

**THE MANAGEMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND TRADITIONAL LEADERS: A CASE OF
THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY**

BY

MAPHIRI MUTSHINYALO JONATHAN

8600106

**Mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of**

MASTER IN PUBLIC MANAGEMENT (MPM)

at the

University of Venda

**In the School of Management Sciences
Oliver Reginald Tambo Institute of Governance and
Policy studies**

Supervisor: Prof. M.P. Khwashaba

Year: 2011

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out at Thulamela Municipality of Vhembe District Municipality in Limpopo Province in the Republic of South Africa. The study is about **The management of the relationship between the local government and traditional leaders: A case of Thulamela Municipality.**

The study seeks to investigate how the management of the relationship between the local government and traditional leaders over land ownership, control and authority impacts on service delivery and development. Furthermore, the study seeks to find ways through which the relationship between the two institutions could be managed to be harmonious in order to improve service delivery and development to communities.

In South Africa, Municipalities, especially those which are found in rural areas, are faced with challenges that sometimes hamper development and thus efficient service delivery to clients. These challenges are the results of the management of the relationship between the local government and traditional leaders over land ownership, control and authority. It is in this context that this study attempts to investigate the causes of conflict between the local government and traditional leaders and how the conflict impacts on service delivery and development.

Only qualitative method was used to collect data. Questions were formulated and interviews conducted to Thulamela Municipality officials, traditional leaders, members of the royal families and members of the public. Data was collected and analysed using descriptive method.

The research contained the following as findings:

- The management of the relationship between the local government and traditional leaders over land ownership, control and authority is poor.

- Poor consultation of traditional leaders by the local government before any development commences in areas under traditional leadership jurisdiction is another cause for concern.
- Some ward councillors do undermine traditional leaders.
- When development is halted, developers and the local government lose millions of rands in income and so are the local communities which are deprived of employment opportunities.

The following were recommendations which were made to the local government:

- There should be proper consultation between the local government and traditional leaders on matters of land management and development before any project commences.
- Monetary benefits, if needs be, should be agreed upon between the developer, local government and traditional leaders in advance.
- Traditional leaders should respect areas that are proclaimed and allow the local government to be in charge of service delivery and development without much interference.
- On the other hand, the local government should respect areas that are not proclaimed and give traditional leaders room to exercise their powers without being undermined.

The above findings and recommendations suggest that much still needs to be done between the local government and traditional leaders over land management, control and authority for the management of the relationship to be harmonious in order for service delivery and development to be done for the local communities.