarily through:

- Disruption of the family income base through death of one or more contributors/breadwinners.
- The creation of orphans, many themselves infected with the disease, who will become a burden upon the extended family and, in the absence of care givers, become the responsibility of the State.
- The erosion of the productivity of the labour force and the effective increase in the cost of labour at a time of globalisation and liberalisation of markets when labour's main imperative is to become more competitive.
- Increasing pressure on health and welfare systems, requiring the diversion of resources toward health spending at the cost of economic growth, sustained job creation and improvement in the per capita gross national income (World Development Report, 2000:17).

## **2.11 SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICIES SINCE 1994**

On the eve of the first racially-inclusive democratic elections in 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) embarked on drafting its vision of how it would transform the country. This strategy was the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which was defined by its authors as follows:

The RDP is an integrated, coherent socio-economic policy framework. It seeks to mobilise all our people and our country's resources toward the final eradication of apartheid and the building of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist future (ANC, 1994:1).

The initial policy framework document spelled out the vast number of changes the future ANC-led government would seek to effect. The central theme was reducing the poverty of the majority of South Africans, and thereby redressing the inequalities

and injustices of colonialism and apartheid. Access to water, jobs, land, education, and health care, were among the priorities highlighted. Apart from a massive investment in infrastructure, however, the document gave little indication about what the new economic strategy would entail. Following the April elections, an RDP Office was established within the Office of the President, charged with the responsibility of coordinating RDP-related activities, including the spending of the initially modest RDP budget. In November 1994, the ANC-led government introduced the *RDP White Paper*, the content of which was not dissimilar to that of the earlier policy framework document, but arguably with a more 'business friendly' and fiscally conservative bent. In early 1996, after much public debate as to what the RDP meant for economic policy, the RDP Office was closed and its staff dispersed to various government departments (Aliber, 2001:9).

The closure of the RDP office appeared to have been of a piece with the introduction by the Department of Finance in that year of the framework for Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). GEAR was a conventional neo-classical macroeconomic recipe for economic growth. While not intrinsically incompatible with the goals of either the RDP or the nascent National Growth and Development Strategy that complemented the RDP, GEAR eclipsed the latter as the central economic programme of the government. Business leaders applauded GEAR for its emphasis on fiscal restraint, the expressed commitment to controlling inflation and interest rates, as well as the promise of loosened foreign exchange controls. Among the more controversial aspects of GEAR were the recommendations that the public service be down-sized and state-owned enterprises be "restructured", i.e. sold off. Not surprisingly, the adoption by government of GEAR as the blueprint for South Africa's economic policy, also outraged many observers and strained the tripartite alliance between the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP), and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Critics considered GEAR to be a neo-liberal sell-out by the ANC (e.g. Bond, 2000), as well as an inappropriate approach to solving the country's most pressing economic problems such as unemployment and poverty (Adelzadeh *et al.*, 1996). In terms of real GDP growth,

the projected annual average was 4.2%, versus the actual average of around 2.3% (Department of Finance, 2000; SARB, 2000). In terms of formal sector employment growth, the projected cumulative increase over the 5 years was 1.3 million, versus an actual job loss of more than 800 000 (Aliber, 2001:9).

Much hinged in the modelling and arguably in the whole strategy, on the assumption that foreign direct investment would pick up substantially. The importance of foreign direct investment is particularly great in order to compensate for the low level of domestic savings. The modelling assumption that specifically informed the optimistic "Integrated Scenario Projections" of the GEAR document was that foreign direct investment would increase from the base scenario of no change by an annual average of \$509 million. However, in reality what has happened is that the easing of exchange restrictions has facilitated outward direct investment of South African companies wishing to diversify overseas. Contrary to the GEAR assumption, the net effect has been negative (i.e. outward direct investment has exceeded foreign direct investment into South Africa) for every year since 1994 (SARB, 2000 in Aliber, 2001). Of course, whether these unfortunate developments are the result of GEAR, or of the failure to implement GEAR fully, or whether the situation would have been worse in the absence of GEAR, is an involved debate which we will not enter into here (Aliber, 2001:10).

Where there has been more cause for celebration, however, is in the delivery of services. While delivery of services has also been slow relative to expectations, it has nonetheless made a palpable change in many people's lives. Since 1994, the various government programmes and municipal infrastructure programmes, have improved access to safe water for 4 million people, improved sanitation services for over 3 million people, built 600 new clinics, 700 000 houses, had 1.5 million more households connected to the electrical grid, and so on. The study by CASE (2000) on behalf of the Human Rights Commission's "Second Economic and Social Rights

Report", found that a substantial fraction of those surveyed reported some sort of development of infrastructure or services within the previous year (Aliber, 2001:10).

## **2.12 THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS**

During the 1990s increasing recognition has been given to the role of institutions in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of development policy. Institutions are patterns of behaviour or systems of legitimate enforceable rules, recognised and valued by society and embedded in social relations. Organisations are purposeful, structured, role-bound units where people get together to carry out particular functions. Organisations are also institutions; both organisations and institutions shape social, political and economic behaviour. From an economic perspective, institutions can be viewed as transaction cost-minimising arrangements; from a broader social and political perspective, institutions determine the capacity for governance. Governance is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs; it is possible to talk about good or bad governance practice with respect to every institution and organisation in society, from civil society to the state. Effective governance can take place only if state institutions function properly and are responsive to the needs of individuals in society, especially the poor and marginalised. However, other processes are equally important, such as a culture of human rights, the rule of law, gender equality and open electoral processes. Democratic reforms do not necessarily help the poor unless the institutions of government are improved, in terms of being mechanisms for popular participation, the administration of justice, and bureaucracies stimulated by incentives and held accountable by performance measures. Likewise, macroeconomic reforms do not necessarily help the poor unless market institutions are improved through better systems like that of property rights and contract laws. Institutional failure can undermine attempts to address poverty and inequality through the rules and structures of the institutions themselves, through the non-delivery of the services the institutions are meant to provide, and through the behaviour and attitudes of the people within the institutions. The success of

development initiatives thus largely depends on the strengths and weaknesses of the underlying institutional environment. Institutions can be assessed against four criteria: efficiency (i.e., cost-effective delivery); equity (development must reach the poor); adaptability (as society changes, institutions must be able to change needs and priorities); and accountability – institutions and their officials must be held responsible for their actions (May & Wilkins, 1998:31-32).

## **2.13 CONCLUSION**

Poverty is defined as 'the inability to attain minimal standards of living. It is characterized by the inability of individuals, households or communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living.

Chronic poverty is usually the more difficult to address, and is often associated with persistent inter-generational poverty. Temporary poverty may result from a one-time decline in living standards (for example following the loss of a job). Chronically poor people are those who live in rural areas, female-headed households, people with disabilities, the elderly, retrenched farm workers, AIDS orphans and households with AIDS sufferers, cross-border migrants and the 'street homeless'.

As roots of poverty, the legacies of colonialism and apartheid policies are known to have contributed to the present situation of poverty that is experienced by some South African communities. As a result of poverty, unemployment is also the cause of poverty. The economy, not having the resources and skills for entrepreneurship in the micro and small enterprise and informal sectors impact of globalisation on the labour market, inflation – rising prices, non-income factors – inadequate access to shelter, nutrition, basic services, health care, and security. Population growth, density and distribution, powerlessness and insecurity, the regulatory environment, crime, corruption and inefficiency in public administrations and enterprises are also causes, roots and aggravators. Poverty in South African communities is also

aggravated and caused by violence and physical safety, diseases like HIV/AIDS and natural disasters like floods that comprise discontinuities.

The initial policy framework that was implemented by the first democratic South African government was the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). It aimed at reducing poverty and in redressing the inequalities and injustices of colonialism and apartheid. Among the priorities that were highlighted by the RDP were access to water, jobs, land, education, and health care.

After much public debate as to what the RDP meant for economic policy the framework for Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) was implemented. GEAR was applauded for its emphasis on fiscal restraint, the expressed commitment to controlling inflation and interest rates, as well as the promise of loosened foreign exchange controls.

Increasing recognition is been given to institutions or organisations in addressing poverty and inequality in South African Communities. This is because effective governance takes place if institutions function properly and are responsive to the needs of individuals in society.

## **CHAPTER 3            MPCCs AS POVERTY ALLEVIATION STRATEGIES**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In chapter two, the nature of poverty and inequality in South African communities was addressed. In this chapter, Multi-Purpose community Centres as poverty alleviation strategies is discussed. Incorporated in the topic is the aim, purpose, process of establishing MPCCs and importance of having MPCCs in communities. In addition, a description of what MPCCs are is provided.

### **3.2 GOVERNMENT'S PROVISION OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION**

The South African government has placed the need to address poverty and inequality firmly at the centre of the nation's agenda. This is reflected in the poverty audits that have been undertaken, as well as in the range of policy documents and strategies that have been developed in the first years of this government. President Mbeki has further reinforced this through his challenge to the nation to create "a caring society." As he stated, such a society "must guarantee the dignity of every citizen on the basis of a good quality of life for every woman, man and child, without regard to race colour or disability' (State of Nation Address, 25 June 1999). In this speech, issues that featured strongly on the agenda as crucial to local development were urban renewal and an integrated rural development strategy (Mokate, 1999:185).

A significant part of the process of developing a new policy and structural framework for Government information system has been the approach of providing development communication and information to communities to ensure that they become active participants in changing their lives for the better. This approach is envisaged as a response to the particular historical, social and economic factors, which characterised freedom of access to information and citizen participation, in our past political system. This includes socio-economic problems such as high

poverty, high unemployment, low standards of living (people living below the poverty line), poor access to basic services, remote settlement patterns, lack of access to technology, lack of information, poor health services, lack of education and skills and lack of infrastructure (GCIS, 2001:1).

The Government national Communication and Information System (co-ordinated at the Government Communication and Information System [GCIS]) has, among others been tasked in the Cabinet approved Comtask Report to provide development communication and information to the public to ensure that they become active participants in changing their lives for the better. (*Comtask Report Clause 65*) To achieve this, all appropriate forms of media, including both print, electronic and other, have to be used to provide the required information as well as two-way communication services. (GCIS, 2001:1).

It was envisaged that MPCCs would be an ideal approach for achieving development communication since they could serve as a base from which a wide range of services and products could reach communities. According to the GCIS (2001:1), development communication focuses primarily on the *“poor and disadvantaged, whose profile reflects not only limited access to information, but also feature as the main target of government socio-economic programmes”*. The majority of people fitting into these two primary categories is to be found mainly in the townships and rural areas. The development communication paradigm is recognised as a democratic approach to a public communication and information system as it aims to put the information needs of citizens first in the communication process. This is in contrast with public information systems reliant upon mass communication and advertising with no scope for two-way dialogue between citizens and government. Some of the salient features of this approach relate to the expressed need for face- to-face interactions between government and people: *“Government with a Human Face.”* A high premium is also placed on the introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to such

communities, using such modern means as the Internet, email and computers will promote literacy and access to technology in communities (Kangala, 2003:14-15).

### **3.3 THE MPCC PROGRAMME**

The MPCC (Multi-Purpose Community Centre) programme was initiated in 1999 as a primary vehicle for development communication and information, and to introduce government services into primary rural communities. This was done to address historical, social and economic factors that created difficulties for citizens to participate and access information and services, as they had to travel long distances to access these services. Government's vision for the MPCCs is to provide for every South African citizen with access to information and services within their places of residence and in each local municipality by 2010, with the purpose of improving the quality of their lives through integrated service delivery (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2004:90).

### **3.4 MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY CENTRES**

Multi-purpose Community Centres (MPCCs) are defined as those centres that have at least six government departments offering services to people who live close by. MPCCs should also have access to technology in the form of an Information Technology Centre (ITC) such as a Telecentre or other forms. Such services add value to those services that are offered by the NGO and business sectors (GCIS, 2001). As one-stop, integrated community development centres, MPCCs encourage community participation and offer services relevant to people's needs (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2004:90).

MPCCs are points of a two-way communication between government and citizens. They are centres where citizens could share their views on government programmes, policies and activities, and make their needs for services known to

government. MPCCs are also places where community events take place, such as music concerts, meetings, voting, workshops and training. They are also places where government representatives and elected members of parliament conduct discussions with communities. Communities can hold forums at MPCCs to share information and lessons on successful development efforts. Essentially, MPCCs are points of service where government departments from national, provincial and local levels offer their information and services. However, services differ from centre to centre based on the needs of communities where they are located. Some services, such as applying for identity documents or receiving pensions and social grants, have proved to be more popular in MPCCs that have already been launched since the beginning of the rollout plan. Services offered by MPCCs include:

- Government services including the provision of identity documents, passports, library services, pensions and health information, and services normally rendered by an unemployment office or a government information office.
- Training in the use of computers, the Internet and other online services; and other kinds of services and information like community banking, craft shops, women's clubs and food production programmes (Kangala, 2003:26)

An MPCC is a place where a number of services are provided by local, provincial and national government, as well as parastatals, NGOs, CBOs and the private sector. The services offered at an MPCC are those that have been identified by communities. Every MPCC is different. Some will comprise a single building with a number of service providers in various offices. Others will comprise a cluster of service providers in close proximity to each other. The vision of MPCCs is to empower the poorest and disadvantaged with access to government information, services and resources for their own development. The mission is to provide a one stop integrated service in under-serviced communities (GCIS, 2001:7).

### 3.5 THE AIM OF MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY CENTRES

MPCCs help people who could not reach government in the past to get information and services. Multi-purpose Community Centres are being set up across the country to better the quality of life for every South African citizen through integrated and accessible service delivery (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2002:60). MPCCs aim to empower the poor and disadvantaged through access to information, services and resources from government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), parastatals and businesses, enabling them to engage in government programmes for the improvement of their lives (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2004:90). Identified as the primary approach for the implementation of development communication and information, MPCCs aim to offer a wide range of services that communities can use for their own empowerment (GCIS, 2001:1).

The objectives of MPCCs are the following:

- To identify community information and service needs.
- To provide access to integrated, cost-effective and responsive government information and services, particularly to those in rural areas.
- To enhance quality of life of the under-serviced communities
- To provide government information to the public in a manner in which it can be used to improve their lives.
- Provision of two-way communication between government and people.
- Improving community participation in government decision making process.
- Enhancing co-operation amongst the three spheres of government in terms of delivery.
- Proper management and control of government resources, e.g, financial and human resources.
- Enhancing the decentralisation of government services.
- Provide access to and use of Information and Communication Technologies (GCIS, 2001:2).

### **3.6 THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING MPCCs**

The DPSA Service Delivery Review (2002:61) consists of steps recommended in order to ensure that the establishment of sustainable MPCCs goes smoothly:

#### **3.6.1 Community awareness**

Rigorous community participation is critical in the establishment of MPCCs. It is essential that communities should be involved in all stages of the MPCC establishment process (Kangala, 2003:28). Various methods are used to build community participation and involvement, including community meetings, *imbizos*, radio (especially community radio programmes and announcements), newspapers, pamphlets, village level announcements (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2002:61). The publicity and awareness programmes are driven by a local committee based at the MPCC and the Local Intersectoral Steering Committee (LISSC) that is made up of community groups and organisations, traditional leadership structures, parastatals from local level and government officials from local and regional offices (Kangala, 2003:27).

#### **3.6.2 Site identification**

In partnership with stakeholders from local and provincial government, the LISSC identifies a suitable place in the community from which the whole district council can be served. Ideally, the location should have some infrastructure in the form of under-utilised buildings. Alternatively, it could be a place that has been identified as a potential growth point by the provincial government (Kangala, 2003). Such points should be in line with the nodal points identified by government for the implementation of an integrated and sustainable development initiative. Other factors determining location are:

- Accessibility and centrality.

- Availability of infrastructure such as electricity, telecommunication, water and roads.
- A rural setting (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2002:61).

### **3.6.3 Researching community information needs**

Continuous research is required before, during and after the establishment of an MPCC, as well as during the launch event. Mentioned in Kangala (2003:28-29), the following issues must be researched and evaluated:

- Community needs.
- Prioritisation of service needs.
- Community profile detailing the population and structures in the community.
- Social dynamics of the community.
- Whether the MPCC concept has been understood at grassroots level.
- Realistic community expectations.
- Whether the real needs of the community will be met by the MPCC through the services and information it will offer.
- Insight into teething problems in the first month of operation.
- Operation of the MPCC.
- Quality of service rendered at the MPCC and whether it achieves *Batho Pele* objectives.
- Frequency of use of the MPCC by community members.
- Monitoring of the commitment of all service providers.
- FAQs as a basis for updating service needs and expectations in the area.

The findings of this research must be communicated to various stakeholders involved in the running and maintenance of the MPCC. Key stakeholders include the Provincial Intersectoral Steering Committee (PISSC) on MPCCs responsible for co-ordinating the MPCC provincially; the National Intersectoral Steering Committee (NISSC) responsible for co-ordinating the rollout of MPCCs nationally; community structures and groups in the MPCC service area; the centre manager and

management committee; government service providers at the MPCC and their various levels of management at local, regional, provincial and national level; provincial government; and local government. Each of these role-players plays a role in addressing gaps and other eventualities that might be encountered (Kangala, 2003:27-28).

#### **3.6.4 Management of the MPCC**

Management committees should be established for individual MPCCs. The responsibilities of these committees include:

- Support in updating the profile of the community serviced by the MPCC
- Assisting in identifying/upgrading service and information needs.
- Managing the process of accommodating new service providers through fund raising, resource allocation and lobbying.
- Monitoring the running of the MPCC by reviewing reports from the centre manager and service providers.
- Quarterly meetings to review and assess the compliance of the MPCC with *Batho Pele* principles.
- Supporting the centre manager in the effective management of the MPCC through budgeting, monitoring, staffing and administrative support.
- Actively advocating and participating in all special events or projects at the MPCC, eg *Imbizos*, youth programmes, training, workshops, etc.
- Assisting the centre manager in lobbying for the extension of the centre to accommodate more services.

Intervening, when necessary, in the administration, discipline or arbitration matters of the MPCC (Kangala, 2003:29).

#### **3.6.5 Funding the MPCC**

Funding and proper management are central to the sustainability and survival of the MPCC. It is important to put in place sound financial management systems and

guidelines pertaining to fundraising and the soliciting of sponsorship from donor agencies and the private sector, as well as other self-sustaining activities. Presently, each government department uses its own budget to fund the provision of their services at the MPCC (Kangala, 2003:28). The Department of Public Works, through its Community Based Public Works Programme, has taken responsibility for the building of MPCCs Where no buildings can be suitably refurbished to establish an MPCC. The launch of an MPCC is funded by a partnership between government, communities, local businesses and traditional leaders (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2002:62).

### **3.6.6 Service providers of the MPCC**

A number of service providers from the public, private and community sectors will then operate from the MPCC (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2002:62). Each service provider is responsible for the resources needed in their offices. These include:

- A business plan of the services to be provided.
- Budgets for services and programmes.
- The staffing of their offices (E.g.: job descriptions and training).
- The procurement of appropriate office equipment and furniture.
- Ensuring that the necessary infrastructure, such as telephones, is in place. Where this is not provided as a general service by the centre management, service providers should apply for their own telephone lines.
- The development of their own departmental programme.
- The scheduling of their office hours.
- Administration and filling in of all questionnaires and templates distributed by the management committee.
- Compiling monthly reports and collating all statistics from various templates including visitor profiles, frequently asked questions (FAQs), timelines for handling queries, etc.

- Submitting monthly reports to the management committee as well to their own departments' principals at either national or provincial levels.
- Attending monthly meetings of the centre management.
- The payment for services used to the management of the centre, including water, electricity and rental.

(Kangala, 2003:29-30).

In 2002, the MPCC Project leader, Michael Currin pointed out that 'government departments operating at these facilities have to make sure that the rural citizen does not get a second rate service - the level of service must equal that of the urban areas.' The other challenge, according to Mr. Currin was to build more infrastructures and increase the number of government services offered at these centres (Tau, 2002:1).

### **3.6.7 Branding the MPCC**

Brand of the MPCC is very important. It must the *Batho Pele* principles underlying service delivery by public institutions. The overarching role which the new Coat of Arms plays in reflecting the corporate image of government (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2002:62). Branding can be done at various levels of corporate identity. Similarly, corporate material could appear at different levels. For example, stationery for the MPCCs may have a special colour or have the embossed Coat of Arms logo. Once the new brand has been finalised, it should be reflected on the GCIS website (Kangala, 2003:30).

### **3.6.8 Human resource development and training**

To ensure effective and efficient service delivery, all staff from various service providers should have appropriate skills to provide quality services (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2002:63). It is very important that all staff from various service providers should receive appropriate skills training. This would empower them to

provide service of a high quality to the MPCC's clients. To ensure effective and efficient service delivery, the NISSC should do a skills audit of staff with the view to design or seek relevant training programmes. The MPCC Business Plan provides details of appropriate training programmes (Kangala, 2003:30).

### **3.6.9 Marketing and promoting the MPCC**

Some of the major objectives of marketing and promotion are:

- To inform stakeholders and the public about the initiative and forthcoming launches.
- To identify the value which will be added to existing centres through the provision of more services, especially by government departments.
- To inform the media of the process, the launch and the value of the initiative to government and the public.
- To encourage communities to use the services to better their lives.
- To encourage stakeholder buy-in through informing them of the value of being at an MPCC and the value it would provide to the communities.

To ensure that service providers, stakeholders and the public understand and support the MPCC initiative (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2002:63).

### **3.6.10 Media advertising and promotion**

The media plays an important role in publicising the services rendered by an MPCC. A media plan ensures that communities have access to information about government and how the MPCC initiative aims to improve the quality of people's lives. There should be a free flow of information between the government and the media. The media should assist the government in reaching out to communities as key stakeholders. All forms of media, especially the ones that reach the majority of communities (radio, loud hailer, workshops, road shows, etc) should be utilised. Communities should be addressed in their own languages wherever possible (Kangala, 2003:31).

### **3.6.11 Distribution plan**

It is important to develop a well co-ordinated plan to ensure the cost-effective and timeous delivery of products and material to MPCCs. Each MPCC also serves as the central point for an extensive network of ward-based distribution outlets. These take the form of points right across the district where people congregate for various purposes (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2002:63). The points include community organisations, premises of a tribal authority, regional courts, clinics, crèches, spaza shops, community libraries, etc. At each point, the Government Communication Officer based at the MPCC establishes a working partnership with a community “distribution champion” who assists in distributing material in communities and who also solicits information and service needs (Kangala, 2003:31-32).. The Communication Officer refers all questions to the relevant government department for attention and on a later visit follows up whether the feedback has been provided or not (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2002:63).

### **3.6.12 Monitoring and evaluation techniques and plans**

Management, monitoring and evaluation techniques should be developed in order to ensure that services offered at the MPCC comply with the set service delivery standards. These techniques should ensure that information responses are in keeping with information requests, an important element in sustaining an MPCC. Monitoring and evaluation techniques are also important to keep track of operational and management issues in the running of the MPCC (Kangala, 2003:32).

### **3.6.13 Launching MPCCs**

Once all preparatory stages have been fulfilled, the MPCC can be launched (Kangala, 2003:33). Launching the MPCC is an important event to service providers and the community at large for all or some of the following reasons:

- Community events form an integral and significant part of a community's life,

particularly in rural areas. They cultivate support for the programme envisaged and offer a platform for contributions by all relevant community stakeholders to the establishment of an MPCC.

- The launch presents an opportune moment for making acknowledgements and sharing information.
- The event offers an opportunity to draw a big crowd to the MPCC. This assists in the marketing and popularisation of the centre.
- Launches offer the opportunity for communities to interact with senior political and government leaders.
- A launch event is, however, a small moment in the life of an MPCC. It should be an event to symbolise that the development communication process is under way in the community and that services and information are being provided. For this reason it is suggested that a centre be operational for at least one month before the launch event is held (DPSA Service Delivery Review, 2002:63).

The strategic review of the MPCC pilot phase contains the following recommendations and guidelines pertaining to the launching of MPCCs:

- A minimum of six government services should be provided at each MPCC.
- Launches should be done at least one month after the centre has been operational.
- It is recommended that at least one launch should be done by the Presidency.
- National politicians should figure prominently at certain launches.
- MPCC staff, from both government or non-governmental organisations, should receive adequate and relevant training before an MPCC is launched.
- The GCIS should brief the provincial top management structures regularly about the launching of rollout plans.
- The Minister in the Presidency politically responsible for government MPCC programme should present MPCC issues to the Presidential Co-ordinating Council and the Governance and Administration Cluster of Directors-General (Kangala, 2003:33).

### **3.6.14 Lessons that have been learnt from established MPCCs**

The rollout of MPCCs is gaining momentum and soon every district or metropolitan municipality countrywide will have its own (Kangala, 2003:). Important lessons from MPCCs launched since December 1999 are:

- Communities are in need of government services and are using MPCCs in growing numbers.
- Communities must choose the services offered at MPCCs according to their priorities.
- Technology in rural areas is costly to maintain and creative mechanisms need to be in place to provide communities with computers and the Internet.
- National, provincial and local government have worked well together to make MPCCs a success. Traditional leaders have played an important role in establishing MPCCs.
- Community participation in the setting up of MPCCs has ensured that no MPCC to date has been burgled or vandalised.

MPCCs run a development communication programme, which builds community participation. MPCCs have strong management structures and this contributes to their success (kangala, 2003:37).

### **3.7 THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY CENTRES**

Information and development services are crucial for the improvement of life for the majority of people in South Africa. Recent studies by the World Bank and others have highlighted that the most effective way to alleviate poverty is through effective acquisition and dissemination of knowledge (MPCC's - Cornerstone of the African Renaissance, 1998:2). Empowerment of ordinary citizens with the information they rightly deserve will go a long way towards assisting them to formulate their opinion of this world and to prevent politicians and so-called opinion makers to take 'every decision' on how they should run their lives and develop their very 'own communities' (Tau, 2002:1).

Access to information through new information and communication technologies and the capacity to use it effectively, is imperative to the progress and prosperity for all in South Africa (MPCC's - Cornerstone of the African Renaissance, 1998). Through the MPCC's which are One-Stop Centre's for government services and information, communities are being assisted to take charge of their own lives by using the power of information, unlimited media that is, and are also serviced with crucial 'government services at their doors step,' as the MPPC Programme slogan states (Tau, 2002:1).

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

The establishment of MPCCs in communities as one of the strategies that the government is using to alleviate poverty in communities is a necessary and important. This is because poverty can be alleviated through the effective acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. Through the MPCC's which are One-Stop Centre's for government services and information, communities are being assisted to take charge of their own lives by using the power of information. Communities are also serviced with crucial 'government services that aim to improve their quality of community life. Access to information through new information and communication technologies and the capacity to use it effectively, is imperative to the progress and prosperity for all in South Africa. The following chapter is to highlight how the kind of services and access to information provided by the Sebokeng MPCC service providers lead to the improvement of the quality of community.

## **CHAPTER 4            EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE SEBOKENG MPCC**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter aims to report the findings of the empirical research that was conducted at the Sebokeng Multi-Purpose community Centre. Information and data was gathered from ten respondents, an interview with the Government Communication and information System (GCIS) communication officer and through a sample observation of the MPCC. The purpose of this was to discover how the kind of services and access to information provided by the Sebokeng MPCC service providers lead to the improvement of the quality of community.

### **4.2 FINDINGS OF THE INTERVIEW WITH THE GCIS COMMUNICATION OFFICER**

According to the GCIS webpage on the Sebokeng MPCC – also revealing that it was last updated on the seventeenth of December 2004, when last accessed on the fifteenth of November 2005 – it is mentioned that Kate Jacobs is the Centre Manager and Mokete Mahapa is the Government Information Centre (GIC) Manager. The Communication Officer working at the Government Communication and Information System office however said that the above statement (that Kate is the Centre Manager and Mokete is the GIC Manager) is not true.

The Communication officer further stated that Kate was the centre manager, but she resigned in 2003 and that the MPCC functions according to the cluster approach. An MPCC functioning according to the cluster approach model has no centre manager. Therefore, the Sebokeng MPCC has no Centre manager. With regard to GIC manager stated by the webpage, it was found that the person working at the GCIS office is a Communication Officer that was interviewed. There is no GIC manager. As the interview progressed, the Communication Officer stated that :

- The MPCC was launched in November 2000.
- The MPCC is operating in buildings of a centre that was known as the Vaal Welfare Centre.

When asked of who the service providers at the MPCC were, the Communication Officer mentioned that there are / is:

- Government departments such as the Department of Social Services and Population Development, the Department of Labour, the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Housing.
- NGOs such as the Family and Marriage Society of South Africa and People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA).
- A telecentre.

The Communication Officer also stressed that the idea behind implementing Multi-purpose Community Centres is to bring government services closer to people, to provide the community with the opportunity to communicate with government. Because of this reason, services within the reach of the community such as the Sebokeng hospital and former Vista University form part of the MPCC concept. She continued by stressing that the main point behind the MPCC concept is to enable the community to travel to the area and be able to use a wide variety of services. This helps to prevent people from the surrounding previously disadvantaged communities to travel from one distant place to another very distant place, so as to access a wide variety of services they are in need of. As a result, this also prevents them from spending so much money on transport. Because of this view, in her own opinion, structures like the hospital near the MPCC and the former Vista University form part of the MPCC concept. This is because they prevent, people from spending money to travel from one distant place to another. She further stated that the services at the Sebokeng MPCC improve the quality of community life by giving the community an opportunity to:

- Apply and obtain social grants.
- Obtain counselling services.
- Obtain legal advice.
- Use office services - phones and photocopying.
- Use educational and skills development services such as computer assisted learning.

- Apply for identity documents.
- Report a crime at the South African Police Service office.

As a result, she further stated that these services lead towards the improvement of the quality of community life by addressing various matters that create, and sustain poverty. For example, money obtained by grants will enable members of the community to address their physical needs such as that of having food.

When asked about what the needs of the MPCC are, so that the MPCC may increase its level of rendering services to the community, she mentioned the following:

- The MPCC concept needs to be marketed, so that people may know about what it is all about and also know of the various services they may obtain at the MPCC.
- The community needs to be informed about the events held at the MPCC.
- Renovation for most the buildings.
- A sense of wholeness (integration of services offered) between the various service providers.

#### **4.3 FINDINGS FROM THE SAMPLE OBSERVATION**

It was firstly, evident that the buildings of the MPCC have been there for quite a long time, as they look old. Certain rooms were not occupied, while some service providers were operating in a small limited space. Due to soil degradation in places where grass once existed, the place becomes so dusty when it is windy. As a result, this may cause health problems for those suffering from diseases such as asthma and also, certain rooms were very dusty. Meat markets are closely situated next to the gate leading to the Department of Social Services and Population. Furthermore, 90% of the meat products were uncovered and they tended to invite flies to roam around them. Even though the meat sellers were keeping the flies away by using objects such as a piece of cloth to sway around the meat, so many flies were still flying around. In addition, a butchery-like smell was present. This atmosphere just near the gate certainly would create an unwelcoming or unpleasant feeling for

some. Nevertheless, most people seemed not to mind as they focused on going there to get what they want (for example, going there to collect the monthly payment of a grant).

#### 4.4 FINDINGS FROM SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

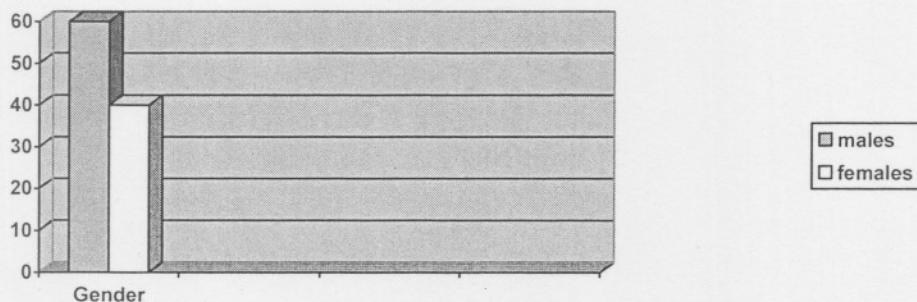
Information gathered regarding the profile of the respondents and on the services and information provided by the service and information providers of which the ten respondents are working for, is provided below.

##### 4.4.1 Section A: Profile of respondents

**Question 1:** Respondents were asked to indicate their gender.

60 % polled were males and 40% polled were females.

**Figure 2: Gender ratio of respondents**



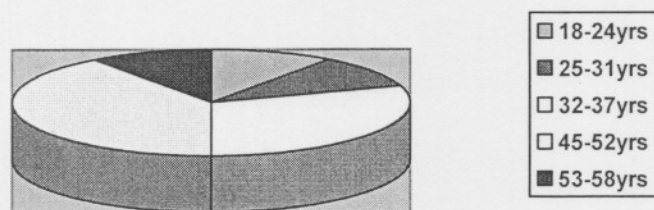
**Question 2:** Respondents were asked to select their age range.

The data revealed that there was / were:

- One respondent within the age range of 18 to 24 years.
- One respondent within the age range 25 to 31 years.
- Three respondents within the age range of 32 to 37.

- No respondent within the age range of 38 to 44.
- Four respondents within the age range 45 to 52.
- One respondents within the age range of 53 to 58.
- No respondents within the age range of 59 to 65.
- No respondents within the age range of 66 and above

A chart illustrating the: age range of the ten respondents



**Figure 3: Age range of the ten respondents**

**Question 3:** Respondents were asked to mention the name of the service provider they are working at or for.

The ten respondents work for the following service providers:

- Two respondents work for the Emfuleni Local Municipality: solid waste.
- One respondent works for the Emfuleni Local Municipality: Department of Health.
- One respondent works for Tswelopele / Inthuthuka telecentre.
- One respondent works for Childline.
- One respondent works for Department of building.
- One respondent works for Vaal Small Business Development and association.

- One respondent works for Lesedi Legal Aid Centre.
- One respondent works for the Department of Social Services and Population Development.
- One respondent works for the Department of Home Affairs

**Question 4:** Respondents were asked to name their occupation.

Occupations of the respondents such as that of being an environmental Health Practitioner, Director, administrative officer, clerk, social worker and Coordinator varied between the ten respondents.

**Question 5:** Respondents were asked to mention how long they have been working for the service provider (years).

Years varied from respondent to respondent. The lowest of all was 11 months and the highest of all was 11 years. 90% of the respondents had been working for their service provider for more than two years.

**Question 6:** Respondents were asked to mention their highest level of education.

The highest level of education for 80% of the respondents is tertiary qualification and 20% are below this level.

#### **4.4.2 Section B: The services and information provided**

**Question 1:** Respondents were asked to mention what the services and / information provided by the service and information provider they are working for are.

Services and information provided by the service providers of which the ten respondents are working for are within the table below

**Table 2: Services and information provided by the service providers**

Department, service and / information provider	Services and / information
Department of Health (Emfulweni Local Municipality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of primary health care services.</li> </ul>
Department of Social Services and Population Development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of welfare services such as social security, social work and development services</li> <li>• Payment of grants.</li> <li>• Promotion of small businesses.</li> </ul>
Department of Home Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration of birth, death, marriages (civil and customary), issuing of passports, migration and immigration services.</li> <li>• Application for identity documents.</li> </ul>
Twelopele / Intutuko Telecentre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of tele-centre services (computer courses).</li> </ul>
Vaal Small Business Development and Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business incubation, business registration, business coaching and counselling and facilitation for business finance.</li> </ul>
Childline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of counselling to children who are victims of abuse, group therapy, family therapy, awareness campaigns at schools on abuse.</li> </ul>
Department of housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspection of houses, plan approvals for building houses.</li> </ul>

Lesedi Legal Aid Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice relating to legal aid issues, labour issues – unfair dismissals, family disputes (divorce and maintenance).</li> <li>• Typing of wills.</li> </ul>
Solid Waste (Emfulueni Local Municipality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of rubbish and waste from the community</li> </ul>

**Question 2:** Respondents were asked to mention how the services and / information lead towards the improvement of the quality of community life.

The services and / information of the service providers from which the ten respondents come from lead towards the improvement of the quality of community life because of the following reasons stated within the table below.

**Table 3: Reasons why the services and / information of the service providers lead towards the improvement of the quality of community life**

Department, service and / information provider	Reasons
Department of Health (Emfulueni Local Municipality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A healthy, sustainable environment is maintained.</li> </ul>
Department of Social Services and Population Development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to money from the payment of grants leads towards the improvement of the standard of living for people within the community.</li> </ul>

Department of Home Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services provided by this Department, enable people of interact with other Departments. For example the registration of a birth certificate and application of Identity documents enable certain people to access grants. This in turn, leads towards the improvement of the quality of community life, as certain people without a source of income may rely on the money from the payment of grants for survival.</li> </ul>
Twelopele / Intutuko Telecentre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People become computer literate and can apply for jobs that require computer literacy. This in turn will lead to the improvement of the quality of community life as people will be able to qualify for jobs.</li> </ul>
Vaal Small Business Development and Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through job creation and income generation is promoted through the support and services given to small businesses.</li> </ul>
Childline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaigns that are run in schools, lead the community towards becoming aware of actions that are regarded as child abuse.</li> </ul>
Department of housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Houses built are inspected so that the people within the community can live in good houses that will last.</li> </ul>
Lesedi Legal Aid Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services are affordable and senior citizens are not charged.</li> </ul>

Solid Waste (Emfulueni Local Municipality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clean environment that is health hazard free is maintained. This leads to the improvement of the quality of community life as health problems which are a result of an unclean environment are prevented from occurring.</li> </ul>
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**Question 3:** Respondents were asked to mention the needs of the Service or information provider they work for, so that the maximum potential towards providing services and information to the community may be used.

Needs of the service providers from which the ten respondents are working for are the following:

- Funding for operational costs. This need was stated by 50% of the respondents.
- For community to pay their fees. This need was stated by 20% of the ten respondents.
- To advertise and market their services to the community. Funding for this will be required. This need was stated by 20% of the ten respondents.
- To establish / open service points around the locations, near people. This need was stated by 20% of the ten respondents.
- For more space to render services to the community, within the MPCC. This need was stated by 10% of the ten respondents.
- For training to keep up with changes in the country. This need was stated by 30% of the ten respondents.
- For more advanced technology: upgrading of computers. This need was stated by 10% of the respondents.
- For corporate identity to be defined. This need was stated by 10% of the ten respondents.
- Resources: vehicles to remove waste, vehicles for travelling, television, video player. This need was stated by 40% of the ten respondents.
- For more personnel / staff. This need was stated by 40% of the ten respondents.

- For students from institutions – the North West University and Vaal University of technology – to help the community by serving it. When they carry out their practicum hours, they should also do it there. This need was stated by 10% of the ten respondents.
- For therapy. This need was stated by 10% of the ten respondents.
- For good working relationships with other Departments / service providers. This need was stated by 20% of the ten respondents.
- For the community to be involved. 10% of the ten respondents mentioned this need.

**Question 4:** In order to meet the needs they have stated, respondents were asked in their opinion, what they think should be done and by whom (what they recommend).

Recommendations were as follows:

- The community should be encouraged to pay their fees.
- Budgets made should make provision to purchase the needed resources.
- For financial assistance to cover their costs.
- For the Department to be overhauled from top management to middle management.
- For Local Government to provide vehicles and manpower (personnel).
- To meet with communities regularly so as to build trust and communication with them.
- A network with tertiary institutions should be established in order to get their involvement in rendering services to the community.
- Sponsorships should be obtained.
- Good working relationships with other Departments / service providers should be established.

#### **4.5. CONCLUSION**

The interview revealed that the idea behind the establishment of Multi-purpose Community Centres is to bring government services closer to people and to provide the community with the opportunity to communicate with government. Ten respondents from the MPCC service and information providers indicated that the services lead towards the improvement of the quality of community life for various reasons. Although there are certain needs that need to be addressed, so that the service and / information providers at the MPCC can better their services, the Sebokeng MPCC service and / information providers play an important role towards improving the quality of community life. MPCCs are therefore, a necessary poverty alleviation strategy that needs to be promoted for the improvement of the quality of community life.

## **CHAPTER 5            RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is firstly, to summarise what this study has dealt in the previous chapters. Secondly, recommendations in connection with the identified issues that need to be addressed when this research was undertaken are made.

### **5.2 REALISATION OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The first objective of this study was to provide an exposition of poverty and inequality in South African communities. To meet this objective, the exposition of poverty and inequality in South African communities was provided in chapter two.

The second objective was to highlight the importance of having MPCCs as poverty alleviation strategies in communities. Chapter three stressed the importance of having MPCCs as poverty alleviation strategies in communities. The purpose was to show that MPCCs play a crucial role towards the alleviation of poverty and towards improving the quality of community life.

Thirdly, the study aimed to discover how the kind of services and access to information provided by the Sebokeng MPCC service providers lead toward the improvement of the quality of community life. Chapter four highlighted this, as it aimed to reveal how the services and information provided by the Sebokeng MPCC service providers play a role toward improving the quality of community life.

The fourth objective of this study was to trace the sources of finance for the Sebokeng Multi-Purpose Community Centre. In chapter three, it was discovered that each service provider is responsible for the resources needed in their offices. These include a business plan of the services to be provided, budgets for services and programmes, the staffing of their offices such as job descriptions and training and the procurement of appropriate office equipment and furniture.

The last objective of this study was to discover what the needs of the Service providers at the Sebokeng MPCC are, so that they may use their maximum potential towards providing services and information to South African citizens.

In chapter four, the needs of the service providers at the Sebokeng MPCC such as funding and advertising were mentioned.

### **5.3 TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS**

The aim of this study was also to test the preliminary statement that was made in chapter one, namely that:

- MPCCs are a necessary poverty alleviation strategy that needs to be promoted for the improvement of the quality of community life.

Findings from the conducted literature review and empirical research support the stated preliminary statement. MPPCs are a necessary poverty alleviation strategy that needs to be promoted for the improvement of the quality of community life.

### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations are as follows:

- When making their budgets, Service providers and Departments at the Sebokeng MPCC should budget for the resources they need such as office equipment.
- Service providers should seek for more sponsors, so that they can purchase infrastructure such as the vehicles they need.
- The Department of Works urgently needs to renovate buildings that need to be renovated and also pave areas that need pavement, in order to reduce dust formation.

- Meat markets situated closely toward the gate leading to the Department of Social Services and Population and other markets too, should be moved away. Markets should at least be situated 50 meters away from the gate. This will help to prevent so many flies from flying near the gate and also create a welcoming atmosphere for people who are to pass through the gate. This atmosphere just near the gate certainly would create an unwelcoming or unpleasant feeling for some.
- Notice boards showing the events such as workshops at the MPCC and informing the community about the services at the MPCC need to be implemented in the communities.
- The community needs to be informed, also via Radio transmissions about the services available at the MPCC. In other words, MPCC marketing needs to be intensified.
- The community should be encouraged to pay their fees.
- For uniformity and a sense of connectedness to be established between the Departments / service providers at the MPCC, the Local Government should perhaps appoint a Centre Manager.
- Some buildings are dusty because there are no cleaners. Therefore cleaners should be appointed.
- A network with tertiary institutions should be established in order to get their involvement in rendering services to the community at the MPCC.
- The GCIC website on the Sebokeng MPCC needs to be updated as it states that there is a Centre Manger and GIC Manager, whilst such positions don't exist.

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## ANNEXURE A

### RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

**Topic:** The role of the Multi-Purpose Community Centre (MPCC) service and information providers towards improving the quality of community life. The case of the sebokeng MPCC.

Researcher: Hahangwivhawe Rabali  
Institution: North West University (Vaal triangle Campus).

#### **Instructions:**

Please do not write your name down.

Answer the questions frankly; and mark with an X where applicable.

#### **Section A: profile of respondent**

1. Gender:

Male \_\_\_ female \_\_\_

2. Age range:

18 to 24 years \_\_\_\_\_

25 to 31 years \_\_\_\_\_

32 to 37 \_\_\_\_\_

38 to 44 \_\_\_\_\_

45 to 52 \_\_\_\_\_

53 to 58 \_\_\_\_\_

59 to 65 \_\_\_\_\_

66 and above \_\_\_\_\_

3. You are employed to work for \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of service / information provider).

4 You are working as a \_\_\_\_\_

5. For how long have you been working here? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is your highest level of education?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Matric
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Tertiary (university, technikon or college):
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Adult basic education
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Other
- If so, please mention below

\_\_\_\_\_

**Section B: The services and information provided**

1. What services and / information is provided by the service and information provider you are working for to the community?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. In what way or how are these services and / information you are providing to the community lead towards the improvement of the quality of community life?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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3. To obtain the maximum potential towards providing services and information to the community may be used, *what are the needs of the Service or information provider you are working for?*

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4. So as to meet the needs you have stated, in your opinion what do you think should be done and by whom (what do you recommend so that your needs should be met)?

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**Thank you for your participation!**

ANNEXURE B

MPCCs around the Gauteng Province

