CHAPTER FOUR
CASE STUDY

4.1   *Introduction*

This chapter is centred on the Vhembe Municipality and its four municipalities, namely, Makhado, Musina, Mutale and Thulamela. From time to time, there are reports in the media of poor service delivery rendered by these municipalities to their communities. These reports are confirmed by the continued demonstrations taking place in municipalities in South Africa. To evaluate whether the service delivery is adequately rendered or not to the communities, the investigator has prepared unstructured questionnaires, which were distributed to these municipalities in order to obtain the required information. The term case study is clearly and explicitly defined in order to shed light on what a case study is. Furthermore, the unit of analysis, which is the Vhembe District Municipality as already indicated above, is discussed.

Case study methodology which indicates procedures to be followed when dealing with case study is also outlined. Designing case studies is dealt with to try to show how the present case study has been designed. The chapter uses with a conclusion followed by a bridging sentence that flows into the next chapter.

4.2   *Definition of case study*

The term case study pertains to the fact that a limited number of units of analysis, such as an individual, group or institution, are studied intensively, and not to some or other technique which is applied. Studies on the notion of case study are directed at understanding the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of a particular case in all its complexity. Usually, the objective of a case study is to investigate the dynamics of some single bounded system, typically of a social nature, for example, a family, group, community, participants in a project, practice or institution. This is especially so when a group or institution is investigated. Field work is often done when the researcher conducts the investigation on the spot under natural circumstances (Stake, 1998:168).

Feagin, Orum and Sjoberg (1991:5) note that case studies are multi-perspective analyses. This means that the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of the actors, but also these of the relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them. This one aspect is a salient point in the characteristics that case studies possess. They give a voice to the powerless and voiceless. When sociological studies present many studies of the homeless and powerless, they sometimes do so from the viewpoint of the elite.

Stake (1998:169) argues that three aspects deserve special mention as far as the conducting of case studies is concerned. In the first place, the case should be defined or demarcated, in other words, its boundaries should be determined. In some instances (e.g. if a single individual is involved), this decision is obvious. In other examples, the researcher may, during the course of the study, find it necessary to adjust the boundaries which of necessity have initially been determined arbitrarily. Secondly, whichever technique is used for purposes of data collection, the concern is not merely with a description of what is being observed, but with searching, in an inductive fashion, for recurring patterns and consistent regularities.

It is clear that a case study might be an individual, group of people or an institution or institutions which are under intensive investigation in order to probe the dynamics of some single bounded system or, typically, of a social nature. The case study should also be defined or demarcated, in other words, its boundaries should be determined. The techniques to be employed during the process of research should also be outlined. The following section deals with the unit of analysis, that is, with the Vhembe District Municipality.

4.3   *The unit of analysis*

According to Tellis, (1997:5), the unit of analysis is a critical factor in the case study. It is typically a system of action rather than an individual on a group of individuals. Case studies tend to be selective, focusing on one or two issues that are fundamental to understanding the system being examined. Stake (1998:169) states that the unit of analysis does not necessarily have to be human, but may also involve personal documents. Whereas the extent of mass material permits the application of content analysis, the small number of personal documents

available for case studies may necessitate an analysis similar to that performed on the data obtained by means of participant observation.

As the unit of analysis for the purposes of this research topic, is the Vhembe District Municipality and its four municipalities namely, Makhado, Musina, Mutale, and Thulamela. Therefore an overview of the Vhembe District Municipality and its four municipalities is outlined below.

4.3.1   *Vhembe District Municipality*

The Vhembe District Municipality was established in terms of the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) which provides for the establishment of municipalities, their categories, competencies, functions and the electoral procedures for office bearers. It is one of the six successors of the now defunct Northern District Council, and comprises four local municipalities, namely, Makhado, Musina, Mutale, and Thulamela. The Vhembe District Municipality, with a population of over 1,1 million living on about 21 407 km^2 of land, lies in the far north of the Limpopo Province and shares borders with Capricorn, Mopane, Bohlabela district municipalities in the southern, eastern and northern directions respectively (Vhembe Voice, 2004:44).

Thohoyandou (meaning Head of Elephant) is the political capital and hub of economic activities for the Vhembe District Municipality. The other major towns are Makhado, Musina, Tshilamba, Dzanani, Sibasa, Vuwani, Malamulele, Saselamane and Elim. The main languages spoken are Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Sepedi, English and Afrikaans (IDP Review Vhembe, 2005/6:5).

4.3.1.1   *Governance*

According to Vhembe Voice (2004:4), since the democratization of the Republic of South Africa in 1994, the local government system has undergone some profound changes, which culminated in the municipal elections of 2000 and the inception of 232 local and 46 district

municipalities and six metropolitan cities. The <u>Municipal Structures Act</u>, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998), the Municipal Systems Act and other pieces of legislation are guidelines in the way the Vhembe District and other municipalities are to be governed and administered. The role and function of the district municipality is that of coordination and a strategic catalyst for integrated development. The district links the local municipalities with provincial and national governments and parastatals. Grants, such as the Municipal Infrastructure Support Grant, are channelled through the district.

4.3.1.2   *Administration*

The Municipal Manager who is assisted by a team of five Departmental Managers leads the administrative component. The Vhembe District Municipality core function departments are: Administration, Human Resources, Finance, Community Services and Technical Services. The integrated development planning unit and planning implementation management support centre play a major role in ensuring the implementation of the integrated development programmes. The planning implementation management support centre serves as a support unit for all the local municipalities.

4.3.1.3   *Powers and functions of the district municipality*

In terms of the Section 84(1) of the <u>Municipal Structures Act</u> 1998 (Act 117 of 1998), the powers and functions of the district municipality are to integrate district development planning; to supply bulk water and electricity; to provide bulk sewerage purification and sewerage disposal; to manage solid waste disposal sites; to manage roads, passenger transport, airport services, health, fire fighting, and disaster which form an integral part of a road transport system for the area of the district municipality as a whole; to manage fresh produce markets, abattoirs; cemeteries and cremation; to promote local tourism; to distribute municipal grants; to collect regional services council levies and provide support to local municipalities.

4.3.1.4 Legislative and Executive Authority

The Vhembe District Municipality Council is the legislative and executive authority of the District Municipality, and has the power to discharge all its political and executive competencies in accordance with the national legislation.

4.3.1.5 The Council

The District Council consist of 43 councillors of whom 17 were directly elected, 26 elected through a proportional representative system from the four local municipalities and seven traditional leaders who serve as ex-officio members. There are twelve, nine, two an one representative councillors for Thulamela, Makhado, Mutale and Musina local municipalities, respectively. The Council elects amongst its ranks, the Executive Mayor and the Speaker (*Vhembe Voice* 2004:4).

4.3.1.6 Role and functions of Council

The council, being the political and legislative authority of the district, formulates decisions and by-laws and monitors their implementation. It provides political leadership in the development and implementation of the integrated development planning and ensures effective public participation in all matters of local governance.

4.3.1.7 The Speaker

The speaker presides over seatings of the Council and ensures that councillors comply with the codes of conduct and rules of council. He/she also takes care of the welfare of councillors as well as facilitating public consultation and participation on matters of the district. He/she executes his/her political responsibility in consultation with the Executive Mayor (IDP Review Vhembe, 2005:6).

4.3.1.8   *The Executive Mayor*

The council elects the Executive Mayor. He/she serves as the political leader of the District Municipality and applies, in consultation with the Mayoral Committee, Council and the administrative component of the municipality, his/her prerogative on matters of governance. The Executive Mayor appoints eight councillors amongst the ranks of the Council to serve on his Mayoral Committee. These councillors are each assigned certain responsibilities, in line with the competencies of the District Municipality. The Portfolio Councillors preside over the Standing Committee and present recommendations and findings to the Executive Mayor who, in turn, tables his/her report to the Council for adoption/ratification (Vhembe Voice, 2004:4).

4.3.1.9   *Council Committee and portfolio councillors*

The establishment of the Council's Standing Committee is guided by the Municipality's political mandate and core-functions. The members of the Mayoral Committee preside over portfolio committees each dealing with a cluster of services linked to the municipality's various departments. These committees deal with matters that need prompt attention, as well as formulating policies, making recommendations and preparing submissions for Council. They serve as advisory and policy formulation structures.

4.3.2   *Makhado Municipality*

Makhado Municipality is situated at the foot of the densely forested Zoutpansberg mountain range near the Zimbabwean, Botswanan and Mozambiquean borders. The municipal area comprises 754 727 square kilometers (km^2). It is located one hundred (100) kilometers from the border of Zimbabwe on the economically important national road (N1). It is also an integral part of the Maputo sub-corridor with the road link to Maputo branching off thirty (30) kilometers south of Makhado. The town was officially renamed Makhado in 2003 from Louis Trichardt in honour of the Vhavenda leader, King Makhado Tshilwavhusiku Ramabulana who ruled the area before the arrival of the Voortrekkers who gained control of the town in 1898. Makhado is a highly fertile agricultural area. The area's scenic beauty provides opportunities

for hiking, trains, mountain climbing, hunting and photographic safaris. The town is one of Limpopo's main business and tourist destinations (*Vhembe Voice*, 2004:7).

4.3.3   *Musina Municipality*

Musina Municipality is situated at the northern part of Limpopo close to the Beit Bridge Border Post between South Africa and Zimbabwe. The Musina town developed around the copper mining industry in the area. The word Musina means spoiler. It originated from the local people who in the olden days, discovered copper, and named it Musina, because it was considered to be a copper substitute for iron, which was what they were after. Today coal, iron, magnetic, graphite, asbestos, copper and diamonds are mined in the Musina Municipal area (IDP Review Vhembe, 2005:7)

This area's major economic strengths, except mining, are the many game farms and tourist attraction sites including Musina Nature Reserve and Mapungubwe National Park. The recently declared world heritage site of Mapungubwe, meaning hill of jackals, is one the richest archeological sites in South Africa. Musina is known for being the region of Baobab trees and impala, which are both protected species (*Vhembe Voice*, 2004, 7).

4.3.4   *Mutale Municipality*

Mutale Municipality was named after the Mutale River which is the main river in this municipal area. The municipality, which is mainly rural, is the successor of the former Mutale/Masisi/Vhutswema Local Transitional Council. The Tshikondeni local mine is located in the north eastern side of Mutale. Mutale is home for many Vhembe District legends and tourist attraction centres, such as Sagole Spa, the biggest baobab tree in the world, Tshavhadinda cave and many others. The majority of the area's inhabitants depend largely on subsistence farming (Vhembe Voice, 2004:6).

4.3.5   *Thulamela Municipality*

Thulamela Municipility, formally known as Greater Thohoyandou-Malamulele, is the largest municipality in the Limpopo province, incorporating areas falling under the now defunct transitional local councils namely, Greater Thohoyandou Transitional Local Council, Matale/Masisi/Vhutswema Transitional Local Council, Greater Nzhelele/Tshipise Transitional Local Council, Levubu Shingwedzi Transitional Local Council and Greater Vuwani/Elim/Levubu/Hlanganani Transitional Local Council. Thulamela is a Karanga word meaning the place of giving birth. The ancient Thulamela settlement, which has been declared a national heritage site, is situated north of the Kruger National Park at the Punda Maria gate. The Vhavenda and Shangaans were the original inhabitants of the area. It was here where they developed strong trade links with traders from the Middle East. The present day Thulamela is a home for people of different racial groups, cultures and traditions. It is a place of many legends with beautiful mountains and vegetation that are compelling for tourists to view. The tea and coffee estates, timber plantations, tropical fruit stalls, art galleries, waterfalls, rural and modern settlements, historical sites, mountains and streams, sacred lakes, forests, and other natural attractions, are what makes this place unique today (*Vhembe Voice*, 2004:6).

Administratively, the local municipalities mentioned above are all headed by municipal managers who are also assisted by a team of departmental managers. The core functions of all local municipalities are administration, human resources, finance, community services and technical services. These four municipalities are also composed of rural areas. The service delivery in these areas is considered to be decidedly poor due to the fact that the villagers do not pay for the services that they are receiving. It is, therefore, suggested that dwellers in the rural areas have to be educated to understand that they have to pay for the services that they are receiving in order to enhance the delivery of services in their areas. No effective services can be delivered to the communities without them being paid for.

4.4   _Case study methodology_

A fregment criticism of case study methodology is that its dependence on a single case renders it incapable of providing a generalizing conclusion. Yin (1994:43) considers case methodology a microscopic method, because it lacks a sufficient number of cases. In contrast, Hamel **et al** (1993:50) forcefully argues that the relative size of the sample - whether two, ten, one hundred cases are used - does not transform a multiple case into a macroscopic study. The goal of the study should establish the parameters, and then should be applied to all research. In this way, even a single case could be considered acceptable, provided it meets the established objective.

The literature provides some insight into the acceptance of an experimental prototype to perceive the singularity of the object of study. This ensures the transformation from the local to the global for explanation. Hamel **et al** (1993:53) characterize such singularity as a concentration of the global in the local. Yin (1994:60) states that general applicability results from the set of methodological qualities of the case, and the rigour with which the case is constructed. Yin (1994: 65) details the procedures that would satisfy the required methodological rigour. He maintains that a case should be seen to satisfy the three tenets of the qualitative method: describing, understanding, and explaining.

The body of literature on case study research is relatively primitive and limited in comparison to that an experimental or quasi-experimental research. The requirements and inflexibility of the latter form of research make case studies the only viable alternative in some instances. It is a fact that case studies do not need to have a minimum number of cases, or to randomly select cases. The researcher is called upon to work with the situation that presents itself in each case (Yin, 1994:61).

There are several examples of the use of case study methodology in the literature. Source Yin (1994:23) lists several examples along with the appropriate research design in each case. There are suggestions for a general approach to designing case studies, and also recommendations for exploratory, explanatory and descriptive case studies. Each of those

three can be either single or multiple-case studies, where multiple-case studies are replicatory, not sampled cases. In exploratory case studies, fieldwork and data collection questions and a hypothesis are standard. This type of study has been considered as a prelude to some social research. Explanatory cases are suitable for conducting causal studies. In very complex and multivariate cases, the analysis can make use of pattern matching techniques. Descriptive cases require that the investigator begins with a descriptive theory, or face the possibility that problems will occur during the project.

For the purposes of the Vhembe District Municipality case study and its four municipalities, a letter of application (to the District Municipal Manager) to secure permission to conduct a research had been submitted. The permission was secured and a letter of introduction was issued to the investigator. Then, the investigator distributed his questionnaires to the Vhembe District Municipality itself to and the other four municipalities, namely, Makhado, Musina, Mutale, and Thulamela. The targeted offices were as follows: Mayoral offices, offices of municipal managers, the department of administration, the community and Technical Services. The respondents were given at least two months to complete the questionnaires. In some municipalities, it was difficult for them to understand the importance and significance of the research and the researcher had to explain clearly and explicitly the main purpose of the research until the municipal officials understood and accepted the questionnaires. After the two months, the researcher had to go and collect the questionnaires from the municipalities. After having collected all those questionnaires, it was found that 92% of the respondents had completed the questionnaires and only 8% failed to complete them. The analysis and interpretation was done without that 8% of the questionnaires.

4.5   *Designing Case studies*

According to Yin (1994:20), five components of research design are identified that are important for case studies, namely, a study's questions, its propositions, if any, its unit(s) of analysis, and the logic linking of the data to the proportions and the criteria for interpreting the findings. The study's questions are not likely to be 'how' and 'why' questions, and their definition is the first task of the investigator. The study's propositions sometimes derive from

the 'how' and 'why' questions, and are helpful in focusing the study's goals. Studies without propositions would at least have to have a stated purpose or set criteria on which success of the project can be judged. The unit of analysis defines what the case is. This could be groups, organizations or countries, but remains the primary unit of analysis. Linking the data to propositions and the criteria for interpreting the findings is the least developed aspect in case studies.

Yin (1994:61) asserts that a case study investigator must be able to operate as a senior investigator during the course of data collection. There should be a period of training which begins with the examination of the definition of the problem and the development of the case study design. If there is only a single investigator, this might not be necessary. The training would cover aspects that the investigator needs to know, such as the reason for the study, the type of evidence being sought, and what variations might be expected. This could take the form of discussion rather than formal lectures.

A case study protocol contains more than the survey instrument; it should also contain procedures and general rules that should be followed in using the instrument. This protocol should preferably be created prior to the data collection phase. This is essential in a multiple-case study, and desirable in a single-case study. The protocol is considered as a mayor component in asserting the reliability of the case study research. A typical protocol should have the following sections, namely, an overview of the case study project (objectives, issues, topics being investigated); field procedures (credentials and access to sites, source of information); case study questions (specific questions that the investigator must keep in mind during data collection); and a guide for case study report (outline, format for the narrative (Yin, 1994:64).

The overview should communicate to the reader the general topic of inquiry and the purpose of the case study. The field procedures mostly involve data collection issues and must be properly designed. The investigator does not control the data collection environment as in other strategies, hence the procedures become all the more important. During interviews, which by nature are opened, the subject's schedule must dictate the activity. Gaining access

to the subject organizations, having sufficient resources while in the field, clearly scheduling data collection activities, and providing for unanticipated events, must all planned for. The guide for the case study reports is often neglected, but case studies do not have the uniform outline, as do their research reports. It is essential to plan this report as the case develops to avoid problems at the end (Tellis, 1997:7).

Stake (1995:35, and Yin (1994:65) identified at least six sources of evidence in case studies, namely, documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation and physical artefacts. Documents could be letters, memoranda, agendas, administrative documents, newspaper articles, or any document that is germane to the investigation. In the interest of triangulation of evidence, the documents serve to corroborate the evidence from other sources. Documents are also useful for making inferences about events. Documents may result in false leads, in the hands of inexperienced researchers, which has been a valid criticism of case study research. Documents are communications between parties in the study, the researcher being a vicarious observer. Keeping this in mind will help the investigator avoid being misled by such documents. Archival documents can be service records, organizational records, lists of names, survey data, and other such records. The investigator has to be careful in evaluating the accuracy of the records before using them. Even if the records are quantitative, they might still not be accurate (Tellis, 1997:8).

Interviews are one of the most important sources of case study information. There are several forms of interviews that are possible, such as open-ended, focused and structured or survey. In an open-ended interview, key respondents are asked to comment on attained events. They may propose solutions or provide insight into events. They may also corroborate evidence obtained from other sources. The researcher must avoid becoming dependent on a single informant, and should seek the same data from other sources to verify its authenticity. The focused interview is used in a situation where the respondent is interviewed for a short period of time, usually answering set questions. This technique is often used to confirm data collected from another source. The structured interview is similar to a survey, and is used to gather data in cases, such as neighbourhood studies. The questions are detailed and developed in advance, much as they are in a survey (Tellis, 1997:8).

Direct observation occurs when a field visit is conducted during the case study. It could be as simple as casual data collection activities, or formal protocols to measure and record behaviours. This technique is useful for providing additional information about the topic being studied. The reliability is enhanced when more than one observer is involved in the task. Participant observation makes the researcher into an active participant in the event being studied. This often occurs in studies of neighbourhoods or groups. The technique provides some unusual opportunities for collecting data, but could engender some major problems as well. Physical artefacts can be tools, instruments, or some other physical evidence that may be collected during the study as part of a field visit. The perspective of the researcher can be broadened as a result of the discovery (Tellis, 1997:8).

For the purpose of this case study unstructured interviews or questionnaires has been employed. Hence, a questionnaire has been developed which is divided into A, B, C Schedules. The Schedule A is for Mayor, Schedule B for the Municipal Manager and while Schedule C is for Directors heading administrative, organizations, community and technical services departments.

4.6   *Conclusion*

It is important to keep in mind that not all sources are relevant for all case studies, but the investigator should be capable of dealing with them all, should it be necessary, but each case will present different opportunities for data collection. The present study was in a position to proceed with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected because, after the researcher has collected all the questionnaires from the municipalities, it was found that 92% of the respondents completed the questionnaires and only 8% had failed to complete them, as already stated. The researcher was compelled to establish questionnaires which were distributed to the municipalities for the respondents to complete, because the respondents were reluctant to be interviewed face-to-face. Time factor was a contributing factor towards respondents' reluctance to be interviewed face-to-face. In Chapter Five the data analysis and interpretation is presented.