



**UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA**

**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES**

A case study of the perceptions of the National Planning Commission officers and  
Commercial printers' directors on the distribution of the Namibian Government  
publications

By

**Kavevangua Kahengua**

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Supervisor: Dr. Angelina Totolo

**CERTIFICATION**

This research report has been examined and approved as meeting required standards of the scholarship for the partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Library and Information Studies.

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Project Supervisor

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Date

## STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This research was conducted by the researcher at the University of Botswana between 2008 and 2009. The work is original except where reference is made to sources of information. The work shall not be submitted for award of degree at any other University.

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Kavevangua Kahengua

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Date

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## **DEDICATION**

To my sons Thabiso Tuahepa Bob Kahengua, Odirile Kahengua  
and daughter Patronella Tjinae

**ABSTRACT**

*The study set out to establish the perceptions of the National Planning Commission officers and those of the directors of the commercial printers on publishing, printing and distribution processes of the Namibian Government publications. The study was motivated by the preliminary literature review which revealed that decentralized distribution systems of government publications can impede access to information. The research adopted a qualitative approach which employed a case study method of inquiry. Data collection was by means of voice recorded interviews. The findings revealed that some of the variables which influence publishing, printing and distribution functions at the National Planning Commission are cost effectiveness, control over subject content, and the adoption of the cost recovery policy by the National planning Commission. Findings also showed that there is no policy on publishing, printing and distribution of the Namibian Government. Some of the major recommendations made by the study are the establishment of an administrative department within the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology for publishing, printing and distributing Namibian Government publications; establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee for coordination of government publishing, printing and distribution processes; formulation of Information Policy that covers all aspects of government information production and conditions of accessibility.*

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

CD-ROM	Compact Disk – Read Only Memory
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
GPO	Government Printing Office
Nampa	Namibia Press Agency
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPC	National Planning Commission
PRO	Public Relations Officer
SOES	State Owner Enterprises
Unam	University of Namibia
URLs	Uniform Resource Locators

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## CHAPTER ONE

### *1.1 Introduction*

Among the important factors which should be considered for a major investment in an information service are the prevailing socio-political, economical and technological situation of a particular country. These are referred to as political, economic, social, and technological (PEST) trends. PEST have a major influence in the planning and undertaking of a major investment including that of an information service (Stueart & Moran 2007:76). PEST could be influential in the establishment of a government printing, publishing facilities and a chain of government bookshops. Below are the Namibian geographical and historical backgrounds in which government publishing and distribution take place as well as the PEST trends.

Namibia attained independence from South Africa on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1990. It is divided into thirteen (13) administrative regions. According to Matengu (2006:20), politically, Namibia is a unitary state and its administration is based on a constitutional democracy comprising three branches of the state with separate powers of the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. There is relative peace and security in the country. Local, regional and national elections are held regularly as per constitutional provision.

Economically, Namibia is classified as a lower middle-income country with an average per capita income of US\$1,800 per annum. This favourable average per capita income is deceiving as the social and economic inequalities inherited from the colonial past are still prevalent (Integrated Regional Information Affairs, 2007). Some households have been described in a Household Income and Expenditure Survey carried out in 2006 as in severe poverty below US\$1 a day (UN 2005 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) cited in (Integrated Regional Information Affairs, 2007).

The basis upon which Namibia was accorded its status of Middle-income country was based on its high Gross Domestic Product rather than on the distribution of resources (Sibeene, 2008).

Namibia is situated in south western Africa. It has a land area of 842 000 square km. Namibia borders the Atlantic Ocean to the west, South Africa to the south and Botswana to the east. It also shares borders with Angola in the north and Zambia and Zimbabwe in the far north-east. Climatically, Namibia is largely an arid territory and 92% of the land is classified as hyper-arid, arid or semi-arid. Three desert systems influence the dry climate. These are the Namib in the west, the Kalahari in the east and the Karoo in the south. Annual rainfall varies from less than 20 mm along the coast to more than 600 mm in the northeast (Office of the President, 2004).

The Namibian population was estimated to be 1.8 million in the 2001 census. About 60% of the population lives in the rural areas while the remaining portion of 40% lives in urban areas (Office of the President, 2004). According to Matengu (2006:21) the Namibian population consists of 42% of under 15 years of age (youth) and 5% over the age of 65 years old with a mean of 18.5. Based on the above, the population of the youth is quite sizeable. The national density of the population is approximately 2.2 inhabitants per square kilometre. Namibia is therefore a sparsely populated country. Towns which are designated as development centres are far distanced from each other. Namibia is very rich linguistically and culturally with a policy which promotes all language groups to prosper verbally and in written forms. Currently, thirteen languages are taught in schools. Some of the government publications on development programmes such as Vision 2030 are translated into the national languages including the English, language which is the official language for conducting government business.

About 89.1% of children are enrolled in primary schools, 48% in secondary schools and 11% of the population is enrolled at tertiary and training institutions (World Bank report) cited in Integrated Regional Information Affairs (2007). Though the Namibian literacy rate of 85% (World Development Indicator 2007) depicts a highly literate society, the deficiency in the education system which lacks competencies in mathematics and science subjects reflects the opposite. Few students enroll in mathematics and science. For instance, from 1995-1997 only 4% of all tertiary level students enrolled for mathematics and science subjects (Office of the President, 2004). Lack of interest in mathematics and science subjects is viewed as a hindrance to the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and a transition to information society.

Generally Namibia has a good communications infrastructure but quality varies. It has good roads, railway lines and telecommunication infrastructure that have the potential to support

economic development. Rural areas have poor or nonexistent ICT infrastructure while regional towns designated as growth poles such as Windhoek, Walvis Bay and Swakopmund have good ICT infrastructure.

Since Namibian independence in 1990 development programmes and policies have been initiated by the government. These are in the form of the periodic five-year national development plans and the long term development plan referred to as Vision 2030. Information is emphasized as one of the resources which should be harnessed for social and economic development. A perusal of the Special Collections at the University of Namibia and the Namibian Government website and that of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Namibia reveals that publishing is mainly in print though few titles are available in the electronic format as well. The Special Collections at the University of Namibia shows that the Namibian Government information relates to issues on health, education, minerals, water, agriculture, forestry, demography, law, among others. There are organizations that publish and distribute information which is of interest to the Namibian Government and the nation as a whole. These are Non-Governmental Organizations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), special interest groups on women and minority sections of the population, institutions that conduct research on economic and development issues, democracy, finance, banking, desertification, poverty, urbanization and rural development.

With regards to printing, the Namibian Government publications are printed by commercial printers and distributed by both the commercial printers and government ministries. Literature shows that both the decentralized distribution of the Namibian Government publications and lack of printing facilities by Namibian Government render access to government information difficult (Namhila & Hillebrecht, 2002:58) in Stringer (2002). The inefficiency of the decentralized distribution of the Namibian publications has been criticized by librarians and other information workers who shared some of the problems of acquiring government publications on the Listserv for Information Professionals in Namibia. One of the contributors to the debate, Hillebrecht (1998), a former librarian for the National Library, states that “The National Library often gets requests for government gazettes. There is a considerable confusion about where to get them, as a result of Namibia not having a government printer and putting out the Gazette printing out on tender”.

Another contributor to the Listserv, Margrit Hoffmann, the former librarian at the National Agricultural Information Centre made a detailed response to a query on where the Namibia Government Gazette could be obtained. Her findings were compiled by Hillebrecht (1998) and are reproduced verbatim as they have anecdotal evidence:

1. The Govt Gazette Office at the Ministry of Justice (tel: 2805111):Mrs. Isaacs) has some back issues of bound quarterly volumes of the Gazette. Stock is incomplete and binding of quarterly volumes has ceased. No unbound copies of single gazettes are available from this office.
2. The same office sells annual volumes of the Laws of Namibia. Back issues are available, this service will continue. Price ca N\$120 per year
3. The current tender for Gazette from Sep. 1995 to August 1998 is held by Central Bureau Services. Tel. 223466/223672, fax 223899. Single copies for this period are available from them as long as stocks last.
4. The previous tender was to Windhoek Stationers. They still keep some issues for the time 1990-August 1995, as long as stocks last. Tel. 267177, fax 217775 (contact person: Mike).
5. Any Gazette that is no longer kept by the above sources, including the old South West Africa Gazette, can theoretically be photocopied at the National Library. Unfortunately our photocopier is almost permanently out of order, ....
6. Alternatively, the National Archives also has a complete collection of Gazette and a photocopier.....

One can understand from the above anecdotal information on inquiries on where the Government Gazette could be obtained, that the distribution of the Namibian Government publications is inefficient and haphazard. The inefficiency of the distribution process renders access to and flow of government publications difficult.

Werner Hillebrecht complained about the confusion that arises as a result of Namibia not having a Government Printer and tendering the printing of the Government Gazette. The tender holder distributes the Government Gazette for the period which they hold the tender and thereafter the distribution either ceases or the stocks are not sustained under the prevailing conditions. Furthermore, there is no fixed place of distribution as distribution shifts from one tender holder to the other.

Observations made by the researcher during his selection and acquisitions trips to the Namibian Government ministries corroborate the above anecdotal evidence about the distribution pattern of the Government Gazette. The haphazard distribution of the Government Gazette is a problem which applies to some of the important Namibian Government publications. The researcher heads the Special Collections Section at the University of Namibia Library. On regular trips to select and acquire government publications from the various Namibian Government ministries, the researcher noticed a decentralized publishing and distribution activities within the ministries. Departments and publish and distribute their own publications. Such a distribution pattern complicates accessibility to Namibian Government publications.

Lack of harmonization of publication distribution process is a wide spread problem within the Namibian Government system. This is also observed by the researcher as the major stumbling block to information access and flow within the government.

The problem identified by the researcher is that the decentralized distribution pattern or system used by the Namibian Government is likely to affect the smooth flow of information to the users. The lack of government owned printing facilities coupled with short term outsourcing printing facilities, which is characteristic of Namibian Government publication distribution system can possibly render the distribution of government publications haphazard and inefficient. This can impede access to crucial government information by the intended users.

Preliminary investigations by the researcher indicated that there are problems in the distribution of government publications hence the motivation to carry out the study.

### ***1.2 Problem Statement***

This research sought the perceptions of government officers and commercial distributors on the distribution of the Namibian Government publications in print. The distribution of information to end users in whatever format, including print format, is vital if information were to influence economic development programmes. Namibian Government publication distribution system is decentralized. It has been established in the literature consulted that decentralized distribution systems are likely to impede access to government information. According to Namhila & Hillebrecht (2002), decentralized and commercialized distribution of government publications make access to government information difficult.

Governments use their mandate of representing people of all social strata and gather funds from well-off citizens through tax payments and produce information for dissemination to all members of society including those who cannot afford it. The logic behind equal access to information as a merit good is that its benefits should accrue to all members of society. Deliberating on the role of information in development, Kasanda (1999:2) emphasizes that information resolves uncertainties in decision-making and problem solving. Kasanda further emphasizes that the availability of appropriate information enables the provision of alternative solutions to problems faced (1999).

The decentralized distribution of Namibian Government information is not only a concern to the researcher; is also a concern to other information specialists. Acquisitions librarians within the National Library of Namibia system argued that the decentralized distribution of government publications in Namibia is a factor which impedes access to and the flow of publications (Hillebrecht, 2004). The other two concerns raised by acquisition librarians are lack of government owned printing facilities, as well as an unsustainable private outsourcing of printing services by the Namibian Government (Hillebrecht, 2004). Observation made by the researcher as a librarian for the Special Collections at the University of Namibia Library, corroborated observation made by the acquisitions librarians that the decentralized distribution pattern of publications is a factor which impedes access to and flow of government publications.

Lester & Koehler (2004) consider information as a merit good and therefore should be availed to the society without hindrance. Mchombu & Miti (1991:1), contextualizing the right to information by the citizens within the African states, strongly recommend that African governments should commit themselves to respect the right to information and to provide information to the public. Such provision of information would enable them to satisfy their basic human needs and to participate in the national development. The problem identified above warrants an investigation to establish the perceptions of the National Planning Commission officers and directors of printing companies on the distribution of the Namibian Government publications.

### ***1.3 Research objectives***

The aim of the study was to establish the perceptions of the government officers at the National Planning Commission and those of the directors of the printing companies on the challenges that impede the distribution and access to Namibian Government publications.

The specific objectives of the study were:

- 1.3.1 To identify the benefits for government publishing agencies and the commercial printers in the current distribution pattern of the Namibian Government.
- 1.3.2 To establish the perceptions of the officers at the National Planning Commission on the flow publications at the National Planning Commission.
- 1.3.3 To establish the perceptions of the directors of the printing companies on the selling of government information.
- 1.3.4 To identify key factors which influence the current system of publishing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications.
- 1.3.5 To identify policy instruments that guide publishing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications.
- 1.3.6 To recommend a functional distribution system for the distribution of the Namibian Government publications.
- 1.3.7 To identify the challenges of the current publication distribution patterns of the Namibian Government.

#### ***1.4 Research Outcome and Significance of the Study***

The study is significant as it explores functional distribution options and recommends a functional publishing, printing and distribution system for the Namibian Government. The study is also significant in the sense that it is exploratory being the first of its kind to assess the distribution pattern of the Namibian Government publications. Exploratory research is undertaken to explore an issue or a topic, identify a problem, clarify the nature of a problem or define the issues involved (McGivern 2006). The study contributes to body of the knowledge in the area of the distribution of government information in Namibia, as well as the rest of the world. Its findings may lead to recommendations that may impact on policy formulation and adoption of a functional distribution system.



### ***1.5 Definition of Key Terms***

Definitions of key terms shed light on how concepts are used in the study. Some are adapted from expert authors while others are defined as conceptualized by the researcher.

**Active information** is information which provided by government on its own initiative (Olthelten, 1974). In this study, the active information implies, government has a responsibility or duty to provide information to the citizens.

**Distribution** is a publishing activity concerned with dissemination of information products. It is regulated by accompanying policies that define conditions of access, funding, equity and the right to information (Lester & Koehler, 2007).

**Distribution system:** The management and production of government publications constitutes a publications system and the dissemination of government publications constitutes a distribution system. In this study different patterns of distribution some of which are centralized or decentralized are referred to as distribution systems.

**Economic good is** a commodity which can be bought and sold in the market. In this study information is treated as an economic good. An economic good is treated in various forms: As a merit good, its benefits accrue beyond the individual consumer. As a private good its benefits accrue to an individual consumer. As a public good it can be used by many people at the same time. These definitions are derived from Lester & Koehler (2004).

**Government:** In this study starting with capital letter ‘G’ connotes a specific government and government starting lower case ‘g’ connotes government in general.

**Government publications** include publications which are produced by state, federal, local and regional governments. Although a government publication is a carrier of information, in this study, it was used interchangeably with official information and government information. The context within which the terms are used is derived from Graziani, (1974:315), Duvall (1988:34).

**Information** is data that has been organized and communicated (Porat, 1977:2) cited in (Lester & Koehler 2004). In this study, the context within which the term is used implies that information influences decision-making.

**Passive information** is information which is provided by government as a response to specific requests (Oltheten, 1974). In this study passive information implies citizens have a right to demand information from the government.

A **publication** is a carrier or surrogate in which information resides. This definition applies to both print and electronic information carriers (Lester & Koehler 2004). A publication is also defined as an economic good which can be bought and sold in the market place. Discussions in this study suggest that government publications could be availed to the public at a price or free of charge.

**Publishing** is the whole process of selecting and editing material and arranging for its printing, promotion and distribution (Paul, 1976). In this study government publishing activities constitute a publishing system.

### ***1.6 Assumptions***

The research proposal was based on the assumptions that the decentralized distribution of the Namibian Government publications and the consequent outsourcing of printing services by the Namibian Government impeded access to and flow of publications.

### ***1.7 Delimitations of the study***

The study was conducted at the National Planning Commission, a government agency which publishes and distributes information based on development projects and programmes. The research was limited to the printing and distribution of Namibian Government publications in print. A commercial printer which has printed and distributed government information on tender basis was also the subject of the study.

### ***1.8 Limitations of the study***

Three major factors have limited the conduct of the study. As the method of the study is a case study, its findings cannot be generalized to other government ministries for one to have a general picture of the variables that influence government publishing, printing and distribution processes. The researcher had intended to interview two commercial printers but one of them did not grant the interview. The respondent's input could have been informative as a representative of the firm that has published, printed and distributed Namibian Government publications. This is so because when informally discussing government publications distribution, while trying to arrange for an interview, the respondent expressed disappointment with poor selling of government publications. The respondent's views could have brought some enlightenment to the study.

Authoritative literature consulted for this study on government publishing, printing and distribution was published three decades ago. There seems to be little research on the distribution of government publications in print as research trends have shifted to distribution of information through the electronic media. The study has therefore not benefited much from recently published sources due to their paucity. However literature from the earlier decades is relevant to the current level of the Namibian Government publishing, printing and distribution processes.

### **1.9 Summary**

The chapter highlighted the Namibian political, economic, social and technological trends as a way of assessing whether or not Namibia could embark on transformation of government publishing, printing and distribution system on a countrywide basis. The chapter also presented a brief historical background of the country in order to understand the historical trends that imparted on the formation of the country. Reference was to the short and long term development plans in which information is regarded as natural resource for development.

A brief description of information available at the University of Namibia relating to government and NGOs was presented in the chapter. The chapter also presented publishing, distribution trends in Namibia. It also presented the research objectives of the study, definition of key terms, assumptions, delimitations and limitations and of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 Introduction***

Literature review is based on research findings that have been accumulated as knowledge shared amongst researchers with similar interest. Researchers learn from knowledge which has been written by others (Neuman, 2000:446).

There are various goals for carrying out literature review as much as there are different types of literature reviews Neuman (2000:447). Neuman identifies three types of reviews and some of them have characteristics which are relevant to this research proposal:

- (i) Self-study reviews increase the reader's confidence.
- (ii) Context reviews place a specific project in the big picture.
- (iii) Integrative reviews summarize what is known at a point in time.

While this research study focused on the distribution of information in print by the Namibian Government, it also acknowledges that information can be distributed by other means such as electronically. The literature therefore covers the categorization of government information, information and its uses, publishing, printing and distribution of both electronic and print media, printing services by governments in the United States of America, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Botswana, Italy, France and Namibia. Botswana and Namibia represent first world countries while the rest represent second world countries.

### ***2.2 Categorization of Government Information***

The following section helps place government information into perspective and the role it plays as a communication link between law makers and the citizens. Olthelten (1974) categorizes information into active and passive. Active information is provided by government on its own initiative. Passive information is provided by government as a response to specific requests. Official information is distributed internally for use by government employees and externally to the public. Olthelten (1974) further categorizes government information into primary and non-primary categories. Primary information is for consultation purposes as a process of enactment of legislation and establishment of state commissions. Primary information includes parliamentary debates, bulletins, orders and decrees that culminate into acts of parliament.

Non-primary information includes information issued for informative purpose and is meant to increase citizen's knowledge (Oltheten, 1974). Non-primary information is also referred to as active publicity. Such information includes government information from advisory bodies, memoranda on government policy, factual information on tax, statistics, crop yields, energy conservation, and drug abuse.

(Oltheten, 1974) also categorizes information into pre-parliamentary and post-parliamentary. The argument proffered is that in contemporary and democratic societies, governments represent informed public whose sentiments should be reflected in the policy decision. Pre-parliamentary information constitutes the two-way communication between society and parliament through which the public contributes to legislative decisions. The responsibility of providing information to the citizens is also advocated by Graziani (1974) who opines that the state has not only the right, but the duty to, to inform its citizens of the directions into which its activities are being channelled and the duty to provide them with details of its achievements. In the same token, Mchombu & Miti (1991:1), contextualizing the right to information by the citizens within the African states, strongly recommend that African governments should commit themselves to respect the right to information and to provide information to the public. Such provision of information would enable them to satisfy their basic human needs and to participate in the national development. being in position in position to hold their governments accountable to their declared policies.

Post-parliament information is part of policy approved by parliament, or evolves from such policy (Oltheten, 1974). Such information would explain the benefits and obligations of new policies, for example on education, prices, energy, labour law, and others.

### ***2.3 Official Information and its uses***

Information plays two roles: it is generated to inform government authorities on the decisions which they should take and to inform the public on the activities of the public administration Graziani (1974:313).

Much has been debated about information as a resource for economic development and arguments both for and against have been raised. Some information economists doubt if information can be accorded commodity status by nature of it being a public good (Martin, 1995). However there is certainly a consensus that "information and knowledge are enabling resources that inform, shape and catalyze other resources" (Babe, 1994) in Martin (1995:89).

Information can be viewed from different angles. It can be treated as an economic good or a public good. As an economic good it can be bought and sold in the market. Based on the 1950s economic theory credited to Paul Samuelson, it can be treated as a public good. As a public good, it can be used by many people at the same time (Lester & Koehler 2004:221). In this case, its consumption is not determined by market forces, it is determined by government intervention in the market forces. Information can be treated as a private good. As a private good when consumed by an individual its primary benefit accrues to that individual. Information can be treated as merit good. As a merit good, it has benefits that accrue to society beyond that gained by the individual who consumes the good (Lester & Koehler 2004:221). Governments use their mandate of representing people of all social strata and gather funds from well-off citizens through tax payments and produce information for dissemination to all members of society including those who cannot afford it. The logic behind equal access to information as a merit good is that its benefits should accrue to all members of society.

Information can play a role as an economic indicator. It can help make informed economic decisions. As an economic good, information contributes to the Gross National Product of a nation. It can also be used as a yardstick for measuring the extent to which the society is transforming into an information one.

According to (Neuman, 1997) cited in Strydom (2001) applied research could be used by government to generate information geared towards solving development issues. For example, social impact assessments could be conducted before the envisaged developmental projects are implemented. Such assessments would enable government to have a scientific understanding of the needs of the recipients of the development projects. Social impact assessments reports could also help government in estimating the costs of the projects and selecting appropriate course of action. By undergoing rigorous research process, government information can overcome the shortcomings of the top-down descriptive communication and reduce rejection by the recipients and thus facilitate information flow. Social impact assessment research could be used by government to solicit public opinion that would enable political representatives to exercise the will of the electorate Strydom (2001:55).

The issue of information as an economic good is discussed in detail by Prophet (1999) who analyses cost recovery policy as instituted by the Canadian Government on the services rendered by government to the public. The principle of cost recovery was instituted to provide the public

with low-cost information without using tax revenue to generate information. The Treasury Cost Recovery and Charging Policy on behalf of the Canadian Government formulated a cost recovery policy that includes guidelines on the sale of government information. Shifting towards privatization and commercialization of government services in a shrinking world economy, cost recovery measure is viewed as a means of achieving fiscal balance. Government departments are allowed to license their data to the private sector to create a value-added product. The private sector presumably makes marginal profit while charging affordable prices.

According to Prophet (1999), economists Bird and Tsiopoulos were charged with the responsibility of determining the services or products which should incur user charges by determining which ones are public goods, private goods and merit goods. The two economists used six characteristics to determine the accessibility of the services or products which included: rivalness, excludability, economies of scale, lumpiness, externalities and social objects.

Public goods and services have a number of characteristics. They were classified as non-rival. That meant that they could be consumed by one person and be available at the same level of consumption for others at no extra cost. This characteristic applies to information which can be shared by many consumers at simultaneously. Information is also non-rival in the sense that it is collaborative or additive in consumption. Information can lead to generation of more information when it is used in influencing research processes. Information is additive as once created databases can generate new information at low costs. Public goods were also classified as non-excludable. This meant that someone could not be prohibited from using the good or service without paying for it. Information can be classified as a non-excludable commodity when it is treated as a private good and its consumption primarily benefits an individual. It is argued that public libraries, being sources of information for the public, should be treated as a merit good as they promote literacy and an informed populace. As a merit good, it has benefits that accrue to society beyond that gained by the individual who consumes the good (Lester & Koehler 2004:221).

#### ***2.4 Publishing and Distribution Systems in Review***

The following is a review of literature on publishing, printing and distribution systems in the following countries: United States of America, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Italy, France, Botswana and Namibia. Literature on the above stated countries was selected for three reasons. First, it was the only available literature. Second, literature was chosen because it was relevant to

the topic of study (Distribution of government publications. Third, literature was meant for comparison of publication distribution systems, both in the developed and less developed countries. Botswana was chosen because it is in the same geographical area as Namibia. Furthermore Botswana and Namibia have slightly equal populations. According National Planning Commission (2003:3), Namibia has a population of 1.8 million and Botswana has a population of 1.65 million (Southern African Marketing, 2002:136).

For comparison, countries with similar publishing systems are presented together. Although most of the literature is dated, challenges on the distribution of government information in print are exemplary and some are similar to those experienced by Namibia. The study depended on dated literature because there is hardly any latest literature on the distribution of government information in print.

United States of America (USA) and Malaysia share similar publishing and distribution system. In the USA, Government Printing Office (GPO) is the major agency which publishes prints and distributes information. GPO operates an online bookstore. Government information is distributed at state and federal levels. The distribution network includes 1200 libraries under the Federal Depository Library Program, National Technical Information Service and Federal Citizen Information Center. Although the distribution policy allows charging for some publications, USA Government documents are mainly distributed free of charge, both electronically and in print. In the USA publishing trend is shifting from print to electronic format (Martin, 2004). Challenges involved in shifting publishing trends include lack of measures to preserve electronic documents for public permanent access. Continually changing uniform resource locators (URLS) also makes previously visited government websites difficult to access (Martin, 2004).

As it is the case in the USA, in Malaysia, Government also has a national printing department which centrally publishes and prints publications (Mohamed, 1988:22). State agencies distribute government publications at state, federal and local levels. The national printing department provides printing services to all government departments, federal, state and statutory bodies. The national printing department has six regional branches which are sales points as well as fifty appointed agencies in Malaysia and Singapore where government publications are sold. Publications published and sold by the national printing department include: acts, rules and regulations, legal notifications, the Auditor-General's report, government directives, annual



reports, financial statements (federal and state), five-year development plans, federal and state government gazettes.

In Italy publishing is decentralized at regional and national levels as part of decentralized service provision (Graziani, 1974). Although state organs publish and distribute information on their respective spheres of competence, three state agencies namely; Presidency of Council of Ministers (Information and Copyright Services), the Central Statistical Institute and the State Polygraphic Institute publish and distribute at home and abroad. Their publications cover social, economic, juridical and cultural disciplines. Information comes in various formats such as periodicals, reviews and yearbooks. Some of the government publications are accessible at a price.

Publishing and distribution processes in Botswana are centralized. The department of Government Printing and Publishing Services is entrusted with printing, publishing and distribution processes. To date the department has a bookshop in each of the following localities: Gaborone, Francistown, Maun, and Serowe. Publications sold which are in the bookshops include: Laws of Botswana, Government Gazette, statutes laws and statistical reports.

The acquisition of government printing services was not without objection. The purchase of printing press by the Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology was not welcome by both parliament and the public. It was feared that the state would have competitive edge over commercial printers if it engaged in commercial printing and undermine democracy which thrives on private press (Baaitse, 2005). However the dissenting voice was that government ownership of printing press would promote operational efficiencies and quality. Botswana has adopted a centralized publication distribution system and the distribution only involves government bookshops and the public library system.

The centralized publication distribution system in Botswana offers a convenient service for the customers as there are government bookshops in large urban areas in the country. The sole publications distributor is easily identifiable to the end user.

Equally displaying a centralized publishing, printing and distribution system is the Netherlands. Reference is made to Government Printing and Publishing Office as the Dutch Government agency for publishing, printing and distributing publications (Oltheten, 1974). The agency issues periodicals and books. The Government Publishing Office finances publishing activity. This involves taking risk by publishing publications which might not make profit. Political, factual,

trade and statistical information is issued by the agency. Titles issued by the agency include: Bulletin of Acts, Orders and Decrees (Government Gazette) and Parliamentary debates.

The publishing policy takes into consideration that publishing is by nature a professional business (Oltheten, 1974). The Dutch Publishing Office therefore adopted a commercial principle. This means that important documents are sold to both members of Parliament and the public at the same subscription rates. In line with commercial principle, distributed books are published with profit-making in view. As commercial principles, in exclusion of periodicals, books are distributed through commercial booksellers offering discount. Booksellers buy Government publications at their own risk. The publishing agency also takes into consideration that not every publication would be profitable and deliberate decision to publish them is taken as a principle. The policy takes into consideration that many publications are issued with the understanding that they will make a loss. Loss-making is unavoidable because Government Publishing Office cannot confine itself to commercially successful publications. The usefulness that has to be set against the cost cannot be expressed in terms of money alone. Losses are balanced by publications that can be commercialized and thus become profitable (Oltheten, 1974). As a matter of policy, public reading interests are taken into consideration and not every title is accepted.

The Netherlands publication distribution system offers the advantage of distributing through both the official bookshops and the commercial bookshops.

The French Government publishing and distribution system described in the 1970s and 1980s in some cases resemble the Namibian publishing system of 21<sup>st</sup> century. In some cases they exhibit dissimilar system. The French publishing and distribution processes in the 1970s and 1980s were described as haphazard and incoherent. It was described as lacking centralization, production being left to the initiatives of the ministries, or often left to the directorates and sometimes to mere government offices (Honore, 1974). Equally, Boisard (1983) described the distribution of the French publications as being very limited, badly organized and anarchical.

According to Namhila & Hillebrecht (2002:58) in Namibia publishing is a private business and government publishing is restricted to documents on policies, programmes and scientific information. Government publications are printed by commercial printers on tender awards.

Commercial printers also distribute government publications while they still hold the tender. Namhila & Hillebrecht (2002:58) observed that decentralized and commercialized distribution of government publications make access to government information difficult. Similarities in publishing and distribution of publications in France and Namibia are inherent in the economic and constitutional set up of the two countries. Both countries practice mixed economy. Article 98 of the Namibian Constitution on “Principles of Economic Order” (Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing, 2002:52) provides for mixed economy based on the following forms of ownership: public, private, joint public-private, cooperative, co-ownership and small-scale family. According to (National Planning Commission, 2001) ICT sector is based on the constitutional principles of mixed economy with both the private and public sectors involved in electronic and print media activities in the country. The partnership of producing information by the Namibian Government and the private sector as a policy is also exemplified by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (1990:9) which quotes the constitution as the basis for having private and government media: As pointed out above Article 98 of the Namibian Constitution provides for a system of mixed economy. In line with this principle of mixed economy, the country’s information policy allows for a model of mixed ownership of the mass media, namely, ownership by private individuals or groups, on one hand, and by the state, on the other.”

Based on the forgoing assertion, one would construe that outsourcing of printing services to the commercial printers by the Namibian Government is deliberately done as a means of involving the private sector in the production of information as a constitutional requirement. France practices a European economic and social model which is characterized by public and private ownership of property (Rodrigues, Eh renkrona, Herzog (2008:115). Government printers, private publishers, private printers and societies are engaged in printing and distribution of information for profit-making purpose.

Important to note is that French publishing is an established industry which has undergone transformation. Government introduced intervention strategies of coordinating publishing activities at ministerial and inter-ministerial levels, streamlining distribution process within the decentralized publishing and distribution system and coming up with policies on pricing and budget monitoring. The Namibian publishing on the other hand has not undergone much scrutiny and transformation though important government titles are appearing in both electronic format and in print. The current information policies are biased towards publishing and distribution of

electronic information but do not address the distribution of information in print. They do not deliberate on how the electronic information should be preserved for permanent public access as it has been the case with its print counterpart. The system comprises of partnership between government ministries, Associations and private entities.

The publishing system in France and Namibia has similar characteristics. Publications are distributed by both government agencies and private entities on a decentralized basis. The decentralized publication system offers the advantage of bringing publication services closer to the end users but the service could equally be distracting as the service providers do not share the same identity.

### *2.5 Summary*

Literature review has highlighted varied government publishing and distribution scenarios in different countries. The Government of the United States of America has a printing department, namely the Government Printing Office (GPO) which is the main government information and publications publisher, printer and distributor. There are other agencies which are responsible for publishing and distributing government publications. Botswana has a centralized publishing and printing government system with a network of government bookshops located in some large towns in the country. Malaysia has a centralized publishing, printing and distribution government system at state, federal and local levels. The scenario which resembles the Namibian Government publications, printing and distribution system, is that of France as described in the 1970s and 1980s. The distribution has been described as haphazard, incoherent, decentralized and inefficient. The difference with the Namibian Government publishing scenario, is that the publishing and distribution of French Government publications has undergone a transformation which led to the streamlining of publishing and distribution functions with policies and guidelines that provide for the participation of the official printing offices, associations/societies and the private printing houses in the publishing, printing and distribution of government publications.

While the French decentralized publication distribution could be suitable for France as a developed country, it is inconvenient for Namibia as a developing country which has limited development resources.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

#### ***3.1 Introduction***

According to (McNabb, 2002:5) research methodology refers to steps involved in a given approach. This study has adopted a qualitative approach and a case study method because data that was collected sought the opinions of the respondents on the subject of study. Qualitative research approach is relevant for soliciting knowledge, attitudes and practices on a phenomenon being investigated (McNabb, 2002:5). Interview instrument has been used to solicit the perceptions of the officers of the National Planning Commission and the director for a commercial printer on the distribution of the Namibian Government publications.

#### ***3.2 Research Design***

According Kothari (1990:22) a research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. It is a plan of action which among others, sets out what the study is about? Why the study is being made? Who the subjects of investigation will be and how they will be selected. Where the study will be carried out? What kind of data is required? How will the data be analysed? It explains which research approaches and their related methods will be used. This study adopted a case study method.

According to Bell (2005:10) "... the case study approach can be particularly appropriate for individual researchers because it provides an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in depth." Case studies in most cases can be completed within a short period of time which is convenient for an academic studies project. Bell (2005:10) also states that "Though observation and interviews are most frequently used, no method is excluded." In this study recorded interviews were administered to obtain data from the respondents.

Bell (2005:10) further observes that "All organizations and individuals have their common and unique features. Case study researchers aim to identify such features, to identify or attempt to identify the various interactive processes at work. McGivern (2006:110) also notes that in an organization the elements of the case might be departments and individuals within departments. This research identified variables that influence publishing, printing and distribution of government publications through a case study conducted at the National Planning Commission.

This study used interviews to obtain data from the respondents. McGivern (2006) recommends this approach to data collection in case study method, especially if the study is exploratory as it is the case with this proposal. According to Chilisa & Preece (2005:145) “Interviews can be divided into individual and focus group interviews.” For this study interview guides were designed to collect data from individual respondents. The interview enabled the researcher to ask open-ended questions to obtain the perceptions and opinions on variables that influence publishing, printing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications. Semi-structured interviews comprising of open-ended questions were conducted face-to-face. A semi-structured interview as data collection method is flexible, allows probing and prompting. It allows new questions to emerge during the interview process as a result of the interaction with the interviewees and their perception of the issues being investigated (McGivern, 2006). Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to plan a set of themes to be explored. According to Neuman (2000) face-to-face interviews have the highest response rates.

### ***3.3 Population of study***

The study was conducted in Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia. The population of the study comprised of all government ministries. The Namibian Government consists of 21 ministries, 4 commissions, Office of the President, Office of the Prime Minister and Office of the Auditor General. The National Planning Commission (NPC), one of the four commissions was purposefully selected for the study. According to Gray, William, Karp, Dalphin (2007: 105), purposive sampling is a general term for judgmental sampling in which the researcher purposely selects certain groups or individuals for their relevance to the issue being studied. The National Planning Commission is a state agency which coordinates development plans and programmes. It publishes and distributes information relating to such programmes. The disseminated information influences government development policies at large. The National Planning Commission is comprised of five directorates:

- Directorate of Development Planning
- Directorate of Development Cooperation
- Central Bureau of Statistics
- Information System Centre
- General Service Administration

The Public Relations Officer, Librarian and the Directors for Development Planning and Development Cooperation were interviewed as respondents. The Director for Solitaire Press was

interviewed as a respondent for a commercial printer which has printed and distributed Namibian Government publications.

The above office bearers were purposefully selected as respondents. The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites (or documents or visual material) best help the researcher understand the problem and research questions Creswell (2003). Through experience as the librarian for Special Collections at the University of Namibia, the researcher knows that the National Planning Commission produces a substantial amount of publications for distribution and has equally subscribed for Laws of Namibia from a commercial printer. The selection of commercial printers as respondents is also based on the literature review which has revealed that they distribute government publications.

### ***3.4 Data Collection***

There are crucial questions about data to be collected (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005: 104). These are: What data are needed to resolve the problem? What is the nature of data? Are they documentary? Statistical? Observation? Interview data? Some of these questions are pertinent to this study.

Data was collected through an interview instrument which was administered by the researcher. Semi-structured interviews were designed based on the objectives of the study, research questions and its assumptions. Semi-structured interview questions were also based on the literature review as concepts and problems discussed in the literature were similar to those which prevail in the Namibian Government publishing system. Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

A letter of introduction from the Research Supervisor was delivered by the Researcher to the Permanent Secretary at the National Planning Commission and Directors for two printing companies. The letter of introduction sought permission to administer the interview guides and to create rapport for administering the interview instrument.

### ***3.5 Techniques for maximizing the return of the survey***

To maximize the return of the survey, the interview was administered face-to-face in a single geographical area of Windhoek City. Appointments were arranged with the respondents in advance. McGivern (2006:244) identifies a number of strengths associated with face-to-face interviews. The interviewer can build rapport with the respondent which can help achieve and maintain cooperation and increase quality of data. McGivern (2006) concurs with Neuman (2000) that face-to-face interviews have the highest response rates as compared to other data

collection methods. Five respondents agreed to be interviewed in exception of one who declined. The respondent kept on postponing the interview session until time ran out for the researcher.

### ***3.6 Techniques to ensure reliable and valid data***

Data was voice-recorded by the researcher from the interviewees without manipulating it. The interviewees were encouraged to express their knowledge and perceptions about the topic or subject of investigation without inhibitions. During the interviewing process some interview questions in the interview schedule were slightly modified when the researcher realized that respondents were not conversant with the concepts of inquiry. Questions were also modified to reassure the respondents that questions were not meant to intimidate them or to challenge their intelligence but were formulated to make respondents to freely come up with the answers they thought were relevant. A transitional introduction was improvised from one question to another in order to focus the mindset of the respondent on the next question. The shortcoming is that the transitional introductions were at times overstated and made the respondent to wait longer unnecessarily. According to Strauss & Corbin, (1998: 41) in qualitative research, objectivity means openness, a willingness to listen and give voice to respondents, be they individuals or organizations.

### ***3.7 Instrument Validity and Reliability***

According to O'Leary (2004) validity is based on the data which is captured and measured concerning the phenomenon being studied. It is assumed that such data represent the nature of the phenomenon being studied. By piloting the semi-structured interview, the instrument is grounded in the views of the interviewees (McGivern 2003). The study was piloted amongst information studies at the University of Botswana and at the National Planning Commission and Solitaire Press to validate the instrument and make it reliable. Changes to the interview questions which were not clear were made. Voice recordings as the means of collecting data were played back to the interviewees to verify data authenticity. The objective to pilot the study was met as the instrument enabled the researcher to collect data which was related to the objectives of the study.

### ***3.8 Data Collection Techniques***

Six research questions were formulated to investigate concepts, factors or variables that were assumed to influence publishing, printing and distribution of the Namibian Government



publications. For each research question, interview questions were formulated for respondents based on their positions in their organizations with assumption that their responsibilities would enable them to understand issues being investigated. Two respondents, being Directors at the National Planning Commission answered the same interview questions. The Librarian and the Public Relations Officer for the National Planning Commission had their own interview questions respectively. Interview schedule was designed for the directors of the printing companies as well. Some interview questions were answered by a combination of interviewees. Interviews were voice recorded and stored in different folders labelled A to D. Recording duration was indicated for each interviewee. The interview for all the respondents was for the duration of 1 hour and 48 minutes. See appendices (B, C, D, E) pp.: 65-71.

### ***3.9 Data analysis***

Voice recorded data was transcribed. Although transcription is tedious and requires deep concentration, the Researcher has realized that it is a process which helped to internalize respondents' answers and ponder over how they should be synthesized and incorporated into the research report. Merriam (1998) and Marshall and Rossman (1989) cited in Cresswell (2003) contend that data collection and data analysis must be simultaneously processed in a qualitative research. While transcribing from the voice recorder, the researcher simultaneously made notes based on respondents' answers which were later used to analyze data qualitatively. Transcription has allowed the researcher to write data in a conversational dialogue reflecting dialogue as uttered by the respondents as well as the interviewer. Dialogue to some extent reflected their hesitation and stammering and errors that occur in spoken speech. Thus transcription reflects the essence of data collected through the vigorous process guided by the case study method.

According to O' Leary (2004: 193) qualitative data can be explored for the words that are used. Data analysis was done manually mainly because the research is qualitative and quality of words is significant in reaching deductions. An aspect of data analysis may entail using the wording from respondents as advocated by Cresswell (2003). The researcher has used respondents' wording by paraphrasing it in order to conform to research style. According to Cooper & Schindler (2003) data analysis involves developing summaries and looking for system. Data analysis was divided into themes that formed the basis for the research objectives that the study set out to investigate. "The process of qualitative data analysis involves the use of inductive (discovering) and/ or deductive (uncovering) reasoning to generate and interpret relevant themes

in order to achieve meaningful understanding” O’Leary (2004:195). Variables that influence publishing, printing and distributing as understood by the respondents have been contextualized within literature and synthesized into the report to give an overall picture of the research problem. Data analysis was based on the following themes that formed the research objectives: distribution benefits, challenges to publication distribution pattern, flow of publications, publishing policies, key factors that influence publishing processes and of the respondents on the selling of government information.

### ***3.10 Ethical Considerations***

The Researcher has concealed the identity of the interviewees by referring to them as “respondents” through out the research report. Pronouns such as he and she were deliberately avoided in reference to respondents. Reference to the interviewees was in the third person point of view such as “the respondent said...” as opposed to “She said...” The reference in first person point of view only appears when reference was made to the researcher. All the respondents read the letters of consent and signed them. Permission to administer the interviews was sought from the highest authority in the organization. See appendices (F, G, H, J) pp.:72-75.

### ***3.11 Summary***

A qualitative research approach was used as a guiding methodology of inquiry. A pilot study method was employed to study the distribution of the Namibian Government publications at the National Planning Commission. The interview instrument was used to collect data from the sample population which comprised of the officers at the National Planning Commission and the directors for the printing companies. The interviews were voice recorded. Although the use of the interview instrument was tedious, it helped the researched to internalize the research process.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

#### *4:1 Introduction*

This chapter presents findings of the study based on the research objectives which the study set out to establish regarding the distribution of the Namibian Government publications. The project was a case study that was conducted at the NPC in Namibia. The National Planning Commission is a state agency which is responsible for coordinating and implementing national development plans. The agency falls under the Office of the President. The mandate of the National Planning Commission as a development coordinator and communicator inherently entails producing and publishing information. Besides collecting data at the National Planning Commission respondents, for verification purpose, data was also collected from a commercial printer. The study sought to find out through the perceptions of the National Planning Commission officers and the directors of the printing companies the factors that hinder the distribution of Namibian Government publications. The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To identify the benefits for government publishing agencies and the commercial printers in the current distribution pattern of the Namibian Government.
2. To identify the challenges of the current publication distribution patterns of the Namibian Government.
3. To establish the perceptions of the officers at the National Planning Commission on the flow publications at the National Planning Commission.
4. To establish the perceptions of the directors of the printing companies on the selling of government information.
5. To identify key factors which influence the current system of publishing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications.
6. To identify policy instruments that guide publishing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications.
7. To recommend a functional distribution system for the distribution of the Namibian Government publications.

Findings of the study are presented objective by objective below:

#### ***4.2 Objective 1: Benefits of distribution system***

The objective was to identify benefits which are gained by the government publishing agencies and the commercial printers in the current distribution system of the Namibian Government publications. Data for this objective was sought from the Public Relations Officer, Directors at the National Planning Commission and the Director for Solitaire Press. Data was solicited from the Public Relations Officer because it was assumed that the responsibilities of the Public Relations Officers familiarize them with the business of their organizations. Data was solicited from the directors at the National Planning Commission because as high ranking they should be conversant with the business of their organization. The director for Solitaire Press was interviewed as the recipient of outsourcing printing services and distributor of some of the Namibian Government publications.

The Public Relations Officer responded that the benefit gained from the decentralized distribution publication system was the convenience of identifying the recipients of the publications. The respondent also explained that there was no central printing and distribution agency in Namibia and further explained that government has a printing facility at the Government Garage where photocopying was done. On enquiry the researcher discovered that the facility at the Government Garage was a reprographic one rather than a printing facility.

The benefits of the decentralized publishing and distribution system that were identified by the Director for Development Planning were similar to those that were identified by the Public Relations Officer. The benefits were that the packaging of information lay with the subject expertise in development related issues. Distribution had to be closely supervised by the publishing agency to avoid dumping it on the public without clarification of the content.

The Director for Development Cooperation explained that the benefits in outsourcing are access to a greater market of printing service providers to choose from, comparison of quality of service and cost effectiveness. The respondent further elaborated that it was good to have some competition and a range of service providers as they provide quality service which is good for development. The respondent also pointed out that competition came with specialization and good service tailor made to what is needed. The respondent emphasized that there was no need for Government to implement everything and run all the services. The respondent however,

stated that if government had a printing facility, printing services could equally be done effectively; cautioning that costs have to be weighed against benefits.

Benefits realized by the Director for Solitaire Press was income generated from the Namibian Government in exchange for printing services rendered as a commercial enterprise. The respondent added that the Namibian Government was a good payer who paid on time. Job creation was realized as a benefit that accrued to the society.

In summary, the benefits that were identified by the respondents of the official publishing agency differed from those of the commercial printer. The respondents for the official agency were concerned with the benefits that enabled the agency to personally publish and distribute publications to the beneficiaries while the commercial printer was concerned with profit making and the job creation as a benefit that accrued to the society. One of the respondents for the official publishing agency recommended the acquisition of the printing facility by the Namibian Government as it would equally have the benefit of printing information efficiently.

#### **4.3 Objective 2: Beneficiaries of publications**

The purpose of the second objective was to establish who the recipients of the National Planning Commission's publications were? The Public Relations Officer explained that line ministries, Parastatals, and the general public were the recipients. Regional Councils were recipients who also facilitated the distribution of the publications from the National Planning Commission to the public. Regional Councillors have an intermediary role as they are in contact with the public and the development stakeholders at grassroots level. The respondent explained that the distribution of the publications was marketed through workshops and meetings where stakeholders were invited by the Regional Councillors.

As a follow-up, when asked if there was any policy which determined who the recipients of the National Planning publications? The Public Relations Officer explained that there was no policy which determined who should be the recipients. The respondent explained that as per mandate bestowed on their agency of dealing with national development planning, recipients should be dealing with development issues.

The benefits of the decentralized publishing and distribution that were identified by the Director for Development Planning were similar to those that were identified by the Public Relations Officer. The benefits related to the packaging of information which is done by the subject

expertise in development related disciplines. The benefit of the government agency in distributing its publications was that distribution was closely supervised to avoid “dumping” publications on the public without clarification of the contents.

The Director for Development Cooperation explained that the benefits in outsourcing were access to a greater market of printing service providers to choose from, comparison of quality of service and cost effectiveness. The respondent further elaborated that it was good to have some competition and a range of service providers as they provide quality service which is good for development. The respondent also pointed out that competition came with specialization and good service tailor made to what was needed. The respondent emphasized that there was no need for government to implement everything and run all the services. The respondent however, stated that if government had a printing facility, printing services could equally be done effectively; cautioning that costs have to be weighed against benefits.

Benefits realized by the director for Solitaire Press were income generated from the Namibian Government in exchange for printing services rendered as a commercial enterprise. The respondent added that the Namibian Government was a good payer who paid on time. Job creation was realized as a benefit which was gained by the commercial printers

In summary, respondents identified the following benefits that were gained by the government publishing agencies and the commercial printers: outsourcing publishing services, identification of key stakeholders as recipients of government publications, using subject experts in the writing and editing of government publications, job creation and income generation for the commercial printers.

#### ***4.4 Objective 3: Challenges to current publications distribution pattern***

This objective was intended to identify challenges to the current publications distribution system of the Namibian Government publications. Data was solicited from the Director for Solitaire Press, Public Relations Officer for the National Planning Commission and Directors for the National Planning Commission. Data was solicited from the Director for Solitaire Press in order to understand challenges to publication distribution from the entrepreneurial point of view. Data was posed collected from the Public Relations Officer as the publicist of the publishing agency. Data was also solicited from the Directors at the National Planning Commission as high ranking officers who are involved in the overall management of the resources and affairs of the official publishing agency.

Challenges encountered by the commercial printer included lack of knowledge in the printing business on the part of government personnel who prepare manuscripts for printing. The respondent explained that government personnel would expect manuscripts to be printed promptly and as such an expectation was viewed as unrealistic by the commercial printer. The respondent pointed out that, government personnel did not prepare the electronic manuscripts well for printing as they lacked training in what was required in the printing industry. Asked if maintaining supplies constituted any challenge when the printer's tenure to supply copies of the Government Gazette expired, the response was that the printer was required to supply print copies as well as the electronic version for two years and thereafter the mandate to supply ceased. Thereafter users could look for the Government Gazette at the public service information providers such as the National Library, National Archives and the University of Namibia. Users could equally visit government website. The understanding of the researcher is that the respondent did not perceive any challenge relating to the cessation of copies of the Gazette which were supplied by the printing firm because the cessation of the service was within the confines of the tender provision. However, according to the researcher's perception, stopping the supply of the copies of the Gazette constituted a challenge as it disoriented the readers. Lacking a permanent point of supply of the Government Gazette was a concern to the acquisitions librarians and their concern was the basis for which the research problem of this study was formulated.

Lack of a central agency which could publish, print and distribute Namibian Government publications was identified as a challenge by the Public Relations Officer. The respondent pointed out that the production of government publications went smoothly but the distribution was problematic. The respondent recommended the establishment of a central distribution point where each line ministry would deliver their documents for distribution for the convenience of the readers. The respondent was of the opinion that if the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology took the central role in distributing publications, distribution could be efficient as the ministry has offices in each of the thirteen regions of the country. Currently distribution could be inefficient as the Namibian Government ministries do not use uniform channels of distribution.

The director for Development Cooperation explained that the distribution of publications was a challenge as some potential users might be unaware that certain publications have been

published. On being asked how the challenge of making the recipients to be aware of National Planning Commission's publications? The response was that each publication has a government logo.

In summary, respondents identified the following challenges to the current publication distribution pattern of the Namibian Government: lack of knowledge by the government personnel in the printing and publishing industry, lack of a central government agency which could publish, print and distribute government publications, inability to identify potential users in order to make them aware of the published information, maintaining enough stocks of publications and deciding on the right price for cost recovery measure.

#### ***4.5 Objective 4: The flow of the Namibian Government publications***

The objective was to assess the flow of the Namibian Government publications at the National Planning Commission. Data was solicited on the internal flow of publications within the National Planning Commission. Data was also solicited on the flow and exchange of publications between the National Planning Commission and other organizations. The purpose was to gather data that would assess flow, accessibility, availability and sustainability of publications by considering measures put in place such as preservation of information. Preservation of information cropped up in the literature review and it motivated the researcher to investigate preservation measures as they contribute to the availability and access to information. The question was posed to the librarian and the Public Relations Officer. The two respondents were chosen because they disseminate information within the National Planning Commission and to the public. Through the provision of the library service, librarian disseminates information to the library. The public Relations Officer disseminates information to the public and informs the public where the agency's publications could be acquired.

The respondent explained that the National Planning Commission Library has exchange arrangements with other ministries, NGOs, State Owned Enterprises, and banking institutions as they deal with development related issues. These include Namibia Economic Policy Research Unit, Bank of Namibia and Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development. The Bank of Namibia supplies annual reports, Quarterly Bulletins and other publications.

Accessibility to the National Planning Commission publications by the librarian facilitates the flow of publications. The librarian explained that the directorates that are responsible for



publishing deliver copies of the newly issued publications to the library for dissemination to the public and for preservation. This assertion was also made by the Public Relations Officer.

The respondent explained that the information which is published by the National Planning Commission is preserved for permanent public access by the library by acquiring three copies of every publication issued. Of the three copies one is reserved as a back-up. Information on CD-ROMs is also reserved as back-up. Electronic information is also preserved for permanent public access by the Information System Centre at the National Planning Commission. The librarian further explained that electronic information is preserved through the National Planning Commission website. When asked whether the information on the website might not be lost in the future when the website changes, the respondent explained that the agency had no plans to change the URL of the website.

The Public Relations Officer explained that the National Planning Commission facilitates information flow by engaging in publication exchange with other organizations. The respondent also explained that the National Planning Library has Inter-Library Loan exchanges with other organizations. The respondent further explained that the National Planning Commission submits fifty (50) copies of publications to the National Library as legal deposit requirements. The copies are further redistributed to other libraries which are covered by the legal deposit law.

In summary, the flow of the Namibian Government publications at the National Planning Commission is facilitated by cooperation of the stakeholders within the agency and the external stakeholders as development partners. Cooperation initiatives include: availing published information for preservation and public access, distribution of publications to the library for public access, exchange programmes between the National Planning Commission and its stakeholders and compliance to legal deposit requirements by the National Planning Commission and use of information communication technology to preserve information.

#### ***4.6 Objective 5: Factors that influence the current system of publishing processes***

The objective was to identify key factors which influence the current system of publishing, printing, and distribution of the Namibian Government publications. Data on the factors that influence publishing, printing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications was collected from three respondents: commercial printer, (Public Relations Officer and two Directors at the National Planning Commission). Data was collected from the above mentioned

respondents because it is at policy level and the researcher believed that the respondents would provide informed data. Data was also collected from the above mentioned respondents for verification purpose; to find out whether or not what each respondent would say in response would contradict or complement what the other had said. Responses for research question four (4) overlaps with the data collected for question five (5) and some analysis are similar. Data for question four (4) emerged during discussions.

Data on the key factors that influence publishing, printing and distribution functions of the Namibian Government publications from the director for Solitaire Press revealed that printing services are procured by bidding for tenders. This means that tendering influences the printing of the Namibia Government publications. The respondent explained that their firm was not involved in the publishing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications in general but only prints and distributes the Government Gazette.

Responding to a probing question on whether or not the Namibian Government should acquire its printing services in order to adequately distribute its information, the respondent's explanation was that the distribution function had nothing to do with the publishing function. The respondent also revealed that the Namibian Government has a small printer which does not handle large volumes of manuscripts for printing. The printing facility being alluded to was also alluded to by the Public Relations Officer. On enquiry the researcher uncovered that the facility was a reprographic one rather than a full-fledged printing facility. Reading in between the lines one can conclude that the Namibian Government outsources printing services because it does not have facilities of its own.

On being interviewed on the factors that influence publishing, printing and distribution processes, the Director for Development Cooperation was not aware of any definite policy and why publishing and distribution were decentralized. The respondent was of the opinion that decentralized processes were more efficient and effective. The respondent explained that costs influence publishing, printing and distribution processes. Tendering as a procedure and policy that is approved by the treasury also influences publishing, printing and distribution processes.

The director for Development Cooperation explained that one of the factors that influence publishing and distribution is the subject content as distribution has to be accompanied by explanation and clarification of the content. As the publisher, the National Planning Commission is responsible for explaining research findings to target audiences and why certain decisions

discussed in the publications are taken, as information is published with specific recipients in mind. The emphasis was that irrespective of the outsourced printing services, the National Planning Commission should distribute its publications for the purpose of delivering them to target recipients.

The director for Development planning explained that for procuring printing services through the market regulations are followed by obtaining quotations. The respondent further explained that documents which do not require formal layout are submitted to the Government Printer which has a limited printing capacity. Government Printer is a reference to the reprographic services which does not amount to printing services as already elucidated above. The foregoing revelation testifies that tendering is a key factor which influences printing services.

In summary, the key factors that influence publishing, printing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications are: bidding for tenders, lack of printing facility by the Namibian Government, decentralized publishing and distribution which are presumed as efficient and effective, cost effectiveness, quality of service and clarification of subject content to target audiences.

#### ***4.7 Objective 6: Policy instruments that guide publishing processes***

The objective intended to identify the policy instruments that guide publishing, printing, and distribution of the Namibian Government publications. The objective was also meant to establish whether or not if there were any policies that guide publishing, printing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications. Data was collected from the Public Relations Officer as the publicist of the agency and was expected to be informed about the policies which are implemented by the agency. The directors at the National Planning Commission as decision makers for the agency were expected to be conversant with the policies of the agency. The data collected in Question 5 overlap with the one collected in Question 4 and the data collected in Question 4 emerged out of the discussions.

According to the Public Relations Officer there are no laid out policies that guide publishing, printing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications. The respondent explained that each line ministry has an obligation to undertake the mandate which is bestowed by the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia. The respondent further explained that the policy of the government is that any major undertaking including printing of documents, institutions were

required to obtain three quotations from three commercial printers and the best in terms of providing quality service and affordability is selected.

The respondent further explained that because publishing is expensive, Namibian Government has a cost recovery policy which mandates the National Planning Commission to sell its publications. The researcher contends that the aforementioned cost recovery policy is not a policy but rather a practice instituted to recoup costs as there is no written policy which drives the action of recouping the costs. This can be acknowledged as implied policy as cited above (Stueart & Moran, 2007:83). The respondent explained that prices for publications were not determined by the market forces and were cheap enough for the public to buy.

The director for Development Cooperation was not aware of any government policy on publishing, printing and distribution of publications but guessed that there could be overall guiding policies. The respondent suggested that investigation could be carried from the Information Systems Centre at the National Planning Commission, Office of the Prime Minister or Ministry of Information and Communication Technology. The researcher is convinced that lack of knowledge by this high ranking respondent testifies that there is no written policy for publishing, printing and distribution of Namibian Government publications and the policy is only implied.

The director for Development Planning stated that government had policies on publishing some of which were written. The respondent further explained that the policy on whether publications should be sold or distributed free of charge depends on the source of funding. If funding was from the state, the policy was that one should recover the costs that were incurred although it is not for profit making. The respondent explained that it was not possible to recover exactly the same amount that was invested although the government policy is that there should be a cost-recovery element. The respondent explained that as a matter of policy government information was subsidized.

In summary, policy instruments that guide publishing, printing and distribution functions of the Namibian Government publications are not yet consolidated as policy instruments.

#### ***4.8 Objective 7: Perceptions on the selling of government information***

The last objective to solicit the perceptions of officers of the National Planning Commission on the selling of government information. Data was solicited from the director for Solitaire Press,

Public Relations Officer, directors and the librarian. The last four respondents were from the National Planning Commission. The Director for the Solitaire Press was chosen as a high ranking official whose firm prints and distributes the Government Gazette of the Namibia Government. The Public Relations Officer was chosen as the publicist for the National Planning Commission and whose responsibilities include disseminating publications of the agency. The directors for the National Planning Commission were chosen as high ranking officers whose responsibilities familiarize them with the affairs of the organization. The Librarian was chosen as an information specialist whose views on selling of government information could add substance to the discourse on selling of government information.

The Director for Solitaire Press stated that in the past government used to subsidize the Government Gazette but stopped after being advised by the respondent. The respondent advised the Namibian Government that the increased costs of subsidizing the printing of the Government Gazette was not justified. The respondent was of the opinion that the Namibian Government should not be subsidizing because readers bought it unnecessarily. The respondent was also of the opinion that readers took the Government Gazette as a hobby and that subsidizing their hobbies was unnecessary. The respondent was of the opinion that subscribers were more than capable of paying the price. The view of the respondent was that government information should not be subsidized and it should be sold as it was cheap. Reading in between the lines, one gets the impression that the respondent was not only concerned about profit-making but was also concerned about saving the Namibian Government financial resources.

However, the respondent's view in accordance with the Canadian Government Cost recovery and Charging Policy which reflects government fiscal policies that promotes equitable approach to financing programmes by fairly charging clients or beneficiaries who benefit from services beyond those enjoyed by the general public (Prophet, 1999).

The Public Relations Officer was of the opinion that the issue of selling of government information could best be addressed by the Permanent Secretary as the highest policy maker for the agency. The respondent explained that they sell government information to recover the expenses that had been incurred. As proof that government does not make profit from selling publications, the respondent explained that publications issued in the vernacular languages such as Namibia Vision 2030, are distributed free of charge. The respondent emphasized that publications which are distributed at a price are sold cheaply irrespective of the high printing

costs and the money which is recovered is returned to Treasury. The opinion of the respondent is that government publications should be sold as long as it is for cost recovery purpose but not for profit making.

The director for Development Planning justified the policy of selling of government information saying that cost recovery measures should be implemented because its production comes at a cost and cost recovery is not meant for profit-making. The respondent was of the opinion that if information is distributed for free, readers would not value and read it that much.

Justifying the policy of selling government publications, the director for Development Planning explained that Public projects are financed by public tax which does not cover all the expenses as it is inadequate. Precautionary measures to sustain financial resources should be instituted by recouping costs for services rendered. The respondent further explained that government information is subsidized as the prices charged are not at market levels. The respondent also explained that some government publications are distributed free of charge. These include the budgetary documents, of which the public needs to know what the budget holds for them. In this case, the respondent explained that the purpose to disseminate information is to inform the public than to recoup the costs. The respondent was also of the opinion that cost recovery reduces wastage. The respondent stated that much of government information is distributed free of charge. For example, copies of the National Development Plans are distributed freely to all the Namibian embassies and to the Namibian Government ministries.

The librarian said that it was justifiable for someone to seek government publications free of charge but the cost of printing does not justify free distribution. The respondent attached enduring value to information and expressed sentiments that once used, knowledge acquired from information is everlasting and therefore should not be distributed free of charge. The respondent however, recommended that students should be exempted from paying for government information. The respondent did not foresee any problem in exempting public institutions from paying for government publications but was of the opinion that private institutions should be charged.

#### **4.9 Summary**

In summary, findings on the perceptions of the respondents on the selling of government information revealed that selling was a precautionary measure to curb wastage of government

financial resources, and for cost recovery purpose and therefore government information should be sold. Respondents were also of the perception that for government information to be considered of value by readers, it should be distributed at a price. Respondents were of the perception that students who attend government tertiary institutions should be exempted from paying for government information.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### ***5.1 Introduction***

The study set out to assess factors or variables that influence publishing, printing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications. The study also sought to understand the perceptions of the respondents on the selling of government information and to recommend a functional system for the distribution of the Namibian Government publications. Analyses of the findings were based on the objectives of the study. The specific objectives included:

- Identification of the benefits that are gained by the government publishing agencies and the commercial printers in the current distribution pattern of the Namibian Government publications.
- Identification of challenges to the current publication distribution pattern of the Namibian Government publications.
- Assessment of the flow of the Namibian Government publications at the National Planning Commission, identification of the policies that guide publishing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications.
- Identification of the key factors that influence the current system of publishing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications.
- Assessment of the perceptions of the respondents on the selling of the Namibian Government information.

#### ***5.2 Discussions***

Findings of the study have showed that benefits that are gained by the government publishing agency and the commercial printer are outsourcing of printing services, identification of the key stakeholders in development as beneficiaries of information, use of subject expertise in the publication of government information, job creation and income generation by the commercial printers.

Finding of the of the study have identified challenges to the current publication distribution system of the Namibian Government as lack of knowledge by the government personnel in the



printing and publishing industry, lack of a central government agency which could publish, print and distribute government publications, inability to identify potential users in order to make them aware of the published information, maintaining enough stocks of publications and deciding on the right price for cost recovery purpose.

Findings of the study showed that the flow of the Namibian Government publications at the National Planning Commission is facilitated by cooperation of the stakeholders within the agency and the external stakeholders as development partners. Cooperation initiatives include: availing published information for preservation and public access, distribution of publications to the library for public access, exchange programmes between the National Planning Commission and its stakeholders and compliance to legal deposit requirements by the National Planning Commission and use of information communication technology to preserve information

Findings have identified the key factors that influence publishing, printing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications as bidding for tenders, decentralized publishing and distribution which are presumed as efficient and effective, cost effectiveness, quality of service and clarification of subject content to target audiences

Findings of the study have showed that policy instruments that guide publishing, printing and distribution functions of the Namibian Government publications are not yet consolidated as policy instruments.

Findings on the perceptions of the respondents on the selling of government information have revealed that the selling of government information was a precautionary measure to curb wastage of government financial resources. It also showed that government information was sold for cost recovery purpose. Findings showed that respondents were of the view that for government information to be considered of value by readers, it should be distributed at a price. Findings also showed that respondents were of the opinion that students who attend government tertiary institutions should be exempted from paying for government information.

In general, the overall objective of establishing challenges facing the distribution of the Namibian Government publications by soliciting the perceptions of the National Planning Commission officers and the directors of the printing companies has been achieved. Data has showed that there are no information policies that cover the distribution of information in print. There are no information policies that state the conditions of accessing government information.

### **5.3.1 Benefits of the current publishing and distributing pattern**

The Namibian Government uses a tendering system in the printing and publishing of information. This system offers an opportunity to scrutinize different service suppliers. It has emerged from the research findings that generally awarding a tender to a particular set up in the printing and publishing process in the current distribution pattern of the Namibian Government publications is based on a number of variables; ability to offer quality and affordable printing and publishing services, the aptitude to thoroughly identify stakeholders who benefit from government information, degree of subject expertise in the publishing process, job creation and finally income generation.

While the respondent for the commercial was concerned with job creation and income generation, the respondents from the agency were concerned with efficiency. In the literature consulted, the need to promote efficiency and quality of service in the publishing and printing services prompted Botswana Government to acquire printing a facility (Baaitse, 2005). In Namibia lack of ownership of printing facility by the Namibian Government contributes to the inefficient distribution of government publications (Hillebrecht, 2004).

### **5.3.2 Challenges to current publishing and distribution pattern**

The research revealed that there were some challenges to the current publication distribution pattern of the Namibian Government. The challenges identified included:

- Lack of knowledge by the Namibian Government personnel in the printing and publishing industry.
- Lack of a central government agency which can publish, print and distribute government publications.
- Identification of potential users and making them to be aware of the published information.
- Maintaining enough stocks of publications
- Deciding on the right prices for cost recovery measure.
- The lack of knowledge in the publishing industry by government personnel seemed to cause misunderstandings between the commercial printers to whom services were contracted to. From the researcher's point of view, the lack of knowledge is contributed

by the fact that the Namibian Government does not have a publishing and printing department and government personnel is not trained in the publishing industry.

- Cessation of the supply of Government Gazette was not considered a challenge from the commercial printer point of view which differs from the researcher's point of view. The researcher observes that when the supply of the Government Gazette ceases at the commercial printer, readers are redirected to new suppliers which is disorienting and frustrating.
- Data collected reveal that there is no administrative department which is responsible for publishing, printing and distributing government publications to the public. Lack of a distributing agency has been identified as a challenge because there is no identifiable focal point where all government ministries can deliver their publications for distribution. Recommendation was made to create a central distribution agency in the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology as it already has offices in the thirteen regions.

### **5.3.3 Marketing of government publications**

This research project did not investigate the marketing of government publications in Namibia. However, views that emerged from the discussions with some of the respondents pointed to the fact that there was a need for the development of publications marketing strategy. The researcher is of the opinion that marketing of government publications has to be proactive. (Oltheten, 1974) marketing strategies include mailing lists, dispatching particulars of forthcoming publications and issuing catalogues of published titles on a determined periodic interval. Keeping enough copies of publications was also a challenge as readers continually demanded publications.

Deciding on the right price for cost recovery was also identified as a challenge. The researcher acknowledges the complexity of deciding on the right price for cost recovery purpose in a situation where government has to take risk by providing information which is not of profit-making nature and where sizes of editions and market limits do not determine prices as there are supposed to be the determining factors in commercialized market (Oltheten, 1974:342).

When incorporating cost recovery policy on the production and dissemination of government information (Prophet, 1999) the Canadian Treasury Board Government Communications Policy advised that in assessing the cost of making information available for purchase by the public,

institutions should take into consideration the full costs of collecting, compiling, preparing, producing and disseminating information.

#### **5.3.4 The flow of the Namibian Government publications**

The question that investigated the flow of the Namibian Government publications at the National Planning revealed that cooperation by stakeholders facilitates the flow of publications. Cooperation includes: availing published information for preservation and public access, distribution of publications to the library for public access, exchange programmes between the National Planning Commission and its stakeholders and compliance with legal deposit requirements by the National Planning Commission and use of information communication technology to preserve information.

In the USA publishing trend is shifting from print to electronic media. (Martin, 2004) identified challenges of lack of an appropriate information technology to preserve electronic documents for permanent public access, lack of funding and continually changing URLs of the government websites which makes revisiting them difficult. Paradoxically findings at the National Planning Commission are that there is appropriate technology for preservation of information for permanent public access, although it was contrary to the United States of America which has a highly advanced information technology.

#### **5.3.5 Factors that influence the current system of publishing processes**

The investigation on the factors that influence the current system of publishing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications revealed a number of factors. These include lack of printing facility by the Namibian Government, decentralized publishing and distribution, cost effectiveness, quality of service and clarification of subject content for target audiences.

The fact that some of the respondents who are of high ranking status did not know why the distribution of publications is decentralized, is an indication that there is no consolidated government publishing policy. The current publishing, printing and distribution system has been practiced without a comprehensive publishing policy. Procedures and rules for procurement of printing services have been implemented without a comprehensive policy driving the actions.

This is despite the fact that respondents refer to what they practice as policy; otherwise it can only be construed as implied policy. According to Stueart & Moran (2007: 83) “Implied policy is developed from actions that people see about them and believe to constitute policy. Usually this type of policy is unwritten.” A similar situation applies to the Canadian Government where directives on cost recovery measures had a bearing on user charges while they were not labelled information policies (Prophet, 1999).

Data collected confirms that the Namibian Government does not have printing facility and the need for printing services gives rise to outsourcing of printing services to the private printers.

### **5.3.6 Policy instruments that guide publishing processes**

Policy instruments that guide publishing, printing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications were examined. Findings revealed that the policy instruments that guide publishing, printing and distribution functions of the Namibian Government publications are not yet consolidated as policy instruments. Findings by the study are that data collected on the policies that guide publishing, printing and distribution of the Namibian Government information are contradictory. Some respondents said that there are no laid out policies on publishing functions. Others said that they were not certain about the existence of the publishing policies but guessed that such polices could be in place. The researcher understands that there are decisions that have been taken to charge publications for cost recovery and to outsource printing of publications to commercial printers; such decisions are being referred to as policies by the respondents. The researcher construes that such policies are implied. The respondent further explained that because publishing is expensive, Namibian Government has a cost recovery policy which mandates the National Planning Commission to sell its publications. The researcher contends that the aforementioned cost recovery policy is not a policy but rather a practice instituted to recoup costs as there is no written policy which drives the action of recouping the costs. This could be construed as implied policy (Stueart & Moran, 2007:83).

Namibia has formulated a number of policies which are information and communication technology biased. While such policies are vital for the development of the information technology sector as rightfully pointed out by (Mchombu & Miti, 1991:3). In Namibia, there is no explicit policy that addresses the distribution of information in print. A classical example is *The information and communication technology policy for Namibia* which was drafted by Esselaar, P., Miller, J. Esselaar, M., James, T., Pistorius, T. Schoeman, T., White, A., Hesselmark,

O., Kiangi, G (2002). The policy referred to is a policy on information infrastructure and is not comprehensive enough as it does not deliberate on the condition of accessing government publications in print as well as their distribution. The policy emphasizes the use of information communication technology in the dissemination government information. According to (Rowlands, 1997) traditionally, information policies have evolved in direct response to the emergence of specific technologies. In this instance the Namibian information policy on ICT seems to have been formulated as a response to the emerging information technologies rather than addressing divergent publishing issues including that of information in print. The Office of the Prime Minister (2005) published a policy guide on the implementation of the information and communication technology and to further nurture e-governance through the use of information technology.

However a policy which was published by the Ministry of Basic Education (1997) for libraries has a multi-dimensional approach to the distribution of information through the use of information technology communication and the use of print media by acquiring information sources through legal deposit means. Nevertheless since this is a policy for libraries but not for publishing state agencies, the policy encourages libraries to participate in the distribution of information as a component of the national information infrastructure. Although the policy for libraries is balanced, a production oriented policy is also required. Mchombu & Miti (1991:8) recommends a production oriented policy for the developing countries.

### **5.3.7 Perceptions of the respondents on the selling of government information**

The researcher is of the opinion that confining the justification of an information policy to a mandate provided by constitution is inadequate. It is understandable that government should commit itself to providing citizens with information to satisfy their basic human needs and participate adequately in national development process (Mchombu & Miti, 1991:1). In addition to existing information policies in Namibia such as the one stated above, there is a need to formulate a policy on the coordination of publishing, printing, and distribution processes of the Namibian Government publications. Mchombu & Miti (1991:3) recommend a series of coordinated policies as a single policy is inadequate to address national information sector.

The investigations on the perceptions of the respondents on the selling of government information revealed that selling of government information was a precautionary measure to curb wastage of government financial resources, and for cost recovery purpose. Respondents were

also of the opinion that for government information to be considered of value by readers, it should be distributed at a price. Respondents were of the perception that students who attend tertiary institutions should be exempted from paying for government information.

Contextualizing some of the perceptions of the respondents to literature, the perception that if government information is distributed free of charge, readers would not value it is not supported by literature. A study at the University of Botswana Library by Mooko & Aina (1998) attests that social scientists attached high importance to the use of government documents. A study on the use of Botswana Collections at University of Botswana Library which houses a larger percentage of government information by Nfila (2001) also attests that the collection was in high demand amongst Faculties of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences. The high demand for government information which is availed as donations to Botswana Collections refutes the perception that freely distributed information would not attract value from readers.

### **5.3.8 Summary of the discussions**

A number of variables influence awarding of tenders to commercial printers for printing of the Namibian Government publications. The variables are; ability to offer quality and affordable printing and publishing services. Challenges to the distribution pattern of the Namibian Government publications included; lack of knowledge by the Namibian Government personnel in the printing and publishing industry, lack of a central government agency which can publish, print and distribute government publications, identification of potential users and making them to be aware of the published information, maintaining enough stocks of publications and deciding on the right prices for cost recovery measure.

Cessation of the supply of the Government Gazette by the commercial printer posed a distribution challenge. When the supply of the Government Gazette ceases at the commercial printer, readers are redirected to new suppliers which is disorienting and frustrating.

Lack of an administrative department which would be responsible for publishing, printing and distributing government publications to the public constituted a distribution challenge. Lack of a distributing agency has been identified as a challenge because there is no identifiable focal point where all government ministries can deliver their publications for distribution.

Views that emerged from the discussions with some of the respondents pointed to the fact that there was a need for the development of publications marketing strategy.

Keeping enough copies of publications was also a challenge as readers continually demanded publications. Deciding on the right price for cost recovery was also identified as a challenge.

Concerted effort by the stakeholders at the National Planning Commission facilitated the flow of the publications. The flow of information was facilitated by availing the published information for preservation, distribution of publications to the library for public access, exchange programmes between the National Planning Commission and its stakeholders in developmental issues and compliance with legal deposit requirements and use of information communication technology to preserve information.

The investigation on the factors that influence the current system of publishing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications revealed a number of factors. These include bidding for tenders as a Namibian Government policy and procedure, lack of printing facility by the Namibian Government, decentralized publishing and distribution, cost effectiveness, quality of service and clarification of subject content for target audiences.

The fact that some of the respondents who are of high ranking status do not know why the distribution of publications is decentralized, is an indication that there is no consolidated government publishing policy. The current publishing, printing and distribution pattern has been practiced without a comprehensive publishing policy. Data collected confirms that the Namibian Government does not have printing facility and the need for printing services gives rise to outsourcing of printing services to the private printers.

Namibia has a number of policies which are information and communication technology biased. There is no explicit policy that addresses the distribution of information in print.

The policy which was formulated by the Ministry of Basic Education (1997) for libraries has a holistic approach to the distribution of information through the use of information technology communication and the use of print media by acquiring information sources through legal deposit means. The policy for libraries is consumer oriented than production which would guide the state publishing agencies in the production and distribution of government information. However, the policy prominently places libraries amongst the leading institutions in the distribution of print and electronic information.



The investigations on the perceptions of the respondents on the selling of government information revealed that selling of government information was a precautionary measure to curb wastage of government financial resources and for cost recovery purpose. Respondents were also of the perception that for government information to be considered of value by readers, it should be distributed at a price. Respondents were of the perception that students who attend tertiary institutions should be exempted from paying for government information.

### **5.3.9 Conclusions**

Through literature review and data analysis the researcher has made sense of the research problem. The research problem was formulated on the premise that lack of printing services by the Namibian Government results in the haphazardness in the distribution of government publications. Data collected and analyzed has shown that there is only one government publication which is printed and distributed by a commercial printer which holds tender for its printing and distribution over a period of two years. The publication is the Government Gazette. Only a single title has been identified as being distributed by the commercial printer because the other publisher/printer who has distributed Namibian Government publications declined to be interviewed. The publisher could have provided information the titles which they have published and distributed. Indeed the distribution of the Government Gazette becomes haphazard when the tenure to distribute copies expires. Readers are referred to other institutions for photocopying as supply ceases or visit the government website or downloading.

Other Namibian Government publications are published and distributed by individual government institutions. Printing is outsourced to commercial printers on tender basis. When stocks are depleted supply becomes problematic as the tender holder has the copyrights to the manuscripts template out of which publications were printed. Where backup of electronic manuscript is available print copies could be made. Haphazardness in terms of unsustainable supplies is not only confined to the Government Gazette as other government publications are affected.

Literature that has been reviewed places government information into different categories according to the purposes it serves (Olthelten 1974). Information produced by the National Planning Commission may be categorized as pre-parliamentary, the purpose of which is to inform the citizens so that the public can in turn give feedback to the government. This type of information includes budget documents which are published by the National Planning Commission which informs budgetary policy decisions. National Planning Commission's information can also be categorized as non-primary or active publicity, the purpose of which is to inform citizens in order to broaden their knowledge. Such information includes factual information, population surveys, memoranda on government policy e.g. Government information bulletin.

Views by respondents on the selling of government information or publications are contextualized within the literature review. All the four respondents at the National Planning Commission and one at Solitaire Press were of the view that production of publications is costly and should be sold to the public at cost recovery prices and be provided free of charge to government schools. Lester & Koehler (2004) describes information in various ways. It can be treated as an economic good which is sold in the market. It can be treated as a public good which can be consumed by many people with government intervention in the market forces to facilitate access. Information can also be treated as a private good. As a private good the consumption of the good accrues to the individual. Other potential consumers are excluded from the accruing benefits. Information may as well be treated as a merit good. A merit good is a private good that society thinks is important enough to supply publicly or interfere with individual preference as expressed through the marketplace (Lester & Koehler 2004:221). The view that government information or publications should be subsidized and accessed at cost recovery prices implies government information is a public good.

The Namibian information policies that guide publishing, printing and distributing of government information are not formally stated. Perhaps they are issued as government directives. Policies are inferred from the Constitution of Namibia as the supreme document which determines the set up of the economy. There are media policies which might have been necessitated by the sensitivity that media issues need monitoring by government. The policy on media was inspired by the emerging information communication technology and does not cover other areas of government information besides media. As a result of inference from the Constitution of Namibia, production of information is a concerted effort by both private individuals and government agencies and the production of information as a responsibility of the private entities and government agencies has been incorporated into development programmes such as Namibia's Vision 2030 and National Development Plans.

Different government publishing, printing and distribution systems have been covered in the literature review. In America and Malaysia distribution is at state and federal levels, with a central administrative agency. There is no participation of the private sector in the publishing, printing and distributing of the government information. In France production and distribution of government publications is done by both government agencies, cooperatives and the private sector. In Botswana publishing, printing and distribution of government publications is handled

by an administrative department. In Namibia each ministry distributes its publications. The distribution lacks centrality and the Ministry of Communications, Science and technology only distributes selected publications from other ministries. Implementing Botswana's distribution system which is a responsibility of a single department with a decentralized distribution at national level would deliver publications closest to the citizens. This would be in line with the Namibian decentralization policy which was established by Act 33 of 2000.

## ***5.4 Recommendations***

### **5.4.1 Motivation for recommendations**

The following summary constitutes an overview of the research findings and serves as a motivational background for the recommendations that follow in the next section.

The publishing, printing and distribution system of the Namibian Government as reflected by the National Planning Commission cannot be judged at face value. There are underlying variables that influence publishing, printing and distribution of the Namibian Government information. An interesting variable which influences publishing and distribution at level is that distribution should be accompanied by an explanation of the subject to the target beneficiaries to avoid dumping. For the purpose of subject specialty the publishing function at the National Planning Commission is handled by the directorates but the distribution is shared with external stakeholders such as Regional Councils, depending on whether or not information is of specialized or of general interest. Such decentralized distribution of publications might seem haphazard at face value. Considering the proffered reasons such as coupling distribution and explanation of content to the beneficiaries, decentralized distribution of publications does not amount to haphazardness. What causes haphazard and inconsistent supplies of Namibian Government publications is lack of ownership of printing services and the lack of an administrative department which should be taking a leading role in administering government information. Some respondents felt the need for a government printing services. They recommended that the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology should take a leading role in the distribution of publications as they have offices in the thirteen regions of Namibia. Analysis of data collected from the commercial printer attests to lack of printing services by the Namibian Government disrupts the constant supply of publications. Literature

review shows that Botswana Government has a publishing administrative department and has acquired printing services as it was envisaged that it would bring efficiency to publishing, printing and distribution processes. It is recommended that the Namibian Government adopts such a system of administering its publications and information.

Interesting findings is that some Namibian Government publications are accessed by the public at a cost recovery price and some are free. The condition of availing the publications to the public in some cases is not necessarily influenced by the need to recoup the costs incurred, but the need to reach out to increase readership for certain publications.

Although the world is facing a financial crunch, Namibia's categorization as a middle-income country should afford the government to establish an administrative publishing department and a network of distribution points in towns which are designated as growth centres. If information were to be harnessed as a resource for development and realization of the Namibia Vision 2030, sustained distribution and preservation of information has to be integral part of the long-term planning strategy.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendations based on specific findings**

Based on the previous section on discussions, recommendations are reached as tabulated below.

The findings of study identified:

**5.4.2.1:** Outsourcing, identification of stakeholders, subject expertise, job creation and income generation as benefits that are gained by the government publishing agencies and the commercial printers. Based on the above findings, the study recommends that for the purpose of subject expertise and convenience of identifying stakeholders and for identification of the recipients of the publications, government agencies should co-publish and distribute publications with the central administrative department.

Findings of the study identified Lack of knowledge by the Namibian Government personnel in the printing and publishing industry, lack of a central government agency which can publish, print and distribute government publications, identification of potential users and making them to be aware of the published information, maintaining enough stocks of publications and deciding on the right price for cost recovery. Based on the above findings, the study recommends:

**5.4.2.2:** the establishment of an administrative department which will be responsible for publishing, printing and distributing government publications and coordinating publishing

functions of government ministries. The department should have a network of distribution centres in the political regions of the country in order to bring publications closest to the clientele. The department should have personnel with managerial, marketing, publishing and printing skills to make self-sufficient.

Findings of the study are that the flow of the Namibian Government publications at the National Planning is facilitated by cooperation of the stakeholders within the agency and the external stakeholders as development partners. Initiatives that facilitate flow of information include: availing published information for preservation and public access, distribution of publications to the library for public access, exchange programmes between the National Planning Commission and its stakeholders and compliance to legal deposit requirements by the National Planning Commission and use of information communication technology to preserve information. Based on the above findings, the study recommends:

**5.4.2.3:** the use of information communication technology for preservation of information in all government publishing agencies to ensure that preservation of information is standard.

Findings identified the following key factors that influence publishing, printing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications:

Bidding for tenders, lack of printing facility by the Namibian Government, decentralized publishing and distribution which are presumed as efficient and effective, cost effectiveness, quality of service and clarification of subject content to target audiences. Based on the above findings, the study recommends:

**5.4.2.4** The establishment of a government printing facility that will contribute to sustained production of publications and to ensure sustained publishing and distribution of government publications.

Findings of the study are that policy instruments that guide publishing, printing and distribution functions of the Namibian Government publications are not yet developed and consolidated. Based on the above findings, the study recommends:

**5.4.2.5** That current policies should be developed and consolidated into full-fledged policies that will give clear and uniform guidance to government publishing, printing, and distribution functions.

Findings of the study are the perceptions of the respondents on the selling of government information are that as a precautionary measure to curb wastage of government financial resources, and for cost recovery purpose, government information should be sold, for government information to be considered of value by readers, it should be distributed at a price, and that students who attend government tertiary institutions should be exempted from paying for government information. Based on the above findings, the study recommends:

**5.4.2.6** That government should exempt educational institutions from paying for government publications in order to broaden the benefits of information resource which were generated through public funds to all learners.

### ***5.5 Suggestions for Future Research***

This study was based on a study case method. Naturally a study case method is limited in scope. Information that applies to an object of investigation may not be generalized to others in a similar environment. The study assessed publishing, printing and distribution processes of the National Planning Commission. For further studies, a research survey that investigates Namibian Government publishing, printing and distribution processes for all the ministries is recommended. A survey would give a general picture of the variables that influence publishing, printing and distribution processes.

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## APPENDICES

### *APPENDIX A: Timeline*

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Piloting interview	2 weeks
Revision of interview guide	1 Week
Conduct interview	2 Weeks
Data entry from interviews	3 Weeks
Transcribe and analyze data	4 weeks
Analysis and writing	10 Weeks

*APPENDIX B: Interview Guide for Directors of National Planning Commission*

**Administrative Department**

1. Does the Namibian Government have an administrative department which is responsible for publishing, printing and distributing Government publications?

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2. What are the key factors that influence the current system of publishing, printing and distribution of Government publications?

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3. What are the policies that guide publishing, printing and distribution of Government publications?

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4. Describe the publishing, printing and distribution system of the Namibian Government publications?

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5. What are the benefits of the prevailing Namibian Government publishing, printing and distribution system?

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6. What are the challenges to the prevailing publishing, printing, and distribution system?

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7. Some information specialists are against the selling of Government publications. They argue that government publications are financed by public tax and they should be distributed free of charge. What is your opinion?

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Thank you for sharing information with me.

***APPENDIX C: Interview Guide for Librarian for the National Planning Commission***

1. How is the information published by the National Planning Commission preserved for permanent public access?

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2. What formats of information carriers does the National Planning Commission library collection consist of?

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3. Does the library acquire Government publications published by other ministries?

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4. What are the challenges to acquiring publications published by the National Planning Commission?

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4. Some information specialists are against the selling of Government publications. They argue that government publications are financed by public tax and they should be distributed free of charge. What is your opinion?

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Thank you for sharing information with me.



***APPENDIX D: Interview Guide for Public Relations Officers at the National Planning Commission***

1. What are the policy instruments that guide publishing, printing and distribution of the Namibian Government information?

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2. What is the current pattern of publishing, printing and distribution of Namibian Government publications?

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3. What are the benefits of the current pattern of publishing, printing and distribution of the of the Namibian Government publications?

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4. What are the challenges to the current pattern of publishing, printing and distribution of the Namibian Government publications?

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5. Some information specialists are against the selling of Government publications. They argue that government publications are financed by public tax and they should be distributed free of charge. What is your opinion?

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6. What subject areas does the National Planning Commission publishing cover?

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7. Who are the beneficiaries of your publications and is there any policy which guide who should be the beneficiaries?

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Thank you for sharing your information with me.

***APPENDIX E: Interview Guide for Commercial Printers***

1. What are the key factors that influence the current system of publishing, printing and distribution of Government publications?

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2. What are the benefits of printing and distributing Government publications?

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3. What are the challenges to printing and distributing Government publications?

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4. Some information specialists are against the selling of Government publications. They argue that government publications are financed by public tax and they should be distributed free of charge. What is your opinion?

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Thank you for sharing your information with me

***APPENDIX F: Letter of Request to pilot Study and Administer the Interview guide***

Mr. Mocks Shivute  
Permanent Secretary  
National Planning Commission  
Private Bag 1  
Windhoek

October 28, 2008

Dear Mr. M. Shivute,

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PILOT AND ADMINISTER STUDY**

I am a citizen of Namibia currently working on a Master degree at the University of Botswana. I am interested in exploring the access to and distribution of the Namibian Government publications. No studies have investigated the access to and distribution of the Namibian Government publications. The study attempts to assess the distribution of the Namibian Government publications with a view to recommending system that would streamline the distribution process of the Government publications. The study is in line with Vision 2030 which envisages transforming Namibia into an information society by 2030. Respondents are; Directors for various s at the National Planning Commission, Public Relations Officer, Librarian and Publications Officer.

Your participation involves answering questions that will be recorded and then transcribed, timing allowing the transcribed version will be shown for verification of facts and opinions. The interview will be on information policies, printing of the Government information, publishing and distributing. The interview might take about 30 minutes. To maintain anonymity the interviewees' names will not be recorded. The pilot interview will be followed an interview during which final responses will be solicited.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at +264-812148039 or at +267-75140656 or e-mail me at [kkahengua@gmail.com](mailto:kkahengua@gmail.com). The results of this survey will form part of the discussions in a dissertation to be presented in partial fulfillment of the Master degree at the University of Botswana. Thank you in advance for your expected help!

Sincerely,

Mr. Kavevangua Kahengua (Master Degree Candidate)

***APPENDIX G: REQUEST TO PILOT AND ADMINISTER STUDY***

Managing Director

Solitaire Press

Printers & Publishers

16-20 Bonsmara ST, Northern Industrial

P.O. Box 1155 Windhoek

October 28, 2008

Dear Madam/Sir,

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PILOT AND ADMINISTER STUDY**

I am a citizen of Namibia currently working on a Master degree at the University of Botswana. I am interested in exploring the access to and distribution of the Namibian Government publications. No studies have investigated the access to and distribution of the Namibian Government publications. The study attempts to assess the distribution of the Namibian Government publications with a view to recommending a system that would streamline the distribution process of the government publications. The study is in line with Vision 2030 which envisages transforming Namibia into an information society by 2030. I would like to interview commercial printers and publishers as stakeholders in the production and distribution of government information.

Your participation involves answering questions that will be recorded and then transcribed, timing allowing the transcribed version will be shown for verification of facts and opinions. The interview will be on information policies, printing of the government information, publishing and distributing. The interview might take about 30 minutes. To maintain anonymity the interviewees' names will not be recorded. The pilot interview will be followed by interviews during which final responses will be solicited.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at +264-812148039 or at +267-75140656 or e-mail me at [kkahengua@gmail.com](mailto:kkahengua@gmail.com). The results of this survey will form part of the discussions in a dissertation to be presented in partial fulfillment of the Master degree at the University of Botswana. Thank you in advance for your expected help!

Sincerely,

Mr. Kavevangua Kahengua (Master Candidate)

***APPENDIX H: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PILOT AND ADMINISTER STUDY TO PRINTERS***

Managing Director  
Windhoek Stationers  
13 Tommie Muller St, Northern Industrial  
P.O. box 23008  
Windhoek

October 28, 2008

Dear Madam/Sir,

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PILOT AND ADMINISTER STUDY**

I am a citizen of Namibia currently working on a Master degree at the University of Botswana. I am interested in exploring the access to and distribution of the Namibian Government publications. No studies have investigated the access to and distribution of the Namibian Government publications. The study attempts to assess the distribution of the Namibian Government publications with a view to recommending a system that would streamline the distribution process of the government publications. The study is in line with Vision 2030 which envisages transforming Namibia into an information society by 2030. I would like to interview commercial printers and publishers as stakeholders in the production and distribution of government information.

Your participation involves answering questions that will be recorded and then transcribed, timing allowing the transcribed version will be shown for verification of facts and opinions. The interview will be on information policies, printing of the government information, publishing and distributing. The interview might take about 30 minutes. To maintain anonymity the interviewees' names will not be recorded. The pilot interview will be followed an interview during which final responses will be solicited.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at +264-812148039 or at +267-75140656 or e-mail me at [kkahengua@gmail.com](mailto:kkahengua@gmail.com). The results of this survey will form part of the discussions in a dissertation to be presented in partial fulfillment of the Master degree at the University of Botswana. Thank you in advance for your expected help!

Sincerely,

Mr. Kavevangua Kahengua

## **APPENDIX J: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FROM THE SUPERVISOR**



UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Corner of Notwane  
and Molebatsi Road,  
Gaborone, Botswana

Pvt Bag 00703  
Gaborone  
Botswana

Tel: [267] 355 2196  
Fax: [267] 318 5098

26<sup>th</sup> November 2008

Managing Director  
Windhoek Stationers  
13 Tommie Muller St, Northern Industrial  
P.O. Box 23008  
Windhoek  
Namibia

Dear Sir

**Subject: Introduction – Mr. Kavevangua Kahengua (200708028)**

This is to verify that the above mentioned student is carrying out a research on “*An Assessment of Distribution of Government Publications in Namibia: A Case Study of the National Planning Commission*” as part of the requirements for the Master’s in Library and Information Studies within the Department of Library and Information Studies at the University of Botswana.

Kindly provide him with whatever assistance he may need as he works on his research. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me by phone on (+267) 355-2642.

Thank you for your kind attention and support.

A. Totolo (PhD)  
Supervisor  
Department of Library and Information Studies

