

CHAPTER 4: EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANISATIONS AS A TOOL FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

4.1 Introduction

The need for a paradigm shift in the management of employment relations was fully discussed in chapter 3. It became evident that a shift to joint governance between employees and management should be the ultimate goal for all organisations that aspire to become “*world class*”. Joint governance will certainly dictate that employees get involved in both operational and managerial tasks of the organisation. In this chapter the participative model of work-place governance founded on team building, team empowerment, a consensus form of decision-making, information sharing, partnering relationships and a two-way communication system between Management and employees is discussed.

In the second part of the chapter employee participation in South African organisations is explored. In this regard the chapter examines both the statutory provisions and the economic imperatives for employee participation; identifying the different levels and forms of Participation in the country. The formal and informal participative structures are discussed; while at the same time evaluating their successes and failures. In the process the extent to which South African organisations have taken participation in their stride, and the manner they have used it to enhance their competitiveness is determined.

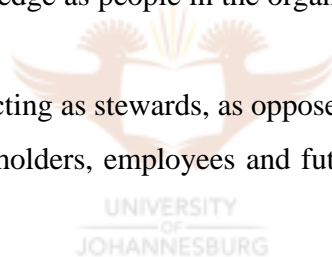
4.2 Definitions of participation

The term, participation in common parlance refers to “*taking part*”. The shorter Oxford dictionary defines it as “*the action or fact of partaking, having or forming part of; the fact or condition or sharing in common, partnership, fellowship, profit sharing.*” However, in the context of this study, participation refers to active involvement of employees and other stakeholders in the affairs of an organisation; each stakeholder playing a different role, yet one that contributes to the common good of the organisation

and all those who have an interest in it. Thus participation means that employees, employers and other interested parties in an organisation are governed, controlled and directed by participative values that may include but not be limited to shared power, rights, responsibilities, information sharing, commitment to performance and internalised control.

In line with the above definition, McLagan and Nel (1995:25) view Participation as:

- people in various roles thinking about the same things though from different perspectives;
- self-management by employees with formal leaders using authority-based control as a last resort;
- honouring and supporting the rights, accountability and dignity of all members of an organisation;
- learning and sharing knowledge as people in the organisation teach one other in every way;
- organisational leadership acting as stewards, as opposed to acting as superiors; and
- involving customers, shareholders, employees and future generations as stakeholders in the organisation.



According to Bendix (2001:655) employee participation refers to sharing information, joint decision-making or shared ownership between employees and management. The amount of employee participation is reflected in the amount of influence employees wield on the organisations' plans and decisions.

It can be seen from the above definitions that participation is a wide concept which is also associated with several other concepts. Mosoge (1996:9) notes that the following concepts are associated and at times interchangeably used with participation: delegation, consultation, influence, collective bargaining, representation and the concept of small group dynamics. In order to give a comprehensive definition of Participation, the above concepts are explored in the ensuing paragraphs.

4.2.1 The concept of delegation

Delegation implies allowing or giving power to subordinates to execute organisational decisions. Indeed, participation can be defined as the delegation of decision-making power from managers to employees, allowing the employees to make decisions without consulting their supervisors. According to Van der Westhuizen (1995:172) however, delegation means that the manager assigns duties to others, and divides work in such a way that it is executed effectively. In a way, delegation lightens the managers' workload and ensures that he/she manages instead of focusing on functionally executed tasks. But in this context delegation restricts participation to only operational aspects of the organisation.

Against the above backdrop, Van der Westhuizen (1995:174) makes a distinction between participation and delegation. Whilst participation refers to joint decision-making, delegation refers to the assignment of duties. The implication is that, unlike delegation, participation accords employees an environment where their views are heard by management. Both management and employees jointly work together to reach a decision. On the other hand delegation merely assigns duties for execution. But in a participative environment employees themselves should take part in the process of delegating. This means that they make suggestions within their teams and indicate among themselves which tasks an individual is supposed to execute. This implies that there are two forms of delegation: one is done by the manager alone by way of assigning duties while the other is executed in the context of participation where employees themselves take part in the act of delegating duties. In this study the latter usage of the term "*delegation*" is adopted.

Through delegation employees either individually or in their teams are given authority. Such authority enables them to make organisational decisions that would otherwise have been the preserve of management. But delegation of authority is not possible without effective delegating skills residing within organisational leadership. Therefore, participation through delegation means that employees, team leaders and overall

management are equipped with the necessary skills to ensure its effective use. In this regard Robbins (1997:496) notes that the parties involved and to whom authority is to be delegated must be clear about what is to be delegated and the expected results of their use of authority. The above implies that delegation is not possible without information-sharing between management, individual employees and their teams.

But every act of delegation comes with constraints. Individuals' or teams' authority to make and implement decisions independently is not unlimited. Robbins (1997:496) notes that authority is delegated to teams or employees to make specific decisions within clear parameters. The success of employee participation thus depends on whether Management has clearly specified team parameters or boundaries (see also paragraph 4.7.3.1).

It is evident from the above, that delegation as a concept may interchangeably be used with Participation. Thus, through delegation, employees/ teams are empowered to solve problems and even make recommendations to management. Delegation therefore, may be viewed as the highest degree of employee empowerment. It does not only distribute power within the organisation but it also develops employees' abilities as they carry out the delegated duties. Delegating tasks to employees, involving them in team meetings for planning and decision-making equips them with capabilities from which organisations too may also draw later.

4.2.2 The concept of 'consultation'

Consultation refers to the availment of opportunities for participation to employees by Management. Through consultation, management seeks the advice of employees, takes cognisance of their feelings and interests before a decision is made. According to Mosoge (1996:13) Consultation refers to the mode in which managers secure employee participation. Thus, consultation allows exchange of ideas and different points of view to take place between management and employees, and among employees themselves.

Consultation is directly related to participation. Through it, people in the organisation are able to reach technically correct decisions. The wider the consultations are within the organisation the more employee participation is envisaged. In organisations where snap decisions are made employees are rarely consulted. Such organisations tend to be autocratically managed. On the other hand, where there is Consultation there is also full employee participation. Management shares problems and seeks solutions from all the people. In the process alternative views and solutions are generated and evaluated and consensus reached. This enables such organisations to reach quality decisions. However the extent to which consultation leads to quality decisions depends on how much relevant information is shared among the involved parties.

4.2.3 The concept of ‘influence’

Bendix (2001:656) defines participation in terms of the amount of influence employees are able to exert on organisational decisions. Influence therefore refers to the effect employees have on organisational decisions that affect them and their work. Conley (1989:368) defines it as employees’ capacity to shape organisational decisions through either formal or informal ways. Participation thus can be conceptualised as the distribution of power or influence within an organisation.

Mosoge (1996:14) asserts that ‘influence’ is one of the three aspects (the other two being ‘power’ and ‘consultation’) that determines the quality of employee participation within an organisation. Mosoge (1996) further indicates that employees value participation only if they believe that there is potential for real influence. Real influence in this regard refers to employees’ tangible effect on organisational decisions.

4.2.4 The concept of ‘collective bargaining’ and ‘representation’

Employee participation may be through collective bargaining. In such a case trade unions engage in negotiations with management in order to influence decisions executed at higher organisational levels. Van Rensburg (1998:16/3) indicates that in the context of

employment relations collective bargaining takes place against the background of differing and sometimes conflicting interests of employees and employers. Keith and Girling (1991:292-293) add that the adversarial parties have to formalise procedures during the process of collective bargaining and may at times require the services of a mediator.

Van Rensburg (1998:17/9) distinguishes between two forms of collective bargaining: distributive and integrative bargaining. The two forms are briefly discussed below.

- **Distributive bargaining**: This form of bargaining is associated with the typical bargaining positions between management and unions. It takes place when the two parties' interests are in conflict. It involves the two parties making proposals, counter-proposals and compromises.
- **Integrative bargaining**: This form of bargaining occurs when there is a common problem at the workplace. The involved parties work together to define the problem, analyse it, gather, exchange and explore information and creative solutions.

During the process of collective bargaining, interaction takes place between union officials and management. Through such representation, employees are able to impact on decisions taken by management. Mosoge (1996:16) however, questions the effectiveness of employee participation through representation because it decreases the participation of the general populace of employees. This type of participation may breed alienation as it creates a gap between the expected and actual responses of the representatives. Williamson and Johnson (1991:16) indicate that this leads to claims by the general populace of employees of improper representation.

4.2.5 The concept of small group dynamics

Employee participation can also occur between small groups. Slabbert, Prinsloo, Swanepoel and Backer (1998:17/4) define a small group as one that consists of between two to twenty people in face-to-face interaction as they execute their duties. Small

Groups include *inter alia* briefing groups, quality circles, autonomous working groups, and self-management teams. Through such groups, employees are able to influence decisions that are either related to their jobs or those that relate to managerial authority and policy making. At the same time organisations ensure that work is effectively performed. Effective performance is normally the result of the joint effort and contribution of each of the group members. Uys in Slabbert *et al* (1998:17/3) indicates that to achieve organisational goals the activities of the groups have to be co-ordinated; and quality and employee productivity has to be accounted for.

Small groups can either be formal or informal. Formal groups are created by the organisation to perform specified tasks; and membership is granted on the basis of skills or knowledge. The members interact and meet to execute official organisational policy. Thus the relationship between members is also official and focuses on executing the group's goal. Unlike the formal groups, informal groups develop spontaneously; and their goals centre around interpersonal relationships. Membership is voluntary, meetings are informal, with no agendas, and are held outside normal working hours. Relationships between members are also informal. Members are interpersonally attracted to those of similar interests (Uys in Slabbert *et al* 1998:17/6).

Most employees in an organisation are members of both the formal and informal groups. This means that informal groups influence employee decisions taken in the formal group context. The two groups thus cannot be separated from each other; and in order to improve productivity in the organisation, Management should encourage employee participation through the formally constituted groups; while at the same time acknowledging employees' need to belong to the informal groups.

The different concepts related to participation have been discussed in the preceding paragraphs. Based on the discussion as presented, a definition of employee participation may be formulated as follows:

Employee participation is a process of interaction between management and employees (or their representatives) through which employees as teams, groups or individuals are empowered to influence managerial decisions and organisational policy, or to identify and solve work-related problems without managerial interference. This is done through consultation between employees and management or collective bargaining between the two parties. Participation can also be in the form of delegating of duties. Duties may be delegated by management or team leaders to employees, with employees themselves taking part in the act of delegating.

4.3 The Participative model of management

A comprehensive definition of participation was given in the foregoing paragraphs. There is no doubt that organisations that aspire to become globally competitive have to implement a participative form of work-place governance; built on empowered teams, a consensus form of decision-making, information sharing, partnering relationships and a two-way communication system between Management and employees.

Therefore the participative model of work-place governance is explored further under the above building blocks.

4.3.1 Team building and empowerment

The process of team building was discussed earlier {see paragraph 2.3.3.1 (b)}; but it is imperative to point out that in order to encourage full co-operation and participation, all employees and their teams must be empowered to do so {see also paragraph 2.3.3.2 (a)}. The question to be asked at the moment is how participative organisations empower their teams.

According to McDermott, Brawley and Waitte (1998:6) this is done by management relinquishing much of the core work in the organisation to the teams. Within the team, employees work with their peers as well as across the different teams to make and

implement decisions that result in increased productivity. The teams plan, set priorities, co-ordinate with others, measure results and take corrective action in the case of discrepancies. Osburn, Moran, Musselwhite and Zenger (1990:8) note that in cases where teams are fully developed, employees can also be entrusted with the responsibility of handling personnel issues like absenteeism, team member selection and evaluation.

But for teams to handle the responsibilities as explained above, they have to be trained {see paragraph 2.3.3.2 (b)} in three critical areas (Osburn *et al*; 1990:18) to enable them to acquire the following skills:

- **Technical skills**

Cross-training in technical skills ensures that team members are equipped with the ability to perform different kinds of tasks within the team itself; and that they are flexible with regard to job performance. Individual members are also trained in specific skills designed to broaden their personal contribution to the overall effort.

- **Administrative skills**

In team-based organisations, individual team members are assigned jobs which were traditionally done by supervisors. This means that former supervisors take on new roles as facilitators giving guidance to the team members as they perform. Therefore team members have to be given training which enables them execute such tasks as: record-keeping, reporting procedures, budgeting, scheduling, monitoring, evaluating team members and any other aspects traditionally the domain of supervisors and managers.

- **Interpersonal skills**

As members of the various work teams, employees are required to communicate effectively with one another. Communication may be either in groups, face-to-face or with people outside the team. As they play the new roles of Supervisor or Manager, employees are bound to face explosive issues like interpersonal conflict. Against this reality employees have to be provided with skills-building training into the appropriate areas. It is vital that team members master among others: listening, conflict and group problem-solving skills.

Empowered with the relevant skills, employees in each team are positioned to work towards the achievement of the identified organisational goals through a sense of communal responsibility among themselves. Empowered employees are also able to effectively take part in decision-making that impacts on their work and the organisation. According to Bergman (1992:50) both employees and management work co-operatively; ensuring that decisions made enhance shared responsibility within the organisation.

Osburn *et al* (1990:41) indicate that team empowerment through the acquisition of the above skills impacts on the teams in the following ways.

- The teams become flexible as they conform to changing conditions within the organisation. Empowered employees are not only able to perform tasks within their teams but can also execute tasks from other teams because of cross-training in the technical skills.
- The teams become fluid in a sense that they do not have permanent members. They are able to replace current members with new members, re-tool to perform new functions and “farm out” other functions as the situation may warrant.
- They become lean as they strive to meet their goals more economically and with fewer people.
- They are responsive in a sense that the acquired skills enable them to appropriately react as they seek out, meet, and exceed the changing demands and expectations of both the internal and external customers.
- They become proactive because they are equipped with the ability to exercise foresight to prevent crises. In this regard, teams plan innovations to meet anticipated needs and continually streamline for increased productivity and global competitiveness.
- The overall impact of team empowerment is to create a sense of satisfaction among the employees. It is this satisfaction that elicits commitment from the work force; forcing employees to perform to the best of their abilities.

By supporting team development and empowerment the participative model of governance does not only equip employees with the ability to participate in operational duties, but also in the managerial process. Team participation in managerial processes will be explained further in the ensuing paragraphs.

4.3.2 Team participation in managerial processes

Managerial processes entail all major actions that concern strategy formulation and implementation. McLagan and Nel (1995:47) indicate that management processes are central to the economic success of an organisation. Such processes are the powerful determinants of the organisations' culture. If organisational planning, vision, mission, strategy, policy formulation and all other management processes take place in authoritarian environment, participation can only be theoretical. But if employees take part in the formulation and implementation of the above processes, then participation becomes real. It is therefore imperative that organisations re-design their managerial processes in such a way that they support team/ employee development and empowerment. This will enable employees to take part in organisational management. Unfortunately Rice and Schneider (1994:446) note that research has revealed that employees normally report decision deprivation in managerial rather than operational duties. This could partly be attributed to employee's lack of the necessary knowledge and skills that enable them to participate. However, as noted in paragraph 4.3.1, the participative model of management is designed to equip teams and all employees with the skills that enable them to actively take part in all managerial processes of planning, vision, mission and policy formulation, goals and objectives setting, decision-making, problem-solving and organising. This is discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

4.3.2.1 Team participation in organisational planning

Planning is a managerial activity that maps out a blueprint showing the intentions of an organisation (Kroon and Van Zyl, 1990:125 – 126). Through planning, the organisation

establishes its purpose, which is later accomplished by the organisational strategy.

Participative organisations involve their teams in strategy development, vision and policy formulation. They also ensure that their employees, customers, suppliers and trade Union representatives are given a chance to bring to the fore their knowledge regarding strategy and policy formulation.

Once strategic decisions and policies have been participatively reached, organisational leadership ensures that they are internalised by all employees. This helps in their implementation. Internalisation can be through open dialogue, questions and even challenges. McLagan and Nel (1995:106) indicate that through dialogue and questions employees are given the opportunity to ask questions about the strategy and discuss its operational implications. A well-understood strategy can easily be implemented.

In cases where organisations are team-based, individual teams are also given the latitude to formulate their own strategies and policies as long as they are in line with the overall organisational strategy. By getting involved in planning team activities, employees contribute to the strategic planning of the entire organisation.

Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:135 – 137) suggest the following steps to enhance team participation in an organisation's strategic planning.

- Each team is accorded the opportunity to suggest and evaluate ways of improving performance.
- Ideas from the different teams are all brought together; amendments, rejections and additions are made to the original ideas.
- Management then refines the accepted ideas and declares goals without further discussion.
- Each team decides on how best to accomplish the declared goals.
- Performance is then monitored monthly by progress reports and displays of progress from each team.

Team involvement in organisational planning allows employees as a team to direct not only the individual team activities but all the other organisational activities. This is because planning, whether at team or organisational level acts as a guide to all other managerial and operational activities.

4.3.2.2 Employee/ team participation in vision, mission, policy formulation and strategy development

Employees as a team collectively formulate the teams' visions. Such visions have to be in line with the overall organisational vision to ensure congruence between the teams' and the organisation's vision. McLagan and Nel (1995:105). Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:94–95) suggest the following ways to ensure that teams participate in the formulation of the overall vision of the organisation.

- Management appeals to the consciences of all employees regarding the importance and need for an organisation's vision.
- Employees are requested to write their own images of what the organisation should be; employees are then requested, in their groups to compile an aggregate of suggestions, or to eliminate ideas from the previous step.
- Employees are requested to describe values that underpin their images concerning what the organisation should be.
- Management proposes a mission statement based on the vision, image and value Statement.
- The mission is given to the teams for comment and improvement; and
- Both the vision and mission are finalised by management after taking employees' views into cognisance.

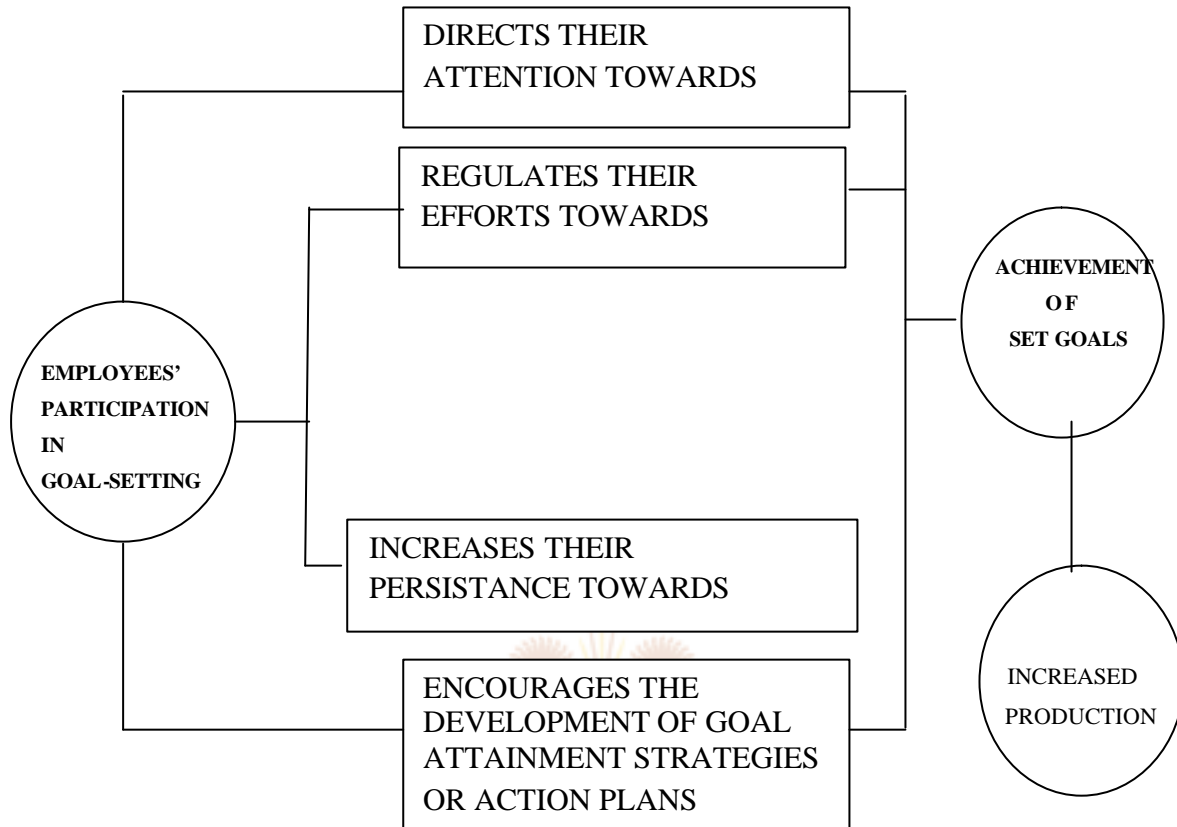
When a vision is formulated through the above process, employees own it. It is this sense of ownership that encourages all teams to strive towards the attainment of the formulated vision. Indeed, as discussed in paragraph 2.3.2.1, by allowing employees to participate in the formulation of the vision, the participative model of management stimulates their commitment to the final mission; the overriding purpose of the organisation.

Employee participation in vision and mission formulation inevitably gives them the opportunity to participate in policy formulation. This is because the policy of an organisation provides the premises upon which its mission may be executed. The organisation's policy is supported by rules, regulations and procedures for the accomplishment of the mission. It is against this scenario that the participative model of management supports team involvement in the designing of such rules. Van der Westhuizen (1995:52) indicates that collective formulation of the policy and the rules that support it ensures employee commitment to the rules and procedures that support the Policy. It also ensures successful delegation of duties and authority.

4.3.2.3 Employee/ team participation in goals and objectives setting

An organisation's goals and objectives describe what the organisation wants to achieve both in the short and long term. This means that goals serve to operationalise the organisation's mission. Participative organisations encourage and support team participation in the goal-setting process. MacLagan and Nel (1995:108) note that once teams determine their goals participatively, "*... there is deliberate integration with customers and other key stakeholders. The team overtly decides what it will and will not do. People are clear about their roles, responsibility devolves, and the strategy becomes action that can be taken*". Furthermore employees who participate in identifying and setting organisational goals became more committed and productive as illustrated in Figure 20.

Figure 20: Effect of employee participation in goal-setting



Source: Adapted from Kreitner and Kinicki (1998:235)

Enhanced task performance and increased production are the ultimate results of joint goal-identification or -setting between employees and management of organisational goals. Increased production comes as a result of the self-evaluation process the teams undertake to determine whether the set goals have been achieved, or whether the team has added value to the organisation as it pursues the identified goals.

However it is important to note that during the process of joint identification of the organisation's or team's goals, individual employee goals have to be acknowledged; and where possible, must be addressed to prevent employees from being distracted from organisational goals. It is against this background that Mclagan and Nel (1995:110)

maintain that in the participative model or work-place governance, individual employee goals become the vehicle for influencing employees' work and commitment.

4.3.2.4 Employee participation in decision-making and problemsolving

Decision-making refers to the making of a choice between several alternatives with the aim of taking the most suitable action to solve problems or handle a situation. Pearce and Robinson (1991:3) regard decision-making as the essence of management. According to Hoy and Miskel (1991:30) the process of decision-making involves several steps some of which require employee participation since the decisions to be taken may directly affect them.

Because of this fact, the participative model of management acknowledges the role of individual employees and their teams in decision-making. Hoy and Tarter (1993:9) note that the model promotes a consensus-style of management. Through the consensus-style of management, teams and employee teams are given the opportunity to take part in decision-making, and solving problems that affect them, their jobs and the organisation as a whole.

From the above, it can be seen that a participative model of management allows employees as individuals or within their teams to make decisions independently and to solve the day-to-day problems they encounter at the workplace. McLagan and Nel (1995:111) summarise the manner in which employees are allowed to participate in decision-making through the following quotation.

“The person who sweeps the floor must decide which broom to use, where to start sweeping, and what to suggest as long-term solutions where persistent or dangerous spillage causes problems. An insurance sales person must decide which policies to offer a client. An executive must decide which strategies the company will adopt and which it will not”.

The implication of the above quotation is that participative organisations give the people power to make decisions in areas where their competence and skills allow them. In the same vein, different teams within the organisation are given the latitude to make decisions as teams as long as such decisions enhance the overall mission of the organisation.

Though decisions may at times be independently made by either team leaders or managers, participative organisations normally strike a balance between independent, consultative, consensual and delegative decision-making (McLagan and Nel, 1995:114). This means that team leaders/ managers may make independent decisions only in cases where they have enough information and only when the commitment of employees to such decisions is either assured or unnecessary. In any other instances however, employees need to be involved in the decision-making process.

To enable employee participation in decision-making, participative organisations put in place a number of structures specifically designed for the purpose. Though quality circles (see paragraph 4.7.2) present the most valuable approach to employee participation in identifying and solving problems related to production methods and delivery services, work-place forums (see paragraph 4.6.1) and teams too play a major role in organisational decision-making.

Osburn *et al* (1990: 227) note that a problem-solving approach for a work-team would comprise the following elements:

- logical, easy-to-remember set of problem-solving steps;
- set of tools and techniques to help team member solve difficult problems;
- procedures for using the process effectively in team sessions; and
- method for training team members in all the above.

The above problem-solving approach can be strengthened, and employees' ability to deal with problems enhanced by:

- augmenting the basic problem-solving process with special tools and techniques that enable individual employees and teams to work through problems;
- developing ground rules for using the process in team problem-solving sessions;
- training all team members in team problem-solving techniques; and
- encouraging learning for both managers and employees. Managers should be equipped with the skills to train employees, and employees should be given the skills to solve problems.

4.3.2.5 Employee participation in organising

Organising refers to the arrangement of people, resources and time in a manner that facilitates the accomplishment of organisational objectives. Mosoge (1996:92) notes that the task of organising entails assigning duties, authority and responsibility that accompany such duties to individual employees or teams.

To enable employees assume duty, authority and responsibility, participative organisations institute a “hands-off” plan for supervisory and support-group tasks. Osburn *et al* (1990:281) defines a “hands-off” plan as a systematic process designed to identify specific tasks that can be passed on to the team. This means that as employees or teams demonstrate the ability to take over specific duties and responsibilities, the supervisors or managers relinquish such duties, responsibilities and authority that accompany them to the employees.

Therefore employees participate in organising when the leadership in the organisation adopts specific methods to ensure that teams and individual employees are involved in executing the various sub-tasks of organising.

As employees or teams demonstrate their ability to perform, organisational leadership will:

(a) Delegate specified duties to teams

Delegation means that the manager assigns some of the work to the employees along with the authority and responsibilities that accrue to it. Employees who had work assigned to them, expected to achieve the desired results without consulting their managers. Delegation thus is the highest degree of empowerment. It not only distributes power but it also develops employees' abilities. Indeed Kreitner and Kinicki (1998) contend that "...delegation gives non-managerial employees... more than a voice in decision-making." The question that now arises is: how does Management enhance Employee Participation through the delegation of duties? According to Canter and Canter (1992:49); Theron and Bothma (1990:114), delegation should be done in such a way that employees are motivated and committed to execute the assigned tasks. Kreitner and Kinicki (1998:325) add that management should view delegation as a process which should be developed and nurtured.

(b) Refine organisational structures

In this regard Leadership completely divorces itself from structures that support Authoritarianism. McLagan and Nel (1995:79) indicate that the new structures have to:

- reflect and reinforce transparency;
- ease information-flow across organisational levels;
- focus on the customers for increased competitiveness;
- deliver added value; and
- enable team members to define team needs in order to accomplish their work and sustain continuous improvement.

(c) Encourage employees to coordinate organisational activities

Cordination implies that the various organisational activities are synchronised into one whole for effective implementation of participative practices. McLagan and Nel (1995:50-51) assert that co-ordination or ensuring congruence ensures that no area within the organisation remains an outpost from which Authoritarianism may stem to discredit participation.

It is evident from the foregoing paragraphs that participative organisations are founded on Empowered Teams. But apart from empowerment of teams and employees the

participative model of work-place governance is also founded on information-sharing between management and employees, a two-way communication system, and partnering relationships. These aspects are discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

4.3.3 Communication as a building block of the participative model of management

Laws and Smith (1992:147) assert that communication between management and the shop-floor is essential in an organisation; and characterises the participative model of work-place governance. This means that regular and effective two-way communication between Management and employees is essential for the mutual exchange of information between the two parties. Through communication information is transmitted to employees, and in the process employees' attention is focused more systematically on product market competition, and a quality ethos can be created across the organisation. Hyman and Mason (1995:75) note that communication to individual employees may take the form of Company House Journals, news letters, video presentation and chairman's forums. Through such communication individual employees are provided with information on major employment related issues. This form of communication, however moves downward from Management to employees; and does not contribute to meaningful employee participation (Spurr, 1990:14-17). Employees hardly contribute to the issues involved. Communication to groups of employees manifests itself in the form of briefing groups. Through briefing groups, employees are informed of high-level or strategic decisions, organisational decisions, rationales behind changes of decisions etc. Through this type of communication employees become aware of how they will be affected by managerial decisions.

But the participative model of work-place management prescribes a two-way communication system in which both employees and Management exchange information. Hyman and Mason (1995:81) indicate that this form of communication is designed to bring about zero-defect in production standards. Employees use their knowledge of the production processes and the various aspects of the organisational systems to identify problems. They share information in this regard with Management to ensure high

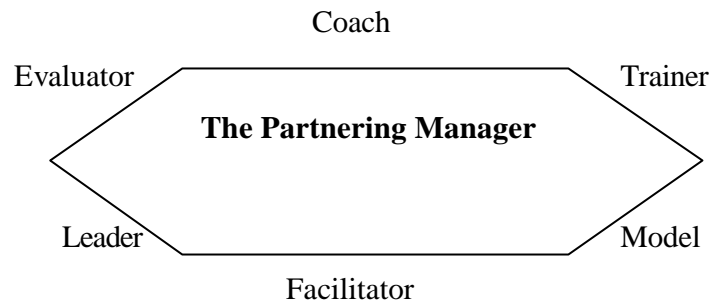
production standards. Information-sharing could be in form of suggestion schemes, attitude surveys, quality circles, teams or work-groups.

4.3.4 Partnering as a building-block of the participative model of work-place management, see also par.2.3.3.1 (c)

Relationships within the organisation are the smallest personal units in which Participation occurs, and form the foundations of either an Authoritarian or Participative Organisation (McLagan and Nel, 1995:132). This implies that when the relationships are adversarial, coercive or dependent they create authoritarian organisations. But as opposed to authoritarian organisations, participative organisations are founded on Partnering Relationships which acknowledge employees' independence and co-operation. Partnering Relationships are founded on trust among all stakeholders. This means that partnering creates an amicable relationship among managers and staff, team members, unions and Management, the organisation and its customers and suppliers. According to McLagan and Nel (1995:131), product quality, customer retention and organisational productivity are enhanced through such relationships.

From the above it can, therefore, be argued that by acknowledging partnering relationships, a participative model of management acknowledges the value of both employees and employers in the organisation; and the need to put each party's talents to use for the benefit of the two parties and the organisation. Sujansky (1991:50) indicates that it is incumbent upon management and the employees to create an environment where a partnering relationship can be nurtured. Management for instance has to recognise and acknowledge employee participation in the management processes (see par 4.3.2), interact with the employees, provide leadership in form of direction and guidance jointly determine mutual goals (see par 4.3.2.3), identify performance criteria, scope of authority, give feedback, solicit and avail employees of the needed resources. The manager's role in the creation of an environment with partnering relationships is to assume a number of roles as illustrated in figure 21.

Figure 21: Roles of a partnering manager.



Source: Sujansky (1991:52)

As coach the manager encourages excellence, develops skills as trainer, and demonstrates appropriate behaviour as a model. As facilitator, leader and evaluator, he/she guides the process; provides vision and direction and appraises results respectively (Sujansky, 1991:51).

On the other hand, employees' role in the relationship is under pinned by the Manager's recognition of their capabilities. In this regard Sujansky (1991:51) asserts that employees have to initiate action, provide ideas and practice self-management. They must also be open and honest, receptive to new ideas, learning, information and skills. Thus employees' relationship with their managers are characterised by behaviours which enhance the Partnering Relationship as illustrated table 9.

Table 9: Interaction between a Partnering Manager and a Partnering Employee

THE PARTNERING MANAGER					
COACH	TRAINER	MODEL	FACILATOR	LEADER	EVALUATOR
<p>Employee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is open to feedback; • Asks clarifying questions; • Confronts the Manager about areas of disagreement. 	<p>Employee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is open to learning; • Self-assesses training and development needs. 	<p>Employee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observes; • Asks questions to clarify; • Gives positive feedback. 	<p>Employee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in the process; • Learns facilitating skills; • Provides feedback on the process. 	<p>Employee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates commitment • Assumes responsibility; • offers supportive and challenging input. 	<p>Employee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responds to and evaluates him/herself; • commits to performance improvement.

Source: Adapted from Sujasnky (1991:52)

When a Partnering Relationship is finally established, employees are able to solve problems, look for opportunities, personal and business growth. Meanwhile, managers are enlightened by employees' ideas and inputs. This makes them well positioned to move businesses ahead as they improve product quality, retain customers and increase productivity. The overall effect is creation of a competitive business, which becomes a leader in the corporate world.

A partnering relationship, however, will not mature unless employees are equipped with self-management skills, broad business understanding, knowledge of business finance and economics, critical thinking skills, integrative skills, mutual learning and decision-making skills (McLagan and Nel, 1995:144-155).

It is clear from the contents of the foregoing paragraphs that the participative model of governance equips all the concerned employees with the ability to participate meaningfully in all organisational processes. It is built not only on employee empowerment but also on consensus decision-making (see paragraph 4.3.2.4); it emphasizes learning and skills acquisition {see paragraph 2.3.3.2 (b)}; a two-way communication system based on information-sharing (see par.4.3.3); and development of partnering relationships (see par.4.3.4).

The above eventually lead to the following.

- Organisational power is no longer determined by management alone, but is also subject to agreed-upon limitations which include various formal checks and balances.
- All employees have access to vital information which enables them to participate and take decisions jointly within their teams.
- Employees are constantly consulted and are able to voice out their opinions concerning relevant issues even when such opinions may be contrary to Management's.
- Management feels confident about delegating responsibility to individual employees or team leaders because such individuals are given the skills and knowledge required to perform the responsibilities.
- Employees feel well-positioned to engage in collective bargaining.
- Leaders become accountable to the employees.
- Employees' needs and aspirations are reflected in all organisational decisions that are taken jointly.

Consequently all employees become committed to working towards increased production and ensuring the competitiveness of their organisations by:

- using their time constructively;
- taking note of every detail regarding their tasks;
- putting extra effort in their tasks;
- trying to get things right the first time;

- becoming innovative;
- making suggestions when called upon by management or the team leader;
- developing trust among themselves; and with management;
- searching for and making constant improvements;
- enjoying their jobs; and
- giving loyal support to the organisation where required.

Against the above observation, paragraph 4.4 will explore employee participation in South African organisations and the extent to which it has elicited employee commitment to ensure the global competitiveness of the concerned organisations.

4.4 Employee participation in South African organisations as a tool for global competitiveness.

It was indicated in Chapter 1 that employee participation in South Africa is dictated by both the constitution in general and the Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995 (LRA) in particular. It was also indicated that the purpose for this legislation is without doubt to democratise institutions at all levels of society, including the work-place.

One of the aims of this paragraph is to examine in some detail the statutory provisions as well as the economic imperatives for employee participation in South Africa; and to determine the extent to which South African companies have embraced participation to enhance their global competitiveness.

4.4.1 Statutory provisions for employee participation in South African organisations

The ANC (1994:2) and Parker (1998: 56 – 61) indicate that the apartheid system of Government did not support employee participation in South African organisations. However with the dawn of democracy in April 1994, the ANC-led government weaved participatory democracy into the constitution.

In order to shed more light on the extent to which the state supports employee participation, the relevant aspects of the current constitution and the LRA are briefly explained in paragraphs 4.4.1.1 and 4.4.1.2.

4.4.1.1 The constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)

After the interim constitution of 1993, a new constitution was negotiated in the constitutional assembly in 1996. The constitution advocates peaceful co-existence and access to development opportunities for all South Africans. Articles related to language equality, human dignity, freedom of speech and access to information have fundamentally influenced the conduct and management of employment relations in South Africa by encouraging and supporting employee participation as explained below.

- **Language**

Apart from English and Afrikaans, the constitution recognised nine other African languages; giving all South Africans the opportunity to participate in parliament, government, schools, work-places etc in a language they are comfortable with.

- **Equality**

All South Africans were declared equal before the law and given the right to equal protection. The article on equality thus outlawed discrimination based on race, colour, creed, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, disability, language, culture, age and birth. By outlawing discrimination, all South Africans are guaranteed participation in various spheres of life.

- **Human Dignity**

The article on human dignity gives everybody the right to have his/ her dignity respected and protected. This is vital if employees are to participate in their organisations.

- **Freedom of speech**

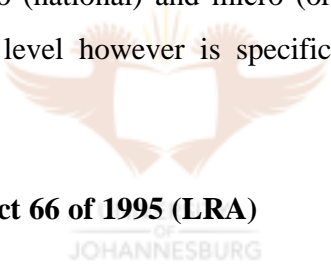
Freedom of speech, as guaranteed in the constitution ensures that everybody expresses his/ her opinions without fear of being victimised. This is essential in the work-place if employees have to participate effectively.

- **Access to information**

Information-sharing is essential for effective employee participation. Therefore, by ensuring that all citizens have the right of access to information held by the State, or an organisation, the Constitution ensures that an employee has access to all relevant information for effective participation.

Thus employees are in a position to make informed decisions when equipped with relevant information.

Legislation based on the above aspects, provides guidance to all South Africans with regard to participating at macro (national) and micro (organisational) levels. Employee Participation at organisational level however is specifically spelt out in the LRA as explained in paragraph 4.4.1.2.



4.4.1.2 The labour relations Act 66 of 1995 (LRA)

The LRA supports the democratic values upon which the constitution is based as explained in 4.4.1.1. The Act seeks to promote Participation through work-place forums, collective bargaining structures and other parallel structures. Several authors (Du Toit, Woolfrey, Murphy, Godfrey, Bosch and Christie, 1998:254–255; Finnemore, 1998) assert that work-place forums are designed to facilitate joint problem-solving (see paragraph 4.6.1) and employee participation as opposed to adversarial collective bargaining.

According to Du Toit *et al* (1998:48) the LRA provides a legal framework for orderly collective bargaining, employment relations, policy formulation by unions and employers; and employee participation in decision-making. Through such a framework employers and employees are afforded the opportunity to co-operate and participate in the development of the core elements of organisational strategy.

By advocating co-operation between Management/ employers and employees, and enhancing employee participation in decision-making, the act also seeks to advance economic development, social justice, labour peace and work-place democratisation.

But as indicated in paragraph 4.4 employee participation in South Africa is not only dictated by law but also the economic imperatives as explained in paragraph 4.4.2.

4.4.2 Economic imperatives for employee participation in South African organisations

The demise of apartheid opened the South African economy to the rest of the world. This means that the South African democratic market is open to international organisations/ companies which can compete with the local businesses.

This development implies that if South Africa has to increase the efficiency of production processes to match those of international organisations, employees and Management have to co-operate and work together. Slabbert and de Villiers (1998) note that the country is party to the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), now known as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and a member of regional groupings like SADC (Southern African Development Community). This re-integration into the wider world means that the country and its organisations must secure themselves a place in the global economy.

Slabbert and De Villiers (1998) further note that this is only possible if it:

- broadens its manufacturing base;
- improves and increases productivity;
- upgrades its technology,
- places emphasis on quality;
- establishes and exploits niche markets and realizes economies of scale; and
- invests in Human Resources.

The above is only possible if decades of entrenched Authoritarianism and Adversarial Governance at macro (national) and micro (organisational) levels are done away with.

Slabbert *et al* (1998:13/6) observe that authoritarian governance coupled with mutual disrespect and distrust between employees and employers failed to lay a foundation for sustainable productivity. Therefore, failure to democratise the work-place is bound to negate South Africa's attempts to reposition the country in the wider world for global competition.

Given the legal and economic imperatives for employee participation in South Africa this chapter explores the different levels and forms of employee participation in South Africa and ways in which employees have been involved in operational and managerial tasks within their organisations; and the extent to which this involvement has repositioned organisations to compete globally.

4.5 Levels and forms of employee participation in South Africa

Levels of participation refer to the amount of decision-making which employees are empowered to undertake (Mosoge, 1996:55). Whilst employees may be empowered to exert a lot of influence on job-related matters, their influence on policy level decision-making may be minimal or non-existent.

Bendix (2001:553) observes that the amount of influence exerted by employees depends on whether participation is task-centered or power-centered. Task-centered participation is job or task-related. It entails organisation and planning of work process between Management and employees. On the other hand, power-centered participation entails involving employees in managerial processes (see par 4.3.2).

Employees who wield more influence on policy-level decisions command more power in the organisation and operate on a higher level of Participation. Thus a high level of Participation occurs when employees and management jointly influence decision-making. On the other hand, the level of employee participation is low when Management retains a dominant influence on decisions.

It must be pointed out that low-level participation is usually informal while high-level participation is usually formal. In paragraph 4.5.1 formal and informal participation are differentiated further.

4.5.1 Formal and informal participation

Formal Participation refers to legally mandated opportunities for employees to participate in the decision-making processes in the work-place. This form of participation is normally government or trade union-initiated, and aims at protecting employees from unilateral management decisions. Formal participation entails the creation of forums, or unions for the purpose of making decisions affecting employees in the work-place. Formal Participation, thus, is also indirect participation because employees participate through agencies like trade unions or work-place forums. Through such agencies employees are represented at the highest level of the organisation.

In South Africa for example the LRA, 1995 provides for the establishment of Work-Place Forums in any work-place with more than 100 employees. Forums are designed *inter alia* to engage in consultation and joint decision-making between employees and management. Workers' councils and co-determination Schemes in Yugoslavia and Germany respectively are examples of structures designed to effect formal participation. Through such structures employees or their representatives are informed of high-level organisational intentions.

On the other hand, informal participation is management-initiated participation. A manager may for instance seek the advice and counsel of his/her employees before making a decision concerning the development of a plan aimed at achieving an organisation's objective. Consultation in informal participation is not legally enforced. Hyman and Mason (1995:22) assert that it is merely designed by the manager to encourage employees to conform with and adjust to patterns of product-market activity. Informal participation thus is narrowly defined, direct and essentially passive. Bendix (2001:553) notes that such direct participation is only feasible in small organisations.

Marchington, Goodman, Wilkinson and Ackers (1992:ix) add that informal participation is low-level and limits employee involvement to matters within reach of individual employees or their immediate work-groups. This implies that employees are not given the opportunity to contribute to high-level decisions. Employees are also denied participation in power sharing.

In line with Marchington *et.al.*; (1992:ix) Eldridge, Cressey and McInnes (1991:165) indicate that Informal Participation is normally about individual issues or quality problems which are defined by Management. Hyman and Mason (1995:22) indicate that informal participation can be interpreted as mere ‘job involvement’ because it is unilaterally initiated by management with no collective employee contributions. In Table 10 the differences between the two forms of participation are presented.

Table 10: Differences between formal participation and informal participation.

Formal participation	Informal participation
Government or employee-initiated. Some control delegated to work-force	Management-initiated and controlled.
Harnesses collective employee input through market regulation	Stimulates individual employee contribution under strong market conditions.
Encourages Collective Representation	Is directed towards responsibilities of individual employees.
Management hierarchies are broken	Management hierarchies are unbroken.
Decision-Making is at higher organisational levels	Decision-Making tends to be task-based.
Plurality of interest is recognised and mechanisms are provided for their resolution	Assumes common interest between employer and employee.
Distributes strategic influence beyond Management	Concentrates influence within the Management sphere.

Source: Hyman and Mason (1995:25)

The forms and levels of employee participation have been discussed in the previous paragraphs. Van Rensburg (1998:18/8) observes that various forms of employee participation have been applied in South Africa with varying results.

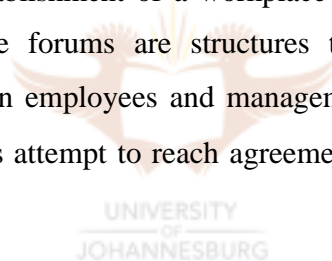
While Formal Participation manifests itself in the various structures as laid down in the LRA, Informal Participation has been in the form of briefing groups, work teams, quality circles, consultative committees and other parallel organisations.

In the ensuing paragraphs therefore, employee participation through the above participative structures will be discussed.

4.6 Formal participative structures in South Africa

4.6.1 Work-place forums

The LRA provides for the establishment of a workplace forum in case a majority trade union requests it. Work-place forums are structures that are designed to facilitate meaningful interaction between employees and management. Through such interaction both employees and employers attempt to reach agreement on matters outside the arena of normal wage negotiations.



The forums are designed to move the South African employment relations system away from adversarialism to a system built on participation, co-operation and co-determination. Thus the LRA dictates that the forum is consulted on various issues related to employees; jobs and working conditions. In the process employees are able to exchange ideas and different viewpoints with their employers or managers.

According to Slabbert and Swanepoel (2002:220) the following are the general functions of Work-place forums:

- promoting the interests of all employees, unionised and non-unionised;
- enabling consultation between employees and the employer with a view to reach consensus;
- facilitating employee participation in decision-making; and

- enhancing work-place efficiency.

In order to promote employees' interests, Management consults and allows them to participate and take decisions on any or a combination of the following issues:

- workplace restructuring;
- changes in the organisation of work;
- partial or total plant closures;
- mergers or transfer of ownership when it affects employees;
- employee dismissal based on operational requirements;
- meetings;
- criteria for merit increases or the payment of discretionary bonuses;
- training and education;
- product development; and
- export promotion.

But while the LRA is clear on the need to consult employees, it does not specifically indicate whether Management must obtain an agreement with the Forum before implementation of the proposal. Indeed Slabbert and Swanepoel (2002:221) reveal that Management may proceed with the implementation of a proposal despite the Forum's disagreement. But in such a case however, reasons justifying the unilateral implementation have to be supplied.

Apart from being consulted, Work-Place Forums are also entitled to participate in Joint Decision-Making with Management. In this regard the LRA stipulates that Work-Place Forums must be consulted and a consensus reached on any of the following matters:

- disciplinary codes and procedures;
- rules relating to proper regulation of the work-place in so far as they apply to conduct and not related to employees' work performance;
- measures designed to protect previously disadvantaged population groups; and
- changes to rules that regulate social benefit schemes controlled by the employer.

Where the employer fails to reach a consensus with the Forum, remedy is sought in procedures, which the two parties may have agreed upon. In the event of there being no agreed-upon procedures, the dispute is referred to the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). The CCMA is expected to settle the dispute through reconciliation; but should this fail, the remedy is sought through arbitration.

For both employees and Management to reach a consensus on the matters identified above, they must be equipped with relevant information. The implication here is that employers are legally bound to provide work-place forums with information, to enable them participate effectively in joint decision-making. However, Van Rensburg (1998:18/16) observes that an employer may not disclose information when:

- it is legally privileged;
- it's disclosure contravenes a prohibition imposed on the employer by a court order;
- it is confidential and its disclosure causes substantial damage to an employer or employee;
- it relates to an employee, and it is private and confidential. However in case the concerned employee agrees to its disclosure, the information may be revealed.

Work-place forums have been discussed as one of the formal participative structures dictated by the LRA in South Africa. It is clear that these structures are designed to promote co-operation, work-place efficiency, productivity and eventually the organisations' global competitiveness. However, since their inception, Work-Place Forums in South Africa have experienced numerous problems which have impeded their expressed purpose. Such impediments are explored in paragraph 4.6.1.1.

4.6.1.1 Impediments to implementation and functioning of work-place forums

Mohlala (2000:49) observes that work-place forums have been an outright failure in South Africa. The forums as participative structures have not only been rejected by almost all COSATU-affiliated unions, but employers too have expressed a desire for

them to be removed from the LRA. Thus both labour's and employers' attitude towards the forums have worked as hinderances to employee participation through work-place forums.

But it is not only the negative attitudes of the parties concerned that have impeded the proper implementation and functioning of the forums. The LRA itself clearly indicates that they are supposed to be merely consulted. This implies that they have too little power to exert real influence on matters like restructuring, changes in the organisation of work, and retrenchments among several other matters.

Although the LRA provides a number of issues for joint decision-making (see paragraph 4.6.1), Mohlala (2000:50) notes that they are very insignificant. Furthermore in terms of negotiation as provided by the Act, Unions already exercise major influence in such issues, and may not need the Forums to exert their influence.

Against the above back drop, unions view a strong and well-functioning Forum as a threat to their own influence, and would therefore go to any length to avoid their members being exposed to divided loyalties. In line with this perception, Van Rensburg (1998:18/12) indicates that establishment of work-place forums gives the employers a wider constituency to interact with; a development which would certainly be abhorred by Trade Unions in an attempt to preserve their power *vis à vis* the employers' influence. Mohlala (2000:50) adds that unions would prefer all the powers vested in the Forums to have been granted to the Unions automatically. This is because unions have always spoken for all employees, even the non-unionised ones.

On addition to the above impediments, proper functioning of Workp-Place Forums is hindered by historical reasons. The history of Employment Relations in South Africa has been tainted by conflict, hatred and threats between parties. This, coupled with the lack of expertise and experience in participative management, has no doubt, worked against the implementation and proper functioning of Work-Place Forums. Both parties involved have thus shown little interest, understanding and support for the Forums.

The lack of decision-making and problem-solving skills on the part of both employees and employers alike, can also be cited as a major hindrance to the proper functioning of the Forums. Joint-decision-making as envisaged by the LRA dictates that employees and managers alike are equipped with decision-making and problem-solving skills. Though managers may have such skills, these skills were developed and used in authoritarian environments and may not work in the modern work-place which is characterised by new tendencies and paradigm shifts. This implies that managers who “successfully” managed the authoritarian work-place require re-training to up date their competencies and skills as regards problem-solving and decision-making in a participative environment.

While managers may require re-training, employees also need to be equipped with managerial and leadership skills. The lack of these skills has hindered the proper functioning of Work-Place Forums in the sense that employees do not feel confident to co-determine or co-decide with Management. Concepts like team approach and group dynamics remain foreign to the majority of South African employees. Consequently such employees do not only refuse to accept responsibility but they also resist change within the organisation. The overall effect of all this is to render work-place forums ineffective.

Work-place forums have been discussed as one of the most outstanding features of the LRA through which employees participate in Work-place management. There is need to note however that the Forums were designed to handle issues outside the collective bargaining process. But as indicated in paragraph 4.2.4 Employee participation can also take place through the process of collective bargaining. This aspect is explored in paragraph 4.6.2

4.6.2 Collective bargaining structures

The LRA accords employees in South Africa an opportunity to participate at both national and organisational levels through the process of collective bargaining. Traditionally, collective bargaining has been associated with adversarialism between the involved parties; each party trying to secure a winning position to the detriment of the

other. Thus, such bargaining is characterised by the conflicting objectives of employers and employees. Indeed the parties involved normally aim at self-gain without considering the other(s). In the context of this study, however emphasis is laid on the Integrative Approach to collective bargaining (see paragraph 4.2.4). Slabbert and Swanepoel (2002:283) note that integrative bargaining is designed to create more than a “win-win” situation. This implies that during the bargaining process parties aim at reaching a settlement which is of mutual benefit to them all. Thus collective bargaining will be viewed as a process through which all stakeholders identify a common problem, define it, analyse it and negotiate with the aim of finding creative solutions that are beneficial to all the involved parties. In this regard Management and employees jointly try to divert their attention from issues that are bound to breed destructive conflict within the organisation. They work together in an attempt to resolve a common problem for the benefit of all those involved.

Collective Bargaining can either be centralised or decentralised. Slabbert *et al* (1998:9/18) categorises Centralised Bargaining into two: Broad Centralised Bargaining and Narrow Centralised Bargaining. While the former involves a number of employers at industry level negotiating with one or more unions, the latter involves one or more unions representing the interests of one or more groups of employees in multi-plants or companies, within a group of companies, bargaining centrally with the company (usually a holding company).

With regard to Decentralised Bargaining, Slabbert *et al* (1998:9/18) observe that one or more unions represent the interest of one or more groups of employees within a particular plant or single company bargaining with Management at a particular plant.

Whatever the form of Collective Bargaining engaged in by the different stakeholders, the resultant Collective Agreements should be able to create peaceful relations between employers and Management, reduce adversarialism and enhance organisational production.

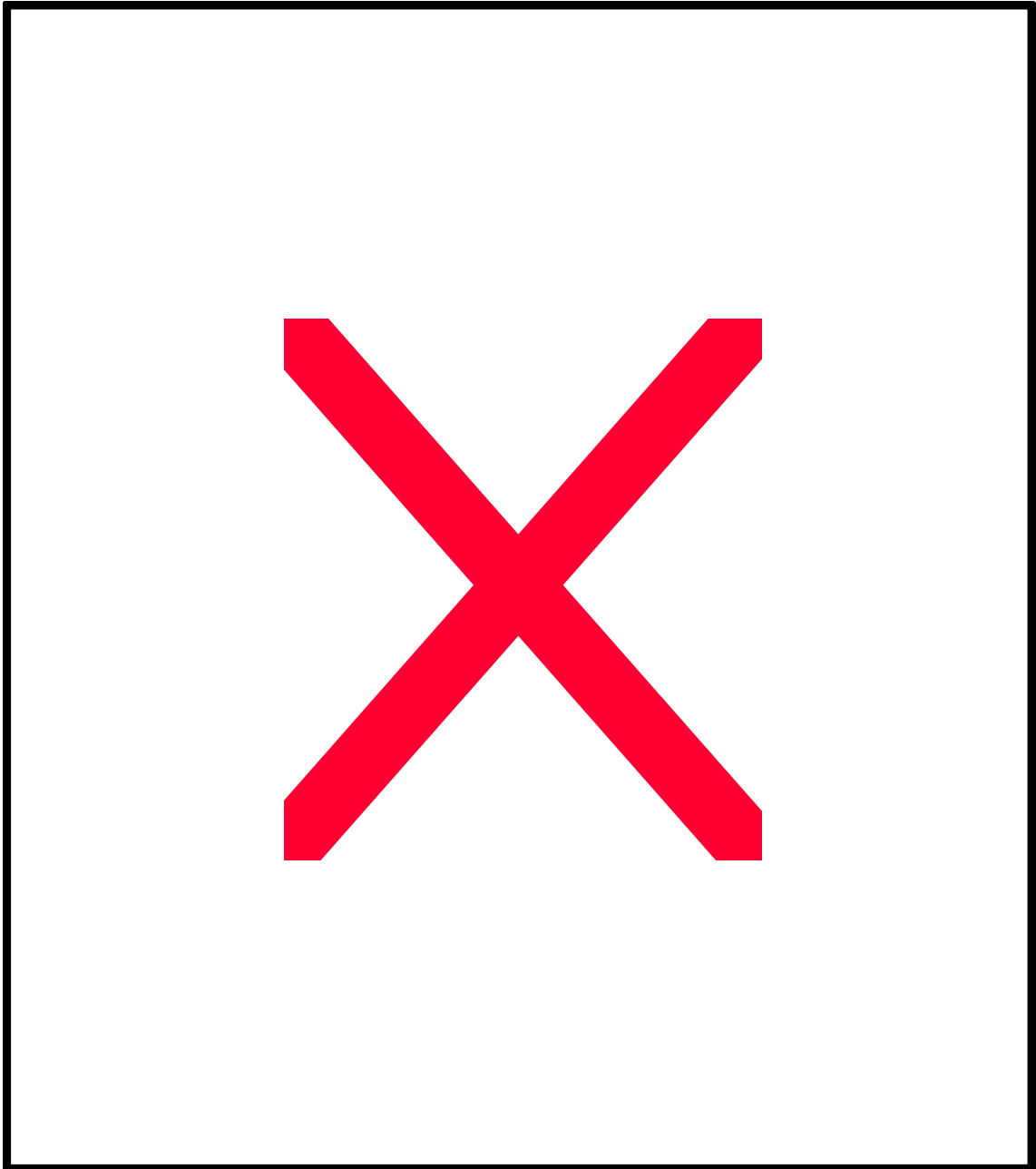
But in order to understand the context of Collective Agreements and how they have been used in South Africa to create a climate that supports increased production, an analysis of the four major components of Collective Agreements as reflected in figure 22 follows in the paragraphs that follow:

It is evident from figure 22 that the conclusion of any Collective Agreement consists of inputs, a converting process (the Collective Bargaining Process), outputs (results of the process) and feedback. Slabbert *et al* (1998:9/5) – 9/4) define inputs as the forces or factors that influence the conclusion of collective agreements. Such forces could be either primary or secondary. As reflected in figure 22 primary forces are either environmental, competitive, public sentiments or factors internal to the organisation. Secondary forces are either individual or group influences. Managing environmental forces, no doubt, impacts on the Collective Bargaining Process to the extent that the resultant collective agreements are signed according to the need for an organisation's survival in the global market or a specific environment in which the organisation operates.

Meanwhile, public sentiments and community views too, are major influences on a Collective Agreement. This means that any collective agreement reached at should reflect the needs of employees as members of the community and the goals of the organisation (see also paragraph 3.4.2.2). Finally, Internal Environmental Factors refer to the factors or systems from within the business and the organisation itself. Thus a final Collective Agreement will no doubt be influenced by such factors as the structure, strategy, culture and leadership within the organisation.

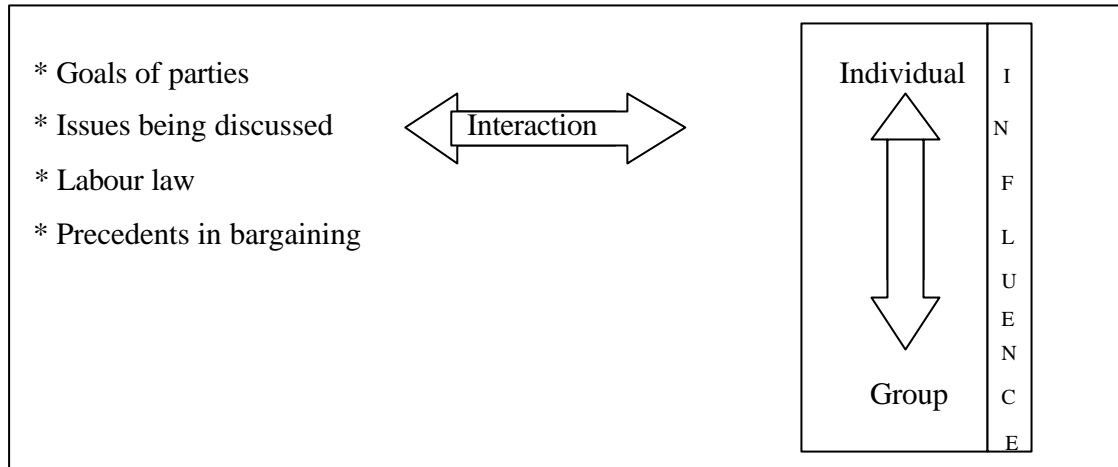
With regard to the Secondary Forces, Slabbert *et al* (1998:9/13) indicate that they are derived from Primary Forces. Secondary Forces are therefore the processes through which Primary Forces are narrowed down into concrete and comprehensive influences that enable the stakeholders to negotiate amicable solutions. Such forces consist of Individual and Group Influences, that interact with goals of the parties, issues being discussed, labour law and precedents in bargaining, as reflected in figure 23.

Figure 22: Contextual Framework of Collective Agreements



Source: Slabbert *et al* (1998:9-6)

Figure 23: Secondary Influences on Collective Bargaining



Source: Slabbert *et al* (1998:9/13)

The secondary component, which influences the conclusion of a Collective Agreement, is the Conversion Process (or the Collective Bargaining Process).

Through the Collective Bargaining Process, inputs are converted into outputs. Slabbert *et al* (1998:9/16) indicate that outputs include the following:

- collective Agreements on National Policy and Legislation;
- procedural, Transformational and Substantive Agreements;
- intermittent and the final results of the Bargaining Process.

While intermittent results include harmonious employee relations, social justice and work-place democratisation (Employee Participation), the final results include the organisation's optimal achievement of global competitiveness and economic development. (see also figure 22).

In order to achieve harmonious Employee Relations, Social Justice and Employee Participation, all stakeholders must take part in the Collective Bargaining Process through the various structures as reflected in figure 24.

Figure 24: A Framework of Collective Bargaining in South Africa

Bargaining level	Bargaining Structure	Actors	Scope	Type of bargaining
<p>National</p> <p>Industry</p> <p>Regional or Industrial sector</p> <p>Multi plants/ companies within a group company</p> <p>Company</p> <p>Plant level or single company level</p> <p>Bargaining units</p>	Nedlac	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government Business Labour Community 	National social economic policy	Centralised bargaining
	Bargaining or statutory council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered employer associations Registered and Trade Union 	Normally substantive/ (wages and conditions of service) and/ or procedural issues for an entire industry	
	Bargaining or statutory council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered employer associations Registered and Trade Union 	Substantive (wages and conditions or service) and/ or procedural issues for an industry	
	Multi-plants/ companies negotiating forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer and trade union(s) In specific circumstances also community groups 	Substantive (wages and conditions or service) and/ or procedural issues in a particular company	
Plant level or single company level	Plants or single company negotiation forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer and trade union(s) In specific circumstances also community groups 	Substantive (wages and conditions or service) and/ or procedural issues in a particular company	Decentralised bargaining

Source: Slabbert *et al* (1998:9/16)

The manner in which each of the Collective Bargaining Structures has enhanced Employee Participation, Work-Place Cooperation and Organisational Competitiveness is discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

4.6.3 Employee Participation through Collective Bargaining

4.6.3.1 Participation through the National Economic Development Labour Council (NEDLAC)

NEDLAC was founded by an Act of Government, the NEDLAC ACT, 35 of 1994. With Government, Business, Labour and the Community as the major stakeholders, the structure was designed to:

- promote goals of economic growth, participation in economic decision-making and social equality;
- aim at reaching consensus and concluding agreements on matters concerning social and economic policy;
- consider all proposed Labour Legislation before it is introduced to Parliament;
- consider all major changes to social and economic policy before its implementation or introduction to Parliament; and
- promote and encourage the formulation of co-ordinated policy on social and economic matters (Mohlala; 2000:37; Van Rensburg, 1998:10/4).

From the functions of NEDLAC as outlined above there is no doubt that it was designed to enhance stakeholders participation (employees inclusive) at both the national and organisational levels. Mohlala (2000:38) for instance, notes that since its inception it has reached 34 agreements among which is the LRA; a legislation which as indicated in paragraph 4.4.1.2 seeks to enhance work-place co-operation between employees, Management and other stakeholders.

NEDLAC, as a National Participative Structure, promotes among others consensus on economic and labour policies. Although it was designed to promote dialogue among Labour, Business and Government at the national level, some of the agreements reached impact directly on employees at organisational level. It is no wonder, therefore, that COSATU as a labour organisation was instrumental in its own establishment.

Apart from the Enhancement of Work-Place Democratisation, NEDLAC boasts several other Bills and Acts that enhance the commitment and productivity of employees. According to Mohlala (2000:38 – 9) such bills and Acts include *inter alia* the:

- Employment Equity Bill;
- Skills Development Bill;
- Code of Good Practice on dealing with cases of sexual harassment;
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act;
- Code of Good Practice on dismissals based on operational requirements;
- Amendment to the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases act;
- The Social Clause;
- Amendment bills;
- Mine Health and Safety Act, 1996; and
- Regulation of Essential Service Committee.

It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss each of the above Bills/ Acts. But suffice to mention is that they were all designed to improve employees' welfare, and to elicit employees' satisfaction and commitment to their jobs. It is because of this that COSATU has been very keen to participate in NEDLAC negotiations. Mohlala (2000:43) reveals that COSATU's participation in NEDLAC has been very good and constructive.

If Business were to be equally committed to NEDLAC, all its objectives with regard to participation would be easily realised. However, Mohlala (2000:43) asserts that Organised Business' intentions are not as serious as those of COSATU. The Captains of Industry rarely participated in Chambers, but on the odd occasion when they did, they

were represented by junior delegations. This has led to questions regarding the role of NEDLAC in enhancing participation.

The Government's introduction of its new macro-economic policy (GEAR) without consulting NEDLAC has led to further questions regarding NEDLAC's role in important economic policies; and though COSATU has not undermined NEDLAC as a participative structure, its rank and file are not comfortable with GEAR as a macro-economic policy.

4.6.3.2 Participation through the Bargaining and Statutory Councils

To promote centralised bargaining, the LRA makes provision for Bargaining And Statutory Councils. Bargaining Councils are established when one or more registered Trade Unions, or one or more registered employer's organisation request them. Through these Councils, employees (through their Unions) are positioned to participate in:

- the prevention and settlement of work-place disputes;
- conducting Conciliation and Arbitration in terms of the LRA;
- making representations to NEDLAC regarding policy or law affecting industry;
- the establishment and administration of pension; provident, medical aid and unemployment funds;
- the establishment of a fund for the settlement of disputes;
- the establishment and promotion of education and training schemes; and
- determining issues regarded as important in disputes for purpose of a strike or lock-out.

From the above it is argued that through Bargaining Councils, employees are not only able to participate in collective bargaining, but also in dispute settlement in the work-place. Bendix (2001) observes that dispute settlement does not apply to only Council Members but to all employees and employers in a sector, industry or area in which a council has jurisdiction. The disputes are settled through negotiations and are normally related to substantive issues like wages and working conditions.

The LRA also makes provision for Statutory Councils; but as Van Rensburg (1998:17/15) notes Statutory Councils perform the same functions as Bargaining Councils. They are

however set up in industries or sectors where there are representative unions or employee organisations. Through Statutory Councils employees are able to participate in the formation of procedural agreements designed to regulate:

- dispute Resolution;
- education and Training; and
- administration of Pension and Medical Funds.

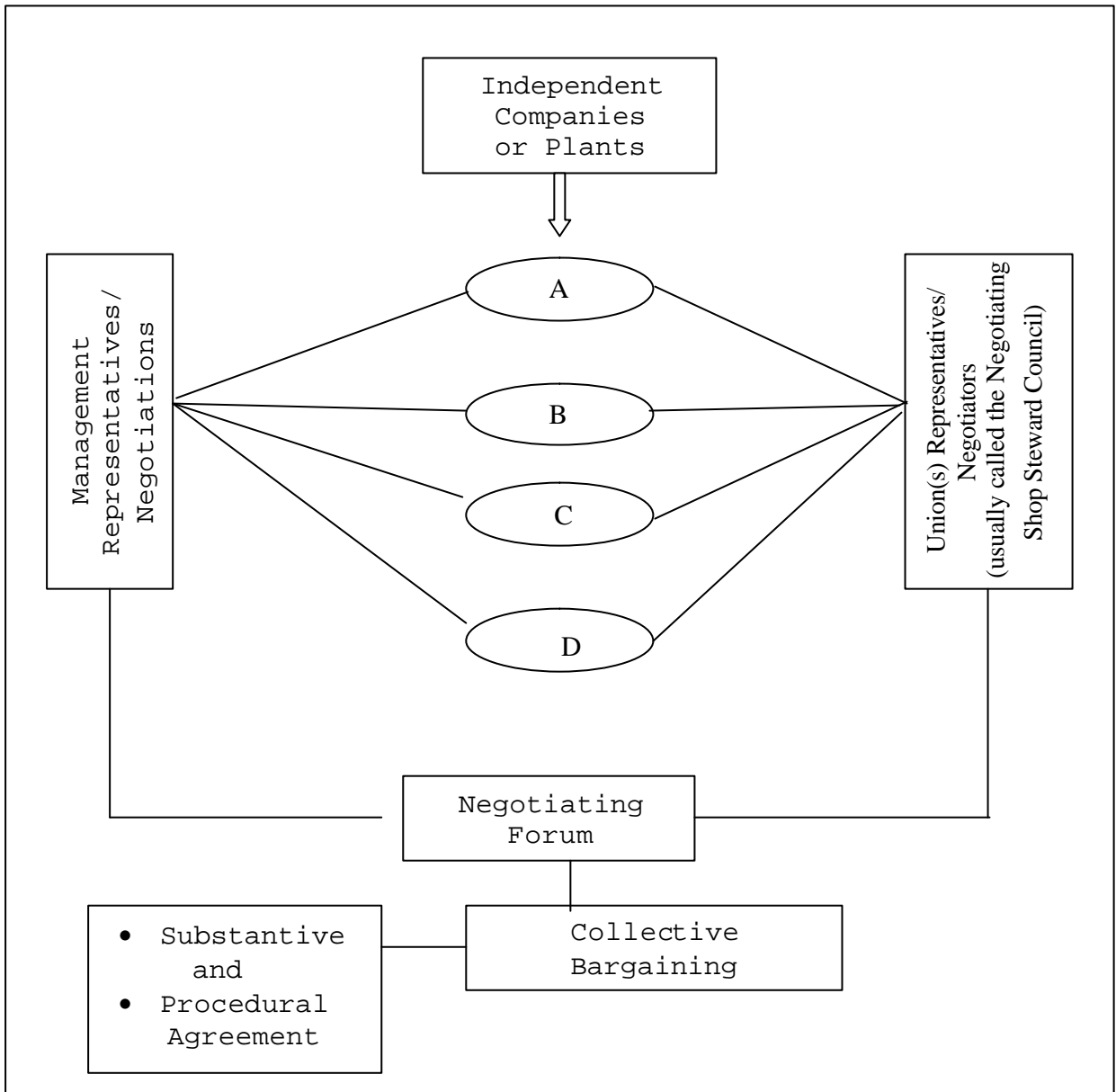
4.6.3.3 Participation through Multi-Plant or Company Negotiating Forums

Multi-Plant Negotiating forums are designed to enhance employees' and at times community participation in the formulation of Agreements concerning substantive as well as procedural issues in a particular company. Thus through these Forums, agreements pertaining to employee's wages and conditions of service are jointly agreed upon by the unions and employers. Collective Bargaining in this regard can be either centralised or decentralised in case it is at a company level.

Slabbert *et al* (1998:9/20) note that in South Africa Multi-Plant or Company Negotiating Forums are popular with the Food and Allied Workers' Union (FAWU) and other companies in the food industry. As depicted in figure 25 union representatives from different companies meet in the forum with Management or Management Representatives. The two parties engage each other in collective bargaining on the relevant issues; reaching either a substantive or procedural agreement on the issues involved.

It must be noted that participation at this level becomes cumbersome in cases where a group of companies comprises a large number of independent companies or plants (Slabbert *et al*, 1998:9/21). However, unions may opt for regional structures to surmount such a problem. In that regard, two representatives from each region are appointed to negotiate on behalf of the various plants.

Figure25: Schematic representation: multi-plant or company negotiating forum.



Source: Slabbert *et al* 1998:9/21

Participation through plant or single company negotiating forums

Employee participation at centralised bargaining level does not preclude participation at plant or company level. The LRA allows for decentralised bargaining through plant or Company Negotiating Forums. Through these structures employees and management consult and make joint decisions on specific issues. Slabbert *et al* (1998:9/22) observe that though the emphasis is on consultation and joint decision-making, some of the issues as put forward by the LRA for consultation or joint decision-making may lead to collective bargaining. Such issues may include *inter alia*:

- partial or total plant closure;
- dismissal of employees for reasons based on operational requirements;
- disciplinary codes, health and safety ruling regulating the work place; and
- social benefit schemes.

Based on the contents of the foregoing paragraphs it is evident that the Collective Bargaining Process as put forth by the LRA presents South African employees with opportunities to influence decisions not only at organisational level but also at national level. Through the Collective Bargaining Structures as discussed above, employees become party to agreements that:

- reduce conflict at the shop floor;
- are designed to meet employees' social expectations;
- guide the national, social and economic policies; and
- regulate all issues pertaining to the entire Employment Relationship.

The resultant effect of all this is to create organisations and organisational environments and organisations that are geared towards increased productivity and competitiveness.

The question that now arises is, whether employee participation through collective Bargaining Structures has contributed to the competitiveness of South Africa's organisations. Baskin (1993:54) states that the system falls short of enhancing the competitiveness of the country's organisations because of the following reasons.

- **The bargaining system is neither comprehensive nor compulsory**

In dealing with Collective Bargaining the LRA is not specific about the preferred levels of bargaining and which parties should be involved. This non-prescriptive stance of the LRA leaves employees and Unions with an option of concluding their own arrangements by exercising power. Such power is underpinned by employees' right to strike, by a set of organisational rights, and by a process of Advisory Arbitration. It is the author's view that if the right to strike is not properly exercised, it is bound to disrupt production and negatively impact on the performance of the organisation.

- **There are very few bargaining Councils in the Country**

Though the LRA encourages bargaining Councils, it is not compulsory for employees to belong to them. Mohlala (2000:52) notes that employers in South Africa have been the main stumbling block to the establishment of bargaining councils. They have not only raised objections or dragged their feet on the formation of their own associations, as required by the LRA, but they have also rejected employees applications for registration on many occasions. This has resulted in the Registration Process being delayed.

What the above implies is that employee participation through bargaining councils as explained in paragraph 4.6.3.2 is not possible or cannot take place as envisaged by the Law.

- **The Majority of Unionized members negotiate at plant levels as opposed to centralised bargaining**

Centralised Bargaining was one of the biggest demands of Labour when the LRA was being negotiated. But, on the contrary, it was one of the central tenets that was left out of the final draft of the Act. This means that workers do not enjoy benefits like large-scale Training Programmes that are associated with centralised bargaining. Training, as indicated earlier in this study, is imperative for successful Employee Participation. Other benefits like Standardisation and Minimum Safeguards in all work-places, better benefits at less costs and minimisation of strike actions are also lost; and yet they are vital for the creation of a peaceful work environment.

- **Most of South Africa's workers are not unionised; and so cannot participate, as their views are not taken cognisance of**

Though many workers participate (negotiate) at plant or company levels, the majority of employees are not members of any union. This means that they are not covered by any bargaining system.

Apart from the above obstacles, Mohlala (2000:53) adds that the lack of co-operation between major Trade Unions has stalled the development of the Centralised Bargaining Process, denying employees effective participation.

4.7 Informal participative structures

It was revealed in paragraph 4.5.1 that informal participation is unilaterally initiated by Management. In this regard, there is no collective employee participation. It is also clear that such participation manifests itself in structures such as Briefing Groups, Team Based Structures, Consultative Committees and numerous other parallel organisations. In the following paragraph Employee Participation through these structures is explored.

4.7.1 Employee Participation through briefing groups

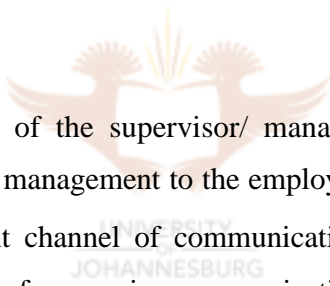
Participation through Briefing Groups comes in the form of communication between Management and employees. Slabbert *et al* (1998:10/7) observe that groups of employees are informed on aspects in the work environment that affect them. Briefing groups exhibit the following characteristics.

- Communication to employees is effected through lines of command as each supervisor informs his/ her work group.
- Communication is face-to-face and supported by memoranda.
- All relevant employees are involved.
- The groups are usually small, consisting of between three to twenty employees.
- The groups hold regular meetings of between 20 to 30 minutes during regular meeting hours.

- Information to employees is accurately communicated and received within a set time.
- Regular briefing meetings are held and form part of the supervisors' tasks.
- The Briefing Group System is effectively monitored to ensure that information is communicated accurately in good time.
- The System does not replace but supplements other communication methods within an organisation.

From the above, it can be seen that, through Briefing Groups, employees are equipped with all information about matters that affect them within their work environment. Employees not only keep abreast with changes that take place within the organisation, but they also become committed to their work.

Slabbert *et al* (1998) summarises the following as the major benefits of the Briefing Group System.

- 
- It strengthens the position of the supervisor/ manager as he/ she communicates important information from management to the employees.
 - By establishing an efficient channel of communication to the workers, the system reduces the negative effects of grape vine communication.
 - It elicits employee co-operation, reducing misunderstanding and resistance to change.
 - It solicits employee commitment and provides feedback information to management.

In spite of the above benefits of participation through Briefing Groups it should be noted that the System does not allow full employee participation in organisational decision-making. Thus participation through Briefing Groups is Pseudo. Pseudo Participation implies that no real participation takes place. On the contrary, employees are merely persuaded to accept decisions already taken by Management. Communication is mainly downward; it filters through organisational hierarchies, is brief, deals with relatively simple aspects; and Management selects the information to be communicated.

Furthermore, the System Of Briefing Groups is faced with numerous practical difficulties (Slabbert *et al* (1998:10/17) which are bound to impede its implementation in the South African work place. The System is impeded, *inter alia*, by the following factors:

- lack of management commitment;
- lack of management orientation and training with regard to the philosophy; objectives, functioning and responsibilities within a Briefing Group System;
- problems related to the scheduling of briefing sessions;
- use of a language(s) which is not properly understood by employees;
- illiteracy among supervisors which hinders their ability to correctly transmit the messages to the employees; and
- distortion of information as it flows from Management to the Shop Floor.

4.7.2 Employee participation through quality circles (QCs)

A Quality Circle is a group of five to ten specially trained employees from the same work area who come together voluntarily on a regular basis to identify, investigate, analyse and solve their own work-related problems under the leadership of their own selected leader (Greenberg and Baron, 1993:649).

Quality Circles aim at solving operational problems within the organisation. Mosoge (1996:111) indicates that after identifying and investigating problems within their defined task area, QC members generate solutions, which they present to Management. Greenberg and Baron (1993:649) add that the members are also involved in implementing and monitoring the solution. QCs provide employees with an effective channel to influence management decisions and because they are autonomous structures, they provide authentic participation to the employees. They empower employees by allowing them to set their own agendas and provide own solutions. This results in increased organisational productivity, profitability and goal attainment.

In South Africa the National Association of Productivity and Quality Circles of South Africa (NAPROQCSA) was formed to promote the Quality Circle Movement in the country (Van Rensburg, 1998:18/5). Basically, Quality Circles in South Africa work on

premises that groups are more efficient in problem identification and problem-solving than individual employees. Through QCs South African employees are availed an opportunity to exercise leadership, because the chairman's position rotates among all employees and is not confined to a formal position; and since membership is voluntary, employees perceive their partnership as more authentic than when membership is compulsory.

The above has led to the extensive use of Quality Circles, or their derivations in South Africa. Despite their advantages, Quality Circles have attracted the following criticism which have also hindered their proper functioning (Van Rensburg, 1998:18/6):

- South Africa lacks a culture of Group Cohesion in organisations. This sharply contrasts with Japan where Quality Circles have been successfully used. Quality Circles thus, are a less-suited structure in the South African industrial environment.
- South Africa's organisational environment is characterised by very powerful Trade Unions. The Unions have been extremely cautious of other Participative Structures, including Quality Circles for fear of diluting their power, *vis a vis* the employers'.
- Quality Circles require that employees master a number of skills. This is not always possible because employees may not have skills of all rounders. Lack of skills related to problem-solving, leadership and organisational skills, are bound to impede the successful implementation of QCs.

The above problems are however more related to effectiveness of QCs as opposed to their ineffectiveness as Participative Structures. QCs thus are structures that can potentially be used to solve a myriad of production-related problems. Hyman and Mason (1995:93) contend that they can indeed be used as a stepping stone to a more holistic approach to an organisation's quality ethos. Against this realisation, Mosoge (1996:117) notes the necessity of in-service training for employees to enable them to participate in organisational management through QCs.

4.7.3 Employee Participation through Teams

Team-based organisational structures were discussed in {paragraph 2.3.3.1(b)} and the process of becoming a team-based organisation was explained. It was indicated that the concept of Team Management refers to design and utilisation of teams which work together to manage an organisation in all its facets; and this is only possible if the teams are empowered (see par.4.3.1). The necessity of Team Management stems from the realisation that individual employees cannot develop better plans than a collective Team. As a collective (team), employees map out action programmes, concerning the running of the organisation, which they execute as teams. According to Parker (1991:49) teams are normally flexible structures, are able and willing to do whatever it takes for the job to be done. Through the team leader's motivation and support, members' energies are directed towards task accomplishment.

Not only do teams enhance efficient accomplishment of organisational tasks, they also enhance reconciliation of various and divergent interests of their members (Herrick, 1991:97). Thus, since team membership mirrors a whole spectrum of the organisation's interaction of team members, and their focus on attaining the organisation's Mission places individual members' interests below that of organisational objectives. In line with the above observations, Herrick (1991:97) contends that subordination of individual interests enhances the development of skills and competencies for mature, self reliant, caring and responsible participative behaviour. Parker (1991:99) adds that guided by the principle of reconciliation, employees are bound to engage in civilised disagreement as opposed to adversarial and hostile confrontation.

It can thus be seen that teams, as participative structures, are an effective tool with regard to stimulating employees' motivation, commitment and the organisations' productivity. Yet, despite the advantages of building and empowering teams as envisaged by the participative model of management, many team-based structures fail. In the next paragraph therefore, the reasons why teams do not work, are explored.

4.7.3.1 Reasons why Teams do not work

Several authors (McDermott *et al*, 1998; Robbins and Finley, 2000; Orsburn *et al*, 1990) identify numerous factors that normally mitigate against the successful functioning of teams. However the following will be discussed as the major barriers to the proper functioning of teams.

- **Uncertain team boundaries and empowerment opportunities**

A team's boundary refers to the limits within which a team conducts its business in order to accomplish its objectives (McDermott *et al*, 1998:59). As indicated in paragraph 2.3.3.1(b), team boundaries or parameters are vital because they define its roles and responsibilities, its level of empowerment and authority. This means that teams whose boundaries are not clearly demarcated, face the problem of not knowing:

- what they are really in charge of;
- whether they have the authority or empowerment to make and implement the relevant decisions;
- the different roles of individual team members; and
- the roles of different stakeholders.

Robbins and Finley (2000:45) reveal that the team eventually feels that it has no authority or leverage to carry out its mission, or it becomes confused about what its authority really amounts to, inevitably failing to perform. McDermott *et al* (1998:61) add that confusion and poor team performance are bound to increase in cases where 'sub-teams' operate within large teams. In such cases skirmishes and conflicts among the subteams could become a reality, unless the vagueness of the roles and responsibility of each unit is clarified, by clearly indicating what each team member is empowered to do.

▪ **Team leadership failure**

Leadership is critical to the success of any team. According to Mc Dermott *et al* (1998:37) Team Leadership facilitates the establishment and accomplishment of the team's goals. Robbins and Finley (2000:96) indicate that individual employees' commitment is solicited and energized towards the accomplishment of team objectives by the leadership. Such objectives are realized when the team's activities are co-ordinated and boundaries clarified. Robbins and Finley (2000:96) maintain that the Leadership must be positioned to add value to the team or organisation by leveraging the organisation's existing human and physical resources beyond performance.

However many teams lack this sort of value adding leadership. This inevitably stifles:

- the Leaders' own performance and ability to elicit solid effort and performance from their followers;
- team members' awareness and choice;
- innovation and performance; and
- detracts the team's ability to focus on its goal/ task.

Team leadership failure to enhance performance in the above four identified dimensions inevitably leads to dysfunctional teams.

▪ **Blurred vision**

Unless teams have a clear vision of what they want to be, and can clearly identify their contribution for the organisation's overall Strategies for Success, they are bound to fail (Robbins and Finley, 2000:115). Robbins and Finley's (2000) observation implies that teams whose visions do not align with the overall organisational strategy are doomed to fail. It is therefore imperative that the corporate vision is clearly communicated and understood by the different teams within the organisation. McDermott *et al* (1998:186-190); Robbins and Finley (2000:115) are in agreement that a clearly communicated and

understood vision enables the different teams to align their own visions with that of the organisation. This helps such teams to figure out and plan their roles in the bigger picture.

In this regard the role of corporate leadership is critical for alignment will never take place if the corporate leadership does not excite senior management and team Leadership about the corporate vision. Robbins and Finley (2000:115-117) indicate that corporate leadership should constantly communicate the vision to teams to such an extent that it becomes obvious to all individual team members.

The following have been identified as some of the constraints that hinder vision communication to teams and their members (Robbins and Finley, 2000:117-118):

- Assigning the vision

Leaders tend to “assign” the vision to the teams or team members in the form of well-put descriptions to memorise and replicate. This is bound to fail because not all team members are clones of the Leader.

- Leader dullness

Passing on a vision requires an “emotional” leader who can in turn stir the emotional feelings of the members through the manner in which he/she articulates the Vision. Therefore, a leader who is not excited about a team’s vision cannot sell it to the team members.

- Lack of clarity by the leader

Leaders who themselves may not be clear about the corporate vision fail to articulately communicate it to the Teams.

- Selling the vision

Leaders often charged up by some consultant or author may try to act the role of the consultant in the process of communicating the vision to the teams. This is essentially

“selling” the idea to team members. Such a role divorces the Leader from the team as a trusted insider and turns him into an outsider.

- Non-alignment between the vision and employees’ needs and demands.

It is impossible for employees to buy the corporate vision if it is irrelevant to their personal needs and wants. Therefore the proper way to succeed in spreading the vision is to work with employees as individuals, acknowledging their needs and aligning them with the team’s vision.

- **Poor reward and recognition system**

It was indicated in paragraph 23.3.2(d) that world class organisations employ world class remuneration practices to motivate their employees. In the same vein there is need to indicate that employees who work together as a team have to be paid as a team. However, McDermont *et al* (1998:148) observe that many an organisation still remunerate team members as individuals. Employees’ rewards are still based on individual employees’ goal achievement aspirations; an aspect that dilutes the importance of working as a team.

The question that now arises is how the reward system should be structured to promote the teamwork in an organisation. According to Osburn *et al* (1990:10-11) the Reward System should be structured in such a way that it promotes the flexibility of the team as a whole. This implies paying team members for mastering the skills required to reach team performance goals. In this case for instance, employees are paid for their knowledge (as opposed to being paid for seniority or a singular skill) that promotes the flexibility required by teams to respond to the changing conditions. The reward system thus is tied to team performance and individual span of relevant skills.

Companies may also institute gain-sharing or profit-sharing programmes to encourage team members innovate new ways to improve productivity. Gain-sharing refers to a system where resources or money saved by the team is returned to some degree to the team members. The system links employees with organisational success. However,

Robbins and Finley (2000:15) note that it is harder to measure success of most kinds of individual teams. Therefore the gain-sharing system could be problematic.

Meanwhile the profit-sharing system enables employees to receive a dividend based on corporate or team performance. Such rewards are normally deferred and added to an employee's retirement benefits.

It is not only poor team reward that may hinder the proper functioning of teams. Teams, like individuals, need recognition if they are to function properly. In this regard Osburn *et al* (1990:302) suggest that modest team gifts, icons or awards may be given to employees as a team. Such modest gifts and awards could include:

- setting aside a display wall that emphasizes team activities with announcements banners, certificates, schedules etc;
- giving special T-shirts, hats, mugs, jackets, to members of a team;
- displaying a plaque in the work area to identify the teams;
- holding celebrations to mark key events in the development of the team, such as anniversaries of the team, first time activities, special team accomplishments etc;
- initiating activities that identify the team as an entity, such as adopting a team colour, choosing a team logo to use on all team communications, uniforms etc;
- painting team equipment in the team colour; and
- competing as a team in company athletic events etc.

The following techniques may also be used to recognize a team for its accomplishments (Osburn *et al*, 1990:303):

- establishing a “team of the week” award, with gifts to each team member or to the team as a whole;
- conducting a team trip to visit customers whose product or service has been improved by the team; and
- holding public ceremonies or displays to point out team accomplishment.

Several authors (McDermott *et al*; 1998, Osburn *et al*, 1990:303; Robbins and Finley, 2000:152) are in agreement that, although it is vital to offer rewards and recognition that promote teamwork, individual-oriented rewards and recognitions (see also paragraph 2.3.3.2(d) need not be completely ignored. Osburn *et al* (1990:303) asserts that as teams mature, the need to recognise individual efforts increases. A team member with substantial experience in meeting customer's needs for instance deserve individual reward and recognition. However, Osburn *et al* (1990) caution that such recognition be done by the team, as opposed to the organisation or the managers.

4.8 Summary

Employee Participation as a tool for global competitiveness has been discussed in this chapter. It is evident that there are several initiatives to ensure employee participation in South Africa. While some of the initiatives are dictated by the law, others are a necessity because of economic imperatives. It has also been indicated that in cases where the law does not enforce participation, management could institute informal participation in the form of quality circles, briefing groups, and other structures. Whatever the approach adopted, however, the ultimate aim should be to enhance the organisations' competitiveness.

It is clear from this chapter that despite the effort by the South African government and organisations to ensure employee participation, there are still many obstacles to these efforts. Both informal and formal structures designed to enhance participation, fall short of what they were designed for. Meanwhile individual initiatives or programmes by different organisations are not co-ordinated. It must be mentioned, however, that unilateral approaches or initiatives in the form of uncoordinated programmes cannot transform an organisation from Authoritarianism to Participative Governance. Participative Governance can be brought about only if the perspectives of many employees and the authoritarian behaviour of Managers change. Since organisations do not have the time and ingenuity to transform all these behaviours, it is argued that the focus should be on major organisational elements which, if changed, will impact on all

aspects of the organisations' interactions and life. It is the author's view that if Employee Participation has to be used as a tool for an organisation's global competitiveness all organisational structures have to be pervaded with Participative Practices weaved into a single coordinated Strategy. In line with this perception, McLagan and Nel (1995:51) observe that if any of the areas in an organisation remains autocratic, Autocracy will "grow" and spread to the other areas, nullifying the organisations' Change efforts.

In chapter 5, a conclusion, summary of findings and recommendations are given.

