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AN EVALUATION OF THE PERFORMANCE OF ZIMBABWE'S PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY INFORMATION CENTRES (PCICs) AND THEIR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT

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By

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN INFORMATION SCIENCE

in the

Department of Information Science, Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and

Information Technology

August 2014

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Declaration

I, Isaiah Munyoro declare that:

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Supervisor: Prof. Archie Dick

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my children Tatenda, Soserai and Kudzai who I hope will be encouraged to aspire for greater things, not forgetting my wife, Pedzisai Munyoro, who also completed her PhD thesis at the same time. I further dedicate this thesis to my late parents who strongly supported my early education through sheer determination.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The Parliament of Zimbabwe Reforms started in 1997 and included the need to reform the information services. This involved a major exercise to establish Parliamentary Constituency Information Centres (PCICs) in all the previous 120 constituencies, during the life of the Fifth Parliament from 2000 to 2005. The idea behind the establishment of PCICs was two-fold: to provide public access to parliamentary generated information and to act as a platform for public participation. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the performance of PCICs in information delivery. Reviews of relevant literature focused on the need for rights to access information, information needs, the concepts of information services and information centre, and fundamental theories and investigations about the inter-related nature of information delivery. For the empirical aspect of the study, the researcher used questionnaires for Members of Parliament (MPs), Office Assistants (OAs), and constituents; interviewed parliament staff and development partners; conducted site visits for observation; and analysed relevant documents.

Data indicated that, although the majority of the constituents were satisfied with information obtained from PCICs, information delivery is a critical concern, because of its inadequacy and lack of currency. The main parliamentary publication that is found at PCICs is the Hansard and is in print format. Information resources are not accessible in various formats, such as television, radio, newspapers, bulletins, and on the Parliament of Zimbabwe's website. The distribution of publications to constituents is not equally balanced, because access to PCICs is affected by office location and political partisanship. There is a communication gap between the Parliament of Zimbabwe (PoZ) and PCICs in centre management, resulting in low morale among OAs. Capacity building programs for OAs are non-existent. Constituents view PCICs as development centres and not only as information dissemination and public participation centres, which is why they expect information from other government departments.

Several lessons were learned from this study. Most challenges encountered by parliament in disseminating legislative information to constituents and providing a platform for public

participation are similar in nature. There is no clarity between PoZ administration and MPs over the management of PCICs. Given the necessary support, PCICs could however be a powerful tool for constituents to access parliamentary information. This calls for the adoption of an appropriate model for parliamentary information delivery. It is against this backdrop that the current PCIC performance was critically reviewed and an appropriate model proposed to take PCICs in a new direction.

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AIPA:	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
CDF:	Constituency Development Fund (s)
CoP:	Clerk of Parliament
DSTv:	Digital Satellite Television
ICT:	Information and Communication Technology
IDRC:	International Development Research Centre
IFLA:	International Federation Library Associations and Institutes
INASP:	International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications
IPU:	Inter Parliamentary Union
MP:	Member of Parliament
NGOs:	Non - Governmental Organisations
OA:	Office Assistant
PCIC:	Parliamentary Constituency Information Centre
POSA:	Public Order and Security Act
PoZ:	Parliament of Zimbabwe
PR:	Public Relations
PRC:	Parliamentary Reform Committee
PRMC:	Parliamentary Reforms Modernisation Committee
UNDESA:	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development
WBI:	World Bank Institute

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

For a long time many parliaments have lagged behind in their ability to inform and interact with citizens, or be effective as public institutions. To involve the public in parliamentary activities, a number of countries introduced new strategies aimed at informing the public about developments in parliament and enabled them to interact with their local Member of Parliament (MP). This two way communication between the MP and the electorate within the constituency provides valuable information necessary for effective decision making within the legislature. The International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (2011) has constantly referred to this as Evidence Informed Policy Making. Parliamentary functions in many democratic countries are becoming more complex as the electorate's political consciousness and knowledge of their rights and responsibilities is changing and transforming. There has been an increasing demand for parliamentary information required for: participation in parliamentary debates; maintenance of formal and informal conversations with colleagues and constituents about matters of mutual concern; and contributions to the legislative processes (Kurtz, 1997).

There are many and varied informational related developments, or reforms being implemented in parliaments globally, regionally and nationally. According to the World Bank Institute (2007), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is one of the key players in the field of parliamentary development, with its wider programme of work on democratic governance. Institutional reform work focuses on procedures and the internal organisation of MPs to provide the basic capacity for parliaments to function. This has included support for transcription services, libraries and information systems. For individual parliamentarians, the UNDP has provided induction seminars, as well as technical training on legislative drafting. Alongside these activities, the UNDP has also published a number of parliamentary handbooks aimed at considering aspects of: poverty reduction; improved relationships between parliaments and the executive, and parliaments and civil society organisations (WBI, 2007).

Governments and Parliaments continue to face challenging demands from civil society and the general public, who are calling for reforms. In recent years, a number of parliaments have implemented changes even in areas beyond their jurisdiction. Such reform efforts have aimed at reducing costs and refocusing on many parliamentary activities to change perceptions and promote different governance roles. For example, according to Sawi (2008), the Burundi Parliament has been involved in conflict resolution. Development Agencies, as well as Security Agencies have also been involved through the use of Constituency Development Funds. Batley (1999) describes these reforms as being driven by: pressure from economic crises and structural adjustments; donor imposition; domestic demands for change amplified by growing political pluralism; and emulation of reforms in other countries. Reforms may address whole institutions or departments within institutions; and may pose a number of fundamental strategic challenges to the provision of parliamentary information services (UNRISD, 2005).

The application of reforms to development policy within the information sector is viewed in a wider context of what can be termed 'informational developments' (Hamelink, 2003: 123). These developments are connected to a series of parliamentary information-related changes in social, economic, political and cultural as well as technological life. Hamelink (2003) also argued that these informational developments in parliaments do not constitute a uniform process globally, or share a common destination, because these societies differ.

The Parliament of Zimbabwe (PoZ) is one such institution that has been implementing wide ranging parliamentary reforms since 1997. Parliament is one of the three arms of the state, apart from the Executive and the Judiciary as created by the Constitution of Zimbabwe. Whereas the mandate of Parliament is derived from section 117 (2b) of the Constitution, which states:

'The legislative authority confers on the legislature the power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of Zimbabwe'.

Section 62 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No.20) provides for access to information. In particular Section 62 (1) of the new Constitution clearly states that:

"every Zimbabwean citizen or permanent resident, including juristic persons and the Zimbabwean media, has the right of access to any information held by the State or by any institution or agency of government at every level, in so far as the information is required in the interest of the public accountability."

The following sections look at information services reforms that have been implemented within the PoZ since 1996.

1.2. Parliamentary information services reforms

Three major reform reports for the PoZ information services have been identified:

- The Zimbabwe Parliamentary Information Consultancy Report by Englefield (1996);

- A Report on the Provision of Information, Analysis, Parliamentary Education, Public Relations and Information Technology Services to the Parliament of Zimbabwe by Verrier (1997); and

- Parliamentary Reform Committee Report (1997).

Although the main focus of this study is on the Parliamentary Reform Committee Report, it is important to briefly highlight the following terms of reference of the first two reform reports.

1.2.1. The Englefield Report

The terms of reference of the Englefield report were to:

- assess the needs of users of Information Services in Parliament by interviewing both existing users and non-users;

- examine the current services provided by three departments (Information, Library, and Research) and recommend how they may be made more effective in meeting current and future needs in the context of reforms envisaged by Parliament;

- make recommendations for the development of the Information Services especially ICT; and

- make recommendations on how best to 'market' Information Services to all potential users to raise awareness of the services and generate enthusiasm for their use (Englefield, 1996).

The Englefield Report managed to bring into focus and outline the proposed functions of the information services departments. These were the research, library, public relations and ICT. The ICT department improved its operation as a result of Englefield's recommendations.

1.2.2. Verrier's Report

The terms of reference of the Verrier report were to:

- implement a needs assessment of the uses of information services in Parliament;

- examine the suitability of the services provided by the four departments (library, Research, Public Relations and Information Technology) *vis-à-vis* the mission of Parliament and recommend how they may be made more effective in meeting the current and future needs in the context of the reforms envisaged by Parliament;

- make recommendations for the development of the Information Services in the area of Information Technology;

- make recommendations on how the four departments can be organised and supervised;

- identify key areas where increased quality information will strengthen the capacity of MPs to discharge their duties; and

- make recommendations on the duties of the Head of the combined Information Services department; recruitment and training required to increase the capacity of the departmental staff; and effectively manage the process of change resulting from the Parliamentary reform.

The report had 73 recommendations on reforming PoZ information services. The Verrier report was followed by the Parliamentary Reform Committee Reports produced in two volumes in 1997 and 1998 as discussed in the next section.

1.2.3. Parliamentary Reform Committee Report

One of the central reasons for undertaking the reforms was the result of increasing Civil Society Organisations calls for wider public participation and consultation in parliamentary business, making the institution more accountable; and creating the foundation for a more effective, open and visible Parliament. The PRC had observed that constituents in Zimbabwe had no forum for public consultation and debate in the various constituencies. The majority of citizens countrywide perceived Parliament as a remote and inaccessible institution. They perceived Parliament as being secretive and an institution closed to public scrutiny. This was reflected by increasing calls by constituents and other stakeholders to access their elected leaders to have meaningful and relevant input in matters of governance; and to contribute to national resource allocation.

These reforms were necessitated by the need to cause Parliament to be more responsive to the wider society. The need for more encompassing reforms culminated in the establishment of the Parliamentary Reform Committee (PRC) in 1997. Their duty was to research and recommend relevant reforms around:

- The Practice and Procedure of the House in Relation to Public Business;

- Civic participation in Parliamentary business which led to the consideration of establishing Parliament Constituency Information Centres (PCICs);

- The Committee System;

- The Legislative Process;

- Conditions of Work and Support for Members and Staff of Parliament; and

- Dress Code and Decorum (PRC, 1998).

The justification for reforming Parliament was to enable the legislature to play a constructive, meaningful and complementary role to the Executive. The PRC aptly expressed this when it observed that Parliament does not govern; and should not seek to govern. That is the role of the Executive. The role of Parliament is to: legislate; scrutinize the policies and activities of the Executive; hold the Executive accountable; and to act as a forum for democratic participation by all members of society. It should thus play a significant role in the system of checks and balances common to all parliamentary democracies (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 1998).

Following recommendations by the PRC, Mutaviri and Ncube (2003) from the Faculty of Commerce of the University of Zimbabwe did a feasibility study on the establishment of Parliamentary Constituency Information Centres for the PoZ. From the data that was gathered through written and oral submissions from the civil society, institutions, Parliamentarians, professionals and academic experts, the following were some of their findings and recommendations:

(1) Facilities required by MPs at constituency level included:

- A library in or near the office, easily accessible by all people within the constituency, to provide them with much-needed information;

- A computer and printer;

- Desks and chairs for office assistant and library users; and

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- Pamphlets.

(2) Information indicated by constituents as required at PCICs are:

- political, economic, and social issues in Zimbabwe;
- Hansard or parliamentary debates (an official verbatim publication of what transpires in Parliament); and
- policies and laws, bills and amendments.

(3) Location of PCICs to be as central as possible to the majority of constituents; and

(4) Nature and scope of PCIC activities and services should not belong to a political party that had won elections in that constituency.

The PRC report was adopted in May 1999 giving a wide range of recommendations aimed at establishing an efficient and effective Parliament capable of executing its constitutional mandate; and improving the quality of the democratic process in Zimbabwe. The main objectives in establishing PCICs as recommended by the PRC were to:

- create a meeting place between the MP and his/her constituents;
- enhance the participation of the public in the legislative process;
- strengthen the capacity of MPs to contribute effectively and meaningfully to Parliamentary proceedings;
- function as venues for committee public hearings or coordinate Public Hearings Committee and workshops for the constituency;
- give Parliament a stronger and more systematic oversight role, with emphasis on promoting greater efficiency in the management and utilization of public resources;
- provide a base for Parliament-generated information where documents like the Hansard, Order Paper, Acts and forthcoming Bills can be accessed by the public within the constituency;
- provide specific socio-economic data of the constituency; and

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- be a development coordination centre for the constituency.

Thus, the project was initiated to provide access to parliamentary information to members of the public in different constituencies to involve them in democratic processes. The main short-term objective was to improve consultation between legislators and constituents. The long-term objective was to empower constituents with knowledge around parliamentary issues and in their particular constituency to enable them to participate in the democratic processes for national development.

PCICs are wholly owned by Parliament, although MPs have been asked to help secure office space in their respective constituencies, either at local authority offices, government offices, or from private individuals (PRC Report, 1998). In order to provide unbiased information to constituents, it is important to note that PCICs are not political party offices and political party regalia, literature or objectives are not part of the collection of their information resources.

In recent studies, the idea of public participation has been a key global issue. This has led to the identification of Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation, which:

- "is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process;
- includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision;
- promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers;
- seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision;
- seeks input from participants in designing how they participate;
- provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way; and

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- communicates to participants how their input affected the decision (The International Association for Public Participation, 2011)."

Parliament embarked on a major exercise to establish these information centres in all the previous 120 constituencies, during the life of the Fifth Parliament from 2000 to 2005. The numbers of constituencies were later increased in 2008, from 120 to 270 (210 for the House of Assembly plus 60 for Senate). The mandate of PCICs was to act as an extension of Parliament at constituency level. Thus, according to the PRC report (1998), the reforms were both a self-realisation by MPs, and a response to concerns by stakeholders that Parliament was a remote institution not responsive to the public. They had generally perceived it as just a 'building' that was distant from them where politicians met to discuss issues that were not relevant to them. MPs themselves were invisible in their constituencies, only to resurface during election time.

Funding was obtained from Development Partners, such as the UNDP, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF), and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). Development partners are organisations engaged in parliamentary strengthening work and these also include some civil society organisations (Hudson, 2009). The Speaker, Hon. Emmerson Mnangagwa, set out the significance of the new PCIC plans at a Constituency Relations Workshop organised by Parliament and UNDP in October 2002:

"The representative function of parliamentary democracy is the primary objective of any popular assembly. It is identified with the expression of the popular will and representation of the majority through universal suffrage and more importantly with the fundamental duty of MPs to look after the interests of their constituents and assisting them with solving their problems, which derive from their practical needs. As parliamentarians, you need to create machinery for consulting with your constituents and involving them in decision-making in the constituency's activities. Capacity building of the electorate should therefore be an ongoing process of reciprocity" (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2003).

Echoing the need for PCICs to the implementation team, the Hon. Minister of Science and Technology, Olivia Muchena, stated:

"I would like to see a computer in every MP's constituency office so that people can come and punch buttons and get whatever they want in Shona and Ndebele" (The Chronicle, (2002).

1.2.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the provision of access to parliamentary information by constituents. This is made manifestly clear in declarations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR), the Declaration on Parliamentary Openness; and the International Federation of Libraries and Institutes (IFLA) Declarations - in particular, the IFLA Lyon Declaration in 2014 (see section 3.2). Information provision to MPs was investigated in as far as constituents provided information that enables MPs to contribute towards the parliamentary debate process. The study deals with the recommendation for the implementation of PCICs by Zimbabwe's PRC in 1997, during the life of the Fifth Parliament from 2000 to 2005. Financial resources as well as time were some of the limits of this investigation. For example, political challenges prevented the use of focus groups. Also, the researcher could not travel to very remote constituencies. However, the researcher was persistent and used the limited time and resources to collect data from relevant target groups (see section 4.5 and table 4.3).

The following section gives an overview of some special considerations for the establishment of PCICs.

1.3. Considerations for PCICs

For the PCICs to start operating, the following was deemed necessary:

1.3.1. Informatics database

The PCICs provide the informatics database of constituency and parliament-generated information where the constituents can access documents such as the Hansard, Orders

Papers, Government Gazettes and Acts and Bills. The informatics database would provide MPs with critical current information, pertaining to data in their constituencies to enable them to effectively contribute in the house. The database has variables, such as education, health, water reservoirs and animals. Data are collected and analysed using the ward as a basic unit. The research department manages the informatics database.

1.3.2. The Office Assistant (OA)

The OAs are engaged in terms of Section 9 of the Officers of Parliament (Terms of Service) Regulations, 1977, as amended. This authorizes parliament to engage persons to provide services required for the purpose of some class of work. The Section states that Office Assistants shall serve Parliament, performing duties in the PCICs. The officer shall place the whole of his/her time during which he/she is required to be on duty at the disposal of the employer. Again, subject to the agreement, the officer shall serve under the direct supervision of the Member of Parliament (Parliament of Zimbabwe Officers of Parliament *Terms of Service* Regulations, 1977).

1.3.3. Training

From time to time, Parliament should engage OAs in various training activities to equip them with the necessary skills to work more efficiently. The training includes report writing skills, computer appreciation skills and database management.

1.3.4. Setting up a library

PCICs should have a library for the constituency office with a collection of books, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, cassettes and audio-visual materials organised for use by constituents. A library is important to provide the constituents with information resources about parliament. Constituents can visit the office and read about what is happening in parliament, thereby keeping abreast with information.

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PCICs do not operate in a vacuum. There are policies that guide the operation of any media or information provider in the country. The following section gives a brief outline of Zimbabwe's information policies.

1.4. Zimbabwe's information policies

Information providers across the country operate within the regulatory framework of the National Information Policy (NIP). Information policy regulates the kind of information collected, created, organized, stored, accessed, disseminated and retained (Nnamdi, 2008). According to Niegaard (2007), national information policies are put into practice through legislation and other state initiatives, national programmes, and projects. Usually associated with government information, information policy also establishes the rules, within which private information providers and the media operate and establishes guidelines to regulate participation in the information sector. These arise from the political, economic and social needs and conditions existing within a country. Feltoe (2003) identifies some of the following NIP regulatory provisions in Zimbabwe:

- Constitution of Zimbabwe (Section 62) Amendment (No.20);

- National Libraries and Documentation Services Act (No.11 / 85);

- Censorship and Entertainment Controls Act (No. 694 / 81);

- National Archives Act (No. 8 /86);

- Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPA), (Chapter 10:27); and

- Public Order and Security Act (POSA), Chapter (11:17).

The NIP should inform PoZ's information policy. In turn, PoZ's Information Policy should guide the operation of PCICs. However, this is not the case with regards to Parliament of Zimbabwe Information's Policy.

The following section examines the motivation of the study.

1.5. Motivation of the study

There were practical problems relating to the performance of PCICs. The public perception on the performance of PCICs has been that the services are not based on proximity to the people, thereby restricting access and utilization of the services by citizens. The PRC acknowledged and recommended the establishment of PCICs to cover the existing 120 constituencies, during the fifth Parliament 2000 to 2005. Mutaviri and Ncube (2003) also did a pilot study and made recommendations on the establishment of PCICs. It would therefore be important to investigate if these recommendations were implemented in full. Press reports on the operation of PCICs indicate an unclear picture. Makamure (2011) raised the question whether the centres are really working, or serving the intended purpose. If not, what can be done for the centres to realize their potential? There is no clear visibility of PCICs through parliamentary debates, or public participation in constituencies concerning parliament business. There is also a lack of effective communication between PoZ and constituencies. Another issue of concern is the role ambiguity between PoZ and MPs as to specific functions at PCICs. There has been total lack of PCICs development and Controversy over use of Constituency Development Funds (CDFs)

Constituents' needs are satisfied through various kinds of activities, each of which require information to solve. These needs may include education, personal needs, policy formulation, business plans, agricultural inputs information, and funding for projects, common to most of the public in Zimbabwe. Whether the PCICs provide benefits relevant to the needs of the constituents and direct contributions to the Parliamentary debate process has not been evaluated. What was also unclear was whether the PCICs really exist; who the real beneficiaries are; and whether the provision of information has had any impact on the targeted recipients in terms of access, awareness, or even nature of expected impact. Nor are there any indicators against which the performance of the service can be measured and evaluated, in terms of how well PCICs are doing, or how well they are supported?

There were also theoretical shortcomings. PCICs were not sufficiently theorised in terms of established theories and models of communicating parliamentary information. The

Englefield (1996) and Verrier (1997) reports and Mutaviri and Ncube (2003) feasibility study identified practical problems but did not consider modern theories of communicating parliamentary information. Besides practical and theoretical concerns, problems about democratic participation were surfacing.

Given this background, this study is further strengthened by the need to:

- determine which PCIC model is the most effective and how best it can manage PCICs;
- Identify the driving forces / factors, such as resources (financial, human and material) that promote or hinder effective PCIC information delivery in various constituencies; and
- Identify any other vital influential factors impacting on smooth PCIC functioning.

In response to the above, it was important to take account of what happened, what is going on, where and what corrections are needed to enable project continuity for the benefit of both MPs and constituents. Because of these practical, theoretical and democratic concerns, the next section gives an overview of the research questions for the study.

1.6. The research questions

A number of fundamental research questions may be asked, and are presented as a main question with linked subsidiary questions.

1.6.1. Main research question

What theoretical insights about models of communicating parliamentary information can be gained from an evaluation of Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Constituency Information Centres, and what are the implications for practical improvements?

1.6.2. Sub-questions:

The sub-questions for this study have been divided into three broad but interrelated issues:

Sub-question number one:

What are the models for communicating parliamentary information; and what theoretical lessons can be learned from communicating parliamentary information in developing countries?

Sub-question number two:

What are the PCIC successes and failures in communicating parliamentary information to Zimbabwe's parliamentarians and citizens?

Sub-question number three:

In which practical ways can Zimbabwe's PCICs be improved as a result of new theoretical insights?

1.7. Research methodology

A mixed methodology approach (Ngulube, 2010) was used to collect and analyze data. The key information requirements of constituents determine the appropriate methods used for this study. These methods were also depended on the scope of this study (see 1.2.4). The key target groups of the study, namely Administration of Parliament, Officers of Parliament and Development partners on the one hand and MPs, OAs and constituents on the other hand justified the methods selected for this study. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data from these target groups. Questionnaires were used to collect data from OAs, MPs and constituents. In-depth interviews were conducted with development partners, the Clerk of Parliament, and officers of parliament. Document analysis, site visits, and observations were also used to collect data for the study. In addition to questionnaires

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and interviews, document analysis, site visits and observations were also used to collect data for the study. A detailed discussion of the methodology used in this study is presented in Chapter Four. The following section gives an overview of the benefits of the study.

1.8. Benefits of the study

This research is evaluative in nature, because the performance of PCICs is evaluated. In the library and information science (LIS) literature, performance evaluation benefits are often stressed. Burke (1999) explains that any evaluation benefits organisations in several ways, if well executed. Some of the benefits of this study are:

- Identification of PCIC performance strengths and weaknesses in information services delivery to direct continuous improvement;

- Examination of the existing PCIC model and a proposal for improvements, or for a more appropriate model for the country's political, and socio-economic environment;

- Facilitation of planning, decision making and policy;

- Analysis of practices or procedures in running the PCIC program for improvement;

- Arguments for the continuation of / additional funding;

- Focused findings around accountability and transparency;

- Records about what has been learned, for shareholder access;

- Creation of future planning processes;

- Generation of learning tools for personal and organizational capacity building;

- Provision of fresh administrative and monitoring insights and a deeper understanding of issues concerning MPs and constituents, for improved PCIC practice;

- Supplementation of the limited literature resources and understanding of PCIC roles in promoting access to parliamentary information and knowledge for democracy in developing countries;

- Analysis of actual achievement of institutional objectives to improve any future objectives and plans; and

- Contribution to theory. Although there is a large body of knowledge on parliamentary information (Pettigrew, 2013), there is dearth of studies on parliamentary information access that focus on the Zimbabwean context. No theories and models have been tested regarding access to parliamentary information using PCICs. This study therefore contributes to the literature by adding Zimbabwe to scholarly discourse on parliamentary information access.

The next section discusses limitations of the study.

1.9. Limitations of the study

In any research one is bound to experience some challenges. Obstacles however should not be allowed to affect the objectives of the study, with their effect being kept to the minimal. According to Lutabingwa and Nethonzhe (2006), researchers should make known the shortcomings of their research. Although the researcher managed to achieve the aims of the study, there are some unavoidable limitations. The study was limited by the following factors:

- Researcher closeness to the project, sometimes renders it difficult to be objective, possibly causing some important elements be overlooked;

- Time, work pressures and financial constraints: Engel and Salomon (1997) discovered that an evaluation can be time consuming and costly as it requires assessing changes at the level of the target groups, which can be complicated; and data gathering PCIC visits were costly, because these are scattered across the country;

- Due to Parliamentary seats and legal instruments being dominated by two major political parties, information gatherers and disseminators are often not trusted.

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Thus, impersonal contact through questionnaires was used to collect information, because the researcher expected resistance in obtaining relevant data from some key sources. Data collection tools were limited to questionnaires, interview schedules, observations and analysis of documents, to the exclusion of focus groups. The researcher, for instance had to eliminate the use of focus groups to collect data, because this needed Police clearance to invite the minimum number people to participate in a focus group discussion (see section 5.1.1 on Data Collection Challenges Encountered); and

- Use of descriptive statistics and not inferential statistics;

- The study applies to Zimbabwe. Although the findings and conclusions of the study may be useful to other countries, they cannot be generalized as valid for them.

Some of the above limitations were overcome through the researcher's determination to achieve the study objectives.

1.10. List of terms

The following terminology is used throughout the study and has been defined for this purpose as follows:

Capacity building: Development work that strengthens the ability of community organisations and groups to build their structures, systems, people and skills so that they are better able to: define and achieve their objectives; consult and plan; manage community projects; and participate in partnerships and community enterprises. It includes aspects of training, organisational and personal development and resource building, organised and planned in a self-conscious manner, reflecting the principles of empowerment and equality (Skinner, 1997).

Constituency: A specific geographic area in Zimbabwe that a Member of Parliament represents in the House of Assembly. In view of its importance, many parliaments in

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developing countries have initiated wide-ranging programmes to establish parliamentary offices in each constituency, where members are available to see their constituents (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2006).

Constituency service: A general term for what parliamentarians do to serve and represent the interests of their constituents (UNDESA, 2008).

Constituent: A person living in an area in Zimbabwe represented by a Member of Parliament.

Empowerment: A multi-dimensional social process to help people gain control over their lives. It is a process that fosters power in the people for use in their own lives, communities and society, by acting on issues they define as important (Page, 1999).

Evaluation: Evaluation is the systematic acquisition and assessment of information to provide useful feedback about some object (Trochim, 2000). It is an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of information product/ service, its design, how it has been planned and implemented and the outcomes/ impacts. This involves judging, appraising, or determining the worth, value or quality of something. It also involves a process of reviewing data and drawing conclusions from it (Fitzpatrick, Sanders and Worthen, 2004).

Hansard: The official record of debates in the House of Assembly and the Senate named after Thomas Curson Hansard (1776-1833). Hansard was the surname of a British printer, who prepared reports of parliamentary debates in the 19th century England. The Hasard is also called Parliamentary Debates.

Model: A systematic representation of an object or event in idealized and abstract form.

Parliament: In terms of Section 32 of the Zimbabwe Constitution, it is one of the three arms of the state, which include the Executive (President), the Judiciary and the Legislature (Parliament). In terms of the same section, Parliament consists of two houses, namely the Senate and the House of Assembly. The role of the parliament is to: legislate; scrutinize policies and activities of the Executive; hold the Executive to account for its actions; and to act as a forum for democratic participation by all members.

Parliamentary Constituency Information Centre: Centres providing parliament -related information in all the Parliamentary Constituencies in Zimbabwe. The term has different meanings in different countries and in different contexts. This can also be taken to mean a place where members of the constituency can:

- find information about subjects of interest to them;
- participate in learning activities;
- discuss and share knowledge, information and concerns with extension officers and other community workers, planners and administrators;
- meet to organise and work together on community projects;
- use equipment to produce their own information materials;
- practice in recording local culture by transcription, in print; and audio-visual forms; and
- enjoy local activities (COMLA Newsletter, 1997).

Parliamentary information: Information about parliament necessary for educating and informing the general public about the activities of parliament and government with aims of encouraging and enabling informed participation in a democratic process. Obholzer (2011) defines parliamentary information as:

"Information about parliament's roles and functions, and information generated throughout the legislative process, including the text of introduced legislation and

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amendments, votes, the parliamentary agenda and schedule, records of plenary and committee proceedings, historical information, and all other information that forms part of the parliamentary record, such as reports created for or by parliament. Parliament shall provide information on the management and administration of parliament, parliamentary staff, and comprehensive and detailed parliamentary budget information. Parliament shall provide information about the backgrounds, activities and affairs of members, including sufficient information for citizens to make informed judgments regarding their integrity and probity, and potential conflicts of interest."

Also, for the purpose of this study, the concept of communicating parliamentary information includes the idea of delivering / dissemination of information.

1.11. Organisation of the thesis

The thesis is organised into eight chapters. At the outset, this chapter introduces the subject of the thesis by: describing the research problem the thesis aimed at resolving; explaining the benefits of the study; and by explaining its purpose and the research questions which guide it. The remainder of the thesis is organised as follows:

- Chapter 2 presents the theoretical frameworks influencing the study. This includes selected theories and investigations relevant to information needs and information delivery. With regard to information needs, specific references have been given to human needs theories, systems theory, theory of community change and the empowerment theory. Information service delivery models include the Parliamentary informatics, Davis' model, Models of Parliamentary Power and Constituency based models. Case studies from both developed and developing countries are discussed before the chapter is concluded.

- Chapter 3 presents a review of the literature relevant to this research by: introducing freedom of information; information services concepts; information centres; and by presenting fundamental theories and investigations about the inter-related nature of information delivery. Specific references will be made in respect

of information needs, accessibility, variables that affect information delivery and promotion and awareness of PCICs.

- Chapter 4 reviews research methodology, the rationale for its design, and the research methods used to collect. Data gathering instruments focused on questionnaires, interviews, site visits and observation and document analysis. The target respondents include constituents, OAs, MPs, Parliament Administration, Officers of Parliament and Development partners. The questionnaires were administered to MPs, constituents, and OAs, whereas interviews were directed to PoZ administration and staff as well as development partners.

- Chapter 5 presents data that has been gathered from respondents and from observations and document analysis. Data presentation will be based on themes as shown in appendix 13.

- Chapter 6 presents the discussion of results aimed to resolve many of the issues highlighted in previous chapters. This will also follow the pattern of themes that have been used to present data in chapter 5.

- Chapter 7 presents a proposed PCIC Model. The substantive PCIC model proposed provides guidelines for establishing the PCIC based on findings from the study.

- Chapter 8 presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations for improving PCICs. In addition, areas for further study will be suggested.

- Lastly, a list of sources has been presented; and a number of applicable appendices.

1.12. Summary

This chapter introduces the subject of the thesis. Reports on reforming PoZ's information services and leading to the final requirements that were found to be essential for establishing PCIC were discussed. The main research question and sub questions raised, research methodology, benefits of the study and limitations have been covered in this chapter. Finally, a brief outline of the division of the 8 chapters of this study was provided. The next chapter discusses the Theoretical Framework.

CHAPTER TWO: TOWARDS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

The field of evaluation is guided by theories and models that have undergone many changes over the past few decades. One of the most recent trends in evaluation research is the adoption of guiding frameworks. The main purpose of this chapter is to explore some theories and models relating to parliamentary information delivery services. The models and theories reviewed in this chapter are not an exhaustive survey of the field. They are presented to provide a theoretical and historical background for this study. This chapter focuses on the theory underpinning PCICs; and Chapter 3 reviews the literature that guides the evaluation of PCICs as an information delivery service. The provision of access to parliamentary information through PCICs can be more fully understood against a background of analysis of relevant theories, as well as a review of some of the relevant literature that will be discussed in detail in chapter 3.

A number of options exist to improve a service. Warren (2003) lists a number of important considerations for making improvements in the service arena; these are to:

- change programme regulations;

- improve information delivery;

- encourage collaboration among agencies;

- develop new programmes; and

- empower clients.

The SADC Parliamentary Forum Strategic Plan (2006-2010) recommended directions for change. They did not cite any fundamental principles to provide a framework for understanding how to promote action to change conditions affecting people. This was left to individual countries to decide. The SADC Parliamentary Forum suggested policy and administrative practices as additional approaches for enacting or managing change at a

broader level. Further, they suggested the need to blend theories and models applicable in the real world. The next section describes a number theories found to be relevant to this study.

2.2. Selected theories relevant to this study

The concept of information services to satisfy user needs has been used in several models within library and information science, especially in the field of information needs; seeking and use; and to describe triggering factors for information-seeking processes (Wilson 1981). However, it has been acknowledged that information needs as such are difficult to study empirically, thus most user studies focus on information seeking activities, rather than on actual information needs (Case, 2002). Although no manageable set of theories can hope to describe every dimension of human interaction, certain theoretical frameworks and propositions can be found ideal to inform work for change within any field (Wavell, 2002).

According to Chigona and Licker (2008), four basic benefits of using theoretical frameworks in research studies include:

- allowing the researcher to make prediction;
- defining research procedures in a systematic way;
- empowering the researcher with explanatory power; and
- allowing the researcher to test and improve the applicability of the theory.

The theories informing this study were used as analytical tools in reviewing relevant literature (see chapter 3). The theories allowed the research to develop systematic research procedures, and provided the researcher with theoretical terms to explain and understand events in the study. The human needs theory, systems theory, theory of community change and empowerment theory were identified with a view to their relevance for developed countries. A review of these theories allowed the researcher to assess their applicability to the PCICs' performance.

2.2.1. Human needs theories

Human needs can be seen to be physical, social, affective, economic or cognitive. Van Lill (2000) observes that to satisfy an existing human need, information becomes a need. Be1kin, Oddy and Brooks (1982) however disagree, postulating that an information need does not equal a need. It should rather be seen as a method to solve problems. Information is used to resolve the "inadequacy", which can manifest itself as a gap, lack, uncertainty or incoherence. According to this theory, the process of becoming informed is reached in a series of stages. Cole (2002) describes the stages as those of an individual being confronted with a problematic situation. This leads to the realisation of a gap / anomaly in the knowledge base, resulting in a feeling of uncertainty. The gap is resolved by an outsider or intermediary intervention, providing the needed information.

Abraham Maslow, in the late 1960s developed a hierarchical theory of human needs. Maslow focused on human potential, believing that humans strive to reach the highest levels of their capabilities. He set up a hierarchical theory of human needs in which basic human needs are at the base of a pyramid-shaped model and the needs with highest potential are at the apex. Horton (1983) adapted the applicability of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to information projects in developing countries, using a similar set of information needs to help in identifying different types of projects. Table 2.1 shows Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs compared to Horton's adaptation.

Table 2.1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs adapted

by (Horton, 1983)

Self-actualisation ⟷	**Edifying information**
Ego needs ⟷	Enriching information
Social needs ⟷	Enlightening information
Security ⟷	Helping information
Biological / Physiological ⟷	Coping information

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At the bottom of the hierarchy is the need for coping information, followed by helping, enlightening, enriching and edifying information. These are explained below:

- Coping information may be provided by a hotline telephone service when dealing with emergency cases of health, safety and security being at the most fundamental level and important to all;

- Helping information is provided by government services, agencies, community groups, and corporations;

- Enlightening information involves seeking information on how to have a happier marriage, interaction with community and neighbourhood, or gaining more friends;

- Enriching information, such as seeking professional services information to help the ego; and

- Edifying information, such as seeking moral and spiritual upliftment with the word of God, spiritual music, or great literature and art" (Horton, 1983).

Constituents use information to address varied needs. The Human Needs Theory provides an important starting point to examine information needs. The next section discusses the Systems Theory.

2.2.2. Systems theory

In the 19th century, Hegel developed a theory to explain historical development as a dynamic process. Marx and Darwin used this theory in their work. Systems theory is the transdisciplinary study of the abstract organization of phenomena, independent of their substance, type, or spatial or temporal scale of existence. It investigates both the principles common to all complex entities, and the models which can be used to describe them. According to Infante (1997), a system can be said to consist of four things. The first is objects, that is, the parts, elements, or variables within the system. These may be physical, abstract, or both, depending on the nature of the system. Second, a system consists of attributes, such as the qualities or properties of the system and its objects. Third, a system had internal relationships among its objects. Fourth, systems exist in an environment.

A system then is a set of things that affect one another within an environment and form a larger pattern different from any of the parts. The fundamental systems-interactive paradigm of organisational analysis features the continuous stages of input, throughput, and output, demonstrating the concept of openness/closeness. A closed system does not interact with its environment. It does not take in information and therefore is likely to disappear. An open system receives information, which it uses to interact dynamically with its environment. Openness increases its likelihood to survive and prosper. Several system characteristics include: wholeness and interdependence; correlation; perception of causes; chains of influence; hierarchy; suprasystems and subsystems; self-regulation and control; goal-orientedness; interchange with the environment; inputs/outputs; the need for balance/homeostasis; change; and adaptability. These characteristics provide various ways to achieve goals. Communication in this context can be seen as an integrated process.

A number of authors have helped to inform perspectives around systems, among them Rossi and Freeman (1993). Systems theory is a fundamental operating theory offering an overview of how things work. Theory explains what each leaving thing needs to do to survive.

The general systems theory (Bertanlanffy, 1968) can be recognised in the information and social sciences. According to Darrell (2013), systems theory significantly correlates current trends in the information sciences and the humanities. Systems theory is used to characterize a set of disparate, yet related approaches to fields as varied as information theory. What unites each of these traditions of systems theory is a shared focus on general systems features and their fundamental importance for diverse areas of fields. Like the systems perspective, communication of activities within the information science discipline occurs among interdependent units, working together to adapt to an ever-changing environment.

Systems theory demonstrates the dynamics of connections among entities within broader PCICs. It helps make sense of what is happening to the program, why people, MPs and Parliament Administration are acting and reacting the way they do; and what might be needed to get them act differently. It is also important to examine how the theory of community change discussed in the next section relates to information delivery.

2.2.3. Theory of community change

Weiss (1995) described the potential contribution of theories of community change to the evaluation of Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs). Weiss continued with a definition of the theory of change as a theory of how and why an initiative works. Building on her work, a theory of change approaches a systematic and cumulative study of links between activities, outcomes and initiative contexts. This definition suggests that steps towards evaluating a project involve determining its intended outcomes; the activities it expects to implement to achieve those outcomes; and the contextual factors that may have an effect on activity implementation and their potential to generate desired outcomes. A theory of community change helps in seeing what agents of change must take into account as they act to promote purposeful change.

Community-based change initiatives often have ambitious goals, so planning specific on-the-ground strategies to those goals is difficult. Likewise, the task of planning and implementing evaluation research to inform practice and to raise broader lessons for the field in general is a challenge. Weiss (1995) showed that the theory of change is vital to evaluation success for a number of reasons:

- programmes need to be grounded in good theory;

- managers can be better assured that their programmes are delivering the right activities for the desired outcomes by developing a theory of change based on sound theory;

- programmes are easier to sustain, bring to scale and evaluate, because each step is clearly defined within the theory of change from the beginning to the outcomes it hopes to provide and the resources needed;

- descriptions of how research links to development outcomes is provided by a structured, theorised process; impact-orientation to guide research design is built; and

- evaluation and social change traditions, combining logical process mapping with critical reflection on assumptions, interpretations and worldviews are used.

Following the tenets of community change theory, it would be appropriate to assess a change in the knowledge and attitudes of constituents after utilization of parliamentary information, as compared with their previous experiences. The theory helps to determine whether the changes in knowledge and attitudes translated into changes in practice over time. A theory of community change helps to define the components and processes necessary to generate a given long-term goal that the PCIC project aims to achieve. A theory of change provides PCIC stakeholders with guidelines to explain the processes and benefits of the project. This can be better understood by constituents if they realise their empowerment through the use of information centres. The next section examines Empowerment Theory.

2.2.4. Empowerment theory

A number of studies on empowerment have been conducted but there has been no overarching framework available for practitioners and researchers to grasp the process and components of empowerment in a comprehensive manner. Empowerment has been defined by Rappaport (1987:3-4) as a process by which people, organizations, and communities gain control over their lives. It implies that new competencies are learned in the context of living life, rather than being told what to do by experts. Success needs to be self-defined by those concerned. Cochran (1986) believes that people understand their own needs far better than anyone else and should have the power both to define and act upon them. Cochran further suggested that for people to be empowered, they need to gain information about

themselves and their environment and be willing to identify and work with others for change.

The origin of empowerment as a form of theory can be traced back to the Brazilian humanitarian and educator, Freire (1971), when he suggested a plan for liberating the oppressed of the world through education. Empowerment was most commonly associated with alternative approaches to psychological or social development and the concern for local, grassroots community-based movements and initiatives (Parpart, Rai & Staudt, 2003). The term has become widely used in the social sciences in the last decade, across a broad variety of disciplines, such as community psychology, management, political theory, information science, social work, education, feminist studies and sociology (Lincoln, Travers, Ackers & Wilkinson, 2002). Information science is one of the disciplines using the term 'empowerment' most frequently; it is often referenced in the Information Science Journals, such as *The Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology (JASIST)*. The concept of empowerment is conceived as the idea of power, because empowerment is closely related to changing power: gaining, expending, diminishing, and losing power (Page and Czuba, 1999). Traditionally, power was understood as an isolated entity and a zero sum, as it is usually possessed at the expense of others (Lips, 1991).

An empowerment - based strategy assumes a more equal relationship between the 'expert' and program participants. In general, empowerment theory is based on a conflict model, which assumes society is comprised of separate groups with various levels of power and control over resources. Accordingly, the capacity of people to improve their lives is determined by their ability to control their environment and resources; negotiate situations; and change the existing limiting social structures (IDRC, 1991).

According to Wallerstein (1992), empowerment is a social-action, a process promoting participation of people, organizations and communities in working towards the goals of increased individual and community control; political efficacy; improved quality of

community life; and social justice. Whitmore (1988) feels the concept of empowerment needs to be more clearly defined, so she states that there are some common underlying assumptions:

- Individuals are assumed to understand their own needs better than anyone else and therefore should have the power both to define and act upon them.

- All people possess strengths upon which they can build.

- Empowerment is a lifelong endeavour

- Personal knowledge and experience are valid and useful in coping effectively.

According to Freire (1994), empowerment strategies should "provide community groups with a sense of ownership of the results and more successful development and implementation of community services". Ownership implies the stakeholders assume responsibility for programme maintenance from external funding.

Several researchers have attempted to operationalize empowerment theory as a strategy or programme goal (Rappaport, 1984). Empowerment has become a valuable concept, because it is increasingly obvious that while programs can be imposed on people by outsiders, these may be successful in the short-term, or for the life of the program. However, they are frequently not successful long-term, because when programme funding ends, stakeholders are usually no better off than before the initiation of the programme.

Lyons, Smuts, and Stephens (2005) investigate the relationship among participation, empowerment and sustainability. The analysis shows that a relationship does exist and is contingent on a number of factors that are crucial to its success. Rappaport (1984: 23) further noted that, if a programme is to empower people, it must have:

(1) Management Structures to:

- involve community members in the planning and implementation of a service

- continue research around the information needs of the community and

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- provide on-going monitoring and evaluation;

(2) Resources to:

- relevant to community needs

- provide many different formats for dissemination to enable all members to use the service

- build on existing community knowledge being culturally sensitive and

- support activities encouraging full participation;

(3) Human Resources to:

- train in communications, advice, educational techniques and information storage and retrieval and

- choose those trusted and respected by the community; and

(4) Services to:

- react pro-actively to involve the community in information-sharing activities.

The review of literature cited above attests that empowerment is a construct used to explain the effectiveness of an institution in service delivery. The construct can be used when dealing with the issue of empowering citizens with Parliamentary information accessed through PCICs, which are a new development. To achieve this, other Models of information services delivery still need to be probed. The following section examines some information service delivery models.

2.3. Information service delivery models

There are several information service delivery models applying to specific situations. The models reviewed in this section have been identified to be closely linked to the activities of parliamentary information services. This section will discuss the following models:

- Informatics Databases

- Davis's Model

- Models of Parliamentary Power and

- Constituency based models.

The word 'model' is used in a number of different ways. For the purpose of this research, a model has been defined as referring broadly to a representation of the PCIC designed to disseminate parliament-generated information. For example, a model of PCIC refers to a building constructed at the desired place that is easily accessible to constituents. Christopher and Cottrell (2002) identified the following characteristics common in models. They are:

- almost always intended to serve a particular purpose, rather than to be of universal application;

- used to categorise and disseminate information resources;

- a framework of information suppliers and users;

- a framework for organizing content to be delivered and reused in a variety of innovative ways; and

- a process of information engineering produced during product development, policies and internal procedures used in the day-to-day conduct of business, or information about customer feedback.

An Information Model is the ultimate content-management tool. Creating an Information Model requires analysis, careful planning and stakeholder feedback.

There is a growing trend for parliamentary informatics use, involving the information technology application to parliamentary activities. The following section views selected parliamentary informatics and case studies that have been found to be useful to this study.

2.3.1. Informatics databases

Research databases offering information in a number of areas using both scholarly and popular sources have been increasing. There has also been a rapidly growing trend in parliamentary monitoring in the use of e-democracy and e-participation tools referred to as parliamentary informatics. This aggregates information, generates visualizations and facilitates citizen participation in parliamentary processes.

2.3.1.1. Parliamentary informatics

Parliamentary informatics refers to the application of information technology to the documentation of parliamentary activity (Mandelbaum, 2011). In a survey done by Mandelbaum, it was discovered that parliamentary informatics are used by approximately 40 percent of clients. While their use remains more commonplace in developed democracies in Europe and North America, informatics application has increased significantly in Southeast Asia and Latin America, as well as in parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. One effective parliamentary informatics tool automatically aggregates publicly available information from parliamentary websites, databases and other sources; and then organizes that data into formats easy for citizens to understand, search and analyze.
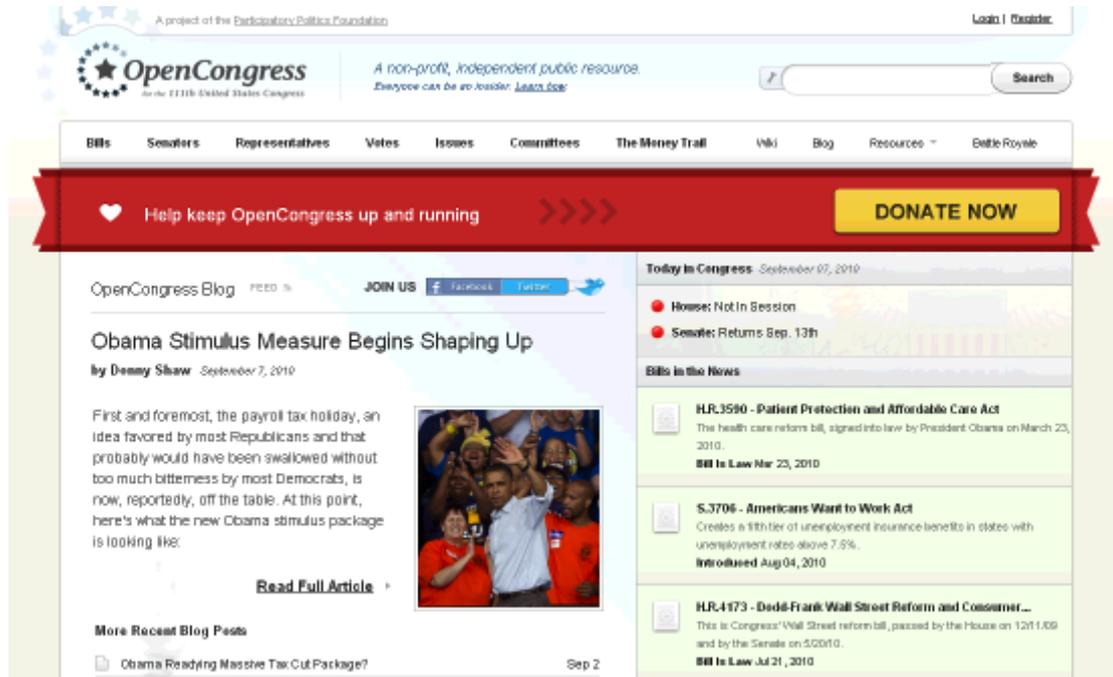
Figure 2.1 The Open Congress.org, parliamentary monitoring website in the U.S

Figure 2.1 shows an example of a website powered by such a tool is OpenCongress.org, developed by the U.S. - based Sunlight Foundation.

2.3.1.2. Africa i-Parliament Action Plan

The Africa i-Parliament Action Plan, an Africa-wide project of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UDESA) is currently being worked on to empower African Parliaments to better fulfill their democratic functions, by supporting their efforts to become open, participatory, knowledge-based and learning organisations. In fulfilling this mandate, the project is currently focusing on promoting the following initiatives:

- Bungeni
- Legislative Drafting Guidelines for Africa and
- Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN).

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One of the initiatives is the Akoma Ntoso, "linked hearts" in the language of the Akan people of West Africa is a collaborative programme. This promotes open standards and open source applications in XML format, for parliamentary, legislative and judicial documents. This should enable inter-parliamentary cooperation and reduce parliamentary IT support systems costs. A set of guidelines for parliamentary services, specifically within a Pan-African context has been drafted. The second application, the Bungeni Parliamentary Information System (based on the Ki-Swahili word for "inside the Parliament") is an end-to-end suite of applications for parliaments to use when drafting, managing, consolidating parliamentary documents; it incorporates the Akoma Ntosa standards. Bungeni aims to increase the efficiency of parliamentary activities to render Parliaments more open and accessible to citizens. These applications are being piloted on Uganda and Zambia parliament websites. The last initiative is the Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN) to support capacity building activities, common services, sharing experiences and best practice among African parliaments.

2.3.1.3. The SEAMLESS project

Rowlatt (1999) describe the SEAMLESS project in the United Kingdom. This two-year research project funded by the British Library aims to develop a new model for citizen information. The objectives are to:

- build strong and sustainable partnerships among the various information providers operating in the region;

- develop and implement common technical and informational standards to achieve interoperability between their systems and data;

- develop a *SEAMLESS* interface to allow simultaneous querying of distributed information sources (whether stored in a database, made available on a website, or in word processed documents) and return all the information to the user in a unified list;

- facilitate electronic communication between the information providers and their customers; and among the various participating agencies; and

- develop a current awareness/alerting service for users (second phase).

The SEAMLESS project proposes to develop, test and evaluate a new model for citizen information provision. The public library will become the facilitator, coordinator and standard setter for a distributed system comprised of the network of local information providers information resources; and provides expertise and training on-demand.

Two basic but crucial pre-conditions underpin this new model. The first is that a substantial degree of co-operation is needed among the various information providers in any given locality: no one organisation can provide a successful citizen information service in isolation. The second pre-condition is that some common technical and information standards need to be developed and adopted to facilitate successful co-operation. Furthermore, it will enable the data necessary efficient data dissemination between partners and the wider public.

One of the key aims of the *SEAMLESS* project is to test whether some of the large body of previous research into interoperability and metadata could beneficially be applied to new domains of citizen information.

The project has had considerable impact at local, national and regional levels, with the project teams working with significantly more organizations than originally envisaged. This thereby demonstrates the need for and viability of an information delivery model to assist in community empowerment.

2.3.1.4. The information database

An information database system (Infolink) (Library & Information Services of Western Australia, 2001) as shown in Figure 2.2 has been initiated in a cooperation between the Western Australian government and community organizations. The purpose of this database is to provide referral services to other organizations to satisfy the particular

information needs of their clients. This Infolink database is protected by copyright, being part of the Library and Information Services of Western Australia (LISWA). LISWA's mission is to provide and promote equitable access to information resources and services to support Western Australian intellectual, economic, cultural, social and recreational needs. This Infolink database covers state-wide, regional and some local organizations and services. It has transformed the local community information services into a regional information resource (Battye, 2004).

Figure 2.2 The INFOLINK Database

(Source: Library and Information Services of Western Australia, 2001)

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The above informatics applications aim to promote citizen awareness of and involvement in parliamentary issues. Where linked to particular models, they have been used successfully for public benefit. The Web-based community information system in the USA is discussed in the following section.

2.3.2. Davis′ model

Davis (1999), using a two-goal survey, investigated a USA Web-based community information system. The first goal was to compare the website demographics and relative qualities of cities. The second goal was to identify high quality, model sites that could be used as templates for other communities to build their own web-based community information system. To accomplish these goals, 539 cities from across the USA were identified. Of these, 309 with official city web sites were surveyed, using a 28-question instrument to measure the website content and design. Three different Information Delivery Models, showing how a community disseminates information via the Internet and World Wide Web were identified; these are the community: marketing model, services model and empowerment model. An explanation of these three models is:

- Community Marketing: Market the community to external business and visitors for economic development;

- Community Service: Gateway to publishing and private services available in the community; and

- Community Empowerment: Information and communication channel access to enable citizen participation in government.

The primary differentiator found among these different models of community network stems from the type of information included in the systems. Doctor and Ankem (2000) developed taxonomy for categorizing community information systems, using this approach. Their taxonomy provides a useful starting point but it ultimately lacks the detail required to evaluate an information service effectively. It includes service categories such as employment, health and medical, legal, social, finance, home and family, nature and

environment, education, governmental processes, politics and policy, recreation and culture. This dimension of the model can be generalized as the mode of information delivery. A state community website can provide factual and directional information, whereas interactive communication eliminates the need for the advocacy and counselling categories; these are subsumed within this mode of information delivery (see table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Model of information delivery taxonomy

Source: Davis (1999)

Category	Example
Factual	Reference services
Directional	Reference
Interactive communication-Directed	e-mail
Interactive communication-Directed	chat-mailing list/discussion database
Phone/Fax/address	non-e-mail

Despite this limitation in the Doctor and Ankem taxonomy, it can be used to identify each of the three different models for a community information system. The Marketing Model is significant for the predominance of Economic Development and Convention and Visitor Information. The Community Service Model, on the other hand contains information primarily on community services. The Community Empowerment Model focuses on community decision - making related information, ideally with interactive communication support to allow citizens to interact with public officials and each other.

These models delineated by Doctor and Ankem substantiate the need to identify further models that operate within particular parliamentary systems to understand the environment within which PCICs are operating. The next section is about models of parliamentary power and how these relate to information services.

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2.3.3. Models of parliamentary power

The World Bank Institute (2007) describes different types of legislatures, according to the models presented; and how these relate to information delivery. The following four types of models have been identified:

2.3.3.1. Rubber stamp parliaments

This is the simplest type of legislature; decisions are made by a leader or vanguard party elsewhere in the political system, usually by parties and / or the executive branch. According to Johnson and Nakamura (1999), rubber stamp parliaments merely endorse decisions made elsewhere, so typically require little in the way of internal complexity and information processing capacity. The rubber stamp legislature is often associated with communist or totalitarian parliaments

2.3.3.2. Arena parliaments

Arena legislatures are more powerful than rubber stamp parliaments, and are places of real discussion, speech, and debate. Societal differences are represented and articulated in an arena legislature. Public policies are debated from different perspectives and government actions are assessed by different criteria (Johnson and Nakamura, 1999), so it is a place of speech and debate. The best known example is the British House of Commons. The arena legislature needs sufficient internal capacity to organize debate; a committee system adequate for channeling the business of the house; and capacity to analyse proposals to make critical comment and some technical amendments. Information needs, therefore are greater than in rubber stamp parliaments.

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2.3.3.3. Transformative parliaments

Legislative bodies capable of both representing and shaping societal demands (Johnson and Nakamura, 1999) are transformative. Legislation and budgets received from the executive branch are amended; citizens are included and involved; their own policy proposals are initiated; and public hearings are conducted. Transformative legislatures are the most expensive to operate. They have highly complex internal structures, including strong committee systems; great information needs, and depend heavily on highly trained professional staff. The US Congress is a good example.

2.3.3.4. Emerging parliaments

The process of change from one type of parliament to another is an emerging parliament. These legislatures may emerge for a variety of reasons, such as an increase in societal demands and political mobilisation. Examples are the Mexican Kenyan and Ugandan Parliaments. At present, they: suffer from inadequate office space for members and a dearth of professional staff; lack office equipment and have inadequate telecommunications systems; and possess only a few analytical staff.

These four models show that different parliaments operate according to certain but different powers. They provide characteristics under which each parliament can be categorised, so it becomes possible to describe Zimbabwe's legislature and better understand how these can support information delivery reforms. Constituency Based Models are discussed in the following section.

2.3.4. Constituency based models

The means through which citizens have traditionally had access to their parliament has been through their elected representative(s). In most countries, where the electorate is divided into geographically-based constituencies, and members represent a specific

locality, such access has typically been through face-to-face contact in the area where the electors live. Defenders of constituency-based information services have always regarded it as their signal merit that members should experience their constituents' concerns and problems at first hand; and not just rely on second-hand reports when assessing the impact of legislation. Examples of legislative models, including the: New Service Model, The Parliamentary Information Model, and Robinson's models will be examined in this section.

2.3.4.1. New service model

There are as many blended solutions and approaches as there are institutions investigating changing the way information services are delivered. According to Kimathi (2011), the experience of developing new models for information provision provides opportunities for information professionals to raise their profiles. Kimathi suggested key issues in his New Service Model essential to the successful operation of the service, namely:

- maintain contact with clients to help you innovate;

- be flexible about what works;

- ensure you solve a true problem and work in consultation;

- focus on who has the expertise to do it right irrespective of where they are based;

- acknowledge the need to focus on professional development;

- application of any model will require significant investment of time and resources in the early stages;

- ask your clients what works for them ; and

- remember to keep communicating with all involved staff and users.

The New Service Model key issues outlined above are relevant and can be applied to developing information services, such as the Parliament of Zimbabwe's information centres. In the next section, the Parliamentary Information Model is discussed.

2.3.4.2. The parliamentary information model

According to Kohl (1991), the current world is witnessing dramatic changes in various spheres of life. A representative government or system in which representatives are elected on a competitive basis is not only a guarantee for responsive rule, that is, a form of government in which the desires of the governed determine the contents of the acts. The representatives, however are also obliged to constantly prove their competence in political decision-making to the electorate, otherwise they will eventually not be re-elected. A basic pre-requisite for this competence is the knowledge of facts, opinions and the latest authoritative research in all fields of parliament. The result of increased citizen participation in public life was further offered by Kohl (1991). He claims parliamentary information services have to be strengthened, and new structures added that have been contemplated where they have not been in existence. This model worked well in Western Europe and Eastern Europe had to follow in adopting the model. In this regard, Parliamentary information services had to contemplate in particular:

- extending reference and research services to include, for the transition period, clients not previously catered for;

- supplying equipment, and library materials where severe shortages were found;

- introducing visitors from other parts of the world to the information services offered to convince parliamentarians and administrators that an effective parliamentary information service is indispensable, if a democratic government is to function properly; and

- offering consultancy and training to staff and in most cases advising staff on the effective administration of the service (Kohl, 1991).

The above model was a result of Parliamentary reforms that had an impact on increasing citizen participation in legislature activities. There were also other views on providing legislative information as discussed in the following section.

2.3.4.3. Robinson's Parliamentary models

Robinson (1991) identified a continuum of possible models for legislative information and action. These exist at various developmental levels and stages of government to address the issue of parliamentarian and citizen generic information needs. The following four models were identified:

- The Nascent Parliament is at the low end of the continuum because it lacks resources and legal authority, staff and information to play an effective role in governance. Their role is unanimously to rubber-stamp party decisions. Such legislatures were common to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union before reform;

- The Functioning Parliament has at least a minimal level of staff and equipment; and sufficient organization and procedures to reasonably and expeditiously process legislative demands. It possesses enough information to validate policies made elsewhere in government. The basic information sources exist within a complement of researchers;

- The Informed parliament model has: added personal staff to extend the effectiveness of individual MPs; and procured computers and other telecommunications equipment to significantly enhance information processing for the legislature. In this model, it is possible to develop parliamentary committee process to deepen the substantive and political analysis done in the parliament. Central research staff: provide: annotated bibliographies; create summaries of bills; provide ready reference responses to member inquiries; describe policies and proposals; and offer pro-con assessments; and

- The Independent parliament model exists at the higher end of the continuum in terms of information requirements. At this level, specialised expertise has been added to member offices, party factions, committee cadres; and central analytical staff databases and computer models capable of producing long-range projections have been developed. This makes possible independent action without assistance from executives or ministers.

Every society must choose how far it wishes to pursue independence of parliamentary action based on its own history and political culture. Given that parliamentary models operate in different situations according to Robinson, it is important to examine some practical examples in the following section.

2.4. Some relevant examples

Parliamentary Information Centres are not a new project of this millennium but they have different names in many countries (UN/DESA, 2008). According to the IPU (2009:2), a constituency or district-based office provides a key point of contact for electors with their representative and local staff. Although areas of emphasis and names coined, parliamentary information centres may differ from country to country; their broad generic objective is to deliver parliamentary information. Relevant studies have been conducted concerning parliamentary information delivery, both in developed and developing countries.

2.4.1. Examples of parliamentary information centres outside Africa

The examples of constituency offices examined from outside Africa include the Congress of the Republic of Peru, Congressional Research Services (USA), the Scottish Parliament and Canadian Constituency Offices.

2.4.1.1. Scottish Parliament

The formation of the Scottish Parliament was seen as an ideal opportunity to establish a new, democratic, open, accessible Parliament with power shared with the people. The people are encouraged to participate in the policy processes through an accountable and visible Parliament; this positively affects their lives (Marcella, Baxter and More, 2003).

The Scottish Parliament plans to develop model information delivery centres for the public in the UK in the context of this global approach (Marcella and Baxter, 2005). These key principles are often summarised in the belief that the Parliament should be open, accessible, accountable and participative. These principles have provided a clear and practical vision for Parliamentary roles and operation. This blueprint included plans for the sort of research and information services needed to support the new legislature. The Scottish Parliament's research and information service is a useful reflection of the particular culture of parliamentary democracy in Scotland.

By making choices, judgments and using available expertise, the Scottish Parliament has opened eyes and minds, and promoted understanding. Knowledge and understanding are the essential ingredients of an effective and democratic parliament. It is vital to promote knowledge and understanding to close the gap that exists between parliament and people living in remote areas. As society progresses, the transmission of information has become more complex and diverse.

2.4.1.2. The United States of America (USA)

Kohl (1991) gave an analysis of the Congressional Research Service (CRS). The CRS performs at least three roles for Congress, namely information factory, policy advisor and think-tank.

- The information 'factory' responds to over 500,000 requests for information every year, that is, an average of nearly 2000 requests every day that Congress is in session. It answers two thirds of these requests on the same day they are received and is prepared by trained reference librarians who manage the vast reservoir of CRS. Prepared products are already on the shelves when needed, and supplement those materials with information found using carefully honed database searching skills. The product inventory on the shelf is the result of anticipating issues and providing written analyses, often before they are requested;

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- The policy consultant role for Members and their staff is one of the most important CRS services available directly in the legislative process and at every stage of that process. The service may be available at each legislative stage, bringing the fruits of research and analysis into the process; and

- The think tank role is to provide basic research when needed and even to build computerized policy simulation models, when appropriate. On occasion, policy analysts working as research brokers discover that an important piece of basic research has not been done yet, but is so central to solving the policy problem that it must be undertaken. If policy simulation models are called for, they can be useful in estimating the consequences of proposed actions before these actions have been taken.

It is important to note that Open CRS provides citizen access to authoritative, objective and nonpartisan CRS Reports already in the public domain. CRS reports do not become public until a member of Congress releases the report. CRS has been effective in providing access to information to researchers for 24 hours, 7 days a week.

2.4.1.3. Canada

A review of Constituency Offices in Canada is primarily based on the research findings of MacLeod (2005) on *How to Organize an Effective Constituency Office.* Each Constituency Office employs two, three and sometimes four staffers to serve 100,000 citizen-clients and typically opens well over a thousand new files each year. To cope with demand and keep their personal touch, an increasing number of MPs in remote and rural-urban areas choose to open additional branches, as constituency boundaries shift to absorb several small towns and communities. Still, in spite of their complexity and growing importance very little attention has been afforded to the work of these offices. A relatively recent addition to Canada's parliamentary infrastructure, funding was increased without debate in 1972 permitting all MPs to open local offices.

Most constituency offices are scruffy, modest places. There is no standard template, no government approved floor plan. Constituency offices come in every size and shape,

occupying nondescript corporate buildings, stuck between pizza shops in strip malls, or occupying first floors of homes (Macleod, 2005). Yet, Constituency Offices play an important role. A Constituency Office Assistant is expected to be a general practitioner capable of parsing application forms, know the contexts of every government department and program, all the while keeping a finger to the wind of public opinion. According to Macleod (2005), Canada's Constituency Offices attempt to balance seven core functions to:

- provide services and assistance in dealing with government departments, to engage the public and maintain a presence in the community;
- provide informal counseling on personal and professional matters and act as brokers and mediators between government and citizens; and
- collate local opinion, and advocate to each level of government and on matters concerning specific individuals and their community-at-large.

Canada's Constituency Offices stand alone as a kind of local infrastructure for encountering, recognition and engagement, as well as connecting citizens to representatives and the legislature.

2.4.2. Examples of Southern African constituency information centres

The creation of constituency offices referred to as Parliamentary Constituency Information Centers (PCICs) in Zimbabwe is a significant development achieved by parliamentary reforms in Southern Africa. Initiated by the Parliament of Zimbabwe in 2001 and implemented in 2002, a number of countries in the region, including Zambia, Botswana and South Africa have followed suit and developed constituency offices. Four countries selected from Southern Africa have been reviewed to gauge the progress associated with Constituency information centres; these are South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe. The Southern African Development Committee (SADC) suggested ways essential for strengthening Constituency Offices. Hughes (2006) summarised these to as:

- Constituency offices should be located as close as possible to public transport and shopping areas, if adequate funding is available for this;

- Comprehensive and accurate records of issues raised during constituency office meetings and consultations must be kept as these may indicate a pattern of recurrent problems, requiring on-going MP attention at either local or national government levels. Such data relating to problems addressed can serve as a valuable resource for feedback to public policy makers within government. Constituency experiences can and should be shared between and among MPs, so they can better assist their constituents;

- The office should serve as a basic information resource centre for citizens residing in the constituency. Basic information brochures regarding issues such as civic education, legal rights, health, employment, social welfare, housing and community safety should be available in these centres;

- Basic legal documents, such as the constitution, bill of rights, electoral system and the parliamentary system should easily accessible in vernacular languages;

- Basic parliamentary information, such as telephone directories, handbooks, Hansards and parliamentary public relations publications should be made available; and

- Computer terminals and printers should be available and connected to the Internet and e-mail facilities to allow information searches and maintain constituent and MP communication.

In view of the importance of information, many parliaments in developing countries have initiated wide-ranging programmes to establish parliamentary offices in each constituency. A constituency or district-based office provides a key point of contact for electors with their representative and local staff.

2.4.2.1. Botswana

Botswana is divided into fifty-seven parliamentary constituencies, last updated in 2002. Botswana has relatively well-developed constituency offices for Members of the House of Assembly and Senators. Chiefs also have offices but under the local Government. No permanent buildings exist for constituency offices in Botswana. The offices are being rented. Selection of constituency office location is done considering aspects of constituent accessibility. According to Antoine (2012), the offices are manned by five members of staff, namely the Administrator, Secretary, Messenger and two Security Guards. The Assistant Managing Officers based at the head office supervise these offices. The *'Botswana Speaks pilot project'* is a parliamentary initiative aimed at complementing traditional participatory democracy. Through this project, there is information flow between the MPs and their electorates; the traditional way of Consultation (Kgotla System) is complemented by this Project. It is co-funded by Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), University of Stockholm (eGov lab) and the Parliament of Botswana. The *Botswana Speaks Project* has been launched in four parliamentary constituencies, namely Boteti North, Maun West, Nata/Gweta and South East South.

2.4.2.2. Zambia

In Zambia, constituency information centres form a key part of an ambitious parliamentary reform programme. Three different types of constituency office models were piloted to identify a suitable and sustainable member-constituency relations model. These models are the:

- fixed office, where permanent offices are currently being constructed;

- travel budget office, where an MP has to be provided with funds for travelling around the constituency in person; and

- mobile office located in a Land Rover equipped with a computer and satellite phone (Parliamentary Reforms and Modernisation Committee of Zambia, 2004).

Of the three types, the fixed office proved to be the most effective in the pilot studies. The 'travel budget office' lacked any focal point or predictability of popular access, while the 'mobile office' proved unsustainable because of its technical demands. The Parliamentary Reforms and Modernisation Committee of Zambia (2004) recommended that the:

- Fixed Office Model be adopted, with a limited travel budget to enhance MP connectivity with their constituents;

- Community be involved in deciding the location of the offices;

- Parliament should ensure Professional Assistants and other employees of the office are non-partisan; and

- Parliament should equip constituency offices with basic literature translated into local languages, if possible.

The Committee concluded that constituency offices would significantly improve constituent access and interaction with the MP. The key to success was the leadership, performance and commitment of the MP and the Professional Assistant. Reviews of the work of constituency offices in Zambia generally suggest their effectiveness as a channel of communication and public participation depends on the conscientiousness of individual members. It seems also that they are more successful at raising individual complaints and problems than as a channel for views about the legislative activity of members.

2.4.2.3. South Africa

A Parliamentary objective is to represent the people through public involvement and building a responsive people's Parliament. This function is guided by Chapter 4 of the Constitution, which mandates Parliament to facilitate public access and involvement in its processes. MPs must ensure that Parliament fulfils this objective by providing services to the public at Parliamentary Constituency Offices. South Africa's experience with Constituency Offices is based on research work conducted in Gauteng and Mpumalanga, during 2002 and 2003. Constituency offices and Parliamentary Democracy Offices (PDOs) are intended to be tools to enhance public participation and bring Parliament to the people.

This structure however has had disappointing outcomes. Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCOs) were established throughout the nine provinces. While the National Assembly and the nine provincial legislatures provide the funding, the various political parties implement the actual establishment of PCOs.

At provincial level, the members of the different political parties represented in the nine legislatures receive allowances through their parties to open constituency offices and recruit administrative staff to operate them. In practice though, not all MPs and Members of the Provincial Legislature (MPLs) run their own PCOs, as the funding is generally considered inadequate. This is especially the case with smaller political parties, where the constituency allowances of the party MPs and MPLs are pooled to establish a small number of functioning PCOs, rather than a large number of non- functioning PCOs. The PCOs are funded through public funds and, officially, they are an integral part of the institutions of legislature, both the provincial legislatures and the National Assembly.

According to research done by the Institute for Security Studies (2011), political parties have completely taken over the use of PCOs and virtually turned them into extensions of party structures. Despite the voluntary nature of constituency service in South Africa, large amounts of public funds are being provided and spent by members of the different political parties to establish and run these constituency offices. There are no standard regulations or procedures applicable to all parties for governing several important aspects of South African constituency services. Some examples of this are: how, where and when to establish these offices; management and governance structures recruitment policies and practices for constituency office administrative staff; and the status of constituency offices in relation to political party structures (Stemela, 2005).

In addition, there appears to be no code of conduct or code of ethics applicable to members of political parties in the PCO operations in their constituencies. Also, there are no common policy guidelines regarding how to integrate the work of PCOs into the work of provincial legislatures or governance practices, at provincial level in general. It appears

that the only form of authoritative control exercised on the conduct of constituency service is through 'The Public Funding of Represented Political Parties Act (1997)', which requires Constituency Offices to submit annual, audited, financial statements, before allowances for the following year are allocated. There seems also to be lack of clarity over the proper relations between constituency offices and political parties, with regard to ownership, management, and delivery of information through constituency offices. This failure to conceptualise a role for legislatures in the conduct of constituency service is surprising, given that all legislatures, including the national assembly do make formal provision in their annual programming schedules for fairly significant periods of constituency service by MPLs and members of the National Assembly.

The parliamentary calendar sets aside regular periods for MPs to spend in their constituencies to do constituency work. During this period, Members visit their constituencies and conduct oversight over government programmes. The parliamentary constituency weeks offer MPs a chance to meet with the public, discuss issues and find solutions to problems. Accordingly, by participating in parliamentary processes it becomes possible for citizens to: exercise their rights; influence decisions made in Parliament; access information about its activities and processes; and ensure that service delivery takes place to build better communities (Stemela, 2005).

Access to Constituency Offices and to designated MPs, however, still remains a challenge for many people. A 2009 Parliamentary assessment made the following recommendations to improve accessibility to Parliamentary Constituency Offices and the quality of services being provided: "Adequate staffing is needed at most of these offices. Material being distributed [must] be in plain language. Parliament [must] provide the public with information regarding Constituency Offices, such as the address and contact details of Constituency Offices, the names and contact details of MP assigned to specific Constituency Offices, and the boundaries of constituency areas." A 2013 Parliamentary survey about the development of a Public Participation Framework concluded that the public should have timely information and educational material to effectively participate in public participation opportunities. Furthermore, Communication Officers should serve as

information access points to provide printed material and electronic options in the relevant languages of the specific province, including the important remote areas.

2.4.2.4. Zimbabwe's PCICs

PCIC offices were introduced in all constituencies in Zimbabwe in 2002, following the recommendations of the Parliamentary Reforms Committee in 1997. The objectives of establishing these offices are to:

- enhance the participation of the public in the legislative process;
- strengthen the capacity of MPs to contribute more effectively to parliamentary proceedings;
- give Parliament a stronger and more systematic oversight role, with emphasis on promoting greater efficiency in the management and utilization of public resources;
- provide a base for Parliament-generated information where documents such as the Hansard, Order Paper and Forthcoming Bills can be accessed by the public within the constituency;
- provide specific socio-economic data of the constituency;
- act as Committee Public Hearings and workshops co-ordination centres for constituencies;
- provide a meeting place for the sitting Member of Parliament and their constituents; and
- be a development coordination centre within the Constituency.

A *Feasibility study on the establishment of Parliament constituency information centers* conducted by Mutaviri and Ncube (2003) recommended that PCICs should:

- provide the link between parliament, the public, civic groups and the media, distribute promotional material, disseminate information and raise public awareness about Parliament;
- provide an up-to-date constituency database to enhance MP capacity to contribute more meaningfully and effectively to parliamentary debates and or proceedings;
- resemble and project the desired image of Parliament in outlook, management and

operation systems;

- have equipped offices for MPs and OAs; and a neutral venue located away from party offices and local government facilities. This arrangement would allow free visitations and should have the following: computers and printers, large screen TVs for local residents to follow parliamentary proceedings, fax machines, fixed telephones, motor cycles; and

- be located in the CBD in urban areas, at a public, visible and central place, while in rural areas it must be at growth points or other central places for ease of access; the office must be seen to be an independent office, free from political party influence.

PoZ has a set of standards for managing PCICs. OAs are engaged in terms of Section 9 of the Officers of Parliament (Terms of Service) Regulations, 1977 as amended, which authorizes Parliament to engage persons to provide services required for the purpose of some class of work. The Section states that OAs shall serve Parliament, performing duties in the PCIC offices. These PCIC offices must be manned by an office assistant (OA) with working hours similar to other officers of Parliament. The regulations further state that the officer shall place the whole of their time on duty at the disposal of the employer. Again, subject to the agreement, the officer shall serve under the direct supervision of Parliament and the MP. The conditions of service applicable to Officers of Parliament appointed in terms of Section 48 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe shall apply to OAs. PCICs are apolitical offices, which should be accessible to all members of the public, irrespective of political persuasion. OAs are ambassadors of Parliament in constituencies which should be endowed with important qualities of credibility, reliability and trustworthiness.

A number of constituencies are operating without PCICs. When PCICs were introduced in 2002 the aim was that all 120 constituencies of the country should have these offices. A verification survey on PCICs conducted by Kurebwa (2003) found that out of 120 constituencies, only 79 PCICs (65%) were operational and there are no permanent structures. Other challenges related to the advent of Amendment Number 18 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. The number of MPs increased in the House of Assembly, from 120 to 210, in addition to 60 Senators. This translated to a total of 270 PCICs that should have been established. There are also arguments that traditional chiefs should have PCICs offices. Due to financial constraints, especially from 2006, the Administration of

Parliament could not be directly involved in establishing PCIC offices and equipping existing ones, so this resulted in some PCICs not being given computer equipment and office furniture.

Discussion on Zimbabwe's PCICs has also been covered in sections 1.2.3 and 1.3.

2.5. Summary

In this chapter a number of information services theories and models were discussed. It has been noted that the provision of information to parliamentarians and citizens has continued to evolve along the lines of shifts in theories and models. Some of these relate specifically to parliamentary information services.

Reviews of the work of constituency offices in general suggest that their effectiveness as a channel of information delivery and public participation depends on a number of factors such as support, political development and ability of the individual MP. There is no universal constituency office model in both non-African and African examples discussed above. There are also no agreed general requirements nor standards that are supposed to be afforded to the constituency office. In the case of Zimbabwe, political parties are in control of the routine constituency office operations. Zambia has started construction of permanent offices for the information centres. In Zimbabwe there are no permanent constituency offices. Offices are rented from different lessors, resulting in constituency offices located in awkward places. In South Africa, political parties hold power or control over parliamentary constituency offices.

CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

3.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature by first introducing the need for rights to access information with emphasis on access to information for democracy, the UDHR, The Declaration on Parliamentary and IFLA Declarations. This will be followed by a review of the role of parliamentarians and constituents and paying attention to their information needs and services; the concepts of information services and information centre, and then presents fundamental theories and investigations about the inter-related nature of information delivery. Specific references have been made in respect of information needs, accessibility and variables affecting information services delivery, promotion and awareness of services. Chapter 3 has been separated from chapter 2, which focuses on the theories underpinning PCICs.

Access to information is essential to citizen participation and encouragement in the development process. When constituents are better informed they are more likely to participate in policy discussions where they can communicate their ideas and concerns freely. They can speak freely, discern different perspectives, share similar interests and concerns, and pursue what they believe to be in the public's interest. Such exchange of ideas is fundamental to democratic participation and civil society. Many of the theorists who focus their scholarship on new forms of citizen participation have recognized the importance of access to information to bolster civic engagement (see section 2.2). Boyte (1989) elaborated the importance of schooling citizens in democracy by informing them about issues and utilizing public spaces to listen, negotiate, exchange, act and hold officials accountable. Likewise, Hardt and Negri (2000) elaborate on the importance of information access to the evolution of the postmodern state and the emergence of new social. The American Library Association (2001) conference commissioned papers on information equity, copyright and fair use, and public access. The role of the information access has assumed a new dimension in the millennium.

3.2. Rights of access to information

Freedom of Information is a basic human right; access to Information is increasingly regarded as a basic human right. Many countries globally have now adopted access to information declarations and laws to give effect to the right of access to information. Some of the declarations and laws discussed in this section include:

- Access to information for democracy;
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- The Declaration on Parliamentary Openness; and
- IFLA Declarations.

3.2.1 Access to information and democracy

Freedom of Information (FOI), good governance and democracy are a central prerequisite to citizen rights to information; and is crucial to public participation. FOI is as essential to a farmer, teacher, librarian, historian, as to any other person. For the public to be informed of what government does, they should be given a legal right to be informed about what it is doing.

Darch and Underwood (2010) reflect that information is a crucial commodity to good governance as it reflects and captures government activities and processes. Zvoma (2005) expresses a similar view by stating that information is at the centre of the relationship between government and the public it governs. Without information, Darch and Underwood (2010) continue, the public cannot understand, let alone ask how and why decisions were made on their behalf. Governments enact FOI laws to facilitate free flow of official information to the public. This flow is meant to keep the public informed of government activities and processes; and is presented as a measure of its commitment to account to the people who brought it to power. FOI is a measure government undertakes to convince the public they are getting fair and equal access to services, resources and opportunities; and that their views and opinions are always considered. In other words, FOI

is a step towards providing the public with a guarantee that government is transparent in its operations and accountable for all the activities it performs.

By fulfilling any of these missions, there is room to safeguard liberty and advance democracy. Information centres have an obligation to provide access by all persons to a variety of information and ideas to enhance their opportunities for self-improvement and empowerment.

Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation now exists in many countries of the world. It provides access to information centres for use by the citizens. In Armenia, The Freedom of Information Centre of Armenia (FOICA) was created in 2001 by a group of devoted professionals, with a mission to protect the constitutional right of citizens for access to information. FOICA has reached its objectives through strategic litigation, training, monitoring, public campaigns and advocacy. One of the major accomplishments was the adoption of the Armenian FOI law (National Assembly of Armenia, 2003). Currently, FOICA works with the Government and the Parliament on the second generation of FOI legislative reforms in the country. One of its Parliamentary Monitoring Activities includes providing access to parliamentary information for the public, through the submission of FOI requests to the Parliament.

Individuals and organizations use the FOI laws not only for its democratic value but also for various economic and social purposes, including access to information, regulatory enforcement data, health and safety reports, and even community development projects. Without user-friendly and readily available administrative, parliamentary, financial and other public information, economic actors cannot make fully informed decisions. Halligan, Krause and Williams (1988) summarized how satellite information centres can provide freedom of access, and promotion of citizen participation in specific ways:

a) Those affected by regulations or rules will be more likely to understand and obey them if they are accessible and have been developed through a public process;

b) The quality of government decisions usually would be better if they encourage public input during the process;

c) Legalization of access confirms public ownership of government information, and that it is gathered or created, maintained and used for public purposes;

d) Greater access to government information is pragmatic, as more information means more efficient resource allocation; and

e) Secrecy, which allows corruption to flourish, is reduced. Corruption in government invariably carries adverse social and economic consequences for citizens.

In promoting democracy, the IPU (2006) outlined in the publication *Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: guide to good practice,* that,

"Parliament makes a vital contribution to democracy at many levels simultaneously. It is a representative body through which the will of the people finds expression, in which their diversity is manifested, and in which differences between them is debated and negotiated. At its best, parliament embodies the distinctive democratic attributes of discussion and compromise, as the means through which public interest is realized rather than the individual or sectional interests. In carrying out its central functions, parliament works together with associations of civil society, and has the distinctive responsibility of safeguarding the individual democratic rights of citizens. It can only do all this if it observes its democratic norms, by being open, accessible and accountable in its own mode of operation."

In extensive literature on parliamentary reform, going back to the 1960s, changes have been proposed to allow parliaments to better perform their legislative functions. These functions included conducting inquiries into matters of public interest and communicating with the public to allow them to be more informed (Evans, 2006). Kohl (1991) emphasised that if parliaments want citizens to have a say in the affairs of the country, they must first secure their right of having unrestricted access to all information necessary for participation in parliamentary activities. A tool for implementing this access to information is through the parliament information services. Kohl (1991: 339) further says, "once the legal obligation to respond to information requests from parliament is binding upon all government agencies, the public administration, and all other generally accessible sources of information, the professionalism of parliamentary information services guarantees the

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identification, location, analysis, condensation, simplification and dissemination of well-researched, accurate, up-to-date information for decision making to all those concerned on a strictly non-partisan basis."

3.2.2. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) highlights that problems in underdeveloped areas can be solved by 'educating the citizen' about fundamental human rights, which include the right to information access and freedom of expression. The right to access information is the right to open inquiry, without having the subject of one's interest examined or scrutinized by others. The best-known statement of all the conventions is in Article 19 of the UDHR (2001): *"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers"*.

The UDHR's provision for the freedom to hold and impart opinions constitutes one side of the freedom of expression, while the other side consists of the freedom to search for and access those opinions. This means the right to be able to access what is being published by virtue of the freedom of expression. By ratifying the UDHR and other instruments, nation states commit to its provisions which must then be reflected in the laws and practices of the nation.

Other international declarations and instruments that represent major efforts to universalize democracy and freedom of access to information, and freedom of expression have been discussed in the following section.

3.2.3. The Declaration on Parliamentary Openness

Parliaments, as public bodies need to ensure that citizen access to parliamentary information is enhanced. The *Declaration on Parliamentary Openness* has four sections that relate to information (Mandelbaum, 2011). The declaration recommended that parliaments should:

- promote a culture of openness by upholding public ownership of parliamentary information. It calls for parliaments to ensure citizen access to basic freedoms, including expression and assembly, as well as release of complete, accurate and timely parliamentary information;
- specify the type of information that parliaments should be accessed by the public to include documents created and received by parliament during the legislative process including preparatory documents, committee minutes, votes and reports by parliament from government institutions;
- call for information to be broadly accessible to all citizens through print and electronic channels. Access to information should be made through removal physical and language barriers; and
- focus on electronic information and how parliaments should enable online participation by citizens.

The Declaration provides important guidelines to parliaments on requirements for accessing parliamentary information.

3.2.4. IFLA Declarations

Article 19 also enshrines the basic principle of freedom of information and is widely cited as a foundational statement of freedom of expression in the *Geneva Declaration of Principles* (WSIS, 2003). It is also enshrined in IFLA (2010) Statutes as the first of IFLA's core values and cited in in the American Library Association's (ALA) *Resolution and on IFLA, human Rights and freedom of expression* (ALA, 1997). The IFLA has on numerous occasions and in many forums made clear its belief in the positive role of libraries and information centres in society; and its commitment to enhancing this role. The IFLA

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Manifesto on Transparency, Good Governance and Freedom from Corruption endorsed by IFLA Governing Board, on 3 December 2008 is closely linked to the principle of Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression, as set out in Article 19 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. In particular:

- The IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1994) which states the importance of 'the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society'; and

- The Alexandria Manifesto on Libraries, the Information Society in Action (2005) reasserts the principle that 'libraries and information services [are] vital to a democratic and open Information Society'; and adds that 'Libraries are essential for a well-informed citizenry and transparent governance'.

The IFLA *Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development* (2014) represents one of the most recent declarations on access to information. Access to information has been identified as playing a critical role in supporting development. To advance this position, IFLA has launched *the Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development* outlining the need for access to information to be recognised in the United Nations post-2015 development framework. The framework will succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and set the agenda for development for the next decade.

The Lyon Declaration calls on Member States of the United Nations to acknowledge that access to information, and the skills to use it effectively, are required for sustainable development, and to ensure that this is recognised in the post-2015 development agenda by:

- Acknowledging the public's right to access information and data, while respecting the right to individual privacy.
- Recognising the important role of local authorities, information intermediaries and infrastructure such as ICTs and an open Internet as a means of implementation.
- Adopting policy, standards and legislation to ensure the continued funding, integrity, preservation and provision of information by governments, and access by people.

- Developing targets and indicators that enable measurement of the impact of access to information and data and reporting on progress during each year of the goals in a Development and Access to Information (DA2I) report.

More than 125 institutions and associations from within and beyond the library sector, including development agencies, media organisations, gender, ICT and education campaigners have signed the pre-launch, already making the Lyon Declaration the most successful campaign of its type that IFLA has ever undertaken.

The *Declaration*, together with further analysis and research of the post-2015 framework and capacity building will give IFLA members and libraries the tools to advocate for the inclusion of access to information in the final goals, and to be ready to support national governments in the implementation of the framework. IFLA will continue to engage with all relevant UN processes, and encourage librarians to meet with Member State representatives at national levels to promote the Lyon Declaration and highlight the role that specific library services, such as government information, literacy, children's services and ICT can play in supporting development (IFLA Lyon Declaration, 2014).

By adhering to some of the above declarations, laws or regulations, parliaments can be in a position to provide conditions and guidelines to promote access to quality information.

3.3. Parliamentarians and constituents

A number of studies have been conducted concerning parliamentarians and citizens in relationship to parliamentary information delivery, both in developed and developing countries. It is instructive to review studies from each category to gauge the direction of progress in this particular field.

3.3.1. Roles of Parliamentarians and Constituents

Rayward (1992) discovered that parliamentarians usually pay attention to four main levels for the range of subjects in:

- constituency;

- party;

- parliament; and

- international level.

Rayward further highlighted that, at the constituency level, parliamentarians would regularly see the constituency as the priority to maintain constituent confidence and votes for future elections. A survey conducted by the Global Centre for ICT Parliament (2010) in its World e-Parliament Report 2008 showed that parliaments are struggling to meet ever growing, citizen expectations. Data suggest citizens hold parliamentarians to account principally for the services they are able to deliver outside parliament, not for their law-making role, nor their ability to oversee the executive. Constituency service exists in many different forms, both in constituency-based electoral systems and also in list-based systems. Research has shown that parliamentarian capacity to deliver is being stretched to the limit; and might even be taking them away from their parliamentary duties. The Global Parliamentary Report 2011 surveyed over 600 parliamentarians; and suggests that working on citizen issues is the single most time-consuming aspect of a parliamentarian's work.

It is clear that constituency service is important both to citizens and legislators. It is an accepted and expected part of the legislator's job. Numerous opinion polls in different regions of the USA suggest that the public believes that some form of constituency service is the most important part of an MP's role, while MPs themselves no doubt see the benefit of meeting the public's needs for various reasons, not least to improve their chances of re-election. The same survey conducted for the Global Parliamentary Report 2011 indicated that parliamentarians consider law-making to be their most important role (52.3% of respondents); followed by holding government to account (17.2%); and solving constituent

problems (12.5%). When asked what they think citizens see as their most important role, however, the result is different. Parliamentarians believe that, in the eyes of the citizen, solving citizen problems is the parliamentarian's most important role (36.4%); followed by law-making (20.3%); holding government to account (16.2%); and promoting the interests and economy of their constituency (13.1%).

Figure 3.1: Ranking parliamentarians' roles

(Source: World e-Parliament Report 2008)

According to the 2008 World e-Parliament Report, many parliaments lag in their ability or effectiveness as public institutions to inform and interact with citizens. To avoid the risk of eroding public trust in the legislative body, a number of Parliaments need to define new strategies and a vision aiming to:

- re-engage the electorate;

- interact with citizens;

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- inform citizens; and

- provide   multiple channels for receiving and disseminating information**.**

In a publication titled *"In Connecting Parliament and citizens: the challenge of openness, transparency and representation",* Casini (2008) provided examples of parliaments moving from the almost "traditional" citizen input solutions, to the more interactive and popular, social networking media. In Brazil, lawmakers connect with the constituents through various social media as shown in figure 3.3. The Brazilian e-Democracia project relies on the use of social media combined with offline legislative events, such as committee hearings, and conferences. The initiative is intended to reach a broad segment of the public, including citizens, parliamentarians, civil servants, researchers, non-governmental organisations and interest groups. The main goal is to permit easier access to the decision-making process by citizens not associated with strong interest groups or corporations that usually lobby for access to the centre of power in Brasilia, where the national government is located.

WE ARE CONNECTED TO...

Figure 3.2: Participatory Law-making in Brazil

Source: (Casini, 2008)

The World e-Parliament Report (2008) suggested that to involve constituents in Parliamentary issues and challenges, there is a need to address:

- the digital divide;

- access to technology for all citizens;

- complexity of multiple languages;

- literacy; and

- people with disabilities.

This will encourage citizens to make effective input and valid comments through their representatives. Citizens are requested to make democratic choices. To do this they need a considerable amount of information about: what goes on in the legislature; the choices on offer; and the consequences of choosing one course of action in preference to another. The

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issues are clarified or clearly identified at critical decision-points, such as elections or referendums. But there is an underlying expectation that citizens will act as informed citizens, gathering, sifting and using information for the collective and for personal, individual benefit. This is a fundamental principle of democratic, political systems - if citizens are not well-informed then democratic processes are little more than a sham.

Without understanding the relationship between legislators and constituents as explained previously, it would be difficult to make any meaningful information needs analysis of these two groups. Parliamentarians require free and easy access to relevant, accurate, timely and impartial information if they are to accomplish the difficult tasks they have been elected to implement. Similarly, constituents need feedback information from Parliament and information generated within their constituency.

3.3 2. Information needs and services

This section examines the concepts of information needs and services, information services in Africa and its promotion and marketing. Information need is the lack of appropriate information on which to base choices that could lead to benefits or services that may improve citizen well-being (Tester, 1992). Tester's definition is a good starting point for a consideration of what we mean by information needs. It emphasises that we seldom want or need information for information's sake. Information is a means to an end, something that enables us to make choices. Devadason and Lingam (1997) categorised information needs by distinguishing between unexpressed and dormant information needs. Dormant needs are needs of which a user is still unaware and that can be activated by an information system. With unexpressed needs, people are aware of their needs but do nothing about them. Smith (1991) classifies information needs as being either general or specific. General information needs being the need for current information on topics of interest, while specific needs refer to problem solving and solution finding information. According to Atkins (1973), information need is "a function of extrinsic uncertainty produced by a perceived discrepancy between the individual's current level of uncertainty about important environmental objects and a criteria state that he seeks to achieve." Van Lill

(2000) however warns that information should not be seen as a need in itself, but rather a construct or tool used to satisfy primary human needs. Kebede (2000) agrees that satisfying information needs of users is a dynamic process and once knowledge has been accumulated can lead to renewed information needs, leading to T.S. Eliot's *Choruses from the Rock's* three key terms namely data, information, and knowledge (continuum). These have been presented in linear state in figure 3.1.
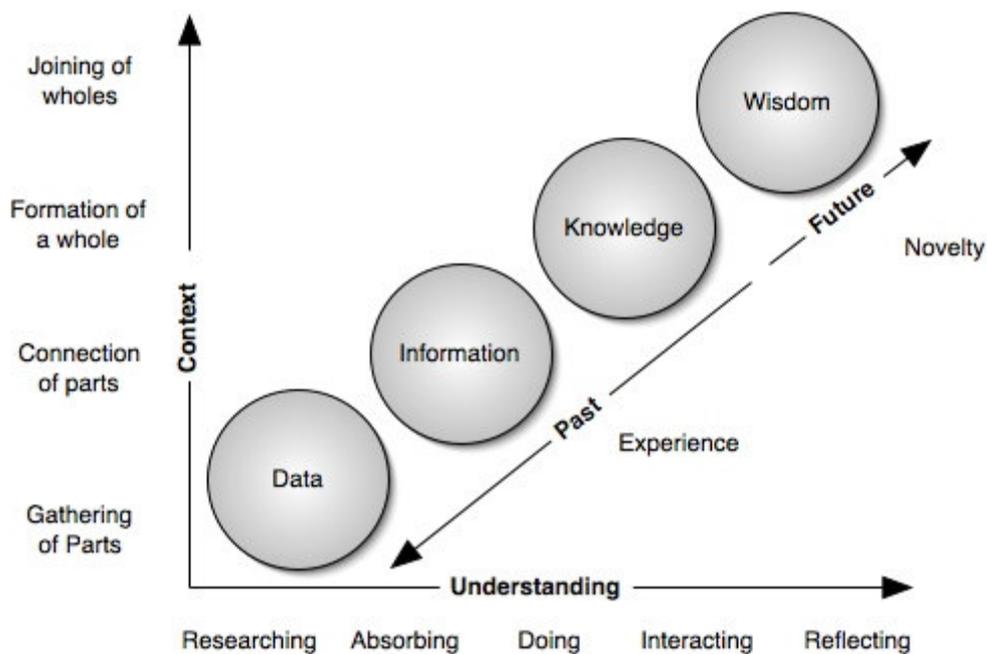
Figure 3.3: Information, Knowledge and Wisdom (DIKW) hierarchy

Source: (Clark, 2004)

Eliot's DIKW model has been discussed at a number of forums, including Al Gore's Digital Earth in 1998; and appears to have proved both a useful and an enduring model to better understand the concept of information as a need. Cognisance should be taken that information can be differently interpreted and have different meanings assigned to it by each individual, depending on their specific need. In this respect, Kebede (2000) categorised information as having content and non-content characteristics:

- Content characteristics of information are related to facts, data, claims, concepts or conceptual structure to solve problems. The content is interpreted within the

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context of the individual information seeker's problem(s) or question(s), which might differ from person to person; and

- Non-content characteristics refer to the carrier of the information. The need for the appropriate carrier is also a user need that needs to be met.

Homan (2008) conducted further studies on the information needs of individual groups, such as medical professionals, managers, ethnic minorities, students, legislators and social scientists. Cox (2000) noted that there has been a tremendous change in the provision of information services but there is still a need for a theory of information actions. The provision of information services is complex and should be regarded as a management tool. This tool is applied to: determine how effectively and efficiently the information centre is serving the needs of its users; identify the limitations and failures of service; and to recommend ways to improve such a service (Cox, 2000). Adopting effective management practices ensures formulations of an efficient policy and its effective implementation. Agha and Akhtar (1992) identified factors vital for effective management: strong leadership, participative management, team building, effective human resources management and appropriate organisational structures. For organisational capacity building, it is also essential to develop information centres for management to support policy planners, administrators, and practitioners at all levels to make informed decisions and effectively handle their functions in a decentralised manner (Bhola, 1995). A culture of information emerges from values and norms held by participants in a system in relation to the development, validation, and utilisation of information in decision-making. A great deal of research has been undertaken in Britain, North America and Australia to identify the extent and nature of the needs for information services (Dervin and Nilan, 1986). It has been revealed by these studies that even in developed countries, there is need for services that concentrate on providing specialised information. Ikoja-Odongo (2002) ascertained the information needs of an informal economic sector in Uganda in *"A Study of the Information Needs and Uses of the Informal Sector in Uganda: Preliminary Findings"*. The author examined the use, role and impact of information in the growth and development of informal sector. Opinions of citizens under study were collected through focus group discussion, informant interviews and observations. The study revealed the need for simplification of information packaging and improvement in its delivery.

Mchombu and Mutanyatta (1995) carried out a significant research in community information needs. They discovered that although the specifics vary from one community to another, challenges highlighted were almost identical. Durani (1985) criticized information extension services for both media and libraries. In a survey of information units in Turkey's rural communities, Englefield (1993) commented that, "It is perhaps appropriate that in developing countries research in itself is developing".

Paisley (1978), in his study of scientists in the work environment discovered that the work environment influences the nature and type of information requirements of individuals. Lin and Garvey (1972) conclude that from the perspective of the work environment in which the parliamentarian and citizen operate many and varied needs could emerge; in the process of satisfying these needs, information is needed. The problems could manifest as decision-making, understanding or gaining insight into a situation, awareness of issues, laws, protocol, rules and regulations, or dealing with problematic situations. Though the information needed in many cases is of a content nature, the non-content can be as important as parliamentary information needs.

In a debate on legislative information services, Robinson (1991) concluded that, while legislative information services can be seen to provide specialised research in the narrow sense of providing services for a specialised clientele, they differ from libraries and other information service providers. The latter must provide information on the breadth of human knowledge, rather than concentrating on a range of subjects relevant to a specialist clientele. Parliamentary information needs to cover the whole universe of knowledge. Cuminghame (2009) argued that information needs relating to legislation must respond to the following question: What do parliaments do? Answers to this question affect the need for, and functions of, information in legislative libraries and information services. There is scope for endless debate but the truth he maintained, is that parliamentary information services are dedicated to parliament, its needs and tempo. This means that its staff must understand how parliamentarians operate; what the information needs of citizens are; and how to respond to these needs.

3.3.3. Access to Parliamentary information services in Africa

Harris and Rajora (2006) remark that people around the world are learning through experience that the survival of democracy itself may depend on a massive change in attitude in societies about the appropriate rights, privileges and powers of corporate entities. This requires access to information.

When used in its broadest sense, access means enabling people to identify, locate and use the information that will meet their needs. Librarians espouse principles of free inquiry and intellectual freedom; they oppose barriers to access, such as censorship or restrictions based on age, culture, religion and cost. An access to service system encompasses removal of any restrictions that would discourage citizens from enjoying equal services (Lips, 1991). Research for the World e-Parliament Report 2010 showed that Parliamentarians need access to information to generate and maintain public support. When citizens lose confidence in the parliamentary institution, the way is open to a revolution. Parliament pursues a number of goals, including the: development and dissemination of information; building of support for the political system; provision of services to all constituents; and enaction of policy decisions into law. Without ready access to relevant information, MPs have no hope of keeping pace with rapid societal changes, nor will they be able to make the right decisions. It is not surprising therefore, that most modern Parliaments spend a considerable proportion of their budgets on parliamentary information and research services.

Citizens sometimes face difficulties in accessing parliamentary information services. In a study of the problems being faced by various parliamentary information systems, Tell (1998) presented difficulties in equal access by citizens and concluded that, "a genuine approach should operate freely along particular lines. Problems such as political power, leadership, democracy, liberty, and political systems are common to every state. Interests differ and solutions arrived at in one environment can sometimes fail to have a bearing on similar institutions in one area or several areas within the state." Access to information and

knowledge for democracy is a paradigm that has been accepted and is strongly gaining momentum globally.

A number of writers have examined the issue of access to information as being at the heart of information services. According to Arterton (1997), theoretically speaking we are experiencing for the first time in history that citizens can have immediate access to information to enhance the knowledge required for participation in a democratic society. Parliament information professionals play a key role in advancing this vital service to provide the successful adoption of information projects at local levels (Button & Mattson, 1999). This is supported by Sawi (2003), whose findings revealed that several countries have embraced the establishment of constituency information centres to provide access to information, for well-known economic, political and social reasons.

What is interesting with regard to accessibility, according to Rosenberg (1998) and what is more promising is the theoretical possibility, which revolves around the point of easy access. Usually, we think of this as potentially lifting barriers of time and space in relation to communication, thereby enabling citizens to participate in decision making processes. Beyond this theory, problems are experienced because it has been realized that 'easy' access does not mean 'equal access. Equal and easy access is vital for any theoretical realisation of information access, as an input towards a better democracy. Speaking of measuring income distribution, Srimarasan (1997) provides an example of models that have emerged from development science, suggesting that concern should be with equality of 'access', be it to educational facilities, medical facilities, job opportunities and not necessarily with equality of success that would not call for institutional change.

The SADC Parliamentary Reforms and Modernisation Committee (2004) also observed that in measuring equality of access to information, it is almost impossible not to also measure the information channels leading to facilities. Equal access must be considered in relation to its effectiveness for the worst off citizens, such as the handicapped or

geographically scattered rural populations. Equal opportunity of access should also alleviate physical sociocultural barriers, and such as language.

Access to parliamentary information has been discussed in detail (see section 2.4.2). A number of Africa countries have introduced information services to disadvantaged areas. In the last two decades, after attacks on existing library and information services as 'colonial brainwashing' (Amadi, 1981), the field concentrated the Rural Information Services movement in Africa and Mchombu's concept of 'librarianship of poverty' in the early 1980s. There has been a steady, and increasing, trickle of publications devoted to this topic. There have also been a number of conferences and workshops on the theme. Probably the most complete synthesis of the information services theme was published by Sturges and Neill (1998). They suggested that the movement is influential in most countries of East, Southern and West Africa. It is found in Anglophone countries and also exists in particularly lively form in Francophone West Africa. Ideas and experiences from the Francophone countries have been drawn together very effectively by Ndiaye (1999) in his research entitled 'Performance measurement and project evaluation for African rural information services'. From these research projects, the movement has produced speculative writing and some experimentation. The speculation has been fruitful; the research helpful and stimulating but it is the experimentation that is now most important. The movement is now much more than a matter of words. Rosenberg (1998) questioned in 1993 if such services were sustainable beyond an experimental phase. PCICs fall into the category of information services to constituencies that provide Parliamentary information and those that have been introduced in Southern Africa have been discussed in section 2.4.2.

3.3.4. Parliamentary information services and their challenges

Obholzer, (2011), in *The Declaration on Parliamentary Openness* defines parliamentary information as:

"Information about parliament's roles and functions, and information generated throughout the legislative process, including the text of introduced legislation and amendments, votes, the parliamentary agenda and schedule, records of plenary and

committee proceedings, historical information, and all other information that forms a part of the parliamentary record, such as reports created for or by parliament." In this regard, Obholzer (2011) continued: "parliament shall provide information on the management and administration of parliament, parliamentary staff, and comprehensive and detailed parliamentary budget information. Parliament shall provide information about the backgrounds, activities and affairs of members, including sufficient information for citizens to make informed judgments regarding their integrity and probity, and potential conflicts of interest".

In an endeavour to implement reforms in providing access to information services, a number of obstacles have been encountered. Sawi (2003) describes Parliamentary reform as politically sensitive given that parliament itself is an eminently political institution. There is constant confrontation amongst contesting parties. For this reason, efforts at reform usually encounter resistance from within and outside parliament. Norton and Wood (1993) identified several closely interrelated factors, including political party structures; available legislator resources; a high degree of professionalism and a political culture, all of which affect parliamentary information delivery. Findings by Granickas (2013) in working with parliaments also noted challenges such as:

- Lack of staff knowledge and a need for training;
- Lack of financial resources;
- User resistance; and
- Lack of management support.

Srimarasan (1997) also identified challenges that affect delivery of information. They noted that:

- Parliamentarians have to run for election at regular intervals and in many cases, turnover is very high, rendering it difficult to maintain a core group of reform-minded MPs to steer reforms in a sustainable manner. This barrier can be lessened by engaging a team of well trained and dedicated parliamentary administration officials to be custodians of these reforms.
- Many parliaments in the emerging democracies have only known multiparty politics since the beginning of the 1990s. The one-party, rubber-stamp reputation continues to be a major hurdle to reform. The culture of democracy has not taken

root enough for there to be an unflinching commitment to implement changes for the better. Generally, fear of the unknown leads to resistance to reform.

- Personal legislator attitudes to constituency services have a great deal to do with how much time is spent communicating with constituents. A study of USA states found that legislator attitudes are a major predictor in the provision of constituent services. Variations in attitude toward constituent communication are largely personal.

Parliamentary resources available to support legislator-constituent communication, travel, office expense allowances, equipment and staff strongly affect the extent to which Parliamentary Information Centres can perform (Van House, 1990). In addition, the rising costs of information resources have become a major concern, causing the management of many organizations to require evidence to justify costs, in the form of objective data acquired from performance evaluations (Kebede, 1999). Reimbursement for legislator travel between the capital and the constituency is a very basic resource that allows for communication with constituents. A survey of Romanian MPs found that four-fifths of them travel to their districts at least three times per month (NDI, 1996:5). This approximates the number of times that most U.S. members of Congress and state legislators return to their districts during legislative sessions. Most legislatures provide reimbursement for such travel but this subsidy cannot be taken for granted. Some Nepali legislator districts involve eight travel days; and they receive reimbursement for travel only at the beginning and end of sessions (USAID, 1996:10).

Most legislatures provide at least some reimbursement for basic office expenses (IPU, 1986). Support for routine office expenses, such as stationery, postage, telephone, photocopying and computers enables more effective communication between legislators and citizens. A USAID (1995:11) study shows that the U.S Congress is probably the most generous legislature in the world in supporting office expenses, as witnessed by the virtually unlimited franking privilege.

Wealthier nations provide computers and other sophisticated electronic communication tools to their constituency offices. According to the USAID (1995), the U.S. Congress and

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the Minnesota Legislature even supply television studios in the capital where members can videotape messages to send to the media in their district. In emerging democracies and poorer countries globally, equipment such as photocopiers and computers may not be available to the legislature, much less to individual legislators. U.S. organizations have often aided legislatures in emerging democracies by providing photocopiers and computers. This type of technological aid has been oriented primarily to supporting institutional legislative functions to the extent that such equipment is available to individual members, it can also aid legislators in constituent information delivery.

The most expensive, and perhaps the most effective, method of increasing legislator ability to deliver constituent services is to provide them with their own staff and district offices. Again, the U.S. Congress is easily the leader in this regard. Members of the Senate receive staff allowances in proportion to the population of their states. Members of the House of Representatives can hire up to 18 personal staff and allocate them between their capital and district offices, as they see fit. Approximately a dozen of the 50 American state legislatures, mostly the states with large populations provide small personal staff to the members. Most other parliaments in the larger and wealthier nations also provide personal staff to their legislators, although not on the same scale as the US Congress (USAID, 1996).

The primary occupation of most staff is service to constituents, especially those in district offices, where legislatures have provided personal staff to their members. Personal staff tend to devote time to the specific concerns, usually district-oriented, of individual legislators; unlike central, nonpartisan staff to the entire legislature, who more often support the administrative and policy functions of parliament. Increasingly in recent years, members of Congress have chosen to place large portions (40 percent on average) of their staff in district offices to enhance the casework and communication with their constituents.

Nepal also provides an extreme case of how the lack of resources can inhibit constituent information delivery. Telephone communication in Nepal is extremely unreliable, and

members of Parliament are not reimbursed for telephone expenses (USAID, 1996). With no travel support and poor telecommunications, legislatures cannot communicate effectively with their constituents.

The cost of providing personal staff to all members of a legislature is very high and few legislatures can afford it. More cost-effective support services for constituent communication and service can be provided through pooled staff for members from the same region, or from the same political party. In the small state of Maryland, the legislative delegation from each of five counties shares support staff to help legislators respond to constituent concerns. U.S. party, state legislature, caucus staff devote extensive time to constituent communication and service on behalf of party members. A memorandum from party whips for the African National Congress in South Africa suggests "members of the national Assembly and the Senate may club together into groups of two, three or four and open up a main or central Parliamentary Constituency Office in an area...." (NDI, 1996)

Parliamentarians in different settings have used creative cooperative mechanisms to pool resources with organizations outside their own legislature. In New York City, some members of Congress co-locate their district offices with state legislators and city council members from the same area to promote cooperation among different levels of government in solving constituent problems. Such an arrangement works best when the legislators from different government levels are of the same political party. In Poland, some MPs have combined their district offices with local political party offices to strengthen constituent support and communication (USAID, 1996).

The question of resources available to parliamentarians is related to professionalism. Legislators who view themselves as full-time professionals and value re-election will take steps to ensure that they have the resources necessary to support constituent needs. In her work, Kempson (1990) found that to provide effective information, the person employed to work at the centre should be:

- known to the constituency and considered to be appropriate for the work;

- chosen by the constituency, or at least, with the acceptance of the community;

- introduced to the constituency in ways that satisfy all traditional and current political protocol requirements;

- present constantly in the community, providing help and attention; and

- prepared to accept that, at their level, they have little control over the client or user treatment by agencies outside the constituency.

Kempson also identified the use of volunteers as an important issue. She feels that where volunteers are used, they should be recruited with a clear understanding that they can never expect to get paid for the work, therefore there should be no coercion whatsoever for them to accept, or continue the work if they do not wish to do so.

Mchombu and Mutanyatta (1995) discovered that information extension services were unsuccessful in most countries. They identified several dimensions to explain the delivery of services. The political dimension of information access is a key issue. The 1990s is regarded as the age of civil liberty; transparency and accountability were required where political organizations and the state have an important role to play in society. The political culture of a country reflects the sum of its citizens' acquired history, attitudes and experience, contributing to the extent to which constituents seek services from their elected representatives. In the former Soviet Union countries, decades of political repression and the consequent lack of civic involvement by citizens may create a reluctance to approach MPs for help.

France, on the other hand has a long tradition of localism among MPs and a "clientelist" style of political culture; constituents attach themselves to legislators, who then protect and support them. Research has shown that political cultures of repression, typical in countries with newly emerging legislatures and clientele, often found in transitional legislatures are enduring and difficult to overcome in the short term (UDHR Article 19: August 2001). Programs of civic education and training for elected officials can help to overcome the problems of a history of repressive totalitarian regime. Promoting effective constituency

information delivery in countries with traditions of patronage politics may first require focusing on administrative and management reforms to control patronage and corruption.

Another challenge has been the controversy over use of constituency development funds (CDFs). These are public funds meant to benefit parliamentary constituencies through allocations and/or spending decisions influenced by the MP. Names coined to CDFs may differ. Use of CDFs has sometimes been controversial, because they raise a number of fundamental questions. Baskin (2010) identified the following as some of the central challenges faced in administering CDFs:

- Accountability and transparency deficiencies generally result from the lack of a clear, effective mechanism for oversight or separation of powers delineated in CDF policy;
- Efficiency issues arise when there is a misallocation, misuse, or underutilization of CDF disbursements;
- Equity dilemma surface partly because of different approaches to defining what is meant by "fair CDF distribution". To address these three elements, one must define who the deserving *recipients* are, what the limits are of the *project or item* for which money is allocated and how to gauge the fairness of the *process* of distribution?; and
- Raised questions that highlight the effects of CDFs on representation and other dimensions of parliament.

To overcome some of the challenges, SUNY, together with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) adopted Principles and Guidelines for Constituency Development Funds (CDFs). Review of CDF Principles and Guidelines highlight the importance of transparency and cooperation among members of government and society. They are organized under the themes of Responsiveness, Transparency, Administration and Management, Accountability and Oversight and Monitoring and Evaluation. SUNY/CID began research into CDFs in 2009 with the intention of assisting in developing effective local development strategies to strengthen ties between MPs and constituents.

Despite being portrayed as a source of inefficiency and corruption, research in Kenya, Jamaica and India indicate that CDFs emerged in part, out of the failure of technocratic administrations to provide adequate services in health, education, roads and community centres. It is true that some country CDFs serve mainly as political slush funds, so inefficiencies can accompany the operations of all CDFs. In this, they however do not differ from most other government programs aimed at delivering services. Well institutionalized CDFs, such as in Kenya and Jamaica can significantly constrain opportunities for corruption and create systematic oversight and auditing of individual projects.

Added to the challenges discussed above, findings also revealed there are several challenges in delivering parliamentary information through PCICs as discussed in section 6.8 of this study.

3.4. Concept of information centre

This section explains the concept of information centre and how this relates to constituency information centres. PCICs are a form of information centre existing within the boundaries of an electoral constituency. They resemble community information centres in many respects. These centres are public locations where constituents gather for amongst other activities, group undertakings, social support and public information.

The UNESCO/UNISIST (1971: 30) report describes an information centre as a combination of some of the functions of secondary journals and specialized libraries, to which are added specific duties. Some of these duties are: the selective dissemination of information; the preparation of state-of-the art monographs; trend reports; and reviews for the benefit of a specialized field, or well-defined and more restricted user groups. The role of the information centre is that of 'repackaging' the information according to the requirements of specific users. Information centres thus operate as 'tertiary' services, with a synthesis function added to those of indexing and classification (UNESCO/UNISIST 1971: 30). Fjordback and Sondergaard (2003) argue that according to the UNISIST model,

an information centre takes on secondary and tertiary functions, such as the preparation of special bibliographies, translations and reviews or syntheses.

In addition, the concept of an information centre, as envisaged by the UNISIST model is broader than that of a library. By ascribing to information centre functions covering both secondary and tertiary roles, information centres actually differ from libraries (Fjordback and Sondergaard, 2003: 284). It may be claimed that libraries are a kind of information centre, whereas the latter is not a kind of library. Libraries do not generally produce reviews or syntheses, or other kinds of tertiary documents. Moreover, information centres are normally not in possession of a physical collection of documents, nor are they primarily concerned with giving access to these collections, as are libraries. According to Fjordback (2003: 286), the concept of the information centre has been under scrutiny for some time. The argument is that the concept of the information centre is one filled with ambiguity and it is not clarified in relation to similar concepts, such as libraries, or documentation centres, or knowledge centres.

Although Zimbabwe pioneered the concept and idea of PCICs in the SADC region, the concept is no longer unique to Zimbabwe. There are similar offices in Botswana, South Africa, Zambia and Malawi. PoZ established PCICs to strengthen the role of Parliament as an important channel of communication between MPs and the electorate. PCICs are an extension of Parliament and the public are involved in the legislative process through their inputs and MP feedback (Parliament of Zimbabwe Public Relations Manual, 2007).

3.4.1. Characteristics of a model centre

In accordance with the statement of the Philippine Association of Congress Universities - PACU (2001), the primary characteristic of a good information centre is its identification with the institution. The measure of excellence is the extent to which its resources, services and facilities support institutional objectives. The Association of Community Information

Centre in Ontario (2005) identifies items of the information centre to comprise and support an information and referral service, namely:

- Inquiry;
- Database;
- Publications;
- Social Reporting, Consultation and Community Development;
- Community Education;
- Professional Development; and
- Administration.

Most of these items are more or less the same as elements of the PCICs recommended in Chapter One (sections 1.2.3 and 1.3) and this study has to consider availability or non-availability of these. This also links to Kanthawongs' (2001) suggestion that in reviewing Parliament Information provision literature, consideration should be on:

- Parliamentary Library;
- Information outreach;
- Communications;
- Research;
- Reports;
- Web Site Management; and
- User security and privacy.

Kanthawongs' framework was tested through a qualitative approach based on one-to one interviews with parliamentary member committees, parliamentary library staff, parliamentary information professionals and citizens. Furthermore, the framework was extended to include parliament infrastructure concepts, a range of subjects, information literacy, and culture, a number of research assistants, language barriers and influences from other government branches. The following section examines promotion and marketing of information centres.

3.4.2. Promoting and marketing of an information service

Information services in Africa have not been properly marketed Rosenberg (1998). The need to promote and market the PCIC is a prerequisite to enhancing awareness and the use of its products and services. In a study by Saracevic and Wood (1981: 89), marketing of information is "an aggregate of activities directed at satisfying human needs and wants through exchange processes. This involves viewing the whole information service or product from the point of view of the final result, that is, from the user's point of view". Saracevic and Wood (1981) further explained that marketing involves:

- Marketing research: analysis of user, identification of characteristics, needs, wants, similarities constraints and economics;

- Product: development of a product or services in congruence with the findings of market research; targeting; testing of products; consideration of alternative products and adaptation if necessary;

- Communication: information to users about benefits, usage, uses, user education and promotion;

- Economics: determination of cost factors; pricing decisions; analysis of economic factors, such as cost benefits; and

- Dissemination: delivery of product or services in an effective way, and at the right time and place.

The relationship that develops between users and service point operators helps users to become more aware of how access to information is essential to a successful pursuit of their everyday interests and fulfilling their needs (Federighi and Parlavecchia, 1994).

Research within the European Parliament by Mezey (2008) has shown that MPs are also concerned with identity and image as being important in creating positive significance when viewed by constituents. Dowling (2001) defines corporate identity as the symbols and names used by an institution to identify with the people. Corporate identity helps

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people find or recognize an organization and is the outward manifestation of an organization. McDonald's, Disney and Nike provide well-known examples. Nike doesn't even need to use its name anymore; the "Swoosh" logo is sufficient. Dowling further explained that corporate identity also encompasses corporate communication, corporate design, corporate culture, behaviour, corporate structure, industry identity and corporate strategy. This taxonomy reflects the multidisciplinary nature of the concept and the struggle to understand what it is. The firm name should be revealed on stationery, literature, transportation, packing, architecture, signs and marketing/sales. These may include a letterhead, business cards, news releases, annual reports, sales bulletins, cartons, labels, stamps, logos, trucks, cars, building design, interior, landscaping and uniforms.

The idea of promotion and marketing of PCICs highlighted in the literature review is relevant. Englefield's report (1996) made recommendations on how best to 'market' Information Services to all potential users to raise awareness of the services and generate enthusiasm for their use (see section 1.2.1). The proposed model (see chapter 7, section 7.3.9) takes into consideration the need to promote and market PCICs, also mentioned in the data in section 5.6.6. Constituents' participation in parliamentary activities is important for PCIC marketing and awareness (section 6.4.4). This is in line with the International Association of Public Participation guidelines (section 1.2.3). PCICs are a product of Zimbabwe's Parliamentary reforms. Most citizens cannot be aware of their existence if extensive promotion and marketing are not done. This can also be strengthened by adhering to Dowling's findings that the primary roles of identity are to create awareness; trigger recognition of the organization; and activate an already stored image of the organization. The following section examines the concept of information centres.

3.5. Evaluation

This section examines performance evaluation in information science, studies on evaluating parliamentary information services and evaluation guidelines.

3.5.1. Performance evaluation in information science

There is wide range of literature relating to the evaluation of information services, including value, impact and measurement, both in library and information science; and in the legal, and business fields. The area was regarded until recently as a 'neglected area and under-researched subject', giving rise to volume based Information Policy Briefings (Feeney and Grieves, 1994), which includes national and international studies on the value of information, including impact, productivity, economics, and measurement.

Evaluation research is the systematic, data-based assessment of social programs, with the purpose of informing action and improving decision making (Rossi and Freeman, 1993). Any project or program evaluator must determine the purpose of the evaluation they are undertaking. Based on this purpose, they must then decide who to study, what kind of research design to use and how data collection will be done (Hermon, 1990). There are usually many choices in each of these categories: multiple stakeholders to be considered; quantitative and qualitative research techniques; and an abundance of possible sampling strategies. Qualitative evaluation works well for exploratory studies in new fields, where there are not many hypotheses yet; and particularly appropriate for evaluating programs that are still developing, for monitoring and evaluating progress (Patton, 2000).

"There is little dispute that social programmes should be evaluated. There is less agreement about how to evaluate them" (Alkin, 1996). Alkin continued to say that such evaluations look beyond the immediate results of policies, instruction, or services to identify longer-term and unintended programme effects. For example, performance evaluations might

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examine whether a programme's immediate positive effects on behaviour were sustained over time.

Kebede (1999) observed that performance evaluation has become a mainstream exercise in all service institutions, such as libraries, in many countries globally. Lancaster (1997) has provided the following reasons for performance evaluation:

- To establish a type of 'benchmark' to show at what performance level the service is now operating;

- To compare the performance of several libraries and services;

- To justify the existence of an information service. This is an analysis of service benefits, or an analysis of relationships among services;

- To identify possible sources of failure or inefficiency in the service, with a view to raising future performance levels.

The purpose of evaluation literature is well documented. For example, Kebede (1999) has quoted the following authorities on the issue:

- It can be used to assess how well the system meets its objectives, or for justification of continuance of service (Bawden 1990:49);

- It can be used to convince institutions that the library needs the same relative share of institutional budget, even if the budget itself is shrinking (Mackenzie 1990; Rodger 1987);

- It may allow a librarian to demonstrate how a particular library stands in relation to others (Winkworth 1993);

- It can help the librarian to describe the extent, range, importance and efficiency of service delivery (Abbot 1994:4);

- It may be used to assess how well the library and information system contribute to achieving parent constituent goals (Pritchard 1996);

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- It can diagnose particular service problem areas, or monitor progress towards specification, or even compare past, current and desired levels of performance (Van House, et al 1990:8)

- It can identify areas where improvement is needed (Van House et, al 1990:3); and

- It can identify what is yet to be accomplished and communicated, how well we do it and what we need to accomplish these (Van house 1995).

The importance of performance evaluation of information projects and services has been emphasized at a number of consultative workshops as highlighted by Kadhar (2002). One such example is the Amsterdam workshop*: Smart Tool practices for evaluating the performance of information products* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 19-22 November 2002).

Researchers challenge evaluation processes of information-based services that focus on transactions, arguing that quantitative data alone cannot provide an accurate picture of the impact, quality, or effectiveness of the interaction (McElroy, 1989).

McElroy (1989) discussed problems associated with performance evaluation and noted: a single performance can have an effect on several people within the community; and intangible benefits are not captured in such a simple approach. Kothari (2004) noted that, regardless of the kind of evaluation, all evaluations use data collected in a systematic manner. These data may be quantitative, such as number of programme participants, reference services rendered, or incidence of a specific behaviour. Data may also be qualitative, such as descriptions of what transpired at a series of service sessions, or an expert's best judgment of the characteristics of information service users. Successful evaluations often blend quantitative and qualitative data collection. The choice of which approach to use should be made with an understanding that there is usually more than one way to answer any given question.

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) has been credited with initiating the first substantive research project aimed at developing a suitable methodology for evaluating the impact of information. This pioneering 1992–2000 research revolved around performance evaluations in seven countries in Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America and Asia. According to the IDRC report, 'the Preliminary Framework (PF) methodology used attempts to measure the part played by information (among other factors) in decision-making through a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to monitoring of inputs, outputs, and outcomes'. The Framework methodology identifies four distinct stages in the evaluation process:

- Preparatory steps: including describing the 'information use environment' and identifying the target audience;

- Planning and design: including identifying the primary objectives of the evaluation and defining indicators;

- Monitoring and measuring: involving data gathering on inputs, outputs, benefits, costs and indicators; and

- Communicating the results: aimed at providing the evaluation feedback to the target audience (IDRC, 2000).

The IDRC report concluded that evaluating project performance is a key part of institutional strategy to manage according to results. Evaluations should produce timely, relevant, credible and objective findings and conclusions on programme performance based on valid and reliable data collection and analysis. Ideally, evaluations should present these findings and conclusions in a clear and balanced manner that indicates the reliability of the findings.

3.5.2. Studies on evaluating parliamentary information services

Parliamentary libraries and information services globally usually provide dual functions, such as traditional libraries providing information resources through print and online collections, research services, publications and responses to individual client requests,

using subject expertise. The larger parliamentary libraries have undertaken research and reviews of their use and client needs over many years. Recent studies have included:

(1) Parliamentarian information seeking behaviour in South Africa by Mostert and Ocholla (2005): In a survey of all parliamentarians and parliamentary libraries in South Africa, it was found that use of electronic services was increasing rapidly, matching print use. This survey was based on interviews with MPs, their research assistants, constituency-based staff, select committee staff and other organisations using the Library. The study also included benchmarking with organisations such as the British Library and the Bank of Canada. The study found the users perceived the service strengths as:

- accessibility to subject specialists;

- accurate, reliable, impartial and up-to-date information;

- rapid responses to reference enquiries;

- access to internal online information and external sources; and

- research publications.

(2) The UK House of Commons observational study of MPs by Orton, Marcella, and Baxter (2000) also identified areas of frustration/weakness such as:

- limited awareness of library services and products;

- unclear, unhelpful and difficult to navigate and search library website;

- slow and unreliable network communications;

- too long, detailed, and overly academic client responses; and

- insufficient and non-proactive service in promoting what it does.

Using case studies, the author found a high level of services that used formal and informal sources to supply information. Member use of online information was highly variable. Motivations for using information services were found to be very unpredictable and dependent on emerging issues and the media.

(3) Marcella, Carcary and Baxter (1999) did a study titled "*Members of the European Parliament information needs*" based on a survey of the information needs of Scottish and UK representatives to the European Parliament. They found that Members were expected to cover a very large range of subject areas, which required them to rely on information from a large number of sources. Respondents considered that the sheer volume of information made information retrieval a "seemingly impossible task". Information contacts were seen as the most important and reliable source of information.

(4) A study by Serema (1999) on information needs of MPs in the House of Commons found that requests for information were increasing. The Library was considered a key, indispensable resource. The quality of Library services was highly rated by information users, that is, MPs and constituents. Challenges identified were the broad range of issues MPs were required to cover, in a short time period.

The studies summarised in the above section have been based on a variety of social science research techniques. The findings and techniques were reviewed as part of the preparation of the data collection techniques for this study (see chapter 4). The next section examines literature on evaluation guidelines.

3.5.3. Guidelines for evaluation

Hernon and McClure (1990) provide guidelines for the evaluation of information projects. The culture and value of evaluation in the information science context, as discussed by CIDA (2000) are also important for consideration in this study. Such guidelines include the importance for evaluation to take place in the real world to:

- have a purpose that is goal orientated;

- focus on determining the quality of a product(s) or service(s);

- go beyond measurement;

- provide useful systematically collected data;

- employ an outside evaluator/consultant when possible;

- target multiple audiences and purposes;

- be more than descriptive;

- be on-going, rather than sporadic and provide a means for on-going monitoring;

- be used to diagnose and to make changes;

- accept the need for on-going evaluation, building on insights and knowledge to reflecting the dynamic information industry environment; and

- analyse the importance of outcomes-based evaluation, focusing on real benefits for real people measured against cost and accessibility.

Menou (1993) further undertook an analysis of the importance of outcomes-based evaluation, focusing on real benefits for real people measured against cost and accessibility. Doctor and Ankem (2000) developed an information needs and services taxonomy to evaluate information services based on user needs, as identified in the Library and Information Science literature. By comparing the existing information services to the taxonomy, they hoped to find answers to the questions: Who do the systems serve? What information needs do they try to meet? How effectively do they meet those needs?

Westat (2002) suggests market research should be done at the initial stages of information service existence, to determine desirable content and services. Westat further emphasizes the need for soliciting public feedback before, during and after development to ensure buy-in and relevance to their needs. They suggest that relevance of information will make or break the information service: information service centres will thrive if they help the public, and will fail if they see themselves simply as "alternative information providers."

Moss (1994) recommends including different stakeholders in the information service evaluative process and suggested doing periodic user surveys as an appropriate means of measuring satisfaction. However, user surveys are only one measure of meeting objectives. A stakeholder approach would involve identifying stakeholder objectives, then developing ways to evaluate whether they have been met. For instance, open-ended interviews with information service users, or stakeholders to determine impacts may be time consuming and costly.

Another feature of effective evaluations includes the use of multiple data sources and the usefulness of combining both qualitative and quantitative data when possible. Several evaluations use multiple methods of evaluation. Schuh and Upcraft (2001) did interviews, document analysis, observed users of information services and studied usage statistics. Burke (1999) conducted interviews and studied the content of existing reports. Weyrauch and Selvood (2007) discovered the information sector is concerned with improving evaluation practice and developing common understanding. In their findings, there is a need to recognize, and even address, some of the challenges facing evaluators, particularly those in a resource poor setting.

Difficulties in comprehending the terminology and concepts present another challenge. Evaluation concepts and terminology in the context of information for development are not clearly defined. This represents a clear challenge to an information practitioner trying to comprehend them. Khadar (2002) has noted the multiplicity of concepts and terms currently employed by various specialists and consultants constitutes a serious constraint to the development of a coherent body of evaluation literature. Key evaluation terms have more than one meaning, or more than one terminology applying to the concept. According to Khadar, information practitioners appear to experience a number of specific problems related to terminology:

- Firstly, the multiplicity of terms and concepts makes it difficult to understand;

- Secondly, this is further confused by these terms often being used in different ways; and

- Thirdly, little has been done to develop definitions of these terms and concepts to apply specifically to information projects, products and services.

The value of Information Centres depends on a host of factors, most of which have to do with political processes. Evaluation is conducted in a complex political context, and many evaluators are not well prepared to either guard against political ramifications, or exploit them to advantage (Case, 2002).

Many information practitioners and managers are expected to evaluate their information services. The impetus for this is either externally or internally motivated. Whatever the initial impetus, this is leading more and more managers to undertake self-evaluations, without the necessary background in evaluation. In resource poor settings, where information managers may not have access to the diverse literature will be unrealistically expected to undertake evaluations. Even in resource rich settings, where information managers have access to the literature, time constraints will also hamper understanding. Where a manager is hampered by both time and resource constraints, they will have nowhere to turn. To overcome these problems, a practical 'how to' manual should be developed (Cummings, 2000)**.** Horton (2000) also noted that a practical 'how to' manual that could be used by all impact study planners and other key players should be produced.

While the track record of performance evaluation of information projects, programmes and activities could until relatively recently be regarded as both poor and relatively short, especially in relation to developing countries, there is now some pioneering work to draw on; and we can start to develop a framework. CTA (2001) has begun to develop its approach to evaluation; however, there have been few studies to date, so there is no tried and tested blueprint for how such work should be done; and the 'impact culture' is only just beginning to develop among its partners, clients and beneficiaries.

3.6. Summary

In this chapter, it emerged that:

- accessibility is a major factor to be considered when planning information centres;

- FOI laws are an important consideration in providing information to citizens;

- information needs of constituents and legislators must be assessed before implementation;

- awareness campaigns must precede access services;

- PCIC identity and image are part of centre promotion and marketing;

- information services and information centres have conceptual difficulties;

- PCICs are a major investment project that must be well funded; and

- reforms have several challenges, which must not be ignored.

There is, however, according to the literature, ample research demonstrating that a systematic approach is a necessary guide for successful information centre establishment. The literature review will provide both theoretical and practical frameworks in relation to this study. The selected literature reviewed in this chapter covered a range of issues, including case studies, a broad spectrum of parliamentarians and citizen information needs, access, evaluation guidelines and challenges faced. The next chapter will provide methodology insights used to conduct this study**.**

There are problems in parliamentary information service delivery both in the developing and developed world and therefore, there is a room for improving the services. It appears that many developing and developed countries if compared would present more or less the same picture. However, more studies like this are needed to develop further understanding of different parliamentary information services globally

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

The methodology that was used to conduct the study is discussed in this chapter, with a special focus on tools used to gather data. These tools were: observation, interviews, questionnaires and reviews of pertinent documents. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in this study. Questionnaires were used to elicit data from MPs, Office Assistants and constituents, while interviews were directed at the Administration of Parliament, Officers of Parliament and Development Partners. Sampling techniques, data collection and analysis and ethical considerations have been included in the research design.

The rest of the chapter is divided into the following sections: Research approach; Sampling; Data Collection methods; Ensuring good quality data; Data analysis and interpretation; and Ethical considerations. All the methodological elements have been chosen specifically to address the purpose of this study, which was to evaluate the Parliament of Zimbabwe's PCICs performance and make recommendations for future improvements.

4.2. Research design

A research design refers to the overall strategy chosen to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring the researcher effectively addressed the research problem (Gorman, 2005:23). It must be efficient to yield the sought-after knowledge. Research design can be seen as the glue that holds the research project together. Its purpose was to structure the research and to show all the major parts of the research project. According to Maxfield and Babbie (1998), the design has two major aspects. Firstly, exact specification of what is to be determined; and secondly to determine the best way to do exactly that. Hagan (2000: 23) explains that research design should

address issues flowing from the problem formulation; and other critical issues identified for observation. Varkevisser, Pathmanathan and Brownlee (2003) identified some components of a research design, as shown in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Components of a research design

Source: Varkevisser, Pathmanathan and Brownlee (2003)

Component	Activity
What information do you need?	Selection of variables
What approach will you follow to collect this information	Selection of type of study
What tools do you need to collect it	Selection and development of data collection techniques
Where should you collect it? How many subjects do you include in the study?	Sampling and how do you select them?
What will you do with the collected data?	Data analysis

Table 4.1 provides a concise summary of the key points about research design. The research design components provide important questions that were used in developing the approach to this study. An attempt was made to answer all the questions in this chapter, such as research responses, data to collect, data analysis and interpretation.

4.3. Research approach

According to Cresswell (2007), the research approach provides an effective strategy to increase the validity of social research. This section will present the research approach that was used.

4.3.1. Qualitative and quantitative research approaches

The two major research approaches, quantitative and qualitative have many terms to describe the organisation of a research project. In most cases, the quantitative approach is seen as objective and relying heavily on statistics. On the other hand, the qualitative approach is seen as subjective, preferring language and descriptions. The functional or positivist paradigm guides the quantitative mode of inquiry; and is based on the assumption that social reality has an objective, ontological structure with individuals being responding agents to this objective environment (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). Quantitative research involves counting and measuring events; and performing statistical analyses of a body of numerical data (Schultz and Hatch, 1996). The assumption behind the positivist paradigm is that there is an objective world truth that can be measured and explained scientifically. The main concerns of the quantitative approach are that measurement should be reliable, valid and generalizable in its clear prediction of cause and effect (Cassell and Symon, 1994). Cassell and Symon summarised strengths of the quantitative method as:

- stating the research problem in very specific and set terms (see also Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992);

- specifying clearly and precisely both the independent and the dependent variables under investigation;

- following firmly the original set of research goals to reach more objective conclusions, testing of hypothesis and determining of causal issues;

- achieving high levels of reliability of gathered data due to controlled observations, laboratory experiments, mass surveys, or other forms of research manipulations; and

- eliminating or minimizing subjectivity of judgment.

However, the quantitative method also has some weaknesses, which are a/an:

- failure to provide the researcher with information on the context of the situation, where the studied phenomenon occurs;

- inability to control the environment, where respondents provide answers to survey questions;

- outcomes limited to only those outlined in the original research proposal, due to closed-type questions and the structured format; and

- discouraging evolving and continuous investigation of a research phenomenon.

The qualitative research shares the theoretical assumptions of the interpretative paradigm, which is based on the notion that social reality is created and sustained through the subjective experience of people involved in communication (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). Qualitative researchers are concerned in their research with attempting to accurately describe, decode and interpret the meanings of phenomena occurring in their usual social contexts (Fryer, 1991). The researchers operating within the framework of the interpretative paradigm are focused on investigating the complexity, authenticity, contextualization, shared subjectivity of the researcher and the researched, and minimization of illusion (Fryer, 1991). The ethnomethodology, postmodernism and critical theories match well with the qualitative research that was used in this study. These disciplines and theories have different philosophies of human behaviour; and different methods for applying qualitative principles/techniques.

Qualitative research in general is more likely to take place in a natural setting (May, 2011). This means study topics focus on everyday activities as defined enacted, smoothed and made problematic by persons engaged in everyday routines (Van Maanen, 1983:255). Qualitative research is less likely to impose restrictive *a priori* classification on data collection. It is less driven by very specific hypotheses and categorical frameworks; and more concerned with emergent themes and idiographic descriptions (Cassell and Symon, 1994).

Extending the fundamental beliefs of the interpretative paradigm, Grix (2004) identified three characteristics of qualitative research. It is the study of:

- symbolic discourse consisting of the study of texts and conversations;

- interpretive principles people use to make sense of their symbolic activities; and

- contextual principles, such as participant roles, physical settings and situational events guiding the discourse interpretation.

Kirk and Miller (1986) identify the strengths of the qualitative approach as:

- obtaining a more realistic feel of the world that cannot be experienced in the numerical data and statistical analysis used in quantitative research;

- performing data collection, subsequent analysis and interpretation of collected information in flexible ways;

- providing a holistic view of the phenomena under investigation;

- providing a descriptive capability based on primary and unstructured data; and

- offering interactions with the research subjects in their mother tongue language and on their own terms.

The weaknesses of the qualitative approach include:

- departing from the original objectives of the research in response to the changing nature of the context;

- arriving at different conclusions based on the same information and depending on the personal characteristics of the researcher;

- presenting challenges to investigate causality between different research phenomena;

- having difficulty in explaining the difference in the quality and quantity of information obtained from different respondents and arriving at different, non-consistent conclusions;

- requiring high researcher experience levels to obtain the targeted information from the respondent; and

- lacking consistency and reliability, because the researcher can employ different probing techniques and the respondent can choose to tell some particular stories and ignore others (Cassell and Symon, 1994).

Based on the attributes of quantitative and qualitative research approaches discussed, a judicious mix of the two research types was found to be inevitable for this study. However, the qualitative approach was predominantly used because it was found to be better for answering more fully the research questions paused in this study. If the answers to research questions were to be obtained simply using statistical results, the performance of the PCICs would have been difficult to evaluate.

Accordingly, adding qualitative flesh to the quantitative bones was a good strategy for overcoming such problems as interpretation of outcomes from questionnaires and interviews. Typical techniques for qualitative data collection included observation, in-depth interviews and document analysis. Triangulation was applied, because it is a major purpose of a mixed-method design to test the consistency of findings obtained through different instruments (Bryman, 2004). The mixed-method design also demands in-depth interviews, which when combined with other mixed-method techniques enabled the PCIC model to be tested, refined and considered for its potential to deliver empowering information to constituents. The variety of questionnaires and analytical techniques selected assisted in ensuring that data fully and accurately answered the research questions.

4.3.2. Inductive versus deductive research approaches

Also important was to classify the research approach in terms of whether it was inductive or deductive. Sekaran (1992) differentiated between these two types of the research design.

- The Inductive Approach is known for building a theory, in which the researcher starts with collecting data in an attempt to develop a theory or model.

- The Deductive Approach is known for testing a theory, in which the researcher develops a theory or hypotheses and designs a research strategy to test the formulated theory.

A researcher should explain clearly which approach is being followed in the research project.

This study was largely shaped on using the inductive research design. Sekaran again noted that the inductive approach gives the chance to have more explanation of what is happening. The data collection was done using multiple sources of evidence, such as interviews, questionnaires, observation and document analysis, in an attempt to develop the best practice model for PCICs. Gray (2004) indicated that qualitative research is often associated with inductive research designs, in which a range of methods are used to collect the data and explore the problem from different perspectives. However, the study used the inductive approach with the qualitative approach being dominant.

4.4. Target groups

The following categories of potential audiences were identified among the many different groups that could provide or be interested in the relevant data in the results of this study:

- **Members of Parliament:** MPs are the political leaders within the constituency. They represent their constituencies in parliament. They provided feedback to members of the public on parliamentary activities. PCICs are meant reduce the burden on MPs, because OAs will always be available to complement MP work and manage documents providing Parliament-related information. PCICs increased the presence of MPs in the constituency. PCICs exist as a meeting place, where MPs and constituents exchange information both from Parliament and from within the constituency;

- **Constituents / Members of the public / users**: These are citizens residing in a legislator's constituency boundaries; and are the intended beneficiaries of

parliamentary information resources. MPs are not interested in the Hansard but members of the public are. Since MPs represent the people, constituents give feedback on how the MP is representing them;

- **Development Partners:** These have been involved with PCICs in one way or another. For example, the Swedish National Development Agency (SIDA) funded the first PCIC data collection, the UNDP bought furniture and ICT equipment for PCICs, paid salaries for OAs and rates for rented offices;

- **Administration of Parliament:** The Administration of Parliament executes the PCIC project, sets standards for staff recruitment and acquires equipment for PCICs. An interview with the Clerk of Parliament was found to be a specialized case of interviewing, because it focuses on a particular type of interviewee. The Clerk was considered to be influential, prominent, and/or well-informed on issues relating to parliamentary reforms; and was selected for the interview on the basis of this expertise. This provided a number of advantages for this research. An overall view of Parliamentary reforms, policies, history, and plans and its relationship to other organizations provided relevant data from an informed position. Interviewing organisational leaders would bring some of the best results for a study of 90 corporate executives (Bennis and Nanus, 2003);

- **Officers of parliament:** A number of departments run the PCIC project. These include the ICT, PR, Research and Human Resource departments. The PR department is responsible for managing the project; the research department for maintaining the informatics database; the ICT department for ICT equipment; and Human Resources for OA recruitment; and

- **PCIC Office Assistants (OAs):** They are responsible for the day to day PCIC operations. They keep diaries of events for MP programmes, schedule meetings and serve the public or visitors to the PCIC. In the absence of the MP, the OAs represent the MP. They represent the Parliament of Zimbabwe; and their non-partisanship on political issues has a huge impact on the public, because they are closer to the people than anyone involved in the project. In addition, since they are locals they have a better knowledge of local communities and cultures.

4.5. Sampling

Sarma (2003) defines sampling as a shortcut method for investigating a whole population. One important aspect of planning a study is deciding who/what/where/when to carry out the research. Some form of sampling is required because of limited study time. Sampling, for example may include: all the PCICs in the country, or to observe all the PCICs in a province, or to interview all the users at a particular PCIC. In reality there was not enough time, energy, money, labour / man power, equipment or access to suitable sites to measure every single item, or site within the parent population, or whole sampling frame. Therefore an appropriate sampling strategy was adopted to obtain a representative and statistically valid sample of the whole.

To produce the desired and representative outcome, a good sample design for this study must be alive to the various embedded elements. The sample was selected in stages to pinpoint the locations where interviews took place to choose the concerned targets efficiently. The design was best ratified so the sample selected covered geographic sub-areas of the primary sampling units, that was, the provinces in which constituencies fall. It also captured the rural-urban divide and population sub-groups.

The sample plan used was purposive sampling in some instances, and random sampling in other clusters of target groups, as detailed below. This was an attempt to keep costs to a manageable level, while simultaneously avoiding too much focus on a convenient geographical region, such as areas close to Harare. This was also done to avoid bias and damaging effects on reliability. A purposeful or judgmental sample was selected based on the knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study (Yates, 2008). Random sampling techniques provide the probability in the choice of elements from the sampling population. Saunders, Philip and Thornhill (2003) describe how a random sample can provide satisfactory and valid surveys for researchers.

Sample size accounted for the spread of PCICs across the country, so costs and precision was optimally maintained, while also addressing the constituents' needs for those desiring data for sub-populations or sub-areas.

Purposive sampling was used to choose the geographic province for the first stage of selection in the sample plan. This decision was based on opinions of which districts are typical or representative in some sense or context, for instance most Mashonaland districts were typically "ZANU PF" Districts, while the metropolitan and Matabeleland Provinces were typically "MDC" and some were typically sway provinces. Neither political party was in control of sway provinces.

The provinces were first stratified using the predominant characteristics, such as rural/ urban; a geographical population spread; and a random sample of constituencies, selected in any of a variety of ways chosen from each stratum in a proportionate way. Stratification was chosen as it greatly decreased the likelihood of selecting an odd sample. With the stratified sample, every constituency in the sample frame had a chance of selection that was unbiased and unaffected by subjective opinion. The total number of registered voters was obtained from The Report on the Delimitation exercise for the 2008 Harmonised Election. For example, from the 10 provinces, Mashonaland Central had 488477 registered voters from 18 constituencies. There are currently 7 PCICs operating; and from these 4 PCICs were sampled. The four sampled PCICs had 106904 registered voters. Table 4.2 shows the sampling frame that was used.

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Table 4.2: **Sampling frame**

(Source: Report on the Delimitation exercise for Zimbabwe's 2008 Harmonised Elections).

Province	Total Constituencies	Total Registered Voters	Total PCIC	Total PCICs in Selected Provinces	Sampled PCIC	Registered Voters in Sampled PCICs
Bulawayo	12	313459	8			
Harare	29	766478	15	15	7	187082
Manicaland	26	709664	11	11	5	133630
Masvingo	26	699200	11	11	6	160356
Midlands	28	739502	11			
Mashonaland Central	18	488477	7	7	4	106904
Mashonaland East	23	624638	9			
Mashonaland West	22	583503	9			
Matabeleland North	13	345263	2			
Matabeleland South	13	342280	6	6	3	80178
Total	210	5,612,464	89	50	25	668,150

Stratification was done to ensure proper representation of important sub-population groups, without biasing the selection operation. Detailed explanation on stratification has been addressed in the next section.

4.5.1. Sample size

"How big should my sample be?' is a common question asked by researchers. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), there are no specific rules for sample size in qualitative research. On determining the sample size for this study, the researcher considered the availability of time and resources, and the extent of the need to provide valid and reliable data. For a large sample size, the required rule is that at least one sample unit must be selected from each stratum created. The strata are essentially independent and mutually exclusive subsets of the population; every element of a population must be in one and only one stratum. Because of this characteristic, each stratum was sampled to represent the whole population and to calculate an unbiased estimate of the population mean. Since each stratum can theoretically be treated independently in the sample design, the creation of the strata need not be done using objective criteria. If desired, subjective criteria may also use the sample of 25 constituencies, with an estimated population of 668 150 registered voters, with 33 408 people being taken as a sample. Because of cost, feasibility and time constraints, this was not possible. The main sampling units considered for constituencies was 25 per PCIC, consisting of 12% of the 210 Constituencies, providing a sample greater than 10%. Table 4.2 provides a summary of the sample used.

The other guide was the carefully selected target groups to represent all the interests in the constituency, whom it was thought could be concerned with the PCIC's information delivery role. The stratification ensured each stratum was as different as possible from other strata, thus the Bulawayo Metropolitan province was excluded as it just mirrored Harare. Most PCICs in Bulawayo and Harare fall under MDC party, hence the decision to choose one of the provinces. This ensured heterogeneity among strata with homogeneity within strata. The reason for choosing urban and rural areas as two of the strata for the survey thus becomes clear. According to Denscombe (2003: 23), urban and rural populations are different from each other in many ways with regard to types of employment, source and amount of income and average household size.

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The locations of PCICs selected were from the following categories (table 4.3).

Table 4. 3: Locations of PCICs

Province	PCIC	Category
Harare	1. Harare Central	Central Business District
	2. Mt. Pleasant	Low Density
	3. Budiriro	High Density
	4. Glen View South	High Density
	5. Kambuzuma	High Density
	6. Mbare	High Density
	7. St. Mary's Chitungwiza	Dormitory Town
Masvingo	8. Gutu North	Growth Point
	9. Gutu Central	Growth Point
	10. Masvingo Urban	Town
	11. Bikita West	Growth Point
	12. Mwenezi East	Rural set-up
Mash Central	13. Mazowe South	Communal
	14. Mazowe West	Farming
	15. Mt. Darwin West	Communal
	16. Mt. Darwin South	Growth Point
Matabeleland South	17. Bulilima South	Town
	18. Bulilima	Town
	19. Umzingwane	Rural Community
Manicaland	20. Mtare Central	Border Town
	21.Makoni South (Nyazura)	Farming
	22. Mutasa South	Rural Community
	23. Dangamvura-Chikanga	High Density
	24. Headlands	Farming

The locations of PCICs that was be visited ranges across urban, rural, farming, border and dormitory town constituencies.

4.6. Data collection methods

Data collection can be derived from a number of methods, including interviews, focus groups, surveys, field notes, taped social interactions or questionnaires (Heaton, 2004:37). O'Leary (2004:150) remarked that collecting credible data is a tough task, so it is worth remembering that one method of data collection is not inherently better than another. Data collection methods therefore depended upon the research goals; and the advantages and disadvantages of each data collection method.

The most popular data collection methods for evaluation purposes are: document analyses, individual interviews, questionnaires, focus groups and observations. It was important to establish the most effective method, or methods of data collection for this study. Each of the methods was used provide particular advantages and constraints. A combination of methods was necessary to answer all the questions posed by this study. According to Kumar (2005), evaluations which combine methods successfully are also likely to be more robust, where they are able to combine findings pertaining to the same topic from different sources. The data-gathering exercise was executed using a variety of methods, paying particular attention to the type of data required. This was also be affected by the sample target groups and practical considerations. The main methods used are discussed in the following sections.

4.6.1. Interviews

Interviews are a systematic way of talking and listening to people. Kvale (2007) regarded interviews as: an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest; the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production; and he emphasizes the social situations of research data. Interviews are done to gather mostly qualitative data from people who cannot be entrusted with the questionnaire; and who may be too busy to allocate time to answer the questionnaires and return them to the researchers. According to

Neuman (2006), whether more formal or less formal, the interview technique to be used will fall under one of the following types:

- **Structured interview:** A structured interview is sometimes called a standardized interview. The same questions are asked of all respondents. Corbetta (2003:269) states that structured interviews are interviews in which all respondents are asked the same questions with the same wording and in the same sequence. The researcher starts from a position of wanting to be sensitive to how participants construct their views and perspectives. Therefore, a goal is to allow participant structures to dominate;

- **Semi-structured interview:** Semi-structured interviews are non-standardised and frequently used in qualitative analysis. The researcher has a list of key themes, issues and questions to be covered. The order of the questions can be changed depending on the direction of the interview. An interview guide is also used but additional questions can be asked. Corbetta (2003:270) explains that semi-structured interviews provide the order of the various topics and the wording of the questions is left to interviewer discretion. Within each topic, the interviewer is free to conduct the conversation as they think fit: to ask the questions they deem appropriate; in the words they consider the best; to give explanations and ask for clarification if the answer is not clear; to prompt the respondent to elucidate further if necessary; and to establish one's own style of conversation; and

- **Unstructured interview:** This type of interview is non-directed and is a flexible method. It is more casual than the aforementioned interviews. There is no need to follow a detailed interview guide. Each interview is different. Interviewees are encouraged to speak openly, frankly and give as much detail as possible. Usually the interviewer has received virtually little or no training, or coaching about the interview process, and has not prepared much. The interviewers ask questions respondents would be able to answer by expressing an opinion, sharing knowledge and experiences.

In this study, in-depth interviews were used to collect data, since an interpretative approach, which is qualitative in nature was adopted for the study. The types of questions

format/structure for interviews were open-ended and descriptive, usually reacting to a given situation presented by the researcher.

In-depth interviews were targeted at respondents knowledgeable about PCICs. This group included:

- Clerk of Parliament;

- Officers of Parliament: Informatics database administrator and Public Relations Officer; and

- Development Partners.

For a detailed explanation of the above list of target groups, see section 4.4. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), other reasons that influence most researchers to select interviews as a method for data collection are:

- flexibility;

- adaptability;

- licence to clarify information as it is;

- licence to draw information directly from people;

- licence to probe and repeat questions; and

- licence to clarify complex data.

Interviews provide rich, in-depth textual data for analysis which usually is some approach to coding, such as the open, axial and selective coding, as described by Davis (1999). Also, it is common to see discourse analysis techniques employed to analyse this type of rich textual data.

Although interviews enabled the researcher to collect data about respondents' understanding of issues around PCICs, interviews also have some weaknesses. Some of the weaknesses include those identified by the CTA-EU (2009), such as:

- Individual interviews can be time-consuming and labour-intensive;
- Some people take the opportunity to speak at length about irrelevant matters;
- People can be reluctant to be overtly critical in a one-on-one situation; and
- Transcripts from interviews can be daunting to analyse.

Interviews require interviewer skills and experience, because they must be able to control the discussion. In response to the above weaknesses, it was important for the interviewer to:

- be more direct in the requirements of certain questions;
- control the proceedings by repeating some questions by asking for clarification;
- remind the respondents that you want to understand in detail their involvement in the PCICs project; and
- show the respondents that you have researched the topic by providing case studies.

The next section is a discussion about questionnaires and how these were used to collect data for this study.

4.6.2. Questionnaires

The questionnaire, defined by Bartels (2002:12) as "a formalized set of questions for obtaining information from respondents" offered several advantages for this study. According to Babbie (2004), questionnaires are instruments in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions written in a pre-defined order to solicit information appropriate for analysis. The questionnaire is a method of collecting self-reported information from respondents through self-administration of questions. According to Burton and Bartlett (2009: 76), questionnaires are useful in collecting a large amount of general data and opinions from a large number of people. Questionnaires tend to elicit responses that fit into broad categories, with little opportunity for respondents to express complex emotional feelings in response to impersonal questions.

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The overriding objective was to translate researcher information needs into a set of specific questions that respondents were willing and able to answer. Three questionnaires were used to gather data from MPs; Constituents and OAs (see appendices 4, 5 and 6).

Using questionnaires was cheap in terms of time and cost. Questionnaires enabled respondents to complete these during their own spare time, reducing bias, because the researcher was not watching them.

A number of drawbacks were identified with the use of questionnaires for this study. These included the low rate of response. Although attempts was made to explain in detail the objectives of the study, people in outlying constituencies are still skeptical of political backlash already experienced during Zimbabwe's 2008 harmonised elections. They may be reluctant to deal with any issues they feel insecure about, such as providing information. It can also be noted that questionnaires favoured the more literate respondents and thus limited the depth of response. Despite these disadvantages, questionnaires were found to remain the simplest way of covering the sufficiently large representative sample for this study.

4.6.2.1. Distribution of questionnaires

Concerning the distribution of a questionnaire, one should always ask: Will it be self-completion, by post or on-line, or delivered personally and completed by who? (O'Leary, 2004). The researcher had options of placing MP questionnaires in their pigeon holes, or arranging for a meeting to hand deliver them. Questionnaires for selected MPs were placed in their pigeon holes at Parliament, where they collect their mail each time they visit parliament on business. The researcher also hand-delivered questionnaires personally to MPs during their visit to the library; and during site visits to selected PCICs to achieve a much higher completion rate. Committee clerks also assisted with the delivery of questionnaires during portfolio committee meetings.

Questionnaires meant for constituents were distributed through OA coordination. Questionnaires were hand-delivered to OAs during the researcher's visit to sampled PCICs. The OAs assisted in administering questionnaires for constituents and returned them later to the researcher after they were completed.

4.6.3 Observation

Observation is one of the oldest forms of data collection. DeWalt and DeWalt (2001:132) describe observation as the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours, buildings locations and artefacts in the social setting chosen for the study. The observational record is frequently referred to as a field-detailed, non-judgmental, concrete description of what has been observed. Observation is a fundamental and highly important method in all qualitative inquiry. It is used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings. Even in studies using in-depth interviews, observation plays an important role as the researcher can note interviewee body language in addition to meaning of words spoken. The essential idea is that the researcher goes "into the field" to observe the phenomenon in its natural state, *in situ*. The researcher typically takes extensive field notes to subsequently code and analyse in a variety ways (David and Sutton, 2004).

There are a number of observation types, namely participant, non-participant, unstructured, structured and disguised observation. For this study, the structured observation technique was used. An observation schedule was drafted for essential areas and activities to be observed. According to Rossman and Sharon (2003), observational types can be obtrusive and unobtrusive. In obtrusive research, participants are aware they are being studied, whereas in unobtrusive observation, the subjects are not aware. In this study, unobtrusive measurement was used. Appendix 11 shows the observation schedule to be used.

The researcher observed during visits to PCICs. The observation was done on the and inside appearance of the building and its outside surroundings. Further observations were made with regard to the collections, the arrangement of the collections, accessibility and

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utilisation of the collections and staff attitudes towards visitors to the PCIC. This method was used to complement the information gathered through questionnaires in this study. Other reasons for using observational data were that it:

- allows the researcher to study constituents in their natural setting, without the behaviour being influenced by researcher presence;

- consists naturally of detailed information about constituents and their surroundings to provide a deeper and richer understanding of PCIC information; and

- is the only way to investigate constituents behaviour, in a political environment where political party members might not trust researchers, so may not cooperate with research methods, such as interviews.

As a research strategy, an observation has particular importance when the researcher suspect people might be acting in a different way from what they say or intend. Their understanding of a situation is revealed more by their actions than by their explanations. So, ask yourself…"Is it true….that actions speak louder than words" (Greethan, 2009).

4.6.4. Document analysis

Documents exist prior to research. Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic. Document analysis is the systematic exploration of written documents, or other artefacts, such as films, videos and photographs (Jupp, 2006: 8). Several documents provide secondary data for analysis; these provide recycled and reinterpreted data. As such, their reliability is an important consideration. They provided an overview of PCIC performance over time. The following documents were analysed:

- Parliamentary Reforms;

- PCIC office inventories, that is, what is supposed to be at the PCIC;

- UNDP Zimbabwean parliamentary support project evaluations recommendations;

- Zimbabwe Press (ZIMPRESS) database articles on PCICs;

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- OA monthly reports submitted to Parliament; and

- Administration of Parliament Reports on PCIC projects.

Several Press reports, whether positive / negative about PCICs exist. The Parliament of Zimbabwe library database called the Zimbabwe Press (ZIMPRESS) database captures social, political and economic articles about the country. PCIC articles vary from letters to the editor, to professional comments about information centres. This study undertook a thorough analysis of relevant articles and further traced the original sources or writers were possible for additional comments. The Parliament of Zimbabwe and Development Partners have been periodically monitoring and evaluating PCIC projects. The researcher analysed evaluation reports generated by these and other stakeholders, such as civil society organisations. Some of these documents are available at Parliament in the library, research department, public relations department and UNDP Programme Coordinator's Office. PCICs additionally produce monthly reports providing valuable information on various activities during particular years.

Corbetta (2003) identified a number of advantages document analysis has over other research methods. These include that it:

- is a non-reactive technique, because the information in a document is not subject to possible distortion resulting from interactions between the researcher and the respondent, as in interviews;

- helps the researcher to study the past; and

- is a cost-effective method as the information already exists. However, documents may have some limitations around the accuracy and completeness of the data.

Robson (2002:358) also highlights the advantages and disadvantages of document analysis. Some of the advantages are that documents are: unobtrusive and can be used without imposing on participants; checked and re-checked for reliability. A major problem is that documents may not have been written for the same purposes as the research requires, therefore conclusions will not usually be possible from document analysis alone.

The necessary precaution was taken when analysing documents to avoid pitfalls affecting this method.

4.7. Ensuring good quality data

The need to feel confident about data has led to the construction of frameworks to act as checks for quality. Two terms synonymous with making judgements about the quality of data are 'reliability' and 'validity'. Efforts were made to ensure that data from which conclusions were made are of good quality by checking the reliability and testing for validity, before subjecting the data to proper analysis.

4.7.1. Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity have been variously defined. Reliability is the extent to which a test would give consistent results, if applied more than once to the same people, under standard conditions (Neuman, 2000). This definition is applied to quantitative or qualitative research. Triangulation is a strategy that can be used to strengthen the confidence of the research findings (Arksey and Knight, 1999). David and Sutton (2004) indicated that triangulation can reduce and/or eliminate personal and methodological biases and increase the probability of generalising the findings of a study. David and Sutton (2004) further referred to data triangulation as the process of collecting data at different times, or by using multiple methods. They asserted that *"using multiple methods pave the way for more credible and dependable information"*. Denzin (2003) identified multiple triangulations that can be used in the same investigation, these include:

- Methodological triangulation involving multiple methods to collect data;
- Data triangulation involves using a variety of data sources in terms of persons, time and space;
- Investigator triangulation whereby multiple researchers investigate the problem; and

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- Theoretical triangulation involving varied perspectives and hypotheses.

In this study, data and methodological triangulations applied data collection from different sources (OAs, MPs, Constituents and Officers of Parliament); and used multiple methods that included in-depth interviews, observation and document analysis. The use of multiple methods assists in data triangulation, simultaneously being an effective way to overcome most of the weaknesses of each of the methods used (Gray, 2004).

Triangulation is an essential strategy to improve reliability and validity of the instrumentation and data collection techniques in the qualitatively-oriented, mixed research design in this research. It increases bias controls and causes, which have the potential to influence research results, enabling valid statements to be made. To reinforce the major aspect of the research approach, multiple sources of data was triangulated as explained in section 4.2. The data viewed from more than one information source ensures veracity wherever possible. It is acknowledged that the external validity of this qualitatively-oriented research leads to limited generalisation of the study result; but this weakness in research methodology was tempered by balancing the rural-urban divide of the constituencies being studied. Internal validity was considered to be strong because of the rigour of the mixed-method design; and taking into account any other perceived causal relationships. Research instrument reliability was enhanced when as many means as possible were used to cross-check and feedback to respondents for comment. Notes taken at the time of interview/questionnaire, photographs, recordings and non-verbal communication were important when interim reports were being finalised. Thus, instrument reliability and validity will be under review constantly to justify data interpretation.

To ensure reliable data are collected for this study, testing data collection tools was done. Difficulties can be identified before the final use of the tools and necessary changes made. To ensure that reliable secondary data was obtained, reliable sources such as in-house reports and professionally published sources were used. A good practice to ensure data reliability is to compare data from different sources and different interpretations of previous researchers (Guba & Lincoln, 1991). Judgements about the reliability of different data sources are required. Sources might be atypical and incomplete, describing just one

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particular perspective, leading to different interpretations and valuations. After facing such a situation, the researcher used 'triangulation' whenever possible, using data from different sources related to the same event or situation to check for completeness or reliability.

Validity tells us whether an item measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe, that is: 'Is the degree to which what is observed or measured the same as what was purported to be observed or measured?' (Rosenthal and Rosnow, 1991). In other words: 'Does the research instrument allow you to hit the bull's eye of the research object?'

For this study, the face validity criteria were considered because the instrumentation is well designed and capable of eliciting the expected information. Though the unexpected was always possible, the instrumentation is theoretically sound. In terms of content validity, the instrumentation and research design allowed it to reflect the intended domain of content.

Validity and reliability are important in research and considerable steps have been taken to ensure they are fulfilled throughout this study. The researcher ensured that questions were appropriate. Perhaps the most practical way of achieving greater validity is to minimise the amount of bias as much as possible (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000:121). Additional measures to achieve this are:

- ensuring the issues addressed by the questionnaire were central to answering the research questions posed;

- Piloting the questionnaire to check for validity and reliability. A pilot study aims to test instruments for reliability, validity and applicability. Hagan (2000:154) maintains that pre-testing is "a reconnaissance operation or exploratory testing of the instrument using subjects who are similar to the group to be studied". The pilot study assists in clarifying confusion and misunderstandings. It provides instrument critique and suggestions for enhancing the instrument; and

- making appropriate sample choices of respondents and contexts to avoid asking inappropriate respondents and contexts.

Consideration of the relevant aspects of reliability and validity, and the use of triangulation would suggest that the design of research instruments and data collection methods have some minor flaws conspiring against generalised conclusions. Patton (1990:42) cautions that: 'There are no perfect research designs; there are only trade-offs, the tip is to balance the probability so that the conclusions are of limited generalizability (sic), given that the research instruments remain squarely reliable and valid. If not, the best that can be hoped is that the conclusions reached using the chosen methodology in the study is only to point the way to the future'.

4.8. Data analysis and interpretation

A mixed-method approach was used in this study to allow for concurrent analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. Having collected reliable and valid data was not of much use, unless the tools to analyse and interpret the data were used with care and expertise. According to Babbie and Mouton (1998:101), the function of data-analysis is to interpret the collected data for "the purpose of drawing conclusions that reflect the interest, ideas and theories that initiated the inquiry". The following components of data analysis have been used:

- information needs and expectations;
- accessibility;
- PCIC awareness;
- information delivery;
- PCIC administration;
- achievements; and
- challenges.

These themes were derived from research questions and developed in aiding data coding.

4.8.1. Analysing qualitative and quantitative data

Qualitative data consist of words and observations, not numbers. As with all data, analysis and interpretation are required to bring order and understanding. This requires creativity, discipline and a systematic approach. Complex statistical analysis was done with the help of a statistician to avoid pitfalls and drawing misleading conclusions.

In quantitative analysis, numbers and what they designate are the material of analysis. Quantitative measures strive for precision by focusing on items that can be counted into categories and subjected to statistical analysis. There are a few agreed-on canons for quantitative data analysis, in the sense of shared ground rules for drawing conclusions and verifying their sturdiness (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

There is no single or best way of analysing data. For this study, qualitative data analysis considered the following five steps recommended by Hagan (2000):

- Raw data collections will be checked to ensure questionnaires are fully completed. Any missing data are rectified followed by frequency counts of variables and inappropriate combinations to avoid bias;

- Data will be entered and analysed on a computer using a statistical software package. Questionnaire / interview responses will be coded and entered into the computer. Responses will be summarised and reported on tables, pie charts and bar graphs to show the relative frequency of various variables;

- Data will be imported onto statistical software. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) will used for data analysis;

- Data will be checked to eliminate errors that might have occurred during the collection and recording stages. This involved: checking all coded values are within the specified codes; looking for outliers; and generating maximum and minimum values within acceptable ranges; and

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- Statistical analysis will be done to obtain frequencies, find averages and compile graphs.

In this study, analysis of quantitative data adopted the framework developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) to describe and classify the major phases of data analysis: data reviewing, entry, checking and exploration of relevant themes. These phases are:

- Raw data review, an iterative process, with data analysis began at the same time as data collection. The emerging results will then influence subsequent data collection. This will result in data review overlapping data entry;

- Data recording involved analyses of respondent words as spoken, or a summary thereof. Data interpretation will take into account first to avoid data loss through transcription;

- Data check and transcript interviews will be reviewed before finalising these for ethical consideration; and

- Data sorting into themes and sub-themes, such as accessibility to services, visits, weaknesses and challenges will be established.

After collecting and analysing both qualitative and quantitative data, results were checked for credibility to enhance the quality of the evaluation study.

The following data collection instruments were used:

- questionnaires;

- interviews;

- site visits and observations; and

- document analysis

A number of challenges were encountered in the process of data collection as discussed in the following section.

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4.8.2. Data collection challenges encountered

In any research, one is bound to experience some challenges. However, the challenges should not be allowed to affect the objectives of the study; and their effect on the study should be kept minimal. According to Lutabingwa and Nethonzhe (2006), researchers should make known the shortcomings of their research. In this section, the challenges faced in doing this study have been explained.

A number of people in Zimbabwe suffered political backlash during and after the 2008 harmonised elections. This was followed by a period of mistrust amongst citizens and MPs. The fear has translated into skepticism; some members of constituents were afraid to complete the questionnaires, because Zimbabwean elections were close to the period of data collection. Even though reference letters authorizing the study were produced, MPs and constituents were reluctant to complete questionnaires. Also, due to some legal instruments in the country, the researcher faced resistance in obtaining relevant information from some key sources, during the data collection exercise. For instance, the researcher had to forego using focus groups, because this would have required Police Clearance, a difficult and onerous task.

Work pressure also affected the time devoted to the research. The researcher had to balance study and work activities. Time and financial constraints in addition provided further limitations. The study research sites in Zimbabwe are scattered across the country, with some in remote areas, making data collection a costly exercise. During data collection, most MPs were participating in new constitution outreach activities, making it extremely difficult to contact them. Some even had to be telephoned and questionnaires distributed through travelling long distances. An evaluation can be time consuming and costly as it requires assessing changes at the level of the target groups, a complex exercise at times (Engel and Salomon, 1997). Details of how data was presented and analysed was provided in chapters 5 and 6.

4.9. Ethical considerations

Ethical research is critically important in social science research (Creswell, 2009). To this end, all research ethical considerations was observed strictly with a high sense of moral obligation, in accordance with the policies and guidelines provided by the University's ethical considerations on various issues of the research. Before data collection, clearance was sort from the ***EBIT Faculty Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity*** (see appendix 1). In addition, permission was granted to conduct this study by the Clerk of the Parliament of Zimbabwe (see appendix 2). Considerations applied to data collection methods, findings presentation and interpretation, citations and references were:

- Explanations of the purpose of the research questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews;
- Informed participant consent obtained prior to instrument administration (see appendix 3);
- Voluntary participant information around assurance that there was going to be no adverse consequences for refusal to participate or withdraw from the study;
- Measures that assured strict respondent confidentiality to protect volunteer subject privacy rights;
- The subjects, except the experts already in the public domain were not identified by name in any reports;
- Data collection was used only for the purpose of the research and analysis and was conformed to confidentiality standards;
- Research findings and interpretations were presented honestly and objectively; and
- Information sources were cited and referenced appropriately.

4.10. Summary

The methodology that was used in data collection was discussed in this chapter. Research design, data collection techniques and type of data collected were emphasised; and strengths and weaknesses of collection methods were discussed in detail. These were supplemented by observations and informal interviews to clarify uncertainties during visits

to sampled PCICs. The reliability and validity of the research instruments and data collection procedures were discussed. Also discussed in this chapter were the sampling of the research population, data analysis and communication plan of the research findings. Finally, ethical considerations and challenges faced by the researcher were discussed. The presentation of data is dealt with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA PRESENTATION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents data collected from the constituents, OAs, MPs, Parliament Administration, Officers of Parliament, and Development partners. **The data presented in this chapter will be analysed in chapter 6.**

5.2. Response rates and other data

Responses from target audiences are presented in this section.

5.2.1. Questionnaires and interview responses

Questionnaires were used to collect data from Office Assistants (OAs), Members of Parliament (MPs) and constituents. Constituents completed 255 questionnaires in total; 15 were returned by OAs; and 20 by MPs. Interviews were held with the Clerk of Parliament, UNDP Parliamentary Program Coordinator and two officers of Parliament. In addition to questionnaires and interviews, document analysis, site visits and observations were also used to collect data for the study.

The distribution of the responses by province was as detailed in table 5.1.

Table 5.1: OAs Questionnaire responses by province

Province	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Masvingo	4	26.7	26.7
Matabeleland South	1	6.7	33.3
Manicaland	2	13.3	46.7
Mash Central	4	26.7	73.3
Harare	4	26.7	100.0
Total	15	100.0	

There were 25 OAs who received questionnaires, 15 responded with Masvingo, Mashonaland Central and Harare provinces having 4 (26.7%) respondents each. Manicaland and Matebeleland South had 2 (13.3%) and 1(6.7%) respondents respectively, as shown in table 5.1 above. The response rate was 15 out of 25.

Table 5.2 shows distribution of the 255 constituents, who responded to the questionnaire. Harare had the highest number of respondents of 83 (32.5%), followed by Masvingo with 71 (27.8%), Mashonaland Central 48 (18.8%), Manicaland 42 (16.5%) and Matebeleland South 11 (4.3%).

Table 5.2: Constituents Questionnaire responses by province

Province	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Masvingo	71	27.8	27.8
Manicaland	42	16.5	44.3
Mashonaland Central	48	18.8	63.1
Matabeleland South	11	4.3	67.5
Harare	83	32.5	100.0
Total	255	100.0	

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The response rate was 255 out of 625 constituents.

There were 4 MPs, who responded from Masvingo and Manicaland provinces respectively; Harare, Mashonaland Central and Midlands had 3 respondents each, while Mashonaland East and Matabeleland South had 2 and 1 respondents, respectively. This is reflected in table 5.3.

Table 5.3: MPs Questionnaire responses by province

Province	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Masvingo	4	20.0	20.0	20.0
Manicaland	4	20.0	20.0	40.0
Harare	3	15.0	15.0	55.0
Mat South	1	5.0	5.0	60.0
Mash Central	3	15.0	15.0	75.0
Midlands	3	15.0	15.0	90.0
Mash East	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

There were 21 constituencies out of the 25 sampled constituencies, which responded to questionnaires. The average response rate per constituency was 12 questionnaires. There were four constituencies which did not respond namely Glen View in Harare province, Mazowe Central in Mashonaland Central province, Mutasa Central and Mutare central both in Manicaland. Harare province had the highest number of respondents, 83 respondents followed by Masvingo, with 71 respondents. The other provinces had 48 respondents for Mashonaland Central, 42 for Manicaland and Matabeleland South, with the lowest number of 11 constituents responding as shown in table 5.4.

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Table 5.4: Users response by province and constituency

Province			Questionnaires	Sub Total
Masvingo	Name of The constituency	Bikita West	22	
		Gutu Central	12	
		Masvingo Urban	12	
		Gutu North	14	
		Mwenezi East	11	
	Total		*71*	*71*
Manicaland	Name of The constituency	Dangamvura-Chikanga	7	
		Headlands	6	
		Mutasa South	13	
		Makoni South	16	
	Total		*42*	*42*
Mash Central	Name of the constituency	Mt. Darwin South	19	
		Mazowe South	10	
		Mazowe West	6	
		Mt. Darwin West	13	
	Total		*48*	*48*
Mat South	Name of The constituency	Bulilima West	9	
		Mangwe	2	
	Total		*11*	*11*
Harare	Name of The constituency	Budiriro	20	
		Harare Central	11	
		Mt. Pleasant	12	
		St. Marys	12	
		Mbare	7	
		Kambuzuma	21	
	Total		*83*	*83*
	Grand Total		**255**	**255**

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Table 5.5 shows responses by constituency, ranging between high, middle and low response rates. High responses were from 16 to 22, middle responses from 10 to 14 and low responses 10 and below.

<div align="center">Table 5.5: Name of constituency</div>

Constituency		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bikita West	22	8.6	8.6	8.6
	Kambuzuma	21	8.2	8.2	16.9
	Budiriro	20	7.8	7.8	24.7
	Mt. Darwin South	19	7.5	7.5	32.2
	Makoni South	16	6.3	6.3	38.4
	Gutu North	14	5.5	5.5	43.9
	Mutasa South	13	5.1	5.1	49.0
	Mt. Darwin West	13	5.1	5.1	54.1
	Gutu Central	12	4.7	4.7	58.8
	Mt. Pleasant	12	4.7	4.7	63.5
	Masvingo Urban	12	4.7	4.7	68.2
	St. Marys	12	4.7	4.7	72.9
	Harare Central	11	4.3	4.3	77.3
	Mwenezi East	11	4.3	4.3	81.6
	Mazowe South	10	3.9	3.9	85.5
	Bulilima West	9	3.5	3.5	89.0
	Dangamvura-Chikanga	7	2.7	2.7	91.8
	Mbare	7	2.7	2.7	94.5
	Headlands	6	2.4	2.4	96.9
	Mazowe West	6	2.4	2.4	99.2
	Mangwe	2	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	255	100.0	100.0	

5.2.2. Site visits and observations

The Observation Schedule used during site visits had some elements mentioned in Chapter One (section 1.2.3), following recommendations by Mutaviri and Ncube (2003) for establishing the PCIC office. Pictures were taken during site visits and used in this study; some of these pictures are shown in Appendix 12. Appendix 11 shows the Observation Schedule that was used. The observation was guided by:

- Centre locations were used to determine accessibility and building ownership;

- PCIC directions through signposting were used to show centre locations and marketing or awareness;

- Adequacy of space to accommodate constituents visiting at any particular time;

- Availability of furniture was used to measure PCIC support;

- Availability and organisation of publications at the centre were observed to obtain information pertaining to constituent needs; visitor numbers at the centre to observe how they were assisted, attitudes, behavior and communication between visitors and the OA; and

- Other activities at centre considered relevant to the study.

In addition to information obtained through questionnaires, interviews, site visits and observations, several documents were used to provide relevant information. The next section presents details about documents that were analysed.

5.2.3. Document analysis

The following documents were analysed to supplement information obtained through questionnaires, interviews and site visits and observations:

(1) Oral presentation on PCICs at Official Openings

The following five (5) presentations were selected for analysis:

- Clearing misconceptions of PCIC functions – PCIC objectives/ how they enable constituents to contribute to important issues in Parliament;
- PCICs play vital roles in society;
- No party politics at information centre according to Parliament;
- Public urged to utilise information centres; and
- Information Centres bring Parliament to the public.

The above presentations were also published in the local press.

(2) OAs Annual Reports

Five monthly reports submitted to Parliament by OAs were analysed:

- Report No. 1: Mazowe South Constituency March 2013 Report/ by OA;
- Report No. 2: Gutu Central Constituency January 2013 Report/ by OA;
- Report No.3: Bikita West PCIC, June 2012 / by OA;
- Report No. 4: Mutare Central Constituency, October 2012 / by OA; and
- Report No. 6: Mt Pleasant Constituency, February 2013 / by OA

(3) Administration of Parliamentary documents:

- OA manual; and
- Monitoring and evaluation reports.

These documents were examined by linking key issues within the main themes under consideration in chapter 6.

5.3. Themes used to present data

The presentation of data followed the pattern of seven major themes derived from research questions. Questions from interviews and questionnaires were categorised according to the relevance to each theme (see appendix 12). These themes were:

- Information needs and expectations;

- Accessibility;

- PCIC awareness;

- Information delivery;

- PCIC Administration ;

- Achievements; and

- Challenges.

The following sections present the data using the above themes.

5.4. Information needs and expectations

Several questions were asked to determine constituent information needs. Some include reasons for PCIC visits, degree of satisfaction, importance of information sources and PCIC objectives consistence with constituent expectations.

5.4.1. Reasons for visiting PCICs

Expressed reasons for PCIC visits by constituents shows the highest frequency, being 49 (20.2%) who visit to collect and read the Hansard; 33 (13.6%) visit for updates on current awareness services (CAS); 31 (12.8%) visit to check for relevant information; 27 (11.2%) want to see the MP and collect the Hansard; 14 (5.8%) are interested in getting information

on project funding; 13 (5.4%) for updates on legislative/parliamentary affairs; 12 (5%) want to learn about developments in their constituencies and in Parliament; another 12 (5%) come for Hansard and press; and 10 (4.1%) wanted reading materials, such as newspapers and magazines. There were 7 (2.9%) and below of the constituents who came for various/other reasons, such as constituency information, grievance submission, livelihood information/ interest, PCIC operations, students and teacher research, internet access and live invitation letters for the MP. Table 5.6 and figure 5.1 show the reasons for visiting PCICs.

Table 5.6: Reasons for visiting PCICs by Constituents

	Reason for Visiting PCIC	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	To Collect/Read Hansard	49	19.2	20.2
	Current Awareness	33	12.9	13.6
	look for Necessary/ Relevant information	31	12.2	12.8
	To See MP and Collect Hansard	27	10.6	11.2
	Seek Project Funding	14	5.5	5.8
	Get Updates on Legislative and/or Parliamentary affairs	13	5.1	5.4
	To Learn of Developments in the Constituency and in Parliament	12	4.7	5.0
	Hansard and Press	12	4.7	5.0
	Reading Material / News Papers and Magazines	10	3.9	4.1
	Information about Happenings in Constituency	7	2.7	2.9
	Submit Grievances	6	2.4	2.5
	Information Concerning Livelihood /Interests	6	2.4	2.5
	Learn of PCIC Operation	5	2.0	2.1
	Research Information for Students	4	1.6	1.7
	Get Political Party Information	4	1.6	1.7
	Information Exchange/Update	3	1.2	1.2
	Access Internet	2	.8	.8
	Information on Government Programs	2	.8	.8
	Reading Material and leave invitation Letters	2	.8	.8
	Total	242	94.9	100.0
Missing	0	13	5.1	
Total		**255**	**100.0**	

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Reasons for visiting PCICs (Constituents)

Reason	Frequency
Reading Material and leave invt Letters	2%
Information on Govt Programmes	2%
Access Internet	2%
Information Exchange/Update	3%
Get Political Party Information	4%
Research Information for Students	4%
Learn of PCIC Operation	5%
Information Concerning Livelihood…	6%
Submit Grievances	6%
Information about Happenings in…	7%
Reading Material / News Papers and…	10%
Hansard and Press	12%
To Learn of Developments in the…	12%
Get Updates on Legsilative and/or…	13%
Seek Project Funding	14%
To See MP and Collect Hansard	27%
look for Necessary/ Relevant information	31%
Current Awareness	33%
To Collect/Read Hansard	49%

Figure 5.1: Reasons for visiting PCIC

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5.4.2. Degree of satisfaction

Most constituents (51%) are satisfied with the information they get from PCICs; 11% are very satisfied, an aggregate of 62% of constituents satisfied with information found at PCICs. However, 28.6% are partly satisfied, whilst 8.2% are not satisfied at all. Constituent degree of satisfaction is shown in figure 5.2.

Degree of satisfaction

	Not Satisfied	Partly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Percent	8.2	28.6	51	11
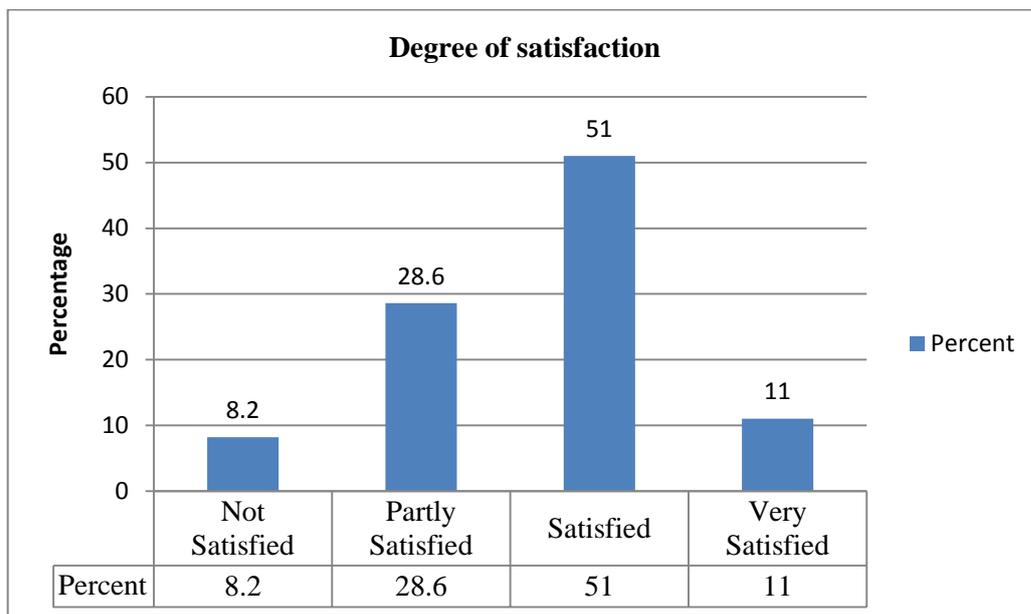
Figure 5.2: Satisfaction with information at PCIC

5.4.3. Importance of information sources

Table 5.7 and figure 5.3 show that information sources ranked highly included: Hansard (89.2%); internet access (87.5%); books (84.6%); databases (81.9%); bills (80.6%); and photocopying services (80.6%). Sources ranked second in importance include: audio-visual information (71.4%); the need for a reading room (68.9%); bills digest (65%); audio materials (62.9%); and expert opinions (61.9%). Other sources also ranked important but less than the first two categories include: borrowing facilities (56.8); surveys (55.6%); translations (53%); and newspaper clippings (48.1%).

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Table 5.7: Information sources importance ranking

Information Sources	Score %
Hansard	89.2
Internet Access	87.5
Newspapers & Journals	84.6
Books	83
Database	81.9
Bills	80.6
Photocopying	80.6
Audio-visual	71.4
Reading room	68.9
Bills digest	65
Audio Material	62.9
Expert Opinion	61.9
Borrowing	56.8
Surveys	55.6
Translation	53
Topical Issues	51.3
Newspaper Clippings	48.1
Other	**29.5**
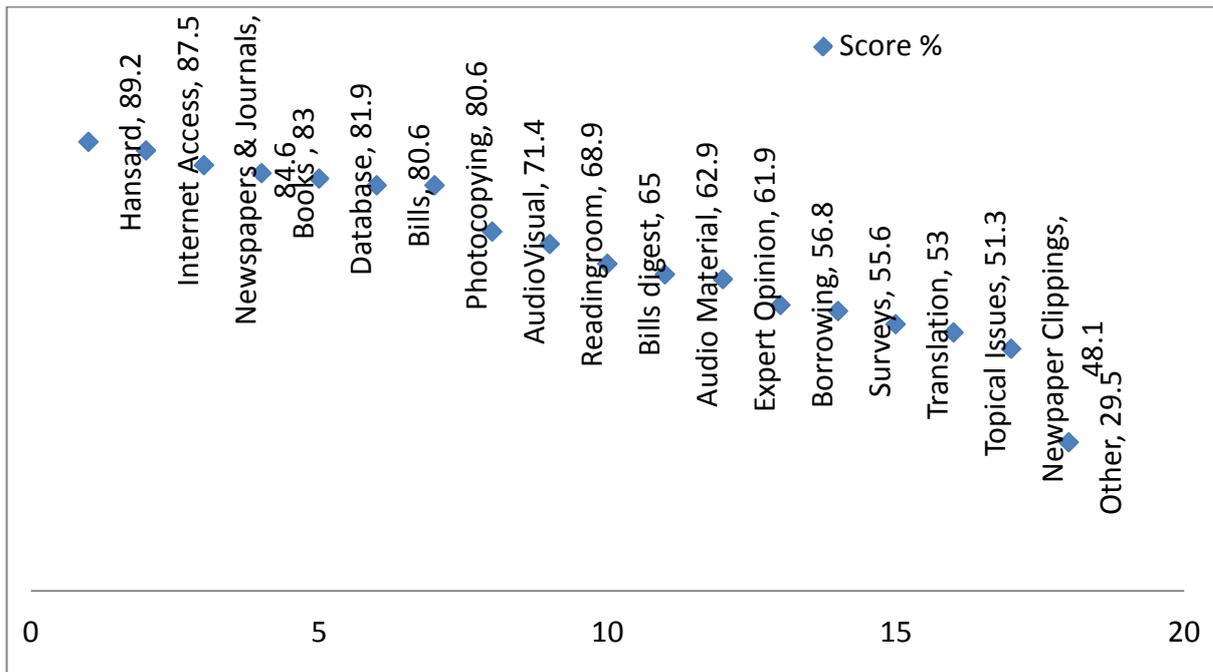
Figure 5.3: Information sources ranking (constituents)

5.4.4. Consistency of PCICs objectives with constituents' expectations

Responses by constituents show 13.5% of PCICs are consistent; 46.4% are consistent giving a 60% aggregate consistency with user expectations. However, 30.2% said that objectives are partly consistent with their expectations; and 9.9% indicated PCIC objectives are not consistent with their expectations. Consistency of PCIC objectives to user expectations have been shown in figure 5.4.

Official publications were also analysed, together with one titled "Clearing misconceptions on functions of PCICs" being analysed to provide a true picture of PCIC objectives.

Consistency of PCICs objectives with Constituents expectations
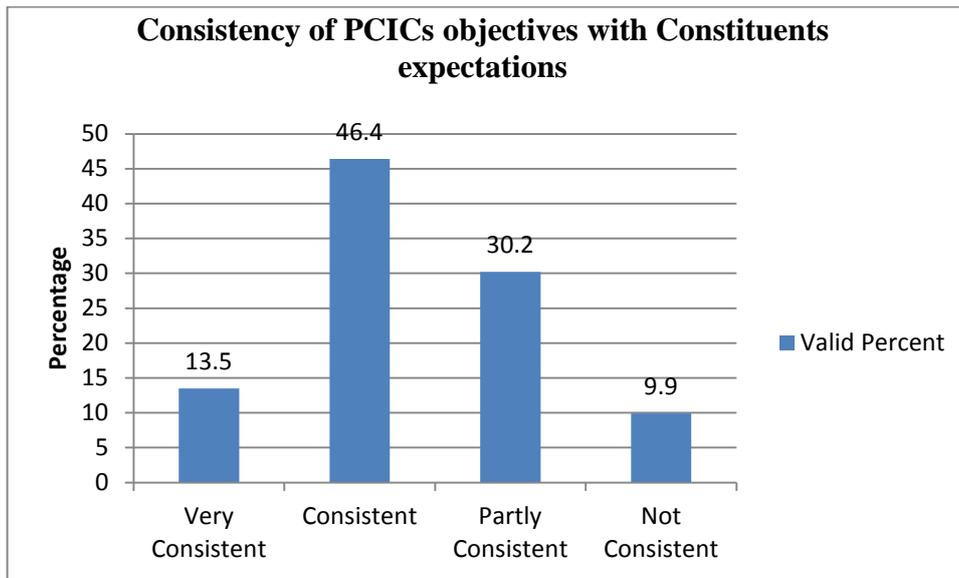
Figure 5.4: PCIC objectives consistency with Constituents' expectations

5.4.5. Kind and volume of information needed by MPs

There were 55% of MPs who said they are satisfied with the kind and volume of information at PCICs, while MPs (45%) said they are not satisfied. Figure 5.5 shows Kind and Volume of Information needed by MPs.
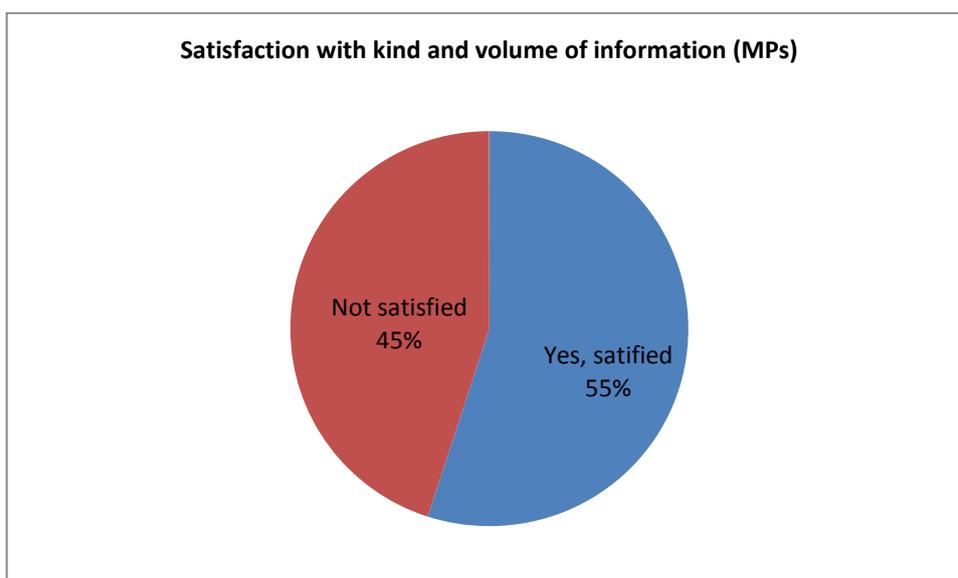
Figure 5.5: MPs' information needs

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5.4.6. Additional sources of information required

Three categories of information sources were rated equally at a frequency of 2 (29%). These were computers and the internet; government documents and literature; and more parliamentary literature. One source, newspapers rated 14% (see table 5.8).

Table 5.8: Other information sources needed (MPs)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Computers & Internet	2	10.0	28.6	28.6
	Government Documents and Literature	2	10.0	28.6	57.1
	More Parliamentary Literature	2	10.0	28.6	85.7
	News Papers	1	5.0	14.3	100.0
	Total	7	35.0	100.0	
Missing	0	13	65.0		
Total		20	100.0		

5.4.7. Additional services expected at PCICs (constituents)

PCIC services ranked 'first group category' expected by constituents were: sports and youth friendly services ((15.9%); training workshops (16%); community projects / loans (14%); monthly forums / meetings (12%); and e-learning and internet (11%). Second group of categories (3%-4%) included were: water (4%); additional parliamentary literature (3.8%); and telephone and fax machines (3.8%). The third category (3%) included: audio-visuals / television (3%); suggestion boxes (3%); information from government departments (3%); and a reading room (3%). Services ranked 2% and below included library (2.3%); typing services (1.5%); computer data bases (1.5%); CDF administration

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(0.8%); newspapers, magazines and journals (0.8%); and Hansard borrowing services (0.8%). Figure 5.6 shows additional PCIC services expected by constituents.

Data relating to information needs identification was also captured by interviewing the database administrator. The informatics database project captures data through various stakeholder (MPs, constituents, and researchers) requests.

Additional services expected at PCICs by Constituents

Service	Percentage
Hansard Borrowing services	0.8
News Papers, Magazines & Journals	0.8
CDF Admin	0.8
Computer Database	1.5
Typing Services	1.5
Library	2.3
Board / Reading Room	3
Information from Gvt Depts	3
Suggestion Boxes	3
Audio Visuals / Television	3
Telephone and Fax	3.8
Additional Parliamentary Literature	3.8
Water	3.8
E-Learningn &/Internet	11.4
Monthly Forums	12.1
Community Projects/ Loans	13.6
Training Workshops	15.9
Sports & Youth Friendly Services	15.9

Figure 5.6: Additional services expected at PCIC by constituents

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5.5. Accessibility

Findings about the distance constituents travel to the PCICs, physical location of PCICs and number of visitors are presented in this section.

5.5.1. PCIC distance from constituent residences

The majority of constituents came from within a 1km radius from the PCIC. About 25% of visitors travel less than 1km from the PCIC; 50% travel 2km and less, while 75 % travel between 2km and 7km. The average distance travelled is 7.2km and some constituents came as far as 60km from the PCIC as shown in table 5.9 and figure 5.7.

Table 5.9: PCIC distance from constituents' residence (KM)

N	Valid	199
	Missing	56
Mode		1.0
Percentiles	25	1.000
	50	2.000
	75	7.000

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Histogram

Mean = 7.23
Std. Dev. = 12.38
N = 199
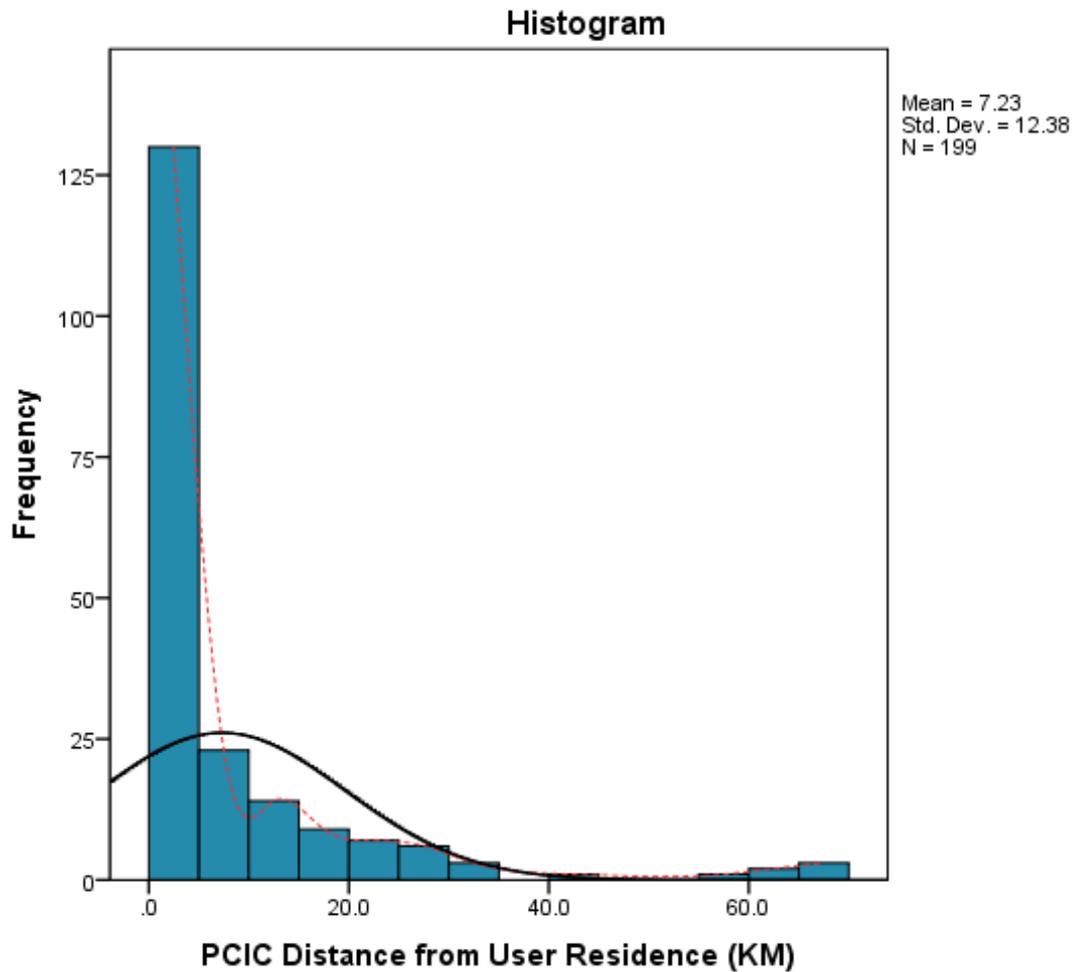
Figure 5.7: Constituents' distance from PCIC (KM)

5.5.2. Physical location of PCICs

A number of constituents (47.2%) said PCICs are located at Council premises; 14.3% said they are located in town; 10.7% said they are located at private premises in business centres, whilst 8.7% of the constituents said they are located at a private residence and Public Service Training Commission Institutions, respectively. There were 7.5% of constituents who said they are located in industrial area premises as shown in figure 5.8.

During site visits to PCICs, the researcher also observed location and PCIC distance from residential areas.

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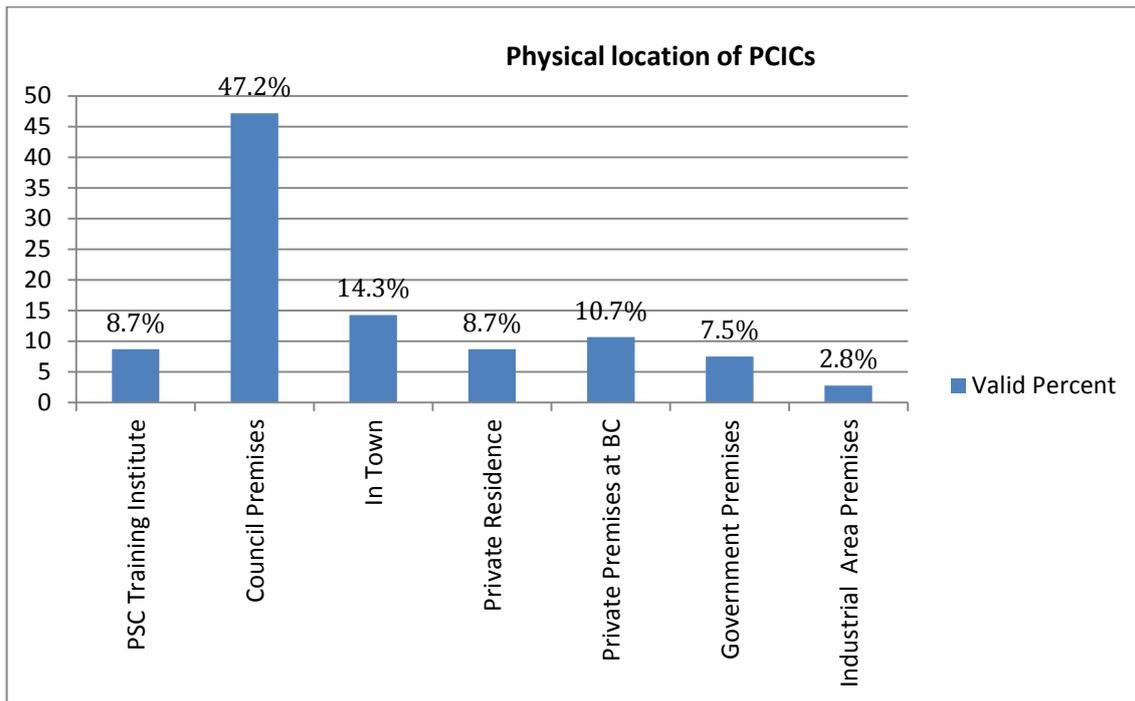
Figure 5.8: Physical location of PCICs

Most PCICs are located in Council Premises and the least number are located in Industrial Premises.

5.5.3 Number of monthly visitors

On average, there are 93 visitors to PCICs; however, most PCICs receive 30 visitors per month. There is a minimum of 20 visitors to PCICs, and a maximum of 250 per month. There are 25% of the PCICs receiving 34 visitors per month. Half the number of PCICs receives around 84 visitors. Three quarters of PCICs receive 130 visitors and below. Only a quarter of the PCICs receive visitors in excess of 130. Table 5.10 and figure 5.9 show the number of monthly visitors.

Table 5.10: Monthly visitors

N	Valid	14
	Missing	1
Mean		92.79
Median		84.00
Mode		30
Std. Deviation		73.005
Range		230
Minimum		20
Maximum		250
Sum		1299
Percentiles	25	33.75
	50	84.00
	75	131.25

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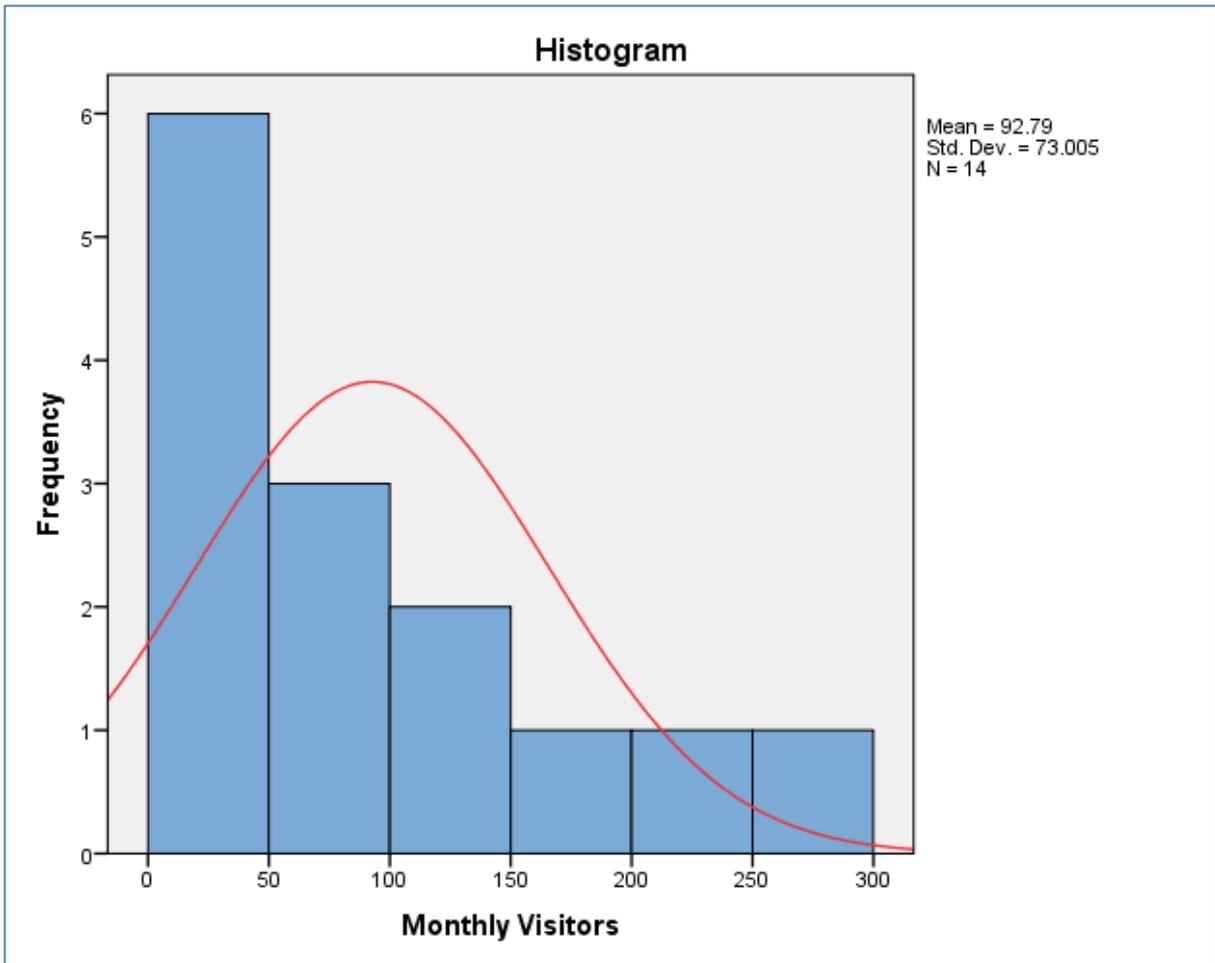
Figure 5.9: Histogram showing monthly visitors to PCICs

5.6. Awareness of PCICs

Data about MP views on PCIC awareness are presented in this section.

5.6.1. MPs views

Most (63%) of the MPs perceive that constituents do understand PCIC roles and objectives; 21% of constituents do not understand PCIC roles and objectives; while 16% said that some constituents do, and others do not understand PCIC roles and objectives as shown in figure 5.10.

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MP's views on understanding of PCIC Roles and objectives by Constituents

Yes 63%
No 21%
Some Do Others Don't 16%
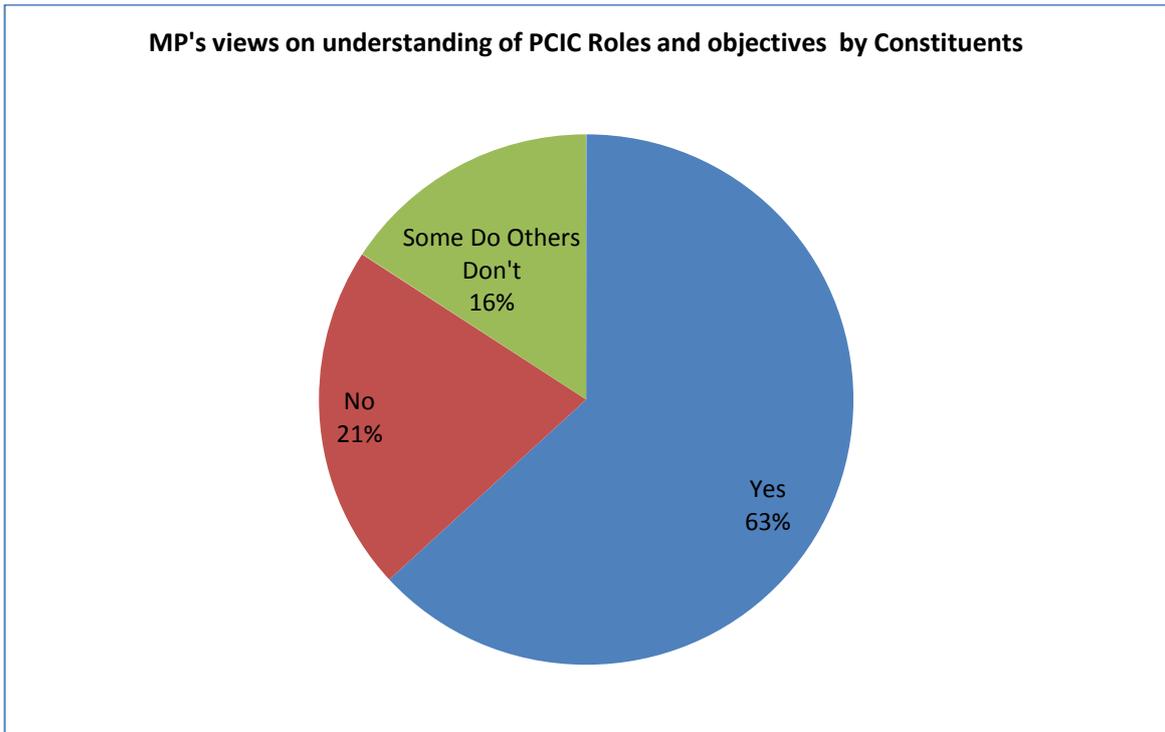
Figure 5.10: Understanding of PCIC roles and objectives by constituents

5.6.2. Understanding of PCICs objectives by MPs

There were 36.85% of MPs who said PCIC objectives were clarified for them; 26.3% said they were 'very clearly' explained, so this category translates to 73.7% of MPs who said objectives were clear to them. However, 21.1% said they were partly clear, while 15.8% said they were not clear. Figure 5.11 shows MP clarity around PCIC objectives.

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Understanding of PCIC objectives to MPs
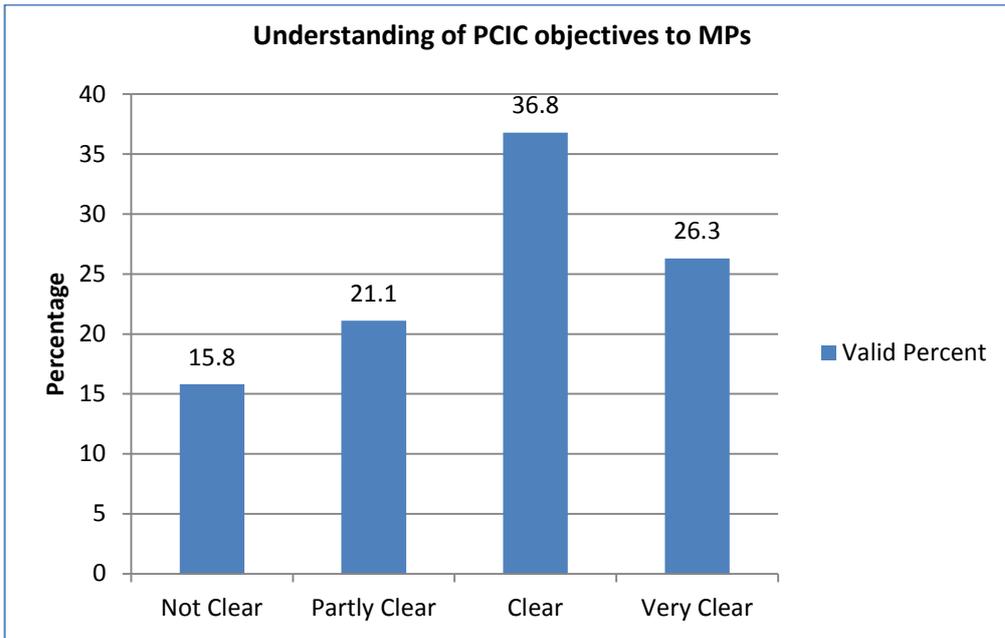
Figure 5.11: **Understanding of PCICs objectives by MPs**

5.6.3. Public invitation to PCICs by MPs

Figure 5.12 shows that 84% of the MPs invite constituents to PCICs; 16% indicated they do not invite the public.
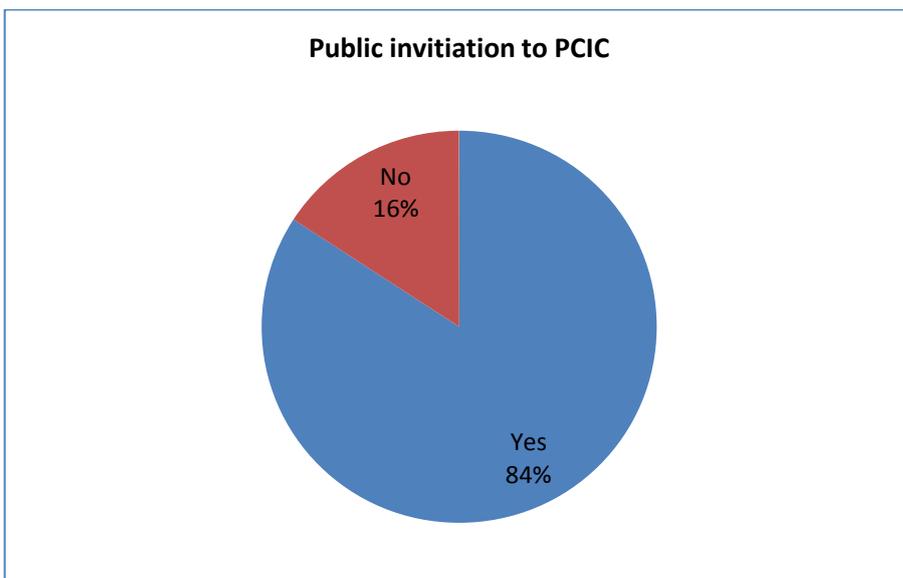
Figure 5.12: **Public invitation to PCICs by MPs**

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5.6.4. Methods of public invitation to PCICs by MPs

Most of the MPs (31.3%) said they invited constituents to organised meetings; and 25% said they make public announcements at meetings. There were 18.8% who said they make use of OAs; 18.8% said they use telephone communication; and 6.3% use newsletters. Figure 5.13 shows methods used by MPs to invite the public to PCICs.
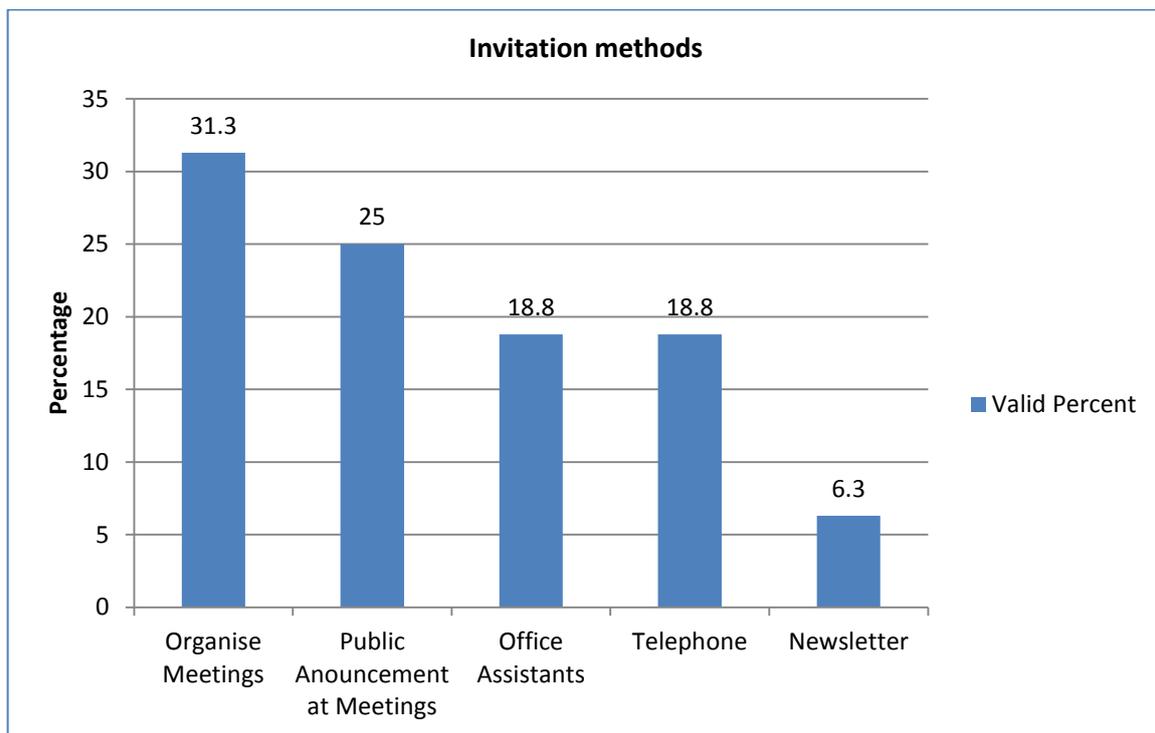
Figure 5.13: Methods of public invitation to PCICs by MPs

5.6.5. Use of PCICs

Figure 5.14 shows that 42.9% of the MPs indicated they use PCICs for meetings with constituents weekly; 21.4% said daily; 14.3% said they use the centres fortnightly; and 7.1% said they use PCICs monthly.

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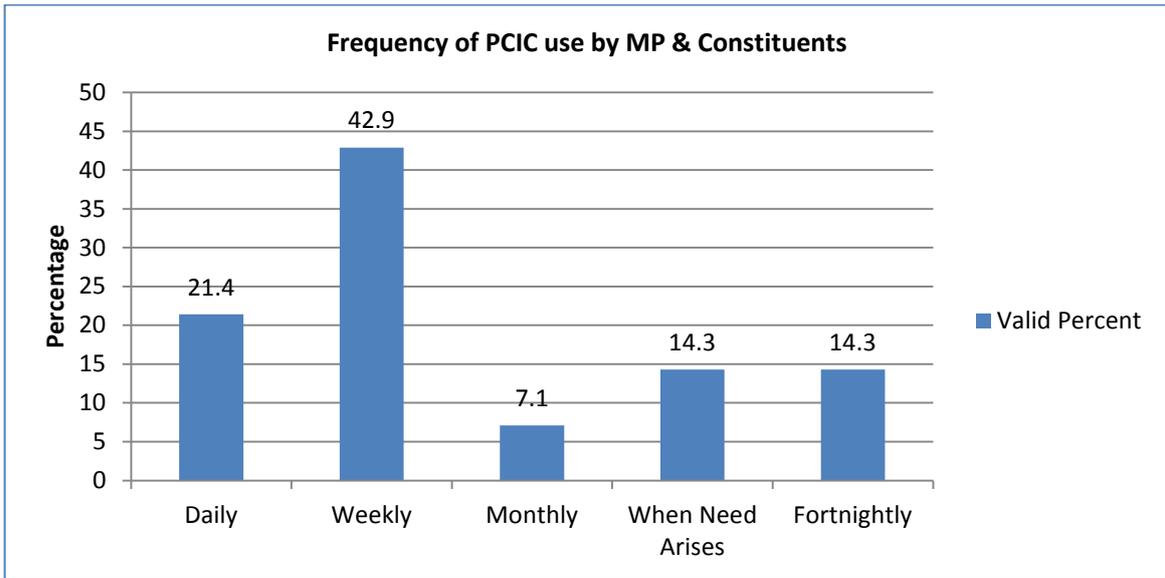
Figure 5.14: Frequency of PCIC Use by MPs and Constituents

5.6.6. Marketing of PCICs by OAs

With reference to figure 5.15, there were 69.2% of the OAs who said they market PCICs by word of mouth and announcements at public meetings; whereas 15.4% said they use flyers, posters and booklets; and others use billboards and signposts.
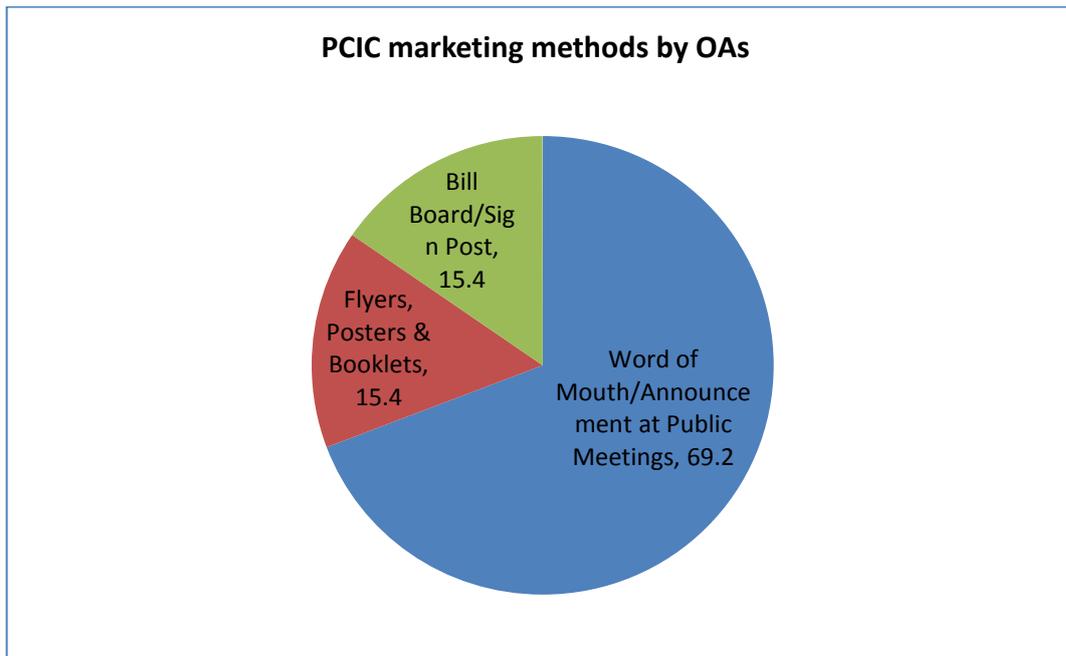
Figure 5.15: Methods used to market PCICs

In response to interview questions, a Parliament of Zimbabwe PRO indicated they are responsible for the main PCIC marketing activities, which are:

- Displays at exhibitions at the Zimbabwe International Trade Fairs and Agricultural Shows;

- Print and electronic media;

- Radio programs such as 'meet your leaders' (sanganai nevatungamiriri venyu);

- Word of mouth through OAs; and

- Contacts or calls from constituents directed or informed to visit the PCIC.

5.6.7. Understanding of PCIC objectives by constituents

There were 49.6% constituents who said PCIC objectives were clarified for them; 21.4% said they were made very clear, amounting to 71% of constituents who said PCIC

objectives had been clarified. However, 20.6% said that PCICs objectives were partially clear to them, and 8.3% said objectives were not clear at all, as shown in figure 5.16:
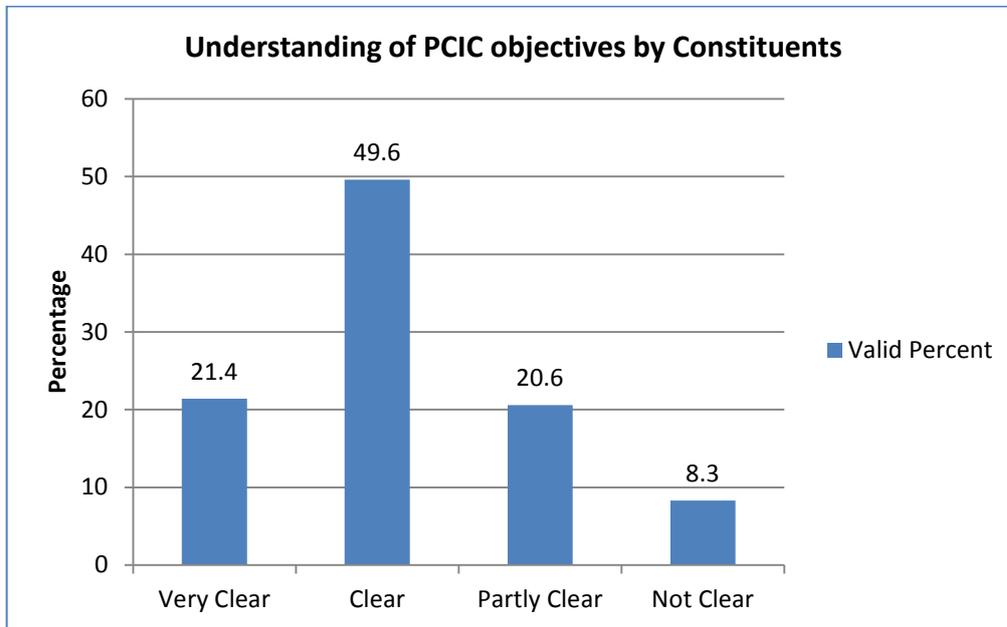
Figure 5.16: Understanding of PCIC objectives by Constituents

5.7. Information delivery

This section presents findings about information delivery from the perspective of constituents, OAs and the database administrator.

5.7.1. Are PCICs well equipped (OAs)?

This question targeted OAs. The majority of OAs (77%) said that PCICs are not well-equipped, while 23% said they are equipped to deliver information to users (reference figure 5.17).

Are PCICs well equiped (OAs)
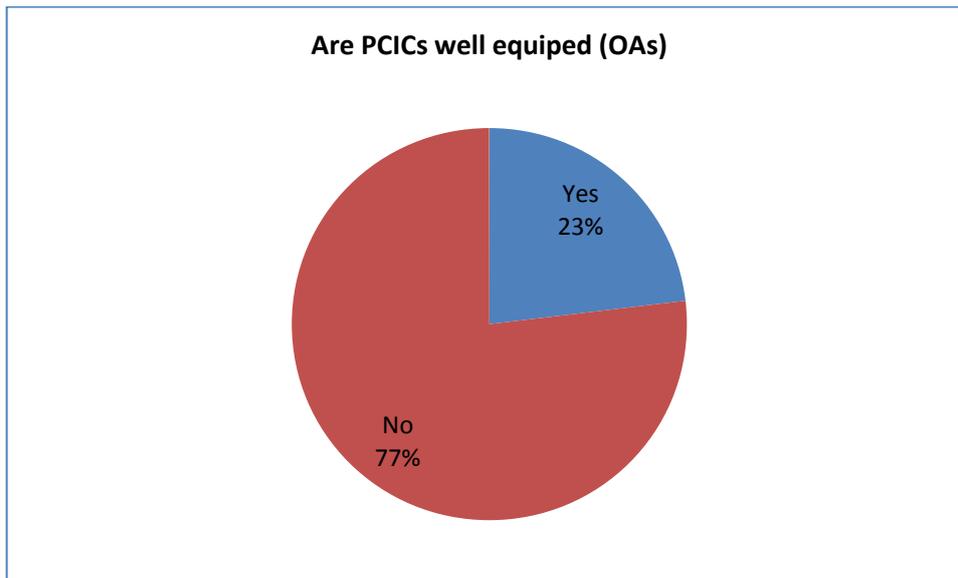
Figure 5.17: Are PCICs well equipped?

5.7.2. Informatics database training (OAs)

The majority of OAs said they were not trained in informatics database components; 42% said they had received training on some aspect of the database (see figure 5.18). From the interview with the informatics database administrator it was discovered that OAs are rarely trained on the major aspects of the informatics database.

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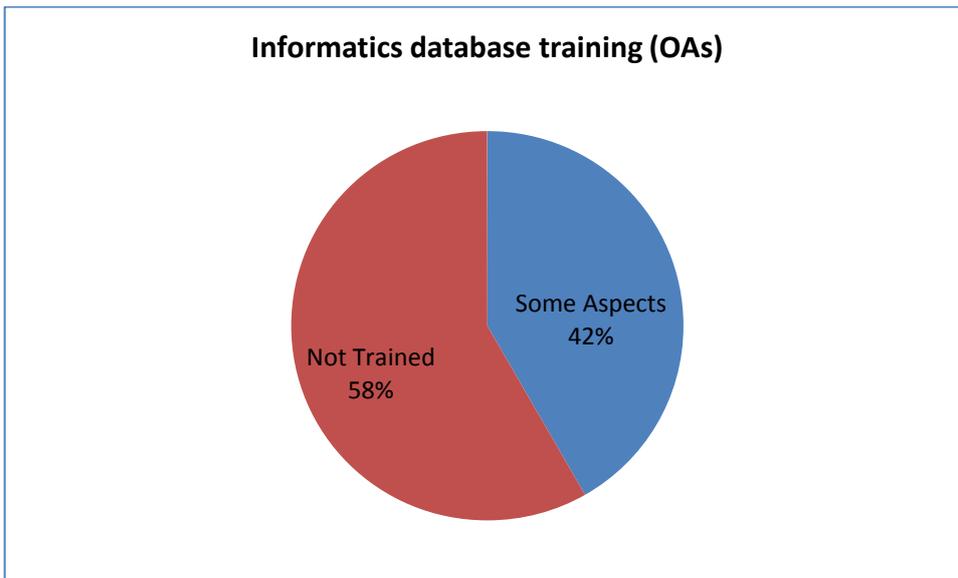
Figure 5.18: Informatics database training (OAs)

5.7.3. Main uses of PCIC computers

Responding to question about the main uses of computer, OAs identified these as for:

- Typing of reports and minutes (86%);

- Record keeping / information storage (81%);

- MP reports on constituency activities (22%); and

- Data analysis (11%).

These rankings have been shown in table 5.11.

Table 5.11: Main uses of PCICs

Main Computer Uses in PCICs	Aggregate
Typing Reports and Minutes	86
Record Keeping / Information Storage	81
MP Reports on Constituency Activity	22
Data analysis	11

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5.8. PCIC administration

The target groups interviewed to collect data about PCIC administration included: the Clerk of Parliament, Public Relations Officers and MPs. As shown in appendix 11, questions 1, 3, 9 and 12 (see appendix 13) provided answers from the PRO about PCIC administration. Questions 5 and 7 provided responses from the Clerk of Parliament. MP responses were obtained from question 3 of the MP questionnaire.

5.8.1. Building ownership

A large number of PCIC offices are located in local government buildings (47.4%) followed by private offices (32%). There were 16% of MPs (self) using personally owned buildings for PCIC activities, for which they receive rentals from Parliament; and 5.3% of the PCICs are located in Central Government buildings (reference figure 5.19).
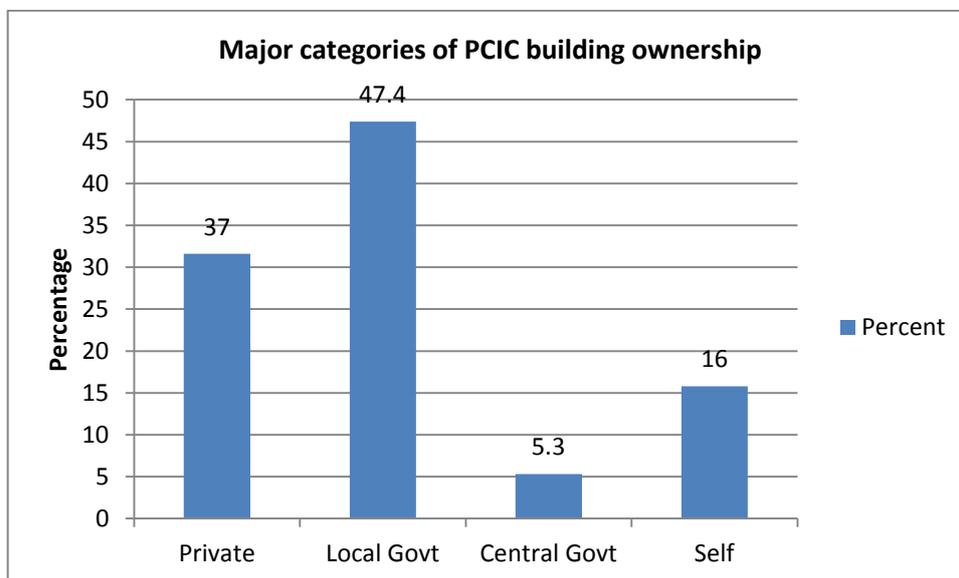
Figure 5.19: Major categories of PCIC building ownership

5.8.2. PCIC management

The PR Principal Officer was asked in an interview to explain the role the PR department in the PCIC project. The main role of the PR department is to run the program managed through the PCIC desk, with two officers responsible. The various roles of other departments in the management of PCICs are:

- Research – informatics database;

- ICT – ICT issues;

- Security – security of premises, equipment and assessments before establishing PCICs; and

- HR – employment of OAs.

The Informatics Database Administrators stressed that there was no co-operation with the PR department in compiling items for the informatics database. This was also echoed by OAs, who said reports they submit to PR are not reflected in the informatics database statistics.

5.8.3. Operating PCIC model

The CoP and the PRO were asked in an interview to explain if there was any model that has been recommended for adoption since the implantation of the PCICs project. They both explained that a fixed model was adopted but no structure has been developed and currently rented offices are being used.

5.8.4. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

In an interview with the CoP requesting whether PoZ is doing M & E on PCICs, it was stressed that there is a committee in place to monitor and evaluate the operation of PCICs periodically. The committee makes recommendations, from time to time, for consideration by the Administration of Parliament.

5.8.5. Recommended improvements

There were 20.7% OAs who recommended for more funding. There were 20% OAs who recommended there is a need for:

- additional stationery, equipment and furniture; and
- improved ICTs.

There were also 13.3% OAs, who made training and development recommendations; awareness and conscientisation of PCIC roles; and the need for PCICs to subscribe to media and press publications as recommended by 6.7% of OAs (see figure 20).

In responding to what they would recommend for improving PCICs, the:

- PRO recommended that there is need for management commitment and continuous education and / or outreach programs for promotion and public awareness; and

- CoP called for improved funding and program refocus.

The UNDP Parliamentary Programme Coordinator responded to what changes could be recommended to improve PCIC operation by stating that:

- permanent structures should be established;

- centre funding could improve their operations;

- recruitment of qualified personnel is essential; and

- MPs must be challenged to use part of their CDF allocation towards PCIC development.

OAs' recommendations to improve PCICs
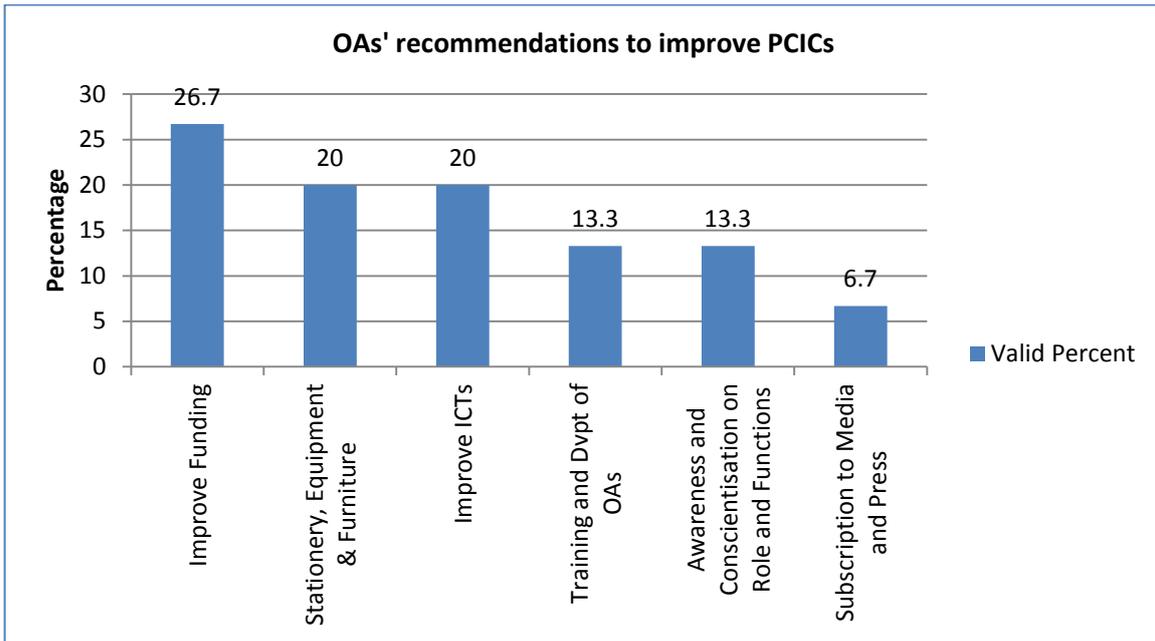
Figure 5.20: OA recommendations to improve PCICs

5.8.6. General comments and reflections

There was 38% of the OAs who recommended PCIC modernisation using ICT applications and improvement in management. There were 31% OAs, who recommended the need to improve PCIC coordination with the PoZ to complement the link between Parliament and constituents, as shown in figure 21.

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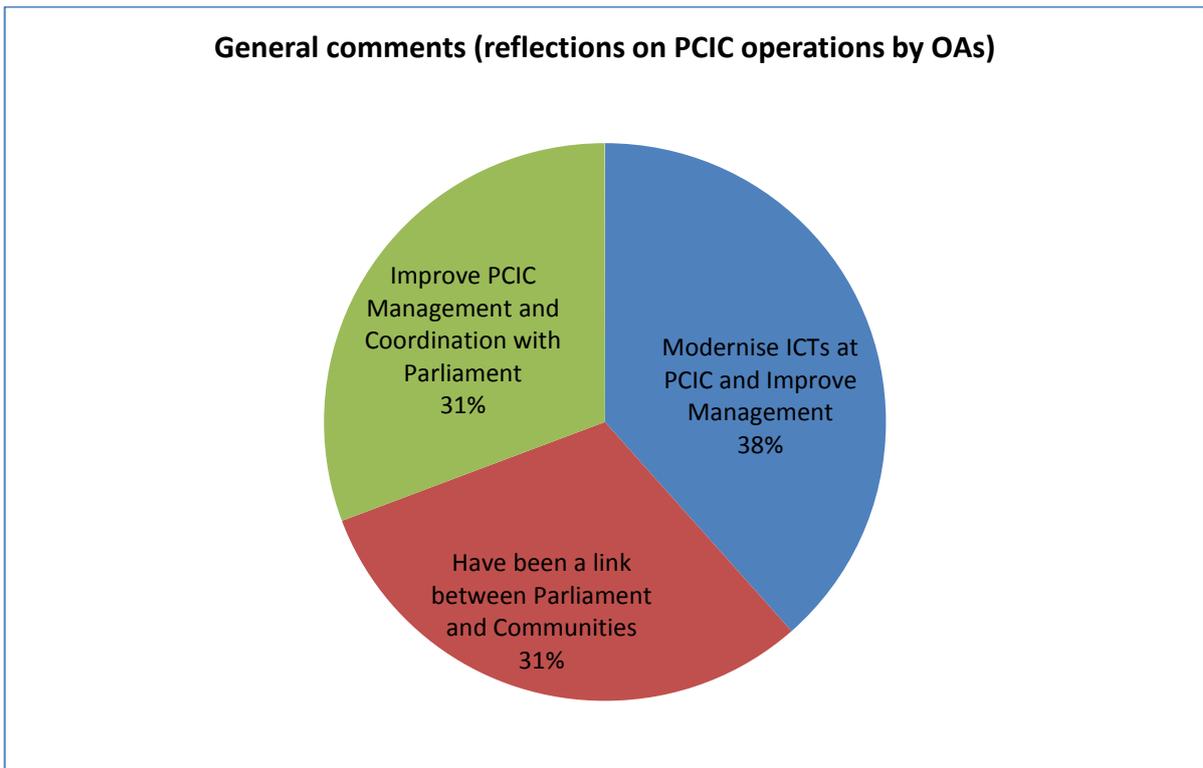
Figure 5.21: General comments (OA reflections on PCIC operations)

5. 9. Achievements

OAs and constituents presented their perspectives on PCIC achievements since their inception, using the questionnaire. These perspectives have been presented in this section.

5.9.1. PCIC strengths (Constituents)

The majority (50.7%) of constituents said PCICs are an information source and provide current awareness service with regard to parliamentary issues, while 35 % said PCICs have been an interface between parliament and constituencies. There were some constituents (4% and below) who said that PCICs are easily accessible; 3.35% said they have good and sociable staff; 2.8% indicated that the centres have clear objectives and good intentions; 2.4% said they are important distribution points or centres of farm inputs; and 1% said they are important focal point to discuss loans and project funding in the constituency, such as CDF (figure 22).

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Responding to the question on how well PCICs are doing, within the context of their established objectives, the CoP was happy to indicate that:

- Established offices have been doing well. Some PCICs have been able to ward off political partisanship; and

- Parliamentary publications can now be accessed at these centres.
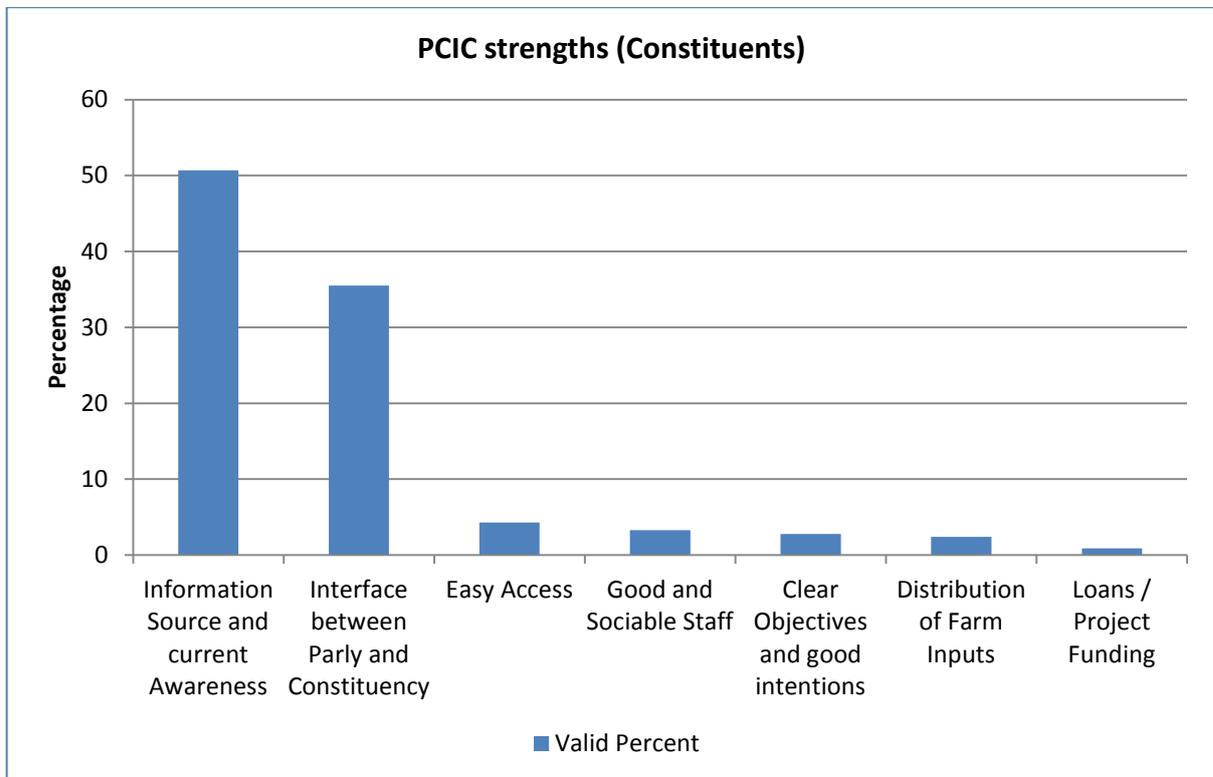
Figure 5.22: Strengths of PCICs (Constituents)

5.9.2. General comments and concerns from constituents

A total number of 24% of the constituents were concerned about poor management and coordination by PoZ; 9.4% said there was lack of PCICs campaigns by PoZ; while 8.7% said they were satisfied with information centre operations. There were 7.4% constituents who raised issues about the lack of library and internet facilities and the removal of politics from PCIC operations. Constituents numbering 6.7% said there was insufficient equipment

and inadequate office space. There were 6% of constituents who said there are inadequate personnel at PCICs and PCICs are in inaccessible locations. A total number of 5.4 % constituents said PCICs create awareness about government programmes, while 4% said the government must build offices; 2% said they should reach remote rural areas; with another 2% saying OA tenure of office must be independent of MPs; and 1.3% said MPs must spend more time at PCICs. There were 0.7% constituents who said PCICs should provide videos of Parliamentary proceedings (reference figure 5.23)

General comments & concerns from constituents

Comment/Concern	Valid Percent
Lack of Parly Internship Opportunities	0.7
Videos of Parlamentary Proceedings	0.7
Provide Press	1.3
MPs Must Spent More Time in PCICs	1.3
OAs Tenture be independent of MP/Change	2
Should Reach Remote Areas	2
Gvt Must Build PCIC Offices	4
PCIC creates Awareness on Gvt. Programmes	5.4
Inaccessible Location	6
Inadequate Personnel at PCIC	6
Inadequate office Space	6.7
Insufficient Equipment and Furniture	6.7
Should not be Politicised	7.4
Library and internet connectivity	7.4
Satisfied with operations	8.7
Lack of PCIC Awareness Campaigns by Parliament	9.4
Poor Management & Cordination by Parliament	24.2

Figure 5.23: General comments and concerns from constituents

5.9.3. Main beneficiaries of PCICs (OAs)

Table 5.12 shows what OAs said who the main beneficiaries of PCICs were:

- The community was ranked as first beneficiary: first by 46.7% of the OAs; ranked second by 42.9%; and third by 12.5% giving an aggregate ranking of 79.5%;

- Schools and teachers were ranked as second beneficiary: first by 20% of OAs; ranked second by 21, 4% OAs; and third by 12.5% giving an aggregate ranking of 38.4%;

- Students were ranked as third beneficiary: first by 13.1% OAs; ranked second by 13.3% OAs; and not ranked as third choice giving an aggregate of 22%;

- OAs were ranked as fourth beneficiary: first by 13.1%; ranked second by 6.7% OAs; and not ranked in the third category giving an aggregate of 17.6%;

- MPs were ranked as fifth beneficiary: first by 6.7% OAs; and not ranked in the second and third categories giving an aggregate of 6.7%;

- Councillors and government departments were ranked as sixth and seventh beneficiary, respectively: in the first choice, they were not ranked; and in the second choice they were ranked at 6.7% by OAs giving an aggregate of 4.5% each respectively;

- NGOs were ranked as eighth beneficiary: ranked third by 2.5% of OAs giving an aggregate of 4.2%; and

- The above scores were weighted by 100% or 1 for first choice; two thirds or 66.7% for second choice; one third or 33.3% for third choice to give the aggregate.

The interview conducted with Parliament of Zimbabwe administration revealed the main beneficiaries from the PCIC Parliament project were the:

- Public in general / constituents;

- OAs;

- MPs;

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- Civil society;

- Education sector; and

- Parliament.

Table 5.12: Main PCIC beneficiaries (OAs' perception)

Beneficiaries	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Weighted Average
The Community	46.7	42.9	12.5	79.5%
Schools/ Teachers	20	21.4	12.5	38.4%
Students	13.1	13.3	0	22.0%
OA	13.1	6.7	0	17.6%
MP	6.7	0	0	6.7%
Councillors	0	6.7	0	4.5%
Govt. Depts.	0	6.7	0	4.5%
NGOs	0	0	12.5	4.2%

5.9.4. Improved knowledge and participation

In Figure 5.24, it can be seen that 79% of MPs agreed the introduction of PCICs led to their improvement in understanding issues within the constituency and participation in parliamentary business. There were 21% of MPs who said they did not improve their knowledge and participation in parliamentary business.

Administration of Parliament also acknowledged that PCIC targeted beneficiaries have improved their knowledge, or influenced Parliamentary business as a result of the introduction of PCICs.
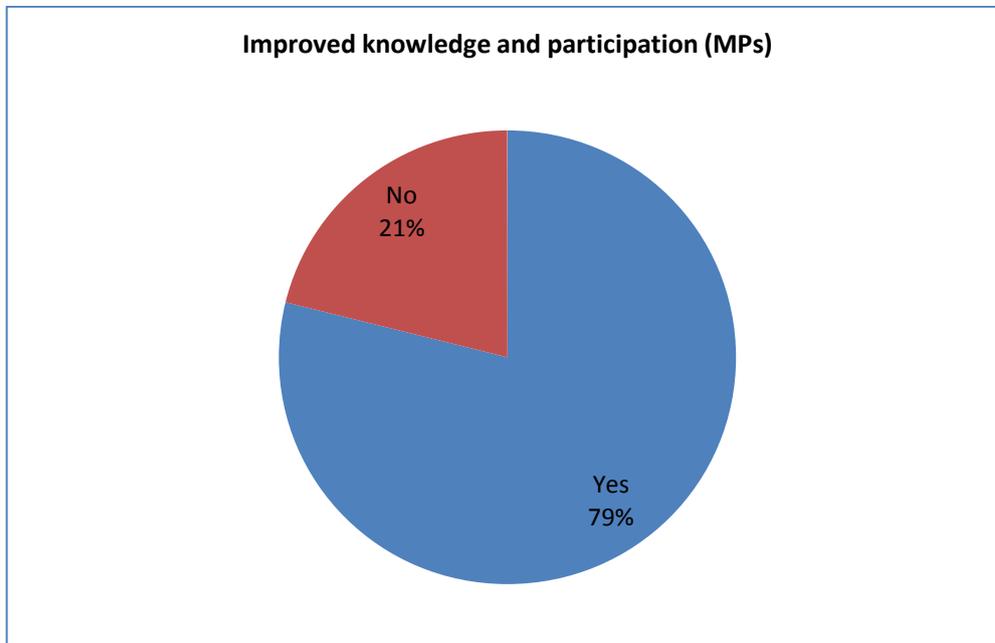
Figure 5.24: Improved knowledge and participation (MPs)

5.9.5. PCIC strengths

Positive or strong aspects of PCICs, according to MPs are summarised in Figure 5.25. 51% said the centres have been a source of information and a dissemination point; 21.4% said they have been an interface between PoZ and constituency coordinating centres, while 7.1% said they have been a communication centre for MPs and constituents.

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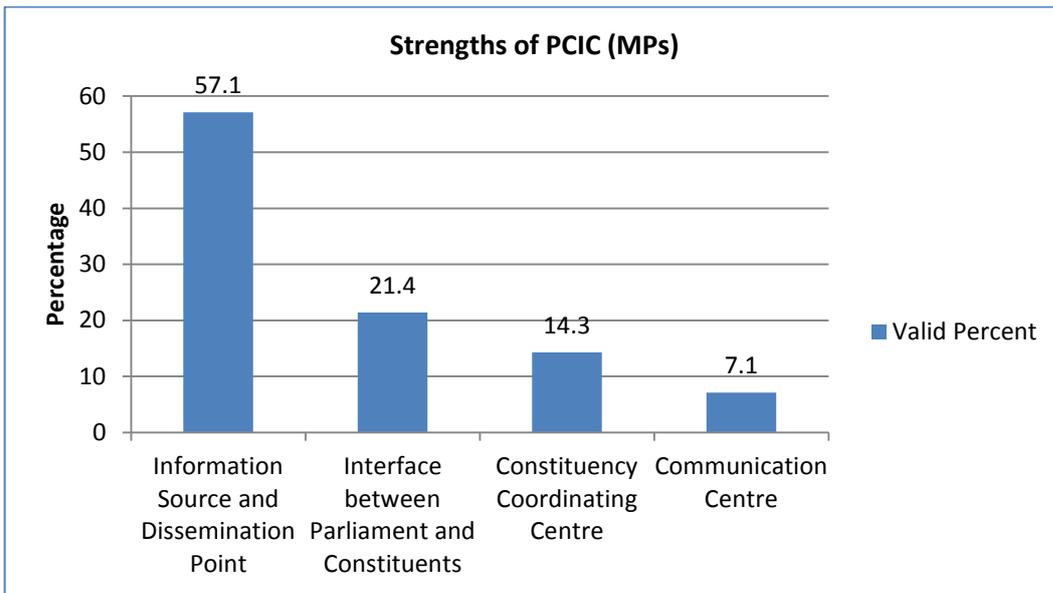
Figure 5.25: PCICs strengths (MPs)

5.10. Challenges

Most data about challenges being faced in the day to day operation of PCICs is presented in this section.

5.10.1. PCIC weaknesses (MPs)

In terms of the weak aspects of PCICs, 40% of MPs said that PCICs are poorly resourced; 26.75% said there is insufficient literature, while 13.3% said there is insufficient equipment and furniture; another 13.3% said the centres are politically polarised. There were 6.7% of the MPs who said there are inadequate personnel at the PCICs.

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PCIC weakenesses (MPs)
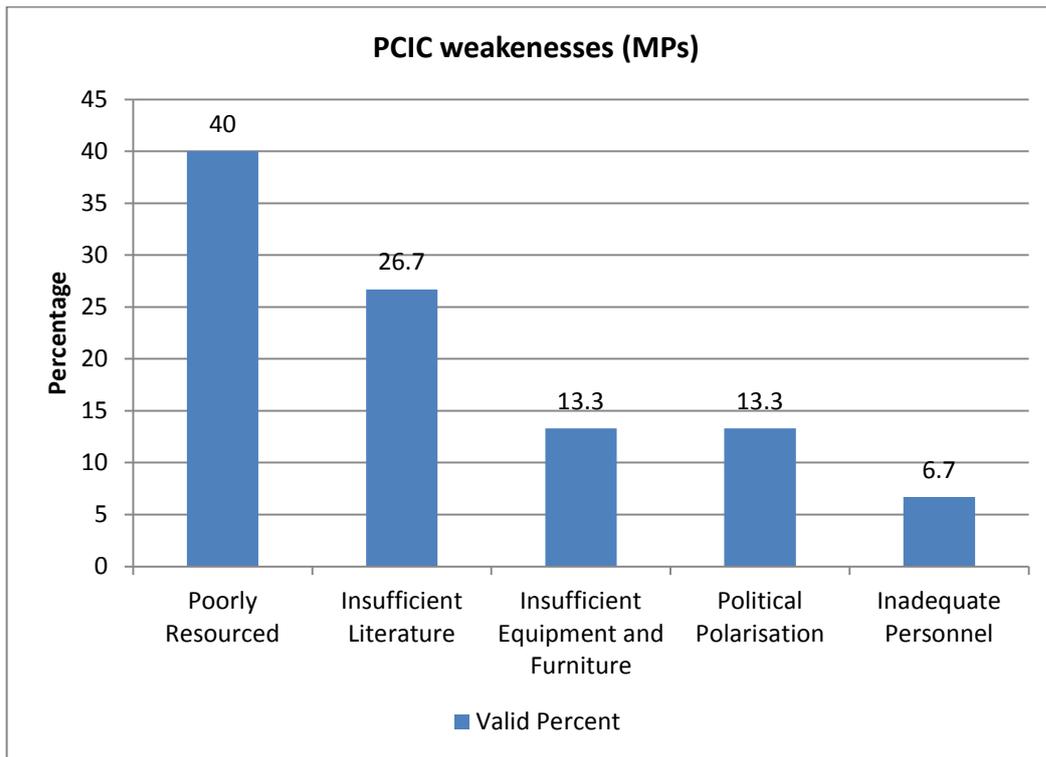
Figure 5.26: PCICs weaknesses (MPs)

5.10.2. Changes to improve PCIC operations (MPs)

With reference to figure 5.27, there were 29.4% of MPs who said there is need to improve funding for PCIC operations; 17.6% said: a) there is need for more personnel / HR development; and b) there is need to improve ICT facilities. There were 17.6% of MPs who called for the improvement in office equipment and furniture. There were four views tied at 5.9% which called for:

- permanent offices to be constructed;

- government documents to be available in every constituency;

- PCIC establishment in every constituency; and

- PCIC de-politicisation.

Responding to changes that could improve PCIC operations, the Administration of Parliament and the UNDP Program Coordinator concurred on the:

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- construction of permanent structures as a solution;

- ensuring centre funding is improved;

- Recruitment of qualified professionals and a possible change in title from OA to Constituency Officer;

- Use of part of the CDF allocation to improve PCIC operations; and

- PCIC program refocus to accommodate in the original plan the 270 Parliamentary Constituencies, 210 for the House of Assembly and 60 for Senators.
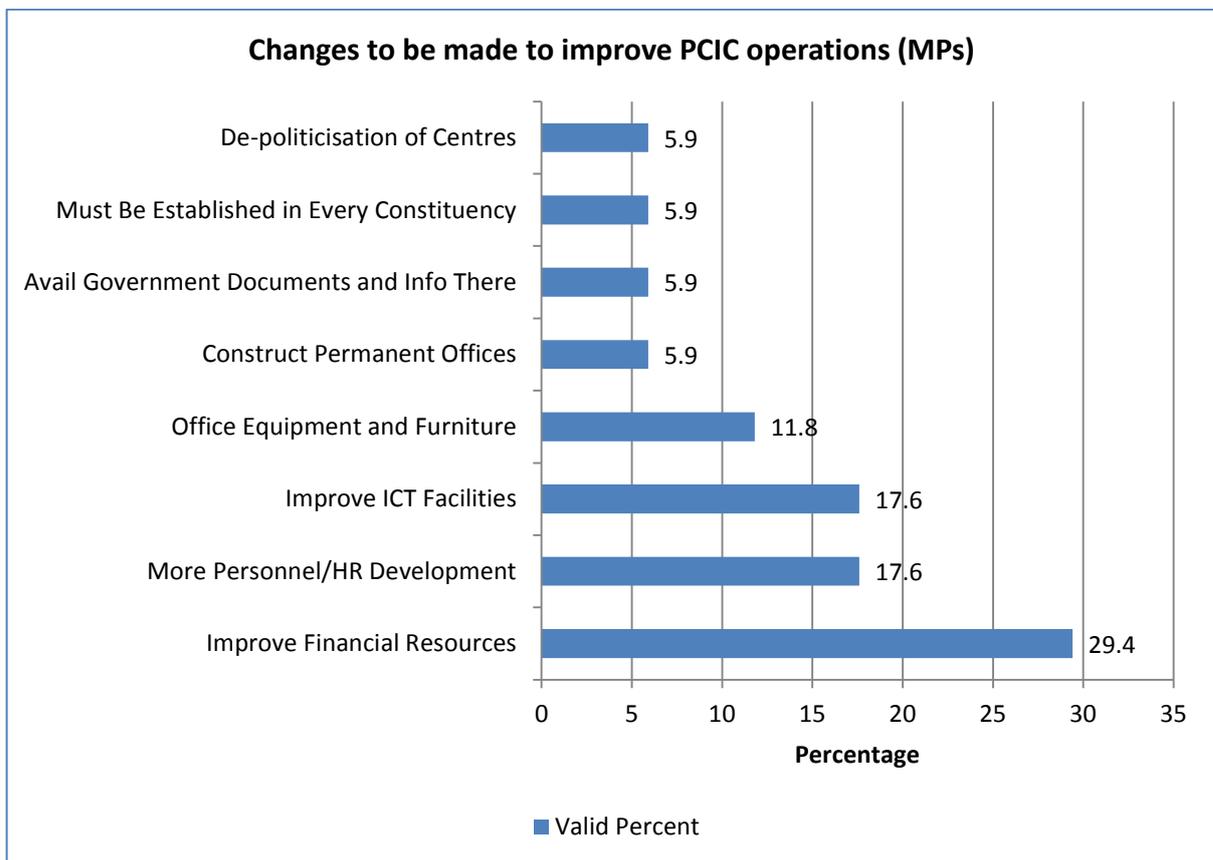
Figure 5.27: Changes to improve PCIC operations (MPs)

5.10.3. PCIC support comments (MPs)

There were certain views concerning support for PCICs raised by MPs with 39% saying support was grossly inadequate; 33% saying support must continue; and 28% saying more financial support is needed, as shown in figure 5.28 below.

PCIC support comments (MPs)

- Support is grossly inadequate 39%
- Support must contintue 33%
- More financial support is needed 28%
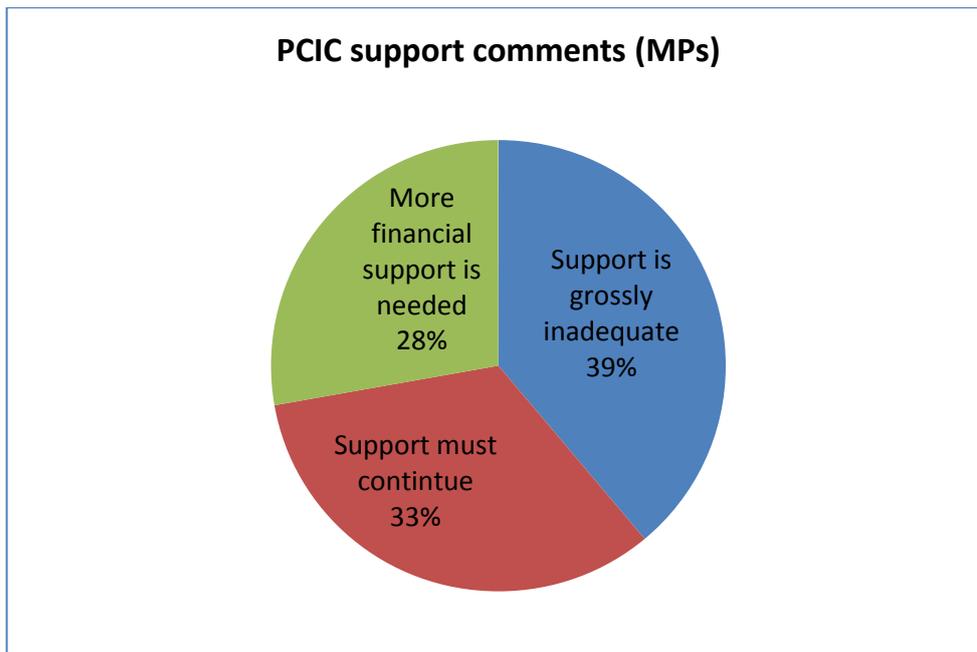
5.10.4. PCIC weaknesses according to constituents

Figure 5.29 provides a summary of issues suggested by constituents as PCIC weaknesses. There were 21% of constituents who identified a lack of internet, photocopying and fax facilities as a major weakness; and 14.9% identified insufficient office equipment and furniture as a further weakness. In total 3.4% MPs said political polarisation / politicisation of PCICs is a weakness; 9.8% highlighted poor publicity; and 6.7% indicated that information is outdated. Constituents totalling 5.7% said there are inadequate / limited reading materials; 4.6% mentioned poor implementation and management of the program or project; 4.1% talked of small office size or a lack of offices for meetings; and 3.6% said there is a limited range of services at PCICs.

Other comments ranging from 0% - 3.1% were that there is / are:

- lack of funding for income generation projects through PCICs (3.1%);

- no fixed time to see MPs (3.1%);

- inadequate personnel at PCICs (2.6%);

- poor accessibility to location relative to constituency (2.1%);

- resources are lacking (1.5%); and

- lack of security, mass media, vernacular publications and training for OAs to master their duties (1%).

PCIC weaknesses (constituents)

Weakness	Valid Percent
Officer Training to master their duties	0.5
Lack Vernacular Publications	1
Lack of Mass Media and Telecommunications	1
No Security	1
Lack of Resources	1.5
Location Relative to constituency	2.1
Inadequate Personnel	2.6
No Fixed Date for Seeing MP	3.1
Lack of Funding for Income Generation Projects	3.1
limited range of Services	3.6
Small office Size / Space for meetings	4.1
Poor Running /Implementation of the Programme	4.6
Inadequate /Limited Range of Reading Material	5.7
Outdated Information	6.7
Poor Publicity	9.8
Politicisation / Polarisation	13.4
Insufficient Office Equipment and Furniture	14.9
lack of Internet, Photocopy and fax Services	21.1

Figure 5. 29: PCIC weaknesses

5.10.5. PCICs operational challenges

Interview questions about challenges faced in PCIC operations were answered by both OAs and the Administration of Parliament. A number of operational challenges were mentioned by OAs, as reflected in figure 5.30. From most challenging to least challenging, these were:

- administration, which was ranked first by 26.7%; second by 27.3%; and third by 40% of OAs giving an aggregate of 52.8%;

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- ICTs, which was ranked first by 33.3%, and second by 18.2% of OAs giving an aggregate of 45.4%;

- financial constraints, which was ranked first by 13.3%, and second by 27.3% of OAs giving an aggregate of 31.5%;

- transport and logistics challenges, which was ranked first by 6.7%; second by 9.1%, and third by 20% of OAs giving aggregate of 19.4%;

- lack of stationery, which was ranked first by 6,7%, and second by 9.15% of OAs giving an aggregate of 12.8%;

- Three challenges were ranked sixth at 6.7%. These were: 1) lack of furniture and equipment, which was ranked first by 6.7% OAs; with no second and third choice giving 6.75% aggregate; 2) political intimidation, which was ranked first by 6.7% OAs; and no second and third choices giving an aggregate of 6.7%. Misconceptions about OAs work were ranked third by 20% of OAs and none for first and second choice giving an aggregate of 6.7%;

- human resource issues were ranked third by 9.1%; and none for first and third choices giving an aggregate of 6,1%

Aggregates derived by weighting first choice by 100% or 1; second choice by two thirds or 66.7% and third choice by weighting one third or 33.3%.

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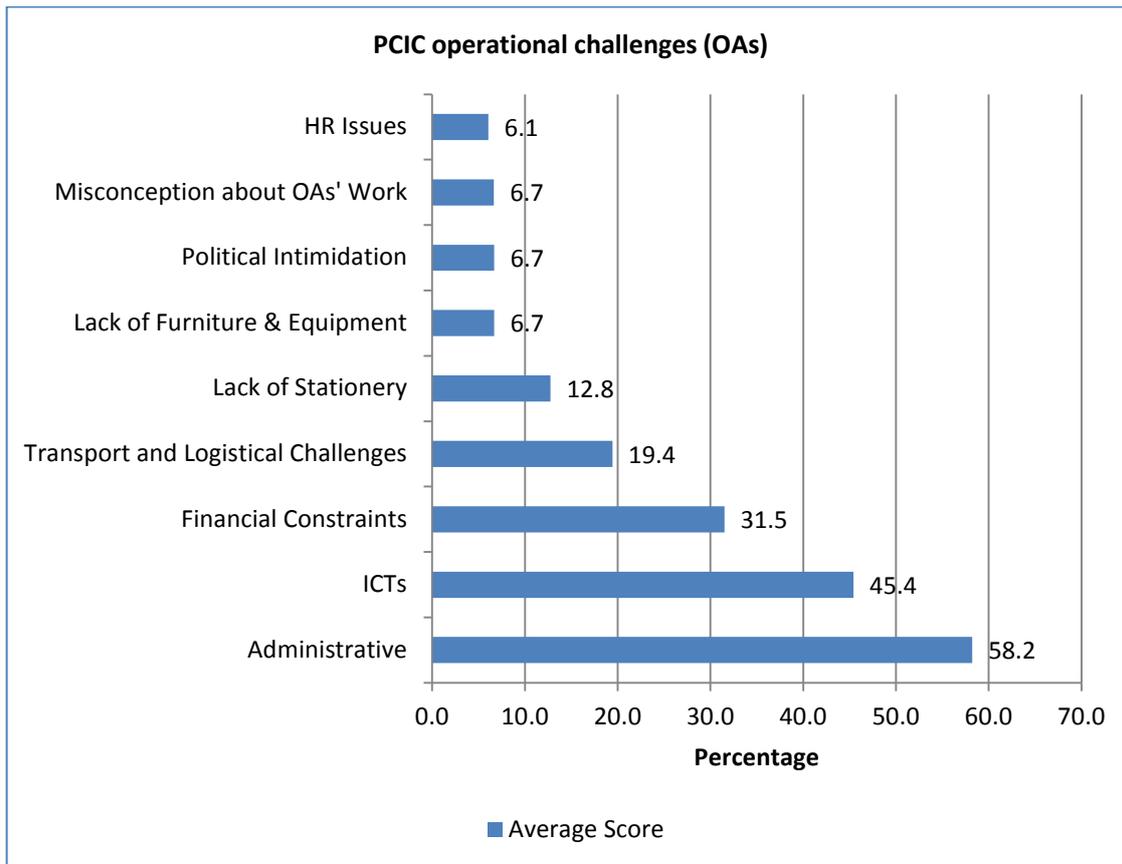
Figure 5.30: PCICs operational challenges (OAs)

CoP explained challenges Parliament is encountering in PCIC project administration, the responses to the questions being that:

- It is difficult for PoZ to monitor activities of private business by MPS at PCICs;

- Parliament had not been able to open new offices due to financial constraints;

- There is lack of manpower to update informatics databases;

- There is friction resulting from chiefs and senators also requesting constituency offices;

- OA preferences for employment contracts to be the same as those of Parliament Officers;

- The general lack of infrastructure presents challenges;

- Some OAs and MPs are not serious about their work;

- MPs want the authority to alter OA job descriptions for hiring OAs; as the

- MPs want more personnel at PCICs than parliament can afford to pay;

- Political partisanship scares away PCIC visitors;

- Securing decent offices at reasonable prices is difficult; and

- Developments arising from the program had not been addressed in the original plan (Constitutional amendments Nos. 17 and 18). Amendment number 17 re-introduced the Senate and number 18 increased the number of members in the House of Assembly (see section1.2.3).

5.10.6. CDF(s) use

There were 6 PCICs that indicated using funds on PCICs. The average amount of money used was $1 633.33; two PCICs used $1 500 each. The minimum amount of money used on PCICs was $500.00 and the maximum amount was $4 100.00. One quarter or 25% of PCICs used $875 and less. Half the centres (50%) used $2 150 and below one quarter (<25%) used more than $2 150.00 (see tables 5.13 & 5.14 and 5.31 figure).

Table 5. 13: CDF (s) used on PCICs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	$500.00	1	5.0	16.7	16.7
	$1,000.00	1	5.0	16.7	33.3
	$1,200.00	1	5.0	16.7	50.0
	$1,500.00	2	10.0	33.3	83.3
	$4,100.00	1	5.0	16.7	100.0
	Total	6	30.0	100.0	
Missing	System	14	70.0		
Total		20	100.0		

Table 5. 14: CDF(s) used on PCICs

N	Valid	6
	Missing	14
Mean		$1,633.3333
Std. Error of Mean		$516.18257
Mode		$1,500.00
Std. Deviation		$1,264.38391
Variance		1598666.667
Range		$3,600.00
Minimum		$500.00
Maximum		$4,100.00
Sum		$9,800.00
Percentiles	25	$875.0000
	50	$1,350.0000
	75	$2,150.0000
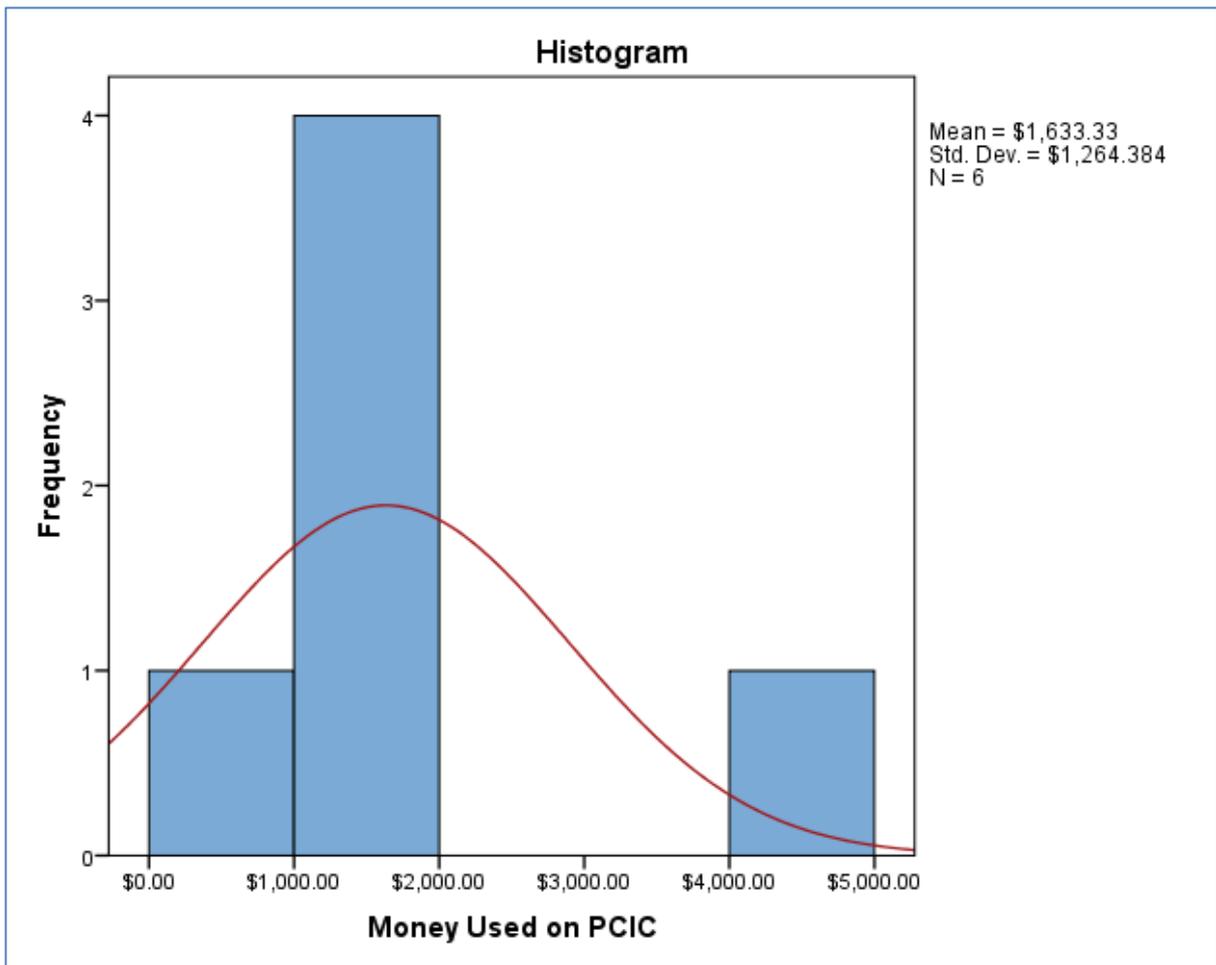
Figure 5.31: CDF funds used on PCICs

5.11. Summary

Chapter five presented data obtained from questionnaires, interviews, site visits, observations and document analysis. The data presented was categorised and grouped into seven themes, namely information needs and expectations, accessibility, PCIC awareness, information delivery, PCIC administration, achievements and challenges. The next chapter will interpret the data presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: DATA INTERPRETATION

6.1. Introduction

The data presented in chapter 5 are interpreted and some of the issues identified in the literature are addressed. The presentation follows the pattern of the themes relevant to communicating parliamentary information, namely:

- Information Needs and Expectations;

- Accessibility;

- PCIC Awareness;

- Information Delivery;

- PCIC Administration;
- Achievements; and
- Challenges.

The above themes were selected on the basis of related issues from interviews, questionnaires, observations and the literature review.

6.2. Information needs and expectations

The PCIC should ideally meet the information needs of all its constituents. This set of questions aimed to discover how constituents as a whole felt about the information centre; and their perspective about the way the Centre is offering, or should offer its services. Data in response to this theme came from questionnaires that targeted MPs and constituents. The measure was more qualitative than quantitative. Respondents expressed their views on information needs through reasons for visiting the PCIC, such as degree of satisfaction, importance of information sources, kind and volume of information and any additional services needed.

6.2.1. Reasons for visiting PCICs

Constituents visit PCICs primarily to find information about legislation. Table 5.6 and figure 5.1 indicate that the Hansard is the most dominant publication consulted at PCICs (see appendix 12C). The Hansard captures what happens in Parliament; and visitors to the PICIC enjoy reading the Hansard and continue to visit the centre to monitor what is happening in Parliament. It provides information on current legislative debates. Constituents need current information about what is going on in Parliament. The purpose of CAS is to inform the constituents about availability of the latest copies of the Hansard, new bills being discussed in parliament and any other publications from parliament. Besides these reasons, people want to learn about Parliament in general. Parliamentary studies are one of the courses taught at tertiary institutions throughout the country. As such, PCICs, being the nearest sources of Parliamentary information are visited by researchers, teachers, students and lecturers. Constituents look for general information. On the other hand, the MP from time to time invites councillors and members of the public with a view to updating them on: the latest developments discussed in Parliament; and new laws and programmes that may affect the constituent well-being. Given the challenges that the country faced before 2008, people had many unsettled grievances and might have wanted to meet the MP for assistance in solving their problems; and seeking funds for projects. They would also want to invite the MP to officiate at certain functions, such as graduations and school prize-giving ceremonies, weddings and official community project openings.

The above findings also harmonizes with the interview response by the PRO who found that through their outreach programmes to educate the public about functions of Parliament that most constituents who have used the PCICs were found to be excited about obtaining copies of the Hansard. One constituent respondent summed up his / her opinion in the questionnaire: *'If I don't find the Hansard on my visit to the PCIC then next time I won't visit…' 'I enjoy reading the Hansard especially when topical issues are being debated in Parliament.'*

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Respondents told of how they valued PCICs for being useful to providing them with parliamentary information and thus being empowered. The empowerment theory largely supports this view as highlighted in the literature review (see section 2.2.4).

There are various reasons why the public visit the PCIC. Some of the reasons have not been anticipated by the Parliament of Zimbabwe prior to implementation of the PCICs project. The significance of these findings are to provide pointers and urge Parliament to improve and increase the number of parliamentary publications that are allocated to PCICs. This also shows clearly that most constituents want to get the opportunity to improve their understanding and knowledge about activities that take place in Parliament

6.2.2. Degree of satisfaction

There was a need to analyse constituent responses on satisfaction to the question: *'To what extent are you satisfied with the information obtained at the PCIC?'* to find the degree of satisfaction experienced, as shown in figure 5.2. Most users are satisfied, showing an aggregate of 62%, for those satisfied (51%); and those very satisfied (11%). Thus, PCICs have played a valuable role by filling the information gap existing between PoZ and constituencies. The majority feeling satisfied shows that a well-intentioned project has potential in supplying useful information, whereas those who are only partly satisfied confirm that more information is needed.

Those constituents not satisfied, and not fully satisfied could be looking to meet other services not available at the PCIC. It is a challenge for PCICs to meet the varied needs of different groups of people residing within the constituency, ranging from farmers to teachers, extension workers, health workers, religious groups and entrepreneurs.

6.2.3. Importance of information sources and services

Constituents know their information needs better than outsiders. This claim is supported by Whitmore (1988), who feels the concept of information needs to be more clearly defined. Consideration should be taken for individuals being able to understand their own needs better than anyone else and have the power both to define and act upon these. The data appears to confirm this view that the Hansard, internet access, newspapers, journals, database, and bills all rated above 80%, signifying issues to do with Current Awareness Services (CAS) in general. The constituents also want to have a global identity as signified by the need to access internet and newspapers for global information issues. The data also revealed that availability of non-book materials, such photocopying services are also significant PCIC services. Constituents rate services, such as photocopying because this can assist in the reproduction of PCIC publications.

Methods of information dissemination in suitable formats, such as audio materials, audio visuals (ranked at 60% - 70%) are of secondary importance. This shows that constituents would prefer various formats other than print. Thus, 'repackaging information' should be included among the other PCIC roles, according to the requirements of specific users. Hence, information repackaging and simplification to the constituent level is one of the functions of the informatics database administrator. UNISIST (1971) studies reveal that information centres operate as 'tertiary' services, with a synthesis function added to those of indexing and classification: reorganisation, quality control, compression and evaluation. Other activities ranked lower, including survey findings, expert opinions and translations to ensure that such information is clearly understood. These were considered less important, because constituents are unfamiliar with them.

6.2.4. Kind and volume of information

The idea behind this measure was to assess whether there was enough information material available for the number of potential users; and whether the information was up-to-date. This also answers why some users are dissatisfied. Parliament administration confirmed

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they are not in a position to supply the number of Hansard copies MPs require, so these are limited to 50 copies per MP. This amount cannot meet the demand, because constituencies have thousands of people, as shown in table 4.2. MPs also feel that PCICs should provide more information, such as government literature and internet access.

MPs satisfied with the quantity and volume of information are also happy with the services they get from the information centres. A concern however is with those not satisfied and the reason for dissatisfaction. There are some reasons that could explain this. MPs preside over rural and urban constituencies. The information needs for the different constituencies also differ, if one analyses the demographic and socio-political nature, or the rural–urban divide. Unlike urban MPs and their constituents, who can get information from various sources such as libraries, internet and daily newspapers, rural constituents do not have this wide choice. This has also been observed by the 2008 World e-Parliament Report, in which it is suggested that to meet the varied information types of constituents in Parliamentary issues and challenges, there is a need to address:

- the digital divide;

- access to technology for all citizens;

- multiple languages;

- literacy; and

- people with physical challenges.

This could provide another important area of future study relating to the disparate rural urban divide information needs. This has been explained by different information sources needed by MPs, as indicated in table 5.8; these needs are computers and internet, government documents, parliamentary literature and newspapers. Newspaper access, for instance, though rated low (14.3%) by MPs, has been highly rated by users at 84%. The explanation could be that MPs can afford newspapers daily and do not see any reason for their inclusion at the centre, unlike constituents who cannot afford newspapers.

6.2.5. Additional information sources and services required

The data indicates that there is a general shortage of reading matter at PCICs. That is why the public want more computers and Internet connections. There is also the need for literature from other government departments and more parliamentary publications. Table 5.8 shows the scenario explained above. PCICs do not have resources or means to acquire additional information. Some PCICs have been depending on local NGOs to donate some publications.

Constituents indicated they need additional services, such as interactive gatherings, such as sporting events, training workshops, communication projects / loans, monthly forums and internet services. In a publication for the Global ICT in Parliament entitled "*In Connecting Parliament and citizens: the challenge of openness, transparency and representation*" Casini (2008) provided examples of Parliaments moving from the almost "traditional" citizen input solutions, to the more interactive and popular social networking media. In Brazil, lawmakers connect with the constituents through various social media. In this study, constituents have been found to demand PCIC internet facilities. The data extends Mutaviri and Ncube's (2003) list of needs that emerged more recently.

6.3. Accessibility

The overall aim of this indicator and set of questions was to show how easy or difficult it is for constituents to reach and gain PCIC access and use its information resources and other services. This access relates to distance from user residences, centre locations, number of visitors per month, frequency of visits and other barriers. Constituents are affected primarily by the distance one stays from the information centre. Visiting the information centre could also be a result of other factors, such as availability of transport, central location and information availability (see figure 5.7). However, there are also constituents, who travel very long distances, as far as 60km to visit a PCIC. These could be councillors coming for important constituency meetings, or individuals requiring MP interventions, or they could be teachers from distant schools visiting on pay day.

Access to PCIC services encompasses removal of any discouraging restrictions for constituents using its information resources. Information professionals espouse principles of free inquiry and intellectual freedom; they oppose barriers to access, such as censorship or restrictions based on age, culture, religion and costs. Freedom of Access to PCICs is also a function of local laws affecting freedom of expression. In Zimbabwe, laws such as POSA, AIPA and other pieces of information policies (see section 1.4) have a bearing on PCIC access. For instance, POSA forbids public gatherings, so the public do not feel free and secure to hold meetings at PCICs, for fear of victimisation by law enforcement agents.

Zimbabwe is not fully adhering to most of the International Freedom of Access to Information guidelines, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Freedom of Information (FOI) and other international declarations and instruments representing efforts to universalize democracy and freedom of access to and expression of information (see 3.5.2). By fulfilling these guidelines, there is room to safeguard liberty and advance democracy. Information centres have an obligation to provide access by all persons, to a variety of information and ideas to enhance the opportunities for self-improvement and empowerment.

In Armenia, for example, the Freedom of Information Centre of Armenia (FOICA) created in 2001 protects the constitutional right of citizen information access. FOICA has achieved its objectives through strategic litigation, training, monitoring, public campaigns and advocacy. One of its major accomplishments was drafting an advocacy of the Armenian FOI law in 2003, which was adopted by the National Assembly in September 2003.

In addition, individuals and organizations can use the Freedom of Information (FOI) laws existing in a country for various economic and social purposes, including access to information, regulatory enforcement data, health and safety reports and even community development projects. Without user-friendly and readily available administrative, legislative and other public laws to support access to information, PCICs cannot function fully.

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6.3.1. Location of PCICs

Location has an important bearing on access to the information centre. Figure 5.8 shows that:

- most PCICs are located at Council premises (47.2%); and

- a significant number are located in towns, government institutions, growth points and private business premises and industrial areas.

Because Council premises and town centres have buildings and infrastructure, such as telephone facilities, electricity, security and transport networks, these issues of centrality, infrastructure in addition to political neutrality are of paramount importance with regard to PCIC location. Those located at private premises, residences and industrial areas, mostly MDC strongholds, are in such areas due to political sensitivity, because they could not obtain offices at Council premises. Documents analysed revealed Parliament involvement in visiting Rural District Councils (RDCs) to appeal for MP office space, irrespective of political party membership. This was after it was discovered that RDCs preferred MPs from one political party over others. As a result of failure by Parliament to pay rentals and rates, most MPs were chased from rented premises and moved to industrial areas, or used own residences.

Two notable location examples that came to light through personal observation were:

- Harare Central PCIC located at Trafalgar Court is not visible at all to constituents, although it is in the Central Business District (CBD). The billboard is badly placed, because directions to the office from outside the building cannot be found. Researcher observation of the internal Audit Committee Report findings of 2011 that although the Harare Central PCIC was in the CBD, its location is not visible to most constituents; and

- Headlands PCIC was moved from Headlands constituency to Rusape town, ostensibly because Headlands people could not locate it. However, the new

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location, at the MP's house was not an improvement at all, because respondents conceived it as partisan and uncomfortable to visit the MP's private residence.

The location of PCICs is a major factor affecting accessibility.

6.3.2. Number of monthly visitors

On average, there were 93 visitors per constituency, per month. The minimum is 20 and the maximum 250 per month as shown in table 5.10 and figure 5.9. The number of visitors was affected by:

- Distance: PCICs located in areas far from constituent residents are not frequently visited by constituents;

- Location: As discussed under section 6.3.1, PCICs located in private or industrial areas are not easily accessible;

- Information Resource Availability: This ensures that constituents visit PCICs on the understanding that they will find information from the centre. Usually, they receive notification after documents such as the Hansard have been delivered. Relevance of the information also adds to the frequency of visits by constituents;

- Population density: PCICs located in high density areas receive many more constituents than those in sparsely populated areas; and

- Other activities: These ensure poor citizens requiring distribution of agricultural inputs and food hand-outs go to the PCICs in any event.

This means the PCIC location, information source availability; population density and provision of a variety of activities affect the number of constituents who visit PCICs.

6.4. Awareness of PCICs

MP and constituent answers provided: awareness of PCICs and their objectives; MP perspectives; PCIC marketing; and constituent understanding of PCIC objectives.

6.4.1. MPs' views

Most MPs perceive constituents as understanding PCIC roles and objectives. Those who understand PCIC roles and objectives continuously request services and information found at PCICs, see figure 5.10. Some constituents do not understand PCIC objectives, because the information or services they seek cannot be supplied or found, such as welfare issues. Strong constituent groups within constituencies, such as activists and war veterans politicise the centres. Then there is the third group, according to MPs, who do not fully understand PCIC roles and objectives. Figure 5.10 provides a summary of the above assessment.

6.4.2. MPs and constituents' understanding of PCICs objectives

Two insights relating to the understanding of PCICs objectives, according to MPs can be inferred from the data in figure 5.11.

- Those who said that the objectives were clear or very clear see PCICs as advancing their cause in the constituency. Such PCICs are properly located for accessibility; and adequately resourced to provide relevant information, so they attract a large number of visitors; and

- Those MPs who indicated that the objectives were partly clear and not clear are not aware of the objectives of PCICs.

The lack of understanding of PCICs objectives by some MPs and the lack of adequate support from PoZ affects the efficient operation of PCICs. Somehow, this is causing MPs to use the centres for political party activities.

The questionnaire data (see figure 5.16) shows that most constituents have understood PCIC objectives (71%). Obtaining a true picture on whether constituents have understood PCIC objectives has been explored through reasons for visiting PCICs; and PCIC consistency with constituent expectations and levels of satisfaction. That most constituents (see table 5.6) visit the information centres to collect and read the Hansard shows an

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understanding PCIC objective as collection and distribution centres for the publication. The level of satisfaction with the kind of information obtained through the PCICs has also been used to gauge constituent understanding of PCIC objectives. The majority of constituents (62%) are satisfied with the information obtained from the PCICs (see figure 5.2). There are some PCIC strengths appreciated by constituents, such as satisfaction with the existing interface that exists between the Parliament of Zimbabwe and constituents. The project objectives are clear and a result of good intentions.

There is a small fraction of constituents (8.3%) who said PCIC objectives were not clear to them (see figure 5.16). This represents those constituents whose information needs are not being met by PCICs.

6.4.3. Public invitation to PCICs (MPs)

Figure 5.12 summarises MP responses to public invitation to the PCIC. Most MPs do invite constituents to PCICs (84%). This may be because they want to:

- discuss community projects;

- discuss topical issues; and

- have other information for the public.

Some of the MPs who said they do not invite constituents to the PCIC may not have any offices; and some offices may have been closed, mainly due to non-payment of rentals. The PoZ Committee audit findings in August 2011 show that Masvingo has the highest number of non-functional PCICs, namely 6 PCICs (37.5%) of the 16 PCICs opened are not operating. This province is followed by Harare with 3 PCICs (20%) not operating out of the 15 opened in the province. From the PoZ Audit Committee 2012 Report and researcher observations, four provinces have only 2 PCICs not operating. These are Mashonaland Central, Midlands, Matabeleland South, and Matabeleland North.

6.4.3.1. Methods of public invitation to PCICs by MPs

The predominant invitation methods used include organising meetings and public announcements at public meetings or community gatherings; because these are the least-cost methods and can reach a wider audience within the constituency, as figure 5.13 shows.

Other methods include use of OAs and telephones. This method may involve contacts with a limited number of constituents critical to the issues under discussion. These could be VIPs and business communities within the constituency, who require formal invitations. The cost element comes into consideration here when using telephone or sending OAs with invitation letters. The use of newsletters assumes a literate readership or people who can access the PCIC; another method observed during PCIC visits was placing the invitation on the notice board within the PCIC for everyone visiting the centre.

Findings from interviews revealed that PoZ uses press and broadcasting methods, such as radio and television to invite MPs to Committee meetings and other Parliamentary business. These methods have not been extended to PCICs.

6.4.4. PCICs marketing

Figure 5.15 summarises methods used by OAs to market PCICs. Most of the marketing methods mirror those used to invite the public to PCICs, due to cost considerations and capability to reach a larger audience. However, 15.4% of additional marketing methods used by OAs include the use of flyers, posters and booklets. This marketing is for those not usually attending meetings and to raise awareness amongst those with no PCIC business. The use of billboards is important, because it reflects PCIC identity as that of Parliament (appendix 12A). However, most of the available billboards are now shabby, not prominently displayed and not even supported by posts (appendix 12D). Some PCICs do not have these billboards, underlining lack of identity. As has been reviewed in literature, according to Dowling (2001) corporate identity helps people find or recognize an

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organization. Well known examples of identity as the outward manifestation of an organization are clearly provided by McDonald's, Disney and Nike, who do not even need to use the name anymore, the "Swoosh" logo is sufficient. Identity also encompasses corporate communication, corporate design, corporate culture, corporate behaviour, corporate structure, industry identity and corporate strategy. All these need to be part of PCIC marketing strategies.

OAs have limitations in advocating the existence and functions of PCICs to the constituents at large. This is an area requiring attention if the involvement and effective participation of constituents in parliamentary issues/developments is to be realized. Of the 25 constituencies visited by the researcher, only one PCIC, Bikita West had used the CDF to acquire a motor cycle for the OA for outreach and marketing activities.

Besides OA marketing strategies, the Parliament of Zimbabwe also markets PCICs at premier events, such as agricultural shows and trade fares. PoZ Marketing has not targeted the rural constituents, because most of these shows are in urban areas and have a minimal urban following. There is, thus the need for aggressive PCIC marketing by PoZ.

Access, awareness and information delivery best practices can be learned from the Parliament awareness system developed by the Peruvian Congress, which uses the Radio Programmes to broadcast the congressional activities weekly; and discuss specific issues one hour every week. This programme can be obtained from the Internet in MP3 format and is widely used to distribute audio messages through the Internet and other resources. Digital press systems have enabled the development of direct communication not only with citizens, but also with mass media information chiefs, so that greater accuracy in information dissemination is achieved. The Peruvian Congress also makes use of the electronic gazette *El Heraldo* to provide on-line information about congressmen's varied activities, agreements, discussions and statements. Of all the PCICs observed in this study, not even one is connected to the internet.

Closer to home, Hubbard (2004) did a study on the use of radio to the National Assembly of Namibia, whose idea is to have full Parliamentary proceedings broadcast live on radio or television through the constituency channel. The Constituency Channel is a Parliament based radio and video production house, which intends to serve as a source of legislative, public and developmental information for community radio. Its aim is to encourage informed civic participation in how the country is governed. In addition, the Constituency Channel produces weekly updates on Parliamentary proceedings and public opinion on legislative and policy issues. These updates will be sent to local community radio stations and the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC).

Although awareness is important, there is a need to move beyond awareness, because this does not automatically lead to constituents changing their behaviour towards PCICs. Knowing about the existence of the information centres will not be enough. The main issue is to make PCICs freely and easily accessible in all respects.

6.5. Information delivery

To explain the information delivery process, the findings from OAs revealed a clear picture of this process. On the questionnaire, OAs explained how well equipped the centres are for managing the information delivery process. The informatics database administrator responsible for distributing data to the centres was also interviewed to provide data. The main use of computers at PCICs also provided important data on electronic dissemination of information. In addition, interviews with PoZ administration revealed how information is delivered to PCICs. These findings are discussed in sections 6.5.1; 6.5.2; and 6.5.3.

6.5.1. Are PCICs well equipped (OAs)?

As shown in figure 5.17, most (77%) of OAs responded that PCICs are not sufficiently equipped to deliver information to constituents because:

- Furniture and equipment is outdated, broken and obsolete;

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- Most computers are non-operational. Figure 12B shows the state of computers at PCICs. According to the OA, the computer had been covered with blankets, awaiting service for the past one and half years;

- Resources such as consumables are lacking;

- No photocopying services are available;

- No internet connection is available; and

- Insufficient space is provided. As figure 12D shows, the size of some PCIC offices is so small that a sizeable number of visitors cannot be accommodated simultaneously.

Lack of resources affects all PCICs, whereas insufficient space does not affect all PCICs. Some PCICs have bigger office space that is underutilised.

6.5.2. Informatics database training

Most OAs claimed they were not trained in the operation of the informatics database. Figure 5.18 shows that 58% of OAs have not been trained in most aspects of the informatics database. The PR department that handles the induction of OAs does have records as to when they last trained OAs; according to documents available from public relations department, they were last trained in 2003. Those trained indicated only acquiring a few aspects of the database.

Parliament of Zimbabwe is among a number of parliaments applying parliamentary informatics. The informatics database has become a rapidly growing requirement in parliamentary monitoring; the use of e-democracy and e-participation tools to aggregate information and generate visualizations; and to facilitate citizen participation in parliamentary processes. In section 2.3.1.2, Rowlatt (1999) described the SEAMLESS project in the United Kingdom funded by the British Library that aims to develop a new model for citizen information. In Western Australia an information database system

(Infolink, 2001) shown in Figure 2.2 has been initiated through cooperation between the Western Australian government and community organizations. The purpose of the database is to provide referral services to other organizations to satisfy the specific client information needs.

This is not the case with Zimbabwean PCIC informatics databases. Although it provides valuable socio-economic data about constituencies, there are gaps because the database updates extremely slowly. What is worrisome is that most OAs are not trained in database operations. There are no continuous training programs for OAs, as was highlighted in the PoZ Committee on PCICs 2011 Audit Report. This underutilisation of computers means that talk of the informatics database for PCICs is not a reality.

6.5.3. Main uses of computers

Computer uses at PCICs revolve around two main areas:

- Typing of minutes and reports (86%); and

- Record-keeping and information storage (81%).

Most computer use at PCICs is for basic word processing. A small percentage, 11%, as in table 5.11, of OAs use computers as a result of lack of computer training among OAs. It was observed that computers at most PCICs are not functioning and are obsolete, as appendix 12B shows. Some of the computers acquired 10-12 years ago are beyond repair and should be replaced by new ones.

Of the computers that are working, none are connected to the internet. Printers and fax machines are also not working. Some of the OAs administering PCICs indicated they use their own laptops and personal e-mail addresses. Others had neither personal laptops, nor e-mail addresses. Although OAs have submitted reports on several occasions about the state of equipment, to the PoZ through the PR department maintenance has not been done, because the ICT department has no capacity to service the computers.

Computer use is minimal. These should be used for purposes of information seeking on the Internet and for on-line and off-line databases, or CD-ROM searching. None of these computer functions at PCICs have been realised.

6.6. Administration and management of PCICs

The provision of information services is a complex exercise and requires professional management skills to determine how effectively and efficiently the information centre is serving constituent needs. Professional management is important to identify service limitations and failures and to recommend ways to improve. Adopting effective management practices ensures the formulation of an efficient policy, and its effective implementation.

6.6.1. Ownership of buildings

Building ownership affects PCIC management, especially when the centre is located at private premises, as explained in section 6.3.1. PCIC offices located at MP business premises or on their residential properties are used for other functions that have no relationship with PCIC activities. Most buildings housing information centres belong to the local government. MPs who use their own buildings constitute 15.8% of respondents. Figure 5.19 shows the major PCIC building ownership categories. Ownership of buildings is also linked to accessibility / location of PCICs, as figures 5.7 on user distance from PCIC, and figure 5.8 on physical location of PCICs show.

6.6.2. Management of PCICs

The management of PCICs must reflect what happens in Parliament, whose administration cannot be justifiably done by one department. This is the reason why a number of departments work as a team. However, there is the need to provide a clear picture regarding the responsibilities of various departments and of MPs.

Another issue is the lack of clear separation of powers between Parliamentary administration and MP roles with regard to PCIC operations. Parliament is responsible for the payment of rates and rent bills, salaries, consumables and OA training; thus PoZ must have the overall responsibility.

An analysis of OA reports suggested a sad picture. OAs seem to function without effective supervision. According to the OA Manual drafted by the PR Department in 2007, the officer 'shall serve under the direct supervision of Parliament and the MP'. The manual does not say who has the overall responsibility. In practice, however, the MP is rarely present as they spend most of their time in Harare on Parliamentary duties. The PR PCIC Desk Officer at Parliament is too far removed to exercise any supervision. In any event there are so many PCICs across the country separated by long distances, that effective supervision is difficult. The only supervision that may be said to take place is through monthly OA reports that are supposed to be sent to the PCIC Desk Office. An interview with the PR Officer revealed limited contact and communication with OAs. The monthly OA reports submitted to Parliament are not strictly followed-up and some PCICs never submit these. OAs also highlighted that they find no reason to continue submitting reports, because there is never any feedback.

The lack of close OA supervision has had several implications. OAs feel isolated from POZ. There has been a lot of absenteeism, because an OA cannot avoid reporting for work without this being noticed, when the MP in not in the constituency. This also affects constituents who may not receive assistants when they visit PCICs.

6.6.3. Operating model

According to the IPU (2005), three different types or models of constituency offices were piloted to come up with the most suitable for application. These were:

- the fixed model;

- the travel budget office, where an MP was provided with funds for travelling around the constituency in person; and

- the mobile office located in a moving vehicle, and equipped with a computer and satellite phone.

Findings of the interview with the Clerk of Parliament revealed that, Parliament of Zimbabwe opted for the fixed model, and there are plans for permanent structures. It seems clear that the issue of permanent PCIC offices requires urgent attention as it has serious implications for sustainability. A concept paper on PCICs has already been submitted proposing Parliament/Government to build permanent structures in each constituency. There has not been any feedback from central government on the issue of the proposed construction of permanent offices for PCICs. Detailed discussion has been covered in chapter 7 proposing a PCIC model.

6.6.4. Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E)

Parliament executes annual M & E of PCICs. The major questions have been why the PoZ does these audits; and how they have impacted on PCIC operations. Also, development partners, such as the UNDP financed the initial PCIC implementation and operation by paying for: salaries, rentals, OA training, equipment and consumables; and have been doing M & E of PCICs. In the most recent *UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation of the three-year, rolling multi-donor program*, Vrieze and Murupa (2012) discovered that, despite recommendations, not much has been done to improve PCIC operations or challenges.

6.6.5. Recommended improvements

Increasing PCIC efficiency shown in figure 5.20 focuses on: funding, stationery supplies, ICTs, and training and development of OAs in these centres. Other recommendations for improvement focus on raising awareness of: PCIC roles and functions; current services with subscriptions to media such as DSTV; and publicity in both local and international publications. For example, in most local banks, clients view programmes and international news while waiting for services. Research has shown that information can be successfully

transmitted in many formats. Audio and visual formats are often more successful for rural people, who find it difficult to read and to find the time to read printed material. A Centre which holds information in many different formats is able to offer many ways of accessing information.

There is convergence of views between OAs, PoZ administration and development partners, particularly on funding issues; and the use of CDF and training as important ways to improve PCIC operations and development.

6.6.6. General comments on PCICs operations by OAs

Two general categories, as reflected in figure 5.21 arise from general respondent comments, namely the:

- Call to improve PCIC management and coordination with PoZ. The need to modernise PCICs through the introduction if ICTs is important because this will in turn improve information management; and

- PCIC impact in the constituency revealed there is a link between the PoZ and the constituents, thus PCICs may have an important role with regard to development in general, and information delivery in particular.

The PoZ strategy should entirely recast how PCICs can improve on the above reflections. "Success can only be defined through the eyes of the public," as Pullinger (2009) of the British House of Commons Information Services identified in his report titled *'Connecting Parliament with the Public'*.

6.7. Achievements

In this section, findings from respondents suggesting how PCICs have achieved their objectives have been discussed. These achievements discussed are:

- strengths of PCIC according to constituents and MPs;

- Main beneficiaries; and

- Improved knowledge and participation.

6.7.1. PCIC strengths according to Constituents and MPs

The achievements of PCICs on representation and information delivery feature as dominant themes. The information delivery component has been much appreciated by as many as half the respondents, who feel PCICs are an important source of information and current awareness services; thus, they are meeting the information needs of the majority of the people.

Representation, that is, the introduction of PCIC centres has been seen as a critical link between Parliament and the constituency, so has been found to be a major achievement. A third of the constituents (35%) felt their impact, as shown figure in figure 5.22. Thus, to some extent the PCICs have achieved some of the set objectives in section 1.2.3, and are a welcome programme in constituencies. PCICs provide a base for: Parliament-generated information, where documents such as the Hansard, Order Paper and Forthcoming Bills can be accessed by the public in the constituency; meetings for the sitting MP and their constituents.

With the advent of CDF, PCICs have become increasingly important as centres for: disseminating Parliamentary information; interface between Parliament and constituents; and as communication and coordination for constituency activities (see figure 5.25). These aspects have the effect of improving MP work within the constituency, consequently having a positive impact on the constituency.

6.7.2. Main beneficiaries of PCICs

Table 5.12 indicates the main beneficiaries of PCICs are the constituents (79.5%), schools and teachers (38.4%) and students (22%). The advent of PCICs thus has benefited the constituents and any other community groups. Further PCIC beneficiaries are: government departments, MPs, OAs and NGOs. The availability efficient PCICs lessens the burden on PoZ work. The administration of Parliament identified beneficiaries as the:

- Public in general: Constituents no longer travel to PoZ to obtain information because it is now available at PCICs, so they are now better informed able to discuss development issues during PCIC meetings.

- OAs: They have benefited through employment created for them as part of the local community;

- Education sector, both students and teachers: They obtain Parliamentary information necessary for Parliamentary studies research, a component of school and college curricula. MPs: They can now plan meetings from the centres. Additionally, MP contributions are now factual and evidence-based, with data from the PCIC informatics database.

- Civic society and NGOs: They are now able to disseminate information to various constituencies through the centres.

Linked to the issue of main beneficiaries was the response by the CoP on whether the targeted beneficiaries have improved their knowledge, or influenced Parliamentary business, as a result of the introduction of PCICs. He concurred with most of the above views but further said that PCICs are mostly about representation and development.

6.7.3. Improved knowledge and participation

MPs agreed that they have benefited from PCICs. Most MPs (79%) are satisfied with the introduction of PCICs, a reflection of the importance of the introduction of these centres operating within their constituencies. The remaining 21% who are dissatisfied may not have PCICs in their constituencies for several reasons, or the centres are poorly-resourced.

Figure 5.24 shows responses around improved knowledge and participation. PCICs have provided parliamentary information and constituency data important to the development of the constituency. MP contributions, thus are now evidence-based, with data from PCICs through the informatics database, as advocated by the INASP (see section 1.1). This was also supported by the Clerk of Parliament during an interview. He stated that MP contributions or reports bear evidence or data from the informatics data base.

Study data suggest achievements relating to a service not previously available. It does not appear to be clear at this point to conclude that PCICs were successful or able to meet their objectives, unless these are measured against challenges, as discussed in the next section.

6.8. Challenges

Several challenges affect PCIC operations at various levels. There were several challenges identified by respondents from the AoP, MPs, OAs and constituents.

6.8.1. PCIC weaknesses and operational challenges

Smooth PCIC in information delivery and MPs operating in constituencies generally have been affected by:

- Lack of resources and personnel at PCICs; both OAs and MPs think one person is insufficient for an effective PCIC operation;

- Insufficient literature; and

- Insufficient equipment and furniture.

There is a perception that a weakness is political polarisation. MPs think constituents tend to view PCICs as political party centres; this affects even some apolitical constituents. This perception also affects MPs in their endeavour to reach as many people as possible within the constituency, a further obvious weakness.

The challenges for the Administration of Parliament are:

- Difficulties in monitoring MP private businesses. In the interviews it was noted that some MPs claim financial support from Parliament for PCICs that are not even practicing the co-business they were meant to be. This was especially so with regard to PCICs, whose offices are located at private offices;

- Lack of funds for payment of rates, rentals, consumables and to open new offices. This is a serious challenge, because all PCIC activities require adequate financial resources. The Counsel to Parliament reported to the Heads of Departments (HOD) Meeting on 20 June 2011 (of which the researcher is also HOD) that PoZ is in an intolerable position, due to debt accruing from unpaid PCIC office rentals, with some creditors, such as the City of Harare resorting to the courts;

- Constitution amendments numbers 17 and 18: Section 17 reintroduced the Senate, with 60 Senators; while section 18 increased the number of MPs in the House of Assembly from 120 to 210. This resulted in to 270 additional PCICs. Some arguments are that traditional chiefs should have PCIC offices as in the original plan. There is no comprehensive policy to guide the Administration of Parliament and MPs on issues such as between MPs and Senators, who is supposed to have PCICs. At present Senators do not have PCICs.

Constituents indicated a number of issues affecting PCIC operational efficiency. These touch on: lack of ICTs; inadequate office equipment and furniture; poor program implementation; insufficient office space, lack of diarised dates to meet the MP; inadequate personnel and lack of security, as figure 5.29 shows. A further constituent raised concern was that they are supplied with inadequate reading material, outdated information, lack of mass media information and telecommunications; and lack of vernacular publications.

Another weakness relating to perception centres on awareness issues. Constituents are concerned with political polarisation of PCICs (13.4%) and poor publicity, which is a management issue. The role of responsibility for marketing PCICs is not clearly defined, nor are there adequate or relevant marketing strategies.

The major operational challenges cited by OAs were:

- Lack of furniture and equipment; most furniture donated to PCICs is broken;

- Lack of stationery; OAs do not have the required stationery for day to day use;

- Transport and logistics;

- Lack of ICTs;

- Financial constraints; and

- OA Employment Contracts affect continuity; most OA questionnaire respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their contracts, because continuity is not guaranteed in the event that an MP has lost elections.

Most OAs (58%) think PCICs are hampered by administrative challenges, including HR issues (6%), as figure 5.30 shows. Over 13% of OAs perceives they are affected by political intimidation and misconceptions about their work. This was reinforced by constituents raising issues of political polarisation (13%); and admission by MPs that these centres must be depoliticised (see figure 5.27) to improve their operations.

In general, from the late 1990s to 2008, PCICs, like other institutions in the country were affected by considerable political and socio-economic turmoil. This has had an impact on institutions, infrastructure and the citizens. A number of projects collapsed or were abandoned, due to lack of funding, political interference and the key personnel brain drain. For instance, poor information infrastructure in outlying areas restricts access, rather than enabling access to PCICs. Investment is concentrated in the central areas, cities and growth points. Thus, PCICs primarily serve narrow groups of citizens. Access to Parliamentary information is selective and does not reach underdeveloped and rural areas.

Kohl (1991) proposed an interesting Parliamentary Information Model claimed to be the result of increased citizen participation in parliamentary activities. To improve the services, the model contemplates:

- Supplying equipment, library materials and computers where severe shortages were found; and

- Introducing visitors from other parts of the world to the information services offered to convince parliamentarians and administrators that an effective parliamentary information service is indispensable, if a democratic government is to function properly.

6.8.2. General comments on PCIC challenges

General comments on PCICs by OAs (section 6.6.6) relate to centre management. Constituent comments are accurate expressions of their perspectives. PoZ management and coordination is of major concern, because PoZ is not fully able to fulfil its expected role; it is weighed down by failure to implement some of the special considerations in the initial requirements for PCIC establishment. These include: a small library at each PCIC, internet connectivity, sufficient equipment and furniture, adequate office space and PCIC and location, that is, easily accessible centres (see figure 5.23).

Another concern is caused by the lack of separation of powers between PoZ and MPs. However, to a lesser extent, there were also general positive comments from constituents on PCIC roles, including the position that PCICs have created awareness about local and accessible government programmes and activities.

Constituents are also concerned about PCIC operations, so they proposed that government must build permanent offices and PCICs should reach remote rural areas, rather than focusing only on growth points and in towns. Constituents are also concerned about the limited time MPs spend in constituencies, suggesting more time should be spent at PCICs; and there should be various information formats, such as videos and press on parliamentary proceedings.

A number of constituents indicated the need for online access to information. The lack of internet services at PCICs presents a challenge for quick access to online parliamentary publications being accessed through the institution websites

6.9. Changes to be made to improve PCIC operations (MPs)

These can be divided into operations, information delivery and administration, as shown in figure 5.27. The first category, relating to operational challenges includes:

- ICT Improvements;

- Office equipment and furniture;

- Construction of permanent office;

- Additional personnel; and

- Increased funding.

The second category of challenges, relating to information delivery was that there are insufficient parliamentary publications and these are not delivered timeously. As information delivered does not meet constituent demands, MPs also think PCICs must provide government publications / documents. This could improve the range of information available to constituents. Currently, PCICs do not provide information from other government departments.

The third category was the concern that there must be permanent office structures in every constituency. Lack of permanent structures was said to have had huge administrative and financial impacts, due to the increased number of PCICs from 120 to 270 constituencies. Perception around centre politicisation also affects PCIC awareness and conscientisation, particularly with their roles and functions. PCICs are apolitical offices, which should be accessible to all members of the public, irrespective of political persuasion.

A survey conducted for the World e-Parliament Report 2008 showed that parliaments have many challenges in meeting ever growing citizen expectations. Data suggests that citizens hold parliamentarians principally accountable for the services that they deliver outside Parliament but not for law-making role or overseeing the Executive. PCICs are not unique; they face challenges as well. There is need for strategies focussing on overcoming the challenges that affect PCIC information delivery functions and constituents participation at the centres.

6.9.1. Use of CDF(s)

There is a general feeling that support is grossly inadequate. Much must be done as a result of the advent of the Constituency Development Funds (CDF), particularly how the funds can be used to support some PCIC activities. There are suggestions from some respondents, particularly development partners, who think MPs must use part of the CDF to fund PCIC operations.

The amount used on PCICs ranged from US$500.00 to US$4 100.00, with an average of $1 633.00 (figure 5.31). However, there were only six (6) out of twenty (20) respondents (MPs) who indicated that they used the CDF for PCIC activities. This has also been noted in the literature review, referencing Baskin's (2010) findings that CDF use has sometimes been controversial because of:

- fundamental questions about the efficacy of government service delivery,
- the extent to which such service delivery can be made accountable;
- the role of legislators in selecting development priorities; and
- how public participation in policy making can be made more meaningful.

Baskin also indicated that CDF use has been controversial, with opponents citing instances of corruption and poor oversight of CDF projects. Also, proponents cited the expectation many developing country citizens have for MPs to deliver development projects for their districts. Perhaps the case of Zimbabwe is complicated because of the lack of policy on the use of CDFs on PCICs. There are challenges to this approach as the CDF is a new phenomenon and is silent on policy with regard to its use. Thus, in 1990, for example

SUNY, together with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) adopted Principles and Guidelines for CDFs.

Recent findings in Zambia by Mwanza (2011) suggest that CDFs do not always have the development impact intended. There have been many examples where funds have been poorly used or abused. This research provides useful learning for parliamentarians and policy-makers worldwide, who wish to tackle corruption and ensure effective development at the local level.

6.10. Summary

In this Chapter, data presented in Chapter 5 was interpreted using the main themes outlined in the introduction section 6.1. A number of ideas can be drawn to summarise the interpreted data:

- **Constituents are satisfied with information**: There are more constituents who are satisfied with information they get from PCICs than those that are dissatisfied;
- **Main Information Sources:** Hansard is the main information source or publication found at PCICs (see appendix 12C). However, constituents need PCICs to provide them with additional information resources and other activities to include: (1) information in different formats or media, such as the press, and audio–visual material, such as DSTV subscriptions in addition to Hansard (2) Education on Parliamentary roles and functions to bridge the gap between expectations and delivery ; (3) Public debate at the local level on Parliamentary policies and bills; and 4) Information or publications from other government departments.
- **PCIC Awareness:** There are constituents who are aware of the existence of PCICs and their objectives; and some who are not aware at all.
- **PCIC offices:** There are no permanent PCIC offices, so the centres rely on rented offices from different lessors, and this is why PCICs are located in council, industrial and privately owned buildings. PCICs located in private and industrial places are not easily accessible to constituents.
- **Information Delivery:** Delivery of information resources such as Hansard to PCICs is not as per OA and constituent expectations, because it takes time to access publications.

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- **Equipment:** ICT equipment at PCICs is not given the necessary attention. Computers are not serviced and some centres do not have computers at all. At most, centre computers lie obsolete (see appendix 12B);

- **Capacity building / OA Training:** There is no plan in place for inducting OAs and those already there have not been inducted, so are not fully aware of their duties and responsibilities.

- **Political polarisation:** This factor affects accessibility and is contrary to the assumption that the elected MP has an obligation and interest in listening to constituent needs, regardless of political affiliation. Shortage of resources is a major handicap. PCICs are not fully supported with resources for them to achieve their mandate. There is concurrence among respondents from Development Partners, Administration of Parliament, OAs and MPs on lack of resources. The informatics database is hampered by a number of challenges, such as lack of computers, OA training and gaps in updating the dataset.

In addition, data from the study showed that:

- Expectations are unrealistic because constituents perceive the MP as the person who can solve all their problems;

- There is no uniformity in PCIC operations with regard to initial objectives, possibly because some areas do not have adequate information infrastructures;

- There is no synergy between the Parliament and OAs. The data showed very low levels of motivation among OAs as a result this disconnect;

- The OAs are being used as political party officials, attending to their respective MP political party business. This business includes political party literature distribution through PCIC office as centres; and

- Performance of some PCICs is dependent on the initiative of the incumbent MP in improving the centre through own initiatives, such as sourcing information resources.

Thus, the major issues noted to have a negative impact on PCIC performance need to be addressed. In the next chapter, a proposed PCIC model will be presented, in detail.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DEVELOPING A PCIC MODEL

7.1. Introduction

A proposed PCIC model is presented in detail in this chapter. Theoretical models of communicating parliamentary information demonstrate existing challenges affecting the effective delivery of information to constituents. Potential solutions to this problem have surfaced, stressing the need to propose a model for PCICs based on the study data. Against this backdrop, the proposed model provides guidelines for establishing information services / centres. Before presenting the proposed model, it is important to examine some of the models discussed in the literature to assess where there is the need to improve, expand or develop a new model to deliver parliamentary information.

7.2. Issues emerging from models and theories in the reviewed literature

Four distinct models were discussed in the literature review in section 2.3 to gauge their applicability to the Zimbabwean model. These were:

- Informatics Databases;
- Davis's Model;
- Models of Parliamentary Power; and
- Constituency-based models.

In addition to the above models, examples of Constituency Information Centres both outside and from Southern Africa were also discussed to find common and / or diverging features.

7.2.1. Models

The models discussed in the literature review apply to different situations with regard to time, environment and legitimacy. From the literature review in section 2.3.1.1, there is evidence that models of parliamentary information delivery are still being developed. For

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example, in Africa, the i-Parliament Action Plan is currently being explored (see section 2.3.1.2). Africa i-Parliaments Action Plan builds on experiences and achievements of the regional pilot project *"Strengthening Parliaments' Information Systems in Africa"*, an initiative to promote parliamentary democracy in Africa; it is supported by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA). The major outputs of the Africa i-Parliament project have been:

- Bungeni;
- Legislative Drafting Guidelines for Africa; and
- Africa Parliamentary Knowledge Network (APKN) - (see section 2.3.11 for detailed information).

The Africa i-Parliament Action Plan is facing challenges of acceptability from African parliaments; for instance, the APKN model has been found to be duplicating activities of established associations, such as the Association of Parliamentary Libraries for Eastern and Southern Africa (APLESA). Other models, for example, the Davis' Model in section 2.3.2 has major challenges relating to particular Parliamentary models based on the environment, history and political culture. Applications of other models are discussed in detail in section 8.2.4. These models were examined as a guide or way of thinking about the current challenges in the delivery of parliamentary information in Zimbabwe. None of these models have proven completely satisfactory to effectively solving the problems being experienced by Zimbabwean PCICs. A better understanding can be achieved by combining a number of models, or developing a completely new model. The main shortcomings of these models focus on some of the challenges already identified in section 6.8.1. Some of these challenges have been addressed in some countries and presented as case studies in this study. For example, challenges to do with lack of furniture, political partisanship, legislation, employment contracts, and transport logistics still affecting PCIC operations in Zimbabwe have already been addressed in Zambia and Malawi. Although Zambia introduced constituency information centres after Zimbabwe, the Parliament of Zambia has advanced by constructing permanent structures, and constituency officers are well coordinated by the library department. Malawi introduced Parliamentary Information Centres in 2013, after having analysed challenges in other countries. The Parliament of Malawi, before 2014 had a task force to plan and complete the construction of the information centres in all 193 constituencies.

Also emerging from the literature reviewed was that PCICs both outside Africa (see section 2.4.1) and within Africa (see section 2.4.2) are still experimenting on how best to deliver information to constituencies. Several shortcomings and challenges faced by individual African Parliaments are common to many Parliaments. Some common challenges are: insufficient publications; insufficient equipment and furniture; lack of personnel; lack of access to technology for all citizens; capacity building; management issues and policy challenges; and funding (see section 6.8).

7.2.2. Connecting proposed model to theories

In addition to the models, a number of theories were also selected and discussed in the literature; and their connection to the proposed model is important. This is discussed in this section.

The human needs theories provide the starting point to address not only information needs but also other varied constituent needs. This also relates to earlier studies and findings by Ncube and Mutaviri (2003) as explained in section 1.2.3. The connection of this theory to the proposed model is based on information needs and other activities by constituents have been indicated in this study (see sections 5.5 and 6.2). The PCIC has to meet or provide the varied needs of constituents. This means that both PoZ and MPs have a duty to ensure information is delivered to the PCICs. Table 5.6 and figure 5.1 provide a summary of varied constituent needs, as found in data. These are not only information needs but other needs, such as submitting grievances to the MP. Figure 7.1 of the proposed model shows this important link between PCICs and both PoZ and MPs.

The systems theory relates to the proposed model, because it demonstrates the dynamics of connections among the different entities of the PCICs, including parliament, MPs, PCICs, constituents, development partners and other government departments. The PCIC function is to provide parliamentary information and perform other activities within or outside the system (the environment), or both. For the PCIC to survive, it must provide the services that meet the needs of constituents, or adapt to the environment. The systems theory gives

a structure to provide an overview of how parliament works; and its relationship with MPs and their constituents. In coordinating the PCIC activities, it is evident that the whole-part-relation becomes an important consideration – the "whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Systems are collections of multiple elements and one of the most fundamental distinctions in systems theory is that of "part" and "whole." Part-whole relationships are applicable in evaluation and its use in this model is important. In this case, the PoZ (whole), implementing the PCIC programme in constituencies will need the cooperation of other stakeholders such as MPs, development partners and other government departments. The idea of part-whole relationships is essential in the development and implementation of this PCIC model. It is central to the program description, the model development and stakeholder analysis.

The theory of Community Change provides strategic direction for the proposed model. Changes encompass a myriad of strategies. Necessary changes to PCIC strategies include staffing, funding, infrastructure, awareness, election of new MPs and policies. These changes need to be implemented, so they do not affect the constituents but empower them through Parliamentary information. The community change theory is thus linked to the empowerment theory to improve democracy through public participation at PCICs, the direction PCICs want to take. Constituents are able to raise concerns through meetings and other gatherings happening at PCICs. Constituents are empowered through the provision of parliamentary information. PCICs empower constituents and give them a voice that permits them to contribute to parliamentary activities. Giving constituents a voice means giving the opportunity to express views and opinions to become part of the parliamentary law-making process. The approach is participatory and could lead to improved policy formation and execution. Improved information service delivery through PCICs would enable the remotest constituents to access regular and reliable information from different media combinations, which may include radio, television, video cassettes, audio cassettes, computer programmes, print, CD-ROM, or the Internet. A variety of these information channels and formats can be of greater value to constituents, because they will be able to choose the format, or channel that suits their environment.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the above discussion is that there are number of positives and short-comings with the existing constituency information centre models and theories. The model proposed in the next section is not a comprehensive theoretical framework, but does offer insight into the structure, which can be easily understood and implemented. The model attempts to represent an improved mode of communicating information, but also derives from theoretical insights emerging from the data analysed and interpreted in chapters six and seven.

7.3. Structure of the model

As illustrated in figure 7.1, all the components of the model connect and inter-relate with each other. There are two major categories of the elements in the model. These are: the core elements (in bold) crucial to PCIC operations; and non-core elements, supportive of the operations. The elements linked with dotted lines indicate moderating variables and depict existing challenges or problems. The main reason for the proposed model is to improve parliamentary information delivery. The existing model adopted by the Parliament of Zimbabwe (see section 6.6.3) was originally used to achieve this. The proposed model is similar to the PoZ model in many respects. The similarities and differences have been highlighted from section 7.3.1 onwards. The model acknowledges the interdependent relationship between the main players, such as PoZ, MPs, constituents, development partners and other government departments; and provides a framework for the integration of parliamentary information and information from other government departments.

However, the proposed model differs from other models in the literature review. Granickas (2013) summarises the differences the developing world has from the developed world, because it suffers from a lack of resources, management support and knowledgeable staff. The major MP concerns (see figure 5.26) highlight where the model differs from those of the developed world. Data shows that PCICs are poorly resourced, that is, have insufficient literature, equipment and furniture and inadequate personnel. This is unlike transformative legislature models (section 2.3.3.3), such as the U. S Congress, which are well resourced and depend heavily on highly trained professional staff.

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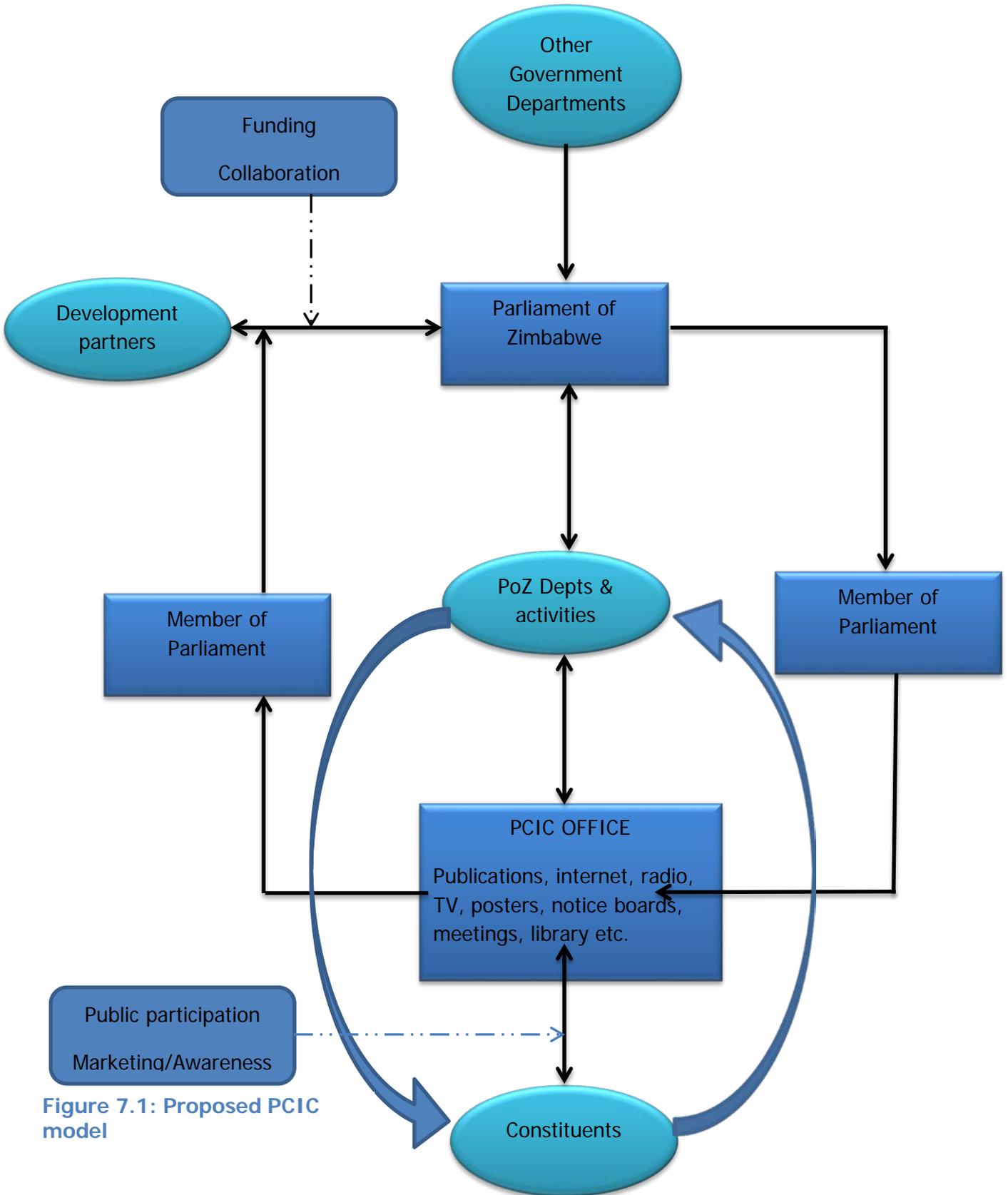
Figure 7.1: Proposed PCIC model

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7.3.1. Parliament of Zimbabwe

PoZ is at the centre of administration and management of PCICs. PoZ should perform all management functions. The literature review suggests the need to regard information services as a management tool to determine information centre efficiency and effectiveness in serving constituent needs; identifying limitations and failures; and recommending ways to improve services. The literature review also shows how parliamentary information services have challenges, such as lack of management support (see section 3.5.3). This is a major concern for OA with regard to their contracts and relationships with parliament departments. From the data, the majority of OAs feel isolated from parliament activities yet they are regarded as employed by the parliament. Management issues also touch on the perceived political partisanship at PCICs. The PoZ has to imprint its authority on, and be responsible for the management of PCICs to control this tension (see section 6.6.2). For instance, all donations in cash or kind should belong to Parliament and this must be signed to avoid MPs from claiming any equipment after vacating the office. This is important to avoid a difficult situation arising when a new MP arrives and the outgoing MP wants to claim PCIC property. A breakdown of Parliamentary responsibilities can include:

- Recruitment of staff, management and training. OA recruitment needs to be clear. An interview with the PRO showed that there is no clear responsibility for recruiting OAs, as at times this has been done by the MP, sometimes by HR and also by the PR department. This is an HR function. The PR Department has to provide reports on OA operations, whereas human resources implements recommended actions. Attachment of PCIC officers to Parliament under professional supervision to align them to PoZ values is necessary. During discussions with OAs, a recurring issue relates to the need for induction and attachment to relevant parliament departments for the OAs to gain experience in dealing with MPs and the public. Lack of induction and training for OAs is one the main operational challenges affecting PCICs (section 6.8.1);

- Marketing of PCICs / raising awareness (figure 5.6);
- Coordinating the operation of PCICs through monitoring and evaluation (section 6.6.4); and

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- Providing proper contracts for employment to enhance job security. This was a major OA concern, because their future depends on the MP remaining in office.

Other responsibilities important to improve the proposed model include:

- Providing a centralised informatics database;

- Encouraging networking among Constituency Information Officers;

- Procuring and maintenance of PCIC equipment;

- Enforcing standards at PCICs; and

- Constituting a Standing Committee / PCICs Committee whose functions and duties must be guided by the Standing Rules and Orders Committee.

The work and management of PCICs are, by their nature, multi-disciplinary and cross-cutting. In the review of relevant literature, Agha and Akhar (1992) identified vital factors for effective information centre management to include: strong and supportive leadership; participative management; team building; effective human resources management; and appropriate organisational structures.

7.3.2. PoZ departments and activities

A number of departments (PR, ICT and HR) are responsible for running the PCIC projects. Data from the study suggest the administration and coordination of information centre activities is one of the major operational challenges to be addressed (figure 5.30). Various departmental activities should be clarified to avoid conflicting responsibilities. It is also important to ensure relevant departments manage PCIC activities. In Zambia, the centres are manned by professional information officers under the management of the library department. The Parliamentary Reforms and Modernisation Committee of Zambia, the equivalent of Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Reforms Committee also continuously monitors and evaluates (M&R) the information centres. In Zimbabwe, M & R of PCICs is done by a select committee from a number of departments.

7.3.3. Development partners

Development partners and government departments who work with the PCICs at an institutional level have to work through PoZ. Policy on all equipment and facilities should be in writing. Functions of development partners as detailed in section 4.6 are essential. Development partners play an important role by providing funding for the various PCIC activities.

7.3.4. MPs

The main concern of MPs is to justify their interaction with constituents and parliament. The lack of funding or support leads MPs to seek for donors. In brief, MPs should:

- Be the link between Parliament and constituencies;

- Seek donors;

- Seek guidance on CDF use, because it remains a major challenge (see section 6.9.1), which requires policy guidelines;

- Solicit for development projects within the constituency;

- Convey / communicate input from constituents to PoZ;

- Transport publications from PoZ to constituencies; and

- Request information and research services from the PCIC.

PoZ has been relying on MPs to distribute publications to PCICs. There is need for a system whereby publications can be distributed, even when the MP is not going to parliament, so constituents receive current publications, instead of having to wait for the MP.

7.3.5. Constituents

Constituents face challenges that need to be resolved, according to the literature review (see section 3.5.3). The main reason for PCICs is the existence of constituents, who are the main beneficiaries of the information delivered from PoZ. A study by Ncube and Mutaviri (2003) discovered these information needs (see section 1.2.3) but the recommendations were not fully implemented. Most of their findings do not differ from data collected for this study, such as the need to provide current information, internet services and a small library or reading room. Constituents will always advocate for changes to meet their changing needs. They make appointments with MPs to discuss issues affecting their constituency. They can volunteer labour and other activities for the benefit of other constituency members. Constituents link directly with the PCIC and sometimes should contact relevant departments at parliament.

7.3.6. Funding

The lack of financial and material resources is a major impediment to PCIC operations (see section 3.5.3); and data also show funding is necessary to improve PCIC operations. This has been stressed by respondents (see figure 5.20) who included the clerk, development partners and officers of parliament (see section 5.8.5). Thus, as indicated in the model, collaboration between PoZ and Development Partners is important to attract funding. Use of CDF funds on PCICs (see sections 3.5.3.1 and 6.8.3) is a major concern that requires policy on use of CDFs on PCICs. The major sources of funding for PCIC operations are the government and development partners.

7.3.7. The PCIC office

The constituency office is an information dissemination centre. Relevant literature should be disseminated through this centre, from departments, such as the Papers' Office, Library, PR, and Research departments. The key consideration is the need to avoid partisan

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literature related to political parties. PCICs require basic facilities and equipment and the following list could be essential:

(1) Facilities:

These should include identical, permanent Constituency Offices in each constituency with the following facilities:

- A Boardroom to hold public meetings, talks, discussion forums and meetings; the same room could be used for viewing videos on parliamentary proceedings;

- Offices for MP and Constituency Information Officer (CIO)

- Library. This represents one of the facilities (see section 1.2.3) recommended in an earlier study. According to the researcher, no PCIC provides this facility;

- Notice Board prominently positioned;

- Internet connectivity;

- Provision of open space for other activities; and

(2) Equipment:

- Fixed or Mobile Phone plus airtime;

- A functioning computer is required to: access internet and e-mail; create a database; to type documents and other forms of word processing; keep records / statistics reporting constituency activities;

- Office desks, printer, stationery, chairs for MP and PCIC staff as recommended in a study by Mutaviri and Ncube (see section 1.2.3)

- Constituents indicated they would want a photocopier, TV and DVD player for replaying various proceedings from PoZ and other development themes (see figure 5.6);

- A fax machine, generator, posters, maps, pamphlets, portraits of the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, current Speaker and President of the Senate and MPs in all the offices;

- Filing cabinets, shelves, boxes and cupboards for material storage;

- Bill boards;

- Updated soft and hard copies of the informatics database.

Some of the above requirements were part of the earlier recommendations that led to the establishment of PCICs, while others were suggested by OAs and MPs through questionnaires and observations during visits to PCICs. These facilities and equipment would create a more efficient and better outlook for PCICs.

7.3.8. Other Government Departments

The proposed model differs from the PoZ model in that there is a need to provide additional information documents from other government departments, because the data from this study showed that constituents need information from other government departments, not only from PoZ (see figure 5.6).

7.3.9. Public participation

MPs invite constituents to participate at meetings, or any PCIC community gatherings (see figure 5.13). The model takes into consideration the need for public participation to be clear and accessible, as found from the data in section 5.6.6. Constituents' participation in parliamentary activities is important for PCIC marketing and awareness (section 6.4.4). This is in line with the International Association of Public Participation guidelines (section 1.2.3).

7.4. Other important considerations

An additional proposal is being made on staffing to provide professional support to all constituents.

(1) Office Location

PoZ needs to reconsider the demarcation of constituencies according to the Delimitation Commission boundaries in some constituencies too big to be served by one PCIC. Whatever the decision, location of the centre should be at a public place, visible and centrally situated, with respect to accessibility, infrastructure and other services, such as water, electricity, service centres and economic activities. The office location should be strategic, visible and close to other economic and service activities, such as shopping, local council offices, or a hospital. The ideal situation furthermore should allow space for parking; and be open for small gatherings and meetings.

(2) Staffing

PCICs are centres of information delivery, so should be operated by information professionals. Appendix 13 shows a breakdown of the proposed posts, qualifications, responsibilities and competencies required of information officers. Employing professionals with relevant qualifications and competencies would improve the PCIC operations, because of their ability to solve problems, do research and understand constituent needs. They also have the ability to organise and communicate with constituents in a non–partisan and professional manner.

7.5. Summary

In this chapter, an information services delivery model has been proposed. The Model proposed acknowledges and responds practically to most of the challenges in PCIC operations that were addressed in the main research question (see section 8.2.1). The last chapter of this study provides the summary, conclusions and recommendations of this study.

CHAPTER EIGHT: FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1. Introduction

The research findings are summarised, make conclusions and propose recommendations for improving dissemination of parliamentary information through PCICs in this chapter; and areas for further study will be suggested. An evaluation of the performance of Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Constituency Information Centres (PCICs) was the purpose of the study; recommendations for their future improvements were also explored. Three sub-questions were derived from the main research-question. The study findings are based on formulated themes and summarised according to research questions.

The research questions were:

- **Main research question:** What theoretical insights about models of communicating parliamentary information can be gained from an evaluation of Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Constituency Information Centres, and what are the implications for practical improvements?

  To answer the main question, three sub- questions were also asked:

- **Sub-question number one:** What are the models for communicating parliamentary information; and what theoretical lessons can be learned from communicating parliamentary information in developing countries?

- **Sub-question number two:** What are the PCIC successes and failures in communicating parliamentary information to Zimbabwe's parliamentarians and citizens?

- **Sub-question number three**: In which practical ways can Zimbabwe's PCICs be improved as a result of new theoretical insights?

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8.2. Findings

The findings have been summarised in respect of the main research question and each of the three sub-questions.

8.2.1. Main research question

What theoretical insights about models of communicating parliamentary information can be gained from an evaluation of Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Constituency Information Centres and what are the implications for practical improvements?

While the study and the models discussed in the literature focus on parliamentary communication, this study provides valuable theoretical insights. Some of the theoretical insights from this study about models for delivering legislative information are:

- PCICs were not sufficiently theorised in terms of established theories and models of communicating parliamentary information such as the empowerment theory, community change theory and systems theory identified in literature. Theories of communicating parliamentary information through PCICs have been selected because they have not been represented in earlier studies by Engelfield (1996), Verrier (1997), & Mutaviri & Ncube (2003).

- The needs of the constituents are essential for sustainability. This emphasises the need for the MPs and constituents to be closely involved in setting PCIC strategies. Harris and Rajora (2006) support this view that successful information centres have ensured that the community was fully consulted and closely involved at every stage of program development affecting them. The empowerment theory provides an important dimension of theoretical insight in its emphasis to involve the citizens. Implementation and continuous operation of PCICs has not involved the constituents. According to Freire (1994), empowerment strategies provide the community with a sense of ownership of the results; this is followed by more successful development and implementation of community services. Involvement

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implies the stakeholders, with external funding take responsibility for program maintenance.

- The approach to establish PCICs was a top-down, with little involvement of constituents. Constituents are nowhere involved in PCIC management. Failure to involve constituents has implications for future improvements, because they simply refer to the project as 'them' and not 'us.' A good example of involving the people is through volunteerism and friends of the libraries, as experienced in most of the American libraries and information services. This could provide much needed labour at a low cost, and funding from local organisations.

- Another important theoretical insight from case studies around the PCIC models of communicating parliamentary information has been learned from developed democracies. The Congressional Research Services (CRS) in the USA perform three main roles namely information factory, policy advisor, and think tank (Kohl, 1991). CRS successes have been due to available resources for parliamentarians to support constituent communications, office expenses, equipment and staff. Another important lesson from the CRS model is the significance of personal attitudes of legislators towards constituency services (see section 2.3.1.3).

Given the theoretical insights about delivering parliamentary information for the benefit of constituents and their current status, the following are implications for practical improvement:

- Provide more education about Parliament. This should include a module about Parliament studies in tertiary college courses where it is relevant to course content. In addition, accessible information about what Parliament does can be placed not only at PCICs, but in locations that people visit on a regular basis; community centres, schools, local shops, at grinding mills and clinics. The importance of PCICs in improving democracy has been highlighted by respondents and in literature reviewed. At an early stage, before elections, MP, OA and constituent education regarding PCIC roles and functions is important, because constituent services have a positive impact on PCIC operations.

- A number of theoretical issues were raised based on the data collected. Parliaments in many developing countries have not managed to fully implement programs of public participation and information delivery for the benefit of citizens. Parliaments

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are still dependent on libraries and information services but these are not accessible to the majority, the public can still not distinguish between the executive and the pillars of democracy. In most rubber stamp and emerging parliaments of developing countries, the executive, the judiciary and the parliament are regarded as the same way. This could be the reason why respondents want information from other government departments, when PCICs were specifically established to provide parliamentary publications.

- This study helps PoZ information officers identify unique factors that affect delivery of parliamentary information to constituents. It helps identify how these attributes affect communication practices within PoZ and the constituency. The study also helps development partners to understand how these factors may affect communication practices when they collaborate with public service institutions in assisting the people. The conclusions drawn and the remedial measures proposed by the study are useful tools to assist PoZ, MPs, constituents, development partners and other stakeholders to improve information delivery to PCICs for the benefit of constituents.

- Parliamentary use of social media: Literature review showed that in some Parliaments social media can be effective for providing information to the public and educating citizens about parliamentary work, and engagement with citizens over vast distances at very low cost and at less time. Parliaments are increasingly utilizing social media in their operations. Guidelines for parliamentary use of social media are an area that needs study for future refinement of the benchmarks. The example of Brazil cited by Casini (2008) provides a practical case study for connecting Parliament and citizens by moving from traditional citizen solutions to interactive and popular social networking media (see section 5.3.1). Internet use and other digital networks can also be used to transform the Parliament of Zimbabwe PCICs in communication with constituents. There are collaboration opportunities ICTs can bring to the public in terms of unprecedented information sharing. This links well to Barth and Cottrell's (2002) constituency based support model for delivering Information Services not based on physical collections but encouraging a broader, more effective and innovative use of varying ICTs.

Implement an operating model. The model presented in chapter 7 proposes holistic approaches to PCIC operations, enabling MPs, PoZ, other government departments, development partners and constituents to have an input into PCIC programs.

8.2.2. Sub-question number 1

What are the models for communicating parliamentary information; and what theoretical lessons can be learned from communicating parliamentary information in developing countries?

A number of models for delivering parliamentary information have been identified and discussed in the literature review (see section 2.3). Some of the identified models discussed, include the UNISIST model, Models of Parliamentary Power, Parliamentary Informatics Databases, Constituency based models and Doctor and Ankem's three models.

The UNISIST (1971) model has some elements of an information centre. These activities include repackaging of information to meet specific user needs. There is, however, an important argument against the UNISIST model, that is, that information centres are not a kind of library, and that each centre is unique. Information centres are not usually obliged to possession a physical collection of publications. As such, Parliaments need to clearly understand what the PCIC should do, concerning collection, storage, organisation, document dissemination and other public activities.

The Models of Parliamentary Power (see section 2.3) apply to both developed and developing countries. These are types of parliaments and are described according to how they relate to information delivery. The Rubber stamp and emerging legislatures have been found to be mostly applicable to social environments existing in developing countries. Within the Rubber stamp legislature, decisions are made elsewhere in the political system, usually by parties and/ or the executive branch. The parliament is expected to simply endorse decisions made elsewhere. Such a model is often associated with communist or

totalitarian nations, where decisions are made by the leader of the political party. Emerging legislatures are in the process of changing from one type to another. Expanding their powers usually requires major parliamentary changes. These may include: developing improved information systems; the need for new and more professional staff and better information systems. Examples from Parliaments in developing nations include those of Mexico, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Uganda. A number of developing countries are in the process of improving their information services to cater for constituencies in outlying areas.

Robinson's (1991) legislative models, in particular the nascent model relates to the delivery of parliamentary information in developing countries. It has been found that most developing countries lack sufficient financial and material resources to play an effective role in decision-making activities. The main role of the nascent legislature is authorising party decisions, as was common to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, before reform.

Parliamentary informatics use databases to deliver parliamentary information. A survey by the Parliamentary Monitoring Organisation (2012) found that parliamentary informatics are used by approximately 40 percent of constituents, mostly in developed democracies (see section 2.3.1.1). Their application is showing an increasing trend in Southeast Asia and Latin America; and parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The Africa i-Parliament Action Plan, an Africa-wide project of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UDESA) is currently being piloted in a number of African countries. The idea is to empower African Parliaments to better fulfill their democratic functions by becoming open, participatory, knowledge-based and learning organisations. In fulfilling this mandate, the project currently focuses on promoting the Akoma Ntoso, and Bungeni initiatives (see section 2.3.1.2).

The other models identified for delivering parliamentary information include Doctor and Ankem's (1996) three models, which use web-based information. These can be easily

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adapted and utilized for effective Parliamentary Information Services Delivery. The three models are:

- The Marketing Model, which is significant for the predominance of economic development information;

- The Community Service Model, which contains information primarily on constituency services; and

- The Community Empowerment Model, which focuses on community decision-making related information, ideally with interactive communication support to allow citizens to interact with MPs.

Models for delivering parliamentary information are still being developed. The use of new ICTs is largely being incorporated into models delivering parliamentary information. This is providing new challenges for most parliaments, particularly those in developing countries, such as Zimbabwe. Whichever model of information delivery is in use, the prevailing situation determines the model(s) that can be applicable. Zimbabwe made a choice of the fixed model (section 6.6.3) over the mobile PCIC model. The choice of model must be arrived at after cost benefit analysis, an idea applied to information projects in developing countries by Horton (1983).

A number of lessons can be drawn from these models.

- The study provides interesting and informative views about parliamentary reforms taking place in a number of parliaments meant to improve the delivery of information services to the citizens. Very few studies have been carried out on the topic and what exist are mostly feasibility studies and on-going projects such as the Africa i-Parliament Action Plan (see section 2.3.1.2). Theoretically, constituency information centres are considered as important channels of parliamentary information, because they can enhance the representative role of Parliament. They are also meant to be centrally located, so most citizens can easily access the centres.

- For any project of national magnitude, great care should be taken during the planning stage to ensure success factors are taken into consideration and most importantly, the issue of sustainability. Funding is vital for the sustainability of any project. An important lesson could be that accelerating project implementation, without funds to sustain the program is not recommended. For example, the case in section 6.6.3, where the Clerk of Parliament indicated that a concept paper is still being developed, well after the PCIC project was implemented. This seems to be a major challenge in a number of developing countries. For instance, there was no explicit strategy for the continuity of PCICs after the UNDP had withdrawn initial funding. Funds allocated through the CDF have not been used on information centres, because there is no policy providing for a certain percentage of the CDF to be allocated to the information centres. The CDF use, a new development within Parliaments has not been clearly defined for the various parliaments (see section 6.5.3.1).

- Another important lesson relating to M & E study results is the non-implementation of recommendations, which are not often taken seriously in developing countries. In most instances, M & E become too routine and during visits to project centres by those involved can be seen as a way of raising extra cash through allowances.

- In a many developing countries, a national information policy agenda has not been prioritized. This has also been noted by Mchombu (1995) who said that currently few countries in Southern Africa seem to have a clear national information policy agenda other than vague indications that they want to emulate the 'Asian tigers' and accelerate development.

- Future research can be guided by theories related to information services delivery identified in this study. The proposed PCIC Model (see section 7.3) can be applied to parliaments in developing countries.

There are several models used to deliver parliamentary information; and several lessons have been learned through implementation. The next sub-question discusses PCIC successes and failures in delivering parliamentary information to constituents.

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8.2.3. Sub question number 2

What are the PCIC successes and failures in communicating parliamentary information to Zimbabwe's citizens?

PCICs have been successful in meeting the information needs of Zimbabwe's parliamentarians and constituents in a number of respects:

- There are more people satisfied with information they get from PCICs, than those who are dissatisfied (see figure 5.2). The PCICs have been able to meet the needs of the constituents they serve within the constituencies, by providing a base for parliament-generated information with the Hansard being the most widely ranked and accessed publication by constituents (see table 5.7). Although there are access challenges, constituents enjoy reading the Hansard during their visits to the centre.

- PCICs have lessened the MP burden, because information is now available through the centre and the public can now solve certain issues without having to meet the local MP through the assistance of the OAs;

- The PCICs provide constituents with the opportunity to identify more closely with PoZ. PCICs have demystified the institution of Parliament. Many people in Zimbabwe used to view parliament as a mysterious place but most respondents said they now understand that parliament is an open place for MPs to debate numerable issues.

- The PCICs have provided a forum for interaction between MPs and the constituents. This has improved two-way communication between the MPs and the constituency members (see section 5.9.5 and figure 2.25).

- PCICs are now the focal point of Parliament and community activities, which will increase cooperation and national cohesion. PCICs have also acted as centres for conflict resolution around political differences among constituents;

- PCICs have provided vital working relationships among various stakeholders, such as, parliamentarians, local authorities, Development Partners and Civil Society Organisations.

- A PCIC economic success has been the creation of employment opportunities for local people. Information on various constituency activities has been disseminated through PCICs, for example agricultural and constitution-making information have been made available to constituents through PCICs by OAs. Thus, these meeting places between the MP and the public can be seen as cost effective, because so many citizens are reached.

- The informatics database provides ready and easily accessible data about each constituency.

- PCIC establishment has provided a knowledge base to those administering and monitoring project operations, providing fresh, exciting insights and a deeper understanding of issues of central concern to constituents.

However, PCICs are failing to meet some of the objectives that led to their establishment. Tostensen and Amundsen (2010) emphasise the importance of long-term and comprehensive support. The need for long-term intervention is correlated with the effectiveness of PCICs. Development partners have played an important role in PCIC development but according to Tostensen and Amundsen, they often perceive a tension between stakeholders in long-term projects as damaging to their reputation. They thus respond by turning to new opportunities, rather than continuing to coordinate a project with difficulties. Some PCIC failures are:

- Inadequate supplies of parliamentary publication (see section 5.10.1 and figure 5.26). PoZ has been unable to provide timeously a variety of information sources in various formats required by the public. The PCICs mainly rely on MPs delivering parliamentary publications on return visits to Parliament; and the gap increases when the MP is unavailable for long periods. Due to the late delivery of publications, it is difficult for the centres to obtain information or current awareness services timeously (see section 5.10.4). This has been a major respondent concern.

- Lack of access to information critical for enabling constituents to: participate in legislation; exercise their voice; to effectively monitor and hold government to account; and to enter into informed dialogue about decisions affecting them. This is seen as vital for empowering constituents. Government has not been actively supportive of the right to information through PCICs, due to repressive laws, such

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as AIPPA and POSA. For example, POSA discourages the gathering of people without the knowledge of the Police.

- Political polarisation, which has also been widely cited (see section 5.10.4 and figures 5.27 and 5.29) by respondents as a reason for poor access to information through PCICs. The mixing of political and public interest is one reason why a number of PCICs have been seen as partisan. In many rural constituencies political barriers hinder the ability of constituents to claim their right to information to demand better governance and public services. PCICs could have prevented this through continuously educating constituents, particularly highlighting that PCICs are not political party offices.

- There are structural barriers hindering access to, and use of, information through PCICs. For example, lack of, or poor, access to the Internet exists in many developing countries and not at all at any PCIC within Zimbabwe. The informatics database is rarely used at PCICs, due to a lack of ICT equipment and other logistical challenges. Infrastructure-related support to PCICs, including construction of permanent structures, library services, and website development are not fully supported (see section 1.2.3). Neither were they connected to the internet to provide e-mail facilities, or access to the informatics database. Due to this lack of these resources, PCICs are unable to provide the services as expected.

- There has not been enough promotion and awareness of the existence, activities, purpose and non-partisan character of PCICs. Visibility and reputation are keys to PCIC success. Newspapers reporting the events confirm lack of awareness. *The Chronicle*, a public service press published in Bulawayo on 19 June 2004 stated that: '*some people in this area do not even know what this office is all about; in fact, and they do not know that it exists. Most of those who know of its existence are not aware why it was established. So an educational campaign through various media would help more people. In addition, Parliament should bring all the materials helpful to the people within the constituency.*' Not much has changed since 2004, because poor publicity of the PCIC services still prevails (see figure 5.29). It has also been noted in the literature review that most citizens cannot be aware of the existence of a service, if there is no marketing (see section 3.5.2).

Promoting and marketing PCICs to existing and potential users should be a continuing activity.

- The PoZ has no funding and staffing capacity to provide information to constituents. The institution has not been receiving sufficient financial support from central government to fund PCIC operations. Little CDF money meant for constituency activities has not been allocated to PCICs (see section 6.8.1).

Despite the above challenges, PCICs have operated and provided access to information resources generated from PoZ. To improve PCIC operations despite challenges, practical solutions have been discussed in sub-question three.

8.2.4. Sub question number 3

In which practical ways can Zimbabwe's PCICs be improved as a result of theoretical insight?

Theoretical insights generated by study results can provide numerous practical ways to improve PCICs. Empowerment theory, systems theory, human needs theory and theory of community change have aided in explaining these possible changes. Reference has been made to these theories as discussed in section 2.2.

Reference to theory enables an assessment of whether all the necessary elements of PCIC projects are in place. Theory of Community Change (see section 2.2.3) informs the development and implementation of intervention strategies. Without a full, rational appraisal of the problem and possible solutions, interventions might easily:

- address wrong or inappropriate variables (i.e. miss the target completely); and
- challenge only a proportion of the combination of variables required for the desired effect.

Theoretical lessons (see section 8.2.2 sub-question 1) also provide a base for judging whether all the necessary requirements of the Zimbabwe's PCIC projects were established. For example, the project could not be expected to succeed unless it addressed the known information needs of citizens. Also, providing financial support to MPs through CDFs with little or no appreciation of the role of information in development will have little effect, unless these MPs have an understanding of the project objectives.

Systems theory emphasises and demonstrates the importance of the dynamics of connections among entities within broader PCICs. The need to connect various stakeholders (see section 7.3) form the elements of the proposed PCIC model as noted in the literature review (see section 2.2.2). These elements help to make sense of a practical approach to the PCIC program. This is also why constituents, MPs and Parliament Administration, development partners and other government ministries should be involved in program improvements. The systems and empowerment theories both propose involving various stakeholders; thus practical, citizen participation in various PCIC operations is key to project success and sustainability. Theory of empowerment encourages participation or involvement of the community in any project that affect their lives. PCICs will not survive if the local people are neither involved nor aware of what is being done on their behalf. Involving the constituents includes inviting their participation in addressing certain specific matters, such as finding a centre location and marketing PCIC activities within the constituency.

FOI legislation is an essential element of the enabling environment for citizen access to information. In theory, a legal right to information can increase government openness and responsiveness to requests for information. But Zimbabwe, as a developing country does not have adequate legal provision for the right to information. There is need to improve on existing access to information legislation in Zimbabwe. Currently, legislation, such as AIPPA and POSA militate against access to information. It has also been noted in the literature review that fewer than 7.5 percent of African countries have an enforceable right to information law (Darch, 2009). Crucially, the passage of access to information legislation may be a necessary but insufficient step towards meaningful access to

information. Governments and citizens must be able and willing to implement, enforce and use the laws. Implementation and law enforcement the most critical and challenging stages of reform. The involvement of civil society in the formulation and adoption of access to information laws may increase long-term use and sustainability. As yet, few studies exist describing the impacts of access to information laws at the grassroots level, specifically, on whether and how civil society is actually able to make use of them.

Constituent information needs change from time to time, so it is necessary to keep track of these on a regular basis to determine how information is used. Their needs are essential for the continuous existence of PCICs and as such, these should be clearly identified, and a commitment to identifying the kinds and volume of information needs requires thorough research. Thus, planning of PCICs should be seen as a process which involves the assessment of needs, implementing the PCICs to realise objectives, providing the services, monitoring and evaluation performance of the centres.

Another practical way is for PoZ to adopt effective management practices to ensure an efficient policy and its effective implementation. Findings from the study showed that most OAs suffer from low morale and hopelessness, due to limited resources and a lack of support. It has been highlighted in section 8.2.2 that lack capacity building is one of the failures of PoZ and PCICs. Capacity building strategies aimed at improving the ability to provide need-based services and maximize the use of existing resources is vital. It is important for OAs to receive training for them to understand PCIC roles. They should know how to: keep records, organise information materials and plan PCIC activities. Developing and maintaining high levels of professionalism is important if PCICs are to remain viable. Adequate personnel with relevant skills and playing their appropriate roles can become potential contributors to PCIC improvement.

Funding will remain a key factor determining PCIC sustainability. The biggest challenge facing PoZ in sustaining the operation of PCICs is how to ensure the centres continue to

receive adequate and long term funding. Central government should support the programme.

8.3. Conclusions based on the study

In addition to the main findings of the study, other conclusions can be drawn.

- PoZ has initiated a number of Parliamentary Information Service Reforms. These included the Englefield (1996) and Verrier (2003) recommendations; and PRC reforms that generate the need to establish PCICs. What is important about the various reports is that they provided a starting point for the parliament of Zimbabwe to work towards meeting parliamentary information needs of the constituents;
- Constituents are not regularly receiving copies of latest Parliamentary publications, such as the Hansard, Order Papers, Bills, Parliamentary Committee Reports, motions and other relevant government policy documents, or publications. Findings have shown that constituent information needs constitute more than what Parliament has planned to provide. The public need for information from other government departments through the PCICs is also important;
- Constituents, regardless of political affiliation are unable to meet their local MP regularly at PCICs to answer questions and provide feedback on resolutions made in the House, or the content of issues that are before the House. There is thus not much two-way communication between constituents and the MP on their views about the issues before the House;
- Capacity building / training of OAs has been ignored. There are no plans for OAs and the uninitiated to be made aware of their duties and responsibilities. OAs who work at the PCICs are poorly qualified and not sufficiently trained to be able to competently stand in for the MP, or respond adequately to constituent questions, because they mainly do secretarial work;
- With current access to information through new ICTs, the information centres are not advancing because they are failing to provide electronic information; and

- Respondent information needs were very practical, being closely related to activities experienced within constituencies to improve their everyday pursuits and standard of living. The widening of their knowledge base should be geared towards social, political, and economic life. Constituents also felt PCIC services should include various formats for information, in particular by using the latest ICTs and audio visuals, including subscriptions to DSTV. Some expressed preferences were not part of the materials included in the original plan by the Parliament of Zimbabwe.

Carefully designed and implemented, PCICs promise great potential in providing a place for public participation in constituencies and in disseminating the much needed Parliamentary information and the provision of other services.

8.4 Recommendations

To improve PCIC performance, the recommendations are that:

- There is the need to educate citizens about the MP role by communicating clearly what the MP can and cannot do for them; and to redirect requests by informing constituents about existing government programmes that provide the kind of assistance they are seeking;

- PCIC offices must be centrally located for ease of accessibility not only to the centre but also to other community services, such as public utilities. In identifying the location, authorities should involve constituents because they are partners in the services they get, not just recipients. After the location has been identified it is important to construct permanent, fixed, PCIC offices. Chapter 7 provides a detailed proposal for a PCIC model. If permanent offices are not constructed, PoZ should consider a pilot programme that would experiment with trial leases of PCICs in public buildings, such as centrally located and easily accessible libraries. PCICs can be housed in community libraries, schools, community halls, colleges and universities. Due to a lack of funding, institutions such as the library or university can be approached to donate surplus computer (s);

- PCICs should be operated by highly qualified personnel to efficiently and effectively coordinate constituency activities. In addition, induction and capacity building for OAs are essential for PCIC operations; and these should be planned and continuous. OAs should also perform duties outlined in their employment contracts, rather than executing political party duties. There is a need to clearly define OA duties and responsibilities;

- Volunteers or retired people can be recruited to address personnel shortages. Recruitment should be on merit according to official recruitment and selection standards and procedures (see appendix 14);

- Promotion and awareness should be a continuing activity; and should focus on PCICs activities and their attempt to reduce the information gap. Formal launching activities advertised in the media, such as on radio and television, which is how most people are reached; promotional materials can also be supplied to constituents. PCIC location must be clearly sign-posted with visible, mounted billboards, giving directions to the centre. Billboards need to be re-done, because some are faded, rusty and not mounted (see appendix 12D);

- Traditional formats and internet connectivity should be considered a priority. To empower and strengthen constituents in this digital age, staff must be introduced to ICT use. Also, given the vast distances and poor infrastructure in many constituencies, ICT holds the power to disseminate information; mobile technologies should also be used;

- Management should make provision for a Standing Committee / PCIC Committees to have functions and duties guided by a clause in the Standing Rules and Orders Committee; and

- PoZ does not administer the CDF, a recent creation administered from the Ministry of Parliamentary and Constitutional Affairs. Policy on CDF use should be introduced to include the exact percentage of the fund to be used on PCICs activities.

The study also identified a number of areas where delivery of parliamentary information can be fully understood from further research as outlined in the following section.

8.5 Suggestions for future research

Based on the findings of the study and subsequent conclusions presented above, a number of issues requiring further investigation became apparent:

- The resource implications of service delivery require further investigation and discussion. Of particular concern is the recurring lack of sustainability of information projects in most developing countries;
- The differences in Constituency Profiles with regard to the rural-urban divide need further study. Information needs of rural and urban constituents differ in many respects, because of the different stages of development; and
- A number of development partners working with parliaments across the globe are engaged in activities contributing to parliamentary support, both in developed and developing countries. Study data showed that development partners have an important role in PCIC establishment. A follow-up study is recommended to determine the extent to which development partners are influencing information service programs within parliaments of developing countries; and what challenges they face.

8.6 General conclusion

This final chapter provided a summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations used to evaluate the performance of Zimbabwe's PCICs. The PCIC program is an extensive project requiring a holistic approach, through the participation by various stakeholders for it to succeed. The establishment of PCICs should be seen as a process which involves: establishing constituent needs; establishing objectives matching these needs; developing services to achieve the objectives; providing the services; monitoring and evaluation of outcomes; and revising the objectives in light of changing needs. This process should include all the stakeholders identified in the proposed model to ensure that

PCICs meet the needs of the constituents. The study achieved its objectives by describing the performance of Zimbabwe's PCICs and recommending several methods for service improvement. Although the findings and conclusions of the study may be useful to other countries, they cannot be generalized as valid for them. The study, however, applies to Zimbabwe.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics clearance letter

Reference number: EBIT/47/2012   13 February 2013

Mr I Munyoro
Parliament of Zimbabwe
PO Box CY 298
Causeway
Harare

Dear Mr Munyoro,

FACULTY COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

Your recent application to the EBIT Ethics Committee refers.

1   I hereby wish to inform you that the research project titled "An evaluation of the performance of Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Constituency Information Centres (PCICs) and their future improvement" has been approved by the Committee.

        This approval does not imply that the researcher, student or lecturer is relieved of any accountability in terms of the Codes of Research Ethics of the University of Pretoria, if action is taken beyond the approved proposal.

2   According to the regulations, any relevant problem arising from the study or research methodology as well as any amendments or changes, must be brought to the attention of any member of the Faculty Committee who will deal with the matter.

3   The Committee must be notified on completion of the project.

The Committee wishes you every success with the research project.

Prof. J.J. Hanekom
Chair: Faculty Committee for Research Ethics and Integrity
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING, BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY

Appendix 2: Clerk's letter of approval

20/03/2012

To Whom It May Concern

Research: Research Project Amongst Legislators and Constituency Residents

Mr. Isaiah Munyoro, an officer of the Parliament of Zimbabwe is undertaking a supervised PhD thesis with the University of Pretoria to **"Evaluate the Performance of Zimbabwe's Parliament Constituency Information Centres (PCICs) and their future improvement".** He is asking for permission to do the research project amongst the Honourable Members of Parliament and Constituents. It is a fact that legislators and constituents need relevant information and the establishment of PCICs brought hope to close the existing information shortage gap. This research aims at: evaluating, as objectively and comprehensively as possible, the degree to which PCICs have been successfully implemented. This will be inclusive of issues such as operational performance; extent to which the targeted beneficiaries have benefited from the establishment of PCICs; the degree to which the project has succeeded in light of the challenges that have occurred within the country; identifying challenges, constraints and lessons learnt; providing detailed recommendations on the operation and future improvement of the PCICs; and identifying suitable parliamentary information models.

He intends to use questionnaires amongst Honourable Members as well as sampled constituency residents, which can be answered during one spare time. He will also use guided interviews, and observations to complement findings from questionnaires. A self addressed envelop will be will be attached to the questionnaire which can be used to return the completed questionnaire to the Parliament Library. If permission is granted, the PCIC Office Assistant will distribute the questionnaire to sampled members of the constituency.

The researcher has chosen to use the above methods of gathering data because he does not foresee any interference with the day to day activities of any PCIC. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely
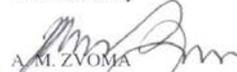
A. M. ZVOMA
Clerk of Parliament

OFFICE OF THE CLERK
PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE
2 0 MAR 2012
P.O. BOX CY 298 CAUSEWAY
HARARE
ZIMBABWE

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Appendix 3: Informed consent form

(Form for research subject's permission)

(Must be signed by each research subject, and must be kept on record by the researcher)

1   Title of research project: _____

2   I _____hereby voluntarily grant my permission for participation in the project as explained to me by_____

3   The nature, objective, possible safety and health implications have been explained to me and I understand them.

4   I understand my right to choose whether to participate in the project and that the information furnished will be handled confidentially. I am aware that the results of the investigation may be used for the purposes of publication.

6   Upon signature of this form, you will be provided with a copy.

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Witness: _____   Date: _____

Researcher: _____   Date: _____

Appendix 4: Questionnaire for MPs

Research Topic: An Evaluation of the Performance of Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Constituency Information Centres (PCICs) and their future improvement.

Read the following information before completing the questionnaire.

My name is Isaiah Munyoro and I am conducting a study towards a Doctor of Philosophy Degree with the University of Pretoria, South Africa. You have been elected to participate in this research through this questionnaire because of your interest in relation to the PCICs project. After reading this short Explanatory Statement I will be very grateful if you choose to complete the questionnaire. Through your participation in this study it is hoped that new knowledge and theory will be generated on the topic and this is very important in that directions will be provided in information delivery through PCICs.

Instructions:

a) *Sign the attached consent form before filling in this questionnaire*
b) *Use pen to answer this questionnaire*
c) *Where the space is provided, write your answer in it*
d) *Indicate the most appropriate answers by a tick (√) in the brackets*
e) *Each question should have only one tick (√) for your chosen answer, unless stated*

Section A: Basic Information

Name of constituency: _____

Period as MP: _____years

1. a) Does the constituency have a PCIC?

       Yes   [   ]

       No   [   ]

  b) If Yes, in which year was the PCIC established?: _____

2. Indicate the main local language used in your Constituency:_____

3. Who owns the building in which the PCIC operates from?: _____

4. How often do you visit the PCIC?

       Daily   [   ]

       Once a week   [   ]

       Once per month   [   ]

       Other (Specify):_____

5. Which is your designated day of visiting the PCIC?

       Monday   [   ]

       Tuesday   [   ]

       Wednesday   [   ]

       Thursday   [   ]

       Friday   [   ]

6. a) To what extent where the objectives of PCICs made clear to constituents when they were introduced?

Not clear at all   [   ]

Partly clear   [   ]

Clear   [   ]

Very clear   [   ]

b). In your own opinion, explain whether constituents understand or do not understand the roles and objectives of PCICs.

_____
_____
_____

7. a) Do you invite people to the PCIC?

Yes   [   ]

No   [   ]

b) If yes, what methods do you use to invite them?

_____
_____

8. What other activities besides provision of information, take place at the PCIC?

i) _____

ii) _____

iii_____

iv) _____

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Section B: Outcome/impact

9. To what extent were the information delivery objectives of the PCICs consistent with your expectations?

       Not consistent   [ ]

       Partly consistent   [ ]

       Consistent   [ ]

       Very consistent   [ ]

10. a) Are you happy with the kind and volume of information that is found at the PCIC?

       Yes   [ ]

       No   [ ]

  b) If no, what kind of information would you expect to find at the PCIC?

       _____

       _____

11. a) Have you benefitted from the PCIC since its establishment?

       Yes   [ ]

       No   [ ]

  b) If yes, please state how you benefitted

       _____

       _____

12. Do you think the introduction of PCICs and the information accessed from these has improved your knowledge and participation in legislation?

Yes   [   ]

No   [   ]

13. Please state the strong and weak aspects of PCICs

    a) Strong:

_____

_____

    b) Weak:

_____

_____

Section C: Sustainability

14. The future of PCICs – do you envisage any improvement in the operation of the PCIC

    Yes   [   ]

    No   [   ]

15. If yes, what key changes should be made to the project to enhance achievement of objectives?

_____

_____

16. What can you say about support for the continual operation of PCICs?

_____

_____

_____

17. a) From your annual CDF allocation have you ever considered setting aside any amount for the PCIC development?

     Yes   [ ]

     No   [ ]

     b) If yes, how much was used for developing the PCIC during the last fiscal year?

_____

18. Please state any other observations you might consider pertinent to this evaluation exercise or operation of PCICs

_____

_____

_____

Should you need clarification, please contact me or supervisor using the following contact details:

Researcher:	E-mail:	munyorois@gmail.com
	Mobile phone:	+263 712 00 18
Supervisor:	E-mail:	archie.dick@up.ac.za
	Mobile phone:	+27 22 38 89 26

Thank you for taking your time to complete this questionnaire

Appendix 5: Questionnaire for Constituents

Research Topic: An Evaluation of the Performance of Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Constituency Information Centres (PCICs) and their future improvement

Read this information before completing the questionnaire

My name is Isaiah Munyoro and I am conducting a research project towards a Doctor of Philosophy Degree with the University of Pretoria. You have been elected to participate in this research through this questionnaire because of your interest in relation to the PCICs project. After reading this short Explanatory Statement I will be very grateful if you choose to complete the Questionnaire. Through your participation in this study it is hoped that new knowledge and theory will be generated on the topic and this is very important in that directions will be provided in information delivery through PCICs.

Instructions:

   f) *Sign the attached consent form before filling in this questionnaire*
   g) *Use pen to answer this questionnaire*
   h) *Where the space is provided, write your answer in it*
   i) *Indicate the most appropriate answers by a tick (√) in the brackets*
   j) *Each question should have only one tick (√) for your chosen answer, unless stated*

Section A: Basic Information

Name of Constituency: _____

Nationality: _____

Educational level:_____

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Working language:_____

1. Which of the following best describes your field of work?

Sector	Mark with x
Civil servant	
Academic	
Community and social service	
Health work	
Religious	
Charity work	
Mining	
Farmer	
Student	
Extension workers	
Other (Specify)	

Section B: PCICs

2. Are you aware of the PCIC's existence in your constituency?

     Yes   [ ]

     No   [ ]

3. Briefly describe the:

     a) physical location of the PCIC:_____

     b) distance of the PCIC from where you stay:_____

4. How often do you visit the PCIC?

     Daily   [ ]

Once a week   [   ]

Once per month   [   ]

Other (specify):_____

5. Which is your designated day of visiting the PCIC?

Monday   [   ]

Tuesday   [   ]

Wednesday   [   ]

Thursday   [   ]

Friday   [   ]

6. Why do you visit PCICs?

_____

_____

7. To what extent were the objectives of PCICs made clear to you when these were introduced?

Not clear at all   [   ]

Partly clear   [   ]

Clear   [   ]

Very clear   [   ]

8. To what extent are the objectives of the PCICs consistent with your expectations?

        Not consistent   [ ]

        Partly consistent   [ ]

        Consistent   [ ]

        Very consistent   [ ]

9. Was there ever any training on using information that is found at the information centre?

        _____

        _____

10. To what extent are you satisfied with the information obtained at the PCIC?

        Not satisfied   [   ]

        Partly satisfied   [   ]

        Satisfied   [   ]

        Very satisfied   [   ]

11. Please rank the following services in order of importance from 1 to 5.

(1 - Very important. 2 - Important. 3 - Moderately important. 4 - Of Little importance.

5 –Unimportant)

Information source	Rank
Hansard	
Bills	
Computer data base / informatics database	
Books	
Newspapers, magazines, journals	
Borrowing facilities	
Access to the Internet	
Access to audio materials	
Access to audio visual materials	
Photocopy services	
Do opinion survey polls	
Surveys on specific topics	
Provision of expert opinion	
Translations	
Reading room	
Comments on Bills	
Newspaper clipping service	
Other sources	

12. In addition to the above, what additional services or activities would you expect at PCICs?

_____

_____

13. Do you think the availability of PCICs and the information accessed from these has led to improvements in your knowledge about the operation of Parliament and your participation in legislation?

Yes   [ ]

No   [ ]

14. If no, what sort of improvements would you expect?

_____
_____
_____

15. Please state the strong and weak aspects of PCICs

a) Strong:

_____
_____
_____

b) Weak:

_____
_____
_____

16. Please state any other observations or comments you might consider pertinent to this evaluation exercise or operation of PCICs

_____
_____
_____

Should you need clarification, please contact me or supervisor using the following contact details:

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Researcher: E-mail: munyorois@gmail.com

               Mobile phone: +263 712 00 18

Supervisor: E-mail: archie.dick@up.ac.za

Mobile phone: +27 22 38 89 26

Thank you for taking your time to complete this questionnaire

Appendix 6: Questionnaire for Office Assistants

Research Topic: An Evaluation of the Performance of Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Constituency Information Centres (PCICs) and their future improvement

Read this information before completing the questionnaire.

My name is Isaiah Munyoro and I am conducting a research project towards a Doctor of Philosophy Degree with the University of Pretoria. You have been elected to participate in this research through this questionnaire because of your interest in relation to the PCICs project. After reading this short Explanatory Statement I will be very grateful if you choose to complete the Questionnaire. Through your participation in this study it is hoped that new knowledge and theory will be generated on the topic and this is very important in that directions will be provided in information delivery through PCICs.

Sign the attached consent form before filling in this questionnaire.

Instructions:

a) Sign the attached consent form before filling in this questionnaire

b) Use pen to answer this questionnaire

c) Where the space is provided, write your answer in it

d) Indicate the most appropriate answers by a tick (√) in the brackets

e) Each question should have only one tick (√) for your chosen answer, unless stated

Section A: Basic information

Date: _____

Name of constituency:_____

Your Educational level: _____

Section B: PCICs

1. When did you join the PCIC:_____?

2. How often do MPs and constituents use the PCIC?

       Daily   [   ]

       Once a week   [   ]

       Once per month   [   ]

       Other (Specify):_____

3. Do you think PCICs are well equipped to provide relevant information to empower citizens in order to contribute to the legislation?

       Yes   [   ]

       No   [   ]

4. Do you compile statistics on the PCIC activities?

     Yes   [ ]

     No   [ ]

5. If Yes, how many users visit the PCIC per month?: _____

6. When did you last submit the PCIC's annual report to Parliament: _____

7. How do you market PCICs and / or the services provided?:

       _____

       _____

       _____

8. List in order of importance the main uses of the computer (s) that you have at the PCIC:

       i)   _____

       ii)   _____

       iii)   _____

       iv)   _____

       v)   _____

9. Which aspects of the informatics database have you been trained to use?:

       _____

       _____

10. Who can you say has been the main beneficiary from PCICs and why?:

       i):_____

       ii):_____

       iii):_____

iv):_____

v):_____

11. List the challenges faced on day to day operation of the PCIC:

i):_____

iii):_____

iii):_____

iv):_____

v:_____

12. What do you recommend as a way of improving PCICs?

_____

_____

_____

13. General comments

_____

_____

_____

Should you need clarification, please contact me or supervisor using the following contact details:

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	Mobile phone:	+263 712 00 18
Supervisor:	E-mail:	archie.dick@up.ac.za
Mobile phone:		+27 22 38 89 26

Thank you for taking your time to complete this questionnaire

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Appendix 7: Interview schedule - Clerk of Parliament

Research Topic: An Evaluation of the Performance of Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Constituency Information Centres (PCICs) and their future improvement

Researcher: Isaiah Munyoro

Interview date: _____

The purpose of this interview is not simply to fulfill academic literature, but to identify ways of creating new knowledge from the findings. As Administrator of Parliament you set standards and executes the project of PCICs. You are influential and well-informed on issues that relate to Parliamentary reforms and as such have been selected for the interview on the basis of this expertise. I am kindly requesting you to respond to the following questions.

1. Can you briefly explain Parliamentary Reforms on Information Services Delivery?

2. How successful were the PCICs in the context of their established objectives?

3. Who have been the main beneficiaries from PCICs project and why?

4. In what ways do you think the targeted beneficiaries have influenced Parliamentary business?

5. Briefly explain the model that has been adopted for the PCICs program.

6. Funding: UNDP has been funding the operation of PCICs. What has been the government's position on continued operation of the project in the event of withdrawal of funding by development partners?

7. Do you have monitoring and evaluation mechanism for PCICs at PoZ? If Yes, which are these and has been their net impact on the operation of PCICs?

8. What are some of the challenges Parliament has encountered in administering the project?

9. Are there any other related developments that have arisen that the project did not address in the original plan and how have these been addressed?

10. As a follow up to the above question / discussion, now that there are now 270 Parliamentary Constituencies, 210 for the House of Assembly and 60 for Senators, not accommodated in the original plan. How do you foresee the issue of PCICs following such changes in 2005?

11. What lessons can we learn from the way in which the PCICs project is progressing?

12. Do you have any additional information you feel would be helpful for this study?

Thank you very much for your time. I will be grateful if you would accommodate me in future for any questions I might have omitted that would benefit my study.

Appendix 8: Interview guide for Public Relations Officer

Research Topic: An Evaluation of the Performance of Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Constituency Information Centres (PCICs) and their future improvement.

Researcher: Isaiah Munyoro

Interview date: _____

The purpose of this interview is not simply to fulfill academic literature, but to identify and recommend ways of creating new knowledge on delivery of Parliamentary information services. You are among the list of potential interviewees identified to provide relevant information. I am kindly requesting you to respond to the following questions:

General

When did you join the PR department?

How long have you been working for the PCICs project?

About PCICs

1. Explain the role PR department in the PCICs project?

2. Which other departments at Parliament are involved in the operation of PCICs?

3. Explain the various roles of other departments in the management of PCICs.

4. Is there any model that has been recommended for adoption since the inception of the project?

5. Explain how well equipped are PCICs to provide relevant information to user?

6. In what format do you disseminate information to various PCICs?

7. How do you market PCICs?

8. Do you find people in various constituencies being able to interpret or understand information in its various formats?

9. How often do you communicate with OAs?

10. What are the common challenges that have been reported annually by OAs?

11. What challenges do you face at Parliament to provide efficient services to PCICs?

12. What would you recommend to improve the operation of the PCIC?

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Appendix 9: Interview guide for Informatics database manager

Research Topic: An Evaluation of the Performance of Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Constituency Information Centres (PCICs) and their future improvement.

Researcher: Isaiah Munyoro

Interview Date: _____

The purpose of this interview is not simply to fulfill academic literature, but to identify and recommend ways of creating new knowledge on delivery of Parliamentary information services. I therefore, found it necessary to interview individuals outside as well as inside the legislature, observers as well as participants. You are among the list of potential interviewees. I am kindly requesting you to respond to the following questions:

General

How long have you been working for the PCICs project?

The Informatics database

1. Briefly describe your current role as the informatics database administrator

2. Besides yourself, who else assists you in maintaining the database?

3. Outline the main components of the PCIC informatics database

4. How do you identify information gaps?

5. How do you collect data from PCICs?

6. How do you disseminate information to PCICs?

7. Do you have a mechanism to get automatic updates on changes on the constituency information?

8. Who are the Primary and Secondary users of the informatics database?

9. Explain how you manage the database

10. Explain your cooperation with PR department in the management of PCICs

11. What can be done to improve the database?

Thank you for your time in discussing about PCICs

Appendix 10: Interview guide - Development Partners

Research Topic: An Evaluation of the Performance of Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Constituency Information Centres (PCICs) and their future improvement

Researcher: Isaiah Munyoro

Interview Date:_____

The purpose of this interview is not simply to fulfill academic literature, but to identify and recommend ways of creating new knowledge on delivery of Parliamentary information services. I therefore, found it necessary to interview individuals outside as well as inside the legislature, observers as well as participants. You are among the list of potential interviewees. I am kindly requesting you to respond to the following questions:

General

When did you join the department?

About PCICs

1. What has been the contribution of development partners since the beginning of the PCICs project?

2. Was the PCICs project implemented in the most efficient way, compared with alternatives?

3. Are the activities being performed as planned?

4. Explain your future relationship with Parliament of Zimbabwe regarding PCICs.

5. What changes would you recommend to improve the operation of the PCIC?

Thank you for participating in this interview.

Appendix 11: Observation schedule

Research Topic: An Evaluation of the Performance of Zimbabwe's Parliamentary Constituency Information Centres (PCICs) and their future improvement.

Section A

Outside the PCIC

1. Location:_____

2. Directions to the PCIC:_____

Section B

Inside the PCIC

Check / Observe

3. Adequacy of space: _____

4. Availability of furniture / equipment: _____

_____

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5. Information resources available:

    _____

    _____

    _____

6. Organisation of information resources: _____

7. Visitors to the centre: _____

8. General office assistance, appearance, attitude, behaviour, morale and PR: _____

9: Other activities_____

Appendix 12: PCICs in pictures

12A: Identifying the PCIC   B: State of computers at some PCICs

C: Publications available at PCICs   D: PCIC size

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Appendix 13: Themes

Theme	Target	Interview	Questions used
Access			Location, Distance , number of visitors
	OAs		5 Number of visitors
	Constituents		3 Distance and physical location 1 frequency of visits 4 Statistics
Information needs and expectations			Information needs
	Constituents		6 Reasons for Visiting PCIC 8 Consistency with objectives 10 Satisfied with information at PCIC 11 Ranking of Information sources 12 Additional Service at PCIC 14 Expected improvements
	MPs		9 PCIC objectives consistency with MPs' expectations 10 a) kinds and vol. of information. b) kind of information expected
		Database administrator	4 Information gaps?
PCIC Awareness	OAs		2 Frequency of Use (1) 7 Marketing of PCIC (2)
	MPs		6 a) PCICs objectives clarity b) Role & objectives of PCICs 7 a) Invitation b) Invitation methods
		PR	7 Marketing of PCICs
Admin of PCICs			Standards/ ownership/ rates/rentals / furniture/ equipment /personnel /model
		PR	1 Role of PR 3 Role of other departments 9 communication with OAs 12 Operation recommendations
		PoZ / Clerk	5 Model 7 monitoring & evaluation
	MPs		3 Building ownership

Information Delivery	Constituents		4 frequency of visit – see access 6 Reason for visit – (see constituents needs) 7 Clarity of objectives 8 consistency of objectives – see constituents needs
		Database administration	3 Components of informatics database 11 Sharing constituency data electronically
	OAs		3 Equipped to provide information 5 Number of visitors – see access 8 Main use of computer 9 Informatics training 12 Recommended improvements 13 General comments
		PR	6 Information format
Achievements / Benefits			Objectives
	Constituents		15 a) Strong aspects of PCICs 16 Observations and comments
	Office Assistants (OAs)		10 Beneficiaries of PCICs 12 a) Benefits 12 b) Targeted beneficiaries 13 General comments
	MPs		12 improved knowledge 13 a) Strong aspects
		PoZ	2 PCICs success 4 Influence Parliamentary business
Challenges			Objectives / Funding / Institutional Capacity / policy / Management
	Constituents		15 b) Weaknesses 16 Observations and comments
	OAs		11 challenges
	MPs		13 b) weak aspects of PCICs 15 key changes 16 Support 17 a) amount allocated from CDF b) Use of CDF
		PoZ	6 Funding 8 Challenges
		PR	10 / 11 Challenges
		Development Partners	1 Contribution 4 Future Relationship 6 Changes

Appendix 14: Proposed posts, qualifications and specifications for PCIC officers

Post	Qualifications	Responsibilities	Competencies
A: Constituency Information Officer (CIO)	•Degree in Media Studies •Degree in Library and Information Science •Degree in Development Studies	•Attending to constituency queries •Research and support •Records management •Instruction services •Client engagement and relationships •Compiling and submitting monthly and annual reports •Preparing background papers for the MP on any subject upon request •Keeping the MP abreast of political, social and economic developments in the constituency •Identify information needs of users as these can change from time to time •Compiling and submitting monthly reports to Parliament •Independent from the seating MP. •Manning the PCIC office •Managing and maintaining offices assets •Liaising with departments of Parliament on any matter including the drafting of speeches •Handling correspondence •Writing minutes of meetings chaired by the MP and providing any other secretarial services as required •Making arrangements for	•Broad knowledge of technology and data management •Computer and Information literate •Innovative, creative and risk – taking •Strong problem solving skills •Tolerance •Strong planning and writing skills •Familiar with communications, research and data practices •Literate in data management, and statistics

		meetings and appointments •Keeping a diary of events for the MP •Providing typing and other secretarial services for the MP	
B: Secretary or Assistant CIO	•Relevant Certificate or Diploma	•Manning the PCIC office •Managing and maintaining offices assets •Liaising with parliament departments on any matter including the drafting of speeches •Handling correspondence •Writing minutes of meetings chaired by the MP and providing any other secretarial services as required •Making arrangements for meetings and appointments •Keeping a diary of events for the MP •Providing typing and other secretarial services for the MP	•Dairy management •Project management •PC literate •Efficient office administration Systems •Respects the public •Customers service excellence and Interpersonal skills •Delivery of results
C: Security Officer	•Relevant security training	•Responsible for all security matters that might arise at the PCIC. •Patrols, guards and secures property and grounds.	•Understands basic public safety operations •Knowledge of standard safety, surveillance, and security issues •Ability to write reports on security issues •Knowledge of policies, rules and regulations.