

Contextualising E-Governance in the Public Participation Debate: The Sassa Electronic Payment System

by

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Declaration

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ABSTRACT

E-governance is but one of the many public participation strategies a government can use to engage with its citizens. E-governance improves government processes, connects citizens and builds interactions with and within civil society. Through the provision of improved processes and information access, e-governance paves the road to good governance goals and development targets. Governments in developing countries can benefit greatly from e-governance as the world is technologically driven but, at the same time, the social realities of poverty; inequality and unemployment are becoming more apparent. Many developing countries are being left behind as they do not have sufficient technical infrastructure and human capital to provide internet access and are thus unable to provide online services and programmes. E-government must be accessible, interactive, transactional and transformational, and services offered electronically should not be seen as new, but rather as alternative methods for time saving, convenience, cost reduction and equitable distribution of services.

In this study the Mooiplaas Community is used as a case study. It has become apparent that the electronic payment system implemented by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) is not accessible to its intended beneficiaries. This study argues that authentic and empowering public participation based on an appropriate mix of context-specific strategies is required for the SASSA to successfully implement their electronic system. The public must be afforded space to *influence, direct, control and own* the development it is introduced to. In the light of the model developed in this study for public participation that empowers communities, it is evident that public participation in Mooiplaas is at the level of tokenism, yet the ideal level is that of public control whereby the public influences, directs and takes ownership of its own development.

This study adopted a qualitative research method. Interviews were conducted on the basis of probability sampling to collect primary data. An evaluative research design was used, aimed at answering the question of whether a development intervention programme or strategy has been successful or effective. A public participation strategy has been developed to achieve the appropriate level of

public power with the consequence of improved service delivery, free from complaints and protests.

OPSOMMING

E-staatsbestuur is maar slegs een van die baie openbare deelnemingstrategieë wat 'n regering kan gebruik om met sy burgers te kommunikeer. E-staatsbestuur verbeter regeringsprosesse, bring burgers in kontak, en bou interaksie met, en binne die burgerlike samelewing. Deur die voorsiening van verbeterde prosesse en toegang tot inligting, word e-staatsbestuur 'n pad na goeie bestuursdoelwitte en ontwikkelingssteikens. Regerings in ontwikkelende lande kan baie baat by e-staatsbestuur, aangesien die wêreld deur tegnologie aangedryf word, maar ondervind terselfdertyd dat die sosiale werklikheid van armoede, ongelikheid, en werkloosheid meer sigbaar word. Baie ontwikkelende lande word agtergelaat as hulle nie die tegniese infrastruktuur en menslike kapitaal het om internet te voorsien nie, en daarom kan hulle nie aanlyn-dienste en programme verskaf nie. E-staatsbestuur moet toeganklik, interaktief, transaksioneel en transformerend wees, en dienste wat elektronies aangebied word, moet nie as nuut gesien word nie, maar eerder as alternatiewe metodes om tyd te bespaar, gemak te verseker, koste te verminder, en vir die billike verspreiding van dienste.

In hierdie studie is die Mooiplaasgemeenskap as 'n gevallestudie gebruik. Dit het duidelik geword dat die elektroniese betalingstelsel wat deur die Suid-Afrikaanse Agentskap vir Maatskaplike Sekerheid (SASSA) geïmplementeer word, nie toeganklik vir die beoogde begunstigdes is nie. Hierdie studie voer aan dat outentieke en bemagtigende openbare deelname, wat op 'n toepaslike mengsel van konteks-spesifieke strategieë gebaseer is, deur SASSA benodig word om hul elektroniese stelsel suksesvol te implementeer. Die publiek moet ruimte gegun word om die ontwikkeling waaraan hulle voorgestel word te beïnvloed, rigting daaraan te gee, beheer daarvan te neem, en ook eienaarskap daarvan te aanvaar. In die lig van die model vir openbare deelname met die oog op die bemagting van gemeenskappe wat in hierdie studie ontwikkel is, is dit duidelik dat openbare deelname in Mooiplaas meerendeels tokenisme is; tog moet die ideale vlak een van openbare beheer wees waarin die publiek invloed kan uitoefen, rigting kan gee, en eienaarskap van hul eie ontwikkeling kan neem.

Hierdie studie volg 'n kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetode. Om primêre data in te samel, is onderhoude wat op 'n waarskynlikheids-steekproefneming gegrond is, gevoer. 'n

Evaluasie-navorsingsontwerp, wat daarop gemik was om die vraag of 'n intervensie-program of strategie suksesvol of effektief was, is gevolg. 'n Strategie vir 'n openbare deelnemingsproses is ontwikkel. Die strategie is daarop gemik om die gepaste vlak van openbare bevoegdheid, wat gevolglik 'n verbeterde dienslewering vry van klagtes en protes moet bewerkstellig, te kan bereik.

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This study has opened my mind to numerous public administration dimensions and I have grown from it. I hope that it brings about new perspectives in the South African public administration arena. I thank God for the ability, wisdom, health, strength and determination to complete this study. It has been an enormous task which entailed dedication and perseverance

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This study is dedicated to my late dear father Wellington Zolile Lungile Qina, who left me with no material resources, but with valuable words of wisdom. As he said: "Success in life is twofold. First, fear God. Second, be educated". To the world you were my father, but to me you were the world. May your soul rest in peace.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Governments in both developed and developing countries are embarking on e-government. E-government aims to improve service delivery, access to information and enhance transparency. E-government thus becomes one of the means to communicate development. In addition, e-government creates space for public participation, good governance and thus enhances democracy (UNESDOC, 2005; Nzimakwe, 2012:56-68; Couttolemc, 2012).

The use of information and communications technology (ICT) has changed the nature of the relationship between government and the public into a technology -based relationship. This phenomenon has a significant impact on how government conducts its business, interacts within itself, with private sector and the public in general. Most importantly, e-government calls for communication of development processes and goals in an effective and accessible manner.

E-government communication takes into account the needs of society, the developmental goals of government and empowerment of the public (Van Dijk and Croucamp, 2007:670). E-government supposedly increases the level of public participation as supported by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum Toolkit (2007) which states that participation *informs, consults, involves, collaborates* and *empowers* (Theron and Mchunu, 2014: 111-128). Empowering participation, for example, enables beneficiaries to *influence, direct, control* and *own* the development introduced to them (Creighton, 2005:139-179). This issue of authentic and empowering public participation has been highlighted by several scholars, who emphasise the right of the public to be heard (Burkey, 2002; Creighton, 2005; Davids, 2005; Theron, 2008).

This study focuses on a development strategy introduced by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), wherein an electronic payment system is implemented to pay all social grants recipients (e-government). The strategy implemented by the SASSA has both advantages and disadvantages for both the public and government, and these are acknowledged in this study. The e-government strategy is one of the

public participation strategies that have to be implemented in a manner that promotes community development (Swanepoel and De Beer, 2011:75-83). An 'appropriate mix' of strategy for an improved SASSA service delivery initiative which would promote community development is presented in this study,

1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

In February 2012, the SASSA announced the implementation of a biometric re-registration of all social grants beneficiaries and a subsequent electronic payment system. The SASSA is a public entity mandated to implement a section of the Social Assistance Act (RSA, 2004). The social assistance services are a set of social grants, which are provided as direct cash transfers to vulnerable citizens. According to the SASSA (2012:2), the aim of this initiative is to reduce social grant fraud, eliminate duplications and to improve accountability and transparency within South Africa's social assistance system. Owen (2003:5) agrees with this notion and states that contemporary organisations, including the public sector, should ensure efficiency gains and proper dissemination of public value to avoid wastage of tax-payers' resources. For Manyathi (2011:35) these benefits can create an opportunity for improved audit reports as well as savings in policy costs, which can be redirected through the National Treasury to other pro bono uses.

In this regard, Makinana (2012:3) commends the SASSA on implementing the electronic payment system but cautions that, although this has clear cost benefits, it has raised considerable concerns in the national social sphere. This is because this plan to eliminate fraud and corruption within the social assistance system and electronic payment is radical in nature. Heginbotham (2006:2) points out that e-government takes into account the needs of society, the developmental goals of government, and the empowerment of its citizens. Communicating development processes and goals should therefore become a primary objective of any institution as this issue – communication – locates the SASSA model and approach within the participatory debate (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Hickey and Mohan, 2004; Cornwall and Coelho, 2007; Theron and Mchunu, 2014).

The SASSA has utilised a top-down approach in its implementation of the electronic payment system and has not considered public participation in the process. Theron and Caesar (2008:100-128) and Theron and Mchunu (2014:111-128) argue that this top-down approach is prescriptive and often arrogant, and imposes certain types of knowledge transference and communication styles on communities. According to Theron and Barnard (1997:37), citing Coetzee (1989), public participation and self-reliance imply participation by the beneficiaries of development at a micro-level. Davids (2014:18-19) concurs and mentions that *authentic* and *empowering* public participation involves the public in the processes of decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as the sharing of the benefits of governance and development, including outputs and outcomes.

Queral (1998), in Heginbotham (2006:2) posits that public participation “is the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfilment of the human potential”. For Kotzé (1997:37) the public participation approach has to be people-centred, wherein development, communication, influence and dialogue all take place in the public sphere. Davids (2005:19, 29) elaborates, mentioning that even democracy is deepened through strict public participatory mechanisms.

According to Gwala (2011:2), the lack of a specific appropriate public participation strategy that is relevant to local users’ capacity to participate can become a fundamental challenge. The ability of the users to use the electronic payment system in the SASSA system is of great significance. Questions need to be asked: as to *when*, and *for whom* we will use e-governance services and why. Purcell and Toland (2004), in Dada (2006:4) discovered that, in Samoa, poor institutional capacity presented a limitation, as the public were not ready to “e-participate”. Critics of e-governance in South Africa, Petersen (2005:3), question the relevance of e-government seeing as the majority of citizens still lack basic needs such as houses, water, toilets and electricity.

Given the above, this topic justifies research as it reveals both the opportunities for, and challenges to, the social grants beneficiaries’ in utilising the electronic payment system as implemented by the SASSA in a society which experiences a digital divide.

ICT brings about the potential gains of both financial and material inclusion, efficiency, effectiveness, e-governance, public participation and empowerment. Thus social grants beneficiaries' experiences regarding the utilisation of the electronic payment system need to be observed.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

E-government is one of the public participation strategies as stated in the IAP2 and is a highly debated topic worldwide given that it is diverse, often subtle, cost saving and direct democratic participation (UNDP, 2004). According to Manohar, Rao and Mellan (2009:243) the concept of e-governance cuts across the spectrum of government, citizens and political parties, and enables accountability, responsiveness and transparency. E-governance supposedly increases the level of public participation as supported by the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation Toolkit (2007) which states that participation informs, consults, involves, collaborates and empowers. Empowering participation, for example, enables beneficiaries to influence, direct, control and own the development introduced to them (Creighton, 2005:139-179).

In South Africa, e-government services are impeded by several issues, such as a lack of technically skilled people, limited financial resources, poor energy resources, inefficient research and development of ICT infrastructure, the presence of eleven official languages, a high level of illiteracy and the high costs of internet access and ICT equipment (Lesame, 2005:197-198). Further, South Africa is a society that experiences a wide 'digital divide'. This digital divide occurs as the affluent, more urban communities have improved access to communication technologies whilst rural communities lag behind.

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) has the responsibility to develop policies and guidelines relating to e-government (DPSA, 2007a). The department impresses upon all state organs that, should a desire to implement ICT be expressed or considered, the point of departure is the identification of customers' needs and abilities. This should be followed by a determination of how ICT will effectively and efficiently assist the achievement of these intended objectives. This notion by the DPSA calls for authentic and empowering public participation prior to the

implementation of an electronic payment system implemented by the SASSA, wherein the public is enabled to influence, direct, control and ultimately own the developmental intervention (Theron and Ceasar, 2008:100-123). However, the most effective public participation strategy is always based on an appropriate mix of context-specific strategies relevant to the particular case at which a level of public participation is required.

The SASSA as well as Eastern Cape media houses have been inundated with complaints from social grants beneficiaries about their inability to access their monthly social grants (Plaatjie, 2012:2). The implementation of the electronic payment system by the SASSA without utilising an appropriate context-specific public participation strategy is a potential source of this problem. This claim finds resonance in Makinana (2012:3) who mentions that rapid migration by the SASSA from the cash to electronic payment system raised salient concerns in the greater social sphere. The digital solution introduced by the SASSA could be regarded as a first world solution applied in a third world country without any adequate capacitation and infrastructure. The community of Mooiplaas Village is used as a case study in this study to determine facts and data as it is one group of complainants, amongst many, who are unable to access their monthly social grants (Leedy, 1989:4-8).

Brynard and Hanekom (2006:16) argue that scientific research begins with a definition of the problem statement. This study aims to explore the implementation challenges of electronic payment systems operated by the SASSA. Mouton (2001:171) mentions that studies such as this can contribute towards enhancing public service and to the body of knowledge. The researcher will prove the importance of communication development to provide solutions to challenges facing the SASSA during the implementation of electronic payments.

This study will seek to address the following research problems:

1. To explore the challenges facing social grants recipients regarding the electronic payment system implemented by the SASSA.
2. To identify and describe infrastructure provided by the SASSA for the electronic payment of social grants recipients.
3. To explore implementation challenges facing the SASSA during the implementation of the electronic payment system.

4. To determine the extent to which the perceived lack of public participation in the electronic payment system of the SASSA contributes to the complaints from beneficiaries about an inability to access their monthly social grants.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

According to Brynard and Hanekom (2006:21), Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2007), and Babbie and Mouton (2008), a hypothesis seeks to establish a relationship between at least two variables, independent and dependent. The two variables identified in this study are public participation as an independent variable and the SASSA electronic payment system as a dependent variable. This study seeks to study the relationship between the complaints of social grant beneficiaries, emanating from the electronic payment system implemented by the SASSA, and a lack of authentic and empowering public participation. Mouton (2006:159) mentions that deductive reasoning approach starts from an existing theoretical point of view. In this regard, this study argues that a lack of authentic and empowering public participation results in complaints about the electronic payment system implemented by the SASSA.

Theron, Ceasar and Davids (2007:2) argues that public participation strategies have two main gains for democratic policy-making processes, namely; participation leads to better policy outcomes, and participation assists the public to develop the capacity to improve their lives. Masango (2002:55-56) mentions that dictatorship is combated through public participation while principles of good governance are promoted. Public participation paves the way for policy implementation to run smoothly and fosters a sense of ownership, eliminates resistance and builds commitment to the outcomes of the process (Clapper, 1996:76).

Following the above, the hypothesis for this study is that ***authentic and empowering public participation is a primary source of strength for the success of the SASSA's electronic payment system.*** An authentic and empowering public participation programme would enable social grant beneficiaries to own the electronic payment system implemented for both their own good and that of the nation. These issues will be addressed by the case study.

The researcher has observed that if an appropriate mix of public participation strategy is implemented, the complaints about electronic payment will be minimised. A public institution, like the SASSA, has a legislative obligation to empower the public to participate meaningfully in the public's own affairs and to engage in the issues that affect their lives. The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA) (No. 3 of 2000) compels an administrator to consult with the affected person if a decision to be made will adversely affect that person. A participatory planning structure and partnership between the SASSA and the public will go a long way to ensure efficient and effective delivery of services (Theron, 2008:29). However, should *authentic and empowering* public participation not be exercised, resistance and complaints will become a norm in the implementation of a policy programme.

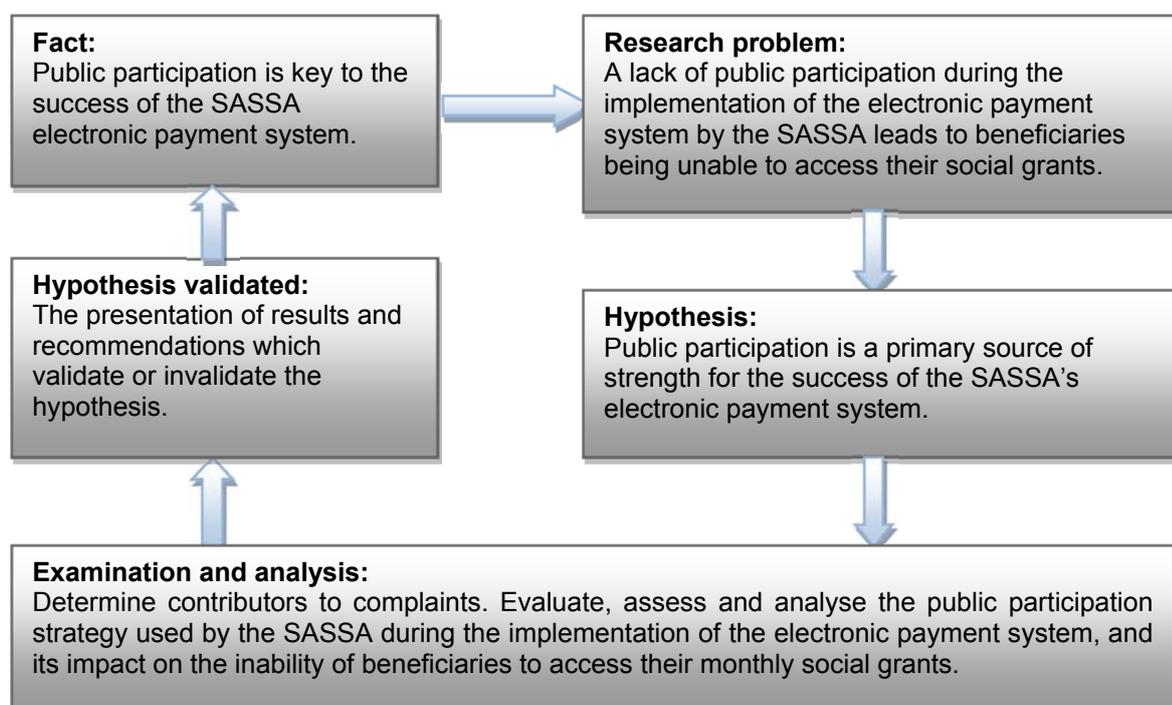


Figure 1.1: A diagrammatic representation of the study

Source: Adapted from Bless and Higson-Smith (1999:13).

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative research design. According to Mouton (2006:194) qualitative research is best suited for this study as it allows the researcher to test the hypothesis and to have direct contact with the social grants beneficiaries of Mooiplaas

Village, where the case study is conducted. This will enable the researcher to gather information on the beneficiaries' views about the electronic payment system implemented by the SASSA. Brynard and Hanekom (2006:37) agree and state that qualitative methodology allows the researcher to know the respondents personally and to examine their daily lives and experiences. The researcher's decision to employ this design stems from the fact that the study does not aim to manipulate existing variables but rather to study the variables as they exist.

The focus of this study is on behavioural regularities of daily circumstances, for example the relationship between individuals or groups in a specific community or organisation. For the purpose of this study the researcher is interested in obtaining the opinion of participants and not their behaviour towards one another (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2007:194). The term 'case study' does not refer to a particular technique to be applied but rather enables the researcher to obtain an understanding of the distinctiveness of a specific case in all its complexities. Mouton (2005:149) recommends that the case study design may be used for research that intends to provide an in-depth description of a small number of cases. The research design is therefore a "blueprint" of how the research will be conducted (De Vos, 1998:77; Mouton, 2001:55).

In light of the above, the researcher will study literature on public participation in South Africa and international trends. The researcher will conduct participatory observation by visiting the community of Mooiplaas during the days on which social grants are paid to interact with beneficiaries and experience their plight (Welman and Kruger, 2001:184). Various literature sources will be searched for appropriate standardised questionnaires to be utilised in this study. Amongst others, these will be questionnaires on the implementation and management of electronic payment systems. These tools will assist the researcher when developing a relevant tool for this study. Mouton (2001:124) states that it is critical to collect accurate information about a group and the best strategy is to use post-coding to minimise errors.

Triangular sampling will be utilised with social grants recipients from Mooiplaas Village (for the case study), the SASSA management, and Cash Payment Services (CPS) management being interviewed. Mooiplaas is a deep rural village near East London, within the Amathole District Municipality, in the Eastern Cape Province. The majority

of the residents are illiterate and unemployed and depend on social grants for their survival. The researcher will conduct focus groups, and questionnaire-based interviews with beneficiaries in receipt of child support, old age, and disability grants as these social grants are most common (SASSA, 2010b:07). The closed questions administered by the researcher in the focus groups will focus on the challenges faced by social grants recipients when using electronic payment systems as implemented by the SASSA. The size of the population will be between eight and ten recipients per grant type, which means approximately thirty people from a population of 300 households.

The SASSA general and customer care managers will both be interviewed to establish the SASSA challenges in the implementation of an electronic payment system and what is being done to overcome those challenges. A Cash Payment Services (CPS) manager will be interviewed to assess the infrastructure provided by the SASSA for social grants recipients. CPS is a private sector company contracted by the SASSA to pay out social grants to all social grants recipients.

Through the application of this methodology, the researcher is able to establish the 'appropriate mix' required for the SASSA to implement effective e-governance with adequate resources, authentic community participation, the programme being owned by the beneficiaries, and with a community that is empowered and able to influence the process. The researcher will analyse data gathered from all the interviews applying the principles of grounded theory, which will enable an understanding of the relationship between the contents. Charts will be used to present the data in a visual way. Conclusions will be drawn based on the information obtained, linked to the body of knowledge and recommendations presented.

1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

A mind-map approach enables a researcher to identify key concepts to be discussed in an investigation. It thus simplifies the search and collection of data (Brynard and Hanekom, 2006:62), through the linkage of principles and strategies.

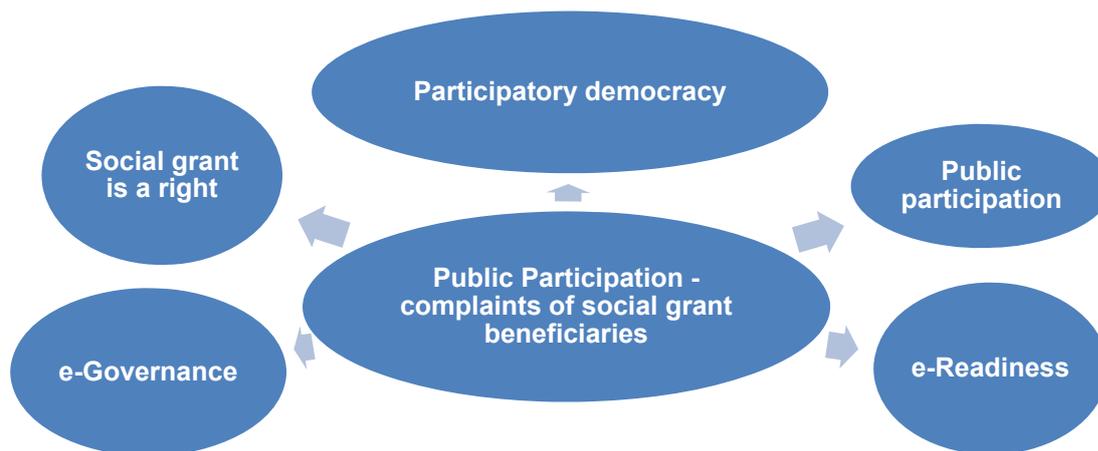


Figure 1.2: Aims of the study

Source: Adapted from Mchunu (2012:18).

In this study the key concepts are defined as follows:

- (i) **Participatory democracy:** Representative democracy, as in South Africa, requires strategies in order for it to be consolidated. The voting process alone is not enough as participation in the decision-making process becomes one of the fundamental strategies that can consolidate democracy (Heywood, 2007:86). At times participatory democracy is referred to as public participation, but it is a system that allows many concerned citizens to participate in the formation and implementation of a policy. Even the minority in a participatory democracy is afforded equal opportunity to express its views, and decisions are reached by way of consensus (Reddy, 1996:5). The consensus decision-making approach leads a country towards establishing a mature and democratic system.
- (ii) **Public participation:** This is a strategy which is used to influence, direct, empower, control and own a programme or policy. Davids (2005:25) states that public participation requires people to have the capacity to participate effectively. Theron (2008:08) defines public participation as dismantling the top-down, prescriptive and often-arrogant knowledge transference and communication styles that tend to be imposed on communities by outsiders. Burkey (2002:56) refers to public participation as a basic human right that

demonstrates respect for disadvantaged groups. In South Africa public participation is enshrined in the Constitution (1996).

- (iii) **E-readiness:** This is seen as the starting point when implementing e-government with the aim to bring about e-governance. It refers to an ability to make use of information and communications technology to expand one's economy and cultivate welfare. E-readiness describes the capacity to participate in and benefit from the global digital economy, a precondition necessary for e-government, e-commerce and e-development, and the degree to which a community or organisation is prepared to participate in the networked world (Dockett, 2001:Slide 6).
- (iv) **E-governance:** E-governance becomes a continuous optimisation of government service delivery, constituency participation and governance by transforming internal and external relationships through technology, internet and media (Shilubane, 2001:40). E-governance is a public participation strategy to be used in addition to other well-known strategies, such as those in the IAP2 Public Participation Toolbox. These electronic services should be made available and accessible at all times and at any place to customers, depending on context-specific factors and the ability of the public to operate these strategies (Lesame, 2005:193).
- (v) **Social grant as a right:** Section 27 (1)(c) of the Constitution (1996) states that everyone has the right to access social security, including with appropriate assistance for those who are unable to support themselves and their dependents. The Constitution (1996) is the supreme law of the country, and all citizens are governed and protected by it. According to Hanyane (2005:267), public participation, as an advocate of the realisation of the public's interests, has the capacity to improve and strengthen the democratic culture of any nation, including by protecting the rights of the poor and the vulnerable who receive social assistance in the form of grants.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The subject of this study is the exploration of implementation challenges regarding the electronic payment system implemented by the SASSA, though only one rural village will be studied and not the entire social grants population. Additionally, the most disadvantaged locality has been selected and no urban or semi-urban social grant recipients will be studied. This results in a selective view of the subject matter as opposed to a holistic picture in respect of the study. There is also non-standardisation of measurements in this study, though it has high contrast validity.

1.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter a background argument of the relevance of the study and its value was presented. It was argued that since the implementation of an electronic payment system by the SASSA, the complaints of social grants beneficiaries emanate with regard to the lack of authentic public participation. Appropriate application of principles, models and strategies of public participation would minimise these complaints. The researcher argued that an 'appropriate mix' of public participation strategies, relevant to the local users' capacity to participate was not applied by the SASSA. When implementing a programme, questions must be asked as to when this can be done, for whom, and why. Implementation of the electronic payment system by the SASSA did not ask these fundamental questions.

In this chapter, the hypothesis of the study was identified as: *public participation is a primary source of strength for the success of the SASSA's electronic payment system.* Public participation is viewed as an appropriate context-specific strategy to mitigate complaints from social grant beneficiaries. This study will contextualise e-governance within the public participation debate, suggesting a public participation approach towards capacity building.

It is the intention of the researcher to compare the findings of each chapter with the hypothesis until this is validated or invalidated. The next chapter deals with the principle of public participation, linking this to relevant analytical models to test the value of public participation and, finally, considers an appropriate mix of a context-specific (to the case study) set of strategies which will lead to authentic public

participation within the context of e-governance via the SASSA electronic payment system.

CHAPTER TWO: PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In 1994, South Africa saw the birth of a democratically elected government and the subsequent introduction of the Constitution (1996), which paved the way for a developmental orientation based on authentic and empowering public participation. According to Gwala (2011:3), authentic and empowering public participation entails creation of space for the public to influence, direct, control and own the development process as beneficiaries of the programme or project. Democracy is consolidated when the public is allowed space to participate in decision-making at micro-level (Gildenhuys, Fox and Wissink, 1991:124). Heywood (2007:72) states that when the public does not participate in decision-making, democracy translates into being a ‘*hurrah word*’, a “feel good” approach. He argues that, even though democracy is almost universally regarded as a “good thing”, when the interests of a particular organisation and/or certain individuals are served under the umbrella of democracy whilst the needs of the public¹ are not, this cannot be regarded as democracy.

According to Roelofs (1998:25), the definitions of participatory democracy often touch on the two interlinked notions of *participation* and *action*, and where these two are manifested participatory democracy may be expected to feature. For Theron and Mchunu (2014:111-128) the rationale behind the promotion of public participation is the belief that when the public participate in development, that intervention is perceived to be legitimate and it is more likely to be sustained. Burkey (2002:35) mentions that meaningful development must begin with, and within, an individual and unless motivation comes from within, efforts to promote change will not be sustained by that individual. In essence, manipulative approaches and the era of dictatorship need to be replaced by authentic and empowering participatory approaches through which the public can influence, direct, control and own development².

¹ In this instance the public refers to the poor and the marginalised.

² Approaches such as developmental local governance, IDP, LED and PPP are supposed to be based on this notion.

The persistence of complaints by social grants recipients since the implementation of the SASSA's electronic payment system indicate that the necessary leverage envisaged of public participation has not been afforded and may lead to protests to make their voice heard (Mchunu, 2012:2). The fact that social grants recipients are financially poor does not suggest that they are incapable of contributing meaningfully to their own development. Wignaraja (1981), in Burkey (2002:36), expressing the sentiments of an Indian peasant, quotes "We were learning ourselves, however slowly. You came with your science that you developed with your money and power, and its dazzling light blinded us. Can you throw the light not on our face but on the road so that we can see it better and walk ourselves, holding your hand occasionally". He further argues that in such situations an individual (the poor/public) will remain under the power of others (the rich/dictators) (Burkey, 1993:35). Hickey and Mohan (2004:8) argue that when the public is afforded space to participate it does not only influence the development intervention, but it will take ownership and direct the development agenda based on its context specifics.

Theron (2008), Chambers (2002), and Korten (1990) further argue that in these instances not only will legitimacy be acknowledged by beneficiaries but also self-reliance, empowerment and assertiveness will be achieved (Theron, 2009:112). In this regard, Swanepoel and De Beer (2011:46) state that people become more self-reliant and self-sufficient if they participate in decision-making and their dignity is restored, thus an institutional building process is achieved.

In this chapter, two key concepts are presented, namely participatory democracy and public participation. Although these two concepts are sometimes used interchangeably, they are not the same. Participatory democracy is presented with a view to understanding how it leads to good governance and consolidates democracy, whilst public participation is presented for purposes of understanding principles, models, and strategies. This is done in order to understand and interpret the public participation strategy employed by the SASSA in its introduction of the electronic payment system, given the complaints that have plagued this public institution since the system's introduction. A determination is attempted of the extent to which public participation principles could assist the SASSA to improve the quality of its public participation strategy to being one that is authentic and empowering.

2.2 PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Heywood (2007:17) describes participatory democracy as a form of democracy that allows the public to participate in the decision-making process of policy development, formulation and implementation. The term democracy, traced back to ancient Greece, means 'rule by the people'³ (Heywood, 2007:72). Creighton (2005:17) postulates that democracy is intended to give power to the people, and to enable people to make choices about the ultimate aims and goals of government action. In this regard, Pimbert and Wakeford (2001:23), in Creighton (2005:2), state that democracy without citizen deliberation and participation is an empty and meaningless principle. The ANC (2002:1) agrees and mentions that, "where people are not involved in the decisions that affect their lives, social policies and political interventions are less likely to succeed. Participatory democracy should therefore complement and enhance representative democracy".

Participatory democracy advocates for more meaningful and involved forms of public participation than traditional representative democracy. Francis (2008:128) asserts that participatory democracy can only be realised when the rights, interests and participation of the public are taken into consideration. The hypothesis for this study is that *authentic and empowering public participation is a primary source of strength for the success of the SASSA's electronic payment system*. When the rights and interests of the public are respected and meaningfully so, participatory democracy is realised. Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2009:52) and Davids (2014:49-61) state that when participatory democracy is practised it empowers the public to be drivers of their own development and policy-making processes. For Barber (1984:151) strong democracy calls for active citizens to govern themselves, not necessarily at every level and in every instance, but frequently and particularly when basic policies are being decided and significant power is being deployed. Cohen and Arato (2003:07), in support of this notion, argue that participatory democracy would allow the public, and not the elected chosen few, to acquire a democratic political mandate for every step they take. The very act of participation is educative and politically significant.

According to Kotzé and Kotzé (2008:91), participatory democracy is determined by the extent to which the State has created platforms of public participation. The now-

³ In Ancient Greece, 'people/*demos*' referred to the 'poor' or 'the many' (Heywood, 2007:72)

defunct Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA, 2010:3) states that participatory democracy seeks to ensure active participation of the public in governance matters as one way of enhancing democracy. Participatory democracy means the inclusion of the public or groups in policy-making and implementation processes (Friedman, 2006:4). The type of participation envisaged in a participatory democracy is ongoing interaction between the elected and the public in all decision-making and is seen as contributing to the enhancement of democracy in a society. The researcher contends that although the electronic payment system implemented by the SASSA provides several benefits for both government and the public, reluctance to engage the public has made the public lose hope and become disgruntled, instead of being constructive and responsive in realising their potential and capabilities leading up to self-reliance.

In this regard, Aragonés and Sánchez-Pages (2008:56) mention that participatory democracy is a process of collective decision-making, where citizens have the power to decide on policy proposals and politicians assume a role of policy implementation. Friedman (2006:4) points out that participatory governance stands to gain collaborative and harmonious working in government and can thus prevent resistance emanating from exclusion in the policy-making and implementation processes. Friedman further states that social policy is hampered by a representational gap in which the needs of the poor are unknown. Gwala (2011:3) argues that authentic and empowering participation only occurs when the public, wherein a developmental intervention is to take place, is enabled to influence, direct, control and eventually own the process. Theron (2009:132) sums this up with a claim that public participation is a cornerstone principle in the democratisation process and good governance, and that the lack of public participation often results in public complaints and protests as is currently commonly experienced at the SASSA and even at local government level.

CIVICUS (2006:4) concludes that participatory governance is about empowering the public to influence and share control in processes of public decision-making that affect their lives. If participatory democracy is implemented correctly, it can be a tool that both the government and the public can use to entrench empowering public participation, thus consolidating democracy. Participatory democracy serves as a basis for good governance, as democratic governance emanates from good governance (Gwala, 2011:52; Theron and Mchunu, 2014).

2.3 PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AS A BASIS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

This section discusses governance and good governance. This approach is adopted with a view to make a clear distinction between these two concepts. Generally, governance refers to structures or systems, whilst good governance refers to management and relationships within those structures of governance.

2.3.1 Governance

The United Nations Development Programme (1997:9) defines governance as an exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. Governance can be categorised as the rules of the political system to solve conflicts between actors and adopt decisions (legality). It has also been used to describe the, "proper functioning of institutions and their acceptance by the public" (legitimacy) as well as invoking the efficacy of government and the achievement of consensus by democratic means (participation). The Constitution (1996) impresses upon all actors in government and the public to open space for participation in the decision-making process. However, according to Van Donk (2012) in Mchunu (2012:3) the SASSA electronic payment system demonstrates a governance deficit.

The Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA, 2009:107) states that governance means constitutional, legal and administrative arrangements by which a government exercises its power, as well as the related mechanisms for public accountability, rule of law, transparency and public participation. The SASSA, being a public entity, cannot in a democratic country function outside these basic principles of governance in its introduction of an electronic payment system. In other words, the main value of effective governance in a democratic society is public accountability. For example, South Africa's Constitution (1996) contains several legislations to promote accountability and responsibility in the public sector and these include, amongst others, the Public Finance Management Act of 1999 (PFMA), Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003 (MFMA) and protocol on corporate governance (PCG).

The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA) (No. 3 of 2000) advocates the creation of a "culture of accountability" at all levels of government. If this culture is

adopted by the public then the concept of influencing, directing and owning decision-making processes and community-based development becomes a reality. The World Bank (1996a:4) views governance as the exercise of political authority and the use of institutional resources to manage society's affairs. An alternate definition sees governance as the use of institutions, structures of authority and collaboration to allocate resources and coordinate or control activity in society or the economy.

2.3.2 Good Governance

Gwala (2011:55) argues that good governance allows the public to participate in economic development, political education and in the administration of its local structures with the purpose of becoming change agents in influencing, directing and owning development in its area. This is in line with the concept of a better life for all, people-centred development and public participation. For the PALAMA (2009:114), good governance is the integrated management of political, socio-economical and institutional relationships between people, policy, and power for decision-making about the distribution of development or public resources. Good governance is fundamentally concerned with relationships between people as individuals, interested groups, stakeholders and organisations. These relationships are forged in order to better or improve services, and also to ensure that services are delivered and benefits enjoyed.

Decision-makers in the public sector, private sector and civil society organisations are accountable to the public and the relevant institutional stakeholders (PALAMA, 2009:116). Central to the principle of accountability are information-sharing and transparency, both of which should be promoted by effective governance structures (Cornwall, 2008:119-121). Good governance is achieved through political accountability and creates an empowering environment for participatory democracy. If the public is allowed scope to influence, direct and own decisions made for its own development, then accountability becomes a shared responsibility and good governance is achieved (Mchunu, 2012:60). Good governance is the highest need for authentic management and development of public affairs.

Swanepoel and De Beer (2006:93) advocate that an open leadership style creates a platform for open communication, which would mean that all members participate in and are responsible for decision-making. Agere (2000:5) notes that communities

should feel satisfied with the procedures and processes followed when arriving at solutions to a problem. Communities in such environments need not agree on the method used and conclusions reached since they are involved in the solution. Mchunu (2012:105) describes the opposite of this phenomenon, or 'poor governance', as implanting the growth of discontent, which in the SASSA case is demonstrated through complaints pointing out disapproval aimed at compelling authorities to accede to their grievance and change the status quo, which they cannot change on their own. Mchunu (2012:105) further argues that to be denied space to participate equates to one's dignity being stripped, including human rights and power.

Chapter 10, Section 195 of the Constitution (1996) lists values and principles of good governance, such as how public servants must conduct themselves, namely in terms of representation, professional ethics, efficiency and effectiveness, accountability, impartiality, development orientation, representativeness and participation, and fairness. The PALAMA (2009:125) tabulates six guidelines for good governance in the public sector namely:

- (i) Citizens must be empowered to understand and know what is taking place in the public service. The public will then also be able to demand improvements in the services rendered.
- (ii) Measures that prevent transparency need to be removed, if the general public does not know what is taking place in government, government cannot expect the public to support its work and initiatives.
- (iii) Participation in government by the general public needs to be enabled. Practical ways of involving citizens must be explored, as in a democratic country people must participate in issues like policy formulation.
- (iv) There must be established criteria to measure performance of public officials; this also extends to monitoring and evaluating expenditure programmes.
- (v) Capacity must be built in public financial management with the view to account to the tax-payers on the revenue of government.

- (vi) Cooperation with other institutions in civil society, such as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), is of significant importance; as such civil institutions create a platform for dialogue. Additionally, civil society raises the issues of vulnerable or marginalised groups.

In this regard, and in addition to these principles, the UNESCAP (2008) presents eight characteristics of good governance as shown in figure 2.1 below.

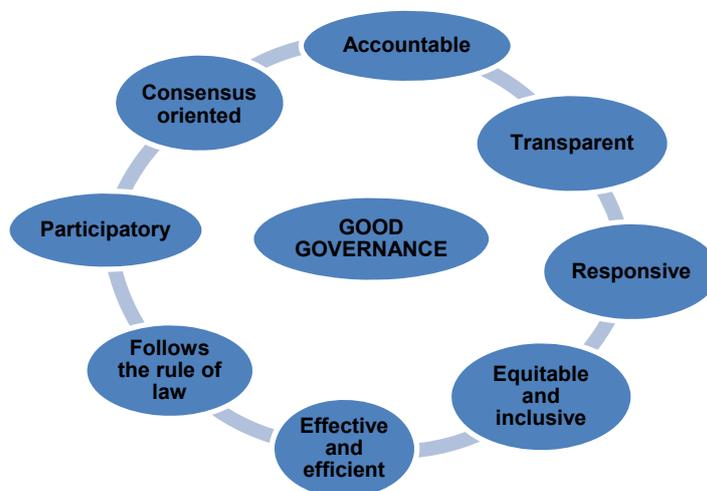


Figure 2.1: The UNESCAP’s eight characteristics of good governance

Source: UNESCAP (2008:14)

It becomes evident, based on the above, that should countries apply these principles, criticisms and complaints, steps taken by government would be minimised. PALAMA’s two sets of principles, one directed to public servants and the other directed to public service, make these principles clearer to those in the public service. Kotzé and Kotzé (2008:91) argue that any progressive State that adopts and promotes good governance creates an enabling environment for its public to participate meaningfully in its affairs. Good governance creates an empowering environment for participatory democracy. Gwala (2011:55) argues that good governance and empowering participatory democracy give birth to empowered public participation which leaves its

recipients owning, directing and influencing decision-making processes and development.

2.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The rationale for promoting public participation is based on the notion that, if the public participates in development it will be seen as legitimate and will stand a better chance of sustainability (Theron, 2009:112). In this regard, Mchunu (2012:16) mentions that participation by the public raises hopes of a positive future, in particular for the poorest of the poor and the marginalised. Public participation is about a development process that has a human and emotional quality. Following the principles of people-centred development, Chambers (1997), Korten (1990) and Theron (2008) argue that the inclusion of the beneficiaries of development enables these participants to become self-reliant, empowered and assertive about becoming the masters of their own development. Cornwall and Coelho (2007:9) add that authentic and empowering participation enables the marginalised to enter and engage in participatory arenas – thus development liberates.

Public participation creates an environment wherein beneficiaries are not merely seen as recipients of resources allocated from the top, as in the case of the SASSA electronic payment system, but are enabled to determine and control the allocation of resources. Further, Theron (2008:55) adds that public participation dismantles the top-down style of governance. Accordingly, Hickey and Mohan (2004:8) argue that the ideal situation for any development programme is one where the public has the ability to influence, direct, control and own a developmental intervention meant for them. Creighton (2005:17) believes that public participation offers an opportunity to channel differences into a dialogue wherein different viewpoints are expressed equally and the public can be reassured that all viewpoints are being considered. Fagence (1977:340) argues, therefore, that public participation in policy-making and implementation gives those elected a sense of legitimacy, as what they do or embark on has the support of the public. The role of public participation is the facilitation of interaction between policy-makers, implementers, and members of the public and thus it must be preserved and encouraged at all costs. This becomes more apparent when considering the fact that an exchange of information between government and the

public is promoted as well as responsiveness to the needs of the public, promoting the achievement of community development (Masango, 2002:63).

Kotzé (1997:37) states that the notion of public participation may perhaps be described as mainly laying emphasis on a people-centred approach wherein development, communication, influence and dialogue take place in the public sphere. Today public participation is increasingly considered standard practice and is regarded as an essential characteristic of, and condition for a successful modern democracy and good governance in which the manipulative participatory approaches are replaced by authentic and empowering participatory ones (Cooke and Kothari, 2001:1).

Kumar (2002:24) argues that the meaning of public participation differs depending on the context to which it is applied. Kotze and Kellerman (1997:43) view public participation as a social-learning process that embraces a bottom-up decision-making as well as partnership approach. Theron (2009:115), in support of this view, argues that public participation should not be seen as a “blueprint” but rather as a social-learning process wherein dialogue is facilitated at grassroots level. Cooke and Kothari (2001), Hickey and Mohan (2004), Cornwall and Coelho (2007), and Theron and Ceasar (2008) assert that public participation is a complex elusive concept open to different interpretations and cannot be packaged as a single concept. Due to this, change agents should be careful of how they attach value to the concept (Theron, 2009:115). The uncertainty of changing circumstances, experience, needs, and even people calls for an appropriate context-specific mix of a public participation strategy. Theron (2009:115) states that the International Labour Organisation (ILO) claims that what gives real meaning to public participation is a collective effort by the people concerned to pool their efforts together to attain objectives they set for themselves.

Meyer and Theron (2000:i) and Theron and Ceasar (2008:100-123) state that, “approaches to public participation often tend to be ad hoc, incremental, unstructured, unbalanced and uncoordinated, and some even smack of window dressing, and this translates into public participation becoming a buzzword” (Theron, 2009:114). According to Theron (2009:114), when public participation is compromised⁴ misunderstanding, anger and scepticism is created, resulting in complaints and protests, as is the case with the SASSA electronic payment system. This view is

⁴ Has no authentic participation by the poor.

supported by Cooke and Kothari (2001), Stiefel and Wolfe (1994), Theron and Ceasar (2008), Emmert (2000) and Roodt (2001), who warn against the limitations of participatory development principles and strategies (Theron, 2009:114).

2.4.1 Principles of Public Participation

Given that there is no agreed-upon definition or blueprint for public participation, which is a strength of this concept, according to Theron (2009:113), principles of public participation were developed, such as the following:

(i) The Manilla Declaration (1989)

Theron (2009:113) states that the Manilla Declaration formulated four public participation principles basic to people-centred development, and these were echoed in the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (1990):

1. Sovereignty resides with the people, the real actors of positive change.
2. Those who would assist the people with their development must recognise that it is they who are participating in support of the people's agenda, not the reverse. The value of outsiders' contribution will be measured in terms of the enhanced capacity of the people to determine their own future.
3. To exercise their sovereignty and assume responsibility for the development of themselves and their communities, the people must control their own resources, have access to relevant information and have the means to hold the officials of government accountable.
4. The legitimate role of government is to enable the people to set and pursue their own agenda.

In addition to these four principles, Theron (2009:114) states that the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) (2007) formulated seven core principles for the practice of public participation:

(ii) **The International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) (2002) core principles:**

1. The public should have a say in decisions about actions affecting their lives.
2. The public participation process involves participants in defining how they participate.
3. The public participation process provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
4. The public participation process communicates the interests and meets the process needs of all participants.
5. The public participation process seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected.
6. The public participation process communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.
7. Public participation includes the premise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.

The above-stated principles protest against a 'feel good' approach to public participation that has very little to do with authentic and empowering participation by the poor and marginalised (Theron, 2009:114). As identified by Rahman (1993:150) in Theron and Mchunu (2014:114), the key issue of public participation is that it is an organised activity (collective) of the people concerned, who own the philosophy and direct their collective ideas, as well as control the process of action, and whose needs lie at the heart of their programme. Siphuma (2009:20) states that what constitutes authentic public participation is a collective effort by the public to pool their efforts and resources for the attainment of its own *goal*. The researcher is of the opinion that the success of positive change is measured by results in the public. Equally, the SASSA electronic payment system's success can only be measured through the public. This is based on the assumption that people themselves are able to make a difference in

their own lives if they are provided with the necessary resources (Theron, 2009:116; Burkey, 1993:35).

Theron (2005:104-109) mentions that a people-centred approach even offers ways to overcome problems of the past and, in such an approach, building blocks of development need to be used, namely participation, social learning, capacity building and empowerment. It becomes imperative that the SASSA electronic payment system, which seeks to improve the livelihood of the public, their needs and their circumstances, be anchored by these building blocks.

2.4.2 Models of Public Participation

Given that there is no “blueprint” for public participation and that there are principles guiding the concept, practitioners also vary in their interpretation and implementation of public participation (Theron and Ceasar, 2008:123). This led Arnstein (1969) and Pretty (1994) to develop models for public participation. Pretty, Guijet, Scoones and Thompson (1995) developed seven typologies of public participation (Theron, 2009:116). These typologies point out the different conceptions with regard to public participation implemented by development practitioners.

Since public participation demands action from the public to improve its current situation from a less desirable to a more desirable one (De Beer and Swanepoel, 1998:20), it can be presented as a continuum that covers four modes that overlap. Table 2.1 below contains Pretty, *et al's* seven typologies and Oakley and Marsden's (1984) four modes of public participation:

Table 2.1: The seven typologies and four modes of public participation

TYPOLOGIES	MODES
<p>1. Passive participation: The public is merely told what is to happen from the top (authority), leaving them clueless, frustrated and powerless.</p>	<p>1. Anti-participatory mode: Voluntary contribution from the public on a programme is afforded, but is not expected to shape programme content or outcomes.</p>
<p>2. Participation in information-giving: The public is made to answer questions</p>	<p>2. Manipulation mode: Involvement in decision-making, programme -</p>

and are not afforded the opportunity to influence or direct proceedings. Findings are neither shared nor validated.	implementation, evaluation and sharing in the benefits are all included in public participation.
3. Participation by consultation: The public is consulted by professionals who have already defined both the problem and solution, and are not under obligation to modify their position based on public views.	3. Incremental mode: Concerned with organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in a given social situation.
4. Participation for material incentive: Participation by providing resources in return for food or cash, e.g. farmers providing fields but not being involved in the learning process.	4. Authentic public participation: Public participates fully, influences the direction, executes the programme, enhances its well-being in a situation where self-reliance is cherished.
5. Functional participation: The public participates in a group context to meet predetermined objectives.	
6. Interactive participation: Joint analysis participation, which is viewed as a right, not a means of achieving programme goals.	
7. Self-mobilisation: Public takes initiative on its own, identifies areas of support, mobilises resources and controls them. Yet such a bottom-up approach may not challenge the existing inequitable distribution of wealth and power.	

Source: Theron (2009:116-117).

In addition to the above typologies and modes, Arnstein (1969:218), a known expert on public participation models, argues that “public participation can differ in scope and depth”. She formulated eight possible levels of public participation which indicate the extent of public participation in a “participation ladder”. The ladder moves from manipulation (level 8) to public control (level 1) (Theron and Mchunu, 2014:117). Table 2.2 below contains comparisons of the typologies, modes and levels of public participation. The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate the overlaps between the

seven typologies and the four modes, and at what level public participation is located using the participation ladder.

Table 2.2: Comparison of typologies, modes and levels of public participation

MODE	TYPOLGY	LEVELS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	LEVEL NO.
1. Anti-participatory mode	Passive participation	Manipulative	8
2. Manipulation mode	Functional participation Participation in information giving	Placation	4
		Consultation	5
		Informing	6
		Therapy	7
3. Incremental mode	Interactive participation	Delegated power	2
4. Authentic public participation	Self-mobilisation	Public control	1
		Partnership	3

Source: Adapted from Theron and Mchunu, 2014:117

According to Theron (2009:117), any type of intervention should be located within the above-stated typologies and modes on a continuum, to prevent it from adding to the confusion already surrounding the public participatory debate. Theron (2009:117) argues that it makes sense to present public participation along a spectrum with passive participation at one end and self-mobilisation at the other. When the public is self-mobilised towards a programme or project, the outsiders have a minimal span of control, whereas when there is passive participation the outsider controls the development (IAP2, 2007; Oakley, 1991:7; Theron, 2009:118). Public participation must be viewed as a means of empowering the public, and developing their skills and abilities in terms of their own developmental needs and priorities (Oakley, 1991:9; Theron, *et al* (2007), in Theron, 2009:121). In a situation where the public span of control is minimal, the public is deprived of its right to be heard and this may lead to

complaints and even protests (Burger, 2009:2). The ideal situation is that, the public must be able to influence, direct, control and own the decision-making and development process meant for it. The public participation strategy implemented by the SASSA in its electronic payment system will be discussed against this backdrop.

2.4.3 Public Participation Strategies

The World Bank (1996b:9) states that there is no existing perfect model for public participation. Chambers (2002) in Theron (2009:126) cautions that a public participation strategy calls for the training of change agents, given that there is no strategic “blueprint” (Theron, 2008:1-22; Burkey, 1993:73-114). Theron (2009:126) further suggests that, in narrowing the gap between rhetoric and reality, public stakeholders, as local experts, should be part of the process of planning and identifying appropriate public participation strategies.

Meyer and Cloete (2000:104-109) state that a public participation strategy on policy-making processes in a democratic country can be regarded as authentic if the following four steps are followed:

- 1) political representatives are participating and obtain ratification of their decisions from their constituencies;
- 2) civic organisations, NGOs and FBOs are participating and they too provide feedback to their constituencies to legitimise their actions;
- 3) individual opinions of leaders in the community are considered; and
- 4) there is direct participation of the public in general.

Following Meyer and Cloete’s four steps above, Theron (2009:127) argues that their point of view brings more questions than answers as two issues are at stake, namely inclusivity and representativeness (Friedman, 1993:2) wherein the level of inclusivity and the extent to which the population is represented are both questionable. If these two essential elements cannot be adequately responded to, then a call is made for each situation to have its own relevant combination of strategy since there is no best strategy available in the development market (Theron, 2009:127).

Taking the above argument further, Theron (2005:117) suggests that the manner in which principles such as ‘inform’, ‘consult’ and ‘involve’ are defined and implemented

in South Africa, do not constitute authentic public participation. According to Theron, ‘inform’, for instance, leads to one-way communication, as it is meant to make stakeholders understand an issue at hand, and not necessarily change opinions, find solutions, or even ‘involve’ them in any decision-making process. The same goes for ‘consultation’, which is equally promoted in South Africa, but connotes a pseudo-process in which the public is asked to give input, but the change agents define both the problem and the solution (Theron, *et al.* 2007:8). The World Bank (1996a:4) also warns about ‘consult’ being an essential element of participation, but this should not be equated to ‘participation’, because the element of social learning from the beneficiary’s side is absent. Theron, *et al* (2007:8) confirms this view by stating that ‘consultation’ explicitly excludes development beneficiaries from decision-making.

A possible solution to this problem of strategy, as Theron, *et al* (2007:11) suggests, would be for public participation practitioners to adapt the ‘Manilla and IAP2 principles’ and the ‘IAP2 spectrum’ to their development of public participation strategies. The spectrum of public participation leads to different levels of influence of public impact in decision-making (Theron, 2009:127).

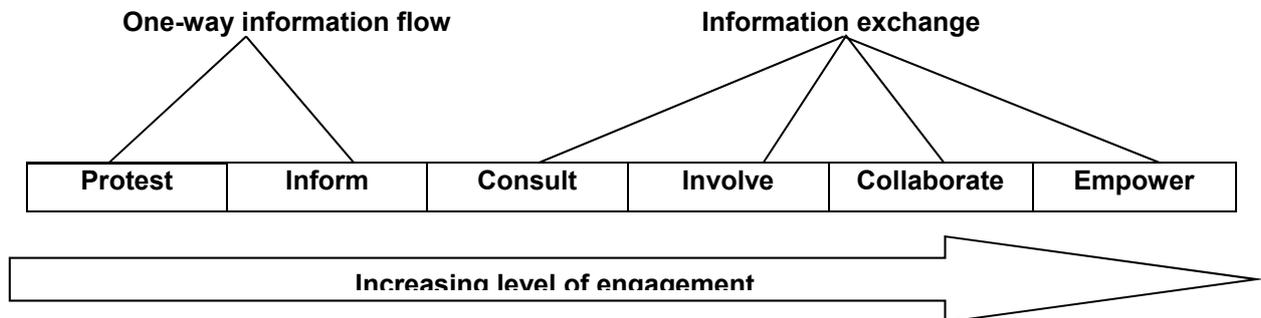


Figure 2.2: The spectrum of public participation

Source: Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT, 2002:7)

Theron (2009:130) states that the “golden rule” for appropriate public participation strategies is to “select the best combination of strategy for the task at hand”. Chambers (2002) agrees, stating that change agents should consider the input which community stakeholders can offer regarding the most appropriate strategies, when, how and why, and even harness the potential of community social networks, social capital and indigenous knowledge (Theron 2009:130). Gwala (2011:8) adds to this view by stating that public participation facilitators must always (first) assess the local context(s)

before an 'appropriate mix' of strategies can be decided upon. Appropriate strategies will ensure that the public is provided with the scope to influence, direct, control and even own development interventions and decision-making processes.

2.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter public participation is traced back from participatory democracy and it has been argued that public participation is complex and has no single definition and/or strategy. Further, it is argued that for any form of development to be successful, authentic and empowering public participation should occur. Public participation does not have an agreed upon definition and thus is subject to several interpretations which can cause it, in some instances, to become a mere 'buzzword'. Effective and efficient application of public participation rests on an appropriate application of IAP2 (2007) core values and the Manilla Declaration (1989). These values need to be understood and applied in a spectrum of public participation that increases the level of participation. The application of an incremental spectrum of public participation culminates in an appropriate mix of a strategy selected for a particular community as strategies of public participation vary from one community to another (Gwala, 2011:8). However, a well-planned public participation process is ideally facilitating, developmental and promotes good governance.

This chapter sets a basis for chapter three, wherein e-governance will be contextualised in the public participation arena. The hypothesis of this study is that, ***public participation is a primary source of strength for the success of the SASSA's electronic payment system.*** The discussions in this chapter demonstrate various principles and strategies required for authentic and empowering public participation, wherein the public is ultimately enabled to influence, direct, control and own the development intervention.

CHAPTER THREE: LOCATING E-GOVERNANCE IN THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DEBATE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Mphidi (2009:1-2), in the past communication took place by means of radio, television, newspapers, public gatherings, posted letters and telegrams. Since then communication has improved significantly and currently also occurs through information and communications technologies (ICT), such as internet and satellite. Cloete and Schwella (2006:537) concur and state that globally there has been a revolution featuring the application of new communication technology (Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), 2009:6).

Heeks (1999:15) describes the systematisation of communication technology as the electronic computerisation of data into information. This is information technology (IT). Cloete and Schwella (2006:538) argue that information technology is a management tool with the same function as files, typewriters, ballpoint pens, and so forth; however with IT these tools are more sophisticated and are automated to reach objectives and outcomes more effectively.

Digital technology presents new opportunities for both the public and private sectors, including the economy. The World Bank Commission on Growth and Development Report, in Roux (2011:201) attests to this and states that the economic success of East Asian countries was made possible by exploiting global markets using digital technology. Fields (2000:6) states that if you are poor you cannot get rich by selling to yourself. Governments participating in the global economy have to improve communication and explore the utilisation of information and communications technology. The Economic Intelligence Unit (2009:6) goes further, mentioning that the digital economy is decisively connected to the real economy. The National Development Plan of South Africa (2011:17) states that the infrastructure of a country is not about brick and mortar, but about people, systems, plans, designs, and the maintenance and operation of complicated systems over a period of time. However, a key question which requires an answer relates to the ability of ordinary people to access ICT, as in the case of the SASSA electronic payment system.

Cloete and Schwella (2006:539) state that with ICT government functions are transformed internally into e-management and externally into e-delivery. According to Shilubane (2001:40), e-governance is the transformation of internal and external relationships by government constantly utilising internet and satellite for both government service delivery and public participation. The State Information Technology Agency (SITA) concurs and emphasises that the needs of the people must be considered when e-governance is implemented. In addition, Lesame (2005:193) argues that not only should e-governance be relevant to customers, but also it should be equally accessible to all users, including customers, for the betterment of government service delivery. E-government has the potential to create new ways of making government transparent, improve quality of services and better communicate development efforts.

The Department of Public Service and Administration (2001a:7) impresses upon all State organs that should a desire to implement ICT be expressed, the point of departure should be the identification of customers' needs and abilities, followed by a determination of how ICT would effectively and efficiently assist the achievement of these intended objectives. These are basic principles applicable to all government entities including the SASSA. The DPSA is responsible for developing policies and guidelines relating to e-government (DPSA, 2007a), and emphasises the importance of authentic and empowering public participation prior to the implementation of e-governance, wherein the public is enabled to influence, direct, control and ultimately own the developmental intervention (Theron and Ceasar, 2008:100-123).

Ernst and Young (2009:10), while applauding the success of the Delhi government in its implementation of e-governance, state that in order for a government to implement e-governance, an e-governance roadmap has to be designed with a view to assess the infrastructure of ICT and identify risks and mitigation strategies. Five strategy frameworks are of utmost importance in the implementation of e-governance, namely an institutional and capacity-building framework; a policy or legal framework; a government re-engineering framework; a funding framework; and a prioritisation framework. Accordingly, e-readiness can be assessed based on these five strategic frameworks.

E-governance presents both opportunities and challenges to government. Petersen (2005:3) argues that e-governance increases public participation and thus the interaction of citizens with government. He further states that the dignity of citizens is restored in e-governance as the public is not subject to long queues in order to access government services and can rather access services electronically in their comfort zones. Additionally, within government itself the use of paper is reduced, as transactions are automated, thus saving costs (Riley, 2003:10).

The World Information Technology and Service Alliance (2000) states that, although governments are promoting the benefits of ICT, challenges still exist such as a lack of infrastructural resources, competition in markets, rapid changes to ICT software and hardware, human resource capacity, customer expectations and issues with the labour force. It is worth mentioning that another challenge facing government is that of meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015 which include inclusive access to ICT by its populace (Mutula, 2008:469).

This chapter discusses e-readiness, e-government and e-governance along with their benefits and constraints, with a view to contextualising e-governance in the public participation debate, a link between development and ICT.

3.2 E-READINESS

Wikipedia (2009) describes e-readiness as the ability of a country to make use of ICT to cultivate its welfare and expand its economy. The World Bank (2007) explains e-readiness as being about ICT infrastructural readiness, its accessibility to the public, and the existence of a regulatory framework to govern it. The EIU (2009:4) defines e-readiness as a means by which a country determines the strength of its ICT infrastructure, including the willingness of the public to utilise it. According to Dada (2006:1) e-readiness can be described as a measure by which a country declares itself ready to implement e-government and e-governance and enjoy the benefits of both. Ernst and Young (2009:49) mention that an institutional and capacity-building framework; policy or legal framework; government re-engineering framework; funding framework; and prioritisation framework, all form the basis of e-readiness.

There is no single definition of e-readiness as an e-readiness assessment depends on what a country sets out to achieve in its implementation of ICT. In summary, e-readiness is when a country reaches a stage where it can declare itself ready to proceed with a particular ICT programme or project. These sentiments find resonance from scholars such as Budhiraja and Sachdeva (2002:5) who, given the complexities of defining e-readiness, suggest that the goals and objectives of e-readiness must be clearly defined, along with role players' participation, for a smooth implementation process. The public thus ideally becomes the driver of the process, a point stressed in previous sections of this study.

Lehay (2013:9) explains that the public should be afforded an opportunity to give inputs, including regarding the tools to be employed for monitoring and evaluation. Leahy advances that evaluation capacitation and the required resources need to be made available so as to improve implementation of a programme or project and achieve value-for-money. Gordon and Cuddihey (2005:12), in Wong, Fearon and Philip (2007:931) argue that providing services is only part of the overarching process as the fundamental issue is the participation and interaction of government, business and society, whereby self-examination, constant pursuit and user feedback are harnessed.

The GeoSINC International (2002:15) states that when a country implements ICT, a standard framework can be employed as a tool to assess e-readiness despite the differing goals and objectives of countries. This framework assists with the development of a strategy and ensures that there is inclusiveness and consistency in the process.

The following five areas of activity in the framework are suggested by GeoSINC International (2002):

- (i) Training, education, language used and public awareness;
- (ii) Network installations and technical support;
- (iii) Access and connectivity;
- (iv) Government leadership and policy or regulatory framework; and
- (v) Outcomes of initiatives.

The GeoSINC International (2002:7) explains that e-readiness is a sequential process with the goal to identify how ICT can assist government in reaching its objectives timeously. Accordingly, e-readiness leads to e-government and subsequently to e-governance. This can be best depicted by a closed chevron process to show the sequential steps, as in figure 3.1 below.



Figure 3.1: Sequential process of e-governance

Source: Adapted from GeoSINC (2002:7).

The characteristics of a country's e-readiness can thus be captured in terms of the framework. In this way the framework enables a country to assess and evaluate its ICT infrastructure's accessibility and connectivity, education and public awareness, policy framework and outcomes. This process has to be inclusive; the public must participate in it. However, Dada (2006:3) cautions that there are multiple measures available with no standardisation. Maugis, Choucri, Madnick, Siegel, Gillet, Haghseta, Zhu and Best (2005) in Dada (2006:3) state that the majority of indexes on e-readiness are ambiguous and uncertain in both theory and practice. Purcell and Toland (2004), in Dada (2006:4), discovered that in Samoa poor institutional capacity presented a limitation as the public were not ready to "e-participate". Access to ICT can also present a challenge to the implementation of e-governance, in particular for the poor due to the digital divide. The section below briefly discusses the digital divide and how it is measured.

3.2.1 Digital Divide

Mutula (2008:470) states that the origin of the phrase "digital divide," is uncertain. According to Miranda (2006) in Mutula (2008:470), this phrase found resonance in a White House ceremony hosted by Albert Gore in May 1996 at which he stated that, when a mobile book is launched in this digital age and connected to schools in the poorest areas, this narrows the digital divide. Gerhan and Mutula (2007) in Mutula (2008:469), describe the digital divide as inequitable access to effective ICT and

content, quality networks, adequate bandwidth, value for money, its value and status in the populace, and its status in a country and between countries, and the ability of users to access the system. The term digital divide is associated with universal or inclusive access to ICT and its effective use by the public in general. Governments vary in their definition of access as, in the SASSA for example, access to a pay-point needs to be within a five kilometre radius.

Jensen (2000), in Mutula (2008:469), mentions that the South African government perceives universal access as access to a telephone within thirty minutes walking distance. Mutula (2008:469) argues that universal access is intimately connected to universal service and, as such, ICT has to be accessible to and used by all, including people with disabilities. Mutula (2008:470) argues that the digital divide is strongly linked to social, economic and political development. Birdsall (2000:16) states that the digital divide is even perceived as a public policy challenge, and further as a bureaucratic programme (Reddick, 2000:8). The digital divide represents a barrier to e-government in that people who do not have access to the internet will be unable to access online services. In South Africa there is still a large number of people who do not have access to the internet. The inability to provide online services to all citizens can hold back e-government projects. The divide is also as a result of socio-economic realities, and social grant recipients largely fall into this category.

3.2.2 Measuring the Digital Divide

According to Mutula (2008:471), the gross domestic product (GDP) of countries with a narrow digital divide is higher than those with a wide digital divide, and the same applies to development. In the former countries, poverty is reduced, there is emancipation for a better quality of life, literacy levels are high, productivity is high, there is physical and commercial infrastructure development, and there is a stable political system, positive attitudes towards life, and sophisticated techniques of production.

Since 2000 the EIU has consistently published annual e-readiness rankings for the world's sixth largest economies. The EIU shows how a country is performing in technological initiatives against other countries (EIU, 2004). The EIU (2006) report shows that European countries are leading in e-readiness. Regarding Africa, South

Africa leads in 35th position on the global scale, followed by Egypt in 55th position. The digital divide in Africa is exacerbated by the predominant use of satellite which is a more expensive mode of communication. The World Bank, in Mutula (2008:475) states that the costs of an international phone call or those of a high speed internet connection are beyond the reach of the average person. Furthermore, the World Bank observes that bandwidth prices in Africa are 20 to 40 times higher than those in the United States of America. The need to bridge this digital divide cannot be overstated.

Faye (2002) in Mutula (2008:478), states that it is a basic human right of every citizen to have access to information. The PANOS Institute (2004) notes that the lack of adequate requisite infrastructure, such as computers, telephones, and roads in Africa widens the digital divide. Manohar, Rao and Mellam (2009:245) argue that, according to the United Nations e-Governance Report (2008), there is a wide gap in e-information, e-consultation and e-decision-making between the developing and developed countries. The International Telecommunications Union's (2005:4) report concludes that the 'haves' and 'have-nots' (developed and developing) countries are very separate from each other. The (2014:16, 17) United Nations e-Government Development Index (UN-EGDI) put South Africa in the middle of EGDI which is between 0.25 and 0.50. It further mentions that countries in middle EGDI has an opportunity to advance e-government development if appropriate strategies and investment in ICT infrastructure occurs.

3.3 E-GOVERNMENT

The United Nations Development Programme Report (2008) defines e-government as the use of information and communications technologies, and in particular the internet, as tools for achieving better government. Heeks (2010:58) defines e-government as any task, service or process conducted by government using ICT. Agrawal, Mittal and Rastogi (2001:1) concur, defining e-government as the use of digital technology by government to provide services and information to the public and to enhance service delivery as well as participation opportunities. Going one step further, Manohar, Rao and Mellam (2009:243) describe e-government as the digitalisation of government services. These authors argue that the digitalisation of government services provides accountability, transparency, responsiveness and effectiveness, with Farelo and

Morris (2006:1) adding that the use of ICT promotes efficiency and effectiveness in government, as well as improved access to government services, information and accountability.

Pascual (2003:5) states that e-government allows for the free movement of information, free from paper boundaries and therefore beneficial to the public, private and business sectors, including staff. Agrawal, Mittal and Rastogi (2001:2) argue that e-government reduces costs, is faster, innovative and improves standards. This is expanded on by Naidoo (2007:323) who explains that e-government increases transparency and access to government services and information as well as opportunities for participation in democratic institutions. Two elements of e-government can be identified: (1) it improves the quality of government services and reduces costs; and (2) it promotes inclusion of the populace, for example during participatory e-democracy and e-community involvement (Aicholzer and Schmutzer, 2000:22).

E-government is described by the DPSA (2007a) as digital, electronic, and online government, meant to exchange information and services with the public, business, and within government itself, notwithstanding legislature and the judiciary, to improve efficiency and the fortification of democracy. E-government is by its very nature participatory. The DPSA (2001) highlights three types of e-government: government to citizens (G2C), government to business (G2B), and government to government (G2G). These three types of e-government services can be best described in a Venn interconnected relationship, as depicted in figure 3.2 below.

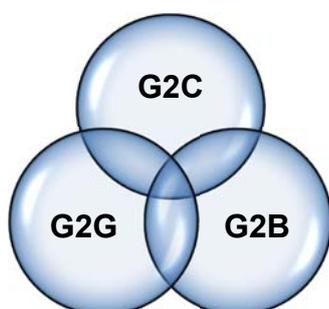


Figure 3.2: Venn interconnected relationship of types of e-government

Source: Adapted from DPSA (2001:11).

Farelo and Morris (2006:2) state that ICT should be viewed as a tool to achieve or demonstrate a citizen-centric approach. These authors state that e-government calls for greater active participation between government and the public; government and private sector; and within government spheres. Pascual (2003:10) broadly states that e-government aims to strengthen good governance and public participation, improve productivity and efficiency, and thus improve the quality of life for the poor and marginalised.

According to Lesame (2005:193), the availability of e-government has helped to restore human dignity, as the public does not have to stand in long queues to access government services. Instead, at the mere click of a button they can access government services. Lesame further recognises that e-government finds resonance in Batho Pele, which means 'people first' (DPSA, 2001:1) as it aims to constantly improve service delivery for the benefit of the public. For this reason e-government must be accessible and available to both users and clients.

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2003), economic disparities place significant limitations on access to electronic services. South Africa experiences a general digital divide whereby the more affluent urban communities have improved access to communication technologies whilst the rural communities' former homelands lag behind. Petersen (2005:3) concurs that, given South Africa's imbalances and limited access to internet services as well as low levels of literacy, e-government is a luxury as the majority of citizens still lack basic needs such as housing, electricity and water. The DPSA (2001:5) acknowledges the challenges facing South Africa and states that, coupled with those previously cited by Petersen (2005), capacity problems are amongst the basic challenges as there is a very limited capacity of public administrators.

MyBroadband (2009: x) reveals that between 2000 and 2008 South Africa had 2.7 million internet users. According to MyBroadband (2010), the Nielsen Online demographic statistics for South African websites depicts the gap that exists in access to the internet in South Africa.

Table 3.1: Nielsen Online Demographic Statistics for SA Websites

PLACE		POPULATION GROUP		AGE GROUP	
Johannesburg	29%	White	63%	>15	0.2%
Cape Town	17%	Black	25%	16-19	0.7%
Pretoria	14%	Coloured	7%	20-24	11%
Durban	6.6%	Indian	5%	25-34	31%
Gauteng (Other)	5.5%			35-44	25%
Western Cape (Other)	4.8%			45-49	9.5%
				50-54	7.8%
				55-64	9.9%
				65+	3.9%

Source: MyBroadband (2010).

This table reflects that predominantly white people have been consulted in this study. In 2010, the age group of 25 to 44 was in the lead in the use of the internet, whilst the elderly and young were in the low percentage groups.

Lesame (2005:197-198) presents the following challenges in the implementation of e-government in South Africa:

- (i) There is a need for technically skilled persons to manage and maintain the technology in government sectors. There are limited financial and energy resources to sustain the infrastructure of the country and it is imperative that South Africa enhances its service delivery and technical skills;
- (ii) There are eleven official languages in South Africa and it is therefore essential that services be delivered in the language of the applicant. South Africa is also characterised by a high level of illiteracy;
- (iii) ICT equipment remains generally unaffordable for the majority of South African citizens. This can pose a challenge as organisations tend not to purchase ICT equipment due to its high cost, delaying the implementation of e-government;
- (iv) Less than 5% of South African citizens own a computer and less than 3% have access to the internet, making it crucial that South Africa addresses the digital literacy of its citizens; and

- (v) South Africa should also improve in terms of research and development in the ICT infrastructure of government.

Mphidi (2009:2) asserts that e-government calls for new leadership styles, another way of debating and deciding policy and investment, new means of accessing education, new methods of listening to citizens, and new techniques of organising and delivering information and services. Naidoo (2007:330) adds that for e-government to be successful, strong leadership is required in a country like South Africa. Naidoo (2007:328) is of the view that, in South Africa, businesses, citizens, and government departments are cautious about conducting business over the internet because of the resulting lack of a predictable legal environment.

SITA (2002: Slide 31) cites the critical success factors for e-government in South Africa as the following: having a clear vision which is shared and communicated; the setting of achievable targets; investing in ICT and political support given to this investment; private public partnerships (PPPs); enabling infrastructure; and common branding and marketing. SITA (2002: Slide 22) further proposes an e-government gateway, leading e-government to be a single point of access to all information about government and its services. The process, according to SITA, must be seamless, continuous, and accessible anytime and anyplace, and should respond to the personalised needs of its users. According to Cloete and Schwella (2006:538), this process calls for the availability of effective methodologies to identify, monitor, record, compare, measure and assess outputs and outcomes. These authors demonstrate the dimensions of e-government as illustrated in figure 3.3:

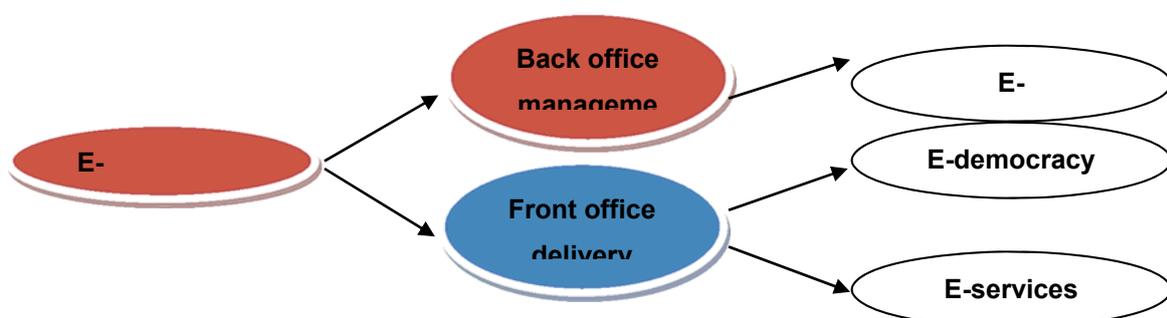


Figure 3.3: Dimensions of e-government

Source: Cloete and Schwella (2008:539)

Figure 3.3 depicts that ICT not only calls for a new system of government, but e-governance in specific, as stated in figure 3.1.

Gronlund (2001:24-26) states that democratic e-government could feature in formal politics, administration, and in civil society. He argues that in administration, for instance, ICT could support planning, financing, environmental scanning, implementation, service delivery control and evaluation, thus enhancing the decision-making process. Democracy can then be realised in day-to-day activities. It can be deduced that a successfully implemented system of e-government has the potential to improve service delivery to citizens through electronic access and empower citizens through connectivity, and the capability to deliver e-services and leverage new service delivery channels through the self-service of citizens by means of service portals and customised services in a responsive and cost-reductive way, which could be reliable and continuously available.

The Third Global Forum on Reinventing Government (2001) concluded that e-government can improve the quality of life for citizens and can create a reduction of cost and time spent. United Nations Division for Public Economics and Public Administration (UN-DPEPA) (2001:6) states that e-government transforms governance in a different way to any previous reform of reinvention initiatives. The UN-DPEPA (2001:4-5) states that e-government must be given consideration, even by developing countries, given its potential for stronger institutional capacity-building, better service delivery for citizens and businesses and reduction of corruption, as it increases transparency and social control to business and civil society.

3.4 E-GOVERNANCE

Toress, Pina and Acerete (2005) in Wong, Fearon and Philip (2007:928) define e-governance as rules, processes and behaviours that affect the way public administration functions. Tan, Pan and Lim (2005) in Wong, Fearon and Philip (2007:928) expand on this, describing e-governance as being much broader than e-government as it encompasses a wide range of challenges to corporate management caused by technology. Manohar, Rao and Mellam (2009:243) add that e-governance allows the public to participate directly in the politics of a country through e-voting and online political participation debates, thus realising e-democracy. E-governance

enables government to disseminate information, obtain information or feedback from the public, and render services using electronic means. E-governance, therefore, includes the judiciary, government, political parties, parliament and the public.

Riley (2003:15) states that with e-governance government is able to attend to and resolve public enquiries and provide information, thus empowering its citizens. It can be deduced that the participation process is composed of direct contact between the public sector, citizens and interest groups. The participation process provides opportunities for the public to participate in the formulation of policies and regulations which affect them, thus eliminating a top-down leadership approach. Riley (2003:10) provides a much clearer distinction between e-governance and e-government as depicted in table 3.2:

Table 3.2: e-Government and e-Governance

E-GOVERNMENT	E-GOVERNANCE
Electronic service delivery	Electronic participation
Electronic workflow	Electronic controllership
Electronic voting	Electronic engagement
Electronic productivity	Networked societal guidance

Source: Riley (2003:10).

Table 3.2 explains e-governance as the utilisation of technology to improve service delivery, sharing of information, client participation, as well as the advancement of government services through the transformation of internal and external relationships. However, the effectiveness of this process can only be assessed by using a public participation model like that of Arnstein (1969). Moon (2004), in Wong, Fearon and Philip (2007:928) agrees that the use of ICT should support collaborative relationships and networks. Plabo and Pan (2002), cited in Wong, Fearon and Philip (2007:928) describe the concept of e-governance at four levels which can be represented in chevron sequential steps as depicted in figure 3.4:

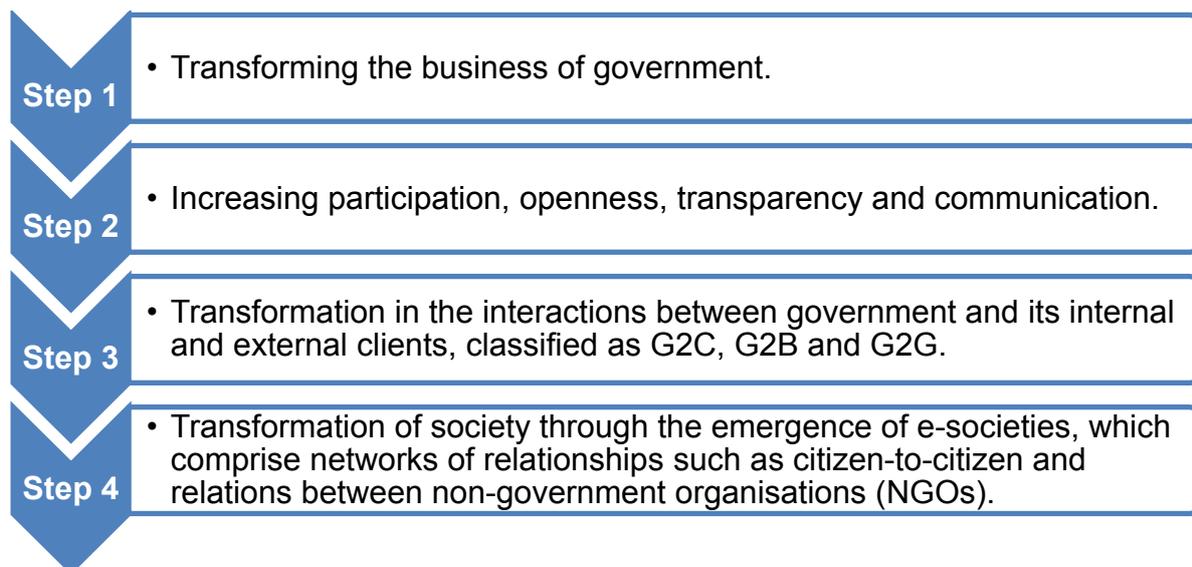


Figure 3.4: Levels of e-governance

Source: *Adapted from Wong, Fearon and Philip (2007:928).*

Figure 3.4 shows the importance of government increasing public participation in their transformation and delivery of services. E-governance calls for transparency and commitment by the public to participation in the decision-making process, thus deepening democracy. The SASSA's electronic payment system lacks transparency as it does not view beneficiaries of social grants as key stakeholders, or take their needs into account. Moon (2004:13) states that government needs to work with organisations and citizens in relationships and collaborative partnerships in pursuit of reciprocal interests and shared values in order to be effective. Freeman *et al* (2004:11) argue that taking a stakeholder approach encourages social responsibility and collective action on the part of government. At this juncture, it is relevant to discuss stakeholders in e-governance.

3.4.1 Stakeholders in e-Governance

Carroll (1996), Freeman Wicks and Parmar (2004), and Byrson (2004:22), in Wong, Fearon and Philip (2007:929) suggest that a stakeholder is any person, group, or organisation that can place a claim on the organisation's attention, resources or output; or is affected by that output, regardless of their power. Carroll (1996:17) describes stakeholders as consumers, suppliers, government, competitors and shareholders. The interests of stakeholders must be taken into account when arriving

at a management decision, as the purpose of government is to serve and coordinate the welfare of the general public (Buchholz and Rosenthal, 2004:68). Matten and Crane (2005:6) adds that stakeholders participate in the processes of organising, decision-making and governance. Legislation, in the form of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA), No. 3 of 2000, ensures that government acts fairly whenever it makes decisions that might affect its populace. The public or beneficiaries of development must influence, direct, control and own the development agenda.

According to Freeman *et al*, (2004:9), two questions need to be answered by government in its delivery of services, namely what is the purpose of the organisation, and what is the responsibility of management to stakeholders? The first question calls for participants to be encouraged to engage and create a joint and shared vision. The second question calls for the inclusion of stakeholders in the management process. In this regard, the responsibilities of government and citizens in the development of e-governance must be established.

Regarding the implementation of e-governance, government must not only understand its needs, but must equally understand these needs from the perspective of the organisations and citizens who are its stakeholders. Any analysis of e-governance must be based on the assumptions of stakeholder management, including the key aspects of identifying them, understanding their interests, and the segmentation thereof in social contracts. Freeman, *et al* (2004:11) support the stakeholder approach, stating that it encourages social responsibility and collective action on the part of governance. Moon (2004:72) states that in order to be effective, government needs to work with organisations and citizens in relationships and collaborative partnerships in pursuit of reciprocal interests and shared values. These partnerships will make government programmes sustainable (Tan, *et al.*, 2005:58). Grant (2002:39) explains that, in order for e-governance to remain successful, leadership and strong stakeholder management through partnerships is a critical factor. In addition, the synthesis of ethics and economics for societal gain as well as competitive advantage, enabled through cooperation from all participants, promotes mutual benefit for all stakeholders (Jones, 1995:64).

The United Nations' (2005: Foreword) ranking report on e-governance depicts the USA, Denmark, Sweden, UK and Canada as in the lead whilst, amongst the

developing countries, Korea, Singapore, Estonia, Malta and Chile are leading. The UN report proceedings state that developmental thinking in e-governance must align with socially inclusive governance “e-inclusion”, and views ICT as a perfect conduit for citizens to govern. Governments need to formulate ICT-led development that ensures that everyone, regardless of their economic background, is on an equitable playing field. For a developing country like South Africa, wherein the digital divide is vast and coupled with illiteracy, this may seem unlikely, particularly for social grant recipients who are in the poverty belt.

An inclusive mode of government demands that all citizens of a State have equal access to opportunities. Gordon and Cuddihey (2005:86) mention that Canada was voted best e-government service provider for the widest range of integrated e-government. Key to its success has been the process of self-examination and constant pursuit of user feedback and participation. In the same vein, Mackay (2007:24) advises that the sustainability of a system can be ensured by merging and institutionalising monitoring and evaluation in core government processes such as budgeting and funding requests.

Theron (2009:113) agrees with these authors, adding that public participation creates an environment wherein beneficiaries are not merely seen as recipients of resources allocated from the top, but are enabled to determine and control the allocation of these resources. Accordingly, Hickey and Mohan (2004:8) argue that the ideal situation for any development programme is one where the public has the ability to influence, direct, control and own a developmental intervention meant for them. It can thus be reasoned that a lack of authentic and empowering public participation leads to resistance and complaints, as is arguably the case in the SASSA. E-governance thus calls for a revolution in public management.

The section below discusses the benefits and constraints of the ICT revolution within public management.

3.5 ICT REVOLUTION WITHIN PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Lauden and Lauden (1998); and Snellen and Van de Donk, (1998), in Cloete and Schwella (2006:541) state that international research findings on good governance

indicate that effective methodologies to identify, monitor, record, compare, measure and assess outputs and outcomes, which were made available through ICT, have led to significantly improved government services. Many countries succeeded in policy design and implementation due to their utilisation of inclusive ICT (Heeks and Bhatnagar, 1999:56). The above assumption of inclusivity is based on the notion that information is made available and accessible through the use of ICT and that the decision-making process is informed and influenced by all stakeholders. However, the digital divide in developing countries continues to prevent this assumption.

The UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration's Report (2002:3) concluded that ICT has the potential to significantly change how government operates and give rise to a new paradigm of governance which places citizens at the centre, responding to their needs and expectations, and which is based on the tenets of transparency, accountability and participation. Duffy (1998:31) identifies the consistent benefits of ICT in public administration as being better responsiveness to organisational changes; better satisfaction of changing user needs; better problem identification and resolution; better management coordination and better strategy formulation. Cloete and Schwella (2006:543-545) state that the full realisation of these benefits is denied by several constraints, namely technical, financial and political, psychological, organisational, and social. Cloete and Schwella (2006:545) also argue that a combination of these constraints creates a formidable opposition faced by modern technology.

Clarke (2001:143) and Watson *et al* (1997:242) in Cloete and Schwella (2006:543-547) propose that participatory change management, consisting of a political leader (decision-maker), administrative manager (commits resources) and ICT manager (commits expertise may lead to the success of a programme. In addition, ICT must be integrated into every dimension of management so as to respond effectively to the increasing demand for good governance. Snellen and Van de Donk (1998:18) in Cloete and Schwella (2006:547) give a classic example in this regard by stating that ICT contributes to an integration of the stages of policy-making and policy implementation, while giving more opportunities to determine, control, and monitor the policy implementation stage.

3.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter the researcher has also traced e-governance and e-government from the evolution of ICT and argued that ICT has proven to be a tool that can bring about the realisation of good governance and enhance participatory democracy. However, e-governance, although having such potential, faces a digital divide which hampers its full implementation. A stakeholder strategy is required to ensure that no one is excluded during the process.

In this chapter it is argued that e-government holds the potential to affect the political, policy and service delivery aspects of government, leading it towards a more accessible system of government. Equity has to be maintained at all times and, for this to be realised, equal opportunities should be promoted even for the so-called 'have not's'. E-government potentially empowers individual citizens by providing them with an alternative channel to access information and services, and to interact with government. Governments need to initiate appropriate general literacy and specialised computer literacy programmes to reduce the digital gap and to achieve good governance. However, the digital divide will not be reduced if not accompanied by a paradigm shift. The use of electronic management assessment tools can provide important benefits to public management outcomes and the challenge of participatory democracy.

The hypothesis of this study is that ***public participation is a primary source of strength for the success of the SASSA's electronic payment system.*** The discussions in this chapter call for authentic and empowering public participation, within which the public is ultimately enabled to influence, direct, control and own the development intervention. In this regard e-governance is one possible public participation strategy which government should consider, ideally in combination with other micro-level strategies. The use of ICT has to be regulated by government and ensured to be safe, secure and free from manipulation, thus a regulatory framework is necessary. The following chapter discusses the regulatory framework required for e-governance.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK OF E-GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, the Constitution (1996) is the Supreme Law. Any law, policy or conduct that is not in line with the Constitution (1996) is regarded as invalid. The Constitution (1996) imposes obligations on all citizens and these obligations must be fulfilled. Chapter two of the Constitution (1996), The Bill of Rights, is a critical chapter, stating all generation rights, the code of conduct, laws, and regulations, which must be fair and partial. Section 195(1) states the issues of accountability, transparency, and access. According to Matshiqi (2007:76), this section calls for a high standard of professional ethics; efficient, economic and effective use of resources; public administration that is development-oriented; services that are provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias; people's needs to be responded to, and greater public participation in policy-making processes.

The Constitution (1996) contains sections that impress upon government to ensure that the public, in particular the previously marginalised, participates in their own development agenda. It is evident that the promotion of procedural rights provides an enabling framework through which improved service delivery and accountability can promote institutional change. All citizens are equal before the law and Theron (2009:114) argues that public participation dismantles the top-down approach, whereby outsiders impose their ways of doing things on the local communities and/or government.

In instances where the law is downplayed, the public is deprived of their right to participate meaningfully in decisions affecting it. The constitutional mandate of public participation is thus removed from its rightful owners – the public. Nel and van Wyk (2003:50) cite Mbeki as he acknowledges that public participation in South Africa is not yet what it should be: “We must translate into reality our vision of people-driven processes of change as well as fundamental principles that the people are their own liberators.”

Public participation has been made even more important by the series of Constitutional Court rulings against the legislative sector which questioned the validity of public participation processes conducted in the case of the Matatiele Municipality (2006). During this case, the court ruled in favour of the Matatiele community and called upon government to afford the community an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. The essence of the court rulings was that, although the constitutional obligation allows some discretion in how parliament and legislatures conduct public participation depending on specific situations, minimum standards should be met in order to adhere to the requirement of sufficient public participation. Seedat (2006:17) states that the court's judgment makes it clear that legislative timelines should respect the requirement of public participation, and participation should not be seen as an obstacle to legislation but as a means to promote the effectiveness of laws.

The principles of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, No. 3 of 2000 (PAJA) impresses upon administrative decisions to be procedurally fair (Kleyn and Viljoen, 2010:98). Theron, Ceasar and Davids (2007:02) argue that public participation strategies have two main gains for the democratic policy-making process, namely: participation leads to better policy outcomes, and participation assists the public to develop the capacity for improving their own lives. Public participation paves the way for policy implementation to run smoothly and fosters a sense of ownership; eliminates resistance and boosts commitment to the outcomes of the process (Clapper, 1996:76). Masango (2002:55-56), in relation to the above, argues that dictatorship is combated through public participation and the principles of good governance are promoted. In addition, public participation is an alternative accountability mechanism for programme evaluation as it encourages transparency in the public domain. It also creates greater ownership of public policy and, if stakeholders participate, they may buy into this and thus help with its delivery.

Hyden and Bratton, in Cloete (2005:1) provide four criteria for the assessment of governance style in a society: (1) degree of trust in government; (2) degree of responsiveness in the relationship between government and civil society; (3) government's degree of accountability to its voters; and (4) the authority government exercises over society. According to Cloete (2005:1), good governance can be viewed as, "...the achievement by a democratic government of the most appropriate developmental policy objectives to sustainably develop its society." Gwala (2011:58)

explains that the PAJA was enacted to promote efficient public administration and good governance and to create a culture of accountability, openness and transparency in public administration, the exercise of public power, and the performance of the public function. Its aim is to do this by giving effect to the right to just administrative action.

The South African government continuously adopts new and improved service delivery initiatives, based on the Batho Pele principles and the People's Contract. The People's Contract is a manifesto that aims to strengthen democracy and exists alongside the Growth Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR) in an effort to tackle unemployment and poverty (Edigheji, 2007:39). The Batho Pele principles were introduced as a possible measure to bring about better service delivery and accountability. The objectives of the Batho Pele are to introduce a new approach to service delivery which puts the people at the centre of the planning and delivering of services; to improve the face of service delivery by fostering new attitudes such as increased commitment, personal sacrifice, and dedication and to improve the image of the public sector (Matshiqi, 2007:65).

The decision of government to move away from a traditional pen and paper format to e-government is underpinned by the principle of 'access to information'. The Batho Pele principles of consultation urge for greater public participation in the earlier phases of policy development. These principles speak directly to the issue of public participation and government's responsibility to the public, and should be measured against the Manilla Declaration (1989) and the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.

4.2 E-GOVERNMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK

Mutula and Kalaote (2010:64) state that the advent of ICT in the public sector brought reforms to aid improved service delivery. Such reforms are aimed at enabling government to deliver services more efficiently and increasing public participation in their own governance. Multinopal (2000), in Mutula and Kalaote (2010:64), argues that through e-government sustainable development can be achieved; decision-making and service delivery enhanced; capacity of authorities or customers improved; procedures of government simplified; connectivity increased; global advocacy and

communication facilitated; and innovative approaches enabled. E-government can be best explained as a participatory process during which there is continuous input and feedback from the public, private sector and public servants. Mphidi (2009:7) provides the following goals of e-governance as endorsed by the DPSA:

- Improve the internal organisational processes of government;
- Increase government transparency in order to reduce corruption;
- Provide better information and service delivery;
- Reinforce political credibility and accountability; and
- Promote democratic practices through public participation.

Odogwu (2014:20) provides the following reasons for a regulatory framework:

- Regulation creates, limits, and constrains a right;
- It prevents abuse;
- It creates or limits a duty, or allocates a responsibility;
- It calls for uniformity of behavioural patterns of both the service providers and consumers;
- It enables the government, through its regulatory agencies, to set a standard that will be beneficial to both the service providers and the consumers; and
- It instils discipline in both the service providers and the users/consumers.

In the South African context, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) is entrusted with the overall responsibility to develop the policies relating to e-government (DPSA, 2007a). Farelo and Morris (2006:6) mention that the DPSA was not only tasked to develop e-government policies but also to ensure that there is proper measurement of ICT effectiveness in government in consultation with the National Treasury. The DPSA (2001) produced an information technology (IT) policy framework which laid the foundation for e-government, and mentions that in 2001 an e-government policy was compiled by the DPSA to assist with the overall service delivery improvement programme (Naidoo, 2007:323).

The DPSA is responsible for the management and utilisation of ICT within government, as well as the supervision of the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) as mentioned by the DPSA (2001:13). The SITA was established in 1999 to assist with the transformation of government departments and agencies, and to provide recommendations in respect of ICT-related matters while also supporting these departments so they remain focused on their key operations. The government departments therefore consult the SITA when in need of assistance to achieve their outputs, and the SITA then networks with the appropriate solution partners on their behalf. Haricharan (2003:13) explains that departments such as the Department of Communication (DoC) and the Department of Science and Technology (DoST) have also contributed to policy documents.

Farelo and Morris (2006:5), as well as the DPSA (2007a), note that South Africa has the following policies, standards and documents in place to assist with the effective implementation of e-government:

- **Handbook on Minimum Interoperability Standards (MIOS)**

The South African government has adopted these guidelines as they are in line with international trends and best practices. The document provides an overview of the policies and technical standards for the e-government strategy of South Africa. These standards enhance the flow of information across the public sector and increase the accessibility of government services for citizens and businesses. These guidelines also specify the standards used for minimum government e-governance (DPSA, 2007b:2).

- **Presidential Review Commission Report, Chapter 6: Information management, systems and technology (IMST)**

Chapter 6 of the Presidential Review Commission Report (2007) describes the challenges experienced by the public service with regard to information management (IM), information systems (IS), and information technology (IT). In this chapter, information, human resources, infrastructure as well as organisations are listed as essential resources of government. This report provides an analysis of information management, information systems and information technology in government. It further reports on the challenges

identified by the commission in respect of IMST and offers recommendations to address these obstacles (DPSA, 2007c:1). These recommendations vary from a short-term procurement moratorium to large IMST, to electronic government. The report proposes that the implementation of IMST would be both viable and advantageous when used to assist all sectors of society, stakeholders and the public (DPSA, 2007c:3).

- **Public Service Regulations (PSR), 2001; as amended up to 2006, Chapter 1, Part III: E**

Part III: E of the regulations reflects the responsibilities of the heads of department as, amongst others, to develop information plans, information technology plans and operational plans for the implementation of ICT (RSA, 2006).

- **Public Service Regulations (PSR), 2002; as amended up to 2006, Chapter 5, Part I to Part III**

The PSR explains and describes electronic government regulations as well as the importance of e-government for effective and efficient service delivery, information security, and interoperability.

- **Minimum Information Security Standards (MISS)**

The MISS prescribes how security measures should be applied in respect of classified documents, personnel (guidelines for security vetting), communication, and computers. These standards replace the previous *Guidelines for the Protection of Classified Information* (DPSA, 2004:3). In respect of document security, the standards provide guidelines on who should obtain access to the documents and the transmission, storage, as well as removal of these classified documents. The standards on personnel security explain the screening, validity of clearances and protection of executive officials. The security standards are clear regarding how documents stored on computers should be managed. The standards conclude with a chapter on breaches of security (DPSA, 2004:63).

- **The State Information Technology Agency Act, No. 58 of 1998 and the State Information Technology Agency Amendment Act, No. 38 of 2002**

These Acts regulate the e-service providers to government. In Section 7 of the SITA Act, it is explained that all ICT services must be obtained from, or through, the SITA. The SITA is responsible for the provision of a secure wide area network (WAN) to enable government departments to interact with one another, citizens and business, as well as enable data-processing or associated services for transversal information services. The SITA set the standards regulating ICT, which were approved by the Minister of Public Service and Administration. The SITA Act is important in respect of e-government.

- **Policy on Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) use for the South African government**

This policy document summarises the use of free or open-source software (FOSS) to improve e-government. Apart from this document, research and consultation in regard of FOSS have also taken place both nationally and internationally with stakeholders. The FOSS policy encourages government to make use of open-source software, and draws attention to programmes and the required phases thereof, from the initiation and enhancement to the maturity phase. It is estimated that the initiation and enhancement phases can be completed within a three-year timeframe. Initially there were several obstacles identified in respect of the FOSS policy, but these have since been addressed. The FOSS software has also become easier to use as the software has matured. The FOSS policy explains the implications, advantages and disadvantages of using FOSS, as well as how FOSS contributes to development in general in South Africa (DPSA, 2006).

- **Information Technology (IT) Planning Guidelines (2002)**

This document applies to public managers and provides an overview of how to compile strategic IT plans. These guidelines have been accepted

because they incorporate ICT. Farelo and Morris (2006:7) highlight four pieces of legislation relevant for the implementation of e-government. Two of these are the Promotion of Access to Information Act, No. 3 of 2000, which provides any citizen of South Africa from either a private or a public entity with the right to gain access to information; and the State Information Technology Agency Act, No. 58 of 1998.

- **Electronic Communications and Transaction Act, No. 25 of 2002**

This Act includes guidelines for the facilitation and regulation of electronic communications and transactions, and the development of a national e-strategy for South Africa that encourages the use of e-government services, endorses universal access to electronic communications and other related matters. The Act also makes provision for the making or receiving of electronic payments, the acceptance of data messages, and the issuing of permits, licences or approvals in the form of data messages.

- **Electronic Communications Act, No. 36 of 2005**

This Act replaced the Telecommunications Act, No. 103 of 1996 and includes the regulation of telecommunication activities (excluding broadcasting) as well as the control of the radio frequency spectrum. The Act also recommends that an independent South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority and a Universal Service Agency of South Africa be created.

Farelo and Morris (2006:5) are of the opinion that the Public Service Regulations of 2001 have helped to make the implementation of e-government possible in South Africa. They further explain that an Open Source Software Strategy and Policy has been in place since 2003 for the development of an implementation strategy and plan.

The Protection of Information Bill was published on the 5th of March 2010 in the Government Gazette No. 32999 (RSA, 2010). The Bill was developed to ensure that certain information is protected from destruction, loss or from being illegally disclosed. The Bill also strives to regulate the way in which information may be safeguarded. The

Bill further replaced the Protection of Information Act, 1982 and provides for matters in this regard. The goal of the Protection of Information Bill is to ensure that State information is protected, classified and declassified in a consistent manner. The Bill brought about a legislative framework to guide the State when taking action against espionage and other related activities of intimidation. The Bill covers 12 chapters that indicate that government is serious about service delivery and has developed Batho Pele principles to ensure that it achieves its service goals.

Legislation plays an essential role in the implementation and efficiency of e-government. To summarise, the MIOS, for example, provides information on international trends and best practices to be followed, therefore legislation can also provide guidance. IMST, on the other hand, provides information on the challenges experienced in the public sector concerning information management. This can assist departments or organisations to refrain from repeating the same mistakes.

It is critical to consider security of information when embarking upon e-government initiatives. The MISS and the Information Protection Bill provide guidelines on the protection and consistent safekeeping of State information. This is important as it ensures that confidential information is safely stored and secure. All of the above-mentioned guidelines can contribute to the success and effectiveness of e-government initiatives.

The Public Service Regulations (PSR), 2001, as amended in 2006, states that the heads of departments must establish information technology plans as well as operational plans for the implementation of ICT (RSA, 2006). The PSR further recognises that effective and efficient service delivery, information security and interoperability depend on electronic government regulations. The Promotion of Access to Information Act, No. 3 of 2000, provides that citizens have a right to information either from public or private entities. The Electronic Communications and Transaction Act, No. 25 of 2002 encourages the use of e-government services, endorsing universal access to electronic communications and related matters. It further creates provisions for receiving or making electronic payments, receiving data messages, the issuing of licenses or permits, and approvals in terms of data messages (RSA, 2002). In this chapter it becomes evident that effective and efficient e-government is dependent on appropriate laws and regulations.

The Batho Pele principles aim to transform public service delivery. Batho Pele consists of eight principles, namely: consulting users of services; setting service standards; increasing access; ensuring courtesy; providing more and better information; increasing openness and transparency; redress and value for money (DPSA, 1997). According to Visser and Twinomurinzi (2008:4), the utilisation of e-government initiatives can improve service delivery and uphold the Batho Pele principles by putting people at the centre of service delivery.

4.3 ROADMAP FOR E-GOVERNMENT

Farelo and Morris (2006:2) argue that e-government is about transforming government to be more citizen-centred, and this calls for changes to how government works. According to these authors, the Pacific Council on International Policy (PCIP) developed a *Roadmap for e-Government* containing ten indicators to guide e-government implementation. These ten indicators are considered crucial by many developing countries including South Africa:

1. Why are we pursuing e-government?
2. Do we have a clear vision and priorities for e-government?
3. What kind of e-government are we ready for?
4. Is there enough political will to lead the e-government effort?
5. Are we selecting the e-government projects in the best way?
6. How should we plan and manage e-government projects?
7. How will we overcome resistance from within the government?
8. How will we measure and communicate progress? How will we know if we are failing?
9. What should our relationship be with the private sector?
10. How can e-government improve citizen participation in public affairs?

(Farelo and Morris, 2006:2)

Below is a summation of the above indicators in relation to the South African e-government context, with a view to contextualise e-government prescripts whilst measuring the same against the roadmap.

The South African government understands the need for the utilisation of ICT and harnesses its benefits. There is also political will for e-governance. The president established a Presidential National Commission on Information Society and Development in 2001 (PNC on ISAD) to advise and coordinate ICT initiatives. Government views ICT to be an enabler for the management of information and interaction with the public, business, and with itself. E-governance is informed by the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of 2015 and the growth and development priorities of National Development Plan (2011) wherein ICT is seen to be an enabler for the realisation of these goals.

Government realises that this transformation will not be easy owing to several capacity challenges, such as access to information, staff, and hardware. The government has a clear vision and priorities for e-government; for example, NDP (2011) envisions fast, reliable, and affordable access to information and knowledge. The DPSA, in its *Electronic Government, the Digital Future: A Public Service IT Policy Framework* (2001), mentions that e-government is about rendering services from “cradle to grave”. Services rendered must be accessible to all citizens anytime, anywhere and through different devices. Government recognises that successful implementation of e-governance can only be achieved if there is continuous buy-in and participation from critical stakeholders.

Considering progress regarding ICT, South Africa launched a Batho Pele gateway portal in 2004 through which 355 multipurpose community centres have been established to provide ICT access to people in villages. All universities and 6 000 schools countrywide have been granted access to ICT. Over 50% of the population has access to mobile phones, some of which have multi-access to information. There are 800 public information terminals and over 80% health centres with connectivity. In addition, a language portal using all eleven official languages has been established in the Thusong Service Centres. Key policies and governance frameworks have been developed and defined.

Government has implemented a number of transversal projects such as financial, personnel management systems and supply chain management systems (Personnel and Salary System (PERSAL), Basic Accounting System (BAS) and Logistical Information System (LOGIS)). There are also other management transversal projects within government and its agencies, for example the South African Post Office (SAPO) implemented Postbank; and the South African Revenue Services (SARS) implemented e-filing for tax-returns, and the SASSA Management Information System (MIS) and Social Pension (SocPen) for the automation of social grants, as well as the Home Affairs National Identification System (HANIS). These government models improve service delivery to the citizenry and will have a lasting effect on efficiency and effectiveness.

Although commended based on the *Roadmap for e-government*, progress made towards e-governance by the South African government requires service and customer maturity particularly regarding government challenges, including creating access, illiteracy, internal efficiency and human resource development. Service maturity refers to the extent to which government has developed an online presence and its completeness. Whilst customer maturity considers the extent to which government reaches out to the public to deliver integrated services, features of customer maturity also include customer relationship management, citizen-centred strategies, multi-access for services, cross-government service delivery and creating awareness and educating customers. The two aspects of service and customer maturity will encourage the existence of a successful government with good governance.

4.4 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the legislative framework of e-government and assessed e-governance in South Africa based on the PCIP Roadmap. Successful implementation of e-governance calls for an appropriate legislative framework, which must be tested against the PCIP Roadmap and good governance principles, as well as the Batho Pele principles wherein the public participate with the rule of law applied, and empowering public participation wherein the public influences, directs and eventually owns the process.

The researcher argued that the DPSA (2001:7) suggests that an organisation should first identify the needs of its customers and then determine how to make use of ICT to achieve economic and effective e-government. The DPSA is a watchdog organisation that monitors and evaluates the overall performance of the public service. The DPSA (2001:5) itself acknowledges the challenges associated with implementing e-government and highlights the fact that this implementation is an enormous task for both developed and developing countries.

In order for e-government to materialise, countries need a high-quality communication infrastructure, reasonably priced computers and appliances, inexpensive and quick access to the internet, as well as relevant legislation. Capacity-building of employees in terms of ICT, marketing and customer relationship management is considered as important for the successful implementation of e-government.

New leadership styles, ways of debating and deciding policy and investment, new means of accessing education, new strategies for listening to citizens, and new techniques of organising and delivering information and services is brought about by e-governance. For e-government to be successful, strong leadership is required in a country like South Africa. All e-government initiatives need to be integrated in order to ensure the success of e-government. The next chapter deals with the SASSA e-governance using a case study in the Eastern Cape.

CHAPTER FIVE: IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ELECTRONIC PAYMENT SYSTEM BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY (SASSA): A CASE STUDY IN THE EASTERN CAPE REGION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Since 1994, the South African government has expanded its social security safety net. Section 27 (1)(c) of the Constitution (1996) states that everyone has a right to access social security. According to Makinana (2012:13), the social assistance system in South Africa has been the key driver of an anti-poverty policy. The SASSA (2013:4) records that there are over 16 million people who benefit from social assistance by way of social grants, with 22 million recipients. The social grant system covers a wide range of the South African population, from day-old children to the elderly with the intention to assist poor and vulnerable individuals.

The SASSA was established by an Act of Parliament in 2004 – the South African Social Security Agency Act, 2004 – with a mission to administer and pay social grants cost-effectively and efficiently. The South African Social Security Agency came into being on 1st April 2006. The SASSA is a schedule 9 institution and a public entity in terms of the Public Finance Management Act of 1999 (PFMA). The SASSA administers and pays seven types of social grants, namely the Foster Child Grant, Care Dependency Grant, Child Support Grant, Disability Grant, Old Age Grant, War Veterans Grant and, Grant-in-Aid. In order to ensure that the SASSA standardises its processes, the SASSA was relieved from accounting to various Members of the Executive Council (MECs) in provinces, but has to report directly to the Minister of Social Development through its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is also its accounting officer.

The administration of social grants, despite the new dispensation, has been polluted by a high incidence of maladministration, litigation, fraud and corruption, from different sectors ranging from the SASSA officials to beneficiaries and professionals. Heywood (2007:165) explains that such unintended consequences do at times occur during policy implementation. According to the SASSA (2011:3), the Standing Committee on

Public Accounts (SCOPA) and the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA), have been vocal in their critique of the SASSA's failure to review social grants beneficiaries on an annual basis as stipulated in the regulations of the Social Assistance Act of 2004, and its failure to ensure that people being paid are alive and/or deserving of these grants.

The SASSA (2012:7) pays approximately 2.7 million recipients in the Eastern Cape, from a population of just over 6.5 million, at a cost of R17.2 billion per annum. The SASSA (2011:2) Eastern Cape put a pilot project into operation to investigate selected 'hotspot areas', and uncovering, in just under three months, 3 300 cases of grant fraud at a cost of R15 383 740.94. This transversal project revealed the extent of fraud in the social assistance system (SASSA, 2011:2).

In response to these challenges, the SASSA announced its strategic approach to re-register all social grant recipients biometrically utilising a Cash Payment Services' ICT platform (SASSA, 2012:1). According to the SASSA, the aim of this biometric registration is, amongst others, to reduce fraud and corruption within the social grants system, eliminate duplications, create a credible database, and enhance accountability and transparency within social assistance. Manyathi (2011:35) mentions that the outcomes of biometric registration, as anticipated by the SASSA, will create scope for an improved audit report, reduction of policy costs, and the redirection of resources for other noble pro bono uses. Makinana (2012:3) states that the implementation of biometric registration brought about prominent apprehension in the greater social space countrywide, and that the appointment of the new Minister of Social Development and the new Chief Executive Officer in the SASSA had brought about 'drastic steps' to curb fraud and corruption in the social assistance programme.

Dunn (2012:138) cautions that at times politicians exert pressure on administrators to implement policies even though there is no capacity within the public service to implement it. Senge (2006:27) mentions that organs of State must always strive to maintain a balance between the interests of efficiency, and customer satisfaction. Kleyn and Viljoen (2010:98) state that the rules of administrative law try to prevent organs of State, ministers, and several boards from unilaterally applying their power in a way that is detrimental to the public. Arguably, the SASSA's biometric registration of social grant recipients and electronic payments, despite having cost benefits, seems

to deny several values of participatory democracy in both policy-formulation and implementation by an organ of State.

5.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL GRANTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, social assistance is provided for the poorest of the poor, those lacking necessities, and susceptible members of society. The White Paper for Social Welfare Policy (1997) chapter 7, states that the domains of social security are poverty prevention, poverty alleviation, social compensation, and income distribution. Chapter 7 provides that social security measures are to take place in the event of an individual's earning power permanently ceasing, being interrupted, never developing, or being exercised only at unacceptable cost and such a person being unable to avoid poverty.

The SASSA administers social assistance services as a set of social grants which are provided as a direct cash transfer to vulnerable citizens. The right to access social security is enshrined in the Constitution (1996). Section 27 (1)(c) and 32 state that everyone has the right to access social security, including any information held by the State. Section 27(2) impresses upon the State to take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of the right to social security.

Both adults and children have the right to social security. The right for children to access social security is entrenched in a cluster of other child economic and social rights found in section 28(1)(c) of the Constitution (1996). This section provides that every child has a right to basic nutrition, basic health care services and social services. The Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005 gives effect to the rights of children as contained in the Constitution (1996) and sets out principles relating to the care and protection of children. The Aged Persons Act, No. 81 of 1967 provides for the protection and welfare of certain aged and debilitated persons, as well as provision for social security entitlements. The Older Persons Act, No. 13 of 2006 deals with the plight of older persons by establishing a framework aimed at the empowerment and protection of older persons, their status, rights, well-being, safety and security. Social security therefore covers a wide variety of public and private measures.

The regulations included in the Social Assistance Act, No. 13 of 2004 provide that the SASSA may use electronic bank transfers, manual transfers at a designated pay-point (hard cash payment), and any other method of payment approved by the minister (section 24(1)(a-c)). Payment methods must be fair and accessible, and the SASSA must review the grant on an annual basis (section 31(2)(a)). If the beneficiary fails to provide the requested information or documents, the SASSA must suspend the grant (section 31(4)). However, cancellation or suspension of a grant can only take place if reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that the beneficiary understands the eligibility and conditions of the grant (section 40(1)). Kleyn and Viljoen (2010:93) state that public law is classified into three categories, namely constitutional law and human rights; administrative law; and criminal law. Public law determines the extent of State authority and regulates the organs of State, their relationships, and the relations between State and its subjects.

According to Kleyn and Viljoen (2010:97), the constitutional law divides the State authority into three branches: legislature – with the role to promulgate legislation; judiciary – responsible for the interpretation and application of the rules; and the executive – which deals with government affairs and administration of the State. Administrative law determines the way in which the State exercises its executive powers and prevents State bodies from misuse of power.

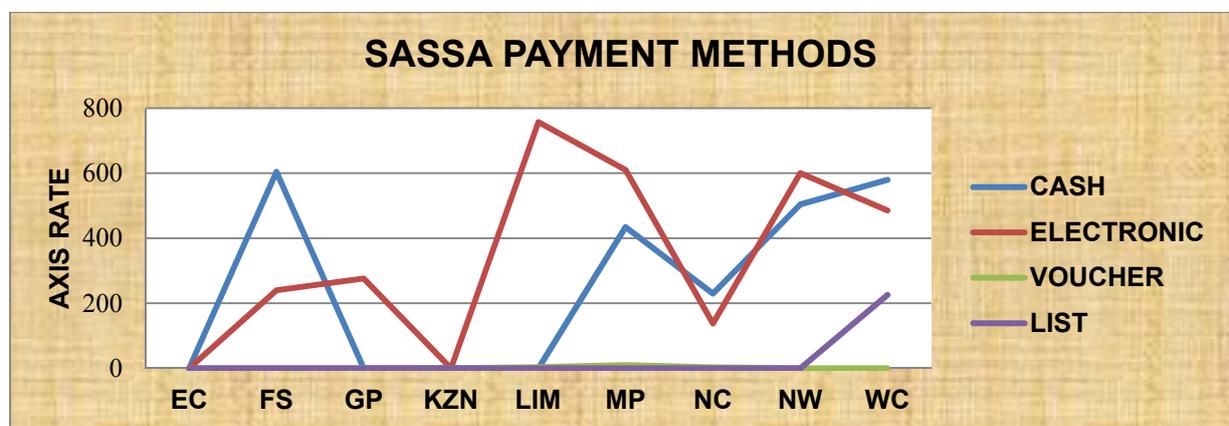
The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, No. 3 of 2000 requires administrative decisions by government officials to be procedurally fair, and anyone who is adversely affected by such a decision is entitled to reasons and may approach the court for a review (Kleyn and Viljoen, 2010:98). Implications of cancellation, effective date, reasons, rights and procedures for appeal against the decision must be supplied in writing to the beneficiary. Even after the implementation of the decision to suspend or cancel a grant, a beneficiary must be informed within thirty days of such an action being taken.

In 2004, the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Social Development unilaterally suspended all disability grant recipients and subjected them all to review. The recipients took class action against the State and the courts ruled in their favour. This left the department liable for costs. Section 39(1)(a-f) provides conditions under which the SASSA may suspend or cancel a grant, namely if it is fraudulent, circumstances

have changed, there is failure to comply with conditions of the grant, death, failure to produce life certification, and if the grant was approved erroneously. Tempering with the payment of one’s social grant has legal implications.

5.3 THE SASSA PAYMENT METHODS

The SASSA uses four methods of payment: manual; hard cash payments at designated pay-points; electronic commercial bank transfers; and Postbank accounts, vouchers and list. ‘List’ refers to those recipients residing in Namibia. Manual cash payments are paid by the SASSA through third party agents. Those receiving social grants from designated cash pay-points receive their monthly social grants on payment day, which are subject to multiple threats, ranging from inadequate infrastructure of pay-points, inhumane treatment, fraud, robberies, to unfavourable weather conditions. Those receiving payment from the banks and post-banks are equally subjected to these calamities, the only difference being that recipients are able to access their social grants in their own time and on any day of a given month. Figure 5.1 below depicts the SASSA payment methods prior to the February 2012 policy reform.



	EC	FS	GP	KZN	LIM	MP	NC	NW	WC
CASH	1.357.447	603.948	1.459.258	2.561.434	1.311.319	434.392	229.497	504.164	579.464
ELECTRONIC	1.158.554	240.104	276.154	1.023.450	756.854	609.909	138.116	599.971	485.445
VOUCHER	0	0	0	0	3.706	9.689	3	0	0
LIST	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	226

Figure 5.1: The SASSA payment methods prior to February 2012

Source: The SASSA (2010).

According to the SASSA (2010:14), this figure calls for the promotion of an electronic payment system, which will reduce long queues and minimise the inhumane conditions that the recipients of social grants are subject to during monthly pay-outs. Table 5.1 provides a clearer picture of the coverage of various sectors within the social grants populace.

Table 5.1: Number of social grant types

Province	Old Age	War Veteran	Disability	Grant in Aid	Foster Children	Care Dependency	Child Support	Total
EC	477.127	144	198.268	7.217	106.375	18.689	1.708.181	2.516.001
FS	157.401	26	91.502	849	44.277	4.535	545.462	844.052
GP	336.846	294	126.821	858	64.286	13.326	1.192.984	1.735.415
KZN	547.254	165	350.924	23.728	122.163	33.549	2.507.102	3.584.885
LIM	393.395	89	99.811	6.384	56.151	12.194	1.503.857	2.071.881
MP	178.864	50	74.619	1.073	26.998	5.727	766.659	1.053.990
NC	67.718	40	46.191	3.061	15.670	3.939	230.994	367.613
NW	223.358	38	94.439	2.193	34.608	8.944	740.562	1.104.138
WC	217.824	276	149.927	7.934	27.454	8.793	652.927	1.065.135
TOTAL	2.599.787	1.118	1.232.502	53.297	497.982	109.696	9.848.728	14.343.110

Source: The SASSA (2010:8).

From these statistics, the SASSA (2010:3) conveys that the majority of social grant recipients are children whose caregivers may have either been to school, or who have some knowledge and understanding of how to utilise technology. Gauteng, with its urban nature, has more cash recipients than the rural Eastern Cape.

The basis of biometric registration (re-registration), although tabulated by the SASSA, led to disquiet from the public regarding the manner in which it was presented to the general populace of the country. The salient concerns suggest that no public participation was conducted with the people affected by this decision. Plaatjie (2013:3) states that media houses in the Eastern Cape province have been swamped with grievances of social grant beneficiaries about their monthly social grants, with concerns ranging from not being able to access their grants electronically due to inadequate infrastructure, the SASSA electronic payment cards being retained by

automated teller machines (ATMs), personal identification numbers (PINs) being disabled, being short-paid, and retailers forcing them to spend a certain amount of money before being paid their social grant. This indicates that the system is too sophisticated for users. The SASSA (2013b:2) agrees, stating that the SASSA call centre and front desk officials have also recorded these common complaints from social grant recipients.

Beukman (2010:2) mentions that, in 2010, the Black Sash, made it explicit in its written submission to the SASSA on the social assistance benefits payment system that, although the opportunity exists to contribute to the work of the Committee of Enquiry as they investigate and recommend an appropriate model of payment for social assistance benefits, adequate time for public participation in public hearings must be offered in all provinces. Affected communities should be properly informed and given sufficient time to respond to the work of the committee and to propose changes to the system. The very act of participation is educative and politically significant. This claim is supported by Pimbert and Wakeford, in Creighton (2005:2) who states that democracy without citizens' reflection and contribution is an empty and meaningless endeavour.

Kotzé (1997:37) mentions that the notion of public participation may be depicted as an approach that places prominence on a people-centric approach, whereby development, communication, influence, and dialogue take place in the public sphere. Theron, Ceasar and Davids (2007:2) argue that public participation strategies have two main gains for the democratic policy-making process, namely participation leads to better policy outcomes, and participation assists the public to develop the capacity for improving their own lives. Masango (2002:55-56) argues that dictatorship is combated through public participation while principles of good governance are promoted, and reasons that basic principles of public participation may have been ignored, if not omitted, by the SASSA in its biometric registration and electronic payment. This can culminate in resistance, litigation and many more challenges than solutions.

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (2011:18-24) states that, even in the implementation of welfare social policy, organisations of the State should take advantage of technological advancements associated with globalisation

in order to strengthen the processes of the administration of policy for beneficial cost-effective outcomes. The DPSA (2001:7) advises that any institution or organ of State looking to implement an electronic payment system should first conduct a needs assessment of its clients and make a determination of how it will make use of ICT to achieve effective and efficient e-governance. Bovaird (2004:201) states that the risks involved in public organisations employing the services of private organisations are too high as the public sector has little knowledge of, or no experience in, the ICT sector. Petersen (2005:3) objects to the use of electronic systems and states that e-government is not relevant in South Africa as the majority of citizens in the country still do not have access to basic needs such as houses, water, toilets and electricity.

During a study based in Mexico, Amin and Herbert (2012:13) assessed whether or not the older generation is ready for cash-based pensions and welfare to occur through e-payment. They found that multiple stakeholder participation, including that of the affected public, contributed to the success of this e-payment system, promoting not only cost savings but also financial inclusion.

Salamon (2002:08) emphasises that the use of the word “governance” instead of “government” is a recognition and acknowledgement by the public sector that collaborative approaches must be used in a coherent way to address challenges posed, as well as opportunities presented, by public problems. Bovaird (2004:204) states that these problems are too complex for government to deal with alone and thus private public partnerships (PPPs) are essential. He further argues that it is therefore of importance that the public sector examines inter-organisational behaviour in the public and private sector, notwithstanding the commissioning and providing roles of an organisation, with a view to understanding different conceptual frameworks.

According to Bovaird (2004:203), if the typology of the PPPs is not understood, the fragmentation of structures and processes will lead to blurred responsibilities and accountabilities. For Gwala (2011:5) an appropriate mix of strategies needs to be implemented, taking into account local realities, context-specific issues, indigenous knowledge systems, and meaning-giving contexts of the beneficiary community (Emmett, 2000:501-518; Sillitoe, Dixon and Barr, 2005:12-18; Kotzé and Kotzé, 2008:76-99; and Theron, 2008:224-226; 235-238). These authors contend that, due to the limited ability of participants to influence, direct, control and own the service

delivery process; complaints become a vehicle for expressing frustration. E-governance is only one of many public participation strategies which a government can use to engage with the citizenry, but in all cases, the most effective public participation strategy is always based on an appropriate mix of context-specific strategies relevant to a particular case at which level public participation is required.

5.4 SUMMARY

E-government must be *accessible, interactive, transactional* and *transformational*, and services offered electronically should not be seen as new but rather as additional strategies to save time, convenience, cost reduction and equitable distribution of services. The lack of grassroots and context-specific participation strategies, relevant to local users' capacity to participate remains a challenge. E-government must take into account the needs of the society, the developmental goals of the State and the empowerment of its citizens. We need to ask: when; for whom, will we use e-governance services and why? Developing countries in implementing e-governance are faced with the social realities of poverty, language divides, illiteracy, inequality and unemployment amongst others.

This chapter focusses on a development strategy introduced by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), wherein an electronic payment system is implemented to pay all social grant recipients. This initiative, aimed at reducing fraud and corruption, improving accountability and transparency, has seen administrators succumbing to political pressure implementing policies even though there are not enough resources.

In this chapter the strategy implemented by SASSA has opportunities and challenges for both citizens and the State in a society that experiences a digital divide. Communicating development processes and goals should become a primary objective of any institution. An appropriate citizen participation strategy at the level of citizen power, the consequence of which will be an improved service delivery free from complaints and protestations, is ideal for South Africa.

The role of government is not to deliver services, but to promote community building, help citizens' shared interests, and bring the proper players to the table to broker

agreements amongst themselves and to function as proxy citizens. Salamon (2002:08) contends that, in order for public managers to perform effectively, they must not only be able to follow rules, but must engage in complex multi-party negotiations utilising the relevant instruments, and be equipped with knowledge.

This chapter laid a foundation for the context of this study. The next chapter focuses on data gathering, analysis and interpretation of the findings. The hypothesis of this study is that ***public participation is a primary source of strength for the success of the SASSA's electronic payment system***. An authentic and empowering public participation programme will enable social grant beneficiaries to own the e-governance implemented for both their own good and for that of the nation. An appropriate mix of strategies needs to be implemented, taking into account local realities, context-specific issues, indigenous knowledge systems, and meaning-giving contexts of the beneficiary community.

CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:2) describe a research study as the process of generating knowledge utilising objective methods and procedures in a particular field of study. The starting point of scientific research is the definition of a problem statement (Brynard and Hanekom, 2006:16). The hypothesis of this study is that ***public participation is a primary source of strength for the success of the SASSA's electronic payment system.***

The researcher's goal is to establish whether there is authentic and empowering public participation planning and partnership in the implementation of the South African Social Security Agency's (SASSA's) electronic payment system. This study seeks to address the following research objectives (as reflected in section 1.2 of chapter 1):

1. To explore the challenges facing social grants recipients regarding the electronic payment system implemented by the SASSA.
2. To identify and describe infrastructure provided by the SASSA for electronic payment of the recipients of social grants.
3. To explore implementation challenges facing the SASSA during the implementation of the electronic payment system.
4. To determine the extent to which the perceived lack of public participation in the electronic payment system of the SASSA contributes to complaints from beneficiaries about an inability to access their monthly social grants.

Brynard and Hanekom (2006:37) argue that the research methodology adopted in a study (as reflected in section 1.4 of chapter 1) enables the researcher to personally interact with respondents, given that the researcher's aim is not to manipulate existing variables but rather to study them as they exist. This chapter presents the primary data obtained from both the individual questionnaires and focus groups. Questionnaires were sent to a SASSA member of the senior management service, a SASSA member of middle management and a Cash Payment Services⁵ (CPS) senior manager. The

⁵ CPS is a company which was awarded an R10m tender to pay social grants on behalf of SASSA for five years countrywide.

researcher, being an employee of the SASSA, informally interviewed call centre and reception personnel to enhance his understanding of the matter under investigation. In addition, the researcher had the opportunity to observe how busy the call centre was during payment dates.

Three focus groups were conducted, comprising three social grant types, namely 'old age', 'disability' and 'child support' grants. The researcher aimed to establish the challenges faced by the elderly, disabled, and young parents when dealing with the electronic payment system implemented by the SASSA. This was done with a view to obtain a balanced perspective of the prevailing conditions of social grant beneficiaries in Mooiplaas in relation to public participation and complaints. The size of the population was ten beneficiaries per grant type. The researcher compiled a list of questions for both the individual interviews and focus groups and used a questionnaire in the focus groups as a guide for conducting the interviews (see annexure 4⁶, 5⁷, 6⁸, 1-3⁹). This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of responses, and is followed by the research findings.

6.2 ANALYSIS OF THE SASSA MEMBER OF THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT SERVICE

According to the SASSA member of the senior management service, the SASSA aimed to close existing gaps in the social grant payment system by implementing biometrics and subsequent electronic payment. The identified opportunities for the resolution of these gaps included:

- Conducting a comparison of a beneficiary's fingerprints to ensure that people with more than one identity book were not able to access more than one grant i.e. eliminating duplications;
- Ensuring that deceased persons' grants would not be paid beyond the grave by using biometric identification;

⁶ Questionnaire for the SASSA general manager.

⁷ Questionnaire for the SASSA manager.

⁸ Questionnaire for the CPS manager.

⁹ Questionnaires for social grants beneficiaries.

- Ensuring life certification biometrically, thus reducing manual life certification;
- Ensuring that the correct person received the correct grant, by ensuring that either fingerprints or voice print biometrics were used as a means of identification and/or verification;
- Banking all social grants beneficiaries; and
- Creating an enabling environment for the SASSA to take over the payment function in 2017.

The SASSA member of the senior management service was of the opinion that the aims of the SASSA had not been properly addressed before the tender. Even the SASSA officials themselves were in the dark as to the intricacies of the payment system prior to the awarding of the tender. The respondent stated that if public participation had been held, there would have been reservations raised against the electronic payment system. However, the respondent did believe that reasonable measures were taken to ensure that beneficiaries received their monthly payments during the transition from the manual to the electronic payment method, despite some mishaps along the way, as a phased approach was employed.

The respondent viewed the issue of resources as an area that is “sadly lacking”. There was very little public education conducted after the announcement of the tender, and beneficiaries had to determine their preferred payment method through trial and error as well as through information received informally. Matters such as minimum balance, debt, and even the appropriate types of bank accounts were not communicated, resulting in much confusion and a flood of complaints. There was also no audit of resources to determine how beneficiaries would access their monthly social grants.

The respondent believed that the process of queries, access, and information dissemination remain a grey area to-date as, despite the SASSA’s endeavours to close the gap and impress upon CPS to put help desks in place to provide information to beneficiaries, all attempts to assist recipients have been unsuccessful. The respondent’s perception of these is as being distant from beneficiaries, and not

accessible to the SASSA. Even now, there is a feeling that the SASSA only receives information on a 'need to know' basis.

The respondent mentioned that the SASSA is facing ample challenges in relation to payment, namely:

- The South African Reserve Bank (SARB) has recently declared the biometric identification of beneficiaries for payment purposes illegal in the open banking environment, although fingerprint identification for cash and merchant payments is accepted.
- All social grants beneficiaries receiving their monthly social grants from automated teller machines (ATMs) and chain stores will in future be forced to utilise personal identification numbers (PINs). By implication, the SASSA has to re-register all beneficiaries and issue them with PINs. This not only has a bearing on beneficiaries and State fiscal but also it defeats the sole aim of biometric registration.
- There is excessive pressure on Bankserv at the beginning of each month with over ten million beneficiaries being brought into the banking infrastructure simultaneously.
- Long queues have shifted from cash pay-points to banks and retail stores especially on the first three payment days.
- Unscrupulous moneylenders and online service providers take advantage of the debit system linked to the card. This means that some beneficiaries take home only a small portion of their grant.

The respondent is of the opinion that, given the opportunity, the whole process should be started from scratch taking the following into consideration:

- Planning should be extensive.
- A reasonable amount of time should be set aside for consultation with stakeholders and public participation at large prior to the approval of terms of reference.

- Ensuring that there is a regular tender process in place, even if that means getting an independent committee involved.
- An extensive communication plan should be implemented which would commence at least six months prior to roll out.
- Consultation should be conducted with stakeholders such as SARS, to determine a risk matrix.
- The payment system must be tested legally before any decisions are made regarding it. The issues experienced during the SARB incident will return to haunt the SASSA if beneficiaries are made to register for PIN numbers en masse. The SASSA should have consulted the SARB before the awarding of the tender, or during development of specifications, as SARB would have advised the SASSA that biometric payment identification in the open banking system was not allowed.
- The National Credit Bureau should be approached so as to ensure that the social grant beneficiaries are protected against debit orders, aside from the 10% for funeral policies as stipulated in the Social Assistance Act of 2004.
- An undertaking from the payment service provider should ensure that strategic helpdesks are made available to assist beneficiaries with problems.

Only after all of the above have been fulfilled should the roll-out of the payment system occur.

6.3 ANALYSIS OF THE SASSA MEMBER OF THE MIDDLE MANAGEMENT SERVICE

This respondent stated that SASSA's main strategy for electronic payment systems was focussed on the marketing of the system. The marketing strategy promoted all the positives of the system with an aim to soften the SASSA members towards it. These positives consisted of the benefits of the system, such as eradicating fraudulent grants, multiple methods of payment for beneficiaries as opposed to the previous

system, and the ability to withdraw grants anywhere in the country without prohibition. It also afforded beneficiaries access to a banking environment for those who were previously excluded, and so one was not required to withdraw every cent – thus helping those who wanted to create savings. While previously payments were conducted at any time over three weeks in a month, the system introduced payment on the first day of the month to anyone who opted to use banks or merchants to access their money, bringing payment to beneficiaries forward by about two weeks. To eliminate beneficiaries who were receiving fraudulent grants, recipients were encouraged to cancel these grants so they could be enrolled in the system with legitimate children and possibly avoid being arrested.

According to the respondent, prior to the implementation and/or roll-out of this system, beneficiaries were never consulted nor afforded the opportunity to give input about the payment method they would prefer. Once CPS was awarded the tender, marketing was done. The sole purpose of such marketing was to introduce its features to the beneficiaries, not to obtain their views as to what features they needed.

The respondent stated that the system did effectively introduce all beneficiaries to the banking environment as all payment cards are from Grindrod Bank, meaning payment has to go through this bank whether opted for or not. The respondent listed the following major problems encountered by beneficiaries:

- Beneficiaries had to create their own PIN for their cards, and some had never used such a method before. As a result CPS officials had to assist them in creating PIN codes.
- Some corrupt officials abused this PIN-creation process, as they now knew the PIN codes of some illiterate beneficiaries.
- Other beneficiaries had their siblings assist them, who then abused their information, cards, and open accounts.
- Unknown withdrawals and/or airtime and/or electricity purchases that are ultimately linked to family members are daily occurrences amongst illiterate, elderly beneficiaries in particular.

- Unknown deductions continue to be a monthly problem and no solution seems to be forthcoming as CPS is allowed to continue with this practice unabated.
- There has been a rise in the business of unlawful money-lending where unscrupulous money-lenders keep the beneficiaries' payment cards against loans offered to them. This has increased as all the payment cards have an option of having a PIN code.
- Some merchants coerce beneficiaries to purchase from their retail stores in order for the former to receive their monthly social grants.
- Several unresolved complaints have been received of money being withdrawn using beneficiaries' PIN codes.

The respondent argued that, in relation to skills, infrastructure and development, an intensive marketing and communication effort was made during the project implementation. Stakeholder engagement was also thoroughly undertaken to ensure that beneficiaries were aware of these changes in the payment system and what these changes entailed, namely:

- While previously beneficiaries had had a single method of receiving grants, the new system introduced them to the banking environment, while also allowing them to continue using the previous method of payment.
- At the same time, those with bank accounts could have their money deposited directly into their accounts.
- In addition, a beneficiary was not limited to one method of payment only; one could change from one method to another on a month-to-month basis.
- This system is now used countrywide, and not limited to some provinces as before.
- Those beneficiaries who wished to use their bank accounts had to call the toll-free number first to match their voices with those pre-recorded for life certification purposes. Vodacom starter packs were provided to enable them to make these calls.

- Cash payment remained an option, and merchants countrywide have been used to dispense payments at no fee to the beneficiaries.

In relation to customer care support, the respondent mentioned the following:

- The SASSA's turnaround time for attending to enquiries is five (5) days, while complex issues are expected to be resolved in twenty-one (21). However, the CPS turnaround time to resolve their queries is not known to the respondent.
- In terms of providing assistance to beneficiaries who might have payment-related problems, CPS has established the toll-free centre where they receive and attend to any queries. However, beneficiaries have experienced difficulties of access, mainly due to call-waiting times and difficult operators. As such, the SASSA has taken it upon itself to contact CPS on behalf of the beneficiaries and endeavours to resolve these problems where possible. This is done because, while payment has been outsourced to CPS, beneficiaries remain an SASSA priority, who assists where possible.
- The majority of queries relate to beneficiaries with unknown or unauthorised deductions made on their grants as well as trial-and-error situations of access. In such cases the SASSA assists beneficiaries by ensuring that bank statements reflecting deductions are provided to them. These bank statements are either e-mailed or faxed and it is common, given that grants are paid to the disadvantaged, that beneficiaries do not have these facilities nor are they able to read or write.
- There are cases that have been lodged for months without resolution and there is no commitment to an expected time for their resolution.

Regarding challenges facing the SASSA in relation to its clients, the respondent mentioned that:

- One of the roles of the SASSA customer care unit is to ensure that beneficiary enquiries, questions, or problems are addressed satisfactorily and objectively.
- The main issue with CPS contract is that several beneficiary issues that need answering specifically by the CPS are not responded to, or take unreasonably long periods to be responded to.
- The SASSA finds itself in a tight situation where they cannot provide answers to their clients because CPS's general conduct is not necessarily customer-centric.
- The beneficiaries have a contract with the SASSA and know nothing about CPS. As such, when answers are not forthcoming they shift the blame onto the SASSA who cannot respond to them.

In terms of what needs to be fixed, and how, the respondent attested that:

- Proper consultation needs to be done with beneficiaries to gain their input on the payment method that suits their circumstances.
- One of the main complaints by the beneficiaries on the system relates to unauthorised deductions on their accounts, and what makes this worse is that CPS has been allowed to offer loans to beneficiaries and deduct them on payday. According to the respondent, this constitutes a conflict of interest.
- Whilst the respondent does not know the contract with CPS, these loans must be stopped. There are legal processes that need to be followed before any deductions can be made from someone's money. This current loan system exposes beneficiaries to ample forms of vulnerability with very little power if any, to act on them.
- CPS, as a player in the system, should not be allowed to act in a manner where there is a conflict of interest.

6.4 ANALYSIS OF THE CPS MEMBER OF THE MANAGEMENT SERVICE

The CPS member of the management service stated that CPS engaged in an aggressive educative marketing campaign with its internal stakeholders, i.e. the SASSA. Several demonstrations were conducted with the SASSA officials on how both biometric capturing and voice verification work. According to the respondent, the approach implemented in this programme was a top-down approach in that those affected, i.e. social grants beneficiaries were not afforded an opportunity to be heard.

The respondent mentioned that CPS used Morph Smart and Morph Touch to capture the biometric data of beneficiaries. Mobile automated teller machines (ATMs) were provided at designated pay-points for beneficiaries to access their monthly social grants with bank cards that were micro-chipped. Beneficiaries were taught on registration how to use the cards at ATMs.

In conjunction with banks in busy areas, the respondent contends that ATMs manned by both CPS staff and the SASSA officials were provided to mitigate teething problems. The respondent argues that beneficiaries have a plethora of avenues at their disposal whereby their problems are attended to. On the back of their cards there is a call-centre number which they can call free of charge; alternatively they can send an email to queries@cpsnet1.co.za or call the SASSA office. According to the respondent, CPS is not facing any challenges; it is the beneficiaries that suffer when using the cards due to the burden of being illiterate.

The respondent contended that the system of paying out beneficiaries is a world class one appropriate to the first world where levels of education are high. Given the chance to change anything, the introduction of rural mobile banks manned by well-trained personnel would be ideal.

6.5 ANALYSIS OF THE FOCUS GROUP OF DISABILITY GRANT (DG)

BENEFICIARIES

This focus group population consists of fourteen beneficiaries; two of whom have passed grade four (4) and the rest are illiterate. Three members of this population are wheelchair-bound, whilst one is deaf but has a caregiver.

According to these beneficiaries, they access their monthly social grant from the ATMs in town situated approximately 68 km away. Some access their monthly social grant from the retail stores (merchants) in town.

The introduction of the electronic payment system by the SASSA brought a burden upon this group as they could no longer access their social grants from a local pay-point. Some travel with their children or grandchildren to town in order for the latter to assist them with the withdrawal of their social grant amount from the ATM, since they are not able to use these. However, the cost of transport is high, at R48.00 for a return trip, and this cost is doubled for these beneficiaries who have to bring someone along. The respondents find this system more costly than the previous system of cash payment, which was easier and brought payment closer to the people.

According to this group, when withdrawing from ATMs they cannot access the full social grant amount since the ATM has a limit of R1 000 per day. By implication, those who receive R1 350 per month have to go to town twice in order to access their monthly social grants, which are coupled with service fees to further reduce their already small grant amount. Some mentioned that they are dependent on security guards at ATMs since they are unable to operate the machines by themselves. The wheelchair-bound beneficiary sends a child to collect his monthly social grant amount, as it is difficult for him to travel in a taxi.

The group stated that they had never been trained to use the ATMs nor had they been consulted on the introduction of the new payment method. There have also never been any ATMs installed in their village for ease of access to their monthly social grants. They claimed that their councillor had informed them that the cash payment had been out-phased and that new SASSA cards had been implemented. This is how they came to learn of this electronic payment system. The group also mentioned that there is one ATM located in the Mooiplaas Hotel, to which a return trip is R20. Even there

assistance is not provided, and they have to depend on a passer-by who may or may not be willing to assist with the ATM. Since they are vulnerable, those who assist these beneficiaries sometimes do not give over to them their full social grant amount.

In terms of monthly social grant payment where an amount due to a beneficiary is not paid in full, the beneficiaries has to visit a local office in town, but the shortfall will continue and most beneficiaries matters remain unresolved and beneficiaries have to live with these short-payments. Consequently, there is no customer care service at all.

6.6 ANALYSIS OF THE FOCUS GROUP OF OLD AGE (OA) BENEFICIARIES

Included in the study was a population of twelve (12) elderly people. This group has experienced hardship since the payment has been made by the SASSA. The group stated that they had never been informed about the electronic payment system before its implementation. Additionally, they were never afforded an opportunity to make an input to this payment method. The group was of the view that they need these social grants, as these are their only source of income; therefore they merely comply even though they are unhappy with the system.

The members of the group mentioned that they do not complain about whatever amount they receive because they have a fear of losing what they do receive. The majority of the group does not know how to use an ATM, thus they use a retail store (merchant). In terms of customer care, this group's problem is a lack of support by an official. This group utilises PINs, which were created for them during registration, and which are kept in their identity documents. The group commends the staff at retail stores, as they show them which buttons to press in order to access their monthly social grants. Some members go with their siblings who assist in the entering of the PIN, and they have to bear transport costs for both of them. Some members explained that, at times, when they are at the ATMs people refuse to help them, claiming that they are barred by the law from punching in PINs for beneficiaries. The appeal from this group is for an ATM or pay-team to come into their village and bring these social grants closer to where the people live or stay.

On a more positive note, those receiving grants from retail stores felt that they voluntarily buy from those retail stores and are not compelled to. In addition, the group

expressed appreciation that they are now able to access the social grants anywhere in the country, on any day of the week.

6.7 ANALYSIS OF THE FOCUS GROUP OF CHILD SUPPORT GRANT (CSG) BENEFICIARIES

This group, with a population of fourteen (14) aged between 18 and 40 years, stated that they do not find electronic payment beneficial due to short payments emanating from service fees, the amount of R50 required to keep the bank account active, airtime deductions, transport costs of going to town, and electricity deductions. The group also complained about loan deductions as well as insurance, since the SASSA offers them these loans and insurance, though when the time comes to make a claim, the SASSA local officials deny any knowledge of these.

This group finds it easy to use the ATMs and do not experience any difficulties with PIN codes. They mentioned that banked beneficiaries are not accepted at retail stores and they find this to be a problem as the SASSA, during its marketing, had stated that beneficiaries would be able to utilise multiple channels of access. The group acknowledged that they are able to use any ATM to access their monthly social grant. However, on the first day of the month the queues are extremely long and they have to arrive in the early hours of the morning in order to be able to do their business in town and still get a taxi home before dark.

The group stated that there is a pay-team that comes into the neighbouring village on the eleventh (11th) of each month to pay cash; however its arrival has no significance as by then people have long since been paid from the banks and merchants. The respondents expressed their desire that an ATM be installed in their village to enable them to access their monthly social grants. Alternatively, their local general dealer could be capacitated to become a merchant in order for him or her to disburse social grant payments.

Some respondents in this group voiced feelings of hurt and frustration at not being able to receive their monthly social grants from the ATMs whilst the SASSA claims to have paid their social grants to CPS. They mention that after long and hard efforts to

follow up, including via the SASSA offices and the making of telephone calls, they give up, resulting in them having to apply anew.

The group stated that they would like to see both the elderly and the disabled receiving their social grants locally instead of being forced to go into town and become vulnerable to criminals. They appealed that the elderly and disabled be treated with dignity and respect.

The respondents mentioned that the introduction of the electronic system was imposed on them and, fearful of losing their social grants, they took up the payment cards. There were neither resources nor training conducted for beneficiaries of the new electronic payment system. Telephone calls made to the toll-free number on the card are not answered and this number is not free to call from cellular phones but in the village there are no Telkom lines. The group called for the reinstatement of the previous system whereby they received their full grant amounts without short-payment.

6.8 RESEARCHER FINDINGS

1. The research shows that the SASSA's approach to the implementation of the electronic payment system was a top-down approach wherein the public were not afforded the opportunity to be heard. The social grants beneficiaries (affected party) were pushed to accept the electronic payment system irrespective of their inability to utilise it.
2. The research further shows that the SASSA employees feel similarly to the beneficiaries as the SASSA managers express frustration caused by their inability to serve their clients (beneficiaries) with dignity and respect owing to limited knowledge and access to the electronic payment system solutions.
3. Social grants beneficiaries are exposed or made vulnerable to all sorts of criminal elements, and they are not cared for. The Bill of Rights of the Constitution (1996) states that this is a violation of first generation rights.

4. Even though the social grants beneficiaries appreciate their ability to access their monthly social grants anywhere in the country, 100% of the beneficiaries are not satisfied with the electronic payment system, the main causes being:
 - (i) The cost of transport that they are subjected to on a monthly basis in order to access their social grants.
 - (ii) Their inability to utilise ATMs, which makes them vulnerable to criminals.
 - (iii) Non-availability of the SASSA customer care personnel at ATMs.
 - (iv) Inability to receive prompt responses in relation to their queries.
 - (v) The long queues that they are subjected to.
5. The SASSA marketed the implementation of electronic payment only after the appointment of a service provider. The marketing itself was merely to give beneficiaries a 'feel good' sense, and has not afforded the public any space and scope to influence, direct, or own the initiative. Cornwall (2008:7) argues that public participation is not a privilege but is a basic right that is fundamental to claiming other rights.
6. The study shows that a lack of knowledge or inability of beneficiaries to utilise the ATMs, or deductions, causes the SASSA call centre to be flooded with complaints from the populace of social grants. It is interesting to note that all respondents agree that, with a concerted effort for public participation, complaints could have been eliminated.
7. The SASSA did not do a feasibility study on the implementation of e-governance to assess whether its clients would be able to access their monthly social grants but merely put its administrative processes as a priority instead of clients' abilities. Authentic and empowering public participation would have enabled beneficiaries to participate meaningfully in this system. DPSA (2007a) asserts that any public institution intending to use ICT should do a feasibility study first, and the needs of customers should be put at the forefront.

6.9 SUMMARY

E-government must be *accessible, interactive, transactional* and *transformational*, and services offered electronically should not be seen as new but rather as additional strategies to save time, for convenience, cost reduction and equitable distribution of services. The lack of grassroots and context-specific participation strategies, relevant to local users' capacity to participate remains a challenge. E-government must take into account the needs of the society, the developmental goals of the State and the empowerment of its citizens. We need to ask: when; for whom will we use e-governance services and why?

This chapter focussed on a development strategy introduced by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), wherein an electronic payment system is implemented to pay all social grant recipients. The strategy implemented by the SASSA has opportunities and challenges for both citizens and the State in a society that experiences a digital divide. A selection of strategy brings more questions than answers to the fore as it raises two issues that are at stake, namely *inclusivity* and *representativeness*. An appropriate citizen participation strategy at the level of citizen power, the consequence of which will be improved service delivery free from complaints and protestations, is ideal for the SASSA.

The SASSA only focusses on its "self-administrative matters" and little concern has been shown for beneficiaries. True as this may be, at the SASSA strategy is still ineffective and therefore the public is denied the space and scope to *influence, direct, control* and *own* decision-making processes. The researcher argues that development demands action from a community to improve its current situation from a less desirable to a more desirable one. The SASSA decision to implement the electronic payment system had numerous benefits, not only for the SASSA and its clients, but also for tax-payers and the nation in general. However, the SASSA strategy defeated these benefits through its failure to implement authentic and empowering public participation but rather opting for a top-down approach.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that contribute to complaints by social grants beneficiaries against the SASSA. The hypothesis of the study is that **authentic and empowering public participation is a primary source of strength for the success of the SASSA's electronic payment system**. Authentic and empowering public participation will enable social grants beneficiaries to influence, direct, control, and own the electronic payment system implemented by the SASSA for both their own good and for that of the nation.

Before this study was completed, Diseko (2014:3) stated that the dust has now settled on the SASSA case, meaning that the SASSA can hopefully get the grant money to the people who need it. According to Diseko (2014:3), the Constitutional Court ruled that the SASSA's decision to award the contract to CPS was "constitutionally invalid" on two grounds. Firstly, empowerment credentials have not been confirmed by the SASSA; secondly, the bidders' notice that the SASSA published was not sufficiently clear as to what it wanted in terms of biometric verification. The SASSA was ordered to initiate a new tender process within thirty (30) days of the court order and provide quarterly reports to the court. It has been intriguing to follow the SASSA's electronic payment system along with its awarding of the tender. The researcher has noted that the SARB has declared the use of biometrics illegal in the public banking system.

On the basis of the analysis of the research findings, the researcher can make recommendations to assist the SASSA in reducing or even eliminating complaints from social grants beneficiaries. Occurrences like these, where the decision-making process is not authentic and empowering, impact negatively on service delivery. If the public is allowed scope to *influence, direct, control* and *own* decisions made for its own development and welfare, then accountability becomes a shared responsibility. If the public adopts this culture, then the concept of influencing, directing, controlling and owning decision-making processes the community-based development becomes a reality.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.2.1 Mode, Typology and Level of Public Participation

Based on the information gathered, as well as findings made- by the researcher the following is concluded:

- (a) According to Oakley and Marsden's (1984) four models of public participation, the SASSA approach is anti-participatory wherein voluntary contribution from the public to a programme is afforded, but must not be expected to shape programme content or outcomes.
- (b) In terms of Pretty, *et al's* (1995) seven typologies, the SASSA's public participation approach is passive participation wherein the public is merely told what is to happen from the top (authority), leaving them clueless, frustrated and powerless.
- (c) Arnstein's (1969:218) public participation ladder indicates how public participation differs in scope and depth, moving from manipulation (level 8) to public control (level 1). It can be concluded that the SASSA public participation is manipulative and on level 8.

People should be treated as if they are the only customers or clients on earth, so that the 'people first' concept can be put into operation and become a reality (Burkey, 2002). Gwala (2011:55) mentions that authentic and empowering public participation allows the public to participate in economic development, political education, and in the administration of its local structures with the purpose of becoming change agents who influence, direct, control and own development in their area, in line with the concept of a better life for all. If the public is allowed this scope in its own development, then monitoring and evaluation becomes a shared responsibility and good governance is achieved (Mchunu, 2012:60). Social grants beneficiaries would not complain to the SASSA and be made vulnerable if they were afforded an opportunity to participate in the planning of the electronic payment method.

Mchunu (2012:16) mentions that participation by the public raises hope for a positive future, in particular for the poorest of the poor and the marginalised. Chambers (1997), Korten (1990), and Theron (2008) argue that the inclusion of the beneficiaries in

development enables participants to become self-reliant, empowered, and assertive about becoming masters of their own development (Theron, 2009:112). Cornwall and Coelho (2007:9) assert that authentic and empowering participation enables the marginalised to enter and engage in participatory arenas, not to mention that authentic and empowering public participation is always based on the notion of freedom of speech and association.

Public participation is seen as a means to overcome governmental deficits, reduce information gaps, and build consensus around policy. It also leads to smoother implementation of State policies, ensures accountability and transparency in governance, and enhances the credibility and sustainability of programmes and developing countries' global competitiveness (Davids, 2005:20; Theron, 2008:41). The SASSA is not enjoying the benefits mentioned above due to a lack of public participation in its electronic payment system.

Public participation is a standard practice that does away with out-dated top-down methods of governance (Theron, 2009:113). The public needs to be mobilised for a common cause and be made custodians of the development and decision-making process. Briand (2007:290) asserts that the public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives.

7.2.2 Public Participation Strategy – An Appropriate Mix

Theron (2009:121-125) mentions four building blocks for development analysis, namely (i) public participation, which is concerned with human development, dignity and self-esteem; (ii) a social learning process which looks at embracing errors and learning from failures; (iii) empowerment, which focuses on skills, abilities and equipping people for sound decision-making and the transfer of power; and (iv) sustainable development which looks at present needs without compromising future generational needs. These building blocks of development should be drivers of the SASSA's planning of an electronic payment system. Buckey (1993:56) agrees and states that public participation empowers people by way of developing their skills and abilities so that they can negotiate with the delivery system and make their own

decisions in terms of their own developmental needs and priorities (Oakley, 1991:9; Theron *et al* 2007, in Theron, 2009:121).

Kumar (2002:26) mentions that employing a spectrum enables a change agent to understand the extent of disparities in the participation process regarding control between the local people and outsiders. This control is measured as moving from 1 (passive participation) to 7 (self-mobilisation), as reflected in table 2.1 on page 37. At 1 the span of control by the local people is minimal and outsiders dominate, yet moving from 7 to 1 the span of control by outsiders is minimised and local people dominate the process. Moving from 7 to 1 is how authentic and empowering public participation is attained. The distinction made above is in line with the IAP2 Spectrum and Oakley's (1991:7) interpretation of the concept of public participation being viewed as a means to an end or an end in itself (Theron, 2009:118). Kotzé and Kotzé (1997:61-69; 2008:76-99) in Theron (2009:121) add that public participation as both a means and an end in the process of development must be understood holistically and multi-dimensionally against the backdrop of different environments and dynamics of development.

De Beer and Swanepoel (1998:20) state that, since public participation is a community development model, it demands action from a community to improve its current situation from a less desirable to a more desirable one. The World Bank (1996b:9) warns that there is no existing perfect model for public participation. Chambers (2002) in Theron and Mchunu (2014:121-127) supports this, cautioning that, due to this lack of a strategic "blueprint", public participation strategy calls for the intensive training of change agents (Theron, 2008:1-22; Burkey, 1993:73-114). Theron (2009:126) further suggests that, to narrow the gap between rhetoric and reality, community stakeholders, as local experts, should be part of the process of planning and identifying appropriate public participation strategies.

Theron (2009:127) argues that a strategy brings more questions than answers to the fore as it raises two issues that are at stake, namely *inclusivity* and *representativeness*. Friedman (1993:2) agrees stating that when the level and inclusivity of these two essential elements are both highly questionable and cannot be adequately responded to, then a call must be made for each situation to have its own relevant combination

of strategy since there is no best strategy available in the development market (Theron, 2009:127).

A possible solution to this problem of strategy, as Theron *et al* (2007:11) suggest, will be for public participation practitioners to adapt the 'IAP2 principles' and the 'spectrum' to apply to their development of public participation strategies and tools. The spectrum of public participation leads to different levels of influence of public impact on decision-making (Theron, 2009:127). Gwala (2011:8) echoes this view, stating that public participation facilitators must always (first) assess the local context(s) before an 'appropriate mix' of strategies can be decided upon. Appropriate strategies will ensure that the public is provided with the scope to influence, direct, control and even own development interventions and decision-making processes.

For any form of development to be successful, authentic and empowering public participation should occur. Public participation does not have an agreed-upon definition and thus is subject to several interpretations which can cause it, in some instances, to become a mere 'buzzword.' Effective and efficient application of public participation rests on an appropriate application of the IAP2 (2007) core values and the Manilla Declaration (1989). These values need to be understood and applied in a spectrum of public participation that increases the level of participation. The application of an incremental spectrum of public participation culminates in an appropriate mix of strategy selected for a particular community as strategies of public participation vary from one community to another and one context to another.

7.3 SUMMARY

The SASSA's decision to implement the electronic payment system had numerous benefits, not only for the SASSA and its clients, but also for taxpayers and the nation in general. The SASSA's slogan, "paying the right social grant to the right person at the right time and place, NJALO!" was to be realised through this payment system. However, the SASSA's strategy defeated these benefits through its own failure to implement authentic and empowering public participation and rather opting for a top-down approach. As stated in the previous section, SARB has now declared the use of biometrics in public banking as illegal. The whole process of biometric life verification

would have been properly guided if SARB had been consulted prior to the awarding of the tender. Equally, salient concerns expressed by the social grant populace on the radical implementation of the electronic payment system would have been alleviated. The unending complaints of beneficiaries would also have been avoided.

The hypothesis of this study is that authentic and empowering ***public participation is a primary source of strength for the success of the SASSA's electronic payment system*** and this has been verified through this study. The IAP2 core values for public participation, mentioned in chapter one, that are meant to serve as a touchstone for public participation principles, priorities and practices are confirmed in this study.

Chapter two of this study traced public participation from participatory democracy and argued that public participation is complex and has no single definition and strategy. It was further argued in this chapter that public participation is the first of the four building blocks of community development (Theron, 2009:121).

Chapter three traced e-governance from the evolution of ICT and e-government and argued that ICT has been proven to be a tool that can bring about the realisation of good governance. However, e-governance, although having such potential, faces the digital divide, which hampers its full implementation. A stakeholder strategy is required to ensure that no one is excluded during the implementation of e-governance. The discussions in this chapter called for authentic and empowering public participation, within which the public is ultimately enabled to influence, direct, control and own the development intervention.

Chapter four discussed the legislative framework of e-government; assessed e-governance in South Africa based on the PCIP Roadmap, and concluded with good governance. The use of ICT has to be regulated by government and ensured to be safe, secure and free from manipulation, thus a regulatory framework is necessary. It can be concluded that successful implementation of e-governance calls for an appropriate legislative framework which must be tested against the PCIP Roadmap and good governance principles, as well as the Batho Pele principles wherein the public is consulted with the rule of law applied, and involved in empowering public participation wherein the public influences, directs, controls and eventually owns the process.

Chapter five presented a case study of the SASSA in the Eastern Cape e-governance. De Villiers (2001:159-160) states that the basic principles of public participation are “proactivity, inclusiveness, shared responsibility, openness, access, transparency, and respect” for public input. These principles call for those in authority to genuinely listen to public inputs and to be open to possible influence by the public. In doing so the public will be able to *direct, influence, control* and *own* the development or electronic payment method offered to them, instead of being unwillingly made to use it.

“What gives real meaning to popular participation is the collective effort by the people concerned in an organised framework to pool their efforts to attain objectives they set for themselves” (Burkey, 1993:48). In this regard participation is viewed as an active process in which the participants take initiatives and take action that is stimulated by their own thinking and deliberation and over which they can exert effective control.

Chapter six focussed on data-gathering, analysis and interpretation of the findings. The hypothesis of this study is that public participation is a primary source of strength for the success of the SASSA’s electronic payment system. An authentic and empowering public participation programme will enable social grants beneficiaries to *own* the electronic payment system implemented for both their own good and for that of the nation.

In conclusion, citizens would like to live in a State where the government has an evident concern for the country’s people and a commitment to foster a better life for all. Governments are elected by ordinary people in the hope that they themselves and their wishes will be respected, and that those in positions of responsibility will give an account of their actions and allow ordinary people to participate in decision-making processes. For any government to be efficient and effective, it must be aware of the minimum requirements to be met in order for it to be seen as a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, as reflected in the Freedom Charter of the African National Congress (ANC) (1955).

An appropriate mix of strategies needs to be implemented, taking into account the local realities, context-specific issues, indigenous knowledge systems, and meaning-giving contexts of the beneficiary community. True as this may be, at the SASSA strategy is still ineffective and therefore the public is denied the space and scope to

influence, direct, control and own decision-making processes and community-based development. The public at its educational level, political maturity and stability, transformational leadership, level of responsibility and willingness to learn, must be allowed to participate. The development demands action from a community to improve its current situation from a less desirable to a more desirable one. Level 8 of public participation, which takes away power from the public, will cause the public to remain puzzled, complaining and disgruntled, and may even be destructive as stated in table 2.1 on page 37. This chapter has offered recommendations that, if applied correctly, would capacitate social grant beneficiaries to assume their rightful position of influencing, directing, controlling and owning decision-making processes and developments.

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ANNEXURE 1

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW FOR MOOIPLAAS DISABILITY GRANT RECIPIENTS

CONTEXTUALISING E-GOVERNANCE IN THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DEBATE: THE SASSA ELECTRONIC PAYMENT SYSTEM IN MOOIPLAAS
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Date of interview: _____

Time of interview: _____

Name of interviewer: _____

Instructions to read before the interview is conducted

- Confirm if you are in receipt of a disability grant
- There is no right or wrong answers but your personal opinion is sought
- For confidentiality and anonymity purposes your name is not required
- The purpose of this interview is to fulfil the requirements of a Master's degree in Public Administration at the University of Stellenbosch
- Participation in this study is entirely your choice
- The information provided may assist the South African Social Security Agency in improving on its disbursement of social grants
- The findings of this study will be made available to you upon request
- For more information, clarity and enquiries, please contact Luzuko Qina at (043) 707 6300 or luzukoq@sassa.gov.za

Consent signed _____ at Mooiplaas Village near East London on this ____ day of _____ 2014 (the signature is optional, some respondents may prefer to give a verbal consent)

Thank you for taking part in this study

QUESTIONS

1. Who is paying your social grant?

2. How are these social grants paid to you?

3. Were you afforded an opportunity to express your views on how you would prefer to receive your social grants, if yes, how?

4. Were there any provisions made to ensure that you are able to access your social grant given your medical condition?

5. What resources were made available for you to access your social grant?

6. What challenges are you experiencing in your current method of payment?

7. Do you receive assistance in relation to your queries, access, information, and from whom?

8. How much time does it take for you to receive feedback on your enquiry?

9. What benefits are you enjoying in your current method of payment?

10. If you were given an opportunity to turn things around what is it that you would change and why?

ANNEXURE 2

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW FOR MOOIPLAAS OLD AGE GRANT RECIPIENTS

<p>CONTEXTUALISING E-GOVERNANCE IN THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DEBATE: THE SASSA ELECTRONIC PAYMENT SYSTEM IN MOOIPLAAS</p>

Date of interview: _____

Time of interview: _____

Name of interviewer: _____

Instructions to read before the interview is conducted

- Confirm if you are in receipt of an old age grant
- There is no right or wrong answers but your personal opinion is sought
- For confidentiality and anonymity purposes your name is not required
- The purpose of this interview is to fulfil the requirements of a Master's degree in Public Administration at the University of Stellenbosch
- Participation in this study is entirely your choice
- The information provided may assist the South African Social Security Agency in improving on its disbursement of social grants
- The findings of this study will be made available to you upon request
- For more information, clarity and enquiries, please contact Luzuko Qina at (043) 707 6300 or luzukoq@sassa.gov.za

Consent signed _____ at Mooiplaas Village near East London on this ____ day of _____ 2014 (the signature is optional, some respondents may prefer to give a verbal consent)

Thank you for taking part in this study

QUESTIONS

1 Who is paying your social grant?

2. How are these social grants paid to you?

3. Were you afforded an opportunity to express your views on how you would prefer to receive your social grants, if yes, how?

4. Were there any provisions made to ensure that you are able to access your social grant?

5. What resources were made available for you to access your social grant?

6. What challenges are you experiencing in your current method of payment?

7. Do you receive assistance in relation to your queries, access, information, and from whom?

8. How much time does it take for you to receive feedback on your enquiry?

9. What benefits are you enjoying in your current method of payment?

10. If you were given an opportunity to turn things around what is it that you would change and why?

ANNEXURE 3

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW FOR MOOIPLAAS CHILD SUPPORT GRANT RECIPIENTS

CONTEXTUALISING E-GOVERNANCE IN THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DEBATE: THE SASSA ELECTRONIC PAYMENT SYSTEM IN MOOIPLAAS

Date of interview: _____

Time of interview: _____

Name of interviewer: _____

Instructions to read before the interview is conducted

- Confirm if you are in receipt of a child support grant
- There is no right or wrong answers but your personal opinion is sought
- For confidentiality and anonymity purposes your name is not required
- The purpose of this interview is to fulfil the requirements of a Master's degree in Public Administration at the University of Stellenbosch
- Participation in this study is entirely your choice
- The information provided may assist the South African Social Security Agency in improving on its disbursement of social grants
- The findings of this study will be made available to you upon request
- For more information, clarity and enquiries, please contact Luzuko Qina at (043) 707 6300 or luzukoq@sassa.gov.za

Consent signed _____ at Mooiplaas Village near East London on this ____ day of _____ 2014 (the signature is optional, some respondents may prefer to give a verbal consent)

Thank you for taking part in this study

QUESTIONS

1. Who is paying your social grant?

2. How are these social grants paid to you?

3. Were you afforded an opportunity to express your views on how you would prefer to receive your social grants, if yes, how?

4. Were there any provisions made to ensure that you are able to access your social grant?

5. What resources were made available for you to access your social grant?

6. What challenges are you experiencing in your current method of payment?

7. Do you receive assistance in relation to your queries, access, information, and from whom?

8. How much time does it take for you to receive feedback on your enquiry?

9. What benefits are you enjoying in your current method of payment?

10. If you were given an opportunity to turn things around what is it that you would change and why?

ANNEXURE 4

PERSONAL INTERVIEW WITH SASSA GENERAL MANAGER

CONTEXTUALISING E-GOVERNANCE IN THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DEBATE: THE SASSA ELECTRONIC PAYMENT SYSTEM IN MOOIPLAAS
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Date of interview: _____

Time of interview: _____

Name of interviewer: _____

Instructions to read before the interview is conducted

- Confirm if you are a General Manager employed by SASSA
- There is no right or wrong answers but your personal opinion is sought
- For confidentiality and anonymity purposes your name is not required
- The purpose of this interview is to fulfil the requirements of a Master's degree in Public Administration at the University of Stellenbosch
- Participation in this study is entirely your choice
- The information provided may assist the South African Social Security Agency in improving on its disbursement of social grants
- The findings of this study will be made available to you upon request
- For more information, clarity and enquiries, please contact Luzuko Qina at (043) 707 6300 or luzukoq@sassa.gov.za

Consent signed _____ at Mooiplaas Village near East London on this ____ day of _____ 2014 (the signature is optional, some respondents may prefer to give a verbal consent)

Thank you for taking part in this study

QUESTIONS

1. SASSA in 2012 pronounced on the introduction of biometric re-registration of all social grants recipients and a subsequent electronic payment. Can you explain and describe strategies employed by SASSA on this programme?

2. Were social grant populace afforded an opportunity to be heard on re-registration and subsequent electronic payment system?

3. Were there any measures taken to ensure that beneficiaries do access their monthly social grants?

4. What resources were made available to social grants beneficiaries to access their monthly social grants, in terms of skills, infrastructure and development?

5. Is there any assistance provided to beneficiaries in relation to queries, access, information from whom, and what is the turn-around-time?

6. What challenges are facing the institution in terms of the current method/s of payment?

7. If you were given an opportunity to turn things around what is it that you would change and how?

ANNEXURE 5

PERSONAL INTERVIEW WITH SASSA MANAGER

CONTEXTUALISING E-GOVERNANCE IN THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DEBATE: THE SASSA ELECTRONIC PAYMENT SYSTEM IN MOOIPLAAS
--

Date of interview: _____

Time of interview: _____

Name of interviewer: _____

Instructions to read before the interview is conducted

- Confirm if you are a Manager employed by SASSA
- There is no right or wrong answers but your personal opinion is sought
- For confidentiality and anonymity purposes your name is not required
- The purpose of this interview is to fulfil the requirements of a Master's degree in Public Administration at the University of Stellenbosch
- Participation in this study is entirely your choice
- The information provided may assist the South African Social Security Agency in improving on its disbursement of social grants
- The findings of this study will be made available to you upon request
- For more information, clarity and enquiries, please contact Luzuko Qina at (043) 707 6300 or luzukoq@sassa.gov.za

Consent signed _____ at Mooiplaas Village near East London on this ____ day of _____ 2014 (the signature is optional, some respondents may prefer to give a verbal consent)

Thank you for taking part in this study

QUESTIONS

1. SASSA in 2012 pronounced on the introduction of biometric re-registration of all social grants recipients and a subsequent electronic payment. Can you describe and explain strategies employed by SASSA on this programme?

2. Were social grant populace afforded an opportunity to be heard on re-registration and subsequent electronic payment system?

3. Were there any measures taken to ensure that beneficiaries do access their monthly social grants?

4. What resources were made available to social grants beneficiaries to access their monthly social grants, in terms of skills, infrastructure and development?

5. Is there any assistance provided to beneficiaries in relation to queries, access, information from whom, and what is the turn-around-time?

6. What challenges are facing the institution in terms of the current method/s of payment, in particular customer care unit?

7. If you were given an opportunity to turn things around what is it that you would change and how?

ANNEXURE 6

PERSONAL INTERVIEW WITH CASH PAYMENT SERVICES MANAGER

CONTEXTUALISING E-GOVERNANCE IN THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION DEBATE: THE SASSA ELECTRONIC PAYMENT SYSTEM IN MOOIPLAAS
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Date of interview: _____

Time of interview: _____

Name of interviewer: _____

Instructions to read before the interview is conducted

- Confirm if you are a Manager employed by Cash Payment Services (CPS)
- There is no right or wrong answers but your personal opinion is sought
- For confidentiality and anonymity purposes your name is not required
- The purpose of this interview is to fulfil the requirements of a Master's degree in Public Administration at the University of Stellenbosch
- Participation in this study is entirely your choice
- The information provided may assist the South African Social Security Agency in improving on its disbursement of social grants
- The findings of this study will be made available to you upon request
- For more information, clarity and enquiries, please contact Luzuko Qina at (043) 707 6300 or luzukoq@sassa.gov.za

Consent signed _____ at Mooiplaas Village near East London on this ____ day of _____ 2014 (the signature is optional, some respondents may prefer to give a verbal consent)

Thank you for taking part in this study

QUESTIONS

1. SASSA in 2012 pronounced a joint programme with CPS on the introduction of biometric re-registration of all social grants recipients and a subsequent electronic payment. Can you explain and describe strategies CPS employed on this programme?

2. Were social grant populace afforded an opportunity to be heard on re-registration and subsequent electronic payment system?

3. Were there any measures taken to ensure that beneficiaries do access their monthly social grants?

4. What resources were made available to social grants beneficiaries to access their monthly social grants, in terms of skills, infrastructure and development?

5. Is there any assistance provided to beneficiaries in relation to queries, access, information from whom, and what is the turn-around-time?

6. What challenges are facing CPS in terms of the current method/s of payment?

7. If you were given an opportunity to turn things around what is it that you would change and how?
