

## **Role of Traditional Leaders in Infrastructural Development in Marondera Rural District in Zimbabwe**

Shillah Rugonye<sup>1</sup>, Gift Rupande<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Department of Applied Social Sciences, Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU), Zimbabwe

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Department of Student Affairs, Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU), Zimbabwe

### **\*Corresponding Author:**

Shillah Rugonye

Email: [srugonye@gmail.com](mailto:srugonye@gmail.com)

---

**Abstract:** The study looked at the role of traditional leaders in economic development in Marondera Rural District with emphasis on infrastructural development. The objectives of the study were basically to explore the role of traditional leaders in economic development as well as examining the extent to which the Zimbabwean Government had integrated the traditional leadership institution in existing development structures. The qualitative research design was used in the study. Random sampling was also used to select the fifty participants in Marondera Rural District for the study which was generally descriptive. Data was gathered through qualitative methods such as questionnaires and interviews. The collected data was analyzed qualitatively and presented in pie charts, tables, figures using frequencies and percentages. Findings indicated that traditional leaders played quite a number of roles in economic development in the rural areas. These include mobilizing the communities in development projects and programmes, local governance, settling family disputes, performing traditional rituals and ceremonies, presiding over community courts, land allocation and the general development of their respective areas as well as politicization of the local people. Traditional leaders were generally found to be the entry point of development projects and programmes in the rural areas. The study gave quite a number of recommendations which included the involvement and participation of traditional leaders in economic development. Successful rural development entails the active participation of traditional leaders in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of infrastructural projects in the rural areas. The study further recommended the enhancement of the traditional leadership institution through capacity building of the traditional leaders through relevant training and development.

**Keywords:** economic development, traditional leaders, politicization.

---

### **THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Traditional Leaders have been a part of the cultural system for hundreds of years in Zimbabwe. There are different forms of developmental relationships between the Traditional Leaders and Rural Local Authorities (Traditional Leaders Act, Chapter 29:17). Generally, they are the custodians of customary law and practice. Duties of Traditional Leaders are far and wide ranging including overseeing collection of levies, taxes, and other charges, dealing with land issues, ensuring that public property such as dip tanks, roads, clinics, schools and others are used properly by the people, enforcement of environmental conservation, peace building, presiding over traditional courts and others.

Service delivery in the rural areas hinges on the building of partnerships between the local authorities and traditional authorities. The traditional leadership institution is an integral part of the social, political and cultural values in African Societies [1].

There is a general lack of understanding of the role played by traditional leaders in economic development in the rural communities. The confusion surrounding the role of the traditional leaders requires further research and unpacking.

Implementation of development programmes and projects in rural areas substantially widened political and developmental space for the gallery of actors engaged in the process at the local levels resulting in intense struggle for the space. The actors which include traditional authorities, modern authorities (Rural Councils), administrative appointees, development committees among others jostle and wrestle for power, influence, and authority in the burgeoning new social, political and economic order. This struggle is predominantly in terms of tradition versus modernity.

Against the backdrop of the argument that traditional leaders are an anachronism that should not have survived the twentieth century let alone exist in

the twenty first, the role and place of traditional leaders remains mirrored in a mirage and traditional leaders continue to be characterised as leftovers from a time that is swiftly fading away .

The research is going to look into the role of traditional leaders in economic development in rural areas with specific reference to Marondera Rural District. The study is important as it being undertaken at a time that traditional leaders are being given new authority and power in the country's rural developmental processes by the New Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Number 20.

The study is going to cover background of study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, definition of key terms, significance of the study, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, conceptual framework, theoretical concept, literature review, research design and methodology and data presentation and analysis.

### **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

At the global level leaders play quite a big role in economic development. Leaders have come together at the global level to discuss and agree on developmental issues. Globalization has necessitated collaboration at the global level for effective and balanced development to take place. Forums such as the United Nations (UN) have seen a coalescence of minds when leaders meet to deliberate on developmental issues. Quite a number of protocols and conventions have been agreed endeared towards social and economic development throughout the world. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) was put together by Heads of State and Governments as developmental targets to be attained by all countries of the world by 2015.

At a regional level there is a strong nexus between development and leadership (African Union Constitutive Act, 2000) [2]. According to Murithi (2005) the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) quickly come to mind as they are platforms where regional leaders meet and push forward the African continent's development agenda. Economic and social development in Africa is premised on the active participation of the leadership (SADC, 2014: Southern African Development Community, [www.sadc.int](http://www.sadc.int), AFRIMAP, 2010: Strengthening Popular Participation in the African Union: A Guide to All Structures and Processes) [3, 4]. New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a forum specifically put in place for social and economic transformation in Sothern Africa [5].

At national level leaders play a critical role in development. The Council of Chiefs brings together all Chiefs of the Country for developmental purposes (Traditional Leaders Act (Chapter, 19:17). Developmental efforts of Local Authorities are brought together through national organisations such as the Association of Rural District Councils. Legislation was passed to try and harmonise and bridge the gap between the operations of the traditional and modern development institutions in Zimbabwe. With the enactment of the Traditional Leaders Act (Chapter 29:17) and the Rural District Councils Act (Chapter 29:13) the role of traditional leaders in the development arena was given more impetus.

The assessment is critical at a time the Zimbabwean Government is reinventing and transforming the institution of traditional leadership in line with the New Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Number 20. The Government created governance and development structures such as the Village Development Committees, Ward Development Committees and the Provincial Council as a way of ensuring participation of the traditional leaders in developmental activities. It is not clear whether the traditional leaders are utilising these development structures effectively in order to bolster development in the communities. The question on whether traditional authorities and modern authorities are competing against each other and how to integrate the two systems has remained largely unanswered. Africa's deepening crises are likely to remain unresolved with the existing duality of institutions.

The study seeks to clearly bring out and shed more light on the role played by traditional leaders in economic development. The contribution of traditional leaders' in general infrastructural development in the rural communities will be examined largely to make it more understandable.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Traditional Leaders view themselves as the pinnacle of development programmes and projects in Marondera district whilst the Local Authority on the other hand perceive the traditional leaders as standing in the way of contemporary development. There is a general lack of understanding of the role of traditional leaders in economic development. The existence of the traditional leadership institution in contemporary Zimbabwe and its place in rural development is not well articulated. The research seeks to analyse the role and place of traditional leaders in contemporary economic development in the rural areas of Zimbabwe. Research on the role that traditional leaders play in economic development in Zimbabwe remains insufficient. This study will therefore further provide some fundamental and crucial policy tool with regard to the role of

traditional authorities in local government systems in Zimbabwe.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To explore the role played by traditional leaders in economic development with a special emphasis on infrastructural development in Marondera Rural district.
- To examine the extent to which the Zimbabwean Government has managed to integrate the institution of traditional leadership into the existing development structures.
- To assess the extent to which the institution of traditional leadership fulfils its legislative obligations as enunciated by the Traditional Leaders Act and the Rural District Councils Act.
- To examine the nature of the relationship between traditional leaders and local authorities.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- To what extent are traditional leaders in Marondera district involved in economic development activities in their respective areas?
- To what extent has the Zimbabwean Government integrated the institution of traditional leadership in the existing development structures of the country?
- To what level have traditional leaders fulfilled their legislative obligations?
- What is the nature of the relationship between authorities and modern authorities?

### DELIMITATIONS

The research was carried out in Marondera Rural District covering the Svosve and Chihota areas. Marondera Rural District is one of the nine administrative districts in Mashonaland East Province. It has 23 wards and approximately 116 985 people (Zimbabwe Population Census, 2012). The research covered the role of traditional leaders in economic development with an emphasis on infrastructural development in Marondera Rural District.

### LIMITATIONS

The researchers were constrained in terms of time as he is a full time employee of the Government of Zimbabwe. Resources were a challenge since the research project was self – financed by the researcher. In order to overcome the challenge of time and resources the researcher utilised gate – keepers such as councillors and village heads in the distribution and collection of the questionnaires in the communities. The researchers fully engaged the participants explaining the purpose of the research. Relevant documents authorising carrying out of the research were availed to the participants. The subject studied is a sensitive area in light of the involvement of traditional leaders in politics. This complicated the research as there was

need for the researcher to properly present himself so that he was not mistaken as a politician.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research is going to make an impact on infrastructure development in Zimbabwe in general and specifically Marondera Rural District. It is going to awaken the Rural Local Authorities and Traditional leaders on the need for collaboration in development programmes and projects. The Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing will benefit immensely from the research as the one that administers both traditional leaders and rural local authorities. A refinement of the role of traditional leaders in economic development will result. Traditional Leaders will be refocused in the discharge of their functions. The legislative framework within which traditional leaders and rural local authorities are operating will be reviewed for accelerated rural development to be achieved. Zimbabwe will have a strong traditional leadership institution and local government system best to deliver services to the people. The research will also add value to the literature on traditional leaders, governance, rural development and local authorities.

### ASSUMPTIONS

Traditional Leaders play a critical role in developmental activities being undertaken by Rural Local Authorities in Zimbabwe.

### DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

**Development** – The word is viewed differently by economists, anthropologists, geographers, historians, planners and others. Economists define development as the achievement of economic growth with a resultant impact on the standard of living of the people [6].

**Economic development** – According to the Business Dictionary this is progress in an economy, or the qualitative measure of this. Economic development usually refers to the adoption of new technologies, transition from agriculture-based to industry-based economy, and general improvement in living standards. The main goal of economic development is improving the economic wellbeing of a community through efforts that entail job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements and quality of life. (International Economic Development Council, <http://www.iedconline.org/hotlinks/whtecodev.html>)

**Infrastructural development** – Infrastructure is the basic physical and organizational structure needed for the operation of a society or enterprise, or the services and facilities necessary for an economy to function. It can be generally defined as the set of interconnected structural elements that provide a framework supporting an entire structure of development (Cambridge English

Business Dictionary, 2011). It is an important term for judging a country or region's development. The term typically refers to the technical structures that support a society, such as roads, bridges, tunnels, water supply, sewers, electrical grids, telecommunications, and so forth, and can be defined as "the physical components of interrelated systems providing commodities and services essential to enable, sustain, or enhance societal living conditions (Cambridge English Business Dictionary, 2011).

**Traditional Leadership** – these are customary institutions or structures. They can also be customary systems or procedures of governance recognised and utilised or practiced by traditional communities. Traditional leaders are structures of governance that derive part of their legitimacy from an association with the past [7]. Traditional leaders encompass kings and other aristocrats holding office in political structures that predate the colonial state and the post-colonial state as well as the heads of extended families and other political religious offices in decentralised polities that also date back to the pre-colonial period.

#### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT ARENA**

Traditional leaders (chiefs, headmen and village heads) were playing quite a big role in rural local governance before colonisation in Zimbabwe and other African States. According to Mararike [8], powerful traditional authorities existed in Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Uganda, Malawi, South Africa and other states long before the introduction of colonialism. They dominated the socio-economic lives of the people. According to Mbembe [9] with the advent of colonialism there was a shift in political systems with the emergence of a new arrangement for the role of traditional leaders. Mbembe [9] goes further and indicates that traditional leadership systems were systematically dismantled and eroded by the European Colonial Settlers. This was done with the purpose of promoting and sustaining the objectives and interests of the colonial masters especially with regard to the acquisition of productive resources such as land and minerals.

In Malawi (Chiweza 2007) and South Africa [10] as quoted in Muriaas [11] traditional leaders continued to play major roles in modern societies. This is buttressed by Nicholson (2006) and Kenworthy (2010) who indicate that the traditional authorities had played an important role in their respective communities with regard to crucial public service delivery, in terms of health, provision, education, agriculture, heritage management and judicial processes [13]. (Zuma 2010 and Motlanthe 2009 share the same view on the relevance of traditional leaders in economic

development. They said—"The suggestion here is that traditional leaders in the discharge of their everyday functions are very relevant in the modern socio – economic set up, especially with regard to issues of development, as partners in the modern state"

The paper titled Relevance of African Traditional Institutions of Governance presented at the Economic Commission of Africa (ECA), fourth African Development Forum (ADF-IV), in October 2004 outlines the role that traditional authorities can play in the process of good governance which includes their advisory role to government, their participatory role in the administration of regions and districts, their developmental role, complementing government's efforts in mobilizing the population for the implementation of development projects, sensitizing them on health issues such as HIV/AIDS, promoting education, encouraging economic enterprises, inspiring respect for the law and urging participation in the electoral process as well as their role in conflict resolution.

The important role of traditional leaders in developmental activities is entrenched in history. Van Nieuw van Rouveroy [14] indicates that "in the days of colonialism traditional authorities were responsible for the administrative functions, while simultaneously being incorporated into the colonial ruling systems and as such strengthening the new local councils".

In the rural areas of former homelands of South Africa, the traditional leaders were an important factor of public governance and service delivery to their communities in partnership with Bantustan governments. The International Journal of African Renaissance Studies – Multi, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity Volume 7, Issue 1, of 2012 gives serious debate on the tension between the conception of traditional leadership systems as mere cultural institutions and the lack of interest and/or ability to use them as practical development tools in Africa. The article brings out the need for African countries to endeavour to achieve a dialectical mediation between traditional leadership institutions on the one hand and concrete rural development projects on the other, for the purpose of promoting sustainable development.

Mamdani [14] talking about decentralised despotism indicates that it was common for traditional leaders to be given extensive powers, especially powers of coercion. Traditional leaders became local – level law makers, tax collectors, police commissioners and judges. Customary law became a mechanism of upholding colonial order to the extent that the colonial order became customary. Colonial authorities intervened in traditional and customary matters since they appointed chiefs where there were none and

deposed those traditional leaders that opposed them. However this does not go without challenge as not all traditional leaders were despots as others strongly resisted colonial authorities.

Despite their purported support of colonial governments, traditional leaders were viewed as role – players, particularly in calming rural communities from mobilizing against modern governments which apparently were failing to deliver services [11]. Despite the failure by modern governments in service delivery, the concern still remains that by their very nature traditional authorities remain a threat to democracy .

The traditional leaders are viewed as a representative of a privileged few who rule over the majority [15]. The various scholars so far cited acknowledge the role played by traditional in development in the past and this exposed the traditional leaders to modern experience, knowledge and skill which they transferred to the modern states after the colonial governments. The Modern states should use the traditional leaders for the good of the communities as these modern states are still modelled on the same pattern of the colonial systems, which were served by the traditional leaders.

#### **LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR TRADITIONAL LEADERS IN ZIMBABWE, NAMIBIA, BOTSWANA AND SOUTH AFRICA**

According to Chatiza (2008) the 1967 Rhodesian Tribal Trust Land Act restored land allocation powers to traditional leaders, the 1969 African and Tribal Courts Act restored their powers to try some cases and the 1973 African Councils Amendment Act granted traditional leaders executive and administrative powers. The alignment and identification with unpopular policies of the colonial government resulted in their corruption, leading to a decision at independence in 1980 to strip the traditional leaders of virtually all formal administrative and powers.

The Zimbabwean Chiefs and Headman Act [Chapter 29:01] stripped traditional authorities of most powers they had prior to independence in 1980. The Act excluded village heads from rural local governance and allocated only three functions of customary nature to Chiefs and Headman. Power at the district and sub – district level was transferred to elect Councilors in Rural District Councils and Village and Ward Development Committees. The new arrangement resulted in tension and role conflict in the rural areas. The traditional leaders despite being legally stripped of functions such allocation of land and resolving customary law disputes continued to carry out these functions [16]. Local people continued to recognise the traditional leaders and accorded them the status that

they always had. The Rukuni Commission of 1985 on land tenure recommended the need to harmonise traditional leaders and elected official such councilors.

The Traditional Leaders Act (Chapter 29:17) was passed to harmonise structures at the grassroots level. The functions of the Chiefs were increased from 3 to 22 and those for headmen from 3 to 11. The Act recognised village heads and these were allocated 16 functions. The Zimbabwe Constitution requires chiefs to give advice to Government on chieftainship matters as well as modernise outdated customs and adjudicate on chieftainship disputes.

In Namibia, when the Constitution was crafted after independence the Chiefs and other indigenous groups were not consulted hence their interests were not reflected in the Constitution [17]. Article 102 (5) of Namibia Constitution Act 34 of 1998 only states “There shall be a Council of Traditional Leaders in terms of an Act of Parliament in order to advise the President on the control and utilization of communal land and all such matters as may be referred to it by the President for advice”.

Mhlangeni (2005) indicates that the Namibian Traditional Authorities Act 17 of 1995 excluded traditional leaders from political office, thereby reducing their traditional and colonial status from political leaders to that of cultural agents.

When Botswana became a full republic in 1966, the Constitution of Botswana 1966 came into effect with a provision for the creation of a House of Chiefs comprising eight ex – officio members made up of four elected and four special members. Article 80(1) of the Constitution was very clear on the need by all the Chiefs to abstain from active politics for a period of at last five years prior to their election into the House of Chiefs. The House of Chiefs was not given power to make law which was only a prerogative of parliament.

Despite dissatisfaction by the House of Chiefs over the arrangement nothing was done to address the situation. The restricted powers of the traditional leaders remained a serious cause for concern in post-independence Botswana. Vengroff [18] indicates that traditional leaders in Botswana were reluctant to surrender their powers to the new development structures and the relationship continues to be quarrelsome. The traditional leaders lost most of their powers to district councils and land boards, but the people still pledged their support and loyalty to the Chiefs rather than the new Municipal Councils [18].

In South Africa the Apartheid Government put in place quite a number of legislation which impacted on the traditional leadership institution. These comprise:-

1. The Black Administration Act, 1927 which gave the Governor General unfettered powers to appoint and remove traditional leaders at his will.
2. The Bantu Authorities Act which had provision for the establishment of black homelands and regional authorities, the aim being to create self-government in the home lands.
3. The Promotion of Bantu Self Government Act, 1959 which classified black populations into eight ethnic groups, whereby each group had a Commissioner General with the task of creating a home land for each group.
4. The Bantu Homelands Citizens Act, 1970 which compelled black people to become citizens of the homelands that responded to their ethnic group.

The Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA) felt that the Local Government Transitional Act, 1993 had stripped traditional leaders of all their powers and this caused conflict between the traditional leaders and the African National Congress. Chapter 11 of the 1996 South African Constitution is dedicated to traditional authorities and the institution of traditional leadership where it is recognised as a system of governance at the local sphere (White paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance, 2003).

The independent South African Government put in place quite a number of pieces of legislation which impacted on the traditional leadership institution. These include-

1. The Constitution of South Africa 1996 which recognised the institution of traditional leadership as well as the status of the traditional leaders.
2. The National House of Traditional Leaders Act, 1997 which established the National House of Traditional Leaders stating its objectives and functions.
3. The Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework, 2003 which guided the transformation of the institution of the traditional leadership bringing good governance to the rural areas.
4. The White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance, 2003 which recognised traditional communities, the establishment of traditional councils and gave a statutory framework for leadership positions within the traditional leadership institution.

#### **CONCEPT OF PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

The concept of development is ambiguous as it is wide ranging. Chambers [19] views development as implying a good change. This is buttressed by Peet [20] who indicates that despite the various interpretations of development it is generally associated with a positive connotation, progress directed at efforts aimed at improving conditions of life. Chatiza (2008) gives two

forms of development as either being a gradual process of change 'immanent development' which refers to a spontaneous and unconscious process of change or a planned rapid change, 'intentional development'. The rural poor, who represent a latent productive potential, need to be provided with an appropriate policy and institutional framework, resources and technology support, and an enabling market environment so that they can raise their productivity on land where access to it is assured, and raise their income through off-farm income generating activities, where there is scope for generation of productive employment.

Governance is the use of political authority and exercise of control over a society and the management of its resources for social and economic development. Participatory governance entails involvement and participation of the people in the processes that affect them. Through participation individuals influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources that affect them.

WWAP/UNESCO [21] indicates that with participation the voice of the voiceless is heard. Local Government as the level closest to the people is the best to respond and articulate the needs of the local people. Chambers [19] avers that "it is time to put the last first". Bottom top strategies are varied but most importantly they stress the concern for local community participation in development design and implementation of projects, reducing outside dependency and promoting sustainability.

Through local government, the ordinary people participate in public affairs at the local level [16], development is possible when there is involvement and participation of the local people. Development should begin from the people at the grassroots so that their aspirations and needs are satisfied [16]. An interaction should exist between the people and the development agencies. Involvement and participation of traditional leaders in infrastructure and economic development planning adds value to the development process in their communities.

In 2005, the United Nations argued that "poor governance in African States was one of the key reasons for on-going problems in meeting the goals of development." Participatory governance is characterised by joint decision making. Traditional leaders should be involved and participate in infrastructure and general economic development if effective development is to be achieved.

Zuma [12] talking about the role of traditional leaders in development said- "let me emphasize that traditional leaders have a key role to play as partners

with government, to build a better life for all our people. I am here to request a stronger partnership between us, a partnership for progress and sustainable development especially in the rural areas . . .”

This buttresses the need for greater participation in developmental activities at the grassroots levels. Noluthando Matsiliza [22] talks about the inclusion of rural institutions in accountability and good governance discourses in South Africa in his article *Repositioning Rural Institutions for Good Governance in South Africa: The Case of The Royal Bafokeng Nation* in the *Journal of African & Asian Local Government Studies*.

The major gap in the good governance agenda appears to be at the local level, where the major issues of popular participation, accountability, transparency and support for an active civil society remain largely unaddressed. It is also at the local level that indigenous knowledge appears to have the greatest potential to contribute to sustainable development. Emphasis has been placed on the need for a home-grown model of self-reliant development; however, that can only be achieved when government institutions cooperate with traditional institutions to solve the problems that confront the local people.

Oakley [23] posits that the philosophy of people based development assumes that participation is not only an end in itself, but also a fundamental precondition and a tool for any successful development process. Arendonk and Arendonk [24] argue that development is principally considered to be about culture and institutions which are critical components that enforce cultural rules, norms and beliefs. This makes valid the presence of the traditional leadership institution in development.

Berg and Whitaker [25] indicate the State theory as critical when articulating developmental issues and provides an insight into the involvement of traditional leaders in economic development. The State is a complex system that has the responsibility and authority to accept or deny developmental initiatives. The State also has the mandate to provide the necessary environments and opportunities, policies, security and basic services to its people. The state remains the major facilitator of developmental activities.

Todaro [26] indicates that government support is the *sine quo non* – for development plans where the country’s political leadership and development are central concerns. The state’s political culture and economic policies are the basis of development. Where these are permissive, people have access to education, health, shelter, food, security, justice and

communicative representation which are the cornerstones of developmental dialogue.

Infrastructure development in rural districts of Zimbabwe is heavily hinged on the State. The State puts in place necessary policies to guarantee infrastructure and economic development in the country. It is also the State that can deny development in the country. It dictates the extent to which traditional leaders can partake in developmental activities. The role of traditional leaders in developmental activities cannot be discussed without reference to the State.

#### **POLITICAL CONNOTATIONS IN THE FUNCTIONS OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS**

The role of traditional leaders in development is compromised politically. This has resulted in misconception and misunderstanding of the purpose of the traditional leadership institution. Politicians of all persuasions realise the substantial influence traditional leaders wield in rural communities in Zimbabwe [27]. Both before independence and after independence politicians have sought the assistance of traditional leaders in order to influence electoral and governance processes in the country. Traditional leaders are best positioned to communicate development and non-developmental programmes and ensure the participation of communities in such programmes [16]. Traditional leaders are an effective communication tool in view of their hierarchical nature of chief, headman and village heads. They are present in all parts of rural Zimbabwe. Although the Traditional Leaders Act does not allow traditional leaders to participate in politics, they remain a major force on the political landscape of the country.

According to Makumbe [27] politicians in the bid to hold on to power have found traditional leaders and their institutions providing them with vital supplementary support for their weak power bases. Traditional leaders have been found to be accomplices in election rigging, victimization and the traditional leadership institution has been used to manipulate the electoral process [27]. Makumbe goes further and indicates that the government has targeted chiefs as avenues for consolidating its legitimacy in the rural areas. Various strategies have been used which include appointment of new chiefs, resuscitating defunct chieftainships, constructing houses for the chiefs, paying all traditional leaders monthly allowances, electrifying chiefs homesteads, drilling boreholes, and allocating them vehicles.

The participation of traditional leaders in politics is against the spirit of the Traditional Leaders Act Chapter (29:17) Section 45 which states that “no chief, headmen, or village head shall be eligible for election as President, Member of Parliament or

Councillor whilst still holding office as chief, headmen or village head”.

Section 45 (2) of the Traditional Leaders Act (Chapter 29:17) says- “no chief, headmen, or village head shall canvass, serve as an election agent, or nominate any candidate for election as State President, member of Parliament or Councillors in any local authority.

The Malawi 1967 Chiefs Act propagated after independence in 1964 spelt out the role of Chiefs in Malawi as “aides to the central government particularly in the field of security, law and order” [28]. This resulted in the Chiefs being enmeshed in the one party administrative apparatus as handmaidens of the District Commissioners in their tasks of peace, law, and order enforcement [28]. They now had to cooperate with the Ruling Political Party, the District Commissioners, and Security Forces to ensure peace and stability. Those Chiefs who engendered any semblance of trouble and disloyalty were removed from the chieftainship throne.

#### **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND MODERN AUTHORITIES**

Raftopolous (2002) contends that- “The widened modern political space has many actors which include councillors, chiefs, administrative appointees, local representatives of technical services and ministries, community groups, development committees and non-governmental organisations who wrestle for power, influence and authority in attempts to entrench and legitimise themselves as dominant forces in grassroots politics in the new burgeoning social, political, and economic order”.

Gould (2001) buttresses this by indicating that whilst these ranges of actors are embroiled in the contests over the emerging political space at the local level, the intensity of this struggle has been strikingly pronounced between elected representatives and chiefs in most countries implementing decentralization.

This struggle is predominantly framed in terms of tradition versus modernity as customary authorities (chiefs) and elected representatives (councillors) are widely postulated as embodiments of tradition and modernity respectively .

The Constitution of Zimbabwe and the Traditional Leaders Act provide for various forms of relationships between traditional leaders and local authorities. This is premised on the rational that traditional leaders play a significant role in the lives of the rural Zimbabweans.

In Zimbabwe the Rural District Councils Act has provision for chiefs as ex – officio members of Rural District Councils and are members of the Provincial Council as well as having seats reserved for them in the Country’s highest legislative body – the Senate. Village Heads are Chairpersons of Village Development Committees (VIDCOS). Section 5(1) of the Traditional Leaders Act outlines the duties and functions of the Chiefs whilst Sections 9(1) and 12(1) give functions of headmen and village heads respectively.

Despite Section 26(1) of the Traditional Leaders Act being quite clear on the allocation of land village heads have continued to allocate land to people in rural area. Section 26 (1) indicates “No land shall be allocated in terms of this Act except the approval of the appropriate rural district council” This has resulted in conflict between the Village heads and the local authorities.

Holomisa [29] points out how the Chiefs lost their power soon after independence in Zimbabwe as the State replaced them with elected and government appointed officials. He goes further and explains how the Government roped in traditional leaders to garner the support of the communal people.

The traditional authorities did not also escape the wrath of the post-colonial regimes. The new African Governments felt that traditional leaders were a threat to their political power and influence. According to van Nieuwaal van Rouveroy [13] traditional leaders were perceived as a hindrance to democratisation, modernisation and nation building. In Zimbabwe the association of traditional leaders with the colonial administration resulted in the mistrust.

A study carried out by the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organisational Development (CIKOD) in 2008 revealed that meaningful development can only be achieved when traditional authorities work in partnership with government institutions especially at the local level where traditional leadership is deeply entrenched and state organs are viewed as the axis for development.

On the other hand it can be argued that nothing much has been done concerning the relationship between traditional authorities and modern authorities with regard to decision making on development matters. Traditional leaders have been complaining concerning the way they have been neglected/ignored by the local development organs [16]. According to Crook [30] the authority of Chiefs and resources have been diminishing due to activities of central government and its local agencies that are making it impossible for chiefs to respond to the people’s demands. The

increasing erosion of the role of traditional leaders by the state has resulted in tension and conflict between the state and the chiefs. In Malawi in the initial phases of colonialism chiefs were incorporated into the administrative systems as Assistant to District Commissioners as early as 1912, [28].

Colonialism and other forms of modernity did not disrupt and destroy the moral economy in Namibia, but they undermined the political and social authority of the traditional leaders (Beall *et al.*; 2005). The role of traditional leaders was changed to being colonial bureaucrats from the original one of being guardians of the wellbeing of their societies. When Germany colonised Namibia in 1884 it introduced quite a number of administrative changes which saw the creation of three tier local government structures comprising the municipal as the first level, the district council was the second level and the third level was the territorial council [31]. According to Keulder [32] the main aim of the creation of the new administrative structures was to secure the interests of the Germans at the same time undermining the authority of traditional leaders and resultantly the relationship between the traditional leaders and the German authorities was characterised by a lot of conflict.

The Germans used protection treaties to intervene in the affairs of the local people and to turn the chiefs against each other in a classical divide and rule colonial policy [17]. Du Pisani [31] indicates that a further configuration of the traditional leadership power matrix was the enactment of the 1892 land policy which was generally aimed at expropriating tribal land for white settlers with the tribal people being resettled in the native reserves. After the 1904 to 1907 revolts by the Herero and Nama tribes over land and livestock issues, the Germany administration appointed Native Commissioners to handle the growing black discontentment [17].

When South Africa took over after the end of German rule in 1914 it perpetuated quite a number of trends which included the direct intervention in the traditional power configurations which ensured effective control of the indigenous Namibians with the help of sympathetic Chiefs and headmen, the co-option of traditional leaders into administrative structures in order to enhance the legitimacy of the structures and the use of coercion and legislation intended to secure the dominance of the modern state over the traditional authorities [17].

With the attainment of independence in Namibia the relationship between the traditional leaders and the new state remained polarised. When the New Constitution was crafted the traditional leaders' interests were not considered [17]. The Traditional

Courts were no longer part of the Namibian legal system and lost their power to preside over criminal cases and could now only preside over civil cases. The traditional police was disbanded and the chiefs lost powers to detain criminals. The Chiefs could only become part of the new political configuration if they were constituted as a provincial council as required by the constitution (Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, 1998). Despite so the Traditional Leaders Act (1995) excluded the traditional leaders from political office reducing their status from political to being merely cultural agents .

According to Keulder [17] the occupation of Botswana by the Colonisers was unique in that it was the traditional leaders themselves who consented to the colonisation after fearing a worse subjugation by the South African Boers. There were very few clashes between the indigenous people and the settlers in Botswana compared to Zimbabwe and Namibia [17]. The British had the policy of non-interference with tribal administration as they focused on protecting territories which were economically attractive only and therefore they did not monopolise social control in Botswana. This led to the development of a system of parallel rule whereby the tribal authorities were in charge of tribal affairs without interference and the colonial government managed the affairs of the European people [7].

However, even though the British did not want to interfere in traditional systems, they often did as evidenced by the promulgation of the 1891 Order in Council which established the Resident High Commissioner who was vested with powers of administration of justice, raising of revenue and responsibility for the general good governance of all the people in the Botswana territory. Oomen [7] indicates that the Resident High Commissioner had also powers to remove Chiefs and also was bestowed with legislative powers which were not given to traditional leaders. According to Protcor [33] tribal structures in Botswana were well adapted to European influence and as a result the European rulers did not abolish them. This enabled the traditional structures to maintain their legitimacy.

#### **EVOLUTION OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP IN ZIMBABWE, SOUTH AFRICA, BOTSWANA AND NAMIBIA**

Chieftaincy is defined in terms of tradition, which is any cultural product that was created or pursued in whole or in part by past generations and that having been accepted and preserved, in whole or in part, by successive generations has been maintained to the present [34]. Senyonjo further argues that traditional leaders are at the centre of custom and culture as they play a prominent role in efforts to

preserve custom and culture. Traditional leaders are regarded as guardians of traditional norms, values and practices that are observed and respected in communities from generation to generation and as such they are an important channel through which social and cultural change can be achieved.

There is no one generally agreed opinion on the origins of the traditional leadership institution. There are strong feelings about the relationship and connection between traditional leaders and God. The Native Economic Commission (1930) [35] gave the following “The hereditary Chief is the link between the living and the dead. He is a high priest, and with certain tribes, he may become a ‘god’ during his lifetime. The reverence for the Chief and his family is therefore, a quality deeply engrained in the Abantu”.

Oomen [7] argues that “traditional authority like any other legitimate authority comes for God and without it Africans do not have a community”. The authority of traditional leaders is bestowed upon them so as to shepherd and superintend traditional communities against both unorthodox and orthodox sieges aimed at the destruction of African nations.

Traditional leaders are rulers who govern their people based on traditional practices, values and ethos inherent in their societies [10]. However, there are questions on the legitimacy of traditional leaders deriving from for example in South Africa, where the Governor General appointed and removed traditional leaders at his will after promulgation of the Blacks Administration Act Number 38 of 1927. This was also a similar case in Zimbabwe and other African States during colonial times. Traditional leaders who did not cooperate with the colonial authorities were removed and replaced with those who were corporative. In some of the cases individuals who did not belong to royal or traditional leader’s families were appointed as traditional leaders. This brings in the all-important question “How traditional is traditional leadership?” and this challenge the legitimacy of the traditional leadership institution.

Traditionally, chiefs exclusively derived their authority and legitimacy either as descendants of great ruling ancestors or the membership of a particular ruling family. Despite alterations to chieftainship claims masterminded by both colonial and post-colonial regimes, the right to chieftaincy on the basis of decency has remained the dominant means of ascending to the chieftaincy. Engelbronner – Kolff *et al.*; [31] in explaining the origins of the traditional leadership institution draw heavily from the theory of social contract where individuals decide to come together for protection and mutual cooperation so as to improve the quality of their lives. In the created communities those

endowed with the gift of eloquence and the most bravery generally took the lead. It then became natural that sons and daughters of those in powers would take the place of their fathers when they died or got old. It also became natural that the communities preferred the sons and grandsons of those who would have proved themselves to continue leading the communities. This might be how the institution of traditional leaders came into being. Basing on the theory of social contract it can be argued that the traditional leadership institution did not emanate from God but was a creation of the circumstances of the time.

According to [17] in Namibia before the advent of colonialism most of the communities were ruled by Kings being assisted by the Chiefs who in turn were assisted by senior headmen who were in charge of districts. In the wards sub – headmen were in charge. The Kings’ authority was hereditary with social, economic and political power. The Headmen were appointed by the Chiefs or selected by their communities.

According to Garbert [37] in Zimbabwe, there were two main political entities made up of the Shona and Matebele kingdoms before the arrival of the Europeans. In the Shona tribes patrilineal ancestry was the basis for the political, administrative, religious and social system. Members of the community were united by a common ancestor from whose name the hereditary Chief was derived from Garbert [37]. The people were politically organised into relatively autonomous chiefdoms which were subdivided into wards made up of several scattered villages under the control of the headman. The Chief ruled with the assistance of advisors such as village heads and senior tribal members.

The Matebele were organised into a strongly centralised kingdom. The King was vested with great authority and power over all land and livestock. He was also the commander of the army as well as the supreme judge of the people. In his ruling he was assisted by three great councillors and two councils comprising the headmen and important kinsmen of the king. The headman represented the interests of the common people whilst the kinsmen stood in for the interests of the royalty [17]. The king further controlled various substructures through what were known as ‘Queens Settlements’ which were small independent courts administered by the king’s wives and daughters. These settlements were sources of information for the king Garbert [37].

When the British occupied Zimbabwe they dismantled the administration by the Matebele and Shona Chiefs. The numbers of traditional leaders were reduced and the traditional leaders lost their power and

status. The colonial administration continued to utilise traditional leaders for the maintenance of social control [17]. Holomisa [29] points out that with the attainment of independence the modern state took control of all the administrative and legal structures sidelining the traditional leaders. However [17] points that the State continues to fall back on the traditional leaders in light of its failure to satisfy the needs of the rural populations.

According to Linington [38] chiefs in Zimbabwe today are appointed by the President in accordance with Section 111 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe and the Section 3 of the Chiefs and Headman Act Number 7, 1992. The President also has power to remove any chief. The following subsection of the Chiefs and Headmen Act No 7, 1992 are very clear on the afforested matters on appointment and removal of chiefs-

- (1) The president shall appoint chiefs to preside over communities.
- (2) In appointing a chief in terms of Subsection (1) the President shall give due consideration to the customary principles of succession, if, any applicable to the community over which such chief is to preside.
- (3) The President may, where he is of the opinion that good cause exists remove a chief appointed in terms of subsection (1) from office.

The chiefs, headmen, and village heads are paid allowances by the Government. This is indicated in the Chiefs and Headman Act Section 4 which reads "Subject to this Act, a chief appointed in terms of subsection (1) shall be paid such allowances as may from time to time be prescribed from moneys appropriated for the purpose by an Act of Parliament".

Good [39] indicates that King Khama III appointed commissioners to administer in respective areas that they resided in and boundary watchmen were employed to monitor developments in the Northern and Southern Bamangwato territory. This type of arrangement led to the emergence of a clear tribal bureaucracy with clear line of command and hierarchy.

In South Africa, before the advent of colonialism administration and governance was led by the Kings and Chiefs who permeated all spheres of their subject's lives. Ntsebeza [40] indicates that Chiefs had political authority which covered aspects such as security and safety of the kingdoms, as well as managing foreign relations. The Traditional Leaders also had jurisdiction over economic functions such as allocation and custodianship of the land. When the British colonised South Africa, they came up with a strategy of ensuring that the Chiefs became a part of the colonial leadership structure as a way of revolt by the indigenous people [40]. The British saw the traditional

leadership institution as an instrument of legitimising their cause. It was a link between them and the people. Ntsebeza [10] in George and Binza [41] observed- "If the European Governments destroy directly or indirectly, the powers of the traditional leaders they will have wiped out the only voluntary basis upon which Africa can be administered"

Mamdani [14] argues that the application of the policy of indirect rule was a trial and error exercise in the 19th century in South Africa which only came into full force with the enactment of the Black Administration Act of 1927. The Act gave the Governor General power to appoint and remove Chiefs with the intention of ensuring control over the traditional leadership institution hence making them effective instruments of the colonialism machinery .

Ntsebeza [40] indicates that the traditional leaders were converted to ears and eyes of the colonial government and this created a big gap between them and their people as they were now accountable and reporting to the colonial masters. Hammond – Tooke demonstrates the ensuing drama as follows- "in many ways the headman is a difficult position, on the one hand he is linked by ties to his kinship and political office to the people of his location and is expected to look after their interests and well-being; on the other hand he is a paid official of the white administration, under the immediate control of the Commissioner and subject to disciplinary action if he fails to obey the latter's lawful instruction"

According to Ayittey the new colonial administration system resulted in quite a number of traditional leaders behaving in a corrupt manner and abusing their powers. Ntsebeza [40] avers that – "Colonialism represents the first dent to the integrity of the institution of traditional leadership, in that this was the first time that some higher authority was imposed above traditional leadership in the leadership of South African polity – an authority that corrupted and radically changed the institution of traditional leadership. Even after the introduction of apartheid system in South Africa, the new rulers could not ignore traditional leadership".

Mamdani [14] points out that in apartheid South Africa, the colonisers created two citizenships made up of people who lived in urban areas and those who lived in rural area and fell under the authority of the traditional leaders.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Bless and Higson Smith [42], research design is the planning of a scientific research from first to the last step. This is buttressed by Strauss

and Corbin [43] who view the research design as the plan for the study, provides the overall framework for collecting the data, outlines the detailed steps in the study and provides guidelines for systematic data gathering. This is a programme to guide the researcher in collecting, analysing and interpreting observed facts.

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collecting and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine economy in procedure [44]. Neuman [44] goes further and indicates that the research design is a plan that will be applied during the investigation in order to answer the research questions and aims at trying to ensure that the answers to questions are accurate ones. The design shows which individuals will be studied as well as when and where. A sound research design provides results that are judged and credible.

In this study, a phenomenology design was used as traditional leaders, councillors, government and council officers, and community members constituted the focus group and were interviewed using structured questions. The information gathered was collected, analysed and interpreted into meaningful conclusions.

Research design is a stage where the researcher must decide how to measure the two main variables, hypothesis and the group of people, who will be used as research subjects, what their particular characteristics should be and under what circumstances the data will be gathered [45]. According to Bailey [45], the process of research concerns not just methods, but also the underlying methodology, philosophy of social research, in terms of which the basic assumptions and criteria underlying the research are framed.

### **Research Paradigm**

This study mostly used the qualitative research approach which included documentary analysis in the form of minutes, and correspondence and questionnaires and observations. The quantitative approach was also used in the study but to a lesser extent.

According to Bryman and Burgess [46], quantitative research is essentially an exploratory and unpredictable way of conducting social investigation, while qualitative research is depicted useful as a means of eliciting hypotheses, which can be tested more rigorously by quantitative research. In quantitative research, the researcher's contact with the subjects studied is non – existent, as a result of use of some methods associated with the research. The qualitative approach was mostly used as it entails a much more sustained contact especially in the participant observation method.

The study used a combination of the qualitative and quantitative methods to minimise the weaknesses inherent in each of the methods, thereby maximising validity of the research exercise. Qualitative research is defined by Strauss and Corbin [43] as the type of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. Qualitative research is the research that uses open – ended semi structured or closed structured interviews, observations and focus groups to explore and understand the attitudes, feelings, opinions, and behaviour of individuals or groups of people [47]. According to Mouton and Marais [48], qualitative research concepts and constructs are meaningful words that can be analysed in their own right to gain a greater depth of understanding of a given concept.

Mouton and Marais [48], further indicate that to understand the complex processes that precipitate human interaction, it is necessary to obtain information that is relevant to various attitudinal, situational and environmental factors in the world of those being investigated. Qualitative methods are more flexible than quantitative methods.

In the study, quantitative analysis was used to make observation more explicit, as it makes it easier to aggregate, compare and summarise data. Quantitative approach conceptualise reality in terms of variables and the relationship between these variables. It rests on measurement and therefore restructures data, research questions as well as design. Quantitative researchers rely more on deductive reasoning, beginning with certain premises and then drawing logical conclusions from them. On the other hand, qualitative researchers make big use of inductive reasoning. They make many specific observations and then draw inferences about large and more general phenomena.

Quantitative research is carried out using a range of methods which utilise measurement to record and investigate aspects of social reality [42]. It deals with data that is primarily numerical and is more concerned with the deductive testing of hypotheses and theories. Conversely, qualitative methodology refers to research, which produces descriptive data.

Qualitative research was appropriate for this study as it allowed the researcher to know the subjects personally and see them as they are, to experience their daily struggles when confronted with real life situations. This was a great opportunity for the researcher to interpret and describe the actions of the subjects.

### **Population**

According to Borg and Gall (1996), a population or target population refers to all members of

a real or hypothetical set of people, events or objects which the researcher wishes to generalize the results of the research. Marondera Rural is one of the nine administrative district of Mashonaland East Province. It has a population of 116 985 people (2012 Population Census). Marondera Rural has a total of 23 wards, 6 chiefs, 8 headmen, 200 village heads and 23 Councilors. It measures 23 000 square kilometres in distance.

### **Sampling**

Sampling is critical in the research plan as it determines the participants in the research project. In this study, stratified and purposive sampling was used. A stratified sample is a type of random sample, in which the researcher first identifies a set of mutually exclusive categories and then uses a random election method to select the respondents. The purposive sampling technique is characterised by identifying access points or settings where subjects could more easily be reached, and by selecting knowledgeable subjects. Purposive sampling entails the researcher selecting particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic [42].

Purposive sampling is a form of non – probability sample. In which the subjects selected seemed to meet the study’s needs. According to Baker [50], this form of sampling generally considers the most common characteristics of the type it is desired to investigate, tries to figure out where such individuals can be found and then endeavours to study them. Basing on the researcher’s knowledge of the population, a judgement was made about which participants to select to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research.

A sample is defined as “the selecting of a portion of a population” [51]. It should be at least 10% of the population and as a general rule, a good sample makes up – to 15% of the population. Sampling is the practical way to collect data, when the population is extremely large and must be representative of the wider population.

The target population for this study comprised 2 chiefs, 4 headmen, 20 village heads, 20 community members and 6 government and council officers. They were supplied with 100 questionnaires. This was necessary in order to get detailed information on their experiences. The sample size was deemed representative enough in order to warrant a fair reflection of the views of the whole population. According to Marshall and Rossman [52], for a sample to be considered reliable, it must consist of a reasonable number of people.

### **Research instruments**

The study used research instruments which include questionnaires, documentary analysis, interviews and observation. This was necessary to eliminate weaknesses and balance the strength of the methods through triangulation.

### **Questionnaires**

Questionnaires are instruments of data collection consisting of standardized series of questions to be answered in writing by the respondents [42]. In this study, the researcher constructed asset of questions and the participants were asked to answer the questions in a self-administered form. Questionnaires are used primarily in survey research, but also in experiments, file research and other modes of observations [49].

According to Mouton and Marais [48] a questionnaire is defined as a set of questions on a form, which is completed by the respondents in respect of a research project. Questionnaires were used in the study to ensure consistence. They were structured in such a way to allow the expression of public thinking; hence some of the questions were open – ended. However, there are limitations associated with the use of questionnaires such as the failure by respondents to interpret questions or giving incomplete or indefinite answers. On the other hand questionnaires have the advantage of allowing respondents to modify their answers to earlier questions when they find that they are contradicting later questions.

Respondents sometimes fell irritated by the unilateral nature of a structured questionnaire, as they cannot talk to the researcher or interviewer, when they cannot qualify or expand answers and when they are forced to choose among alternative answers that they find unsatisfactory. This can be overcome through using both open – and closed ended questions. Distribution of questionnaires was done by hand which was time consuming. Gate keepers assisted to make the process efficiency.

### **Interviews**

An interview is a data collection method in which the interviewer asks the respondent questions. The field interview involves asking questions, expressing interest and recording what is said. According to Clark and Sartorius (2004:15), interviews are qualitative, in depth and semi structured procedure of conducting research. The field interview involves mutual sharing of experiences. The researcher shared his background in order to create trust and encourage the participants to open up but not forcing answers or using leading questions. During interviews participants express themselves in the manner, they normally speak, think and organise reality.

According to Nueman [44] the focus during interviews is on the respondent's perspectives and experiences and in order to stay close to the respondent, the researcher must ask questions in terms of concrete examples or situations.

To assist the participants in conceptualising the purpose of the study and to provide ideas that would form the basis of the study, interviews schedules with structured questionnaires were drawn up. 10 key informants – traditional leaders, councillors, government officers and community members were interviewed using structured questions.

The aim of the qualitative interview is to provide a framework for the subject to speak freely and in his/her own terms about a set of concerns, which the researcher brings to the interaction and whatever else the subject may introduce [53] Interviews were done in the form of one to one discussions (face to face). The purpose of the interviews was to determine the understanding of the participants on the role of traditional leaders in economic development with a thrust on infrastructural development.

Ten (10) key informants which include 1 chief, 1 headman, 1 council chairman, 1 council chief executive officer, 1 district administrator, 1 community member, 2 councillors and 2 village heads were interviewed. Singleton *et al.*; [49] indicates that unstructured and semi – structured interviews require more highly trained personnel and more complex data analysis which is why in – depth interviews are generally done with very small samples. During interviews questions should be asked as they appear in the questionnaire for purposes of standardisation. The interviewer should just ask questions without giving his opinions.

It is critical that interviews are carried out without an audience as the respondent might give answers that the audience approves rather than the respondent's desires.

### **Observation**

A great deal of what researchers do in the field, is to pay attention and listen carefully [44]. In observation, the researcher carefully scrutinises the physical settings to capture its atmosphere. Observational techniques were used to determine how individuals or groups of people react under specific circumstances either natural or artificial. Every recording made should be a true reflection of what was observed at the precise moment and not of what was anticipated or predicted.

Observation has the advantage that real life behaviour can be perceived, studied and verified. Any misunderstandings are clarified and verified on the spot.

The disadvantage of observation is that the respondents may feel that an outsider is interrupting them in their work and they may become uncomfortable.

The researcher observed the general attitude and reaction of the participants during the interviews. Observations were also made on the participants holding their development activities in the villages, wards, council and the chief's courts. This was necessary to have a better understanding of the role of traditional leaders in economic development.

### **Documentary Analysis**

Documents such as council minutes, village and ward assembly minutes, traditional leaders act, rural district council's act, ministry directives and circulars were analysed.

### **DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

Data was collected through questionnaires, interviews and observations. Arrangements were made through the phone with the ten (10) key informants for the interviews. It was pleasing that all the participants were available for the interviews, which were conducted successfully.

Questionnaires were distributed to participants by hand with the assistance of the gate keepers such as village heads and councillors. The participants filled in the questionnaires, which were then collected through home and work place visits. This gave the participants the opportunity to ask the researcher for clarifications. Some of the questionnaires were completed in the presence of the researcher.

The researcher observed quite a number of developmental activities being undertaken by the participants. Meetings of the village and ward assemblies were attended recording the observations.

Entrance into the community was not a challenge as the researcher had a permission letter from the University and a clearance letter from the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing to undertake the research in Marondera rural district.

### **Pilot study**

Cooper and Schindler (1998) indicate that a pilot study is conducted to detect weaknesses in design and instrumentation and provide proxy data for sections of a probability sample. Therefore, a pilot study is collective data for a small-scale exploratory research project that uses sampling but doesn't apply rigorous standards. The purposes of the pilot study are to 'Test questionnaire wording, test question sequencing, test questionnaire layout, gain familiarity with participants, test fieldwork arrangements, train and resting

fieldworkers, estimate response rate, estimate interview or questionnaire completion time and test analysis procedures’.

**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURES**

Data was analysed using appropriate statistical packages such as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for analysis of survey data. The researcher used SPSS version 16.0 in the Study. In order to communicate with the SPSS program, it was necessary to identify all items of the questionnaires. All items are referred to as variables and variable names had to be provided. The descriptive analyses, cluster analysis, ANOVAs, factor analysis and principle component analysis were also employed during the study. Presentation was in the form of graphs, charts, tables and diagrams.

**Reliability and validity of the survey instrument**

Reliability is the degree to which measures are free from error and therefore yield consistent results. It entails consistency of measure of concept. Bryman [46] indicates that there are three factors that are considered when assessing measure’s reliability which are stability, internal reliability and inter-observer consistency. Reliability is the extent to which research findings would be the same if the research were to be repeated. Validity is the extent to which the data collected truly reflect the phenomenon being studied.

Validity is the ability of the measuring instrument to measure what is to be measured. Validity is measured by several indicators including, face validity, concurrent validity, internal validity and ecological validity [46].

**DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS**

**Demography of Respondents**

In the study it was critical to know the demography of the participants as this had implications on how the role of traditional leaders in economic development was viewed and perceived in the communities. Information on the economic and socio cultural characteristics of the participants was important in this study as it impacted on how traditional leaders were perceived by the participants. The information on socio economic aspects also had a bearing on the functions of the traditional leaders which in a way affected the participants’ social and economic standing and well-being. Demographic characteristics such as marital status, age, gender/sex and educational attainment were deemed quite relevant to the objectives of the study.

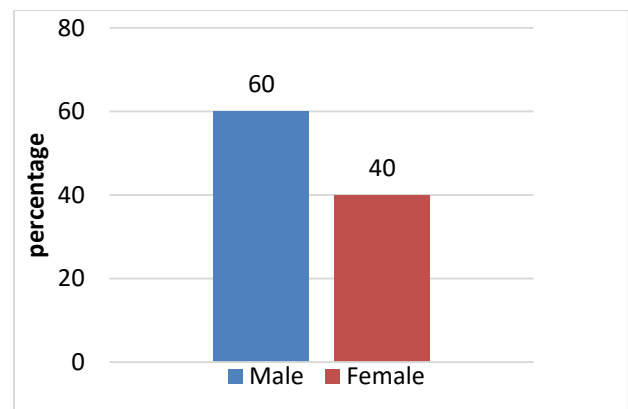
**Age of respondents**

**Table: 4. 1: Frequency distribution of age groups**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 -25	18	36.0
26 -35	10	20.0
Above 35	22	44.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 4.1 above shows the frequency distribution of the age of the participants. The highest number of the participants was aged above 35 years (44%) followed by those who were aged between 18 – 25 years (36%). The smallest number of participants was aged between 26 and 35 years (20%). The results show that the highest number of the participants were aged/old. This is a reflection of the trend in the general population of the Marondera district and Zimbabwe in general where the aged make up the greater percentage of the population of the country (ZIMSTAT, 2012)

**Sex of the participants**



**Fig 4.1: below portrays the sex distribution of the participants.**

During the study males dominated the sample. They had (60%) whilst females had (40%). the females’ low percentage was attributable to the reclusive manner and behaviour manifested by most females requested by the researcher to take part in the study. The females let their male counterparts take part in the survey. The gender frequency distribution of the participants was at variance with the trend of the general population of Marondera district and Zimbabwe. According to the 2012 National Census, females make up 51, 5% of the whole population of Mashonaland East Province (ZIMSTATS, 2012:15)

**Marital Status**

**Table 4.2: Marital Status of Participants**

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	9	18.0
Married	37	74.0
Widowed	4	8.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 4.2 above reveals the marital status of the participants. The results show that the population which was sampled was heavily dominated by the married with (74%). The single were (18%) whilst the widowed were (8%).

**Educational Background**

**Table 4.3: Educational attainment of respondents**

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
Non formal schooling	8	16.0
Primary School Level	9	18.0
Secondary School Level	23	46.0
Tertiary Institute Level	10	20.0

Table 4.3 above shows that 16% of the respondents had Non Formal Schooling. 18% had gone up to primary school level while 46% had gone up to secondary school level and 10% had reached tertiary institutions.

**Role of Traditional Leaders in the Community  
Duties of Traditional Leaders in the Community**

**Table 4.4: Present duties of traditional leaders**

	frequency	Percentage
Leading the community in development work	31	62
Allocation of land	2	4
Solving land disputes	5	10
Solving family disputes	6	12
Leading traditional ceremonies	3	6
Trying community cases	3	6

Table 4.4 above shows responses by the participants to a question requiring multiple responses in which participants were asked to list the present duties of traditional leaders. The table discloses that the majority of participants (62.0%) indicated that leading

the community in development work was the most important and crucial function performed by traditional leaders. This was followed by resolving family quarrels and disagreements (disputes) at (12.0%). The least important roles performed by the traditional leaders was cited as allocating land (4%), leading traditional ceremonies (3.0%), and trying/presiding over community cases (3.0%).

**Performance of traditional leaders**



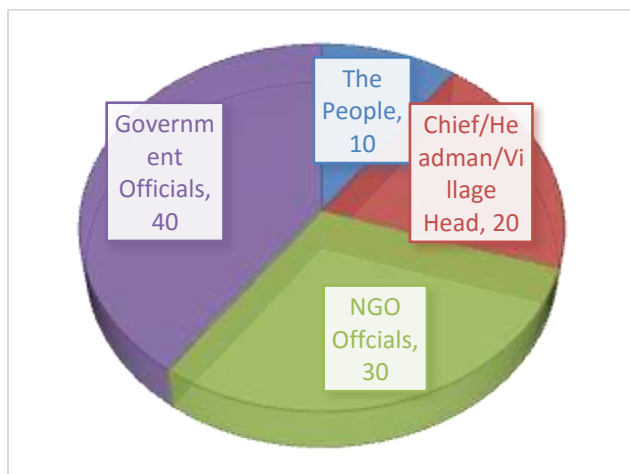
**Fig 4.3: Performance of traditional leaders**

Figure 4.3 shows responses to a question which asked participants to rate the performance of traditional leaders. The majority of the participants (76.0%) rated the performance of the traditional leaders as excellent. (9.0%) rated the performance as poor whilst (7.0%) rated it as very good. (5%) felt that the performance was satisfactory with (3%) indicating that the performance was good.

**4.3.3 Decision on development work in the community**

**Table 4.3: Decision on development work in the community**

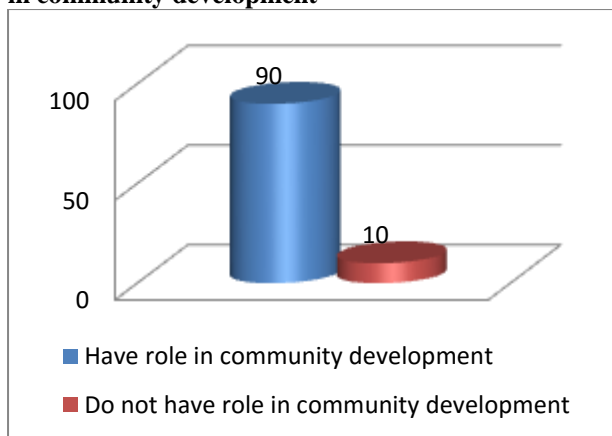
	Frequency	Percentage
Government Officials	20	40
NGO Officials	15	30
Chief/Headman/Village Head	10	20
The (Community) Local People	5	10
Totals	50	100



**Fig 4.2: Decision on development work in the community**

Table 4.5 and Figure 4.2 show the frequency of the responses on who made decisions on community development work. (40%) of the participants indicated that in the community government officials had a greater say in development work followed by (30%) who named NGO officials. (20%) indicated that traditional leaders made up of chiefs, headman and village heads made the decision on development work and the least were the local people at (10%).

**Reasons why traditional leaders should be involved in community development**

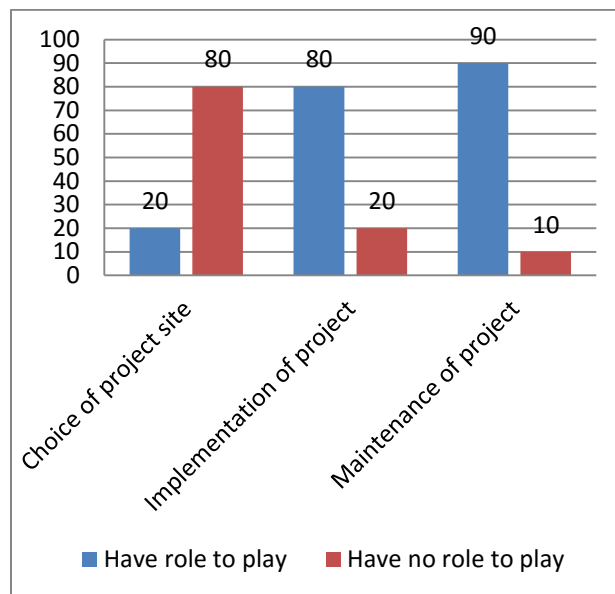


**Fig 4.3: Traditional Leaders and their role in development work**

Figure 4.3 demonstrates the participants’ response on the involvement of traditional leaders in development work. There was general agreement among the participants that traditional leaders should be involved in development work due to the fact that they have strong links with the local people and were the best placed to mobilise the communities for development projects. (90%) of the respondents felt that traditional leaders should be involved in development

work and only (10%) felt that that they should not have anything to with development work

**Role of Traditional Leaders in overall implementation of development projects (this encompasses choice of project, the site of the project, implementation of the project and maintenance after project completion.)**



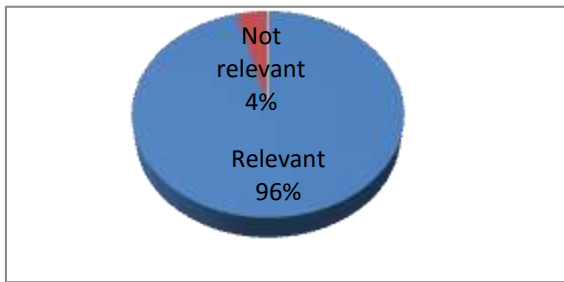
**Fig 4.4: Traditional Leaders in Overall implementation of Development Projects**

20 percent of the respondents indicated that traditional leaders played a very insignificant role in choice of project site, but became more visible during the implementation stage as they led their communities for instance in mobilising local resources such as bricks, river and pit sand and providing free labour. When projects were completed they were left in the hands of the traditional leaders who played a big part in the maintenance and sustainability of the projects. 80% of the respondents felt that traditional leaders played a role in project implementation and 90% indicated that traditional leaders were critical in project maintenance after completion.

**The Relevance of Traditional Leaders in Local Governance**

**Table 4.6: Relevance of Traditional Leaders in local governance**

	frequency	Percentage
Relevant to local governance	48	96
Not relevant to local governance	2	4
Total	50	100

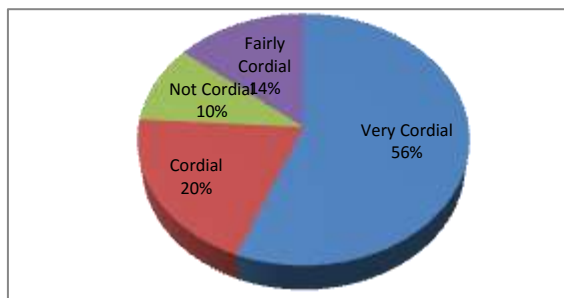


**Fig 4.5: Relevance of traditional leaders in local governance**

Responses on the question on the relevance of traditional leaders in local governance are shown in Table 4.6 and Figure 4.5 above. An overwhelming 95% of the respondents felt that Traditional Leaders were relevant in local governance with just over 5% feeling that traditional leaders were not relevant. The reasons given for their relevance included settlement of disputes and conflicts between family members in the community, assisting the government with decision making and most importantly making available land for development purposes. The reasons why they said traditional leaders were not relevant included the manner in which village heads disposed communal resources in the form of land placed in their care and the fact that they do not operate an open door policy in accounting for these communal resources.

During the interviews with key informants it came out that as the traditional leaders played a critical role of leading the community they were as such very relevant in local governance. One participant indicated during interviews with key informants that as governance was all about ensuring and guaranteeing the well-being of the community, traditional leaders - village heads, headmen, and chiefs, were mostly there as representatives of the people it would be out of sync to say that the traditional leaders were not pertinent and relevant in local governance in the community.

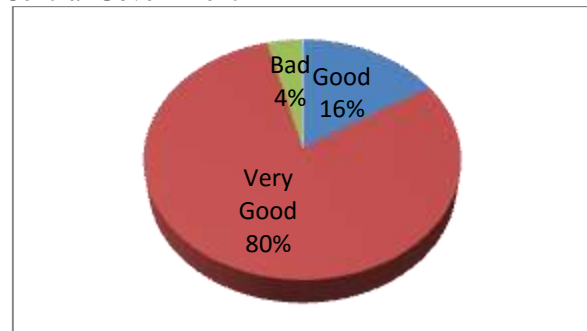
**Relationship between Traditional Leaders and the Rural District Council and Central Government**  
**Relationship between Traditional Leaders and the Rural District Council**



**Fig 4.6: Relationship between Traditional Leaders and the Rural District Council**

An examination of the nature of the relationship between Traditional Leaders and the Rural District Council was done. Figure 4.6 reveals that (56%) of the participants felt that the relationship between the Traditional Leaders (Chiefs, Headmen, and Village Heads) and the Rural District Council were very cordial. (20%) indicated that the relationship was cordial whilst (14%) felt that it was fairly cordial. Only (10%) of the participants indicated that the relationship was not cordial.

**Relationship between Traditional Leaders and Central Government**



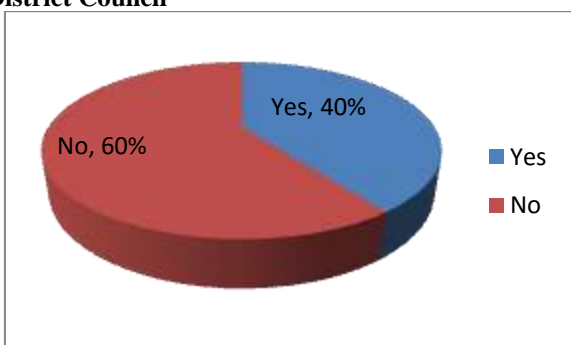
**Fig 4.7: Relationship between Traditional Leaders and Central Government**

Figure 4.7 shows the responses to the relationship between traditional leaders and Central Government. Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents felt that the relationship between Traditional Leaders and Central Government was very good. (16%) expressed the view that the relationship was good and (4%) indicated that the relationship was bad.

Participants gave different reasons for their responses on the matter. These included the issue of the high respect which traditional leaders and Central Government Officials have for each other. Further the relationship is characterised by good confidence and trust between the traditional authorities and the central government ministries, departments and agencies. The relationship is also enhanced by the same goal of good well-being and welfare of the communal people which is shared by the two institutions. Interviews with one of the key informants revealed that the relationship between traditional authorities and Central Government was fairly cordial. However, one traditional leader indicated that the traditional leaders were always pleading with the Central Government Ministries and Departments Officers to give the traditional leaders a role to play in community activities but with very little success as the Officers had their own contacts (people) that they dealt with most of the times in the communal areas.

Context rising the relationship, one participant during interviews indicated that traditional leaders lacked what it takes in terms of resources to satisfy the development needs of their people; however, the Rural District Council was the one in charge of the public finances such that the traditional leaders in one way or another were forced to work cordially with the rural District Council for the community to have development projects and programmes implemented in their areas. The Rural District Council worked with the traditional authorities because it viewed the relationship as a partnership and the two authorities share the same goal of ensuring that development reaches grassroots communities.

**Conflict between Traditional Leaders and the Rural District Council**

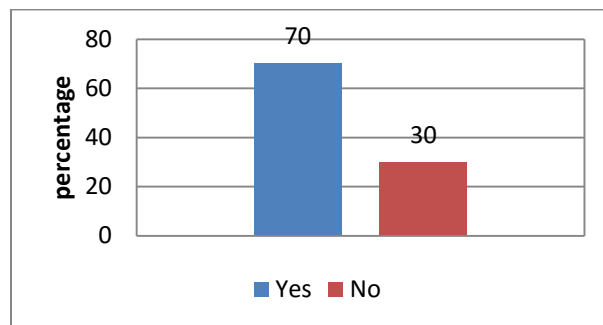


**Fig 4.8: Conflict between Traditional Leaders and the Rural District Council**

Respondents were also asked whether there was any conflict between Traditional Leaders and the Rural District Council. Figure 4.8 shows that 60 % felt that there was no conflict while 40% of the respondents felt there was conflict.

Reasons given for the conflict included the exclusion of traditional leaders in communal decision making. Development projects allocation was also cited as another cause of the conflict between the Traditional leaders and the Rural District Council. The conflict was also as a result of issues to do with communal collection of revenue and statutory (legislative) matters. The conflict exhibited itself in the form of a cold war. The traditional authorities viewed themselves as the real leaders in the communal areas whilst the Rural District Council Staff and Policy makers (Councilors) viewed themselves as representatives of the community and the President. Therefore whatever they said was supposed be the final which should not ever be challenged by anybody in the communal areas. It was quite clear from the responses and comments proffered by both the key informants and other participants that conflict existed in the communal areas between the traditional leaders and the Rural District Council.

**Tension between Traditional Leaders and Ward Councilors**

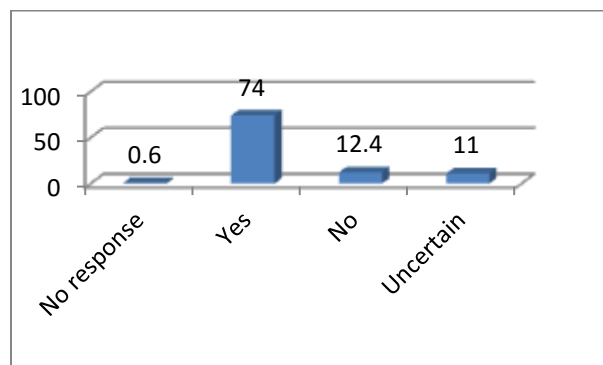


**Fig 4.9: Tension between Traditional Leaders and Ward Councilors**

Figure 4.9 revealed that 70% of the respondents indicated that there was tension between the Ward Councilors and the Traditional Leaders with 30% indicating that there was no tension. The causes of the tension were mostly premised on unclear and overlapping responsibilities. The tension is mostly anchored on issues of power and role conflict in the communities.

Participants concurred on the overall need for a clear delineation of roles between Ward Councilors and Traditional Leaders as a way of reducing the tension and enhancing the relationship between the entities. Trainings in local governance were also cited as another way of making the two fully understand and have an appreciation of their roles hence significantly reducing the inherent conflict. Frequent joint meetings, which brings together the traditional leaders and ward councillors as forums for sharing information and ideas were encouraged by participants.

**Traditional Leaders and Local Government Systems Representation of Chiefs in the Rural District Council**



**Fig 4.10: Representation of Chiefs in the Rural District Council**

Participants were asked a question on whether it was important to have chiefs represented in the Rural District Council. Figure 4.10 shows that an overwhelming 74% indicated that chiefs must be represented in the Rural District Council. 12.4% indicated that Chiefs should not be represented in the Council whilst 11.0% were not certain.

Those respondents who felt that chiefs should not be represented in the Rural District Council cited the issues of litigation within the traditional leadership institution. There was a probability that some chiefs would bring their personal differences into the Rural

District Council Chamber deliberations thereby affecting the zeal for accelerated rural economic and infrastructural development. The reason proffered by the majority who felt that chiefs should be represented in the Rural District Council was premised on the whole notion of rural integration. Rural integration concepts entail linking the chiefs closely with the formal government systems in order to enhance good governance and development at the local level.

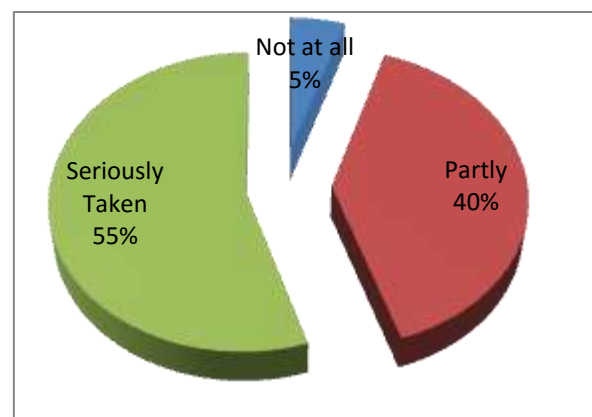
**Reasons for Involvement of Chiefs in Government Systems**

**Table 4.7: Responses to reasons why Chiefs should be involved in Government Systems**

Reasons	Responses (%)			
	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Total
Chiefs represent interests of the people	80.0	14.2	5.8	100
Chiefs have knowledge of the people’s culture	61.0	27.0	12	100
Traditional knowledge and wisdom has withstood the test of time ( indigenous knowledge systems)	70.0	25.0	5.0	100
Rich and deep experience in local governance systems	79.0	11.0	10.0	100
Chiefs are custodians of the resources such as land, minerals etc	75.0	23.0	2.0	100

Respondents were questioned on whether chiefs should be involved in government systems. Table 4.7 shows the participants’ responses on whether traditional leaders should be involved in government systems. (70.0%) of the participants indicated that chiefs should be involved in government systems due to the fact that they were endowed with rich experience in local governance issues. Eighty percent (80.0%) of the respondents felt that chiefs should be integrated into government systems as they are the representatives of the people in their respective areas of jurisdiction. (70.0%) indicated that chiefs should be involved into local government systems as they are vested with traditional knowledge since time immemorial. (75.0%) of the participants felt that that chiefs should be involved in local government systems as they are the custodian of the natural resources in areas under their jurisdiction. Seventy nine percent (79.0%) of the respondents felt that chiefs should be part of the government systems as they deep and rich knowledge of the people’s culture.

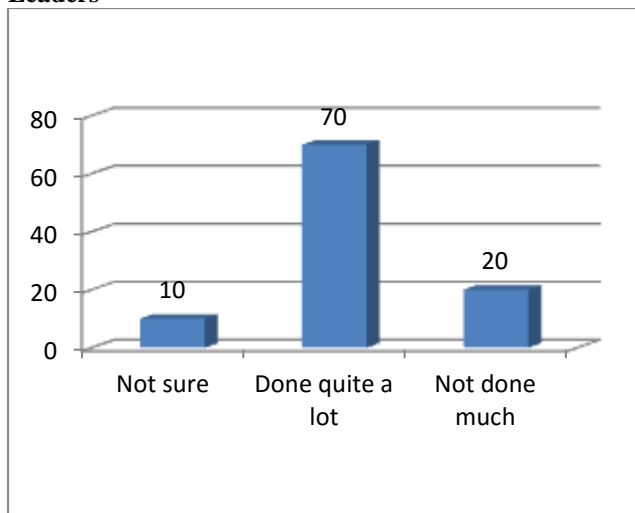
**Perception on views of Chiefs in the Rural District Development Committee (RDDC) and the Provincial Development Committee (PDC)**



**Fig 4.11: Perception on view of Chiefs in the Rural District Development Committee and the Provincial Development Committee**

Figure 4.11 portrays the responses from the participants on the perception of the view of chiefs in the RDDC and the PDC. 55% of the participants indicated that the views of Chiefs are seriously taken in the Rural District Development Committee and the Provincial Development Committee while 40% felt that the views are partly taken. 5% felt that the views of the Chiefs were not taken at all in RDDC and the PDC.

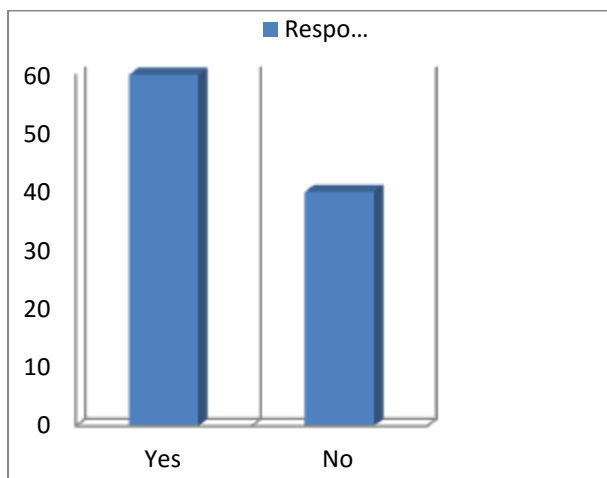
**Chiefs’ Council and the Cause for Traditional Leaders**



**Fig 4.12: Chiefs’ Council and the cause for Traditional Leaders**

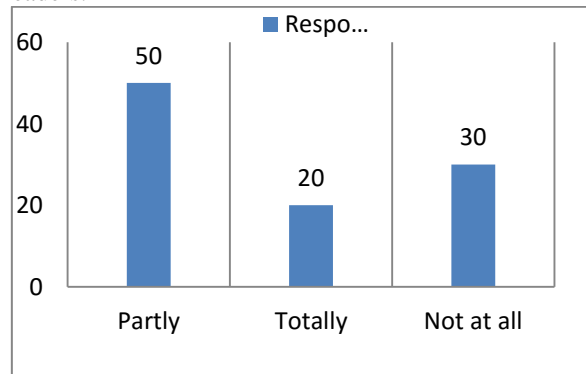
Figure 4.12 reveals the responses by the participants on the Chiefs’ Council. There was a general feeling amongst the majority of the participants that the Chiefs’ Council was doing a lot for the cause of the Chiefs. Improvements in the standard of living of the Chiefs were attributable to the Chiefs’ Council. Chiefs were said to be speaking with one voice through their Council. Due to the Council the Chiefs were now a force to reckon with in the Country. 70% of the respondents agreed that the Council had done great work for the Chiefs’ cause whilst 20% felt that it was not doing much but was merely a cosmetic and window dressing institution. 10% were not sure of what the Chiefs’ Council was.

**Legislation and Traditional Leaders**



**Figure 4.13: Legislation and Traditional Leaders**

Figure 4.13 shows the responses by the participants on whether laws in present day Zimbabwe were supporting the traditional leaders. 60% felt that the laws were supporting the traditional leaders and 40 felt that the laws were not lending support to the traditional leaders.

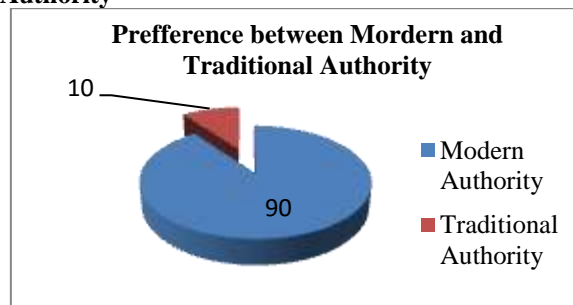


**Fig 4.14: Powers of Traditional Leaders and Legislation**

Respondents were asked whether the full powers of Traditional Leaders had been restored by legislation. Figure 4.14 above provides the respondents answers to the question. Half of the respondents (50%) indicated that the full powers of traditional leaders had been partly restored by legislation. 20% were of the view that the powers had been totally restored with 30% indicating that the full powers had not been restored at all. Reasons advanced by the participants included the despising of the traditional leadership institution by the people.

The Chiefs and Headman still did not have full control of resources in their areas of jurisdiction and had very little say in land issues especially the allocation aspect. They were in fact arrested for illegal selling of land by the Government. Chiefs tried some and not all cases of violations in their communities. The traditional leaders were also subservient to Government Institutions and Agencies such as the Ministry of Local Government.

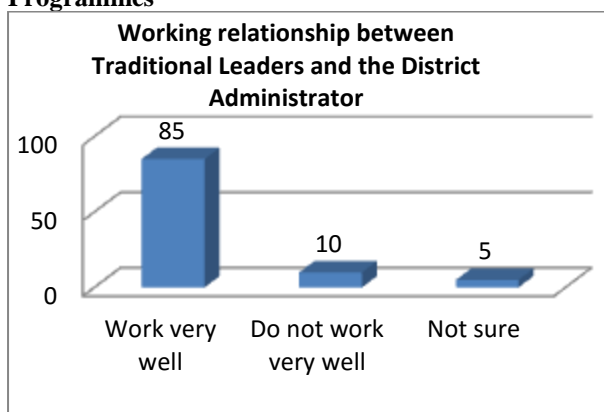
**Preference between Morden and Traditional Authority**



**Fig 4.15: Preference between Morden and Traditional Authority**

Figure 4.15 above shows that 90% of the participants preferred the modern authority to the traditional authority. Only 10% preferred the traditional authority.

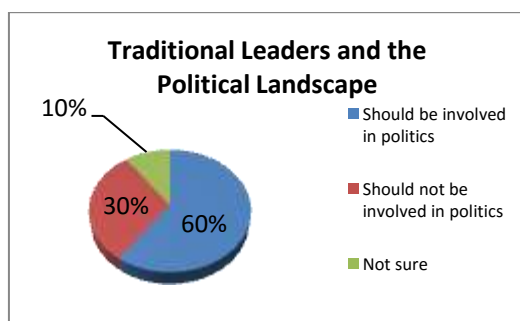
**Working Relationship between the Traditional Leaders and the District Administrator’s Office in implementation of Government Projects and Programmes**



**Fig 4.16: Working Relationship between the Traditional Leaders and the District Administrator’s Office**

Responses given by the participants pointed to good working relationships between the Traditional Leaders and District Administrator. The two complement each other in development projects and programmes. They work hand in hand for successful implementation of government projects and programmes. Figure 4.16 demonstrates the nature of the relationships that existed between traditional leaders and the District Administrator. 85% indicated that the two worked very well in implementation of government development projects and programmes. 10% felt that they did not work very well and 5% were not sure of the working relationship.

**Traditional Leaders and the Political Landscape**



**Fig 4.17: Traditional Leaders and the Political Landscape**

Figure 4.17 shows the responses by the participants on the issue of Traditional Leaders and the Political Landscape. 60% of the participants indicated that the traditional leaders should be involved in the political landscape. 30% indicated that traditional leaders should not be involved in politics. Reasons advanced for involvement in politics was mainly that traditional were the ones closest to the people and had been involved in politics since the pre and post-colonial times. Those who felt that the traditional leaders should not be involved in politics gave reasons such as those traditional leaders should be neutral and apolitical so that they serve people of all political orientations equally.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

**Traditional Leadership system**

In the predominantly traditional governance and developmental setup, the traditional leaders have legislative, judicial, administrative, political and executive roles. Before being appointed a traditional leader an individual will be living his own life. This immediately comes to a stop when one is appointed a village head, headman or chief. There will be newer and greater demands by the chieftainship office. It is uncontested that traditional leaders such as village heads, headmen and chiefs are expected to be straightforward with untarnished characters. The character should be an embodiment of affability, hard work and assiduousness. As community role models all traditional leaders are held in very high esteem.

Contemporary institutional frameworks have recently taken over virtually all the functions that previously performed by the traditional leaders. The new position of the chief became ineffective as it was now only ceremonial. In their communities and greater Zimbabwe traditional leaders – Chiefs, Headman and Village heads) has been the unifying factor [54]. The traditional leaders and cultural leaders (in Shona Midzimu or Masvikiro) were relied upon by the local communities to intercede in spiritual and socio economic problems and disputes at local, provincial and national levels. It is pertinent to point out that the many disputes characterizing the chieftainship institution have shown the institution as a problematic one.

**Roles and Duties of Chiefs, Headmen and Village Heads**

The duties stated by the majority of the participants included maintaining law and order, mobilising development initiatives, disseminating State information, managing community natural resources and mobilising communities for development projects. Although, the discussion outlined the specific roles played by chiefs the common goal was to seek the

overall well-being of people living in areas under their jurisdiction. The roles played by the chiefs in ensuring good governance and development included enacting and enforcing bye-laws, settling disputes, especially those that are thorny in nature, promoting and sustaining traditional values, and providing financial and material support to the needy in the communities through programmes such as the Zunde-ramambo in Shona or Isiphala saSinkosi in Ndebele. Chiefs are revealed as being generally accepted together with Headman and Village Heads as playing a critical role to the overall well-being of their respective communities.

The discussion showed further that the roles of the traditional leaders included supporting administration in their respective traditional areas of jurisdiction and managing the natural resources in their respective communities. Traditional leaders also oversaw the welfare and well-being of visitors to their communities. They were proponents of unity among the communities. The traditional leaders' roles in a way also facilitate political development in their areas of jurisdiction as the traditional leaders on many occasions proffer advice to Government Ministries and Departments on key issues of major concerns gripping their communities for meaningful and tangible action.

The political role of the traditional leaders is now hazed to making their communities to understand and appreciate government policies and programmes, and making decisions that would promote the welfare and well – being of the people, as well as guaranteeing peace and harmony requisite for the establishment of an enabling environment that enables accelerated rural economic development.

The chiefs are the facilitators of economic development in the rural areas as they lead mobilisation of local resources such as bricks, river and pit-sand and free labour for community developmental projects. Promotion of ecotourism through conservation of sites with a historical nature and significance in their areas of jurisdiction was another key role of traditional leaders. Traditional leaders assist the Rural District Council with collection of development levies from the communal people. Revenue realised in the community after for example imposition of fines on offenders by the traditional courts and royalties or shares received on certain local resources are channelled towards the provision of developmental projects, such as the provision of electricity, road maintenance, and provision of potable drinking water. The Community Share Ownership Trust in Zimbabwe was a model where chiefs get shares from companies operating in their areas. The funds were utilised for various developmental projects in the districts.

The traditional leaders make a further contribution to the social and economic development of their communities through mobilising the community to adhere to societal values, norms and practices such as observance of weeding days (chisi in shona), marriages and functions in certain months of the year and prevention of incestuous relationships (makunakuna in shona). The vast contribution by traditional leaders to social and economic development as reflected in the research contradicted the assertions by ECA (2007) that traditional leadership institution hindered the pace of development as they reduced the importance of the state in social services provision. Chigwedere [54] asserts that Chiefs and other traditional leaders are considered an epithet of cultural heritage. As such to build on community unity they bring their people together during the traditional festivals and ceremonies.

#### **Suggested duties of traditional leaders in the community**

Chiefs were identified as performing quite a number of roles in the communities. The majority of the participants indicated the roles as disputes and conflict resolution, driving developmental projects and programmes through mobilization of the communities. This is an indication that if Traditional leaders can symbolise and objectify their functions as revealed, they would greatly enhance their position in governing and managing their rural communities and societies in coherence.

#### **The relevance of traditional authorities to local governance**

Generally, the majority of the participants observed traditional leaders as being still quite relevant in local level governance. The traditional leaders were viewed as generally competent and effective in the discharge of their governance roles at grassroots level. The results resonate with Makumbe [27] assertions of the need for institutional representation of chiefs in the local governance arena. Makumbe [27] goes further and intimates that even in this contemporary age of egalitarianism and governance rural communities still turn to the chiefs as last option in areas where the Central Government and Rural District Councils have failed.

The chiefs still wield immense power in as far as local governance is concerned, to the extent that when making decisions that borders on the traditional areas there is need to first talk to the respective Chief of the area. Looking at the concept of indirect rule, most colonialists quickly recognised and appreciated the important functions and position of chiefs in governance hence the desire to use them for their wants and needs. The affairs of the rural populace can only be effectively managed and controlled through their traditional leaders such as village heads, headmen and

chiefs. The indirect rule utilised the traditional leaders to push forward certain policies and this was a very effective way of ruling and governing the black majority. Chigwedere [54] buttressed the aforesaid in reference to the wide range of powers that were given to the traditional chiefs under the native authority system of the then Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). According to Chigwedere [54], the administrative, legislative and judicial functions of chiefs in the native authority system ensured local development with regards to how customary issues, revenue mobilisation and expenditure were controlled for the effective governance of the traditional state.

In the normal course of local governance, the legislative roles of chiefs are projected by the manner in which they consulted with their elders, making rules bordering on the political, social and economic well-being of their people. In the course of performing their judicial roles, they gave judgment, arbitrated, and influenced resource management. Chiefs are indeed regarded as intermediaries between the living and the dead, and together with the traditional priests they present a symbolic authority that is capable of evoking sanctions on members of the community. When emphasising the chieftaincy institution in relation to local governance it is clear that chiefs were the first to know when there was any disaster such as veldfires, pollution or environmental degradation because the people believed in their capability as leaders in the local area to solve the situation. This is buttressed by Chigwedere [54], when he stated that chieftaincy and all that goes with it is bound within the fabric of social, cultural and spiritual life of the people. As already mentioned, for most people, particularly those in the rural areas, the only authority visible in their community is the chieftaincy institution.

Although there has been a change in the role of traditional over the years, quite a number of communities still value the type of leadership the traditional leadership institution presents at the grassroots. The reasons proffered comprise failure by the traditional leaders to make wide consultations in their decisions, their failure to settle disputes amicably as well as the fact that traditional leaders do not have laid down set of laws in the governance of their traditional areas.

The responses given by the participants confirmed the widely held perception that the traditional leadership institution was laden with a lot of disagreements and clashes and as such the traditional leaders could not effectively preside over the local people without meeting serious problems. Additional reasons proffered included the failure by the traditional leaders to make wide consultations in decision-making as well as the fact that the traditional leaders were

neither transparent nor accountable for their actions in the communities. On the other hand, the foregoing assertions can be strongly disputed due to the fact that most decisions made by the traditional leaders in their respective areas of jurisdiction are subject to thorough discussions at the various community forums. It can also be argued that traditional leaders render accounts to their people and are transparent in all their dealings in the community.

### **Performance of Traditional Leaders**

Evidence from the discussion indicated that it was extremely difficult for community members to seek redress whenever they felt wronged by their traditional leaders or felt that the traditional leaders had conducted themselves inappropriately. If the chief, headman or village head (traditional leaders) was wrong, the matter was referred to the clan elders or to fellow chiefs, headman or village heads and the Government that is the District Administrator's Office. It was extremely difficult for community members to take the traditional leaders head on over improper conduct.

The unavailability of proper and formal channels for expressing complains and grievances made it extremely difficult for members of the community to make known their discontentment with the performance of their traditional leaders. Although quite a number of the participants were pleased with the performance of their traditional leaders, the method of choosing/selecting traditional leaders appeared was less democratic as it was only a privilege of a few elderly and the royal family that had the prerogative to do so.

It is argued that traditional leaders are not accountable for their actions to the majority of the community members as the process of selecting them to positions of traditional leadership was less consultative and democratic as it only involved the ruling clan members. In other words, the position of traditional leadership was hereditary in that only individuals from the ruling lineage were eligible to become leaders. According to Kiondo [55], "in non-democratic forms of government citizens are subjects, ruled by rulers never elected by them and therefore non-accountable to them". Kiondo [55] further states that "when citizens neither participate in nor protest against their government, there is a danger that they will become subjects rather than participants thereby rendering the whole process of governance non-democratic" [55].

### **Relationship between traditional authorities and local government**

The findings revealed that the majority of the participants felt that the relationship between the traditional leaders and some local government agencies such as the District Administrator's Office were cordial.

On the other hand, conflicts were rife with other local government agencies such as the Rural District Council. The relationship between the traditional authorities and local government agencies could be explained as being fairly cordial, cordial or very cordial. However, there were complaints from quite a number of traditional leaders premised on issues of lack of consultations on matters affecting their local communities. There was a general feeling that their functions and roles had been taken over by the mushrooming local government agencies. Quite a high number of the participants (60%) confirmed the presence of conflict between traditional leaders and local government agencies such as the Rural District Council. (40%) of the respondents were quite sure that there was no conflict between the traditional leaders and modern authorities. Issues identified as the root cause of the conflict between traditional leaders and local government agencies included allocation of development programmes and projects, collection of revenues such as development levy, royalties and community shares a trusts, legislative issues and non-involvement of the traditional leaders in decision-making processes. An overwhelming majority of the respondents were of the view that chiefs should be integrated into the local governance system and a few participants were uncertain on the matter. 79% of the participants concurred that chiefs are endowed with rich and deep experience. 70% of the participants had the opinion that traditional knowledge and wisdom had withstood the test of time and as such could significantly strengthen endogenous rural community development initiatives.

#### **Relationship between Traditional Leaders and the Rural District Council and Central Government**

Reasons assigned for the responses under this category included lack of respect that the Rural District Council and Government Officials exhibited in their dealing with the traditional leaders and also their inability to come to consensus on most developmental issues in the communities. There was lack of trust between the Rural District Council and the traditional leaders so the relationship cannot be considered as cordial as the two institutions were always in disagreement over decision making issues. The Heads of Government Ministries and Departments and the Rural District Council did not show the traditional leaders the desired or expected respect. The Chiefs and other traditional leaders on their visits to the Rural District Council or Government Offices in connection with issues concerning their areas of jurisdiction were made to wait for a long time like any other ordinary visitor. On many occasions the Officers do not even listen to the traditional leaders' concerns. They shrugged the traditional leaders off with empty promises of addressing the problems which was never done.

#### **Traditional Leaders and the Rural District Council**

This view put forward by Sklar [56] was that in Africa today, it was normal for traditional political jurisdiction to occupy a second dimension of political space; a dimension that lies behind the sovereign state. The Rural District Council members and staff, especially the elected ones (Councilors), do not interact with the populace as much as expected. However, the traditional leaders regularly and frequently interact with the populace hence are better placed to represent the interests of the local populace. It is pertinent therefore that the representation of chiefs in the Rural District Council and the Provincial Development Committee would increase their involvement in the decision making process and ensure good governance at the local level.

#### **Integrating traditional leaders into the formal local government systems and processes**

The study pinpointed the involvement of traditional leaders in the planning, implementation and evaluation of community programmes and projects as the best method of integrating traditional leaders into the formal governance and developmental systems and processes. The inclusion of chiefs in the Rural District Council Committees and Sub-Committees and in the deliberations of the Rural District Development Committee (RDDC) and the Provincial Development Committee (PDC) was largely viewed as requisite for effective integration to be realised. The establishment of the Chiefs' Council which operates together with the RDDC and PDC was a milestone in the integration of traditional leaders in the formal local government systems and processes. The integration went a long way in ensuring a dual governance atmosphere which encouraged the local people to make use of their own resources, strategies and initiatives to drive development programmes and projects.

This view confirms the widely held perception that traditional leadership institutions are indispensable when discussing and dealing with matters of governance and development, especially at the local level. Working with traditional leaders is the only way to succeed in the traditional communal areas as the traditional leaders understand the local dynamics and know how to govern effectively in extremely difficult and challenging environments.

Although classified as non-scientific, traditional knowledge has been accumulated after centuries of extensive trial and error experiences from which people have learned. This has resulted in people using traditional knowledge to live off the environment on which they depend for food, shelter, medicine and culture. An appreciation of some of the traditional knowledge will provide an insight into how the people can be governed to bring about development. This view

is supported by Chigwedere [54] who stated that chiefs do not only hold in trust for the present and the future generations all resources, but are also accountable to the ancestors for the proper management of these resources.

For good governance to be achieved at the local level there must be some sort of rapport between the traditional leaders and the Local Government Ministry and the Rural District Council. The following were reasons proffered by the participants as possible ways by which the relationship between these two institutions could be improved to achieve good governance and local level development -:

- Joint meetings between traditional leaders and ward councilors to find solutions to problems being faced by the people should be enhanced in the communities.  
Accountability and transparency between the two institutions should be enhanced.  
Wide decision making consultations are critical.
- Traditional leaders and local government agencies should cultivate a culture of peace and respect for each other's office.
- The two institutions should complement each other's development efforts.
- The traditional leaders and the councillors should share ideas on a common platform as regularly as possible so that they appreciate and view matters at the same pace and level.
- On how traditional leaders, especially chiefs, could be incorporated into the formal local government systems and process, it became clear that whereas at the national level traditional leaders are often limited to cultural, ceremonial or frequently undefined advisory roles, at the community level they may be competing with local government officials for real power over land, tax revenues such as development levies or other resources, responsibility for dispensing justice, and influence over community activities and decisions.
- The following are the responses by the participants on how traditional leaders could be integrated into formal local government processes and systems-
- The traditional leaders can be appointed into the various Committees and Sub-committees of the Rural District Council as well as being given Chairmanship of the Committees and Sub - Committees. The modalities of integrating chiefs into the formal system of governance as suggested by participants were the creation of a Council of Chiefs to run alongside the RDDC and PDC. It is reiterated that maintaining a barrel Council of Chiefs

includes giving chiefs the powers to legislate and maintain the traditional courts, with chiefs performing judicial duties and having the authority to enforce their ruling.

- One way of integration is the involvement of traditional leaders in the planning, implementation and evaluation of developmental projects and programmes in their communities.
- It is critical that all Chiefs have automatic representation at all Rural District Council meetings and deliberations as Ex – Officio members.
- There were calls by the participants for traditional leaders especially the chiefs to be adequately resourced financially by way of monthly allowances and other incentives such as vehicles and other equipment to enable them to discharge their duties effectively and efficiently. In Zimbabwe this was already being done although quite a number of chiefs had mobility challenges as they had not yet been allocated vehicles by the State. Notwithstanding the reasons for integrating traditional authorities into the formal governance system, funding is very crucial in any administrative and developmental endeavour at the local level [57]. The quantum of resources available to traditional authorities and the utilisation of these resources could help to solve basic community problems and enhance the economic developmental process.

#### **Traditional Leaders and Legislative and Policy Environment**

According to Makumbe [9] the 1967 Tribal Trust Lands Act restored chiefs their land allocation duties and the 1969 African Tribal Act gave the Chiefs back their power to try certain cases. The 1973 African Councils Amendment Act gave Chiefs executive and administrative powers. This contradicts sharply with the respondents that Chiefs have not been restored their powers [9]. At independence in 1980, the Chiefs were stripped off their powers due to a misconception that their association with the colonial governments had corrupted them [54]. Land allocation powers were then given to the newly created District Councils and further Village Development Committees chaired by elected representatives were created and these wrestled local administrative powers from the chiefs. However, despite the loss of the power, the traditional leaders retained local influence that created anxiety for local government structures and processes [58]. The traditional leaders then began to lobby for recognition culminating in the enactment of the Traditional Leaders Act in 2000 [59].

Traditional Leaders are now administered under the Traditional Leaders Act by the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing. Zimbabwe's Constitution recognises traditional leaders. This is an indication of abundant legislation supporting traditional leaders. However, despite the administration of legislation relevant to traditional leaders by the same Ministry of Local Government, there has been limited attention to harmonising the relations between the Councils and Traditional leaders. For instance there is no evidence of effective participation of the Rural District Council Officials at the Annual Chiefs' Conference and neither is there participation of the Chiefs at the biannual Association of Rural District Councils (ARDC) congresses [58].

#### **Traditional Leaders and the Chiefs' Councils**

At the provincial and national levels, the Chiefs' Council coordinates activities and participation in development processes by the Traditional Leaders. The Chiefs' Council has of late become a force to reckon with as it fights for recognition of Traditional Leaders and improvement in their general standard of living [38]. It is more like a Trade Union fighting for the rights of the Chiefs. However this has resulted in somewhat losing its focus and direction as more time is spent advocating for personal improvements of the Traditional Leaders' life styles at the expense of the ordinary communal people. There is little evidence that the substance of the proceedings of the Chiefs Councils has any bearing on the areas governed by the Chiefs. The relevance of the Chiefs' Council to local governance and development is more imagined than real [38]. However, the Council of Chiefs also sits as an Electoral College that elects Chiefs to sit in the Senate (Zimbabwe Constitution). In the senate the Chiefs have voting powers and deliberate fully on matters that are brought to the Upper House of the Legislature. It is important to point out that the Council of Chiefs does not make any by-laws, neither does it engage in provision of any goods and services to the public Constitution of Zimbabwe, Amendment No 20).

#### **Traditional Leaders and the Political Landscape**

According to Makumbe [27], traditional leaders have been used politically since colonization and post colonization periods. The colonial governments used traditional leaders to mobilise African people to take part in selected government programmes largely aimed at ensuring the people's compliance with colonial rules. Likewise the post-colonial government of Zimbabwe has also used traditional leaders to generate and sustain popular support for the Ruling Party. The traditional leadership institution in Zimbabwe has gone through colonial and post-colonial acceptance, usage and political corruption. According to Mamdani [14] it has revealed

considerable resilience and colour in terms of influencing sub – national development processes and increasingly, national political structures. There are inherent contradictions in terms of the functions of the institution of traditional leadership that Zimbabwe's ruling elite has exploited capitalising on its continued legitimacy in the eyes of the majority of Zimbabweans [9]. The traditional leaders as an institution have been willing and coerced state partners in controlling, ordering, and developing spaces [60].

#### **CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Quite a number of studies have revealed that community developmental projects and programmes that take on board the suggestions and contributions of indigenous locals have culminated into the success of these developments. Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn -

- Traditional authority systems present an indigenous well-structured leadership hierarchy which is deeply woven into the social fabric of the society, with consultative structures of Chiefs, Headman and Village Heads.
- The traditional leadership institution is deeply entrenched in the local communities. Therefore, the institutional representation of chiefs in the Rural District Council must be considered as a necessary process of integration into the formal local governance and development system.
- In contemporary Zimbabwe, chieftainship which is at the top of traditional local governance remains an important institution. As rightly asserted by Chigwedere [54], "Chieftaincy is nobody's creation and therefore cannot be easily destroyed".
- Traditional leaders carried out administrative, executive, legislative, judicial, military, economic and religious functions in the past and this enabled them to lead their people and protect their territories even though this was not consistent with democratic principles. At all levels of the state from the village level to the national level, traditional leaders are generally seen as embodiment of customary authority and as such, they collectively or individually command lots of influence in their areas of jurisdiction and are stabilizing factors in local governance qualified to operate at the grass roots level.
- The traditional system has also proved to be a very important source of mobilization of physical, financial and human resources for development in the rural communities. It is evident that the institutions of traditional leaders together with local government officials are involved in local governance and

development. As such there must be a framework instituted for the two institutions to work hand in hand and cooperate with each other to improve the well-being of the people. If traditional leaders are to play any meaningful role in the governance of the local people, they must be integrated into local governance and be resourced in order for them to carry out their roles in governance effectively.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions from the study, the following recommendations are given-

- The roles and functions of traditional leaders and local government officials must be well-defined and agreed upon and the public must be made to understand this delineation of responsibilities.
- Traditional Leaders must be fully involved in the implementation of programmes and projects in their areas of jurisdiction to enhance the legitimacy of those projects and programmes to the local people. This inculcates a sense of ownership of the projects and programmes, hence their sustainability.
- There should be frequent workshops and forums to train and educate traditional leaders on the state of affairs of the Rural District Council to ensure some form of accountability and transparency in the governance process. This ensures that the Traditional Leaders and the Council Officials move at the same pace and level in viewing and appreciating developmental matters.
- There should be participation of traditional leaders at all stages of decision making in the communities to hold them in identifying with those decisions and assist their communities to understand it. This entails empowerment of the traditional leaders by the Government to enforce certain bye-laws but they must also undergo relevant trainings so that they become knowledgeable in modern trends of arbitration and negotiations.
- Traditional values, traditional ruling systems and traditional legislation must interact with the structures of the formal government system in such a way that harmony; coexistence and complementary effectiveness are ensured.

### REFERENCES

1. Ayittey G.B.N; Why democracy is important for African Development. 2002.
2. African Union; African Union Constitutive Act. 2005.

3. AFRIMAP; Strengthening Popular Participation in the African Union: A Guide to All Structures and Processes. 2010.
4. SADC; Southern African Development Community, [www.sadc.int](http://www.sadc.int), 2014.
5. Nkuhlu W; NEPAD; A look at seven years of achievement and the challenges on the way forward, Pretoria, South Africa. 2008.
6. Clerk J; Democratising Development: the Role of Voluntary Organisations, London, and Earth scan Publications Ltd. 1995.
7. Oomen B; Chiefs in South Africa: Law, Power and Culture in the Post – Apartheid Era, Pietermaritzburg University of Kwa Zulu-Natal Press. 2005.
8. Mararike C.G; Grassroots Leadership: The Process of Rural Development in Zimbabwe. Harare: University of Zimbabwe. 1995.
9. Mbembe A; On the Postcolony. California Press. 2001.
10. Ntsebeza L; Democracy Compromised: Chiefs and the Politics of Land in South Africa. 2006.
11. Murias R.L; Local Perspectives on Neutrality of Traditional Authorities in Malawi, South Africa and Uganda in Commonwealth and Comparative Politics. 2009; 47(1).
12. Zuma G.J; Speech Delivered on the Findings of the Commission on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims. 29 July, 2010. Pretoria: Union Buildings. [www.thepresidency.gov.za](http://www.thepresidency.gov.za), 2010.
13. Van Nieuwaal E.A.B; Chiefs and African states: Some introductory notes and an extensive bibliography on African chieftaincy. *Journal of Legal Pluralism*, 1987; (25&26): 1-46.
14. Mamdani M; Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism. Princeton University Press. 1996.
15. Economic Commission for Africa; Relevance of African traditional institutions of governance. 2007.
16. Chakaipa S; Local Government Institutions and Elections. Local Government Working Paper Series No 4. Community Law Centre. University of Western Cape. 2010.
17. Keulder C; Traditional Leaders and Local Government in Africa: Lessons for South Africa. Pretoria: HSRC. 1998.
18. Vengroff R; State Intervention and Agricultural Development in Africa: A Cross Nation Study. *Journal of Modern African Studies*. 1985; 23(1): 75 – 85.
19. Chambers R; Whose reality counts? Putting the first last. London: ITDG Publishing. 1997.
20. Peet R; Theories of development. New York: Guilford Press. 1989.

21. WWAP/UNESCO; A shared responsibility: the UN World Water Development 2. Paris: UNESCO Publishing, and New York: Berghahn Books. 2006.
22. Mathsiliza N; Repositioning Rural Institutions for Good Governance in South Africa. The Case of the Bafokeng Nations. *Journal of African and Asian Local Government Studies*. 2011.
23. Oakley P; *Projects with people: The Practice of participation in rural development*. Geneva: International Labour Office. 1991.
24. Arendonk J.V, Sony A.M; *Development for what or which culture is we serving? Approaches that work in rural development – emerging trends, participatory methods and local initiatives*. Muenchen: K.G. Sauer. 1988.
25. Berg R.J, Whitaker J.S; *Strategies for African Development*: Berkeley: University of California Press. 1986.
26. Todaro M.P; *Economics for Developing Countries*: New York, Longman. 1977.
27. Makumbe J.M; *Development and Democracy in Zimbabwe*. Harare: SAPES Books. 2010.
28. Baker L; *Doing Social Research*, McGraw – Hill Incorporated 1995.
29. Holomisa P; *Ubukhosi the Bedrock of African Democracy*. Business Day, Wednesday 9 June 2004.
30. Crook R; *The role of traditional institutions in political change and development*. CDD/ODI Policy Brief 2005; (4).
31. Du–Pisani A; *SWA/Namibia: The Politics of Continuity Change*. Johannesburg: Janathan Ball Publishers. 1986.
32. Keulder C; *Traditional Authorities and Regional Councils in Southern Namibia*. Windhoek: Friedrich – Ebert – Stiftung. 1997.
33. Protcor J.H; *The house of Chiefs and Political Development in Botswana*. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1986; 6: 59 – 70.
34. Senyonjo J; *Traditional institutions and land*. 2002.
35. Native Economic Commission; *The Report of the Native Economic Commission of the Union of South Africa*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand. 1930.
36. D’Engelbronner- Kolf, Sindano J.L; (1998). *Traditional Authority and Democracy in South Africa: Proceedings from the Workshop Traditional Authorities in the Nineties – Democratic Aspects of Traditional Government in Southern Africa*. Windhoek, 15 – 16 November, 1995.
37. Garbertt P.A; *Shona Peoples*. Gwelo: Mambo Press. 1976.
38. Linington G; *Constitution of Zimbabwe*. London. Kluwet. 2001.
39. Good K; *Interpreting the Exceptionality of Botswana*. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. 1982; 40: 69-95.
40. Ntsebeza L; *Democracy in South Africa’s Countryside: Is there a Role for Traditional Authorities?* Johannesburg: Interfund. 2003.
41. Goerge K, Binza S; *The Role of Traditional Leaders in Governance and Rural Development in South Africa: A Case of the Mgwalana Traditional Authority*. Paper presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of SAAPAM, 16 – 18 February, 2011, Pretoria.
42. Bless G, Higson S; *Fundamentals of Social Research: An African Perspective*, 2nd Edition, Juta Publishers (Pty) LTD, RSA. 2000.
43. Strauss S, Corbin R.G; *Basic Qualitative Research Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, Thousand Oaks. 1998.
44. Neuman L; *Social Research Methods*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Pearsons. 2000.
45. Bailey K.D; *Methods and Social Research*, Free Press, New York. 1987.
46. Bryman A, Burgess R.G; *Qualitative Research*, Vol 1, Sage Publication, London. 1999.
47. Henning G; *Finding Your Way in Qualitative Research*, Van Schaik, Pretoria. 2003.
48. Mouton J, Marais P; *Understanding Social Research: J.L. Van Schaik Publishers*, Pretoria. 1996.
49. Singleton Jr R.A, Straits B.C, Straits M.M; *Approaches to social research*. Oxford University Press. 1993.
50. Baker S; *Sustainable Development*. London: Routledge. 2006.
51. Leedy P.D; *Practical Research, Planning and Design*, Macmillan Publishing Co. New York. 1997.
52. Marshall C, Rossman G.B; *Designing Qualitative Research*, Sage, Newbury Park. CA 45, 1989.
53. Clark M, Sartorius R; *Monitoring and Evaluation: Some tools, Methods, and Approaches*. World Bank, Washington, D.C. 2004.
54. Chigwedere A; *Traditional Leadership Institutions in Zimbabwe*. Harare. Zimbabwe. 2009.
55. Kiondo A.S; *Civic Awareness and Patterns of Citizen Participation in Political Culture and Popular Participation*, Dar es Salaam: Research and Education for Democracy in Tanzania. 1997.
56. Sklar R.L; *The premise of mixed government in African political studies*, in O.Vaughan (ed.), *Indigenous political structures and governance in Africa* Ibadan: Sefer Books Ltd. 2003; 3-25.

57. Chatiza K; Opportunities and Challenges in Institutionalising Participatory Development: The Case for Rural Zimbabwe, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Swansea University – UK. 2008.
58. UNECA; Striving for Good Governance in Africa: Synopsis of the 2005 Africa Governance Report. United Nations Economic Commission. 2005.
59. Nugent P; Africa since Independence: A Comparative History. Basingstoke. UK: Pakgrave. Macmillan. 2004.
60. Raftopoulos B, Makumbe J; NGOs, the State and Politics in Zimbabwe. Harare: SAPES Books. 2002
61. Zimbabwe Statistical National Census (2012).Harare .Zimbabwe