

LEVEL OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MATSIKA
GRAZING SCHEME IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE

By

MASHUDU NORMAN RAMABULANA

(Student's Number 11514280)

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Institute of Rural development
School of Agriculture
University of Venda
SOUTH AFRICA

Student's Signature *M N Ramabulana* Date *13/09/2016*
M N Ramabulana

Supervisor's Signature *B M Kilonzo* Date *14/09/2016*
Dr. B.M. Kilonzo

Co-supervisor's Signature *J Francis* Date *14/09/2016*
Prof. J. Francis

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ABSTRACT

Livestock in many rural areas depend on natural grazing resources, some of which are provided by grazing schemes for survival. These are presently under threat due to high demand, overgrazing, overexploitation and poor grazing management. There is a general tendency in Africa to exclude local communities in the process of decision-making in the management of grazing schemes which is crucial for sustainable grazing scheme. Thus, this study was conducted to examine the level of community participation in the management of the Matsika grazing scheme five villages located in ward 39 of Thulamela Local Municipality in Limpopo Province. Community perceptions on how the Matsika grazing scheme was being managed, category of people are involved in the grazing scheme, specific roles played by the category of people on the management of the grazing scheme and on whether they are satisfied with the level of their involvement in the management of the Matsika grazing scheme were explored from owners and non-cattle owners in Matsika and four neighbouring villages and the community leaders.

Quality responses were gathered using a semi-structured questionnaire consisting of open-ended was administered. Results of the qualitative study were considered and used to develop a questionnaire with question requiring responses in a likert-type scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) for validation. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used to analyse data imported from excel spreadsheet.

The major results revealed the commonly held perceptions regarding how the Matsika grazing scheme was being managed, "I think it was well managed because people were not allowed to cut green trees, except dry trees for fire woods"(61.3 % of the respondents). With regards to category of people are involved in managing the grazing scheme, The most commonly held perceptions were "Our village was excluded, as such, one cannot be able to know who was involved in the management of the Matsika grazing scheme as we are not the direct beneficiaries of the project" (75.3 % of the respondents). Regarding the perceptions of the specific roles played by the category of people on the management of the Grazing scheme. The most commonly held perceptions were "I don't know since the livestock farmer have never been involved on specific role to play in the management" (71 % of the respondents). With regard to whether they are satisfied with the level of their involvement in the management of the Matsika grazing scheme, the most commonly held perceptions were "No, because we have never been involved" (70.9 % of the respondents). On the issue of what is making it possible for

these categories of people to be involved in the management of the Matsika grazing scheme? The common perception were that: "I know nothing because, we have never been consulted" (67.8 % of the respondents). The hindering factors for these people from effectively managing the Matsika grazing scheme? The most commonly held perceptions were "Exclusion of neighbouring villages" (64.5 % of the respondents). Asked what else needs to be done to improve the management of the community resource, the commonly held perception was the need for "Community involvement with the inclusion of all villages surrounding the Matsika grazing scheme" (79.6 % of the respondents).

There were generally no statistically significant differences ($P > 0.05$) in all perceptions due to gender and age. However, highly significant differences ($P < 0.001$) were observed among all five villages. It was also revealed that there was lack of community participation in the running of the Matsika grazing scheme.

Key words: Community participation, Communal resource, Grazing scheme, Management.