THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STRATEGIES FOR PROVIDING VOTER EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS: A CASE STUDY OF HOMU VILLAGE, GREATER GIYANI MUNICIPALITY

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DECLARATION

I, Rirhandzu Bertha Maswanganyi, declare that the mini-dissertation "The effectiveness of Strategies for Providing Voter Education in Rural Areas: A Case of Homu Village in Greater Giyani Municipality" hereby submitted for the degree of Masters in Public Administration **(MPA)** at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop School of Leadership) has not been submitted by me at this or any other university, that it is my own work in design and execution, and that the sources I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of references.

Rirhandzu Bertha Maswanganyi: ███████████████

Date signed:

DEDICATION

This mini-dissertation is dedicated to my late parents, Mphahlela Willie and Nyanisi Martha Dlomu, for supporting, believing and planting in me the desire to be educated in my early years, and my sisters Leah, Rachel and Asnath and my only surviving brother Reckson for the support throughout the study.

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ABSTRACT

Despite the adoption of democratic electoral procedures and the establishment of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in post-apartheid South Africa, the strategies for providing voter education in rural areas of the country have not been adequate in terms of creating awareness about democracy and enabling rural citizens to mJlke rational choice during elections (Sadie, Patel, & Baldry 2016:6). It is for this reason that this study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of voter education strategies in one of the rural communities in Greater Giyani Municipality, in Limpopo province.

This study adopted qualitative exploratory research design. The target groups were the local IEC voter educators and community members. Data was collected using one to one individual interviews, observation and literature review. The results of the study show that the IEC used various strategies to promote voter education. However, the dominant use of media was discredited by the community because of the language barrier, lack of ownership, one-way communication, unaffordability and low level of literacy. It was also found that voter education is not provided continuously as stated in IEC documents while shortage of IEC voter educators and limiting education periods pose other challenges. The study also revealed poor voter education coverage to special groups such as the disabled or the marginalised groups due to lack of capacity to teach them. These findings show that voter education is not as effective as it should be. The study therefore recommends that strategies for voter education be strengthened, especially in rural communities where people live in poverty and poor socio-economic conditions. It is further recommended that the IEC revises voter education strategies and uses those that will benefit more people, such as face to face and home visits, so that people feel free to ask questions. Furthermore, the community recommended that the IEC teaches community stakeholders, who will in turn cascade the information down to community members. The reason for this is that people are likely to feel free to communicate and to ask question because the educators will be known to them. The study further recommends that the IEC improves its staff complement to curb the existing shortage of human power. Further, research on evaluating the knowledge of voters on voting matters will be of outmost importance.

Key words: voting, voter education, election, /EC, rural areas

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEC	Australian Electoral Commission
ANC	African National Congress
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EISA	Electoral Institute of South Africa
ENCA	eNews Channel Africa
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
LEO	Local electoral officer
MEC	Member of Executive Council
NICE	National Initiative for Civic Education
PEO	Provincial Electoral Officers
SAFM	South Africa Frequency Modulation
ISSA	Institute for Security Studies in Africa

CHAPTER ONE
OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

South Africa's transition from White minority rule to Non-racial democracy resulted in competitive elections and the birth of democracy. It is evident that the success of these elecfrons depend on the effectiveness of strategies for providing inclusive and meaningful voter education toall citizens by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), particularly to those who are less educated and lack awareness about democracy. The !EC as one of the institutions that support democracy (Chapter 9 institutions) in South Africa is responsible for promotion of voter education to the country's population. The establishment of the Chapter 9 institutions culminated in the creation of the IEC and subsequently the Independent Electoral Commission Act No. 51 of 1996.

In terms of this Act, voter education became the legislated function of the JEC as stipulated in chapter 2, subsections 5 (d), of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1966. In addition to promoting voter education, the IEC should also promote awareness of electoral democracy among voters, to enable the citizens to make individual rational choice during voting. This function was primarily carried out by the Civic Society Organisations (CSOs) that were subcontracted by the IEC to provide voter education during pre-election periods, but the arrangement has changed since 2004 (Booysen & Masterson 2009:421). Voter education became the primary responsibility of the IEC, although CSOs also participate as subcontractors. In 1994, the CSOs managed to provide voter education to 85% (Booysen & Masterson 2009:421) of the populace, of which 20% of the population received direct voter education while a larger percentage received it through the national media (Ibid). Since the establishment of the IEC, South Africa has had five national elections; in 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014.

The preparations for 1994 elections were marked with massive ballot education campaigns to enable voters to put a mark on the correct space in the ballot paper. The Centre for African Development and the U.S. National Democratic Institute were tasked to initiate a project vote to familiarise black people with democratic elections as they were voting for the first time. Matla Trust, Institute for Multi-Party democracy, Black Sash, Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa and EISA were accredited by the IEC to participate in providing voter education in preparation for the 1994 elections (Ballington, 2004:141).

The IEC also took an initiative together with the Department of Basic Education to establish voter education in schools in 2013 (Bromfield, Carstens, Pretorius, Vercueil, & Walls, 2013:100). This was piloted in 100 schools in grades 8 and 9 in the Limpopo Province. The purpose was to infuse voter and democracy education into the school curriculum. This initiative proved to be good and well thought out but appears never to have completely taken off, since pupils in some schools still complete secondary school level without background knowledge of politics except those who may choose to follow political science as a career at tertiary level. According to Maphunye (2013: 23) a South African youth is orientated to democracy very late in life thus do not have high regard for political issues. According to Okon (2014:2), people that have been educated on political issues will not only decide on the party they wish to vote for or support, but will also decide on whether to vote and why, based on an informed decision.

In 2004, the IEC started placing advertisements of voter education in newspapers and on community radio and television stations. With subsequent elections, voter education by the IEC became less and less observed, with the IEC becoming visible only during the election period and hibernating when the elections are over. Citizens who do not possess the crux knowledge of democracy, which is an integral part of voter education, are at a disadvantage and fall prey to manipulations by the political parties who accordingly use their political ideologies to attract more in order to win the elections. In support of this view, Mfundisi (2006:93) maintains that citizens in most rural communities are generally illiterate and are susceptible to manipulation by those in power. The author further argues that voter education should aim atmaking voters aware of the purpose of elections, their voting rights and electoral procedures, and if these requirements are not met, voter apathy is pronounced. Because voters do not seem to receive voter education that informs them the rationale behind voting, and the values of democracy as expected, some people vote for political parties that bring
them T-shirts, food parcels and those that promise social grants or employment upon winning the election.

Despite the fact that South Africa has had five national democratic elections, it is important to mention that the effectiveness of voter education strategies in the rural context appears to have been understudied as evidenced by lack of literature on this topic. The literature consulted however indicated that, several studies conducted in South Africa and other countries dealt with voter turnout, behaviour of voters during voting periods, the role of media in voter education, voting patterns as well as women and youth participation in voting. Furthermore, previous studies on effectiveness of voter education were not clear in terms of

rural context in the country. It is against this background the current researcher saw the need to explore the effectiveness of voter education strategies in rural areas where most people are poor and illiterate, and ownership of a radio and television depend on the individual's socio-economic status.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the adoption of international democratic electoral procedures and the establishment of the IEC in post-apartheid South Africa, the strategies for providing voter education in rural areas of the country have not been effective in terms of creating awareness about democracy and enabling rural citizens to make rational choice during elections (Jennings, 1991:11). A study undertaken by Tracy (2016) on the effectiveness of voter education strategies revealed that some participants expressed that they did not register to vote because they did not have enough information to make an informed decision, while others indicated that voting will only make a difference to political party members. When people lack electoral knowledge, their vote become meaningless because they do not know why they should vote.

According to Kutya, Mathoho, Poswayo and Shisanya (2014:1), a free and fair election is not only about casting a vote, but a participatory process where voters engage in public debates and have information about political parties, policies, candidates and the election process itself. In the same vein, Jennings (1991:11) concurred with Kutya *et al.,* by stating that political participation is a by-product of voter and civic education and should be meaning in terms of promoting a sense of civic duty, knowledge of democratic principles as well as the value of voting. Voter education strategies should equip citizens with awareness about voter's rights, obligations, civic participation and informed choice. Such knowledge would enable voters to cast their votes based on sound judgment and not be motivated by political pressure and intimidation.

The observation regarding the gaps that exists in the provision of voter education was identified by the researcher as a member of the rural community in the study area. Firstly, the voter education offered by the IEC appears to be limited to balloting education. It is not known if this inadequacy in the provision of voter education as observed by the researcher is related to lack of voter education policy or lack of national voter education curriculum regarding what to teach. Secondly, the IEC, which is the legislative custodian of voter education, appears to be visible during election periods while according to the 2011/2012   Electoral Commission

Annual Report by Pitso (2011:21), 2003 IEC Portfolio Committee civic and voter education is an ongoing activity to keep the electorate continuously informed and updated on electoral issues. Thirdly, face to face voter education sessions and political debates are either minimal or non-existent in some areas, especially in rural communities where it is mostly needed, as some people cannot even read newspapers due to low literacy level (Diphahla; 201O). From the researcher's observation, voter education strategies through a television, radio, cell phone and the newspaper benefits few pe Ie as there is no full coverage in terms of some indigenous languages. As a result, only people who speak the language used by the broadcasting channel benefit, especially on television.

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The current researcher was motivated by a study conducted by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) on a voter satisfaction survey post 1994 elections which revealed that 68% of the study sample stated that the IEC's voter education was effective. The researcher thought of undertaking this study to determine if voter education was effective and was not limited to balloting education, which talks about which people are eligible to vote, where to register, where and how to put a mark on the ballot paper.

Election authorities often take it for granted that because people have voter education information in accurate form just because it has been made public on the television, radio and in newspapers Election management bodies often forget that lack of ownership of television and the presence of electricity pose a problem (Schulze-Herzenberg, Aling'o & Gatimu, 2013). There is also no guarantee that all information written in newspapers is actually needed since some people read the newspapers selectively. The researcher considered it imperative to conduct a study of this nature, since previous studies on the topic have not been explored in Greater Giyani District. It is within this context that the researcher observed the need to evaluate the effectiveness of voter education strategies in one of the rural villages in this area.

1.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The focus of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of voter education in rural communities. The assumption of the study was based on that, voter education strategies were not effective to equip voters with voting and democracy knowledge that would enable them to vote being informed. It is hoped that the study will assist the IEC to identify the gaps that might be existing in their voter education strategies and to implement meaningful voter education strategies especially in rural areas where most people are less literate. To the

electorates, the study will add insight knowledge of elections and democracy that will enable them to vote having understood what voting entails, the rationale behind voting and how to vote. The study may also identify challenges that the IEC may not be aware of thus, helping the IEC office to improve its performance. The study may offer other academics in the discipline of Public Administration an opportunity to undertake further studies on similar or related topics on a wider scope.

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1.5 THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to explore the effectiveness of strategies for providing voter education in rural areas, with reference to Homu village in Greater Giyani Municipality, Limpopo province.

1.6 THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are:

- To ascertain the effectiveness of voter education strategies implemented by the IEC in rural areas;
- To examine the challenges in the provision of voter education in rural areas; and
- To make recommendations to enhance voter education in rural context.

1.7 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There are several research questions that need to be answered by this study. The following are some of the most important questions that are asked:
- What is the extent of effectiveness of voter education strategies implemented by the IEC in rural areas?
- What are the challenges encountered in the provision of voter education in rural areas?
- What should be done to enhance voter education in rural context?

1.8 DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

For the purposes of this study, the following key concepts are defined as follows:

Voter education: According to Okon (2014:2) voter education is the dissemination of information, materials andprogrammes designed to inform electorates about the specifics of the voting process for a particular election. Voter education involves providing information on who is eligible to vote, how to register, where to register, how to check names in the voters' roll, what type of elections are being held; where, when and how to vote; who the candidates are; and how to deal with election complaints and disputes.it includes democracy and civic education. Voter education is essential in ensuring that voters exercise their democratic rights ACE project (2014).

Voter information: Voter information refers to the fundamentals of the elections, the eligibility to vote, when to register where to vote, where, when and how to vote. Provision of voter education to citizens is the role the Election Management Authority namely the IEC in South Africa. It differs from voter education in that voter education is designed to ensure that voters are willing and ready to vote. Voter education entails election literacy and the confidence that the electoral process is appropriate in governments and promoting policies that will benefit all the citizens ACE project (2014).

Civic education. Civic education is an on-going citizen education aimed at building a universal culture of democracy, human rights, the rule of law as well as the roles and duties of every member of the society through a variety of strategies and it compliments voter education. The goal of civic education is to mould the attitudes of the citizens towards the development of responsible citizenship (Pitso 2011:21).

Independent Electoral Commission. Levin and Van Schoor (2013:29) define the Independent Electoral Commission as an independent, impartial institution established by Chapter 9 Of the Constitution of South Africa to strengthen constitutional democracy. The Commission manages national, provincial and municipal elections and ensure free and fair elections through the participation of citizens, political parties and civil society.

Democracy: The word is derived from two Greek word *"demos* and *kratein"."Demos"means* people and kratein to govern or to rule. The word has its root in the "power of the people". Democracy is therefore, a system of government where people change their rulers in a peaceful manner and the government is given the right to govern because people say so (Becker and Raveloson, 2008: 3). It is also defined as a government in which the supreme authority lies with the people AEC project 2014.

1.9 STRUCTURE OF MINI-DISSERTETION

Chapter one: Overview of the study: In this chapter the background of the study is outlined. The chapter also covers the problem statement, the aims, the significance, and the motivation of the study as well as the study objectives.

Chapter two: This chapter focuses on the review of relevant literature related to voter education at international and national level.

Chapter three: This chapter emphasizes the research design aiid methodology, more specifically the research method, design, population, sampling, data collection and data analysis techniques applied in this study..

Chapter four: This chapter concentrates on data analysis, interpretation and presentation of findings from qualitative one-on-one interviews.

Chapter five: This chapter summarizes the study findings, provides an overall conclusion and outlines the recommendations and the possible solutions in line with the results derived from chapter four and explains the concluding remarks.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter aimed at introducing the reader to the topic. The purpose is to enable the reader to follow what the chapter is all about. The chapter provided an overview of the study, statement of the research problem, research questions, motivation of the study, significance of the study, definition of concepts and highlighted the outline of the chapters. Chapter 2 will focus on literature review.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Literature review, according to Mouton (2001:87), is a review of existing scholarship or an available body of knowledge to determine how previous researchers have investigated the research problem that one is interested in. According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2007:263), the purpeoe of literature review is to learn from others how they have theorised and conceptualised the topic and to stimulate new ideas, to determine what is known about the topic, what instruments they have used and to what effect. The purpose of this chapter is to review literature relevant to the topic and objectives of the study. The objectives of the study are to ascertain the effectiveness of voter education strategies implemented by the IEC in rural areas; examine the challenges in the provision of voter education in rural areas and to make recommendations to enhance voter education within rural context. This chapter is organised into the following sub-sections: The first section focuses on conceptualising voter education. Section two presents international experience on the provision of voter education. Section three presents South African experience in the provision of voter education. Finally, the last section presents the challenges experienced in voter education and provides conclusive remarks based on the discussion.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Democracy

The word is derived from two Greek word *"demos* and *kratein"."Demos"means* people and kratein to govern or to rule (Becker and Raveloson, 2008: 3). Therefore, democracy refers to the government of the country by the people of that country.

Two forms of democracy are differentiated, direct and indirect democracy. Direct democracy comprises a form of government where all citizens directly participate in the political decision making process. Indirect democracy also comes in two forms namely, participatory and representative democracy (Pitso, 2011:22). Understanding the elections in context, requires one interrogate the concept of democracy which literally means the people governing themselves. According to Becker and Reveloson (2008), democracy is the government that comes from the people and it is exercised by those people for their own interest. According to Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, democracy is a human right. A

right to participate in the governing of own country directly or through free election of

representatives. In democracy, the will of the people is expressed through free and periodic elections which are held by secrete vote. For people to understand and be able to link democracy with elections, they need to be educated on both. Democratic values such as freedom, equality, tolerance and people's right to participate in decision making should guide their development. South Africa uses a representative democracy in which people vote for other people to represent the in government. Although elections are central to democracy but, they do not guarantee democracy or human rights because they can be rigged and be rendered unfair.

2.2.2 Elections

According to Makwembere, Chirimambowa and Chimedza cited in (Sebo/a 2017), the historicity of elections and democracy in Africa is mired exclusively in racialized colonial politics that viewed the "natives as subjects and not as citizens who also had equal rights. The revolutionary struggles waged in African countries laid the foundation for modem day democracy and election in these countries.

Elections constitute one of the most important pillars of democracy. Elections are according to Struwig, Roberts and Vivier (2011), the primary channel through which citizens participate in the government of their country. In order to carry this mandate, the IEC has constitutionally been charged with the responsibility to oversee elections, ensuring that they are free and fair and occur in a democratic environment where citizens are allowed to exercise their rights. In order to meet this demand, the IEC should according to the Independent Electoral Act (51:1996) promote voter education and sound knowledge of democratic processes to the electorates in such a way that they are aware of their civic rights.

The relationship between elections and democracy is that the power of the electorates to elect their representatives is grounded on informed decision making of the citizens (Sebake and Mathebula cited in Sebola 2017). In South Africa where representative democracy is practised, elections are viewed as a special feature for the maturation of democracy. While the elections are expected to be free and fair and be conducted within the tenets of democracy, corrupt representatives and failure of the country's citizenry to hold the representatives accountable undermines the maturity of democracy in South Africa.

2.2.3 Voter education

There appears to be a controversy in the manner in which different scholars understand and conceptualise voter education. The discourse surrounding this issue bears testimony to how voter education is implemented by those responsible to promote it. Other concepts related to voter education such as civic education and voter information further complicates how voter education is defined since in some cases, these concepts are sometimes used interchangeably with voter education.

Jennings (1999:4) describes voter education as the process by which citizens are educated on how to register and vote, develop a sense of civic duty to participate in the electoral process and learn to respect the outcome of legitimate elections. Jennings argues that voters should not only be taught where, when and how to vote but should also convince voters that casting a vote will make a difference in their lives. Citizens make sensible choices if they are aware of the purpose of election, their voting rights and obligations. Voter education strategies should address fundamental issues of why people should trust the political system and why they need to participate in nation building. Likewise, Tsie (2003:148) explains voter education as an education in support of elections through which voters are enabled to participate in electoral politics and are ready to cast their vote elections. Tsie's definition of voter education revolves around the mechanics of how to vote, knowledge of party symbols and it includes why it is necessary to vote. Okan and Lawal (cited in Falade & Adeyemi 2015:114) view voter education as being concerned with the development of values, social norms, skills, and democratic ideals in the citizens. According to Totemeyer (2010:125), voter education is a reciprocal process, where the voter educator serves while the prospective voter receives. Although the above authors have described voter education from their own perspectives, their definitions, with the exception of Jennings (1999) and Tsie's (2013) definitions, are nonspecific as only the principles of voter education were highlighted. In this study, voter education is viewed as educating the citizens about the mechanics of voting, informed choice, the importance of voting, public accountability, the political system of the country as well as the citizens' rights and responsibilities in self-governing at the appropriate level of the citizen.

2.2.4 Voter information

Voter information refers to giving information to voters about the eligibility to vote, when to register, where and when to vote ACE project (2014). It is a subset of voter education and is disseminated before the electoral event. Consists of information that enables qualified citizens to vote. It is time-bound to electoral cycle and is provided by election authorities.

2.3 INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES ON VOTER EDUCATION

This section highlights how voter education is carried out in different countries. The choice of the country was based on the fact the countries chosen also run competitive elections which are preceded by voter education campaigns. Most democratic countries have adopted a multiparty system of holding regular democratic and competitive elections. In such countries, elections are overseen by the electoral management bodies. Because elections are competitive, political parties contesting to win elections'ilold campaigns to sell their manifestos and policies to voters using various campaigning strategies. Some of the strategies are accompanied by vote buying, intimidation of voters, patronage and fraudulent activities during voter registration. The means of conveying voter education that have been found to be effective in almost all the countries include the media (television, radio and newspapers). Social media like cellular phone messages, Twitter, and Facebook, are also gaining recognition. All countries holding elections view voter education as important in that it provides the citizens with information that prepares voters to make informed choices based on sound judgement when going to the polls. The recruitment of voters to vote for a particular party in an election varies dramatically from country to country. Country variations result from the nature of the political regime and level of democratic development.

2.3.1 Voter education in the Philippines

Schaffer (2010:1) studied voter education in the Philippines. The title of his study was Clean Elections and the Great Unwashed: Vote Buying and Voter Education in the Philippines. Schaffer found that elections were characterised by what he called *'dirty electoral practices'* such as vote buying, voter intimidation, double voting and fraudulent voter registration. In Philippines, voter education is the responsibility of the civic educators, many of whom are from the middle and upper class. Because of dirty electoral practices, the civic middle and upper class civic educators found elections to be a source of frustration and anxiety and tried to curb vote buying by forming a moral voter education movement in an attempt to convince low class voters to stop selling their votes.

During the lead up to 2001 elections, the poll watching groups for free and fair elections sponsored a variety of radio stations, television and newspaper public service ads on the evils of vote buying. These groups distributed flyers, pamphlets and posters explaining how evil vote buying is. Some of the messages in the pamphlets were bearing messages such as, "your vote is valuable", "your vote should not be treated as a commodity and your vote does not have a price". Other written messages were "do not be blinded by money, vote with

your conscious", and vote for the right candidate". These kind of messages indicate that voter education was not effective if non-existent (Schaffer 2010:6).

The strategies that these groups used for disseminating voter education messages included classroom mock polls, radio, television and newspapers. The main perpetrators of vote buying, voter intimidation, double voting and fraudulent voter registration were politicians who committed these acts during voter education campaigns. Schaffer indicated that in 2002, about three million voters were offered some form of payment by political parties' candidates during their campaigns. The moral voter education movement didnot match up well with the low class vote, as they found vote selling to be beneficial. They watched anti-vote buying advertisements on television but did not get the message of true voter education clearly. As a result, election after election, politicians who belonged to the liberal reformist movement and who were perceived to be inept, depraved and corrupt, did well during elections and returned to power. Most of these vote buying politicians worked very hard to cultivate the poor vote. They sponsored community projects such school building, street lighting, discounted funerals and provided more direct payoffs to voters by supplying them with food, money, free medical care and scholarships. To protect this pool of votes, politicians took measures to protect relocation of poor voters to other areas outside of their bailiwicks. A lesson learned from the above study is that where the is no legislated body; Election Management Body to oversee the running of elections, the results of such elections do not reflect the true will of the people.

2.3.2 Voter education in Kenya

During the years 1992 and 1997, Kenya was a single-party state and elections were not heled. There was no need for elections since the incumbent would automatically be re- elected unopposed. During those periods, were hardly free and fair in Kenya due to interference from the executive through the provincial administration. Therefore, the extent to which one can argue that the elections were free and fair during it single party period is limited. The choices that the electorate made had to be approved by the top echelons of the ruling party. This behaviour left the Kenya population with limited freedom of speech, something that undermines democracy. Elections were managed by the office of the President and people who were found to be disloyal to the ruling party were punished. The restriction of electoral competition during the one-party state was due to the fact that the presidency was not subjected to any competition. The politics were mostly influenced by

clannism and localism and election campaigns were conducted according to patron-client relationship in which politicians promised the potential voters goodies such as tarred roads, running water and employment for the youths in the capital city (Kwatembe 2012:8). Daniel Moi took over the presidential seat in 1978 and subsequent to that, Kenya became a multi-party state in 1991. For the first time, the presidency was put to contest in the 1992 elections. That election paved a new way in Kenya's politics although it was characterised by poor voter education and vote rigging (Kwatembe 2012:9).

Subsequent to the 2013 elections in Kenya, a study on sources of voter education by Schulz-Herzenberg, Aling'o and Gatimu (2015) revealed that the most popular media for political news were radio with 82%, television 54%, followed by newspapers with 32%. The internet and mobile (cell) messaging were also gaining significant attraction at the time. Other sources of political information included spouse/partner, family member, friends or associates such as neighbours and co-workers. These sources were found to be strong in influencing in voters. The television debates helped people to form opinions about the presidential candidates and their coalitions. The debates also provided the opportunity for presidential candidates to be questioned on various issues of national interest and they were held accountable for their previous performance in office.

Although the media is one of Kenya's most trusted public institutions in providing voter education, it is not without shortcomings Some felt that the political ownership of media compromises the neutrality of the media, although 66% of the respondents felt that media messages were uncensored. The media is often criticised for poor neutrality, giving too much emphasis to the main presidential candidates, to the detriment of other smaller parties. Lessons learnt from this study are that the power of media does not supersede the power of a human being, as evidenced in the disadvantages explained above. Face to face political debate in public halls, door to door visits, voter education campaigns during Imbizo's and in public places like taxi ranks and schools remain invaluable strategies of providing voter education (Schulz-Herzenberg, Aling'o and Gatimu: 2015).

2.3.3 Voter education in Malawi

According to Sadie (2001:78), Malawi held its first election in 1994. An Independent Electoral Commission was entrusted with the demarcation of the new constituencies, voter registration, civic education, campaigns and poll administration. Although the observer teams described the elections as free and fair, irregularities were also observed. With regard to campaigning, the Malawi Congress Party enjoyed the privilege of the incumbency. It had the

support of the state-owned media and unrestricted access to funds, while the security forces were employed to intimidate opposition parties and disrupted their campaigns. Other electoral anomalies were poor registration and disenfranchisement of potential voters in the opposition strongholds to finding voting materials with the politicians of the ruling party.

According to Peters-Berries (2005), voter education in Malawi is conducted immediately before and during elections, while civic education is provided continuously for purposes of strengthening democracy. Their means of providing voter education are local radio stations, televisions, traditional rallies, house to house visits and whistle stops in the most rural areas. The Malawian Electoral Commission has developed a standardised civic and voter education policy to determine the framework under which civic and voter education is provided. In contrast, voter education in South Africa is governed by electoral acts, the absence of voter education policy and a national voter education curriculum remains a gap in the country's electoral system.

2.3.4 Voter education in Nigeria

Okon (2014:3) conducted a study on voter education in Nigerian broadcast media. The study aimed to determine how well the media, especially the radio, had been effective in carrying out its role of informing the populace on civic issues. Okon defines voter education as the education that informs the public about the specifics and mechanics of the voting process. In this regard, voter education involves providing information on who is eligible to vote, where and how, how to check the voters' roll, what type of elections are being held and when to vote. Okon found that media was the main source in conveying voter education messages, though he argued that it should be more objective. It was found that the broadcast stations did not create platform for discourse analysis on political issues. He argued that media reports should not stop at generalizations such as "the elections were successful'' but should indicate how successful. and why.

Another article written by Fa/ade and Adeyemi (2015: 113) states that one hundred years of civic education in Nigeria define civic education as an education that is concerned with the development of values, social norms and skills. Before western education, the training of citizens in civic education in Nigeria was one of the goals in traditional education. Less attention was paid to ethics and morals such as honesty, patriotism, loyalty, modesty and obedience. As a result, the country's social behaviour was characterised by moral decadence. restiveness, cybercrimes and terrorist activities. Nigerian schools served as

literacy centres and emphasis was placed on acquiring certificates in order to work. These activities pose a threat to the country's integrity and survival as a nation. At a hundred years of civic education by 2015, the country had not established a stable programme to entrench political participation.

From the above sources consulted, it appears that the media was the main vehicle through which voter education was provided in Nigeria. Although media was regarded as the most effective means of providing voter education in Nigeria, civic education was not given the required prominence in the Nigeria school programme. Before independence in 1960, the colonial education had little or no relevance to the socio-cultural and political situations in Nigeria. At present, the Nigerian society places emphasis on certificates and wealth. Consequently, rather than producing objective and patriotic human beings, ascited in Falade and Adeyemi (2015: 113), the Nigerian educational programme produced many uncritical citizens who are also selfish and indifferent to public affairs.

2.3.5 Voter education in Botswana

According to Maundeni (2005:168) voter education in Botswana is the legal responsibility of the Independent Electoral Commission, with the assistance of Civil Society Organisations (CS0s). The CSOs have the capacity, skills and resources to reach the diverse groups in the country. The CSOs include campaign workers, teachers' organisations, student representatives, women and youth organisations as well as professional bodies. CSOs ensure public accountability by the government and its agencies to the population. These CSOs augment voter education during elections and political parties focus on the socio-economic and political concerns of the citizens. The following strategies are used for providing voter education (Maundeni 2005:168):

- **The media.** Media strategies include radio programmes, television channels, newspapers, magazines and internet. Media as modes of conveying information are less effective in societies that are rural and less illiterate. Media provide information on policy issues, provide platforms for discussions, empower people about their political rights and disseminate information about political parties' candidates, and the electoral system of the country. This enables the voter to make an informed decision when voting. However, the ownership of radio stations by the ruling party and some of the political parties compromises the neutrality of media as a source of information provision because it is used as a propaganda tool.

- **Religious groups.** Religious groups are a part of civil society that have an impact in the provision of voter education due to their following in Botswana.

- **Political parties.** Political parties are also regarded as a civil society group. Their participation in providing voter education is debatable as they are perceived to be outside the realm of the society because their aim is to seize power. Political parties remain indispensable in voter education because of their interest in political contest. Unlike in South Africa, political parties in Botswana are not partly government funded, but fund for themselves. As a result, they concentrate on areas that are likely to support them during an election. Like other countries, Botswana also views voter education as important in that it prepares eligible voters to cast their votes, motivates voters to be willing and ready to vote, and it fosters democratic values and ethics of the country, something which Nigeria does not consider as important. However, the CS0s in Botswana are weak as not many people participate in politics (Maundeni 2005:168).

A lesson learnt in this article is that Botswana values voter education and has everything that it takes to provide voter education. The country's CSOs are all inclusive in terms of representation and can reach a large number of people at all levels (Maundeni 2005). What the country needs is to strengthen the Civic Society Organisations in providing education.

2.3.6 Voter education in Tanzania

Mallya (2010) conducted a study on the role of civil society organisations in Tanzania. Mallya found that prior to the adoption of a multiparty system in Tanzania, the country was using a single party rule system which did not make use of civil society organisations to conduct civil and voter education in a way of developing civil competence in the citizens. As a result civil competence in Tanzania is very low.

The emergence of civil society organisations came in as an outcome of the discussion that took place during the Tanzania Presidential Commission Report (Nyalali1991). Before then, Tanzania civic education was delivered in a form of political education in schools and colleges using radio broadcasts, printed materials and books to communicate the message. The purpose of civil education was to mould the behaviour of the citizens so that they accept unquestioningly the one party ideology of socialism and self-reliance. According to Gasarasi, cited in Mallya (2009:107), this acquiescent political behaviour in the citizens confirms the absence of a democratic political culture. As a result, Tanzanian electorates are unaware of

their rights and obligations and their participation in elections is very low. Public accountability is not practised and people vote for reasons that have nothing to do with influencing the policies of the country. The state emasculates the civil organisation societies by donating gifts, thus perpetuating low civil competence.

The information presented above indicates that Tanzania appears not to be fully democratic, since civil education does not contribute to developing political competence in the citizens. According to Sana (2010: 145) Tanzania held its first competitive elections in 1995. The first elections were met with challenges of misusing state-owned resources by the incumbency, inadequate election materials, inadequate and incompetent election personnel, inadequate voter education and administrative errors in voter registration. In the run up for the 2010 elections, the house to house voter education campaigns and the offering of gifts paved the way for corruption. Illiterate voters had limited capacity to exercise free choice and fell prey to manipulation by the ruling party. The ruling party dominated the campaigns by denying access to grounds claimed to belong to them. Voter education was the responsibility of the National Electoral Commission. The campaigns were characterised by lack of comprehensive civic education strategy of which voter education is a part. Most Civil Society Organisations in Tanzania had no skills to facilitate meaningful learning and donors were reluctant to finance the government, which did not have expertise. This indicates absence of true democracy in Tanzania.

2.3.7 An analysis of lesson drawn from the international experiences on voter education

It is worthwhile to provide the synoptic view of the international trends regarding voter education for purposes of grasping a comprehensive picture on how voter education is provided and whether it is effective or not. The review of the literature reveals that voter education in almost all the countries is managed by the Election Management Bodies and is provided by the Civil Society Organisations and political parties. It should however be noted that political parties have vested interest in providing voter education since their aim is to win the elections. In all democratic countries where the government of the country is put into the administration of the country through a vote, voter education becomes an important component of the elections. For elections to take place, the citizens have to be prepared so that, they vote being well informed of why they vote and what they vote for. However, in some countries for an example, Tanzania, citizens are still politically incompetent as they still fail to hold their political leaders accountable which is a special feature of matured democracy.

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The purpose of voter education in Tanzania was to mould the behaviour of citizens so that they accept unquestiongly the one- party ideology of socialism and self-reliance. Because of this behaviour, voter education is not effective, resulting in low civil competence and low democratic political culture (Mallya,2010).

Elections in Philippines were characterised by what was called *'dirty electoral practices'* such as vote buying, voter intimidation, double voting and fraudulent voter registration. Becaus of dirty electoral practices, the civic middle and upper class civic educators found elections to be a source of frustration and anxiety and tried to curb vote buying by forming a moral voter education movement in an attempt to convince low class voters to stop selling their votes. The strategies that these groups used for disseminating voter education messages included classroom mock polls, radio, television and newspapers. The main perpetrators of vote buying, voter intimidation, double voting and fraudulent voter registration were politicians who committed these acts during voter education campaigns (Schaffer, 2010). The presence of vote buying practices indicate ineffective voter education.

Political parties in Botswana arenot government funded but fendfor themselves. As a result, political parties concentrate on areas that are likely to support them during elections when providing voter education yet, voter education should be non-partisan. Civil organisations that take part in providing voter education also pursue special interest in voter education. They mobilise their own constituencies for example, youth voters, women, rural and disabled voters thus compromising the neutrality of voter education. This is worsened by the fact that the media as modes of communication are weak and as such are used as a propaganda tools (Maundeni, 2005). In Lesotho, voter education is ineffective because it is provided as a "one size fits all" to all citizens. It does not consider the level of education and the rural- context. The content is the same across the country. Because of this, people vote for reasons that have nothing to do with their lot or anything that could change their circumstances for the better (Ngozwana, 2015).

The most popular mode for providing voter education in Kenya are media. Included in these are the local radio stations, televisions, cellular phones and newspapers. Because the Kenyanian society is divided along ethnic lines, the threat of the social media for becoming political and ethnic activism is real. This hampers effective and non-partisan voter education because of the level of exposure to voter education messages. Although some reports did give credit to media, the media are not always neutral as they influence elections outcomes

with biased coverage. In addition, some media platforms are powerful electoral actors (Schulz-Herzenberg, Aling'o & Gatimu, 2015).

A lesson learnt from the international trends with regard to voter education is that, there are competitive elections that are preceded by voter education in all democratic countries. It is also worth mentioning that there is an element of human interference in elections and voter education as provided in the above summary.

2.4 VOTER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.4.1 History of voter education in South Africa

The historical background knowledge regarding the gaining of democracy coupled with voter education should be the point of departure in understanding the importance and the origin of voter education in South Africa. South Africa's liberation struggle to overthrow the apartheid government culminated in the democratic elections. April 27 1994 remains an important date in the South African calendar. It is the date on which the first democratic non-racial elections were held and therefore the date that marked the dawn of democracy in South Africa on that day, as quoted by the late and the first president of a democratic South Africa:

> *"The images of the South Africans going to the polls that day are burned in my memory. Great lines of patient people snaking through the dirt roads and streets of towns and cities; old women who had waited half a century to cast their first vote saying they felt like human beings for the first time in their lives; white men and women saying they were proud to live in a free country at last"* (Mandela 1994:22).

The 1994 elections brought in a new political order in which Black people became South African citizens for the first time, as the suffrage was previously enjoyed by White South Africans only. During the apartheid era, only white political parties could canvass for votes, while emerging black political parties were banned. To date, April the 27thhas been endorsed in South African year calendars as Freedom Day and a national public holiday on which the birth of democracy is commemorated annually.

Most South Africans, roughly 80%, had never voted before, and electoral rolls were non-existent (a large proportion of the electorate was living in remote areas and was barely literate). In the run up to 1994 election, enormous effort was made to educate the citizens about the mechanics of voting. According to Moller (1995:10), the election date had been set in mid-1993, which *left* little time to prepare for an event of such magnitude. The Independent

Electoral Commission (IEC) was established to organise and oversee the elections, and began its work in January 1994. Citizens who had no voting knowledge and who were previously marginalized were provided with voter education by the Independent Electoral Commission.

An Independent Electoral Commission, one of the chapter 9 institutions established under the Constitution to support democracy in South Africa. This then implied that the role of the JEC had to Be established to manage the election and to provide voter education to the public. On that voting day, young and old people eligible to vote came in buses, on foot, in wheel chairs and others assisted by walking sticks.

Moller (1995) conducted a survey soon after 1994 elections. The aim was to evaluate the effectiveness of voter education and voting behaviour. The results of the study indicated that voter education was effective. However, one of the challenges was to bring voter education to older first-time voters in the remote rural areas and to instruct voters who could not even read and write in the mechanics of voting. The results of Mailer's survey also revealed that voter education reached potential voters through electronic media. African language radio stations were singled out as the most important means of communication for black voters. Apart from the media, family members, friends, political parties and voter educators assisted in voter education.

According to Mfundisi (2006:96), citizens in rural areas are generally illiterate andsusceptible to manipulation by those in power. Voters who do not understand the rationale behind voting are at a disadvantage. It is hard for them to make informed decisions and they are easily misled. Because of this challenge, Electoral Democracy Development and Education unit of the IEC responsible for voter education was established to enable people to understand what election and voting entail. The IEC contracts temporary field workers to manage and provide voter education programmes after receiving intensive training (IEC 2002:17).

The Electoral Commission report of 2011/12 states that the IEC has outreach programmes whose primary purpose is to teach civic and democracy education to the populace. The main aim of these outreach programmes is to educate the public on democracy and electoral processes pre and post the electoral period. While it appears to be a good idea to extend voter education post the election period, this seems to be a lip service in South Africa, as observed by the researche.r

2.4.2 Legal frameworks related to the provision of voter education

There are a number of Acts that are relevant to the management of elections. These include: the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No.108 of 1996; the Electoral Commission Act No 51 of 1996, the Electoral Act 73 of 1998; and the Local Government: Municipal Electoral Act 27 of 2000.

2.4.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996

Section 181 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa makes provision for the establishment of Chapter 9 institutions. The main objective of all chapter 9 institutions is to support and to strengthen the constitutional democracy of the country. The Independent Electoral Commission is one of the constitutional chapter 9 institutions charged with the responsibility of managing the country's National, Provincial and Local government elections. The following legislations governing the practice of the IEC were established under the constitution:

2.4.2.2 The Electoral Commission Act No. 51 of 1996

The Act makes provision for establishment and composition of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and its powers. The IEC is tasked with managing the country's elections, ensuring that all elections are free and fair. Within its scope of multiple responsibilities is the promotion of voter education to the South African populace as stipulated in section 5 (k) of Chapter 2. In carrying out its activities, the IEC should be perceived by the electorate as being independent of the government, non-partisan in its functions and impartial in dealing with electoral stakeholders (LGE guide 2011:3).

2.4.2.3 The Electoral Act No. 73 of 1998

The act makes provisions for voter registration requirements, accredits observers and voter educators, determines election time tables, procedures for voting, counting of votes and declaration of results. The following regulations are relevant to the Electoral Act:
    (a) Regulations concerning the Submission of Candidates lists, 2004
    (b) Regulations Concerning the Registration of Voters, 1998
    (c) Regulation on Accreditation of Observers, 1999
    (d) Regulation on Accreditation of Voter Education Providers, 1998

2.4.2.4 Municipal Electoral Act No.27 of 2000

The act deals with procedures relating to municipal elections only. The Electoral Act only explains accreditation processes for voter educators. According to the Act, any natural or juristic person may apply to provide education by completing an application form and delivering the completed form, together with documentation in support of the application, to the Commission at its office in Pretoria. The Act also provides the code of conduct ?or voter education.

2.5 Strategies for communicating voter education in South Africa

2.5.1 Voter education strategies used in 1994 elections

According to Moller (1995), the 1994 election witnessed a massive of black voters coming to cast their vote for the first time. Although the JEC voter programmes targeted all citizens, the main target were black voters. The main voter educators were the African National Congress political party, the IEC, church organisations and civic organisations. Speeches, pamphlets, comics, film videos, role play, workshops, newspapers, radio and television broadcast were used as voter education medium. The radio, television and newspapers, written in English, Afrikaans or African languages were also considered the main sources of communicating voter education messages. In addition, friends, family members, colleagues, political parties and trade unions also play a role. Other vehicles for conveying voter education messages included, pamphlets, comics, film shows, role play, workshops and theatre. A post-election voter effectiveness analysis was conducted and revealed that 98% of participants stated that voter education was effective and that the information was clear and sufficient. However, few indicated that the information was confusing and indicated the need to be given more information.

2.5.2 Voter education strategies used in 1999 elections

According to Ndletyana (2008), voter education for 1999 elections mimicked the success rate of the previous elections. The exit poll indicated that 96% of voters found voting procedures easy to understand. The strategies did not differ from those followed in 1994. According to Kortze (2006), the door to door campaign became the primary strategy for the ANC's approach in preparation for the 1999 national elections. The campaign portrayed President Mbeki as being accessible to the people. The President conducted door to door campaigns and visited various educational institutions. His main focus was on fighting

corruption and on improving service delivery. His message to the people was that if people vote for small parties they will be wasting their votes.

2.5.3 Voter education strategies used in 2004 National elections

According to Dr Brigalia Barn 2002, the IEC relied heavily on Civic Society Organisation (CS0s) to deliver voter information in preparation for 2004 elections. However, there   was a shift in this arrangement before the elections in 2000. Instead of the CS0s playing th main role in voter education, the IEC took charge of voter education and contracted temporary field workers at local level as coordinators to manage voter education programmes. The field workers were and are still responsible for voter education in each ward to date. Voter education targets areas of lower voter turnout or high rates of spoilt ballots including areas previously affected by re-delimitation of voting district boundaries. Field workers establish links with the CSOs and spread voter education messages during Imbizo's using a range of sources ranging from T-shits, posters, pamphlets and books were used to communicate voter education. The run up to 2004 National elections has seen the IEC coming up with new initiatives in an attempt to improve voter education coverage. A programme for developing voter education to the deaf and blind was developed. Customised materials in the form of braille, large font, audio and sign language were developed to provide a comprehensive voter education for these groups. The challenge is that these initiatives remained as decorated ideas in some rural provinces as voter educators are not trained in these skills.

Post 2004 elections, the IEC launched voter education campaigns in November 2005 (Bauer 2009:28). The aim was toprepare for 2006 local elections. leaflets, posters, print advertising, billboards and electronic media were used topromote voter registration andaddressing voter apathy. Political manifestos from political parties ranged focused mainly on service delivery, job creation, improving water and sanitation services and provision of housing. ANC party candidates were made to take an oath aspromise to fight corruption and underperformance.

2.5.4 Voter education strategies used in 2014 National elections

According to Moller and Hanf (2015:7), the radio, television, newspapers, magazines and other social media were used to enhance voter education messages in preparation for 2014 elections. The Media Monitoring Africa awarded the media with a score of 85% for fairness after finding only 155 of all coverage to be biased which they regarded as a significant achievement (Schulz-Herzenberg 2014:5). Voter education through the radio was reported

to have had the highest reach and constituted 97%. Radio talks were used by the IEC voter educators and made use of telephone which allowed participants to phone back for clarification using own language. A study conducted by Moller and Hanf earlier on in (1995:7) indicated that a large proportion of black people in rural areas received voter education messages through the radio due to lack of ownership of a television and inability to read the newspapers. The problem was aggravated by lack of electricity. In comparison to urban population, television in addition to radio, newspapers and social media (Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, internet, cellular phones) played role in communicating voter education messages.

2.6 Challenges experienced in voter education

2.6.1 Challenges experienced in 1994 national voter education campaigns

According to Moller (1995), the 1994 voter education campaigns did not come without challenges. Post 1994 election, the IEC received 3,594 complaints. The main sources of complaints emanated from irregularities with the voting process, temporary voting cards, pirate voting stations in KwaZulu-Natal and lack of the Inkata Freedom Party stickers and more than 1,000 people were killed in election related violence (Booysen et al (2009:417). One of the challenges experienced in 1994 elections was to address rural voters who could not read or write. This group of citizens was according to Moller estimated to be 30% then. Another challenge was the use of either English or Afrikaans tocommunicate voter education messages in radio andtelevision stations. As a result, rural and less educated citizens were less informed about democracy, as a result, they did not see the value of voting. These were more likely to delay the decision to vote. Lack of voters' roll was also a challenge as there were no demarcated boundaries for voting stations. Asa result, voters were voting anywhere. It was also not easy to determine the number of voters anticipated and the voting materials required.

2.6.2 Challenges experienced in 1999 voter education campaigns

In 1999, the majority of complaints were about the incorrect information on the electoral process, infringement on the rights of competing political parties which saw the tearing down of posters and intimidation of voters. The IEC received 1,114 complaints while Jess than 100 people were killed as result of election related violence (Booysen et al (2009:417). However, the challenges related to voter education in 1999 elections were less than those experienced in 1994. Although there were insufficient funds to drive voter education, no significant impact

on voter turnout was recorded in spite of shortage of funds. The exit poll report by HSRC revealed that 98% were happy about voter education. However, challenges highlighted by Bauer (2009:34) indicated that election campaigns and manifestoes shared common themes: fighting corruption, job creation and good service delivery, housing and fighting unemployment. People expressed dissatisfaction in the way service delivery was dealt with.

2.6.3 Challenges experienced in 2004 national voter education campaigns

According to Booysen et al (2009:416), the 2004 election was the least conflictual of the 1994 and 1999 elections. According to Booysen shortage of voter educators posed a major challenge to the recently formed IEC which was expected to conduct free and fair elections. The issue of shortage of staff brought in a political conflict between the National Party and the ANC mistrusting each other about the appointment of election staff and electoral officers. One other challenge emanated from the Minister of the Department of Home Affairs who wanted the IEC to cover limited voter education and election monitoring programmes, leaving the administrative function of the IEC to Home Affairs. This notion was disputed by the then chairperson of the electoral commission Kriegler who subsequently resigned. Had this state of affairs been allowed to persist, it would have costed the credibility of the IEC.

The 2014 media coverage did not show a relationship between the issues voters cared for and those promoted by the media. Although the responses of the respondents listed unemployment as a key concern followed by poverty and others in the Afro barometer while the media's main focus was on political developments. It was also found that media broadcast at the eve of elections put more emphasis on party campaigning 29%, party politics 23% with only 9% dedicated to corruption (with Jacob Zuma being central to the corruption). The media failed to broadcast the political and ideological diversity of what political parties stand for. As a result, voters also failed to use media to draw their conclusions regarding who to vote for. In addition, the public felt that the public broadcast was biased in favour of the ANC (Schulz-Herzenberg 2014:6).

2.6.4 Challenge experienced in 2006 local government elections

Whereas a large number of people had turned out to cast their votes in 1994 national elections, there was a remarkable decline in 2006 local government elections due to voter apathy. The main causes of voter apathy were related to empty promises like, poor service delivery, lack of jobs, corruption and nepotism where the government was seen hiring family members and friends. Many students showed no interest in registering to vote and voting.

Illiterate farm workers in Koffiefontein found the voting process confusing and many voters lost confidence in the IEC. Surprisingly, with all the above complaints, the ANC took control of all 25 municipalities in the Free State (Bauer 2009:34).

2.6.5 Challenges experienced in 2009 national voter education campaigns

According to Booysen et al (2009:417), the early in the election campaign period, was characterised by evidence of political intolerance, hate speech, obstruction an *er* intimidation. The 2009 party objections were frequently related to the perception that shortage of voting materials in some voting areas had deprived voters of their right to vote. However, the mood calmed down significantly and these incidences did not cause serious objections to the election processes and results.

2.6.6 Challenges experienced in 2014 national voter education campaigns

The 2014 voter participation survey highlighted challenges in voter education. 36% of the citizens stated that they had no knowledge about the existence of the IEC. 37% indicated that they received too little voter information from the IEC. 39% said they will remain loyal to their political parties even if it did not live up to the expectations, 26% indicated that they will vote for another political party 22% would abstain while 6% would wait for explanation before they decide who to vote for (Struwig et al 2014:4). These responses were indicative of ineffective voter education. Under normal circumstance,sone would expect the party loyalist to vote for an alternative political party than abstaining from voting.

According to Schultz- Herzenberg (2014), not all South Africans perceived media as fair. Media coverage is considered as favouring one political party to the other even today. In addition, the media's larger coverage was enjoyed by the larger political parties. The media broadcast was made to be proportional to their levels of support of a political party which discredited smaller political parties. Covering of the top parties constituted 85% of the total coverage with 24 smaller parties receiving 15% of the time. The 2014 voter participation survey by Schultz- Herzenberg (2014), revealed that 36% of the citizens stated that they had no knowledge about the existence of the IEC. 37% indicated that they received too little voter information from the IEC. 39% said they will remain loyal to their political parties even if it did not live up to the expectations, 26% indicated that they will vote for another political party 22% would abstain while 6% would want to understand the reasons for poor service delivery before they decide who to vote for. These responses are indicative of ineffective voter education. Under normal circumstances, one would expect the citizens the reasons behind

voting and one would expect the party loyalists to be agitated and vote for an alternative political party rather than abstaining from voting. The floor crossing which was allowed between 2005 and 2007 also had an impact as it also left voters not knowing who to vote for as their representatives were defecting from party to party. Another challenge highlighted by Maphunye (2014:161) is lack of compulsory voter education in South Africa. In countries where compulsory registration and turning out to vote is practised for an example, Argentina, Brazil, Singapore and many more, elections results reflect a true picture of how people voted in terms of who wins the election. (Young ^{ct} 2006:8).

Because of conflicts that were arising during elections, the IEC saw a need to develop conflict management and conflict resolution project in 2009. The project included the signing of code of electoral conduct by all parties and stakeholders, the establishment of the electoral court, the establishment of the election monitoring and conflict management capacity and frameworks for election security. These programmes are run at provincial level and are headed by the provincial electoral officer (Booysen et al 2009:419). In addition, Booysen in Schulz-Herzenberg 2014:5, noted that the elections were preceded by rapid succession of official openings of dams, schools, houses, bridges and power stations to aid the ANC campaigns thus causing conflicts to the IEC.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the literature review was explored to gain insight of findings by other researchers on the study topic. The topic voter education was conceptualised in an attempt to make it more meaningful, international trends on voter education were explored, the historical background and legal framework governing voter education in South Africa post 1994 were also explored to understand its origin and how voter education is regulated. Various publications were consulted. However, the review of literature indicates that the study topic has been inadequately studied, as very little literature was found on this topic. The summary of international trends indicates that although voter education is provided in all democratic countries, an element of human interference renders it ineffective. The following chapter will focus on research methodology.

CHAPTER3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with literature review wherein different scholars aired their views on conceptualisation of voter education and how voter education should be carried out. This cflapter describes in detail the research methodology and designs used in this study. The chapter further describes the geographical area where the study was conducted, the population of the study and the study sample. The instrument used to collect data, including methods of data analysis, is also described.

3.2 RESEARCH METHOD

There are three types of research approaches, namely quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. Quantitative research is the research in which data are collected or coded into numerical forms and in which statistical analyses are used to determine the significance of the findings (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter 2011:563). The quantitate researcher believes that the best way of measuring theproperties of a phenomenon is through assigning numbers to the perceived qualities of those things. Regarding qualitative research, Terre Blanche *et al.,* (2012:12) describe qualitative research as a systemic research which collects data in the form of written or spoken language. On the other hand, mixed methods research approach is research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, analyses the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study (Polit & Beck 2012:734).

This study adopted a qualitative research method to investigate the efficacy of strategies used to provide voter education. The rationale for choosing a qualitative approach for this study was based on the nature of the research problem which lends itself in measuring the quality of a phenomenon under investigation. Another rationale for choosing a qualitative approach was based on limited resources and the fact that the researcher **is a** member of the community and has been observing the provision of voter education in this area. The primary goal of qualitative research is to provide a dense description of the phenomenon being studied. It aims at describing a phenomenon, rather than explaining human behaviour. The research is conducted in a natural setting, that is, where the phenomenon is being experienced, with the researcher being an instrument of data collection. In this study, the

study was conducted in an area where voter education takes place, and interviews were used to collect data (Creswell 1998:14).

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Mouton (2001:54), a research design is the overall plan or a blueprint of how the researcher intends to conduct the research or answer questions. In this study, an exploratory research design was followed. According to Brink (1996:11), exploratory studies explore the dimensions of a phenomenon, how it manifests itself, and other related factors. Exploratory studies also answer the question: what is going on? Strauss and Corbin (1998:17) state that exploratory studies are done where little previous research was done or no research was conducted. In addition, Babbie and Mouton (2012:79) state that exploratory studies are done to provide a basic familiarity with the topic, to provide more insight into the phenomenon, to develop new hypotheses about an existing phenomenon and it explicates central concepts and constructs (Babbie & Mouton 2012: 287). The main reason behind using this design is to obtain more insight into the phenomenon, since voter education is relatively new in South Africa. Another rationale was to meet the objectives of the study, namely, to explore and discover if people receive voter education and to determine people's knowledge of democracy, as it is an integral part of voter education. The literature consulted indicated that the study topic had not been researched in Greater Giyani Municipality of Mopani District and is under researched elsewhere in South Africa.

3.4 THE STUDY AREA

The study was conducted at Homu village, a rural area located in Greater Giyani Local Municipality under Mopani District in Limpopo Province. The seat of Greater Giyani Municipality is Giyani. The most dominating political structures are the African National Congress (ANC), and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). The area is headed by the Induna supported by his council. The rationale for choosing this area was based on limited resources and time on the side of the researcher, and the fact that the researcher is a member of the community who has been observing the provision of voter education in this area.

3.5 POPULATION

Polit and Beck (2012:273) refer to the population as an entire aggregation of cases in which the researcher is interested. Population is a universe of units from which a sample is to be

collected (Brynard & Hanekom 2012:232). Thetarget population consisted of representatives of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the community members who once participated in voting.

3.6 SAMPLING

According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter (2011:49), sampling is the selection of research participants from the entire population, and involves about which people, settings, events, behaviours and social processes to observe. In qualitative studies, a non-probability sampling is used to obtain a sample. In non-probability sampling, not every element of the population has an opportunity to be selected in the sample. Convenience or purposive sampling are examples of non-probability sampling (Polit & Beck 2012:735). Convenience sampling refers to a kind of sampling in which subjects are included in the study because they volunteered or happened to be at the right place at the right time (Burns & Groove, 2000: 375). In this study, readily available respondents formed a sample. The sample consisted of three (3) IEC representatives and 20 (twenty) community members who some of them represent different political parties, especially the African National Congress **(ANC)** and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). A total number of 23 of respondents from formed a study sample and all participated in the interviews.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is the process of gathering evidence that is needed to address a research problem. Primary data was collected using interview and observation techniques. According to Babbie and Mouton (2012:289), an interview is an interaction between interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has a set of questions that must be asked in a particular order.

In this study, in-depth individual one-on-one interviews were conducted. The interviews were done on face-to-face basis. Open-ended questions, that enabled respondents to speak freely, were used, and participants followed an interview guide when answering questions. An interview schedule was designed to aid data collection. Additionally, the researcher used observation techniques, as the researcher herself resides in the village and understands what is going on with regard to voting education and elections.

The researcher also used literature review as a technique for collecting additional secondary data to complement the findings of this study. Various sources such as government reports, legal and policy documents and research articles were reviewed in the study. The review of

literature consulted consisted also included post-election satisfaction surveys and the previous elections reports. The aim was to establish which voter education strategies were used in each election, which voter education strategies were found to be effective and what challenges were experienced during voter education.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

De Vos et al (2007:333) define dgta analysis as a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. Content analysis was used for analysing data in this study. Neuman (2003:310) defines content analysis as a technique for gathering and analysing the content of text. The wordcontent refers to words, meanings, ideas and themes that are communicated. According to Garbers (1996:129), content analysis entails an objective and systematic analysis of media reports to determine the public agenda on a specific research area. The technique is useful in research studies that deal with current affairs such as politics, economics, crime, religion or education. The technique was chosen because the researcher used qualitative interviews for data collection which fit well in content analysis. The following procedures were used to analyse the data:

- The researcher read through all transcripts and field notes to get a sense of the data, jotting down ideas in the margin as they came up and identifying major topics that match the content.

- The researcher developed a list of major topics, giving attention to the meaning of data. Similar topics were clustered together and were given names. The researcher created columns for unique cluster topics, and topics that could not fit into the columns were listed separately as left-overs and were kept for further consideration.

- The researcher abbreviated topics as codes and wrote these codes next to the appropriate segments of the text. The researcher worked the topics out to determine if new themes could still emerge.

- The researcher then found the most descriptive wording for the topics and turned them into themes and sub-themes. The number of themes and sub-themes were reduced by grouping topics that relate to each other, drawing lines between themes and sub-themes to show their interrelationships. The final decision was be made regarding each theme and sub-theme.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

De Vos et al (2007:62) define ethics as a set of moral principles which are suggested by an individual or group, which are widely accepted and which offer rules of conduct towards participants, employers, other researchers and research assistants. In this study, procedures for maintaining ethical considerations included the following:

- *Informed consent and participant authorisation.* Information regarding participation in the study was provided to all research participants in a written form. Participants who could not read were given information verbally and all were allowed to ask questions for clarity. Informed consent gave participants the right to self-determination so that they could participate voluntarily or decline from participation at any stage of the study without penalty. Information provided in the consent form included:
    - Explanation of study goals: The goals of the study were explained in a language that participants could understand i.e. in Xitsonga and, though terms were avoided in this study, they were also used where they were found to be beneficial to the subjects.
    - The type of data collected and the method used for collecting data were also explained to the participants to enable them to make an informed decision. Participants were informed why and how they were selected for the study and how many people were involved in the study.
    - The fact that there would be no stipend and that the researcher was conducting the research for study purposes was also explained (Polit & Beck 2012:157). The researcher asked participants to sign consent forms and kept a record of those forms in case concerns are raised by either participants or any other person (See annexure F for a sample of informed consent).

- *Anonymity and confidentiality.* It refers to protecting the participants' confidentiality to such an extent that the researcher cannot link the individual's name with the information provided (Polit & Beck 2012:720). No hidden cameras, microphones or videos were used when collecting data. Name lists were destroyed soon after use and participants were assigned identification numbers instead of their names. The research assistant was made to sign a confidentiality pledge as he had access to data and also knew participants used in the study.

- *The principle of justice.* This principle refers to fairness. Fairness in selection of participants and their right to fair treatment and privacy was exercised. Participants were selected for the reasons directly related to the problem under study and not because of their poor social status, low literacy level or easy accessibility (Brink 1996:40).

- ***Prevention of harm to participants.*** Since the study did not involve physical harm, participants were protected from emotional harm by eliminating vulnerable participants, for example the visually impaired and those hard of hearing.

- ***Plagiarism.*** It is an act of copying another person's work and claiming it to be your own (Brynard & Hanekom 2012:124). The researcher ensured that all the authors whose literatures have been used in the study were acknowledged.

3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Refers to the confidence in which the findings of the study are worth paying attention to or worth taking account of (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To establish the truth of the study findings, the researcher used the following Lincoln and Guba's criteria:

3.10.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the level of confidence in the truth and interpretation of data (Polit & Beck, 2008:539). De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005:346) state that the goal of credibility is to demonstrate that the study was conducted in a manner which ensues the subject were accurately identified and described. According to Lincoln et al (1985), credibility refers to the activities that increase the probability that the study will produce credible findings. In this study, credibility was ensured through *prolonged engagement, persistent obseNation and triangulation.*

- Prolonged engagement

  It refers to the amount of time invested by the researcher to achieve certain purposes: learning the culture of the subjects, testing for misinformation brought about by distortion either of self or of the respondents including building trust with them (Lincoln et al, 1985). Prolonged engagement was established by the fact that the researcher was not a stranger but, a community member who has been interacting with the community since birth thus, sharing the same culture with the respondents. This helped to build the rapport, trust and morale. Participants were given an opportunity to ask question to gain clarity on statements which were unclear. In-depth interviews took thirty to forty-five minutes which also enhanced prolonged engagement with respondents.

- Persistent observation

  Persistent observation refers to a qualitative researcher's intense focus on the aspects of a situation that are relevant to the phenomenon under study (Polit et al, 2008:761). This was achieved through persistent observation with the respondents during interviews. Interviews were conducted in the respondents' home at the time determined by the respondents thus allowing better focus on the interviews. A radio recorder was used during interviews (with the respondents' permission), field notes were taken and non-verbal cues were noted

- Triangulation

  According to Polit et al {2008}, triangulation involves the use of multiple data sources for the purpose of validating conclusions. In this study the researcher used in-depth interviews on effectiveness of voter education was conducted, voice recorder was used and played back to the respondents to confirm the accuracy of the captured data, observation and field notes to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

3.10.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of the research study can be transferred or have applicability in other settings or groups (Polit et al, 2008:534).to ensure transferability, thick description of the methodology was used to describe the effectiveness of voter education at Homu village in Greater Giyani Municipality. Polit et al, (2008:768)

3.10.3   Dependability

Dependability is derived from the stability of the data over time. It is defined as the extent to which the study will yield the same results if replicated and carried out under similar context (Polit et al, 2008:539). In this study dependability was achieved through member checking with the respondents. Member checking was done to confirm the accuracy of the field notes. The voice recorder was played back for the respondents to comment on their interviews or add more information.

3.10.4   Confirmability

Confirmability is the potential for the congruence between two independent researchers about the data accuracy, relevance and meaning (Polit et al, 2008:539). In this study, the

researcher audio taped the interviews and transcribed them verbatim. Member checking was also done to confirm the accuracy of the collected data.

3.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the research methodology, design, the study population, sample, and data collection strategies. The aim of this chapter is to guide the reader on the methodology of the study followed in order to have insight understanding of the study findings. Measures to ensure ethical standards. Measures to establish trustworthiness of the study findings were also described. Data was collected and readily available respondents were used. An interview schedule was used to guide the interview. A radio recorder and field notes were used to facilitate data collection, preserve the data as collected and for member checks to confirm collected data.. Chapter four will focus on data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 presented the research methodology followed in the assessment of the effectiveness of voter education strategies in the rural community of Homu village. This chapter focuses on the analysis, interpretation and presentation of findings. The objectives of the study were:

- To ascertain the effectiveness of voter education strategies implemented by the IEC in rural areas;
- To examine the challenges in the provision of voter education in rural areas; and
- To make recommendations to enhance voter education in rural context.

According to LoBiondo-Wood and Haber (2012:61), the purpose of literature control is to verify whether the documented identified themes established the credibility of the findings. Generally, chapter explains the research methodology which was used by the researcher. Included in this chapter is the research design which is critical in the research project, the study area, the population of the study as well as data collection processes. The importance of ethics is also highlighted in this chapter.

4.2 THEME-BASED PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS

A detailed description of the themes and sub-themes are discussed with direct quotes from participants used to support the themes. Data analysis yielded six themes and eight sub-themes. According to Burns and Grove (2009: 67) themes are theoretical relationships that emerge after the researcher has spent an extensive time analysing data and sorting elements into themes. Polit and Beck (2012:744) define a theme as a recurring regularity emerging from an analysis of qualitative data. The following are themes and sub-themes identified during data analysis: respondents' understanding of the concept voter education; the value of voter education; voter education strategies; effectiveness of voter education; voter education coverage; and challenges encountered in voter education.

4.2.1 The respondents' understanding of the concept voter education

An analysis of the concept voter education is necessary for setting the scene since this concept is central to the study. One question was intended to determine the voter educators' understanding of the concept voter education. All !EC voter educators conceptualised it as either dissemination or giving information, as quoted below:

Respondent 1 said *"I can say it means giving information regarding who is to vote, when and how to make a mark on the ballot paper".*

Respondent 2 said *"It is the dissemination* of *information regarding registration to vote, the value of vote for the youth since there is minimal participation from the youth".*

Respondent 3 said *"Is giving information to people regarding how to vote, when to register and who can vote".*

The above definitions are congruent with Okon (2014:2) who defines voter education as giving information to the public about the mechanics of the voting process that is, providing information regarding who is eligible to vote, where and how, how to check the names in the voters roll, what type of elections are being held, and when to vote. Tsie (2003:148) defines voter education as an education in support of elections and a means through which voters are enabled to participate in the electoral politics and are ready to vote. Tsie further states that voter education should cover why it is important to vote and should instil confidence in the electoral processes so that, voters view voting as important and as a way of approving policies relevant to needs of the people. According to Falade and Adeniyi (2015:114), voter education is concerned with social norms, value of voting, democratic principles including voting processes (as indicated in Okon's definition). This definition differs from that of Okon and Tsie in that it includes issues fundamental to democracy and elections. The manner in which the respondents defined voter education indicates that voter education is limited to voter registration and voting processes only. This study argues that voter education should ensure that citizens understand their contributions in governing the country, their right to vote, the political system of the country, public accountability, the value of voting, democratic principles, the rationale behind voting as well as the voting process. The study further argues that if voter education is not so defined, people go to the polls without informed information against which they should base their judgement when voting. Furthermore, voter education

cannot be disseminated like a commodity, but should be promoted or provided in a manner that will make the citizens to look forward to cast their vote.

4.2.2 The value of voter education

This question was intended to check the voters' perceptions of voter education. Not all responses have been cited due to their similarities. Service delivery cost emerged as a sub-theme from the value of voter education during an interview. e All participants indicated that they value voter education with reasons varying from it being good for estimation of service delivery cost to teaching them how to vote. The following are direct quotations of the participants' responses:

Service delivery cost

Respondent 1 said *"Yes it is valuable because it teaches us voting rules so that we know what to do when we get inside the voting station·:*

Respondent 2 said *"It helps to estimate service delivery costs".*

Respondent 3 said *"Yes, so that we know how to vote and it also help in estimating service delivery budget".*

Respondent 5 said *"Yes because the ANG is able to estimate the budget for our province·:*

Respondent 8 said *"It assists in drawing the National Development Plan especially when they draw the budget because they have to know the number of people in our province".*

Responded 10 said "/ *vote in order to meet my political aspirations, but eh... I think voter education would be* more *valuable if it was including the basic tenets of democracy because we are told to go and vote, but there are no performance reports after we voted people into power."*

The above responses are in agreement with Jozana, cited in Kotze {2006:208), who found that democracy goes beyond electoralism to include the improvement of material conditions such as service delivery after people have voted. According to ACE project (2014) there is a tendency for voter educators to be out of touch, focusing more on voter registration and voting processes and to neglect informing the citizens about the value of voting which is necessary for the maturation of democracy. The above responses reflect shallow voter

education. Schaffer (2015:14), states that voter education requires an understanding of the reasons why people vote and why they should vote "wisely". It is only then that people will value of voter education. According to Jennings (1991:11), political participation is a buy product of voter education and it should strive to instil a sense of civic knowledge. The absence of responses such as public accountability, civic participation, the meaning of the national flag and people's right to vote in the participants' responses and the emphasis on service delivery indicates that service delivery is central to voting.

Freedom of choice

The responses below indicate knowledge of the country's Constitution. Freedom of choosing ones' own government was also cited as the reason for regarding voter education as valuable, as cited by the respondents below:

Respondent 4 said, "The South African Constitution has given us the power to choose our own government through a vote, so we need to know how to vote because the government is in our handsn.

Respondent 5 said 'We have been given freedom, so *I want South Africa to change because previously we were not allowed to voten.*

Respondent 7 said "Voter education teaches us where to put a *mark* a *mark on the ballot paper without fear of intimidationn.*

Respondent 13 said "It teaches me to choose the party of my choicen.

Respondent 14 said "It equips me with knowledge of the political system and the structure of the government, so putting a mark on the ballot paper guarantees that I have participated in choosing a *government of my choice",*

The above responses are consistent with Struwig, Roberts and Vivier (2013:1122) who found that voting is the primary channel through which people exercise their freedom to choose leaders while at the same time, giving them the right to remove political leaders who fail to honour their promises. It is for this reason that, alongside the managing and monitoring of

elections, the IEC has to prepare the electorate for elections through rigorous voter education programmes. Struwig et al (2011:2024) further state that it is the job of the Electoral Commission to teach the citizenry how the electoral system operates, what voting procedures and registration procedures are, and what their rights are, so that voters exercise their choice being well informed. Uninformed voters fall into prey for manipulations by political parties whose main purpose is recruit more people in order to win the elections.

4.2.3 Voter education strategies

One question required the participants to explain the methods used to communicate voter education in the area and whether they found strategies helpful. In order for voter education to be meaningful. Various voter education strategies should be used to the enhance understanding of participation in elections. The strategies should be applied at the knowledge and understanding level of the voter education recipient or else voters become disillusioned. The following quotes are the participants' responses:

Respondent 1 said, "*I gained access to voter education when it was presented by the IEC on* a *television and it helped men.*

Respondent 2 said, "*I listen to the television, radio, social network and I also read from the newspapers because at least I can read, but I could not ask questions when the presentation was over. I think the IEC should train the South African Civic Organisations so that they in turn teach the communityn.*

Respondent 3 said, "*Sometimes political parties do door-to-door visits and sometimes we are also taught by friends. I do not prefer media because I cannot ask questions, and I would be happy if the IEC can assemble people and teach them when there are activities such as lekgotla*".

Respondent 4 *said, "I learned voter education from radio talks and television. What I have noticed is that political parties inform us about their party symbols and show people, especially the elderly, which party symbol to vote for. So please tell the IEC to come and teach us because they are neutral*".

Respondent 5 *said, "I was taught face to face by my party agents and it helped me because I* am *still able to vote*".

Respondent 6 *said, 'We listen to television and read about how* to *vote in the newspapers, but on rare occasions the /EC presents voter education on the local radio station. I do not prefer the media because not everybody owns a television and the language used is not always the language used by local people; in addition, the illiterate and elderly cannot use social networking".*

Respondent 10 stated, *"The /EC displays posters depicting movement of voters in the newspapers, on the walls of public buildings and voting stations on voting day, while political parties stick pictures of their candidate to elect on electricity poles and on their vehicles and public transport". All these do not replace* a *human being".*

Respondent 13 said, "Political parties sometimes use door-to door campaigns and we listen to televisions and radio stations when political parties take turns in their campaigns. The problem is that most people live under poverty and the youth who can at least read newspapers or understand English used in televisions, cannot afford to buy either the very newspaper or a *television as they are unemployed':*

Respondent 15 who thought that the researcher was an IEC official responsible for voter education *said, "Teach us how to vote because we only follow the mob. We do not have information on why we should vote".*

Respondent 16 said, "There is no true voter education in this area; /EC must come and teach us".
The last two responses were most frequently heard and they appear to be a plea and an invitation to the IEC to go and provide voter education in the area.

Respondent 8 said, *"/ was trained to facilitate voter education in 1994 when the /EC had requested the Department of Education to assist with provision of voter education; that was the last time I saw people being taught voter education and voter education manuals were used during the workshop".* The involvement of teachers in educating the public was based on their level of education and easy trainability.

However, on a separate interview, one respondent who had observed teachers providing voter education said, *"I would not prefer   voter education to be done by teachers because*

their labour union is part of the ruling party and the strategies they use attract people to vote for the ruling party. It would be better to hire neutral people from *outside South Africa·*

Although the respondent said nothing about the teaching strategies, the researcher deems it fit to indicate that some members of the public doubt the neutrality of the IEC. In support of the above response, Mapuva (2014:135) states that if the Election Management Body is controlled by the executive powers like it happened with Department of Home Affairs as explained in chapter two, people lose their confidence on the IEC as it will not be able to act as an instrument of separation of powers. The public's perception is that the IEC has the blessings of the executive as employers and it should therefore dance to the music of politicians.

However, voter education strategies highlighted above were found to be congruent with strategies outlined in 2003 IEC Portfolio Committee which were implemented in preparation for 2004 elections. The strategies included: door-to-door campaigns, television and radio broadcasts, face-to-face discussions and one-on-one discussions. These strategies are suited for voter education in rural areas although the ownership of televisions and absence of electricity pose a challenge. Involvement of teachers in voter education

The role of media in voter education

The above sub-theme emerged when respondents were describing voter education strategies. The following responses indicate that the media play a major role in conveying voter education messages to the public:

Respondent 1 said, *"I first heard about voter education on television and it was presented by a person from the /EC".*

Respondent 2 said, *"/ heard about voting and how to vote on television and radio and newspaper because at least I can read. The problem is that people cannot be clarified if they have questions, it would be better if the /EC train SANCO members so that they in turn train us".*

Respondent 3 said, *"we heard about voting from* a *television and radios and also from friends. Id not prefer media because I cannot ask questions for clarification I only* a *voice".*

Respondent 4 said, *"Media is not so effective because you only hear the voice, but you do not see the face of the person who is speaking".*

Respondent 6 said, *"we listen to the radio, we sometimes see political parties teaching voter education on televisions, we read about voting in the newspapers and on rare occasions the /EC also teach on local radio stations. I do not prefer voter education by the media because not everybody owns a television or understand what is being taught because of the languages that are being used. Also, the illiterate and the elderly people cannot use social networks. I am not happy about how voter education is taught, it would be better if they do it face to face using the language of the local people. As for the /EC .. .ah.... they do not come. I only saw them once with their tents next to the local municipality offices during voter registration making a call for people to go and register".*

Respondent 8 said, *"Media methods are not effective because not all of us understand English, Sesotho, Xhosa and Isizulu as these are main commonly used languages, especially on televisions".*

Respondent 9 said, *"political parties show us their party symbols on televisions and we sometimes watch them teaching about voting".*

Respondent 14 said, *"the televisions, radios and political parties all teach us how to vote".*

Respondent 18 said, "/ *only listen to voter education on television and radio. I do not have the experience of it being taught by a person".*

The above cited strategies are congruent with voter education strategies highlighted in the 2003 IEC Portfolio Committee presentation. The 201/14 Voter Participation Survey by the HSRC found that the radio and television broadcasts were the most preferred vehicles for voter education and had the greatest reach. The report also revealed that mock voting stations were taught to school teachers and learners in some schools to enhance understanding of elections and voting. The radio, television, segmentation of audiences, the newspapers, magazines on voter education strategies have also been highlighted by the ACE project (2014). Television viewership is regularly monitored by advertisers and broadcasters and the ratings thereof are used to determine the cost and when to place the advertisement. However, Mfundisi (2006:91) found that in societies where people are rural,

illiterate, unemployed and live under acute low socio-economic conditions, media may not be an effective strategy of voter education due to lack of ownership of a television, radio and access to newspapers as cited above. In addition, there is still a challenge of electricity in some rural areas. Also, the billboards and stickers pasted on the vehicles may not have a meaning to the rural illiterate societies. In support of Mfundisi's view, Moller and Hanf (1995:7) state that most black voters in rural areas access political information through the radio only due to absence of electricity. Unemployment also contributes to lack of ownership of the radio, television and even a newspaper. Moller and Hanf further state that the disadvantage of the media is that the audience cannot engage in two-way communication since media are one way communications. Although most people access political information through the media, challenges of inability to purchase the television, radio and newspapers due to unemployment still prevail. Language barrier is also a challenge as people do not get the message across. 90.8% *(greatergiyani.gov.za)* of the Greater Giyani Municipality speak Xitsonga and most of the elderly people are not literate. These are potential problems of voter education that they IEC need to address.

4.2.4 Effectiveness of voter education

The question sought to ask the voter educators about measures undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of voter education by the IEC. According 2011/12 post-election report, inadequate research knowledge by the voter educators was found to be impacting the evaluation of voter education negatively. The analysis of the above theme indicates ineffective voter education. The following responses from participants support the above claim:

Respondent 1 said, *"I have been conducting voter education for three years now and I can say it is effective because it is determined by the voter turnout".*

Respondent 2 said, *"We only survey the areas that need voter education mostly during elections since we work on contract and we do not have skills and capacity to do that".*

Respondent 3 said, *"I don't know how to evaluate the effectiveness of voter education, but I have noticed that most people vote after we have been to their places".*

The above responses indicate the absence of valid tools to measure the effectiveness of voter education in the IEC office of the Greater Giyani Municipality as their measurement

was based on personal observation which could be biased. In support of the above sub-theme, a study undertaken by Maphunye (2013 :67) on research and Knowledge Management of Election and Management (EMBs) found that election management bodies lack research skills. Significant to that study were interviewees' responses where respondents stated that they did not have research skills, while others stated that they did not see research as being relevant to elections. Some participants viewed research as the

role of the universities and not EMBs. Lack of research knowledge is a major impediment that undermines the organisation's progress and is a serious challenge to an organisation that claims to be a learning organisation (Maphunye, 2013:69). However, the HSRC evaluated the voter awareness campaign during and found that 95% of voters were satisfied with the language used, 93% were satisfied with the presentation style used while 91% and 92% respectively were happy with the material used and the media used (HSRC:2014). These findings differ with the current researcher's observation of effectiveness of voter education in the rural area. It is also not clear if the study by the HSRC included the rural context.

4.2.5 Voter education coverage

This question sought to evaluate voter education coverage from voter educators in terms of the language used, residential area, literacy level, consideration of people living with disabilities and the frequency at which voter education provided. Poor voter education coverage has a profound impact on the voter turnout, electoral integrity and the public's intention to vote. The following the participants' responses on voter education coverage:

Respondent 1 said, *"It is not possible to provide voter education regularly including post-election periods because we are not full-time employees, so it is only provided when elections are due'. My contract expires at the end at the election period and from that period I will be without a job".*

Respondent 2 said, *"We provide voter education on regular basis even outside the election period and we serve ninety-two areas".* When asked whether they also provide voter education to the deaf and blind community, the respondent said 'We *are not skilled in reading braille or interpreting the language of the deaf'.*

Respondent 3 said, *"We are contract workers; we go home after elections".*

The above responses are not in agreement with Pitso (2011:21) who indicates that voter and civic education should be provided on continuous basis and should strive to ensure coverage. The study conducted by (Booysen & Masterson 2009:423) revealed that, ahead of the 1999 elections, the IEC appointed temporary Provincial Electoral Officers (PEO) for each of the nine provinces and also appointed Local Electoral Officers (LEO), also on temporary basis. The IEC also relied on the LEO to further recruit temporary staff in their districts. This action challenged the quality control of the electoral staff nationwide. The problem of staff shortage ?ppears not to have been resolved, as explained in the responses.

Inadequate voter education coverage in disabled communities

This study also sought to determine the effectiveness of voter education and voter education coverage in disabled communities. Disabled communities are usually marginalised due to Jack of specialised communicating skills by voter educators. The following responses from the IEC voter educators indicate ineffective voter education and poor voter education coverage in the disabled communities:

Respondent 1 said, *"We* do *not know how to interpret sign language, so we do not teach them".*

Respondent 2 said, *"I do not have skills to teach the deaf and blind individuals"*

The above responses are in agreement with the Struwig and Roberts (2013/14:3) Voter Participation Survey which revealed that more than eight in ten voters felt that the needs of the disabled and the elderly were not adequately addressed. This number is significantly high considering that more than half the number of in this group of people do not receive voter education while competitive elections remain the cornerstone of democracy.

According to 2003 Portfolio Committee of the IEC, a programme called D0003 was developed by the IEC with specialised materials to assist in communicating with the disabled. Pitso (2011:17), the Limpopo IEC team coordinator then reported that the 2004 post- election debriefing indicated that the disabled tend to be marginalised and were the least informed in terms of political processes. The D0003 programme was initiated with an aim of providing comprehensive voter education for the disabled, increasing participation and understanding of the electoral democracy by the disabled people. The 0003 programme came in with customised materials that is, braille, large font, audio and sign language. From this

researcher's observation, the disabled communities are at the mercy of their accompanists and vote according to the wishes of the accompanists because they can communicate with them. The disabled rely on the accompanists to obtain information regarding voting. According to Kotze (2006:210), every citizen eligible to vote must be able to express their choice without any repercussions from any segment of the population. This includes the decision to actually go out and vote. A study conducted by Ashworth and De Mesquita (2014:566) on voters' competence found that voters if voters lack basic information about policy choices made by political leaders as a result of poor coverage, then the elections are neither a good instrument for selecting public leaders nor a credible check on the behaviour of those leaders. This is not the case in the rural areas because the deaf and blind communities who rely on the accompanists' decision regarding who to vote for.

Inadequate voter education in schools

One of the questions was intended to evaluate the respondents' perception on voter education in schools and how it will benefit the pupils. All respondents concurred that voter education in school is very important and that pupils will benefit because it will teach them what voting entails and will grow up knowing what voting is rather than voting blindly. The following are the respondents' comments:

Respondent 2 said *"it is very important and it should start at primary school and proceed to tertiary school level and it will be good if it includes civic education so that learners gain knowledge of the country as this will serve as an introduction into politics for learners who want to study politics".*

Respondent 3 said *"it is important because learners do not know anything about voter education but teachers know because they participate in /EC activities during elections".*

Respondent 4 said, *"voter education is important at schools and I think it should start at grade 8 because children in these levels are almost 13 years old and can understand things. But what I have observed is that scholars do not vote even if they have registered. They say it is useless because they do not get jobs after voting and people who persuaded them togo and vote no longer care about them after elections"*

Respondent 6, who was a youth, said *"it will be more beneficial if voter education is taught in schools because democracy will mature. Parties will compete and we will no longer have*

a *situation where one party outnumbers other parties by votes because people will vote equipped with political information".*

Respondent 8 said, *"it will teach students how to vote and it will be more beneficial if it is taught as* one *of the subjects and be evaluated to test the understanding".*

Respondent 13 said *"it is important and it may encourage some learners to study political science as a career in future".*

The above statements were supported by Osumah (2016:5), who found that youth is the foundation of a society whose energies, inventiveness, character, and orientation define the pace of development and security of a nation. And because of their dreams and aspirations, the future of a nation is assured. In support of teaching democracy and voter education in schools, the Electoral Democracy Toolkit manual was developed by the IEC and the Department of Basic Education in 2013. The aim was to prepare leaners to become actively involved in politics and to become responsible members of South Africa's democracy. The manual teaches leaners about democracy, their rights and responsibilities as voters, how to register to vote, how to vote, how to think critically about democratic issues and how to make use of social media as part of their participation in democracy. The manual is compliant with Life orientation in grade 10, 11 and 12 (Levin and van Schaar 2013).

Respondent 14 said "it is important because learners will be taught the reasons for voting. It will be good if it is taught with History so that learners know where they are coming from".

The above statement is in agreement with Maphunye et al (2014) who studied the 'born-free' (young adults) perspectives of public representatives in South Africa and found that they have little or no recollection about the previous system of the government that was declared a crime against humanity by the international community. They also found that the past might mean very little to the 'born-free' who may have radically different views and expectations about governance, accountability and responsible government unlike their parents or grandparents.

In 2004 the IEC targeted the institutions of higher learning in a bid to encourage more young people to vote in 2009 (Booysen & Masterson 2009). The main reason why political knowledge is important from infancy has been cited by Coley R.J (2011:5) when she wrote, *"the more knowledge we have of civic affairs, the Jess likely we are to have a generalised*

mistrust and fear of public life. Ignorance is the father of fear and knowledge is the mother of trust"

4.2.6 Challenges encountered during voter education

Shortage of human resources

The shortage of human resources is a challenge mentioned by the IEC respondents. The following quotes are their responses: [a]

Respondent 1 said, 'We *are short staffed and not permanently employed; as a result we are do not work to our satisfaction. At the end of this week I am going home and the community blame us for not receiving the promised services after voting. "It appears they do not know who is accountable for service delivery'*

Respondent 2 said, *"There are only 10 democracy facilitators and we have to cover 92 areas with voter education. When we have educated 20 people we have met the objective of the day'.* He continued to say, *"People do not know who to blame for not receiving services after voting. They* come to */EC offices carrying placards demanding answers from us·*

Respondent 3 *said, "We are not enough and have a wide area to cover. We are often blamed for not providing services after elections".*

Booysen et al (2009:421), found that shortage of electoral staff was experienced during 1994 when the IEC was still in infancy and had to run the first democratic national elections. The preparation of 1999 elections saw teachers being brought in to assist in educating people Ndletyana et al, (2009:11) although this was disputed by other political parties. Because of this reason, voter education was placed in the hands of the Non-Governmental Organisations. Ahead of 1994 elections, the IEC through its local electoral officers recruited temporary staff which challenged the IEC's quality control nationwide. The IEC took control of outreach programmes in 2004. Ahead of 2011 Local Government Elections, the IEC appointed temporary staff members to run voter education programmes. Sources to support the above responses in Greater Giyani could not be found. However, the absence of sources to support the participants' responses this does not rule out the existence of a problem considering the fact that there are only ten democracy facilitators covering an area of 4,172km2.

Blaming and service delivery protests

This sub-theme emanated from challenges facing the IEC voter educators. The responses indicate that the IEC voter educators are blamed for failure to provide services after they are voted into power. The fact that voter educators are not office bearers is not known to voters who view them as people who should be responsible for poor service delivery. The following responses highlight blaming the IEC for absence or poor service delivery:

Respondent 1 said *"the communities blame us for not receiving services after they have voted".*

Respondent 2 said *"people do not know where to go and report their problems if they do not receive services as promised. They carry placards and picket in /EC offices demanding answers from us".*

Respondent 3 said *"we are often blamed for poor service delivery after elections".*

Although the above responses pertain to blaming the IEC for failure to deliver the services after elections, the government's inability to provide service delivery has been shared by many scholars; Steyn Kotze (2006:216), Phago (2012:61), Maphunye (2014:29). Maphunye (2014:29, 79), found that voters associate the act of casting a vote with immediate delivery of service, whether it be a public or household toilet, school, clinic or other services. Firstly, blaming the IEC for unsatisfactory service delivery indicates lack of information on public accountability an essential element which should be included in voter education content. Secondly, displaying dissatisfaction through service delivery protests is a behaviour which was learnt during the liberation struggle when the only way for one's voice to heard was through a protest action and demonstration. Struwig, Roberts and Vivier (2011:1122) support Maphunye's findings by stating that signs of growing disillusionment become more evident and manifest through service delivery protests when people are dissatisfied with government services. According to Bauer (2009:330), holding the executive for failure to provide services is democratic and that withholding a vote because of poor service delivery is not democratic. What is democratic is to hold the executive, the party or the responsible department accountable for not delivering, or vote for an alternative party. Perhaps the question that one should ask is, who is responsible for meeting the needs of the society?

Unemployment and lack of neutrality

Respondent 1 said *"the challenge that I have obsetved is that voter education is given by people who are referees and players at the same time. I.... do not see the /EC as truly independent because they are members of the political ruling party before they are considered /EC members. It would be better if voter education is conducted by people outside South Africa because in South Africa there is no fairness".*

Respondent 2 said *"the youth are unable to buy televisions, radios and social networks because they are not employed and can hardly buy a newspaper even though they are able to read"*

Respondent 3 said *"people who own televisions and radios watch and listen to political messages and advertisements during election periods. I was taught voter education by my political party ANG but, I do not see political parties as the rightful structures to offer voter education because they tell and show people who to vote for or where to put a mark. Televisions and radios are better because they do not direct anybody where to put a mark".*

Respondent 4 said *"political parties teach us how to vote but, when you ask them about unemployment, they do not give a satisfactory answer. When they canvas they promise us jobs and bursaries"*

Lack of neutrality by the IEC in the provision of voter education is supported Mapuva (2014:135) who questioned whether the IEC is able to act as an instrument of separation of powers. Mapuva states that senior members of the IEC have the blessing of the executive and this implies that they dance to the music of the politicians even when providing voter education. This notion is also supported by Sadie et al (2016:116) who found that the racial composition of the party has an influence during political campaigns by political parties. The ANC is dominated by black officials, has a dominant position in South Africa and is perceived to be a liberation party and a historic bearer of democracy while, the Democratic Alliance is considered to be the remnant of apartheid regime. Sadie's study also showed that one in six voters would consider voting for a party that provides a social grant. This trend was found to be most prevalent in the African communities of Doornkop and Limpopo. Therefore, it could be argued that social grants can be used as a voter education strategy of gaining support from grant-holders and could influence how people vote. These findings are of immediate relevance for voter education initiatives undertaken by the IEC.

The responses of youth unemployment as a challenge are supported by Maphunye (2014:76) who found that the dilemma of being unemployed is a serious challenge as it indicates that young people arebeing let down by the politicians' promises of jobs which they failto deliver. Not beingable topurchase televisions, radios, newspapers and cellular phones that would enable him to gain political knowledge was stated as a challenge by the youth participant. With regard to the neutrality of the IEC employees, some respondents view the temporary employment of teachers by the IEC as being biased. They stated that employing teachers to render voter education during elections discredits the IEC even further because teachers are members of the South African Teachers Democratic Union (SADTU) members, which is an ally of the African National Congress (Ndletyana et. al 2009). Therefore, they regard them as simultaneous referees and players paying allegiance to the ruling party.

4.3 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

4.3.1 Respondents' Understanding of Voter Education

 It can be concluded that there is a difference in conceptualising voter education by the IEC and by different scholars. During the interview with IEC voter educators, voter educators also defined voter education as dissemination of information about the voter registration processes. and where, when and how to vote. The above definitions revolve around the mechanics of how to vote. From the literature consulted, different scholars also define voter education differently. In the same vein, Okon (2014:2) explains voter education to mean information about the specifics or mechanics of the actual votingprocess. However, Jennings (1999:4), Falade and Adeyemi (2015:114) concur that voter education is concerned with the development of a sense of duty, values, social norms, **skills** and democratic ideals in the citizens. This discourse surrounding the definition of voter education has an impact on how voter education is implemented by those responsible to implement it. This study argues that the concept of education is a process and refers to encouraging and developing; as a result, voter education cannot be given or disseminated like a commodity. Voter education should, in addition to the above, address issues such the rationale behind voting. the political system, public accountability, elementary knowledge of democracy, why people need to participate in democracy through a vote and it should include elementary knowledge of the country's constitution so that people know where they come from. Lack of these fundamental elements in voter education makes the definition of voter education incomplete. Based on the   above

discussion, it is not surprising that the IEC's voter education put more emphasis on voter registration.

4.3.2 The value of voter education

From the interviews conducted with community members, there was a unanimous agreement on the value of voter education. The reasons given range from teaching people how to vote. assisting the province to estimate service delivery cost of the pro nce as well as giving the citizens the freedom to evaluate the effectiveness of those in power. Kotze (2006:208) states that service delivery is important to people who were denied basic services during the apartheid era. To support this view further, Okon (2014:4) found that one of the important aspects of voter education is to make people aware and to keep track of the activities of elected representatives that citizens have entrusted to rule the country.

4.3.3 Voter education strategies

Although there was unanimous agreement by the community regarding the value of voter education, the study found that media is the most commonly used strategy, followed by face to face during Imbizo's. Although the Imbizo's were reported to be ineffective some respondents stated that some people may not be free to ask questions where there are many people. Some may feel that they may be victimised for having asked a particular question. However, few respondents mentioned that they prefer media because of its neutrality. Contributory factors to media ineffectiveness were found to be low level of literacy, and the language barrier. This finding is in agreement with Mfundisi (2006:91) who found that in societies where people are rural. illiterate, unemployed and live under acute low socio-economic conditions, some voter education strategies used by the IEC may not be effective, especially the media, due to lack of ownership of a television, radio and access to newspapers as cited above.

4.3.4 Effectiveness of voter education

From the interviews conducted with community members it became evident that the community of Homu village have high regard for voter education as revealed by their responses. However, voter education in this study has been found to be ineffective. Some responses from research participants indicated that people "just" vote because the radios

and other significant people say it is voting time. The respondents also reported that they vote without information on which to base their choice. These responses of the participants are not inagreement with the Electoral Commission Report (2014:36) which states that voter education should be provided on continuous basis, that voter educators should ensure their visibility by effective communication and presence and that voter educators should facilitate platforms for political dialogue. Secondly, the fact that people project their anger on public buildings and roads when staging service delivery protests further indicates lack of knowledge of who to blame when their needs are not met. Lekorwe (2006:76) states that, evaluating the effectiveness of voter education by counting the number of people who participated through voter turnout, does not reflect the citizens' knowledge of electoral information. Previous voter satisfaction reports for example,1999, 2004 2009, 2 indicate that voters were assessed on accessibility of voting stations, perceived secrecy of voting, signage in the voting stations, queuing time and other aspects which the researcher considers to be less significant. This study argues that in addition to what the citizens are evaluated upon, knowledge about the effectiveness of the government policies they have chosen, knowledge of the reasons behind voting, how votes are translated into seats, public accountability, elementary knowledge of the country's Constitution the tenets of democracy and other aspects of voter education should constitute the criteria for assessing effectiveness of voter education. However, the Electoral Commission's Voter Education Campaign conducted in 2016 (post 2014 elections) indicated that 63% of voters believed that the Commission's voter education campaigns were very effective, with an approximately two-sevenths (27%) indicating that it was somewhat effective (HRSC 2016). Similar attitudes were expressed in 2009. It is unfortunate has no knowledge of whether the rural communities including the Greater Giyani District Municipality participated in this campaign.

4.3.5 Voter education coverage

From the interviews conducted with IEC respondents, it can be concluded that there is poor voter education coverage in Homu village. Firstly, the IEC is said to be only visible during voter registration period and is seldom visible during the election. Secondly, the IEC is never visible during post-election periods. According to the Electoral Commission annual report (2014:41), voter and civic education should be provided on continuous basis to in order to impart knowledge and skills to the citizens and to actively engage citizens in democratic processes before and between the elections. The study found that voter education is not provided in accordance with 2014 election report outlined above, for an example, voter education is in schools as revealed by some respondents who were teachers. It was also

revealed during interviews that people living with disabilities rely on their accompanists when they vote because they do not have the capacity to cast a vote for themselves. Lack of interpreting and braille skills to educate the physically challenged communities leaves them completely marginalised. Itis also unimaginable that ten voter educators can cover the whole Greater Giyani Municipality, given the fact that the municipality covers a wide as cited above.

4.3.6 Challenges encountered in the provision of voter education

It is evident from the results of this study that voter education does not find itself without challenges. Most of the challenges emanate from the political parties. One of the challenges that emerged during the study was limited and inadequately trained personnel. The study found that ineffective voter education programmes is related topoor work skills and expertise of employees who undertake voter education, as voter educators are only trained when the elections are due and work on contract basis (only during the election period).

The fact that political parties do not act as neutral organisations but use election campaigns to expose or discredit other parties was mentioned by the respondents from the community. This behaviour was reported to discredit the IEC, since voter education is their competency. Blaming the IEC for failure by the government to represent voters' aspirations was also mentioned by the IEC as a challenge. Mamabolo (cited in Sebola 2017) found that citizens lack information that they can vote the government out of office if not satisfied with the service rendered. In agreement with the above statement, Sebake and Mathebula (cited in Sebola 2017:59) found that a relationship exists between the elected representatives and their removal from office due to lack of confidence. The study found that people can only hold the representative accountable if they know that this is democratically allowed. In agreement, Maphunye, Ledwaba and Kobjana (2014) found that lack of public accountability is a hindrance in achieving true democracy in South Africa.

Another challenge facing the IEC was found to be poor voter turnout by the youth. The IEC, 2008 Election Report indicated that apathy, disillusionment and lethargy were thought to be the probable causes of lower voter turnout by the youth. Maphunye (2014:161) also found low voter turnout by the youth was related to dissatisfaction with service delivery in their communities and unemployment. According to Statistics South Africa 2017, the percentage

of youth unemployment was 27,7% in June 2017. The main challenge highlighted by the community was related to lack of information regarding why people should vote.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the analysis of research findings and literature control. The findings were categorised into themes, namely conceptualising voter education, the value of voter education, voter education strategies, evaluating the effectiveness of voter education, voter education coverage, and challenges in voter education.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Theprevious chapter focusedonanalysis of data and interpretations of findings. This chapter provides a summary of research and draws conclusions from the research findings and results.   -

The aim of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of voter education strategies. The study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- To ascertain the effectiveness of voter education strategies implemented by the IEC in rural areas.
- To examine the challenges in the provision of voter education in rural areas.
- To make recommendations for effective voter education strategies by the IEC in rural areas.

Section 5.2 of this chapter presented a summary of chapters, followed by section 5.3, which dealt with the key findings of the study, as well as section 5.4, which discussed the conclusions and recommendations of the study. It is in section 5.5 where the research limitations were outlined, and suggestions for future research were discussed in section 5.6.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: This chapter presented the background of the study, the problem statement and research questions. The definitions of the key concepts as well as the significance of the study were also covered. Aims and objectives of the study together with the outline of the dissertation were also dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature review was tackled in this chapter. Conceptualization of voter education, international experiences, legal framework related to voter education as well as challenges encountered in voter education were issues that the literature review covered. Furthermore, strategies used in the provision of voter education were also dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter 3: This chapter discussed the research design, study area, and sampling methods and size. The chapter also dealt with data collection instruments of which face-to-face inteiviews were used. It was in this chapter where content was discussed as data analysis method. Consent form, confidentiality and anonymity were also explained as ethical consideration used in the study.

Chapter 4: The chapter dealt withJ)resentation of study findings from the local IEC officials and community members. A summary of the main findings was also presented.

5.3 KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Objective 1: To ascertain the effectiveness of voter education strategies implemented by the IEC in rural areas.

The review of literature indicated that voter education remains the responsibility of the IEC as constitutionally mandated. The literature also revealed that the IEC receives accolades from the obseiver missions for proper administration and for running free and fair elections. However, this study found that in societies that are rural, illiterate, where people are unemployed and suffer poverty, some of the voter education strategies outlined in the literature have not been found to be effective in conveying voter information. The study found that voter education is not provided in a manner that encourages the voters to look forward to cast their vote being well informed. In addition, various post-election reports indicate that civic and voter education programmes are not conducted on an ongoing basis to develop an active citizenry and to foster public participation in democratic processes. The statement above was not supported by the inteiviews conducted as the respondents indicated that the IEC is only visible during the registration period, thereafter hibernates, only to become visible again just before the elections.

The review of literature also indicated that the IEC made an attempt to ensure effective voter education in schools by forming a partnership with the Department of Education with an aim of introducing civic participation to pupils from infancy. The IEC also took an initiative and developed teaching materials for the deaf and visually impaired groups as a way of ensuring voter education coverage. Some of the initiatives were piloted but were never sustained especially in rural areas. There are also no suitably qualified people to educate people with special needs for example, the visually impaired and the deaf community.

The responses from the study respondents indicated that some voter education strategies used by the IEC were ineffective. The most dominating voter education strategies cited by the respondents were media strategies: radio, television and newspapers in particular.

Details of the key findings in relation to objective 1 are as follows:

- Respondents indicated that media does not benefit all members of the community due to the language barrier in television stations, low literacy levels, lack of ownership of televisions and financial affordability to buy a television and travelling to town to purchase newspapers. One contributing factor is unemployment. People especially the youth do not afford to purchase televisions and radios due to lack of money. Unemployment amongst the youth is a major cause for voter apathy and an impediment for participating in elections. The youth become disillusioned and abstain from voting.

- Respondents also cited that the political debates would be more beneficial but are mainly discussed and televised on English stations, for example radio SAFM and eNCA TV. As a result, only people who understand English benefit from the conversations. 98% of Greater Giyani Municipality are Tsonga speaking, some of whom are elderly and illiterate. The elderly, because of their age, ill health and the fact that they are most often home bound are the main viewers and listeners of radio broadcasts and are deprived of this privilege because of language barriers.

- Community members also indicated that where media is used as a voter education strategy, people cannot ask questions for clarification and are unable to attach a face to the voice.

- Some respondents indicated that posters that are seen displayed on the poles at the crossroads and on the vehicle doors and windows, some comprising of arrows indicating the movement of voters inside the voting station may not convey the intended messages especially to elderly illiterate people. They may be mistaken for decorations by the elderly thus rendering this voter education strategy less effective.

- The youth that participated in this study indicated that they also access voter education messages through Facebook and twitter, but the elderly and the illiterate people who do not possess knowledge and skills to operate social network gadgets to access political information fall prey to manipulation by politicians, family friends and other people whom they regard highly.

- The respondents also indicated that the political party agents that campaign in the area during the voting periods use face to-face and sometimes door-to-door

strategies, but areunfortunately not viewed by the community as the rightful structures to provide voter education, due to lack of neutrality. They have vested interests and their strategy is directive because they actually show people, especially the elders and the illiterate, which party symbols to vote for.

- Some respondents indicated that visiting sick people in the hospitals to provide voter education there would be the best strategy because people will know them and they will also feel that they are not marginalised even though they are hospitalized. Elderly people tend to think that they are less considered when they are frail and hospitalised. Taking voter education to institl!tions such as the hospitals and old age home would make them feel that they are still part of the community who can still render a particular service through voting.

Objective 2: To explore the challenges in the provision of voter education in rural areas

The voter education does not come without challenges. The following were challenges reflected by the respondents during interviews. The IEC officials highlighted the challenges of a shortage of manpower, and knowledge deficit in conducting research in voter education areas. They stated that Greater Giyani Municipality is too big for ten voter education facilitators. In addition, they mentioned that voter educators are employed on acontract basis that expires with the electoral period, making continuity of voter education impossible. Furthermore, the facilitators are not skilled in undertaking research, thus failing to identify and investigate problems pertaining to their work.

Details of the key findings in relation to objective 2 are as follows:
- The IEC voter educators reported that they are often blamed for poor service delivery by communities soon after Local Government Elections. Based on this information, this study revealed that citizens do not possess knowledge about public accountability which forms the integral part of voter education. If voter education content was covering public accountability, surely people would be knowing who to turn to for help and the burning of streets and public buildings would be history by now.
- The IEC officials also reported lack of capacity to educate the physically challenged people, for example the blind and the deaf, thus making voter education coverage questionable. This is a challenge that the researcher observed in rural areas where the level of literacy is low even in abled bodied people. It has been observed by the researcher that People Living with Disabilities are at the mercy of their accompanists

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for political information and for voting because voter educators lack the skill to educate them. It is obvious that this group of individuals vote according to the wishes of their care takers (accompanists) because they are the only they rely on.

- The study revealed a lack of frequent visits to provide voter education and overemphasis on voter registration by the JEC. This challenge was mentioned by a number of community members and was cited as the biggest challenge in the area to the extent that some considered the researcher to be a voter educator who had come to educate them on voting issues. The respondents also indicated that they are aware of the presence of political party agents who could assist them with voter education but, they do not consider them to be neutral as they are also campaigning for votes for their parties. They indicated that their teaching is directive because they actually show the people the party symbol or which candidate to vote for in the ballot paper.

- Respondents also highlighted lack of information regarding the rationale behind voter education. Respondents cited that they do not have information on why they should vote because the IEC mainly teaches registration processes. Some indicated that they just follow the mob on the voting day because they were told by friends, spouses and also heard from the radio that people should go and vote, how to place a cross on the ballot paper and which political party to vote for. When people do not possess voting knowledge, they fall into manipulation by those who have knowledge. Citizens need to be educated about the reasons behind voting, the political system of the country, how votes are counted and translated into seats (to avoid political jealousy and intolerance), impotence of civic participation, voting rights which be accompanied by informed consent. Voters who do not understand the rationale behind voting are at a serious disadvantage because it is hard for them to make informed decisions and easy for them to be misinformed. In addition, citizens should have an elementary knowledge of the country's Constitution.

- Some respondents cited that it would be better if the IEC teaches voter education to community stakeholders, so that they in turn cascade the information to the ground because the IEC does not seem to have time to visit their area. These responses could be indicating that people learn better if taught by one of their own.

- Respondents also indicated that the local IEC office does not advertise itself enough to be known by people because very few people are aware of its existence. This could be the reason for staging service delivery in the IEC's offices because ordinary members of the society cannot distinguish between the elected office bearers and the IEC officials especially that the IEC office is responsible for promoting voter education.

Perhaps the most confusing aspect in the world of voters is lack of knowledge regarding what the IEC stands for in terms of its origin and responsibilities.

- Another challenge mentioned by the respondents were the *"no go areas'* during the election periods; as a result, people feel reluctant toattend rallies heldin public spaces like stadiums. The *"no go areas"* that are staged during election campaigns pose serious challenge in South African politics because people are targeted, intimidated and killed as a result of party factions and conflicts during election campaigns. Such a behaviour by voters indicate political intolerance and should be viewed by the IEC as a potential area for voter education.

- Some respondents mentioned that they do not view the IEC as being neutral, alleging that the IEC is an employee of the government and as a result, the IEC office acts as a referee and a player at the same time. They claimed that because of this stance, the IEC is biased towards the ruling party and teaches what the ruling party wants people to know. Responses like these indicate that people have no knowledge of Chapter Institutions and their roles in supporting democracy in this country.

- Some respondents indicated that it would be better if voter education was to be provided by people outside South Africa who will maintain neutrality. They regard the IEC as a referee and a player in support of the government party. This response could be attributed to the fact that people have no knowledge of the roles of the Electoral Management Bodies and their relationship with the government. As a result, they are unable to differentiate between the IEC and the government.

5.4   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results of the study cannot provide conclusive evidence about voter education in all Independent Electoral Offices of the entire Limpopo Province, as the study was limited to one local municipality (Greater Giyani municipality) in Mopani District which has four other local municipalities. A bigger sample on effectiveness of voter education would have yielded better results in Greater Giyani Municipality but, the researcher could not do so due to limited time and financial constraints. However, there is a need to conduct a similar study using a larger sample scale in the Greater Giyani Municipality to further explore the effectiveness of voter education.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The establishment of the Independent Electoral Commission, anelectoral management body that oversees election and the gaining of democracy in South Africa laid foundation for competitive elections. The Commission ensures that elections are managed well and are free and fair and is praised for playing this role well by the International Observers each time elections are held. However, this study found that, 23 years into democracy, the electoral system in South Africa still struggles to provide voter education that make the populace of South Africa to look forward to go and vote as people are ill equipped. In addition, the electoral commission faces myriads of challenges during election campaigns for example, no goareas, demarcation of voting stations, shortage andill equipped personnel, poor media coverage. Some of these challenges have a profound impact on the effectiveness of voter education especially in the rural communities. Voter education is an important aspect in competitive elections because citizens have to base their voting on information and rational decision making.

(a) The study revealed that the concept voter education is defined differently and it could be the reason why it is not provided as expected. Important information that would complement the definition of voter has been left out for example, knowledge of the country's constitution, the rationale behind voting and tenets of democracy at an elementary level. It is recommended that the concept voter education be clearly defined by the IEC *since* voter education is the competency of the IEC.

(b) For citizens to understand what voting entails, they need to be taught and not just to be persuaded to vote. The study revealed that voter education is ineffective because the voter educators themselves are not properly trained, they only work when elections are due, they do not conduct research studies pertaining to their work and do not possess research skills. In addition, voter education is not provided on continuous basis. It is recommended that the IEC improves its staff compliment and employs voter educators on permanent basis, since voter education should be provided continuously. They should train the personnel well on voting issues, evaluate the citizens' knowledge on what they have been taught, and develop voter education policies to guide voter educators regarding what to teach.

(c) The study revealed that there is poor voter education coverage. It is therefore recommended that the IEC strengthens voter education coverage by strengthening voter education in schools, and in marginalised groups like the disabled individuals, while taking into consideration ruralpeople with low literacy level and the elderly. Voter

educators should be equipped with interpreting skills for people living with disabilities, thereby ensuring voter education coverage. This study recommends that the IEC conducts focus group discussions with the citizens after providing voter education to evaluate their understanding and clarify misconceptions. It is further recommended that voter education be televised in all eleven South African languages so that no one is left without this invaluable information.

(d) The study revealed that the types of voter education strategies used do not benefit all the citizens in rural areas, especially the media, since not all languages are used. It is recommended that the IEC improves its teaching strategies and teaching materials to also cater for the elderly, the rural disabled individuals and those with low literacy. The respondents recommended that the IEC teaches voter education to stakeholders so that they in turn teach their community and evaluate if this is properly done. The respondents recommended that face-to-face communication in public areas such the clinics, banks, taxi ranks, stadiums and door-to-door visits in their homes by the IEC would be more beneficial. They discredited the media which they indicated does not benefit all. The use of mock strategies in schools can be more beneficial.

(e) It is further recommended that further research studies be conducted on the knowledge of voters regarding the rationale behind voting, public accountability, tenets of democracy and the elementary knowledge of the country's Constitution and other elements that form part and parcel of voter education content. Such a study will provide a baseline knowledge of the voters regarding voter education entails and probe further research in this area. The study was confined to one village of the Greater Giyani Municipality; as a result, the study findings cannot be generalised to other areas.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was to explore the effectiveness of strategies used by the IEC in the provision of voter education as well to identify challenges experienced by the IEC upon conducting voter education. A qualitative research approach was used to answer the research questions. International trends regarding strategies used for voter education elsewhere were sought from the literature and were compared with strategies used for providing voter education by the IEC in South Africa. The study found that there were no significant differences between strategies used in other countries and those used in South Africa. The advantages and disadvantages of voter education strategies used elsewhere in the world were almost similar to those in South Africa. Challenges facing voter education

were identified. Possible solutions were recommended to improve the quality of voter education. It can therefore be concluded, based on the findings of the study, the objectives of the study have been achieved. It is hoped that management interventions recommended will be put into place to improve voter education by those responsible for it.

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LIST OF ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE 1: Consent Form and information leaflet

Dear Research Respondent/Participant,

I, Maswanganyi Rirhandzu Bertha, a Master of Public Administration Degree student at the University of Limpopo's Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership Campus am conducting a research project entitled: The role of the Independent Electoral Commission in voter education: a case of Homu village in the Greater Giyani Municipality.

The study is for partial fulfilment of a Masters of Public Administration degree. The study will be conducted under the supervision of my supervisor, Dr A Asha, who is a senior lecturer in this faculty. The aim of the study is to determine the effectiveness of voter education in your village.

Your participation involves interviews using an audio voice recorder. If you are in agreement with the request, I would like to inform you that the interview period may last for 30 minutes, during which you will be describing your experiences of voter education in your area. Confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly maintained; your identity will be protected. You are assured that your name will not appear in the research report and the results of the study willbegiven to youon request. Your participation is voluntary and you will be free to withdraw at any stage of the project without any penalty.

I......... ....hereby volunteer to participate in the above written study. The nature of the study has been fully explained to me by the researche.r I have been made aware of my right to withdraw from being a participant without being prejudiced for choosing to do so.

Signature of participant   Date....................................

Signature of the researcher   Date............................
Mrs. Rirhandzu Bertha Maswanganyi
Tel: 015 812 0330 / Cell: 073 483 8475

ANNEXURE 2. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Independent Electoral Commission

1. What does voter education mean to you as an IEC official responsible for voter education?

2. Which methods/strategies do you use when conducting voter education?

3. How do you ensure coverage?

4. What measures do you undertake to evaluate the effectiveness of voter education?

5. What challenges do you encounter when conducting voter education?

Community Representatives

1. What is the value of voter education?

2. What strategies are used to communicate voter education in your area?

3. How effective were the strategies used to convey voter education messages?

4. What will be the value of teaching voter education in schools?

5. What challenges did you encounter during voter education?

ANNEXURE 3. A LETTER OF REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY

Date: 06 August 2016

Enquiries: Maswanganyi RB

Tel. 0734838475

TO: THE MANAGER

THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION (IEC)

GIYANI

REQUISITION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

I, Rirhandzu Bertha Maswanganyi, a registered Masters student in Public Administration at the University of Limpopo's Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership Campus hereby request to conduct a study in your office. The title of the study is: The effectiveness of strategies for providing voter education: a case of Homu village in the Greater Giyani Municipality. The purpose of the study is to determine the effectiveness of voter education in Greater Giyani Municipality. Although the study may not benefit you directly, it is hoped that the study findings may yield information that may strengthen voter education. Your office was chosen because it provides voter education in Greater Giyani Municipality area, the time frame required to complete the study, financial constraints and the fact that it is close to the researcher's home. The results of the study will not be published, since the findings will be based on a small area. A copy of the research report may be sought from the researcher upon request.

The study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Limpopo.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Mrs RB Maswanganyi

ANNEXURE 4. A LETTER OF REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY

Date: 06 August 2016
Enquiries: Maswanganyi RB
Contact number: 0734838475

TO: THE SECRETARY
THANDABANTU TRIBAL COUNCIL

REQUISITION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

I, Rirhandzu Bertha Maswanganyi, a registered Masters student in Public Administration studies at the University of Limpopo's Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership Campus hereby request to conduct a study in your village.

The title of the study is: The effectiveness of strategies for providing voter education: a case of Homu village in the Greater Giyani Municipality.

The purpose of the study is to determine the effectiveness of voter education and to make recommendations for improvement based on study findings. Although the study may not benefit you directly, it will provide the community with knowledge regarding voter education. The village was chosen because it participates in both National and Local Government elections and it is close to the researcher's home. The results of the study will not be published, since the findings will be based on a small area.

The study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Limpopo.

Thanking you in anticipation.
Mrs RBMaswanganyi
………………………………….

LIMPOPO

HEADMAN THANDABANTU

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5. Your assistance will be highly appreciated.

Thandabantu Council secretary

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Anne Kruger Language Practice

•:O   19 Nooitverwacht,105 Main Street, **Paarl** 7646
•:• tel 072 374 6272 or 021863 2315
+ annekru1er2S@1mall.com

To whom It may concern

DECIARATION OFLANUAGE EDmNG

I, ElsJe Anne **lCruger** hereby **dedare** that I have peTSonally **read** through the dissertation of Rirhandzu

Bertha Maswanganyi on "The effectiveness of strategies for providing voter education in rural areas:

a case study of Homu village, Greater Giyani Municipality" and have highlighted language errors and

chedced refe ren ces. The trackchanges function was used and the author was responsible for

accepting the editor's changes and finalising the references. I did no structural rewriting of the
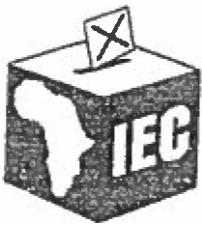
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Yoursfaithfull_y

Date

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Office No 07
KPMa I ufeke C omp"ex Next to Giyani community Hall
Giyani 0826
015 812 1757/ 0080

SOUTH AFRICA

 Independent E!ectoral Commission (IEC)
 Greater Giyani Municipality Lim 331
 KP Malu'eke Building Opposite Community Hall
 Office 07
 Tel: 015 85   17 5.7

Date: 22 September 2016

 PERMISSION TO CON D UC T A   RESEARCH   STUDY

Rirhandzu Bertha Maswanganyi. a registered Masters student in Pubhc Ad minis t ratio n the University of Limpopo

Turnoop Graduate School of Leadership Campus   is hereby   granted a pennission 10 conduct a study in the IEC o fficc

in Greater Giyani Municipality.   The topic of the study: The role of the Independent E le c tora I   Commission in

voter educatiofi' A case of Homu village in 1he Greater Giyani Municipality.

R.tllilUL \,u.1C(E.l_.

Yours Faithfully

Mavunda R (Municipal Outreach Coordi n at or)

071824 8470